

IHC stops NAB
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday stopped the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from arresting Haroon Yousaf on his return to Pakistan in a case pertaining to holding assets beyond known sources of income. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard the petition seeking protective bail to Haroon Yousaf.

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Centre to fully support Sindh for post-flood rehabilitation: PM

KHAIRPUR (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the Federal Government would not leave the flood-affected people of Sindh in distress and would continue to take measures to mitigate their sufferings. The prime minister, during his visit to Pir Guddu and Kot Diji towns of the flood-affected Khairpur district, inspected the post-flood rehabilitation work.

PM Shehbaz, in his address to the flood victims, said the people of Sindh suffered from loss of life and property as the floods had wreaked havoc in the province. The Federal Government, he added, provided the utmost resources to the provincial government to overcome the massive problem.

Under the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Federal Government disbursed Rs 70 billion to the flood victims, he added. Serving the masses and their welfare was the priority of the government, the prime minister said. Shehbaz Sharif said the rehabilitation and reconstruction work had been completed to a large extent, however, stressed that the de-watering of the inundated areas of Dadu required immediate attention. He said

PM launches '4RF' action plan for post-flood rehab, reconstruction

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday launched a plan of action named 'Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework' (4RF), which will be carried out in the flood-affected areas of the country. The copy of the 4RF report was presented to the prime minister by Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI) here in a meeting.

Ahsan Iqbal apprised the prime minister that the document was based on the loss and damage estimated

in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment report, which was launched in late October this year.

The 4RF document contained short- medium- and long-term climate resilient strategy. The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Development Partners, line ministries, National Disaster Management Authority, and the provincial governments for adopting a whole of Pakistan and inclusive approach in bringing out this important framework.

Khairpur. The prime minister also met the flood-affected people at makeshift camps and inquired about the availability of facilities being provided to them by the government. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori said the coordination between federal and provincial governments was important in providing facilities to the flood-affected people who were facing the challenges of food security and accommodation.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah mentioned the need for the availability of funds for redefining and clearing the natural water courses so as to minimize the chances of floods. He also sought the Federal Government's assistance to help the province rectify its drainage system.

Prime Minister Shehbaz was given a briefing on the ongoing rehabilitation and reconstruction projects being carried out in the flood-affected areas. It was highlighted that the areas be restored in line with the feasibility study following a rainfall of 2011-12 that outlined the natural water courses. It was emphasized that most of the flood-hit areas had been de-watered, with electricity fully restored.



KHAIRPUR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif talks to the flood affectees of District Khairpur in Kot Diji.

Court sends Toshakhana reference against Zardari, Gilani & Nawaz back to NAB

ISLAMABAD (INP): An accountability court in Islamabad on Wednesday sent back the Toshakhana reference against former president Asif Ali Zardari, ex-prime ministers Yousuf Raza Gilani and Nawaz Sharif filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir sent back the reference after the PPP and PML-N leaders applied to cancel the case because of the recent amendments made to the NAB Ordinance.

Toshakhana is responsible to store gifts given to Pakistani heads of state and premiers by other countries.

As per the gift depository rules, the presidents and prime ministers have to deposit any gifts they receive in the Toshakhana as they are the property of the state — unless sold at an open auction. The rules, however, do allow officials to retain gifts with a market

value of less than Rs10,000 without paying anything.

In March 2020, NAB filed the Toshakhana reference in an accountability court against the three political leaders. Khawaja Anwar Majeed and Khawaja Abdul Ghani Majeed, the owners of the Omni group were also named as suspects in the reference.

According to the accountability bureau, former president Zardari and former premier Sharif obtained cars from the Toshakhana by paying 15% of the price of the cars.

The bureau further alleged that former premier Gilani facilitated Zardari and Nawaz in this regard.

Sharif and Zardari are currently out on bail in other corruption cases against them. The reference filed by NAB alleges that Zardari was gifted luxury cars by the governments of Libya and the United Arab Emirates, and he used them instead of submit-

ting them to the Toshakhana.

The accountability watchdog claimed that former premier Nawaz was given a car from the Toshakhana by the PPP government in 2008 even though he did not hold any official position in the government.

NAB had requested the court to conduct a trial and sentence the accused to the strictest possible jail terms under the NAB Ordinance for their involvement in the corruption scam. In May of the same year, the accountability court issued arrest warrants for former prime minister Nawaz Sharif after no one appeared on his behalf to represent him.

In September, of the same year, all three were declared proclaimed offenders in the case.

And in October 2020, the court ordered the confiscation of the property owned by Nawaz after he was declared an absconder in the case.

Afghan women stopped from entering universities after Taliban ban

KABUL (AFP/APP): Hundreds of young women were stopped by armed guards on Wednesday from entering Afghan university campuses, a day after the nation's Taliban rulers banned them from higher education.

Despite promising a softer rule when they seized power last year, Taliban have ratcheted up restrictions on all aspects of women's lives, ignoring international outrage.

A team of AFP journalists saw groups of students gathered outside universities in the capital, Kabul, barred from entering by armed guards and shuttered gates. Many, dressed in hijabs, were also seen standing in groups on roads leading to the campuses.

"We are doomed. We have lost everything," said one student, who asked not to be identified. Men students also expressed shock at the latest edict.

"It really expresses their

illiteracy and low knowledge of Islam and human rights," said one, also asking not to be named.

"If the situation continues like this the future will be worse. Everyone is scared."

Most private and government universities are closed for a few weeks over winter, although campuses generally remain open to students and staff.

The decision to bar women from universities came late Tuesday in a terse announcement from Neda Mohammad Nadeem, the Minister for Higher Education. "You all are informed to immediately implement the mentioned order of suspending education of females until further notice," it said. Washington condemned the decision "in the strongest terms."

"The Taliban cannot expect to be a legitimate member of the international community until they respect the rights of all in Afghanistan. This decision

Bilawal urges Afghan authorities to revisit ban on university girls

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Wednesday showed disappointment over the suspension of the university and higher education for female students in Afghanistan. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal said Pakistan strongly believe that every man and woman has the inherent right to education in accordance with the injunctions of Islam. "We strongly urge the Afghan authorities to revisit this decision," said Bilawal. The Afghan Taliban authorities on Tuesday ordered an indefinite ban on university education for girls, the ministry of higher education said in a letter issued to all government and private universities.

will come with consequences for the Taliban,"

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, meanwhile, was "deeply alarmed", his spokesman said Tuesday. "The secretary-general reiterates that the denial of education not only violates the equal rights of women and girls, but will have a devastating impact on the country's future," Stephane Dujarric

said in a statement.

The ban on higher education comes less than three months after thousands of girls and women were allowed to sit for university entrance exams across the country, with many aspiring to choose teaching and medicine as future careers.

Most teenage girls across the country have already been banned from secondary school, severely limiting university intake anyway.

COAS visits CMH, inquires after health of soldiers injured in Bannu operations

RAWALPINDI (NNI): General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited CMH Rawalpindi on

Wednesday. The ISPR said the COAS met injured officers and soldiers who got injured during CTD com-

plex Bannu Operations. COAS remained with them for some time and inquired about their well-being. COAS appreciated

their high spirit and morale and lauded their professionalism during operation against terrorists.



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited CMH Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

Atlantic Council asks Bilawal about taking action inside Afghanistan

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: Atlantic Council, one of most popular think tank in Washington DC asked Pakistani Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto twice whether Pakistan would take action inside Afghanistan, against those terrorists groups, especially the TTP which is claiming responsibility for most of the terrorists activities inside Pakistan.

Young Bilawal replied that Afghanistan was struggling to fight different terrorist groups, including the ISIS. Bilawal further said that "Afghanistan has to demonstrate if they can take on TTP" and it is our choice if we want to learn from our past mistake.

When asked about his short and few months coalition government, Bilawal replied that his government is taking baby steps at the



moment but his aim is to diversify his government engagement with the United States beside counter-terrorism topics.

Bilawal Bhutto spoke about the climate challenges Pakistan is facing

and the destruction caused by the recent floods. Bilawal also spoke about expanding Pakistan economy towards Central Asian States and also towards Malaysia and Singapore.

When asked about

Russian oil imports to Pakistan, Bilawal said that Pakistan is looking everywhere but "Russian oil import was a "Show Shaw" by former Prime Minister Imran Khan" and that it was just a "truck ki batti."

CM inaugurates various uplift projects in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Wednesday formally inaugurated the newly established Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences at the University of Peshawar and performed the groundbreaking of various projects worth Rs 3.23 billion under the Peshawar Uplift Programme Phase-II.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated the construction work on the establishment of Technology Development Centre in Agriculture University, Peshawar. The Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences at the University of Peshawar has been completed at a cost of Rs 180 million. Currently, two academic programs; M.Sc Criminology and BS Criminology, with a total strength of 274 students, are enrolled in the Institute, whereas new academic programs, including Ph.D and MS/MPHIL Criminology, Diplomas in Forensic Criminal Investigation and Cyber Security are to be commenced.

The Chief Minister formally laid the foundation stone for Hayatabad Trail under the Peshawar Uplift Programme Phase-II, which would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 1.22 billion. Under the project, a 6 Km long Bicycle & Walking Track along with service areas at five different sites would be established. The project also includes the construction of green belt, plantation, public toilets, tuck shops, gazebos, futsal field, basketball, volleyball and Badminton Courts, Outdoor Gym and a Roller Skating Rink.

Similarly, the Chief Minister formally performed the groundbreaking of a project regarding the construction and beautification of University road, University town and Palosai road to Peshawar Zoo. The project would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 160.95 million under which multiple construction and uplift activities have been planned including Markhor Square, Iqra Square, Walkway in front of town market, beautification of Park Avenue road to Iran Consulate and Palosai

road Intersection at University road. Besides, physical work on the improvement & construction of roads, footpaths, car parking and public toilets at the University of Peshawar has also been launched which will incur Rs 140.030 million.

The Chief Minister also held the groundbreaking ceremony for the establishment of Technology Development Center (TDC) at the University of Agriculture Peshawar. Under this project, four sub centres/ components would be established that include; Horticulture Center, Animal Husbandry Center, Climate change Center and Business Incubation Center. Talking on the occasion, Mahmood Khan said that the Technology Development Center will be established for technological advancement in the fields of Horticulture, Animal Husbandry as well as adaptation to climate change in the region by introducing innovative technologies. He said that the project would facilitate the agriculture sector in yielding optimum production results with minimum investment.



CM approves Rs. 66b to construct 8,620 km flood-damaged roads

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday presiding over a meeting to review the overhauling of damaged roads by heavy rains and floods approved Rs 66 billion for the reconstruction of 8,620 kilometers of roads across Sindh with the support of donor agencies.

The meeting which was held at CM House was attended by Minister Works Zia Abbas Shah, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary Works Shariq Ahmed, and others concerned.

CM Sindh in his opening remarks said that due to heavy rains during the month of July and August 2022, Sindh has faced an unprecedented situation as the infrastructure has been badly affected.

He added that most of the roads and associated infrastructure have been damaged and the remaining roads were in severely dilapidated condition which required emergent repair and rehabilitation to enable connectivity of inter and intra districts road network.

The CM Sindh was told that the

Works & Services Department has so far carried out a district-wise survey of damages caused to the roads and other infrastructure and prepared a district-wise assessment.

In the Road Sector, 801 schemes under the purview of the Provincial government have been affected having a length of 8,620 km. Funds required for the rehabilitation of the road infrastructure is Rs 94121.578 million (US\$427.825 Million).

Chief Secretary told CM Sindh that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also appointed a consultant to verify the assessment data of damages.

The chief minister approved Rs 66 billion to reconstruct 8,620 km of roads and directed the P&D and works departments to ensure the quality of the roads, and construct conduits, bridges, and siphons where the passage to rain/sewerage water was required to be given.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that now we have to construct climate-change-resilient long-life roads, therefore construction and the material should be used accordingly.

Syed Murad Ali Shah also directed

Chairman P&D to work out the small up to 3 km damaged roads connecting one village to the other to the city or within the city so that work on them could be started. "I want you to prepare the data within three weeks and submit it for my approval," he said, adding he would start work on them in January.

Presiding over another meeting at CM House, the chief minister reviewed the wheat stocks available with the provincial government and approved procurement of 300,000 tons from PASSCO so that the requirement up to the beginning of March could be met.

Minister Food Mukesh Chawala briefing the chief minister said that during the 2022-23 season the food department has released 721,000 tons of wheat so far and still 379,000 tons were available with the department.

He added that 300,000 tons of wheat were required so that wheat requirement till the harvest of the new crop, March 2023 could be met.

The chief minister approved the procurement of 300,000 of wheat from the PASSCO.



LAHORE: People from Christian community are decorating the Anthony Church for upcoming Christmas.

Governor constitutionally empowered to ask CM to seek vote of confidence: Ghani

KARACHI (NNI): Sindh Labour and Human Resources Minister, Saeed Ghani, has said the Governor is constitutionally empowered to ask the Chief Minister of a province to seek a vote of confidence from the provincial assembly. The Sindh Labour Minister stated this on Wednesday while talking to journalists after inaugurating the 3rd Mini thesis show here at Arts Council.

Ghani predicted that the next chief minister in

Punjab would belong to the Opposition political parties. He said that a sitting CM should command the confidence of the majority of members of the provincial assembly. He told media persons that the incumbent CM of Punjab would continue to remain in power till he enjoyed the confidence of the majority members of the house. He said that at present no political party in Punjab Assembly pos-

sessed the decisive majority to form the government.

Ghani said the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in Punjab should have convened the session of the provincial assembly to conduct voting on the no-confidence motion against the CM but this had not been done clearly showing that the ruling political party didn't have a majority in the house.

To a question, the Sindh Labour Minister

said that Karachi didn't belong to any single linguistic community as the provincial capital belonged to all its inhabitants. He said that Karachi had given the honour to all its residents. He said the residents of Karachi had parted ways with politics of hatred and bias as they wouldn't follow anymore the elements that were conspiring to ignite again ethnic strife in the city.

IHC reserves judgment on appeals in Noor case

ISLAMABAD (APP): A division bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday reserved its judgment on appeals in Noor Mukadam murder case.

A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard the appeals against the conviction of accused Zahir Jaffar and others. At the outset of the hearing, the defence lawyer argued that the reason to award the death penalty to his client could be to set a lesson for others. Such punishment was used to be given only to habitual criminals, he said.

He said that there was pressure on the Pakistan at international level to end up the death penalty here. The chief justice remarked that it was a matter of legislation and only the legislators could view this.

Usman Khosa Advocate argued that his client Zahir Jaffar was a citizen of an

American state where there was no concept of a death sentence under the law. He prayed the court to also view this point in its judgment.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that Pakistan was an independent country and it had its own law, and we were bound to implement it.

The lawyer said that if the prosecution couldn't prove the crime then the benefit of the doubt should be given to his client.

The plaintiff's lawyer accused Jamil had not much role in the crime as he used to do day duty. The court asked whether any drugs were recovered from the crime scene and why the handbag of Noor Mukadam was not added in recovery.

The lawyer said that no drugs were recovered from the crime scene and a toxicology report had been attached with the record, adding that only the prose-

cution could tell about the bag. The lawyer said that photogrammetric test of the accused was also conducted and its report was attached. After the two sides con-

cluded their arguments, the bench reserved its judgment. The court asked the lawyers to submit written arguments, if they wanted, within seven days.



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091-5891513, 091-5891516, Fax: 091-5891511 | info@kpitb.gov.pk | kpitb.gov | www.kpitb.gov.pk

TENDER NOTICE


Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) is a public sector autonomous organization working for the development and regulation of ICT sector in the province, invites sealed bids from the firms registered with Pakistan Engineering Council, Federal Board of Revenue and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRa) for **Renovation Work at Citizen Facilitation Center in Peshawar.**

S No.	Description	Bid Submission Date & Time	Bid Opening Date & Time
1	Renovation Work at CFC Peshawar	January 06, 2023 11:00 AM	January 06, 2023 11:30 AM

The Bidding Document containing all the detail terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website www.kpitb.gov.pk. The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions stipulated in the bidding document must reach at the office of KPITB Peshawar on or before the **stipulated deadline**. Bids will be opened in presence of the bidders/representatives who ever opt to attend.

INF(P) 7411/22

Assistant Director (Procurement) KPITB
134 Industrial Estate, Hayatabad, Peshawar
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. 091-9219505, 091-5891513



PHA FOUNDATION
MINISTRY OF HOUSING & WORKS
Ground Floor Shaheed e Millat Secretariat
Blue Area Islamabad

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

PHA Foundation, Ministry of Housing & Works, Government of Pakistan invites Electronic bids for the following mentioned work on an item rate basis from the contractors licensed by the Pakistan Engineering Council in the category C-5 or above, having relevant experience and registered with the income tax department for the current year and meeting the criteria prescribed in the bidding documents, using Single Stage Single Envelop Bidding Procedure under PPRA Rule 36(a).

Name of Work	Fixed Bid Security	Submission of Bids Date & Time	Bids Opening Date & Time
Provision and Installation of 04 Nos of Additional Tubewells & 09 Nos of Pump Rooms For Construction of Infrastructure Works At Site 1 To 4, Sector I-16/3, Islamabad	Rs. 1,500,000/- in the shape of CDR	16/01/2023 at 12:00 PM	16/01/2023 at 12:30 PM

Terms and Conditions:

- The bidding process shall be carried out through PHA E-Bidding System. Contractors, having valid PEC registration are required to register their firms for participation in the bid. User Guide, illustrating the steps for registration is available at <https://www.pha.gov.pk/>.
- After login, the complete set of Bidding Documents may be accessed/downloaded by the interested eligible bidders upon furnishing the requisite documents and payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs.5000/- on the prescribed challan form available on the website during the official working hours.
- All the scanned original bidding documents duly signed and stamped along with the scanned original CDR shall be uploaded on the given website and hard copies of the same in original must be submitted in the office of the undersigned on or before the closing date.
- In case of any ambiguity/discrepancy in hard and soft form, the bid shall be deemed rejected and non-responsive.
- Incomplete, conditional, and Bids without required Bid Security shall not be considered.
- No tender through Fax, Telephone, and Telex would be entertained.
- No Bidding Documents shall be sold on the date fixed for the opening of tenders.
- If the successful bidder repudiated the contract his entire security deposit shall be forfeited in the favor of the government further he shall be blacklisted.
- The bidder shall submit the NTN/Registration certificate from Income Tax Department along with income tax submission or valid exemption certificate.
- In case of any unforeseen reasons, public holiday, unrest or force majeure on the bid submission/ opening date, the Bid shall be opened on the next working day at the same place and time.
- In case of false information provided by the bidder the concerned firm will be blacklisted under PPRA rules, decision of the employer in the case should be final.
- All the prevailing PPRA Rules/Act and government notifications issued from time to time will be applicable.
- All the Federal taxes/duties will be deducted from the bills of the contractor at prescribed rates as per government policy issued from time to time.
- PHA Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid in accordance with Rule 33 of PPRA 2004.

DIRECTOR (ENGG-I)
PHA Foundation

Ministry of Housing & Works, Government of Pakistan
Ground Floor, Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat, Jinnah Avenue, Islamabad
Tel: 051-9201817

PID(I) 3903/22

Sharjeel vows to continue relief work till rehabilitation of the last flood victim

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Wednesday said that the Sindh government was focused on the complete rehabilitation of flood victims and it had resolved to continue relief work till the rehabilitation of the last flood victim.

The minister in a statement issued here said that World Bank has approved various projects worth \$ 1.692 billion for the rehabilitation of flood victims of Sindh, which include rehabilitation of flood-affected population, construction of damaged houses, restoration of affected agricultural lands, social protection, and maternal and child health.

Sharjeel Memon said a survey was being carried out on a fast-track basis for the

disbursement of a subsidy of Rs.5,000 per acre to wheat growers in Sindh. As many as 4,048 teams comprised of officials of the Agriculture and Revenue Departments were engaged in the survey at the Tapa level (the basic unit of revenue administration in the province).


He said that Irrigation and Public Health Engineering departments along with the district administration were working day and night to ensure the drainage of flood water from the affected areas while Sindh Chief Minister was monitoring the operation. Sharjeel Memon said that the Sindh government, CM Murad Ali Shah, the district administration, and Pakistan People's Party had resolved that relief activities would continue until the last flood victims are rehabilitated.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is published through this notice that I Mr. Muhammad Ayub S/o Saail Muhammad Resident of Takht Nasrati Distt. Karak is the owner of Plot no. 153 Size 10 Marla Sector I and Plot no. 154 Size 10 Marla Sector I Phase-II, K.D.A. Kohat He has requested that the original Transfer Deed of The Said Plots Has Been Lost Some Where and now issuance of Duplicate Transfer Deed is desired the Plots is not Mortgaged there has been Appointed no Attorney and not sold to any body if any Bank/Institution/Firm or Person has any objections He /She should contact The Housing Officer UADA Kohat within 15 Day of Publication of this notice in writing with proof otherwise Duplicate Transfer Deed will be issued and no objection will be Accepted. (Director Urban Area KDA, Kohat)

Over 1m online applications received for jobs

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab Job Portal has registered 140 departments of the Government of Punjab and received 1 million+ online applications for vacant positions. It emerged during a progress review meeting presided by Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Chairman Syed Bilal Haider here on Wednesday which was also attended by PITB IT-Operations Director General Faisal Yousaf and other team members. The Punjab Job Portal, developed by PITB, has so far registered more than 250 thousand candidates who have created their profiles on the portal. On this occasion, PITB Chairman Syed Bilal Haider said that the Punjab Job Portal has facilitated the citizens to apply for jobs in government departments.



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BRANCH CLOSING AND ACCOUNTS SHIFTING NOTICE

Sr No.	Branch Code	Name & Address of Branch Going to be Closed	Branch Code	Name and Address of Branch where it will Merge
1	0609	Bagh-e-Haram Conventional Branch	1289	PRC Chowk Mardan Branch Plot No. 1264/9 (1994-95), PRC Chowk Mardan, Tehsil & District Mardan



PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU) ACCELERATED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR MERGED AREAS (ASDP-MAS) GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Inside Government Technical & Vocational Centre (B) Gulbahar Peshawar, Phone No. 091-2606278

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

To produce quality skilled workforce and reduce the existing gap between demand and supply of skills in a growing economy especially in merged areas. In order to address the issue, the Industries, Commerce & Technical Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has recently approved a Skill Development Project for Merged Areas to train 5500 youth from merged areas in demand-oriented skills to equip them with modern and market oriented skills against the allocated seats on first come first served basis.

- > Under this project free training, boarding and lodging and monthly stipend will be provided.
- > The training will be on (80%) practical knowledge and (20%) class room based.
- > Proposed sectors are Mines & Minerals, Construction, Health, Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Services sector (Further details of trades/occupations may be obtained from the office or download from asdp.gkp)

To implement the training program, sealed bid proposal (**Technical and Financial**) are invited from well reputed registered Private Sector's Training Providers/ Organization/ Institutes/ Entrepreneurs/ firms/ Company of the country having accredited/registered training infrastructure including well trained instructional faculty, equipped labs with modern technology and facility for providing skill training including internship (80% of the course). Bid should be submitted on "single stage two envelopes procedure" as per KPRRA rules, 2014 with the following terms and conditions.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- > The service provider/ training institute must be registered/affiliated/accredited with any Federal or Provincial Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) or National Vocational Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) or Board of Technical Education (BTE) or Trade Testing Board (TTB) or HEC recognize University or Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).
- > The service provider should have minimum of Three years' experience in conducting similar assignments having documentary proof of assignments clients name, duration and cost of the assignment.
- > The service provider must be registered with relevant Revenue Authorities.
- > The service provider should not be blacklisted by any Govt. office, for which an affidavit on stamp paper, duly signed will be attached with RFP.
- > Should be financially sound and shall have in its current offices/institutes all the necessary labs equipment and facilities required for training.
- > The cost / rate per trainee per month quoted in financial proposal have validity till completion of training process.
- > One sealed envelope containing two sealed envelopes having clearly marked as "Technical Proposal" and "Financial Proposal" are to be submitted by each service provider.
- > Bidding document having TORs of the assignment along with detail shortlisting criteria can be obtained free of cost from Monday to Friday during office timing from address given below. The same can also be downloaded from website www.ictedu.kp.gov.pk, www.asdp.gkp and KPRA website www.kppra.gov.pk.
- > Last date for submission of technical and financial proposals is **16th January, 2023 at 1200 Hours**. The technical proposals will be opened on the same day at **1400 hours** in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.
- > Incomplete and late submitted proposals will not be accepted.
- > Pre-bid meeting will be held on **January 10, 2023 at 1100 hrs** both in person and via zoom link for which the firm will send formal request through email asdp.pmu@gmail.com before the meeting date.
- > The competent authority may reject any or all the bids at any time prior to acceptance of the bid or proposal with cogent reasons under Rules 47 of KP Procurement Rules 2014.
- > Final selection of the training providers shall be carried out after physical verification of the facility by the concerned committee.

For further information and detailed terms & conditions, please contact at the following address.

Program Management Unit (PMU)
Accelerated Skills Development Program for Merged Areas
inside Government Technical & Vocational Training Centre for boys
Gulbahar Peshawar, Email: asdp.pmu@gmail.com



Sherpao asks govt, Opp to join hands to address challenges

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Wednesday asked the government and the opposition to set aside their differences and join hands to address the challenges facing the country.

He said this while addressing at a gathering to mark the death anniversary of those who were martyred in a suicide attack at his village mosque during Eid prayer in Sherpao village in Charsadda in 2007. Quran and Fateha khwa were held for the departed souls.

He paid glowing tributes

to the martyrs and said their sacrifices would be remembered forever.

Aftab Sherpao said that the country particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was once again experiencing a wave of terrorism and the law and order was deteriorating with each passing day.

He asked the government to review its Afghan policy and remove the shortcomings from its security policy.

Commenting on the Bannu Incident, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had failed to build the capability of the police and other law-

enforcement agencies.

He urged the government to take steps to enhance the capability of the police and the law-enforcement agencies to tackle the issue of lawlessness and avoid the occurrence of the Bannu-like incidents.

He held the PTI government responsible for the Bannu incident, saying it did not build the capacity of the law enforcers and the police.

He said political instability and the poor law and order were affecting the economy, adding a strong economy guaranteed the country's defense.



PESHAWAR: SP Tariq Mahmood Khan presiding over a meeting of police officer regarding tight security measures for Christmas celebrations.

7th NS being kick starts early next year

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 7th national census is being kick starts early next year in the month of February to be conducted across the country and will be the first ever digital census in the history of Pakistan.

According to the clear directions of the KP government, the Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will provide all out support to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in all its phases of cherishing this great national obligation.

Syed Zaheerul Islam Shah, the KP Secretary Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD), disclosed this while addressing the opening session of the 5-day training workshop of Master Trainers for the 7th National Census being organized at the conference room of the Local Government Secretariat, Peshawar.

The Federal Statistics Division Joint Additional Secretary Census Akhtar Khan and Director Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Shaukat Ali Khan were also present on this occasion.

The outgoing Master Trainers of the workshop will later train the trainers at the divisional and district level soon after completing the training.

Syed Zaheerul Islam Shah said that under this first national digital census in the country's history, the concerned statistics division and provincial local government officials would go to the field and get the complete data of the citizens in nook and corner of the province including the merged districts under the newly developed foolproof online system. He said that after the training of the master trainers is completed by 23th of this month, the enumerators will start their work from January 7 to January 23 next year wherein it would tantamount to launching the mega process of national census in the next month of February.

He said that census is an important national duty on which the country's future planning, development and public prosperity depended. He added that the new census is of key importance for better future planning of the country. Therefore, he said, the entire government machinery including divisional and district administration and police officers

of the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would fully cooperate with the staff of the federal Statistics Division.

He also appealed to the religious scholars and other opinion-making segments of society to raise public awareness in this regard so that this national obligation and all its stages could be carried out in a proper manner as well as make it a success story.

Earlier, Shaukat Ali Khan, Director Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, called on the Secretary LGE & RDD at his office LG Secretariat Peshawar and apprised him of the arrangements being made at the federal level for the seventh national census wherein the support and cooperation of the KP Department of Local Government and Elections at the provincial level was requested while the Local Government Secretary made a detailed review of the role and cooperation of the Local Government Department with LGE&RDD senior officials in relation to the seventh census during the meeting with other officials of the Local Government Department. Certain necessary decisions were also taken on this occasion.

KITE issues travel advisory for tourists

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development (KITE) Project of Tourism and Archaeology Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued travel advisory and guidelines for tourists intending to enjoy snowfall in scenic areas.

In a press statement issued here on

Wednesday, the tourists visiting hilly areas during winter have been advised to strictly follow the travel advisory and guidelines to safely enjoy their trips to snowfall areas.

The tourists were advised to keep warm clothes, dry fruits and use reliable vehicles with new tires and chains that could

travel on snowy roads.

The tourists were further advised to avoid lighting unnecessary fires and properly dispose of wastes to protect the area atmosphere.

Protection of forests and wildlife should be ensured and cooperation with KITE DoT in maintaining the environment.

PHC acquits three alleged murderers from charges

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Lal Jan Khattak and Justice Sahibzada Asad Ullah acquitted three persons in double murderer case, on Wednesday.

According to prosecution, Nasir, Hanif and Abid were charged in double murderers on complaint of Mudassir Shah. In the First Information Report Islam Shah and Shah Syed killed in 2019 allegedly by the accused over oral dispute.

The counsel for accused Syed Mubashir Shah Advocate appeared before PHC and argued the case.

Furthermore, Criminal Model Court Swabi has convicted all three culprits for lifetime imprisonment twice while imposed Rs0.8million on each accused in 2022.

After conclusion of arguments, the divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Lal Jan Khattak and Sahibzada Asad Ullah acquitted the culprits from charges.

PHC disposes-off COC against PESCO

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Justice Abdul Shakoor of Peshawar High Court (PHC) has disposed-off Contempt of Court (COC) proceedings against Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) after submitting attested revised assessment charges before court.

The counsel for petitioner Haroon Inayat Advocate appeared and argued that PESCO didn't made compliance of Peshawar High Court (PHC)'s order regarding revised assessment charges.

The counsel argued that XEN along with other concerned officials didn't provided revised charges in electricity bill.

PESCO's lawyer Asad Jan appeared before Peshawar High Court (PHC) and informed that respondent has submitted attested copy of revised assessment charges before court.

After conclusion of arguments, Justice Abdul Shakoor has disposed-off COC after conclusion of argument and submission of attested copy of revised assessment charges.

People urged to pay drinking water charges

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Executive Officer Water and Sanitation Services Company, Engr Amir Khan said on Wednesday that all resources have been utilized to provide clean and safe drinking water and sanitation services to the people.

He said this while chairing a meeting regarding increase in revenue and improvement in service delivery held at his office.

General Manager Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Chief Financial Officer Naveed Akhtar, Manager HR and Administration Imran Afridi, Manager Planning and Projects Imran Zaman and others also attended the meeting.

Amir Khan said that legal action would be taken against the defaulters of Water and Sanitation Services Company's services bill.

He urged people to cooperate with Water and Sanitation Services Company and pay their water charges timely so that service delivery would be improved.

He said that the standard of water being provided to the people residing in the district was up to the mark and declared satisfactory for the drinking purpose by Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR).

He warned stern action for those not paying charges for clean drinking water and their connection would be disconnected.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan unveiling plaque to formally perform groundbreaking of Technology Development Center at University of Agriculture.

City Police take tight security steps for Christmas

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police have taken tight security measures for Christmas celebrations and banned all categories of leave for police from upcoming Friday to Monday.

These directives were issued during a meeting of the Superintendent of Police (SP), Tariq Mahmood Khan with Deputy Superintendents of

Police (DSPs) and Station House Officers (SHOs) here on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the Sub-Divisional Superintendents of Police (SDSPs) were issued standing orders for physical checking of all Churches within the areas of their jurisdiction and to prepare feasibility reports for their security including the required number of security

personnel for rooftop and walk-through-in-gates. Furthermore, the name of the deployed personnel should also be mentioned.

Keeping in view the prevailing situation, SDPOs and SHOs were directed to keep on alert and compulsory use of helmets and jackets. They were also directed to remain vigilant and allow one near them.

PCP sign MoU with US's Miracle Feet

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As yet another quantum leap forward, the ClubFoot Home Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) has signed a formal MoU with a US based humanity organization, "Miracle Feet" for the treatment and facilitation of kids with ClubFeet, from all over the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & beyond.

According to Dr Syed Muhammad Ilyas CEO Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP), the PCP and "MiracleFeet" USA, are planning to take this great

humanitarian project to the next level, extending the program to other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within the next 3 years, to train & educate more Medical & Physical Rehab Professionals, to spread awareness regarding ClubFoot and to integrate ClubFoot treatment into the Health Care System of KP, for future sustainability, he added.

Faisal Imtiaz the Regional Program Officer, MiracleFeet, for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), handed over the signed MoU to the CEO, PCP, Dr. Syed Muhammad

Ilyas in a simple but impressive ceremony at lawn of the PCP Hayatabad Peshawar. The ceremony was largely attended by the doctors, physiotherapists and friends of paraplegic as well as attendants of the patients admitted in PCP.

Faisal Imtiaz on this expressed his utmost satisfaction over the fact that PCP is a well reputed and most experienced organization of its kind in Pakistan and he hopes that together with MiracleFeet we will leave no stone unturned, in order to treat kids with ClubFeet, in a dedicated manner.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Ministers Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Kamran Bangash and Special Assistant to CM Barrister Saif addressing a joint press conference.

KPCSW launches its five year strategic plan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women launched the report of its five-year strategic plan from 2022 to 2026.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women (KPCSW) launched its five-years strategic plan 2022-2026 on Wednesday. The Strategic Plan sets the strategic priorities of the Commission for the coming five years in area of advocacy, generating evidence based knowledge and its dissemination, facilitating awareness raising on the mandate of KPCSW and relevant legislative policy frameworks

In her remarks, the Chairperson KPCSW, Dr. Riffat Sardar said that the KPCSW under its previous strategic plans demonstrated a significant progress in reviewing the laws,

and its own institutional strengthening.

Special Assistant to Chief Minister KP for information and PRs, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, graced the event as Chief Guest. The representatives of government departments, partner organizations, stakeholders, media, academia, provincial election commission, judiciary, lawyers and representatives of various civil society organizations participated in the launch ceremony.

She stated further that the vision is based on existing and emerging ground realities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a way that ensures the wellbeing of women and protect and promote their

improving collaboration with civil society, academia and research studies, which was revised into the existing one based on the feedback and lesson learnt. She added that KPCSW extends its sphere of work to the district levels and established District Committees in each district, which will perform the same functions in the district as the KPCSW in the province. She informed the audience that the notification of the DCSW is at final stage.

She stated further that the vision is based on existing and emerging ground realities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a way that ensures the wellbeing of women and protect and promote their

Eight held during grand operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Capital Metropolitan Government here Wednesday conducted a grand operation against encroachers in its jurisdiction and arrested eight people for exceeding their shop limits.

The district administration said that heavy machinery was used during the anti-encroachment operation to demolish some big encroached structures. During the operation scores of encroached constructions, sheds and extensions were also demolished. On the occasion eight people were also arrested for resisting the operation.

The operation was conducted by Chief Demolishing Inspectors, Qaisar Bacha and Fazal Mehmood on the directive of DG Capital Metropolitan Government, Arshad Ali Zubair and Director East Sayyed Waqas Ali Shah in Khushal Bazaar and Gurr Mandi.

The grand anti-encroachment operation was assisted by the police force of Hashtnagri police station and officials from traffic police.

A truckload of items, displayed outside the shops were also confiscated by the anti-encroachment staff.

UNFPA assures full support

PESHAWAR (APP): The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative Dr. Luay Shabaneh on Wednesday visited headoffice Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

Director General PDMA briefed him on flood response plan and interest in integrating GBVIE in provincial policies, strategies, strengthening multi sectoral GBVIE coordination mechanism at district level.

Dr. Luay Shabaneh assured full support and appreciated good work carried out by PDMA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Shield presenting to Advisor to CM Miss. Ayesha Banu during investment readiness conference organized by World Bank.



In brief

ICU, CT Scan, facilities setup at DHQ Nowshera

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The activists of all political parties along with civil society appreciated Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr. Mujtaba Ali for establishment of Intense Care Unit, ventilator and provision of latest CT Scan machine facilities at District Headquarters Hospital Nowshera. In this regard a collective statement issued by PMLN's Abdul Haq Wali, ANP's Mian Wajahat Kakakhel, PTI's Muhammad Walid, JUI-F Qari Riaz Ullah, JI Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, PPP Falak Naz Khan and Khidmat-e-Khalq Education Foundation president Istiraj Khan to media personnel. They claimed that MS Dr. Mujtaba Ali has ensured delivery of services to larger people and assured public trust on government institutions. They added that shortest span of time MS had established ICU, CT Scan and ventilator facilities at DHQ hospital Nowshera.

Gomal Varsity vacations

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The Gomal University on Wednesday announced the winter vacation schedule for all of its departments, campuses, hostels and University Wensam College, DIK. According to the official notification issued here, the university will remain closed from December 22 (Thursday) to December 30 (Friday), on account of the winter holidays. The Security Section staff will remain in liaison with authorities concerned and submit a report on daily basis to the Vice Chancellor through Registrar regarding the security of the university. During the winter vacations, the Directorate of Admission would perform its duties on regular basis as usual and the admission process of the new students would be carried out as per schedule. However, the she exams already in progress or scheduled has been postponed and a new schedule in this regard would be issued later.

Census body meeting held

NAWABSHAH (APP): Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Abdul Aleem Lashari on Wednesday said that the population and house census was national responsibility aimed to raise awareness among general public about existing resources, facilities and population. This he stated while chairing a meeting of Divisional Census Coordination Committee which was held to review arrangement regarding Seventh Digital Census of population and houses. He said, "Population and house census is an important task for which all Deputy Commissioners and Committee members shall discharge their duty honestly as a national responsibility for error-free and transparent census." He directed officials of the education department that data and information during census should be collected through digital process and young teachers having knowledge of latest technology should be assigned duties under the procedure and method and lists should be compiled as indicated by the Department of statistics. Commissioner said that attendance of the teachers assigned in the training list should be ensured while stern action should be initiated against absentees. Briefing the meeting, Census Officer Aamir Ali Larik said that the 7th population and house census would start in February 2023 and it would be the first Digital Census.



QUETTA: Secretary general of All Balochistan Municipal Workers Association, Nadeem Khokher addressing during a protest camp setup for acceptance of their demands.

Pre-fabricated BHU structure inaugurated

F.P. Report

WANA: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) National Headquarters (NHQ) & Norwegian Red Cross, PRCS Merged Areas Inaugurated. "Newly Constructed Pre-Fabricated Structure of Basic Health Unit (BHU) Chagmalai in District South Waziristan.

The Chief Guest of the Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari & Chairman PRCS Merged Areas Asif Khan Mehsud officially inaugurated the state-of-the-art newly constructed building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that it is the first visit of the PRCS chairman in the history of Pakistan and my presence insures that PRCS is helping out the conflicted areas through our movement partners.

Speaking to the inauguration ceremony, the Chairman of Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari said that the BHU building was constructed in Chagmalai at a cost of 11 million, in which 8 rooms have been constructed to facilitate the local communities by the provision of free health services.

Further, he said that male and female doctors, psychologists, LHV's, child facilitators, and hygiene



promoters have been appointed for the best services. Free medicines, ambulance service, and a playground for children have also been constructed, the Basic Health Unit has been built on international standards, he added. To highlight the services at the BHU level Chairman Pakistan Red Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari Said that now more than 32,000 patients have been facilitated before the inauguration of the newly constructed building.

The Pakistan Red Crescent is the only humanitarian organization that always highlights & ensures human suffering communities through responses. He also said that the people of South Waziristan always have been affected by the instability while PRCS is trying its best to provide the basic facilities at their doorstep.

On the other hand, Asif Khan Mehsud, Chairman of PRCS Merged Areas, while addressing the ceremony, said that psychologists have also been appointed in 7 other PRCS-supported Basic Health Units, including Chagmalai & Baloch Kot BHU. He also said that the provision of clean water and distribution of hygiene kits and well-chairs are being supplied, Waziristan is a backward area, and we have to serve such communities by providing basic health facilities.

Assistant Commissioner Serwakai Umar Khatib, Tribal Elders, and local communities also participated in the ceremony while the Maliks of the Chagmalai areas highly appreciated the Health Services of Pakistan Red Crescent Society and demanded to continue support in Health & Wash in their area.

Gujjar tribe hold convention for mobilization

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: All resources will be used to organize the Gujjar nation. Gujjar Convention is being done in Haripur for the first time in such an organized manner, we are coming together to unite the nation.

It is the responsibility of every Gujjar to go from house to house and unite the nation. Amir Hussain Gujjar, Chaudhry Faisal Zulfikar, Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique, former MPA Mian Ziaur Rehman and others expressed their views in the Gujjar convention. Former MPA Mian Ziaur Rehman said that if you agree on unity, success will kiss the feet of the Gujjar nation. The Gujjar nation will have to pay special attention to knowledge and consciousness.

The importance of education in today's era cannot be denied. The nation has to make sacrifices to send its representatives to the assembly. MD of Dawn Brad Amir Hussain Khan said that you people have honored me by participating, we will deprive the children of Gujjar nation from education. Sardar Abdul Rauf Advocate said that today's pandal is full of Gujjar community. You all have to make the December 25 convention a success.

The participation of the Gujjar community shows that they have stood up for their rights. Will end the distinction between Sardar and Gujjar. More programs will be organized for the betterment of the nation. Chaudhry Faisal Zulfikar I will continue my services for the Gujjar nation. Gujjar nation will be brought out of despair. The December 25 convention will also be attended by senior military leadership. Gujjar will keep the convention free from politics. Chaudhry Haq Nawaz Gujjar said that the Gujjar community of Haripur is gathering to prepare for the program of December 25. I am thankful to Don Brad MD Aamir Hussain Khan for uniting the Gujjar community.

The Gujjar nation is thousands of years old and more such programs will be organized to unite the Gujjar community. Advocate Kala Khan said that hard work is needed to bring the entire nation on one platform. We are grateful to the media for carrying our message to the whole country and the whole world. Lala Safdar Gujjar said that all the brothers have given up their engagements and come to participate in the Gujjar convention.

These words have come together on Gujjar. I don't believe in the distinction between verbal and collective but I believe in practical struggle. Today's program is designed for the success of the December 25 convention. He said that we are not against any nation, only to unite our nation, Gujjar Convention has been organized. We have no political ambitions. Former District Member Muslim League-N Vice President Majid Mukhtar said that 40% of Haripur's population consists of Gujjar community. I salute the Gujjar community of Mansehra for electing their representatives and sending them to the assembly. While the community of Haripur will also have to think about sending their representatives to the assembly.

Former Nazim Union Council Aamgah Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique said to identify yourself. Every Gujjar will know the Gujjar nation by going from house to house. Sardar Yasir Zulfikar said that the Gujjar nation will develop under the leadership of Amir Hussain Khan. Gujjar nation is a lively nation. In order to solve the problems of Pakistan, all the nations will have to unite, and the Gujjars will play the role of the vanguard.

Bilingual Declamation Contest held

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Director National Accountability Bureau, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ziaullah Khan Toru on Wednesday said that youth are the nursery of our society and holding of declamation contests among educational institutes creates confidence among students.

He expressed these views while addressing the students in the bilingual Declamation Contest organised by Fazlehaq College in Mardan on Wednesday. The competition was held in connection to create awareness about the menace of corruption and was attended by a large number of students from 16 different educational institutions across the province.

The students delivered speeches in English and Urdu languages and acclaimed great applause from the audience. In the Urdu speech contest, Oriental Public School Mardan grabbed the first position while Colonel Sher Khan Cadet College Swabi and Tufail Shaheed Army College Mardan stood second and third respectively.

Woman among three killed in Swabi

F.P. Report

SWABI: An unknown woman among three persons was killed in separate incidents of violence, said district police here on Wednesday. In a report lodged in Swabi police station, Feroz Shah alleged that accused Asim opened fire on his son Zarghan Shah over an old enmity. As a result he sustained critical wounds and later succumbed to his injuries at hospital.

Meanwhile, a man taking his wife and son on a motorcycle was trampled to death under a loaded rickshaw near Dagai Road. He was killed on the spot while his wife and a child remained safe in the accident.

Similarly, Chota Lahor police recovered a body of an unknown woman in the limits of Jalasai area near Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. The body was buried and search of the heirs was underway. Police have registered the cases in respective police stations.

DPO Swat directs strict vigilance

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Shafiullah Gandapur has directed police to keep strict vigilance on anti-state and anti-social elements, suspects and strangers.

He issued these directives during his visit to Check-Post, Dadhara, district Swat on Wednesday. He reviewed security situation and arrangements from all sides of the check post. He also met police personnel deployed on the security of the check post and issued them some appropriate directives in view of the security situation.

The DPO further urged the police personnel for compulsory use of the bullet proof jacket and helmets for the sake of their own security. He also directed them to always remain alert to ensure their own and public security and perform their duties with honesty and diligently.

3 perished

F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: As many as three motorcyclists were killed while two others were critically injured in separate road mishaps, on Wednesday.

According to Rescue 1122, one accident was occurred on Takhtbhai-Malakand road in which Shahdab Khan 17 year of age and Talha Mehmood 18 years of age were dead on the spot. The mishap was caused by collision of motorcycle with tractor-trolley while fully loaded with cement.

Police prepared to maintain law and order in Malakand

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Regional Police Officer Malakand Sajjad Khan on Wednesday visited the Lower and Upper Dir districts where he checked the records of various police stations and police lines in Upper Dir. The RPO reviewed the professional activities of the police force and expressed his satisfaction.

Addressing police officials during the visit the RPO directed them to remain alert all the time to maintain a better law and order situation in the context of the current situation and security threat. He said that the police had to speed up their operations against criminals and drugs' sellers in their respective areas. He directed the police officers to ensure justice and merit while fulfilling the investigation procedure.

A police guard presented a salute to the RPO on his arrival to Upper Dir. Talking to the media at the Upper Dir DPO's office, he said that the peace and order situation in Malakand region was comparatively peaceful and the police were fully committed and prepared to maintain the durable peace in the future too. The RPO said the security situation in all the districts would be further strengthened and efforts were being made to enhance the capacity of police in the region. He said that police were being provided with all the necessary resources to strengthen them in every way. "The current better security situation will continue in the future too", he said. The Upper Dir DPO Tariq Suhail Marwat, SP Investigation Farmanullah Khan and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Affected landowners demand stoppage of anti-encroachment drive: Responding to the deputy commissioner Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi's yester-

day press briefing about the ongoing anti-encroachment drive at Timergara Khwar, the local land owners on Wednesday reiterated that they would not let the administration raze their more commercial plazas and shops.

Addressing a protest rally and later speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club the representatives of the affected people including Malik Mushtaq Ali, Malik Inam Khan, Mian Gul Zahoor, Aftab Utmani and others clarified that the land owners on both sides of the Khwar (stream) had invested millions of rupees on building commercial plazas and shops. They said the affected landowners were not against the city beautification but the administration had not taken them into confidence before demolishing their commercial plazas and shops along the stream. The elders said they had got a stay order from the court against razing the shops but the administration violated that order and had been engaged in razing the structure at night using the state force.

They also rejected the administration's claim to implement the Timergara City beautification project as saying the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had even no funds for its employees' salaries. They threatened to take the law into their hands and forcibly resist the drive if the administration did not stop it's the anti-encroachment drive.

The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi during a press briefing at his office the other day had claimed that a total of 257 shops, 2 plazas and one hotel built on the water course had been demolished. The DC said the administration was committed to raze all illegal structures on the court order. He said the administration would accept no pressure from anyone in that regard.

Unknown dacoits looting houses continuously

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: As many as 12 unidentified dacoits looted gold ornaments, foreign currency, dowry and other domestic articles worth Rs.81,80,000/- from two houses including overseas Pakistani in village Rah Bhooharra in precinct of police station Sukheke, last night. Sukheke police have registered a case and are investigating.

According to FIR, 12 unknown dacoits armed with loaded guns and wearing Elite Force uniform stormed into the house of Muhammad Ramzan in village Rah Bhooharra near Sukheke Mandi, last night. The accused made hostage all family members in a room and looted cash amount, foreign currency, gold ornaments dowry and other domestic articles worth Rs.65,30,000/- . It is stated that son of Muhammad Ramzan was returned to Pakistan from abroad after many years to collect his all earning four days before.

Later, same dacoits intruded into the house of Mansab Ali neighbor of Muhammad Ramzan and looted cash amount, gold ornaments and other valuables worth Rs. 16,50,000/- from the house and fled away. The accused also committed aerial firing to avoid any resistance by the villagers and to create panic in the area.

Dead body recovered: The driver of the harvester machine was killed and the body was hidden in a grass warehouse in the suburb of Gujjar ki. The police recovered the body and started the operation. According to the details, Mubashar Hanjra resident of Prain Kot employed by Faiz Tarar as driver of harvester machine was murdered by unidentified accused in the

village of Gujjar Ki. After receiving the information, the police reached the spot and recovered the body and shifted it to the hospital for post-mortem and further investigation is going on.

Saudi's based company to recruit skilled workers: Mazhar Iqbal Hussain, the representative of Saudi Arabia's well-known company "Al-Saif Engineering Group" has said that his company has started recruiting skilled manpower for its project and there are excellent opportunities for decent employment for hardworking people. Pakistani youth can take full advantage of this and play their vital role for the support of their families and the stability of the country's economy. He expressed these views while talking to the media after interviewing the skilled persons trained by "BMR Arab Tech International".

"Manpower Project Services" Recruitment Manager Ali Ahmad, Field Coordinator Muzamil Rana, Dr. Fayyaz Rana of Al-Riyaz Training Center and Chief Executive of BMR Arab Tech International Rana Muhammad Arshad Anjum were also present on the occasion. Mazhar Iqbal Hussain has said that advancement opportunities are available in every part of the world for those who work with integrity and our company believes in highly valuing and encouraging hard-working and talented young people. He also said that the arrangements in line with the contemporary requirements of technical training under the supervision of trained teachers of BMR Arab Tech International are commendable.

Criminal Justice Committee meeting held: A crucial monthly meeting of

Criminal Justice Coordination Committee under Chairmanship of District and Sessions Judge Malik Mushtaq Elahi Bingi for jail reforms. Deputy Commissioner Touqeer Ilyas Cheema, DPO Rai Mazhar Iqbal, Additional Sessions Judge Umar Bin Akbar Qureshi, Senior Civil Judge Civil Division Shabana Hameed Mughal, Senior Civil Judge Criminal Division Usman Ghani, Superintendent Jail Muhammad Abubakar Abdullah, DPP Rana Muhammad Irfan, Probation Officer Faiza Zulfikar, Superintendent Session Judge Mirza Bashir Jaral attended the meeting. At the request of District Jail Superintendent Muhammad Abubakar Abdullah, Sessions Judge Malik Mushtaq Elahi Bingi issued orders for the appointment of an ambulance and a psychologist for the district jail, other issues were also discussed.

Security of jail beefed up

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In view of the current law and order situation in the province, the distinct police officer (DPO) and military officials on Wednesday visited Kohat jail and reviewed security arrangements.

DPO Kohat Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani was accompanied by Brigadier Imran while Superintendent Jail Abdul Bari gave them a detailed briefing regarding the security of the jail. On the occasion Brigadier Imran and DPO Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani assured to deploy more police force for external security of the jail.



HYDERABAD: Sewerage water accumulated on main road of Latifabad, creating problems for commuters.



UK ambulance workers join widening strike

LONDON (Agencies): UK ambulance workers have gone on strike, widening a dispute with the government over its refusal to increase pay above inflation after recent walkouts by nurses. Healthcare leaders warned about straining a health system already in crisis as ambulance staff at the state-run National Health Service (NHS), including paramedics and call handlers, walked out on Wednesday.

Thousands of members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland took to picket lines, just five days after their first strike in its 106-year history. Unions representing NHS nurses and ambulance workers have threatened further stoppages in the new year if the government keeps refusing to discuss pay.

About 40 staff formed a picket line outside West Midlands Ambulance Services' hub in Longford in central England, standing behind a banner reading: "Our NHS is under siege". As passing ambulances sounded their horns in support, a Unite union representative, Steve Thompson, said the walkout was about trying to retain and improve services, as well as pay.

"This is about telling them [the government] that we are not going to allow it [a deterioration in services] to happen. We are not going to roll over. Employees across the UK economy are demanding salary rises in the face of decades-high inflation – currently running at nearly 11 percent – which is spurring the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

"We want the government to actually wake up and realise that this situation is serious." Matthew Taylor, the chief executive of the NHS Confederation, urged the public not to panic during strikes on Wednesday. "It's important to say that if you have a life-threatening emergency, you



must call 999 and the trade unions have made absolutely clear they'll respond to those," he said.

Adrian Boyle, the president of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, however, said the emergency system had been under "immense pressure" for the last three years. He called the last year "the worst we've ever seen it" when it came to delays in getting patients into hospital from ambulances due to a lack of beds. He said accident and emergency departments were expecting people to make their own way to hospital – even those with life-threatening conditions.

"We're expecting people with strokes and heart attacks to turn up at the front door. Now, because of the delays this has already been happening quite a lot anyway," he told Times Radio. But the government insists it must stick to more modest increases for public sector workers recommended by independent pay review

bodies. "The best way to help them and help everyone else in the country is for us to get a grip and reduce inflation as quickly as possible," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said.

The RCN has criticised the government's stance and accused Health Secretary Steve Barclay of adopting a "macho" negotiating style during recent brief meetings. It has warned that nurses would take wider industrial action next month if the government "keeps giving our nursing staff the cold shoulder". Ministers have drafted in 750 military personnel to drive ambulances and perform logistics roles to mitigate the fallout of Wednesday's ambulance strike. Despite the government's insistence that it will not negotiate, polls indicate most people support nurses, and to a lesser extent other workers walking out. YouGov polling published showed two-thirds of Britons support striking nurses, with 63-percent support for ambulance staff.

Mexico arrests brother of drug cartel boss

MEXICO CITY (AP): The Mexican army arrested the brother of the country's most wanted drug cartel boss, Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera, the Mexico Defense Department said. The army said it captured Antonio Oseguera in possession of weapons in a suburb of Guadalajara, the capital of the western state of Jalisco. It said he oversaw violent actions and logistics, and bought weapons and laundered money for the hyper-violent Jalisco New Generation Cartel, often known simply as the Jalisco cartel.

The US Treasury Department lists Antonio Oseguera's alias as "El Tony Montana," an apparent reference to the fictional protagonist of the 1983 gangster film "Scarface." Antonio Oseguera is on a Treasury Department sanctions list for his ties to the cartel. However, it was not immediately clear if there is a US warrant of extradition request for him. Authorities previously arrested El Mencho's wife, alleging she was involved in the cartel's illegal activities.

The United States has offered a \$10 million reward for El Mencho's capture, but the cartel has violently fought past attempts to arrest him. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has said Mexico no longer has a policy of detaining drug lords, but authorities have gone after top lieutenants of some cartels, including the Jalisco.

The Jalisco cartel is arguably Mexico's most powerful and violent. It made its reputation with brazen attacks on Mexico's security forces, including a 2020 assassination attempt on Mexico City's police chief that wounded him and killed three other people. In 2015, cartel gunmen shot down a Mexican military helicopter with a rocket-propelled grenade. The cartel has ruthlessly expanded its territory beyond Jalisco, spurring bloodshed in states including Guanajuato and Michoacan, as well as reaching its tentacles into Mexico's Caribbean beach resorts in Quintana Roo. The cartel's main business is trafficking drugs to the United States, especially methamphetamine and fentanyl.

DR Congo rebel crisis increased

DR CONGO (AFP): M23 rebel activity in volatile eastern DR Congo is threatening mountain gorillas in Virunga National Park and leaving the endangered species vulnerable to poachers, a spokesman said. About a third of the global population of mountain gorillas lives in the park, a renowned wildlife reserve spanning 7,800 square kilometres (3,000 square miles) on the border with neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda.

But M23 rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have seized swaths of territory in the park in a recent offensive, restricting conservationists from areas inhabited by the great apes, said spokesman Bienvenu Bwende. Specialist teams from Virunga National Park are no longer tracking the mountain gorillas, he told AFP, which means the animals will lack medical care should they fall ill.

"There is above all the risk of falling into poachers' traps," Bwende added. Virunga National Park -- a world heritage site -- counted some 234 mountain gorillas in September, when its agents could still circulate with relative freedom. Over 120 armed groups are active in eastern DRC, many of which are a legacy of regional wars that flared at the turn of the last century. The sprawling Virunga park has long served as a rear base for militias.

The M23 first leapt to prominence when it captured the eastern Congolese city of Goma in 2012, before being driven out and going to ground. But the Tutsi-led group reappeared late last year, claiming the DRC had failed to honour a pledge to integrate its fighters into the army, among other grievances. M23 rebels have since surged across North Kivu province and come within several dozen kilometres (miles) of Goma.

‘We will find you.’ Russians hunt down Ukrainians on lists

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Three days after the first Russian bombs struck Ukraine, Andrii Kuprash, the head of a village north of Kyiv, walked into a forest near his home and began to dig. He didn't stop until he had carved out a shallow pit, big enough for a man like him. It was his just-in-case, a place to lie low if he needed.

He covered it with branches and went back home. A week later, Kuprash got a call around 8 a.m. from an unknown number. A man speaking Russian asked if he was the village head. Something was amiss. "No, you've got the wrong number," Kuprash lied. "We will find you anyway," the man responded. "It's better to cooperate with us."

Kuprash grabbed some camping kit and his warmest coat and headed for his hole in the woods. Kuprash — and others The Associated Press spoke with — had been quietly warned that they were targets for advancing Russian forces. Word went round in circles of influential Ukrainians: Don't sleep in your own home. Get rid of your phone. Get out of Ukraine. The hunt was on.

In a deliberate, widespread campaign, Russian forces systematically targeted influential Ukrainians, nationally and locally, to neutralize resistance through detention, torture and executions, an Associated Press investigation has found. The strategy

appears to violate the laws of war and could help build a case for genocide.

Russian troops hunted Ukrainians by name, using lists prepared with the help of their intelligence services. In the crosshairs were government officials, journalists, activists, veterans, religious leaders and lawyers. The AP documented a sample of 61 cases across Ukraine, drawing on Russian lists of names obtained by Ukrainian authorities, photographic evidence of abuse, Russian media accounts and interviews with dozens of victims, family and friends, and Ukrainian officials and activists.

Some victims were held at detention sites, where they were interrogated, beaten and subjected to electric shocks, survivors said. Some ended up in Russia. Others died. In three cases, Russians tortured people into informing on others. In three other cases, Russians seized family members, including a child, to exert pressure. The pattern was similar across the country, according to testimonies AP collected from occupied and formerly occupied territories around Kyiv.

Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv and Donetsk regions. "Clearly what you have here is the playbook of an authoritarian regime that wants to immediately decapitate the area and eliminate the leadership," said Stephen Rapp, a former US ambassador-at-large for

war crimes issues who is advising Ukraine on prosecutions.

The lists are part of growing evidence that shows much of the violence in Ukraine was planned rather than random. Russia has used brutality as a strategy of war, conceived and implemented within the command structures of its military and intelligence services. The Associated Press has also documented patterns of violence against civilians, including lethal "cleansing operations" along a front of the war commanded by a Russian general implicated in war crimes in Syria. Led by the Federal Security Service (FSB), Russian intelligence spent months compiling hit lists before the Feb. 24 invasion, according to leaked US intelligence and U.K. national security analysts.

Ukrainian intelligence indicates that the division of Russia's spy agency tasked with planning the subjugation and occupation of Ukraine — the Ninth Directorate of the FSB's Fifth Service — scaled up sharply in the summer of 2021. Agents categorized influential Ukrainians as either potential collaborators or unreliable elements to be intimidated or killed, according to the Royal United Services Institute, a prominent defense think tank in London. "This political strategy of targeted killings was directed from a very high level within the Kremlin," said Jack Watling, a senior research fellow at RUSI.

Over 100 Rohingya stranded off India's coast

NEW DELHI (Agencies): At least 100 Rohingya are stranded in a boat off India's Andaman Islands and as many as 16-20 may have died of thirst and hunger or have drowned, their relatives and activists said. The stranded boat was approached by five Indian ships, a source told Reuters news agency. "We estimate that probably as many as 20 have died ... some from hunger and thirst, and others jumped overboard in desperation. This is absolutely awful and outrageous," said Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project which works to support Myanmar's Rohingya.

Priyali Sur, an activist in New Delhi who advocates for the rights of refugees, told Al Jazeera the situation on the boat is "getting worse and worse". "I contacted the people on the boat on December 7, that is when they said two children had died. We got unconfirmed reports of some more deaths as two people out of desperation jumped into the water," she said. "It has been 25 days that they have been in the sea. They have run out of food and drinking water." Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Rohingya

Working Group said the group had been adrift for more than two weeks. "We heard late last night that there were some Indian vessels approaching the boat so we are awaiting updates now," said Lillian Fan, the group's chair.

"We hope that the Indian Navy or coastguard will manage to rescue and disembark the boat as soon as possible. These people have been adrift on a damaged boat for more than two weeks without food and water. We have heard that up to 16 people may have already died." Muhammed Rezuwan Khan, a Rohingya refugee living in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, told Al Jazeera over the telephone that his widowed sister Fatim Un Nisa, 27, and her five-year-old daughter Umi Salima are among the people stranded on the boat.

"She left the camp in Cox's Bazar on November 25. She was struggling here alone with two daughters, one of the daughters is with us. We also got to know that many people have died and they have run out of essentials. They are starving and the situation is dire. We are very concerned about their lives," Khan said the inter-

national community should come forward to save the lives of the refugees.

Each year, many Rohingya risk their lives boarding rickety vessels to escape violence in Myanmar and squalor in Bangladesh refugee camps. Many attempt to reach Malaysia. Another boat, carrying more than 100 Rohingya, was rescued by Sri Lanka's navy on the weekend. On December 2, the United Nations refugee agency issued an alert over a sharp rise in the number of people attempting to cross the Andaman Sea from Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The UN statement said the Southeast Asia waterway is one of the deadliest in the world and that more than 1,900 people had already made the journey since January this year — six times more than the number of people who tried to cross in 2020. In 2018, more than 730,000 Rohingya fled to neighbouring Bangladesh following a military crackdown in Myanmar that witnesses said included mass killings and rape. Rights groups and media have documented the killings of civilians and burning of villages.

China reports no new COVID deaths

BEIJING (Reuters): Dozens of hearsees queued outside a Beijing crematorium on Wednesday, even as China reported no new COVID-19 deaths in its growing outbreak, sparking criticism of its virus accounting as the capital braces for a surge of cases. Following widespread protests, the country of 1.4 billion people this month began dismantling its unpopular "zero-COVID" regime of lockdowns and testing that had largely kept the virus under control for three years though at great economic and psychological cost.

The abrupt change of policy has caught a fragile health system unprepared and hospitals are scrambling for beds and blood, pharmacies for drugs, and authorities are racing to build special clinics. Experts predict China could face more than a million COVID deaths next year. At a crematorium in Beijing's Tongzhou district, a Reuters witness saw a queue of about 40 hearsees waiting to enter while the parking lot was full.

Inside, family and friends, many wearing traditional white clothing and headbands of mourning, gathered around about 20 coffins awaiting cremation. Staff wore hazmat suits and smoke rose from five of the 15 furnaces. There was a heavy police presence outside the crematorium. Reuters could not verify whether the deaths were caused by COVID. Some Beijing residents have to wait for days to cremate relatives or pay steep fees to secure faster service, funeral home workers said.

A worker at one Beijing funeral parlour posted on social media an offer of "speedy arrangement of hearsees, no queue for cremation" for a fee of 26,000 yuan (\$3,730). Reuters could not verify the offer. China uses a narrow definition of COVID deaths and reported no new fatalities, even crossing one off its overall tally since the pandemic began, now at 5,241 - a fraction of the tolls of many much less populous countries.

The National Health Commission said only

deaths caused by pneumonia and respiratory failure in patients who had the virus are classified as COVID deaths. Benjamin Mazer, an assistant professor of pathology at Johns Hopkins University, said that classification would miss "a lot of cases", especially as people who are vaccinated, including with Chinese shots, are less likely to die of pneumonia. Blood clots, heart problems and sepsis - an extreme body response to infection - have caused countless deaths among COVID patients around the world.

"It doesn't make sense to apply this sort of March 2020 mindset where it's only COVID pneumonia that can kill you," Mazer said. "There's all sorts of medical complications." The death toll might rise sharply in the near future, with the state-run Global Times newspaper citing a Chinese respiratory expert predicting a spike in severe cases in Beijing over the coming weeks.

"We must act quickly and prepare fever clinics, emergency and severe

treatment resources," Wang Guangfa, a respiratory specialist from Peking University First Hospital, told the newspaper. Wang expected the COVID wave to peak in late January, with life likely to return to normal by late February or early March. The NHC also played down international concern about the possibility of virus mutations, saying the likelihood of new strains that are more pathogenic was low.

Paul Tambyah, President of the Asia Pacific Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infection, supported that view. "I do not think that this is a threat to the world," he said. "The chances are that the virus will behave like every other human virus and adapt to the environment in which it circulates by becoming more transmissible and less virulent." Several prominent scientists and World Health Organization advisers told Reuters a potentially devastating wave to come in China means it may be too early to declare the end of the global pandemic emergency.

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Austerity policy, or oneway traffic

AUSTERITY is a fascinating word that is commonly used by people sitting in high positions to demonstrate their sincerity with the state and to make the public grateful for their nationalism. Historically, this recipe had been widely used by almost every past ruler however the outcome of those recurrent and ill-organized efforts was zero because those who wanted to eat grass to promote nationalism ruined the economy while others who vowed to use a bicycle for a commuting burnt millions of rupees in helicopter's tourism. Presently, a flock of multiple parties and people of several colours and clans occupy the Federal capital while each provincial government is busy implementing its political manifesto to secure the next election in their area, whereas no one cares about the sinking economy.

Although, economic problems are manifold everywhere in the world, especially the low and middle-income countries are the worst sufferers amid high fuel prices and ever-worsening global economic crises around the globe. Pakistan's economy is also in a shamble condition with increasing inflation and persistent political instability in the country. Pakistan's economic situation started deteriorating in 2019 with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and currently, it has reached its lowest ebb facing an extreme crisis in history.

Currently, the Shehbaz government is in the process of formulating an austerity policy aimed at saving money and energy through the implementation of specific measures including early closure of markets, online working/work from home, and an increase in the number of weekly holidays, etc. The government Ministers are relentlessly preaching the use of solar panels, LED bulbs, e-bikes, and electric vehicles along with the use of energy-efficient fans and airconditioners to overcome the fiscal deficit and fuel shortages. The government claims to save billions of rupees annually by implementing such austerity measures in the country.

Interestingly, the bureaucracy has instigated the government to further scrape the ropes of the public and drain the national exchequer through such recipes while keeping a blind eye toward the massive extravagance of the governments in the center and provinces that are flagging unnecessary flashy mass transit and uplifting projects in their constituencies ahead of the general election in the country. On the other hand, preachers of sagacity had gathered an army of Ministers, advisors, and Special Assistants to appease partners and allies that not only caused heavy monetary losses to the national exchequer at this critical junction but also created a bad image of the incumbent government at home and abroad.

In fact, the economic situation of the country is so dire that not only demands strict financial austerity but merits an immediate ban on all non-developmental state expenditures, luxuries of bureaucracy and elite class including the foreign visit, treatment abroad, and bulky incentives along with a significant reduction in the sizes of the Federal and provincial cabinets to save valuable public money. At the same time, every citizen of Pakistan including traders, businessmen, and common people must uphold the national interest because austerity is the only solution for all the economic woes of the country. After all, these arrangements should not be one-way traffic, while restricting the nation's living and working style, the rulers must pull their legs within the robe.

Peru's political turmoil

ACCORDING to the media, Peru's Congress tentatively endorsed a plan on Tuesday to hold early elections in an attempt to defuse the ongoing political crisis marked by deadly unrest after lawmakers ousted President Pedro Castillo. The proposal would pave the way for an early election for the President and Congress in April 2024 instead of the originally scheduled for 2026.

The Republic of Peru is in the grip of political turmoil after lawmakers removed former President Pedro Castillo from his office through impeachment. According to reports, the former President announced his plan to dissolve the parliament and rule the country by decree in a bid to steer the South American nation solely for an unlimited period. Resultantly, congress moved an impeachment motion and removed the leftwing authoritarian leader from his office besides detaining him on the charges of conspiracy and rebellion that sparked widespread protests in rural parts of the country. The interim administration of acting President Ms. Dina Boluarte imposed a nationwide emergency to control the deteriorating law and order situation in the country.

Although, government measures had brought some calm to the situation but former President had strong support in Peru's rural areas and thousands of Peruvians perceive him as a savior and most of them converged in cities across the nation to rally against the political mafia in the congress, whom they accused of excluding the public from the political system in the country. According to analysts, Peru's society is deeply divided and there is a huge gap in the country's business class and politicians, rural Peruvians, and residents in the major cities. The rural population is frustrated due to the non-provision of basic necessities including healthcare, education, security, and better governance. They have high hopes for former President Castillo who was a rural teacher and promised them several daydreams regarding a better future.

In fact, Capitalism has caused multiple social and monetary issues, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and promoted inequality in societies across the globe. Thus, the poor are in search of a savior, who provides them with necessities and makes their lives comfortable whereas selfish leaders use public sentiments for self-service and political advertisement.

Quote of the day

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.
— Douglas MacArthur, American general.

China and the Arabs will show America what true multipolarity is

Dmitry Kosyrev

AND just now the intellectual "heavy artillery" has been brought up, explaining all the possible consequences of the visit of the head of the Chinese state to the Middle East. The visit, in fact, was December 7-10, but the event turned out to be so large that it took a distance of almost a couple of weeks to consider it in its entirety. And the conclusions that have begun to be formulated only now are quite worthy of returning to the topic.

Here, for example, is the verdict of the Council for Middle East Policy in Washington: the point is not that the Arabs want to "make a U-turn" from the US towards China. No, everything is more complicated and interesting: China has "usurped" (that is, in fact, stolen from America) the "monogamous nature" of US-Saudi and, in general, US-Arab relations.

To some, this may seem like a trifle, but for the United States, this is not a trifle at all, but a shake-up of the foundations. The fact is that for many decades a "monogamous" foreign policy for this country is not even subject to discussion, this is the norm of relations in principle with any state. This is translated into Russian as follows: "if you are with us, then with no one else" or even "who is not with us is against us." And then some sheikhs

begin to explain to America that this is normal for them: no monogamy, there can be two wives at the same time (or three, and so on).

The fact is that both Saudi Arabia and other Arab states, whose leaders met during the visit of Xi Jinping, do not at all declare that they want to refuse cooperation with Washington, including military cooperation, for the sake of China. They put the question differently: it's time to deal with the US and China at the same time. And this is a revolution, partly because the life of many countries and peoples in a multipolar world - it apparently will be, and even already is - is like that. When they don't voluntarily break up with anyone, they don't unconditionally join anyone, but try to get something useful from everyone.

A survey of experts from around the world recently appeared on this topic in the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post. And there is the same thought: for example, Clemens Chai from the National University of Singapore says that the Arabs, not wanting to side with the West in the Ukrainian conflict or refusing to increase oil production to enhance the effect of sanctions against Russia, want to become "middle powers" in a multipolar world order".

And what does this mean

specifically, why did the Arabs need it - just for the sake of the desire to keep up with modernity? And here a lot of specifics emerge in various media, including showing that, in fact, during Xi Jinping's trip, it was not only about the Middle East. We also talked about Africa and some countries that are neighbors of the Middle East. In the vast region, a completely natural coincidence of interests of both the Chinese and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf was formed. After all, the Middle East and North Africa are actually one system, and south of North Africa is the one that is sub-Saharan, and they are also connected. Just as smoothly, the Middle East is moving into the region where Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are. And everywhere the same picture. Both Arabs and Chinese are actively working there, and they do not imply any "monogamy", but exactly the opposite:

According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, six wealthy Gulf states provided \$231 billion in financial assistance to a dozen countries in the Middle East and North Africa from 1974 to 2022. During the same time, the West, that is, in this case, the IMF, has lent only 81

billion to the same countries. That is, the rich Arabs seem to have turned out to be the main players in their own region.

But it is not so. There is no longer financing of neighbors, but investments in Africa, which is south of the Sahara. The same Gulf States have invested 102 billion there. But China, the main donor of the continent, is in the first place in this part, followed by the US and the EU, the Arabs are only fourth. Approximately the same picture separately with Egypt, Algeria, Iraq and Pakistan. Everywhere China comes first. It is also the largest trading partner and financier in the sub-Saharan region. China overtook America in this region (only in terms of investments) back in 2013, and it invests twice as much as the United States.

Interestingly, immediately after Xi's trip to Saudi Arabia, a concerned US hosted a summit in Washington with African leaders. It was announced there that America wants to invest \$55 billion in the region over three years. And who would refuse, but this is not the most spectacular amount for Africa against the backdrop of long-standing and hard work of the Chinese and Arabs there.

Note that it makes no sense for them to compete

with each other for influence in this and other regions. The Arabs have oil, gas and money. The Chinese also have money, but no oil and gas, but they have experience in building infrastructure in the region to speed up trade with China, for example. And then there's plenty of top-notch technology. So it makes perfect sense for the Gulf States to coordinate efforts with China without any dramatic denial of cooperation with the West.

This is somewhat reminiscent of the essence of relations between Moscow and Beijing in Central Asia (within, for example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization). Our opportunities and interests with China complement each other in the most natural way. And you have to be a person strongly poisoned by the American style of thinking ("you are either with us or against us") in order to see in this region, against all odds, the rivalry between Moscow and Beijing, their struggle with each other for influence.

Here we must recall the idea of economic and any other divorce with China, which has been fashionable in the United States for several years now (since we have begun to use marital comparisons). Ideally, at least 30 ideologically completely Western countries should form not only an ideological, but also an

economic bloc - and crush competitors (and this is China with Russia and other partners) in the competition. But if not ideally, but in reality, then, for example, in Germany, the Munich Institute for Economic Research calculated how much a complete divorce from the Chinese economy would cost the country. The result is not a boring multi-digit figure, but something better: the "six Brexit" formula. That is, the damage will be six times greater than the loss of the UK during the exit from the European Union, and that - from the exit of the UK.

The picture of the world as a result turns out to be quite understandable: it is unprofitable for many countries when someone imposes on them a monopoly on literally everything - from security to the economy. And at the slightest chance, they try to work with everyone, and not choose someone one.

All these realities are beginning to squeeze the United States. During the aforementioned African summit in Washington, a reassuring flash appeared in the speeches a couple of times: no, America is by no means forcing you to choose between yourself and China on an "either-or" basis. But all the same, behind this promise, a silent and formidable "however" is felt.

The ‘free market’

Jennifer J. Schulz

is comfortable with sacrificing investment returns in exchange for a values-based end goal. Understanding this divide in ESG helps when analyzing anti-ESG actions because the devil is in the details when it comes to whether such state actions are worthwhile.

Starting with state pensions, many conservative state actions look to limit the consideration of ESG by plan fiduciaries. State laws mandate fiduciaries to act in the best financial interest of the plan's beneficiaries. Without a precise definition, a plan fiduciary may simultaneously believe that fiduciary duty both requires and prohibits the consideration of ESG. Indeed, the federal Department of Labor has appeared to straddle these conclusions in its own fiduciary guidance, with the Obama and Biden administrations permitting consideration of ESG and the Trump administration prohibiting it. Both extremes, though, are more similar than different because they both recognize that plan fiduciaries must consider factors that materially affect an investment's risk/return profile. This supports the use of ESG as a process—and rejects the use of ESG as a product—in retirement investing, which makes sense because fiduciaries must act “with an eye single to the interests” of the plan's beneficiaries.

State pension guidance that elaborates on this basic fiduciary duty puts ESG on the same footing as other methods of evaluating investments, and allows the market—subject to a pension fiduciary's standards—to sort out the best means of figuring out investment risk. Because funds that advertise themselves as ESG tend to have higher expenses, a fiduciary must find that an ESG fund will have a high-

er expected return to justify such an investment. Fiduciaries should exclude funds that are aimed at a particular values-driven outcome that does not redound to the pecuniary interests of the plan's beneficiaries. It's no surprise, then, that strong stances against ESG investing by some Republican state attorneys generals have changed nothing at all for state pensions that were already focused on beneficiaries' interests.

But some state pension guidance has gone further by viewing all ESG as a values-based strategy and requiring divestment of state pension funds from investments with managers that “boycott” fuel companies. These directives can conflict with a fiduciary's duties, harming pension beneficiaries by artificially restricting investment options to those that may have lower returns. This is no less of a problem when states seek to divest their pension funds from fossil fuel companies or gun producers.

Several states also have required divestment from or have blacklisted investment firms in connection with other state business, limiting the pool of investment firms that can service the state, for example, by underwriting municipal bonds. This not only can raise costs for taxpayers by limiting competition, it also improperly imposes the state's own values-based investment philosophy. These measures aren't anti-ESG; rather they're just ESG by a different name.

While the details of each state action vary, the general justification for divestment was set out by 19 state attorneys general in a November 2021 letter:

“the overarching objective of our actions will be the same—to protect our states’

economies, jobs, and energy independence from these unwarranted attacks on our critical industries...we each take concrete steps within our respective authority to select financial institutions that support a free market and are not engaged in harmful fossil fuel industry boycotts for our states’ financial services contracts.

Put somewhat more pointedly, Louisiana's State Treasurer described divestment from BlackRock as “necessary to protect Louisiana from actions and policies that would actively seek to hamstring our fossil fuel sector.”

Invocations of the “free market” under these circumstances are red herrings. Wholesale divestment orders, motivated by the same values-driven inquiry that those issuing the orders object to, constrain the free market by imposing a state-sponsored ideological screen on financial institutions. This results in less competition, thus harming taxpayers, and creates an environment where each state feels empowered—or compelled—to add an increasing number of ideological or protectionist demands on financial institutions that wish to serve them.

Take, for example, Texas, which prohibits local jurisdictions from contracting with banks that have adopted ESG policies against oil and gas and firearms industries. A recent study estimates that as a result of the law—after which the five largest underwriters left the market—Texas cities will pay an additional \$303 million to \$532 million in interest on \$32 billion in bonds. Higher costs will not be unique to the municipal bond market; prohibitions may raise costs for a range of state business, from managing state funds to provid-

ing depository accounts and government credit cards.

That's not to diminish a state's right to make contracting decisions; where a financial firm is engaging in a values-based strategy or selling ESG as a product, the state may choose not to buy what the company is selling. But states should support competition, allowing the market to provide solutions. States can also hold investment managers accountable, such as by ensuring that the investment manager fairly represents investors' interests when voting proxies. The state's contracting decisions, though, should be motivated primarily by investment performance and pecuniary interests, rather than exogenous policy or ideological concerns.

While Gregg may be right that “at some point, market signals are likely to crowd out virtue-signaling,” those market signals will be blunted if state policy has distorted them. This is why state action that enshrines ESG or anti-ESG principles into investment decision-making is so dangerous.

Gregg writes that ESG's weakening of the profit motive of companies “damages society's wider capacity to recognize that when business achieves its proper ends, the wider, albeit indirect benefits for others are enormous.” This principle holds true regardless of the political or ideological cause being advanced by the particular flavor of values-based ESG—be it pro-ESG progressivism or anti-ESG reaction. It's a misuse to wield the principle to stand in the way of individuals or investment entities examining the financial health of a business through an assessment—by ESG as process or through other factors—of any and all material financial risks.

Witch-hunt

Renat Abdullin

because they know that I will win,” he says.

His supporters are also outraged. However, the Republican Party is tired of the toxic former leader. If in the summer he was in the lead in public opinion polls, now he is losing to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. According to a December study by USA Today, Trump is supported by 56 percent of Republicans, DeSantis by 65.

However, the MAGA movement (from the campaign slogan "Make America Great Again") is still strong. And Trump's rating is no less than that of Joe Biden. This obviously worries Democrats a lot.

Clear criteria

The decision of the special committee of the House of Representatives to transfer the case of the ex-president to the Ministry of Justice is largely symbolic.

Of course, the recom-

mendation to investigate four possible crimes increases the likelihood of charges and even sentencing. However, this is not so important for the 2024 presidential campaign. The US Constitution clearly defines the requirements for a candidate for the post of head of state: over 35 years old, American citizenship by birth, residence in the country for at least 14 years. Trump fits the bill perfectly.

Moreover, there was a historical precedent. In 1969, the Supreme Court heard the case of Powell v. McCormack. The House of Representatives banned Pastor Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. from running for Congress because of dubious foreign exchange transactions. The defendant protested this - and the court supported him, ruling that "Congress has no right to change the text of the constitution."

So the Democrats cannot remove Trump from the elections.

Underwater rocks

True, there is the 14th Amendment, which prohibits anyone from holding federal office who, "having taken an oath, <...> participated in the uprising."

But here, too, there are pitfalls. The amendment does not apply directly to the office of president and is not considered "self-executing". That is, for its implementation, a special resolution is required. Trump can point to the "Amnesty Act" of 1872, which allowed the appointment of officials from the former Confederate States. And to challenge the fact that his actions were generally associated with the "rebellion".

Even if convicted and imprisoned, a presidential candidate is not prohibited from continuing the campaign. In American history, prisoners have run for and even been elected to federal office more than once. In

1798, Matthew Lyon became a congressman, serving time for sedition. Eugene Debs, founder of the Socialist Party of America, ran for president in 1920 while in prison for the same reason. Although he lost the election, he won 913,000 votes.

Suspension prospects

If Trump is convicted, and he still wins the presidential race in 2024, Congress can ex post facto impeach him and remove him from office.

The Constitution provides for this - for "high treason, bribery, serious crimes and misdemeanors."

Whether to apply this wording to Trump is a matter for Congress to decide. "Serious crimes and misdemeanors" is a vague concept, and it is difficult to say what conclusion the court will come to.

But impeachment is unlikely if Republicans retain control of even one of the two houses of Congress.

‘A splendid little war’

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is behind in the polls, causing him to again look to Syria for “a splendid little war” to win votes. A new invasion could put U.S. personnel at risk and the threat has triggered an angry response in Washington. Ankara’s threats are unjustified, but America’s presence is unwarranted.

The civil war in Syria continues sporadically after nearly a dozen years, with the U.S. still occupying a corner of the country with 900 troops. Meanwhile, Washington has a death grip on Syria’s economy, consigning the Syrian population to poverty through sanctions (Caesar Act). Several other country’s armed forces, including Turkey’s, are active across Syria, creating a risk of broader conflict.

As with other adversaries, Washington believed that maximum pressure would somehow create a friendly government in Damascus. Instead, Western efforts to forge a democratic transition long ago stalled. So far the Biden administration has simply maintained the status quo. Observed the Atlantic Council’s Abdulrahman al-Masri: “The U.S. does not know what it wants in Syria and has no coherent endgame.” That isn’t likely to change, he says, “given the dramatic shift in priorities of the U.S. foreign policy agenda and acute lack of safe options for reengagement in Syria.”

However, Erdogan has proposed to meet with Syria’s Bashar al-Assad and Russia’s Vladimir Putin. A modus vivendi among the three could end the last vestiges of the conflict and reintegrate Syria into the region, Washington should aid this process by rolling back sanctions which target the Syrian people and encouraging its Gulf partners to reengage with Damascus.

The Syrian civil war began in early 2011 with “Arab Spring” protests against Assad’s government. Violence soon erupt-

ed and the conflict drew in foreign groups and nations, including the U.S. Washington’s policy was too clever by half, seeking to simultaneously oust Assad, defeat the Islamic State, promote moderate insurgents, effectively ally with Islamic radicals, indirectly support the local al-Qaida affiliate, conciliate Turkey as the latter covertly aided ISIS and later overran U.S.-backed Kurdish troops, and expel Iranian and Russian forces. Moscow and Tehran simply focused on supporting the Damascus government.

A decade later U.S. policy had failed almost completely, other than defeating ISIS, largely accomplished

The latest Erdogan initiative holds the possibility of doing so. The Turkish leader once was close to Assad but then worked to oust him. Erdogan’s willingness to re-engage with Syria suggests a Russian-backed deal by which Ankara withdraws and allows Damascus to retake control of its border with Turkey.

by others doing the fighting. Washington’s opposition to Persian Gulf engagement with Damascus has left the Syrian regime largely isolated, reliant on Iran and Russia. America’s continued illegal occupation has put U.S. military personnel at risk of attack.

Sources of continuing conflict include the Idlib enclave, largely ruled by jihadist and terrorist factions and protected by Turkey. Israel regularly strikes Iranian forces inside Syria. The Erdogan government uses proxy Arab militias to rule, with predictable brutality, over Syrian Kurdish areas. Ankara’s military intervention continues, with Erdogan currently threatening another invasion of Syria’s north-east, an autonomous zone run by Syrian Kurds and hosting several hundred American personnel. In November, Turkish air and artillery strikes came close to U.S. positions. CIA Director William Burns complaint to Ankara was without effect.

Americans’ presence inevitably draws hostile fire and it could get worse.

Doug Badow

Moscow might retaliate for U.S. support for Ukraine. A revived Islamic State could seek revenge against the U.S. Most seriously, Tehran is likely to urge Iranian proxy forces to strike, as in the past. One analysis found 29 Iranian-inspired attacks on U.S. forces from October 2021 through June 2022. The Biden administration could find itself in one or more limited but troublesome shooting wars with irregular opponents.

Political reform is essential, but the United Nations-led peace process is going nowhere, despite heartfelt pleas from the UN special envoy. The assumption that

tions strategy in Syria does not punish Assad—it punishes Syrians, whether they support the regime or not. Currently, nine in 10 Syrians live in poverty, and more than six in 10 face the risk of going hungry.”

This was, in fact, the perverse intent of its supporters, including special representative James Jeffrey, who misled President Trump about America’s troop presence in order to manipulate him into keeping U.S. forces in Syria. Despite this disservice to the American people, Jeffrey played a lead role in implementing sanctions. After passage of the Caesar Act, he explained: U.S. policy was “to compel the gov-

ernment of Assad to halt its murderous attacks on the Syrian people and to support a transition to a government in Syria that respects the rule of law, human rights, and peaceful coexistence with its neighbors.”

Jeffrey also suggested another objective, for which the Syrian people were just another means to a different end: “My job is to make it a quagmire for the Russians.” That is, Washington hurt Syrians to punish Russians. So far the Putin government has shown no inclination to abandon Assad.

Jeffrey is not alone in perversely exulting in the hardship caused the Syrian people. A former Special Envoy for Syria, Joel Rayburn, celebrated by tweet just this month: “Assad’s economy & state are collapsing: – No fuel. – No electricity. – No commerce. – Streets empty. – Assad just prints money to pay salaries/bills. Result: inflation making basic needs unaffordable. – Pound crashed to 5,900 per \$, making imports impossible.”

Even Jeffrey finally



US and allies straight to an open military clash with nuclear power

AROUND the events in Ukraine, a peculiarity has emerged that, probably, everyone who follows the news has paid attention to: the West is constantly and very actively discussing the topic of victory and defeat in the conflict. This is done by politicians and officials, experts and journalists, the military, economists and energy specialists.

The funny thing is that diametrically opposed positions are voiced. Some argue that Russia’s victory is a foregone conclusion, she has, in essence, won. Others do not doubt that Moscow is suffering a crushing defeat, as a result of which it will be forced to accept the terms of surrender put forward by the collective West. In fact, this point of view was voiced in a recent article by Henry Kissinger. Current politicians have a similar discord. Someone demands to stop funding Kiev, because it makes no sense, and opponents furiously say that Russia cannot be allowed to win, especially since there is very little left before its defeat, literally within reach.

Everyone is trying to support their position with one or another argument. In principle, it would be possible to analyze and rank the arguments presented. But much more interesting and important is the very fact of the emergence of such heated disputes in Western politics and the information field. For decades, NATO, led by the United States, has waged many military campaigns, including long-term ones, around the world. Sometimes there were opinions in the media about the need to leave Iraq or Afghanistan, but these voices were so weak and marginal that they did not influence either public opinion or the position of the state.

The United States withdrew from Afghanistan when an undercover consensus emerged in Washington that this would be the best way out of the protracted impasse. But there was no large-scale socio-political reflection on the theme of the victory or defeat of the West.

Moreover, it could not exist in principle: for the simple reason that NATO’s twenty-year-old Afghan operation practically did not change the lives of Americans and Europeans. They did not feel it when it was going, and, in fact, they were not affected in any way by the exodus of the allies from this country, no matter how shameful it turned out to be.

This phenomenon concerns all military campaigns of NATO for half a century. The Vietnam War was the last one in which the American public was truly involved. Everything else - be it Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, again Iraq, Syria and so on down a very long list - for Westerners it was nothing more than colorful pictures on TV screens. Limited contingents of professionals (contract soldiers and PMCs)

Irina Alksnis

operated there, and they fought with radically weaker opponents, which affected both the course of hostilities and losses. The Western economy not only did not suffer damage from these wars, but usually even received benefits from them (Afghan drugs, Iraqi and Syrian oil, trillion-dollar budget injections with the corresponding “cuts” and much more), and this indirectly provided bonuses to ordinary citizens on both sides. sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

So it is not surprising that Western society has traditionally treated military adventures with silent favor, and the establishment - with wild enthusiasm.

However, in Ukraine, the usual scheme has broken down, and in every sense.

On the one hand, the West’s dream of a full-fledged proxy war has come true, and even against a truly powerful enemy. The states have always been forced to get involved in numerous armed conflicts themselves, because their local allies, even those who were trained and armed by the Americans, did not demonstrate the necessary level of combat capability. Without the direct participation of the US military, it was impossible to achieve the desired result.

Actually, Afghanistan has become another clear example, when the local armed forces trained by NATO, having lost Western support, immediately fled before the Taliban.

The Ukrainians, on the other hand, showed themselves to be excellent soldiers, fighting against the second army of the world. And the West took over intelligence, communications, financing, supply of weapons, military instructors, mercenaries and so on.

We must be aware that this is indeed a breakthrough military-political technology that US strategists have been developing for a long time, but its implementation has failed over and over again.

And then it finally worked out - and not against some third world country, but against Russia. It is natural that many Western experts, being in euphoria from this breakthrough, believe that victory is a foregone conclusion and you just have to go to the end.

On the other hand, this success has serious “side effects”: for the first time in the aforementioned half century, the West felt the hardships of wartime, even in a very curtailed form. For him, this is especially offensive, given the proxy nature of the ongoing conflict.

For so many years, with whom only he did not fight himself, but this did not affect life in Europe and overseas. And here they seem to be acting with the hands of Ukrainians, but the socio-economic situation is deteriorating at home. The ordinary European and American, on

his own wallet, feels that the fight against “aggressive Russia” is costing him more and more, and it is getting cooler at home and in the office.

Of course, it was not Russia and its NVO that caused the difficulties of the West - it simply came to an objective elimination of its socio-economic and financial system. Moreover, the NWO did not even become the reason that provoked the crisis - the West itself did this in its reaction to the special operation, deciding to crush our country with one sanctions blow, instead it received a powerful return of the boomerang.

But that doesn’t matter.

For more than half a year Western politicians have been hammering into the minds of their citizens that Moscow and Putin personally are the cause of their growing disasters. Perhaps at first it seemed like a good ploy to absolve himself of responsibility. However, it was assumed that Ukraine, with the help of the West, would now quickly defeat Russia - and everything would be fine, even better than before.

And if these plans were realized, it would have happened.

But something went wrong. SVO is on its way. The “hellish” sanctions did not inflict not only critical, but even truly significant harm on Russia. Most of the world practically does not hide the fact that in the Western-Russian confrontation it is rooting for Moscow. The global economy is being de-dollarized and rebuilt on new foundations free from Western control.

Of course, things are not going well for Russia either. And it seems like the Atlantic “hawks” even have something to say and what arguments to bring in support of their position to continue the war to the last Ukrainian. But somehow it turns out that Ukraine is turning for the West into a frank “black hole”, which absorbs more and more resources, weapons, money, mercenaries - and there is no end in sight to this process. And the desired result is like a horizon: it seems that here it is, not so far away, but no matter how much you move towards it, it is inaccessible.

Worse, the involvement of Europe and the United States in the conflict is steadily growing. The war is rapidly losing the fig leaf in the form of the prefix “proxy”. And in parallel, the life of people in the West is becoming more and more difficult - the movement downhill is accelerating and there is no gap in sight.

As a result, for the first time in many years, serious disagreements around the military topic appeared in the West and a public reflection began on the topic of what is happening in general and whether it is really necessary to continue along the path that leads the United States and its allies straight to an open military clash with a great nuclear power.

‘They took aim at the Kuriles’

TOKYO approved a new National Security Strategy and effectively put an end to the demilitarized status of the state. About what this promises to the neighbors of the Land of the Rising Sun - in the material of RIA Novosti.

Key decisions
The military policy of Japan is determined by three documents: the strategy of national security, national defense and the plan for ensuring defense capability.

In 2013, under Shinzo Abe, the first defense doctrine in 80 years was adopted. Prior to this, the authorities did not try to change the demilitarized status, fixed after the defeat in World War II.

It was Abe who began working to turn the “self-defense forces” into a full-fledged army. The Fumio Kishida government is taking this to the next level.

Response price
A provision was adopted

on a counterattack: the army was given the right to hit enemy bases. The document notes that Tokyo will act if a strike on Japan has already been dealt or is imminent and there are no other means to prevent it. In addition, the use of force is limited to the necessary minimum.

Two percent of GDP is allocated for military spending - like in NATO (although Japan is not a member). It will be the third indicator in the world after the USA and China.

Japan’s defense budget this year is 5.37 trillion yen (\$39 billion). In 2023 - 5.595 trillion. The two percent level is planned to be reached by 2027: 8.9 trillion yen (64.8 billion dollars).

In total, 315 billion dollars will be spent on the army in 2023-2027.

The Japanese themselves are not particularly happy about this. According to a Kyodo News poll, the rating of the current prime

David Narmanian

minister is 33.1 percent. At the same time, 65 percent were against the tax increase announced by Kishida, which will become a source of financing for the defense industry. And not only his own, but also the American one.

How to defend
One of the priority items of expenditure is missile weapons. Tokyo intends to modify its own Type 12 cruise missiles and purchase American Tomahawks with a range of up to 1,600 kilometers.

In addition, in addition to the Aegis missile defense system, the US will acquire a Patriot PAC-3.

F-35 fighters will also be purchased. And the destroyers-helicopter carriers “Izumo” and “Kaga” will be converted for aircraft.

Particular attention will be paid to cybersecurity: the staff will be increased to 20,000 people.

Friends and Enemies

The cornerstone of the new military strategy is the “doctrine of extended deterrence.” Japan relies on its main ally, the United States.

Washington is actively cooperating with Tokyo: now there are about 54,000 American troops on the islands, while there are about 250,000 in the Japanese self-defense forces. Japan remains the only foreign nation to host the US carrier group Fifth, whose flagship is the USS Ronald Reagan.

South Korea, India and Australia are also named as allies. China was identified as the main challenge in the light of a possible military solution to the Taiwan issue.

“The main result is that Tokyo will play a much greater role in containing Beijing and, as a result, spend more resources on it,” says Vasily Kashin, director of the HSE Center for Comprehensive

European and International Studies.

Another threat is North Korea. In the past year, Pyongyang conducted more than 60 test launches, including three intercontinental ones.

Russia in Tokyo, as usual, was accused of “aggression against Ukraine”, “violation of international law” and “an attempt to challenge the world order.” But Moscow is not considered a threat specifically to Japan there.

At the same time, Tokyo does not renounce its claims to the South Kuriles - this is “Japan’s inalienable territory.” They want to return the islands through a peace treaty, which cannot be concluded in any way.

The diplomatic process was hampered by anti-Russian sanctions, adds Kashin. Therefore, Tokyo is increasingly “flexing its muscles” by launching remilitarization and making its army one of the leading in the world.

Sweden eyes dozens of small nuclear reactors

THE topic of nuclear energy has long been fraught with controversy in Sweden, as its two rival governmental blocs, the “reds” and the “blues”, hold opposing views on the matter, jeopardizing the nation’s long-time commitment. So far, the ball is in the blues’ court, with massive expansion plans underway as the country suffers an energy crisis.

As Sweden’s new centre-right coalition government has openly embraced nuclear power, marking a departure from decades of hesitation and reluctance, planning work is already underway.

The government, led by liberal-conservative Moderates, has touted nuclear energy as a key tool to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and create a cheap route out of the energy crisis. Among others, Moderate Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom stressed that Sweden should expand nuclear power and build more reactors.

The basic coalition

agreement drawn up between the Moderates, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals, as well as the national-conservative Sweden Democrats that remained outside government yet agreed to provide external support, has instructed Vattenfall, the national energy company, to start planning for new nuclear power “immediately”.

Right on cue, Finnish utility Fortum and Swedish small modular reactor (SMR) project development company Kärnfull Next have signed a memorandum of understanding to explore opportunities in new nuclear development in Sweden.

SMRs are about a quarter the size of today’s large nuclear reactors. Vattenfall itself has previously stated that SMR are the most interesting possible investment in new nuclear power.

According to a report by the consulting company WSP presented at a seminar at the Academy of Engineering Sciences, Sweden can build up to 25

Igor Kuznetsov

SMRs by 2050, if the politicians have their way. At the same time, government subsidies are believed to be required for someone to dare to invest.

The 25 SMRs would generate approximately 40 terawatt-hours (40 trillion watts an hour (TWh)) of electricity in 2050, as Sweden is expected to double its electricity consumption by that year which would need an extra 150 TWh. At the same time, the 40 TWh is not enough to replace today’s six nuclear power plants, which according to the current plans must be taken out of operation because of their age by 2045 at the latest.

“There is a superstition among some politicians that nuclear power will solve everything. New nuclear power may be good in the long term, but it is not enough,” Anna Nordling of WSP, the author of the report, told Swedish media, putting a damper on the government’s ambitions.

She also stressed potential obstacles, with a long-time commitment being arguably the largest. According to Nordling, a positive image for nuclear power will take more than promises in a single election cycle to win over a nation whose population and politicians have long been averse to it.

Apart from wavering political ambitions, other deterrent factors include the issue of waste and uranium mines. She also stressed that even in nuclear-heavy countries such as the UK, France and Finland, reactor construction has been significantly delayed and proved much more expensive than planned.

Sweden’s six nuclear power plants presently in use provide up to 40 percent of the country’s electricity. In 1980, the government famously decided to phase out nuclear power as a result of a popular referendum after the Three Mile Accident in Pennsylvania in 1979. However, some saw the referendum as flawed since Swedes were

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Resolution of business community issues: SCCI, police deptt agreed to set up a joint committee

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Department have agreed to set up a joint committee to solve the problems of the business community in a timely manner and to establish a coordinated relationship.

The committee will formulate a sustainable strategy and give concrete recommendations for solving the problems faced by the business community and the chamber and the police department will work together to solve the problems of the business community in a timely and amicable manner in the light of the recommendations.

The agreement was reached with President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq during visit of the Chief Capitol Police Officer Ijaz Khan, SSP Operations, Kashif Aftab Ahmad Abbasi and SSP Traffic Shahzada Umar Abbas Babar and other senior officers of the police department here at the chamber house on Wednesday, said in a press release issued here.

Shahid Hussain, Senior Vice President of Sarhad

Chamber, Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi, Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Focal Person for Ease of Doing Business and Investment Ghazanfar Bilor, Anjuman Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman Shaukat Ali Khan, Former Presidents of Sarhad Chamber Haji Muhammad Afzal, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Malik Zahid Hussain, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sherbaz Bilour, former senior vice presidents Engineer Manzoor Elahi, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice presidents Abdul Jalil, Abidullah Khan Yousafzai, President of Industrialist Association Peshawar Malik Imran Ishaq, Executive Committee members Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Kashif Amin, Manoor Khurshid, Lal Badshah, Afaf Ali Khan, Farhad Asfandiari, Parvez Khattak, Qaraatul Ain and Waqar Ahmed, Nisar Khan, Zahoore Khan, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ghulam Bilal Javed, Aftab Iqbal, Sadar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ehsanullah, Ishfaq Muhammad, Shah Rukh Khan, Aqib Ismail, Director PDA Irfan Shahzad, Deputy Director Admin Transport Department Muhammad Imran, various markets, presidents of traders associations, officials, industrial-

ists and representatives of traders' community were present in large numbers.

Muhammad Ishaq apprised the senior officers of the police department about serious apprehensions of the business community regarding the increasing extortion, crime incidents, disturbed law and order situation, security and other issues of the community.

He stressed that SCCI and the police department should formulate a coordinated strategy under which common measures should be taken to solve the problems of the business community on a priority basis and for immediate solutions.

The SCCI chief on this occasion pointed out various problems of the business community and gave suggestions for their amicable resolution which included extortion, street crime, mobile snitching, FBR data leakage and other problems and also emphasized to ensure their implementation.

CM KP's focal person for Ease of Doing Business and Industry Ghazanfar Bilour while paying tribute to the sacrifices of the police department and law enforcement agencies said that the police department and the business communi-

ty are part and parcel for each other.

Providing protection to the business community will increase investment in the province and stabilize the country's economy, Ghazanfar Bilour said.

The CM's focal person expressed his satisfaction on the steps taken by the police department to arrest the criminals, street crime, extortion and criminal elements and said that crime is not only a problem of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but crime rate is very high rest of world as compared to Pakistan, in which people of Pakistan have no idea about it.

Anjuman Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman Shaukat Ali Khan and Anjuman Tajran Peshawar President Haji Muhammad Afzal also spoke on the occasion.

Later, an awareness session was conducted regarding traffic rules, in which SSP Traffic Shahzada Umar Abbas Babar through his detailed multiple-media presentation apprised the participants about traffic rules and regulations.

It is pertinent to mention here that SCCI, Traffic Police Department and PDA will conduct a joint survey regarding traffic in the city.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq and CCPO Ejaz Khan addressing a meeting.

Employees our biggest strength: CEO IM F.P. Report

KARACHI: Owing to the continuing LC restrictions imposed by the State Bank of Pakistan and the consequent shut down of its plant at Port Qasim, Karachi, Indus Motor Company (IMC) vows that it will not lay-off its workforce.

"Pakistan is at a cross roads both economically and at the political front. The State Bank of Pakistan's LC restrictions which continue unabated, has adversely affected our operations, halting production intermittently, for the sixth month running now," remarked the company's Chief Executive, Ali Asghar Jamali.

"Our human resource is our most valuable asset and our biggest strength by far. As we have always done in the past, guarding their welfare during any rough patch is our moral obligation as it is now. Despite these challenging times, and following Toyota's legacy of tenacity, we are optimistic and standing tall. Inshah Allah, this too shall pass," said Jamali.

Tokyo shares close lower for fifth straight day

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares closed lower for the fifth straight day on Wednesday, as a higher yen triggered by a surprise Bank of Japan policy tweak weighed on the market.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index lost 0.68 percent, or 180.31 points, to end at 26,387.72, while the broader Topix index fell 0.64 percent, or 12.27 points, to 1,893.32.

The dollar fetched 132.08 yen, against 131.69 yen in New York, where the greenback slid further after it dropped from a daily high of 137 yen to 133 yen within minutes of Tuesday's BoJ decision in Tokyo.

"It would be safe to assume that the BoJ shift will likely fuel further yen strength on repatriation flows as local bond yields rise," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a note.

"Effectively the BoJ pivot is the equivalent of quantitative tightening, which should lead real long-term rates to increase."

Wall Street stocks mostly ended higher, recovering from a four-day slump as investors tried to look past market uncertainty and fears of a slowdown.

That came despite the Japanese central bank's policy shift, which "stunned markets" and "sent the dollar tumbling, which gave all risky assets a little jingle", OANDA's Edward Moya said in a note.

"No one was expecting this to happen before Governor (Haruhiko) Kuroda's term ends in April," he said.

After a two-day policy meeting, the bank said Tuesday it would widen the band in which it would allow rates for 10-year Japan government bonds to move, saying it would "improve market functioning".

"Pessimism for equities remains, as earnings and credit risks remain widely in place," Moya added.

Ishaq Dar expresses satisfaction over FBR's performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, here on Wednesday, expressed satisfaction over the performance of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and appreciated its team's efforts in meeting the set targets.

Chairing a meeting on the revenue performance of FBR, the minister extended his full support to FBR in the performance of their duties for revenue collection.

He also stressed the FBR team to position themselves according to changes in the economic outlook and advised the FBR rank and file to increase their efforts to achieve the true tax potential in the country.

Earlier, Chairman FBR Asim Ahmed gave a detailed presentation on revenue targets and performance of FBR for the months of November and December 2022.

He apprised the minister that the FBR had surpassed the revenue collection tar-

gets till November and expressed hope to successfully meet its targets in the remaining months of financial year 2022-23.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa and SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, chairman FBR, Members of the Board (FBR), and other senior officers from the finance division also attended the meeting.

Ishaq Dar meets Pakistan software houses association for IT & ITES
Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT & ITES.

SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Pasha, Khurram Rahat Vice Chairman 'P@SHA' Syed Ahmed ex-chairman P@sha Mohsin Ali, CEO Inbox and senior officers from the finance

division attended the meeting, said a press release issued here.

The meeting reviewed the performance and contribution of the IT sector to the economic growth of the country and discussed the issues related to IT sector's export.

The meeting also discussed measures for the expansion of IT sector's exports.

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, while emphasizing the importance of IT sector, said that government would provide maximum support and facilitation for ease of doing business for the growing IT sector.

He also assured the delegation that the government would continue to provide maximum facilitation to the IT sector for its growth and to facilitate in the rise of its exports.

The delegation thanked the finance minister for extending support and cooperation to the IT sector.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 489 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 489.56 points, a negative change of 1.23 percent, closing at 39,342.89 against 39,832.45 points on the previous day.

A total of 166,000,710 shares were traded during the day as compared to 265,284,415 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 4.052 billion against Rs 4.536 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 329 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 115 of them recorded gains and 195 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 19 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 17,470,525 shares at Rs 1.16 per share, Hum Network with 11,875,500 shares at Rs 5.60 per share and Dewan Motors with 8,573,000 shares at Rs 11.47 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 100 per share price, closing at Rs 5350.00, whereas the runner-up was Premium Textile with a Rs 45.50 rise in its per share price to Rs 669.79.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 600.00 per share closing at Rs 7755. Sanofi-Aventis with a Rs 73.99 decline to close at Rs 966.01.

Rupee extends loss against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 28 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 225.40 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 225.12.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 232.25 and Rs 234.5 respectively.

The price of the euro was increased by 68 paise and closed at Rs 239.51 against the previous day's closing of Rs 238.83, according to SBP.

The Japanese Yen gained one paise to close at Rs1.71, whereas an increase of 23 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 273.93 as compared to its last closing of Rs 273.70.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 08 paise each to close at Rs 61.37 and Rs 59.93 respectively.

5G technology to be launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Wednesday said trial coverage of 5G will be started at certain points in major cities of the country.

The Federal Minister for IT expressed these views while talking to a delegation of Etisalat International led by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) CEO e & International Mikhail Gerchuk.

The meeting was also attended by Abdulrahim Al Nooryani, CEO of Etisalat Pakistan, Hatem Bamatrafi, President and CEO of PTCL & Ufone, and Naveed Butt, Chief Regulatory Officer. Additional Secretary (Incharge) Ministry of IT Mohsin Mushtaq was also present.

Matters related to connectivity, 5G technology and the telecom sector were

discussed during the meeting. He said that the first priority of the Ministry of IT is to increase the reach of 4G technology in the country.

The Federal Minister for IT said that the future of technology in Pakistan was linked to introducing 5G technology.

He said that the Ministry of IT was extending full support to telecom companies. He urged telecom companies to play their role in bringing modern technology to Pakistan.

He said that every possible steps were being taken to make 5G business-friendly.

The Etisalat delegation lauded IT Minister Syed Amin Ul Haque's initiatives regarding telecommunication.

Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO of e & International, expressed readiness to invest in the IT & Telecom sector of Pakistan.

Football exports increase

ISLAMABAD (APP): Footballs exports during the first five months of fiscal year of 2022-23 increased by 60.16 percent as compared to the exports of the commodity during the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July 22-Nov 22, footballs worth US\$101,976,000 were exported as compared to the exports of US\$63,671,000, during the same period of last year.

According to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the exports of Sports goods increased by 29.36 percent, worth US\$174,676,000 as compared to exports of US\$135,034,000 during the same period, last year.

Meanwhile, other exports also increased by 5.56 percent as the exports recorded during the current fiscal year were US\$41,843,000 as compared to the exports during the same period of last year which were US\$39,639,000.

LCCI, Traffic Police to jointly resolve traffic issues

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) and City Traffic Police (CTP) have agreed to form joint committees and to appoint focal person to tackle the traffic related issues including encroachments, wrong parking and violation of traffic rules.

The consensus in this regard was developed in a meeting between Chief Traffic Officer Lahore (CTO) Dr Assad Malhi and LCCI President Kashif Anwar and Senior Vice President Chaudhry Zafar Mahmood here at LCCI on Wednesday. The representatives of markets and LCCI Executive Committee members were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, CTO Lahore Dr Assad Malhi said that the feedback from Lahore Chamber was of utmost importance as its proposals were always knowledge-based. He said that Traffic Police Department would organize awareness session regard-

ing traffic rules in collaboration with the LCCI.

"Whenever traffic stops or slowdown, it also adds to the smog issue," the CTO said and added that all segments of society would have to play their role to ensure smooth flow of traffic. He said that the implementation of traffic rules would become easy with the help of Lahore Chamber.

Dr Assad Malhi and LCCI President Kashif Anwar also agreed to make joint efforts against encroachment and wrong parking which were the major causes of traffic mess.

The CTO said that traffic issues could not be handled without cooperation of the business community, who was the backbone of economy. He assured that additional force would be deputed to check one-way traffic violation in the markets, besides installation of yellow lines for parking.

"A good traffic management system is top priority of the Traffic Police as smooth traffic flow is also a

must for easy and timely movement of the trading goods," he said and asserted that wrong parking, illegal encroachments, carts, stalls and lack of parking facilities lead to the traffic jams. LCCI President Kashif Anwar hailed the efforts of the traffic police for making improvements in traffic flow and reduction in head injury cases of road accidents.

He said that business community was really pleased to have driving license renewing facility.

He said that the process of conducting driving tests for the new licenses was going on successfully at the venue of LCCI till the end of September 2022 but afterwards it was not planned. The CTO assured LCCI office-bearers that the issue would be resolved.

Kashif Anwar said that Lahore Chamber would continue to provide maximum help to the traffic police in the larger interests of the economy. He said that smooth flow of traffic

not only cuts cost of doing business but ensures on-time delivery of goods at their destination.

The LCCI President said that maintaining traffic flow was a herculean task but the traffic police was managing it in such a nice manner that every segment of society was appreciating them. He said that the liaison and awareness between police and the business community was a must and the LCCI was giving a special focus to enhance the liaison with police.

He said that the traffic police role was vital in the sense that a disciplined traffic flow gave a picture of whole society on the one hand while on the other hand it played its role in economic turnaround by cutting transportation time of goods carriers.

LCCI Senior Vice President Chaudhry Zafar Mahmood said that an awareness campaign and walk should be arranged to implement the concept of lane in true sense of words.

Motor car imports witness sharp decline

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of motor cars, both Completely Built Up (CBU) as well as Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) or Completely Knocked Down (CKD), witnessed a sharp decline of 81.79 percent and 31.43 percent respectively during the first five months of the current fiscal year compared to last year.

According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the imports of CKD/SKD were recorded at \$455.780 million during July-November (2022-23) as compared to the imports of \$664.740 million during July-November (2021-22), showing decline of 31.43 percent.

In terms of numbers,

Pakistan imported 101,569 units of CKD/SKD cars during the period compared to imports of 111,350 units during last year.

Likewise, Pakistan imported 6,056 CBU motorcars worth \$27.407 million during July-November as compared to the imports of 25,133 cars valuing \$150.500 last year, showing decline of 81.79 percent.

Overall, transport group imports declined by 46.77 percent during the period under review. The imports of the group were recorded at \$ 1,022.346 as compared to the imports of \$1,920.749 last year.

It is pertinent to mention here that overall merchan-

dize imports into the country decreased by 20.15 percent during the period under review by going down from \$ 32,983 million last year to \$ 26,338 million during the current year.

The exports were recorded at \$11,932 million against the exports of \$12,362 million last year, showing decline of 3.48 percent.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the first five months of the current fiscal year witnessed a decline of 30.14 per cent and was recorded at \$ 14,406 million this year against the deficit of \$ 20,621 million last year.

Envoy for easier measures to import halal meat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Tarek Mohamed Dahroug on Wednesday called on Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar and expressed desire to enhance the export of rice and halal meat from Pakistan.

The Ambassador specifically requested that the Pakistani government take measures to make it easier for Egyptian importers to purchase Pakistani Halal meat and rice, said a press release issued here.

"We believe that Pakistani meat and rice is

better in quality than its neighboring countries," said the ambassador.

Minister Qamar welcomed the Egyptian ambassador's proposal and assured him that the Ministry of Commerce would work closely with the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt to ensure that the proposed measures were implemented.

Syed Naveed Qamar observed that total trade between Pakistan and Egypt stood at \$ 636.89 million during (July-June) 2021-22 out of which exports amounted to \$104.68 million and

imports from Egypt stood at \$532.21 million, which did not match the actual potential of the trade.

Meanwhile, the minister pointed out visa stamps issues facing to the Pakistani business community, even for participation in trade fairs in Egypt.

To which the ambassador assured that business community would not face such problem in the future, adding that Egyptian embassy would offer entry at the spot to the passengers having Schengen, American and Canadian visa stamps on their passports at airport.



In brief

Moroccan king hails national team

RABAT (Agencies): Morocco's king rewarded the national football team with the highest order after their history-making performance in the 2022 World Cup. According to the Moroccan national news agency, King Mohammed VI welcomed the team at the Royal Palace in the capital Rabat, recognizing their achievements in the World Cup, which concluded last weekend. In the semifinals, France defeated Morocco 2-0 to send them to the third-place playoff, where Morocco lost to Croatia 2-1 to end their World Cup campaign. But this performance made the Atlas Lions the first African nation as well as the first Arab one to qualify for the World Cup semifinals. Thousands of Moroccans flocked to Mohammed V and Hassan II avenues in Rabat to greet the Atlas Lions.

Thar Jeep Rally 2023

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Sindh Motorsports Association on Wednesday announced to donate a portion of the revenue from the upcoming Thar Jeep Rally 2023 to the flood victims in Pakistan. The organizers of the famous off road jeep rally, while speaking at a press conference at Karachi Press Club (KPC), made a major announcement regarding taking part in supporting the flood affectees of the country by donating as much as half of the revenue to the flood relief fund. "Sindh Motorsports has decided to spend the earnings of the race on flood victims," announced General Secretary Sindh Motorsports Noman Khan. "This race can help 50 million flood victims. Winners, runners-up and other racers will also donate 50 per cent of their prize money to flood victims," he added. It is pertinent to mention that the upcoming Thar Jeep Rally 2023 will take place from January 5 to 8 and will feature 80 racers. Whereas, women racers will also be participating in the rally.

Kipyokei gets 6-year doping ban

ANKARA (Agencies): Kenyan long-distance runner Diana Chemtai Kipyokei has faced a six-year drug ban to lose her 2021 Boston Marathon title. The Athletics Integrity Unit said in a statement on Tuesday that it has banned two Kenyan marathoners – Diana Kipyokei and Purity Rionoripo – for six years and five years, respectively, "for violations of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules, following thorough investigations which led to doping and tampering charges against both athletes." It also said Kipyokei "will be disqualified as the 2021 Boston Marathon women's winner." Her ineligibility started on June 27 when the Athletics Integrity Unit provisionally suspended her, the independent body added. Kipyokei, 28, was confirmed to have used triamcinolone acetonide, a prohibited substance. Kenya's Edna Kiplagat, who previously came second in the 2021 Boston Marathon, was elevated to the women's champion of the race. So Kiplagat won the title in 2017 and 2021. The annual Boston Marathon is one of the six major marathons. Kipyokei's compatriot Rionoripo, 29, who was the 2017 Paris Marathon winner, was also given a lengthy ban for testing positive for diuretic furosemide. After a positive urine sample in May, Rionoripo was also confirmed to have misinformed the athletics giant.

Pakistan name squad for New Zealand Tests

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan have named an uncapped middle-order batter Kamran Ghulam and fast bowler Hasan Ali in the 16-player squad for the two-Test series against New Zealand, which will commence at Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena on Monday, 26 December.

Kamran has replaced Azhar Ali, who announced his retirement last week, while Hasan Ali has taken over from Mohammad Ali, who, like Faheem Ashraf, has been advised to participate in the ongoing Pakistan Cup in Karachi.

Haris Rauf has not been included in the squad as he is recovering from an injury he sustained while fielding in the Rawalpindi Test. However, fast bowler Naseem Shah, who missed the Multan and Karachi Tests due to a shoulder niggle, has been being declared fit and as such, retained in the squad.

Test squad: Babar Azam (captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Salman Ali Agha, Saud Shakeel, Shan Masood and Zahid Mehmood.

Umpire and match referee appointments for the series:

26-30 December - 1st Test, Karachi. Alex Wharf and Aleem Dar (on-field), Ahsan Raza (third umpire), Asif Yaqoob (fourth umpire); Mohammad Javed Malik (match referee).

3-7 January - 2nd Test, Multan. Alex Wharf and Aleem Dar (on-field), Ahsan Raza (third umpire),



Rashid Riaz (fourth umpire); David Boon (match referee). 10 January - 1st ODI, Karachi. Aleem Dar and Asif Yaqoob (on-field), Ahsan Raza (third umpire), Faisal Afridi (fourth umpire); David Boon (match referee).

12 January - 2nd ODI, Karachi. Aleem Dar and Rashid Riaz (on-field), Asif Yaqoob (third umpire), Faisal Afridi (fourth umpire); David Boon (match referee).

Olympic downhill champion Beat Feuz announces retirement

BERN (AP): Olympic downhill champion Beat Feuz announced his retirement from skiing after 16 seasons, saying Wednesday the classic events in Wengen and Kitzbuehel in January will be his last races.

"Pushing limits and risk has been my passion in skiing for years. My emotion has often been the key to success. Now my feeling tells me: the physical limits have been reached," the 35-year-old Feuz wrote on Instagram. "I am incredibly grateful that I was able to practice my passion for so long and experience many emotional moments."

The Swiss skier won Olympic gold

in Beijing in February, adding to the super-G silver and downhill bronze medals he won in Pyeongchang four years earlier.

Feuz took the downhill title at his home world championships in St. Moritz in 2017 and won 16 World Cup races in his career, including 13 downhill.

Nicknamed "Kugelblitz" (ball lightning) in reference to his relatively small stature for a downhill skier, Feuz came back from several knee and Achilles tendon injuries to dominate the discipline between 2017 and 2021, winning the World Cup downhill season title in four

consecutive seasons. He also holds the men's record with 47 career downhill podiums.

Announcing the Jan. 21 race in Kitzbuehel, where he earned his last three downhill wins, as his last event means Feuz will not compete at the 2023 skiing world championships in France in February, the month he turns 36.

"Looking forward to spending more time with my family and excited to see what new challenges my life will bring," Feuz said.

Feuz and his partner, former Austrian skier Katrin Triendl, have two children.

Abdullah upsets Barkatullah in Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan national tourney

ISLAMABAD (APP): Abdullah Adnan stunned No. 8 seed Barkatullah in the 2nd round match of men's singles category of the 8th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 at Pakistan Tennis Federation Complex Islamabad on Wednesday.

Abdullah won the first set 6-3, but dropped the second set 3-6. However, he stormed back to take the third set 6-2 from the experienced Barkatullah and moved to the next stage.

Meanwhile, top seeds Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoaib pulled off emphatic victories over their respective opponents. Aqeel overpowered M. Huzaifa Khan 6-0, 6-1, while Shoaib eliminated Mahatir Muhammad 6-0, 6-0. On Wednesday, contests were held in men's singles 1st round, ladies singles 1st round, boys 18&under singles 1st round and boys 14&under singles 1st round. Following are the results:

Men's Singles 2nd Round: Sami Zeb Khan bt Faizan Fayyaz 6-2,7-6(4); Abdullah Adnan bt Barkatullah 6-2,3-6,6-2; M. Abid bt M. Talha KHan 6-2,6-3; Muzammil

Murtaza bt Shahzad Khan 6-1,6-2; Yousaf Khalil bt Imran Bhatti 6-1,6-4; Mudassar Murtaza bt Saqib Hayat 6-3,6-0; M. Shoaib bt Mahatir Muhammad 6-0,6-0; Aqeel Khan bt M. Huzaifa Khan 6-0,6-1

Ladies Singles 1st Round: Kainat Ali bt Shandana Rabbi 6-1,6-3; Natalia Zaman bt Soha Ali 6-2,6-7(5),6-3; Mehvish Chishtie bt Amara Khan 6-0,6-1

Boys 18&Under Singles 1st Round: Hamza Roman bt M. Salar Khan 6-3,6-4; Mahatir Muhammad bt Nabeel Ali Qayum 6-1,6-1; Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Yahya Musa Luni 6-1,6-0; Amir Mazari bt Azaan Sajid 6-0,6-2; M. Huzaifa Khan bt M. Zaryay Khan 6-0,6-4; Abdul Basit bt Rayan Khan 7-5,6-2;

Boys 14&Under Singles 1st Round: Nabeel Ali Qayum bt M. Arsalan 4-0,4-0; Abdur Rehman w/o Imdad Ali; Shayan Afridi bt M. Hassan Usmani 5-3,4-0; Muzammil Bhand bt Chengaiz Leghari 4-0,4-0; Zayd Zaman bt Essa Fahd 4-1,4-0; M. Haziq Asim bt Razik Sultan 4-1, 5-3.

Boys / Girls 12&Under Singles 1st Round: Ahmed Khan bt M. Faizan 4-1,4-0;

Haziq Areejo bt Zayd Zaman 4-1,4-2; M. Hasan Usmani bt Ahmed Shaikh 4-0,4-0; Shayan Afridi bt M. Maaz Areejo 4-0,4-0; Ihsanullah Kabir bt M. Taha Raja 4-0,4-0; Anees Khan bt Behroze Maimoon 4-1,4-0.

9th DIG Aman Ullah Memorial KP Tennis from Dec 31

PESHAWAR (APP): The 9th edition of the DIG Amanullah Memorial KP Tennis Championship would be commencing on December 31 here at the Synthetic Tennis Courts of the Peshawar Sports Complex.

This was stated by Senior Vice President of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tennis Association and known cardiologist Dr Farhat Abbas while talking to media here on Wednesday. He said arrangements for the smooth sailing of the championship have already been completed.

The championship, in which top-ranking players from across Pakistan, is carrying a cash prize of Rs 200,000. Dr Abbas said that players from Pakistan WAPDA, Pakistan Police, Pakistan Air Force, Sui

Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), and all provinces would take part in the championship.

The championship would continue until January 7, he said, adding that late DIG Aman Ullah rendered great services for the promotion of sports in the province and not only loved Tennis but also played an active role in holding scores of other sporting activities in the province.

He said the entry of the players has been made subject to Form-B so that there is no scope for the superiority of merit and right of compensation. December 28 is fixed as the last date for entry, while the draw would be held on December 30, he added.

Pakistan's top-seeded players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Pakistan No 1 Aqeel Khan, Pakistan No 2 Shoaib Khan, and Pakistan No 5 Yusuf Khalil, Barkatullah and other top national ranking players, including international Hamza Roman, Saqib Umar, Hamid Israr, M Shayan, Faizan, Salar, and Ryan Umar will participate in the competition along with more than 150 other players.

Babar Azam rises to career high Test batter ranking

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan captain Babar Azam has attained a career-best second position in the latest MRF Tyres International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Test Player Rankings after notching two half-centuries in the final Test of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) series against England in Karachi.

Babar's knocks of 78 and 54 have helped him overtake Steve Smith, who managed 36 and six in a low-scoring game between Australia and South Africa in Brisbane. Babar, who is ranked first in ODIs and fourth in T20Is, trails Marnus Labuschagne by 61 points in the Test rankings.

Australia batter Travis Head, whose first innings score of 92 was the highest in the Brisbane Test, has gained three slots to reach a career-best fourth position as he crosses the 800-rating point mark for the first time in his career. His previous best was fifth position in January this year.

In the latest weekly update that also takes into account performances in the first Test of the WTC series between Bangladesh and India in Chattogram, Cheteshwar Pujara's knocks of 90 and 102 not out have lifted him 10 positions to 16th while Shreyas



Iyer (up 11 places to 26th) and Shubman Gill (up 10 places to 54th) have also gained after some fine performances in the match. England captain Ben Stokes (up places to 23rd), South Africa's Temba Bavuma (up eight places to 24th) and Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan (up four places to 37th) are some others to move up the batters' list. England's Harry Brook is in the top 50 for the first time after scoring centuries in all three Tests in Pakistan.

In the bowlers' rankings, South Africa quick Kagiso Rabada has gained four spots to reach third position after grabbing four wickets in each innings at Gabbra. Rabada, a formerly top-

ranked bowler, was third in August this year before slipping down the table.

India spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have made rapid progress after helping win the Chattogram Test. Yadav's Player of the Match effort of eight for 113 has lifted him 19 places to 49th while Patel's five scalps in the match see him jump 10 places to a career-best 18th position.

Other bowlers to move up the list include Marcon Jansen, Jack Leach, Mark Wood, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Scott Boland and Mohammad Siraj.

Results over the past week see Australia consolidate their position at the top of the WTC table while India in second position.

Lahore Open Polo: Semifinalists decided

LAHORE (APP): The semifinalists have been decided in the Coca-Cola Lahore Open Polo Championship 2022 here at the Lahore Polo Club on Wednesday.

Tomorrow (Thursday), the first semifinal will be contested between Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo Steel at 2:00 pm while FG/Din Polo will compete against Diamond Paints in the second semifinal at 3:00 pm.

Two important matches were played today Wednesday. Hamza Mawaz Khan's heroics helped Remington Pharma edge past Remounts 5-4 in the first match of the day. Hamza cracked a classic quartet. He was ably supported by Ahmed Bilal Riaz, who scored the remaining one goal. Raja Temur Nadeem converted two goals and Shahid Imran and Major Haseeb Minhas (R) struck one goal each for Remounts.

Remounts started the match on a high note as they thrashed in two back-to-back field goals to gain a 2-0 lead. Remington Pharma then made their presence felt by converting a 30-yard penalty to make it 2-1. They played aggressive polo in the second chukker and hammered an impressive hat-trick to take a 4-2 lead.

The third chukker saw both the teams playing well and scoring one goal apiece with Remington Pharma still enjoying a 5-3 lead. Remounts played better polo and in the fourth and last chukker and slammed in a goal, but it was too little too late as Remington Pharma won the encounter by 5-4. Jhon Fisher and Saqib Khan Khakwani supervised the match as field umpires.

Tomas Marin Moreno fired in five goals in FG/Din Polo's fabulous 7-4 goal triumph over Platinum Homes in the second match of the day. Shaikh Muhammad Raffay

also played well for the winning side by banging in a brace. For Platinum Homes, Amirreza Behboudi hammered a hat-trick and Agha Musa struck one goal.

Platinum Homes began the match with a field goal, taking a 1-0 lead, which couldn't last long as FG/Din Polo bounced back well by banging in a brace of goals to gain a 2-1 lead. Both sides scored one goal each in the second chukker with FG/Din still having a 3-2 lead.

FG/Din Polo then showed their class and played better polo in the third chukker, converting three goals against one by Platinum Homes to further enhance their lead to 6-3.

The fourth and last chukker was evenly poised, where both the teams struck one goal apiece, thus FG/Din Polo emerging as victorious by 7-4.

Jhon Fisher and Manuel Carranza officiated the match as field umpire.

Man City need European title to 'complete' Guardiola



LONDON (Agencies): Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says his time at the club will 'not be complete' if they fail to win the Champions League.

Guardiola extended his contract with City to 2025 while the Premier League season was breaking for the World Cup. City have won nine major trophies since he became coach in 2016 but they are yet to win any European silverware.

They came closest to winning the Champions League in 2021, but were beaten by Chelsea in the final. Aside from the final defeat in Portugal, they were beaten by Real Madrid in last season's semi-final, have exited at the quarter-final stage three times and started Guardiola's tenure with a last-16 defeat by Monaco.

"It's not the only one but I admit it's the trophy we want and my period here will not be complete if we don't win it," said Guardiola. "I will do everything in the time we have together but I'd say the same before. It's the trophy we don't have and we'll try

to do it. I have the feeling they'll get it sooner or later."

City have been drawn against German side RB Leipzig in the last-16 of this season's competition. This season, City are aiming to become only the fifth club to win the English title in three successive seasons and on Thursday they host Liverpool in the fourth round of the EFL Cup.

Guardiola has won that trophy on four occasions, putting him level with Brian Clough, Sir Alex Ferguson and Jose Mourinho as the most successful manager in the competition's history. However, City are hampered because they had 16 players at the World Cup.

Nathan Ake, Manuel Akanji and Spain duo Rodri and Aymeric Laporte returned to training at the start of this week and will join Kevin de Bruyne, Ilkay Gundogan, Erling Haaland and Riyad Mahrez as senior players available to face the Reds.

"Step by step they come back," said Guardiola. "We are happy they are back."

"I have the feeling those

who were at the World Cup are in better condition than players who weren't because the players who didn't go lack the rhythm."

Guardiola praised 22-year-old striker Julian Alvarez, who was one of Argentina's standout stars during the country's World Cup triumph in Qatar this month. He also commended Lionel Messi, with whom he enjoyed great success at Barcelona, and former City defender Nicolas Otamendi. "We're delighted for Julian, he played a lot, his contribution was amazing for the team," said the City boss. "We have a world champion in our team. We are incredibly happy for him. Congratulations to him and Otamendi, and personally to Messi. To Argentina, well deserved."

'Support your team' Manchester City and Liverpool's respective chief executives Ferran Soriano and Billy Hogan have written to both sets of supporters before the tie calling for calm after a series of clashes around matches between the clubs in recent seasons.

At Anfield in October, City had the windscreen on their team coach smashed, while their fans sang about the tragedies that have affected Liverpool so badly.

And Guardiola reiterated that message, saying he wants supporters to focus on the game. "Be supporters and support your team unconditionally," he said. "With the quality players on both sides, enjoy the game."



LONDON (Agencies): Three-times Grand Slam champion Andy Murray has vowed to compete as

shape and I'm still able to compete consistently, I'll keep playing," Murray, 35, said. "But I can't look so far in advance with the

age I'm at and with the issues I've had. If I was to have a big injury, I probably wouldn't try to come back from that."

Murray said he is in better shape now ahead of the Australian Open, which will be held in Melbourne from January 16-29.

He was knocked out in the second round of the season-opening major this year. "I spent three weeks in Florida, getting my body right and getting

some work done on my game, and it went really well," Murray said.

"I'm certainly in better shape than I was. A lot of work was done in the gym, trying to build up my endurance and my stamina a bit and I'm hoping that's going to help me next year." Murray will be part of the Scotland team facing England in the Battle of the Brits exhibition tournament in Aberdeen later on Wednesday and Thursday.



In brief

Christmas preparations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Christian community across Pakistan, like other parts of the world, has started preparations to celebrate the grand festival of upcoming Christmas festivity on Sunday (December 25) with traditional zeal and enthusiasm. The community has bought essential items like dresses, shoes, other accessories and also decorated Christmas trees and bought gifts for their loved ones. The festival will be celebrated with different activities such as decorating Christmas trees, cake-cuttings, illuminating houses and observing prayers in Churches. A number of stalls and Christmas trees have been set up, where the majority of the Christian community resides. The stall owners have displayed a variety of decorative ornaments, as well as the dresses of Santa Claus. The main markets of the capital have their stock of Christmas-related accessories on display. Meanwhile, sweet shops are also gearing up to attract large businesses through the sale of cakes and sweets on the occasion. Special services will be held in Churches across the country and prayers will be offered for peace, progress and prosperity of Pakistan as well as for the safety of all humanity from the life-threatening pandemic. The other festivities of Christmas day included the distribution of gifts among children, singing hymns, prayers and family gatherings.

ANF seizes over 1069 kg drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) recovered 1069.783 Kg of drugs and 10.700 kg of suspected substances worth US\$ 27.55 million internationally, arrested 40 peddlers including five women and impounded 14 vehicles while conducting 36 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country. An ANF spokesman told on Wednesday that the seized drugs was comprising 65.600 kg opium, 5.504 kg heroin, 926.034 kg hashish, 11.899 kg methamphetamine (Ice), 0.726 kg Amphetamine (Ice), 58.500 kg Ketamine, 0.152 kg weed, 800 Alprazolam Tablets (1.125 Kg), 1200 Lexotanil (Bromazepam) Tablets (0.243 kg) and 10.700 kg suspected material. In Balochistan, the ANF recovered 697.15 kg of drugs and 10.700 kg of suspected substances in nine operations and arrested 14 persons including a female in drug smuggling while seizing five vehicles. The seized drugs comprised two kg Opium, 695.15 kg Hashish, and 10.700 suspected substance. The ANF Punjab recovered 64.843 kg of drugs in eight operations while arresting 10 persons including a female in drug smuggling while seizing five vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 1.2 kg Opium, 7.4 kg Hashish, 6.243 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), and 50 kg Ketamine. The ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recovered 282.805 kg of drugs in eight operations while arresting six persons in drug smuggling and impounding three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 60 kg Opium, 2.4 kg Heroin, 219.28 kg Hashish, and 800 Alprazolam tablets (1.125 kg). The ANF Sindh recovered 16.14 kg of drugs in two operations while arresting an accused person involved in drug smuggling. The seized drugs comprised three kg of Heroin, 4.640 kg of Methamphetamine (Ice), and 8.5 kg of Ketamine.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal presenting a copy of Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (4RF) Report to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

NDMA holds National Post-Monsoon 2022 Review Conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday hosted National Post-Monsoon 2022 Review Conference.

Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik presided over the meeting and delivered the opening remarks, a news release said.

The Conference reviewed the lessons learnt during Floods 2022 and deliberated upon way forward to address the key shortcomings for better flood management in the next monsoon.

Representatives of PDMA/SDMA/GBDMA, Provincial chapters of Rescue 1122, PMD, FFC, WAPDA, SUPARCO, NHA, Armed Forces, PTA, and Emergency Response Agencies attended the conference and briefed the forum about their respective fields during and after Floods 2022.

They also put forward their recommendations for immediate and long-term interventions for the improvement of relief and disaster management systems in view of extreme climate change vulnerabilities in the country.

Chairman NDMA lauded the

efforts of all relevant Federal and Provincial departments and Armed Forces during Floods 2022. He underscored the need for collaborated and synergized response towards disasters while addressing the existing capacity gaps and structural challenges through the active involvement of NGOs and Donor organizations.

The NDMA chair explained to the participants on the need for further

and closer integration of all departments and briefed on his vision to expand the NEOC and make it live interfaced with all departments to remodel NDMA from a response-oriented entity to a proactive mode.

NDMA asked the Provincial departments to provide plans for prepositioning of available resources to mitigate future floods and mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in their development projects.



ECP orders removing administrators recommended by MQM-P

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has ordered to remove administrators appointed by the Sindh government on the recommendation of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P).

The ECP wrote a letter to the Sindh government and ordered the provincial authorities to withdraw the appointment of Hyderabad, DMC Korangi and East admins. The Sindh Local Government Department had appointed Muhammad Farooq as the Hyderabad admin.

The letter stated that the sched-

ule for the second phase of LG polls in Hyderabad and Karachi had been announced and the commission banned the appointments and transfers till the completion of the elections.

The provincial election commissioner said that the notification of the appointments of Korangi District Administrator Javed-ur-Rehman Kalhor, East District Administrator Rehmatullah Sheikh and Hyderabad administrator or defer the appointments.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President Ali Zaidi said that the provincial EC took timely

action after PTI's letter and stopped the Sindh government from illegal appointments of district administrators.

He praised the timely action of the ECP and demanded the provincial government to immediately implement the commission's order. Zaidi alleged that the Sindh government was making illegal transfers and postings on the recommendations of the MQM-P. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President Ali Zaidi announced challenging all illegal moves of the Sindh government and its ally on all platforms.

Parents and teachers need to be watchful of their kids/students online activities

Muhammad Farooq

People are usually aware of the benefits of internet but very few know of its dark side. Online risk is a global phenomenon however, from Pakistan's perspective we face additional challenges e.g uploading/posting of blasphemous and sectarian content. These are sensitive subject matters and require particular consideration to avoid propagation of hate. Keeping in view the gravity of matter, it is imperative to sensitize our social media users (i.e. youngsters, parents, teachers, and other key stakeholders) about the issues and timely adoption of proper measures to save our generation from further harm. In order to achieve the desired results, a collective effort is required to be made by all stakeholders.

Youngsters are vulnerable in the online world and parents/guardians supervising them are not fully aware about online risks, community guidelines of Social Media platforms and punishments mentioned in local laws (i.e. PECA, PPC etc.) Parents and teachers need to be watchful of their kids/students online activities especially if they are exhibiting aggressive behavior, usually resulting from seeing inappropriate content or playing online fighting/War games. Kids/students at this stage require proper counseling by their parents/teachers from time to time along with adoption of proven measures such as: avoid giving them handheld devices and allow them to use PCs placed in a common area visible to all, and replacing online gaming facilities with physical activities. Most importantly, parents must spare time for their children, be friendly and educate them about online risks and allow them to discuss their issues without judgment otherwise, they may confide in strangers/online predators. Educational institutions should also step up and raise awareness through organizing seminars/webinars, workshops etc. In addition, using parental control software and built in safety features of SM applications is effective in filtering inappropriate content/apps, limiting screen time,

observing online actives etc.(List of parental control software is available at PTA website (www.pta.gov.pk). For Social Media Users' guidance PTA has also placed a list of containing links/URLs of community standards of major SM platforms having information/guidelines about their important policies to be followed while posting content over SM platforms or sharing with others.

Moreover, prevention of Electronic crimes Act (PECA) was approved in 2016, which empowers PTA to control circulation of unlawful content over internet/social media and FIA to investigate cybercrime related issues. Public can report unlawful content to PTA for blocking through complaint management system (CMS):<https://complaint.pta.gov.pk/RegisterComplaint.aspx> or PTA CMS mobile app and cybercrime related issues to FIA Cybercrime Wing (CCW) for initiating legal action against offender.

It is important to mention that all popular SM companies and their systems are hosted outside Pakistan on encrypted HTTPs sites. PTA after analyzing received complaints takes up the matter with concerned SM platform for removal/blocking of reported content. For quick resolution of the matter, SM platforms always prefer direct communication with complainant since it is easier to seek further information (if required) directly from complaint. Links of popular SM complaint reporting procedure/mechanism are below.

Face book:
<https://www.facebook.com/help/181495968648557>

YouTube:<https://support.google.com/youtu-be/answer/2802277?hl=en&co=GENIE.plat-form%3DAndroid>

Twitter:<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-report-violation#specificviolations>

TikTok: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/report-a-problem/report-a-video>

I n s t a g r a m :
<https://help.instagram.com/519598734752872>

‘Parliamentary interactions certain to prove beneficial for Pak-Australia ties’

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Wednesday stressed that persistent parliamentary interactions and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Australia would certainly prove beneficial for the two countries.

Talking to Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins, he stressed on the need to further develop contact between business communities of both countries to tap the massive economic potential in Pakistan.

He said, "Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Australia especially people-to-people contacts and shared passion for cricket."

He also said that both countries were members of the Commonwealth and federations with bicameral legislatures. He also informed Australian High Commissioner that Pakistani Parliamentary delegation would participate 26th Conference of the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) in Canberra from January 3-6, 2023.

While expressing dismay and concern on the rising insurgency and ter-

rorists activities in the country, the speaker said that Pakistani people and government had resolved to eliminate insurgency and rising terrorism at every cost.

He said that Pakistani nation was resolute enough to emerge victorious out of present socio-economic challenges. Pakistan has been tackling severe impacts of recent floods and he appreciated support of Australian people and government in this hour of need.

He also appreciated the support of Australian government to support initiatives of Australian government to support Pakistan for ensuring water and food security especially in Sindh.

Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins appreciated the support of Pakistani government and people to Afghanistan refugees in Pakistan.

He said that it was heartening to note that Afghanistan refugees were being provided basic facilities like health and education.

He also reiterated Australian government resolve to support Pakistani people and government to eliminate insurgency and tackling food security challenges.

PMDC resumed & PMC revoked

F.P Report

ISLAMABAD: The joint session of the Parliament was held today, Tuesday, December 20, 2022, in which the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council Amendment Bill 2022 was officially passed by majority vote.

Thus, the black law like PMC imposed on the medical profession from October 2019 has been completely abolished and all the partners associated with this prestigious profession, especially the medical students who were very anxious and worried about their future, felt a wave of happiness.

On this occasion, not only the students and doctors community but also the employees of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council thanked and extended their gratitude to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif as well as the Federal Minister for Health Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel and MNA Ms. Mehreen Razak Bhutto for presenting the bill and termed their action as a great favor to the medical department that will always be remembered.

Pakistan Medical and Dental Council will offi-

cially start its working in next few days.

The employees of PMDC celebrated the news by conducting Quran Khwani, cake cutting ceremony and by releasing many birds. Employees stated that PMDC bill resumption

sparked happiness in each and every employee of the organisation as it was long waited issue which was pending. By the grace of Allah the bill has been passed and soon formally PMDC will be exercising all official affairs.



AMAN - 23: COMING TOGETHER FOR PEACE

Ms Hadiya Siddiqui

Since 2007, the Pakistan Navy has had the honour of conceptualising and hosting the AMAN series of exercises, which promotes peace at sea. The exercise includes a multinational exercise with friendly regional and extra regional naval forces, which has been essential in raising the morale of the Pakistan Navy. In order to ensure effective maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region, it is necessary to establish relationships, improve compatibility, and increase mutual understanding among navies (IOR).

While interacting with all the participating navies through joint bilateral and multilateral exercises, Pakistan Navy has proudly been able to claim the growing stature of the exercise and the largest participation of representatives of about more than forty friendly nations.

Pakistan Navy is conducting the AMAN series of exercise biennially since 2007 and the 8th of its edition has been scheduled in February 2023. The aim of the exercise is to establish Responses, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures against conventional and unconventional threats faced by today's world. Therefore, these exercises play an important role for formation of a joint strategy among the participating navies to develop a united approach for the regional maritime security. Moreover the exercise includes enhancement of professional expertise in capability of joint operations and regional peace and security. Thus, this authenticates the exercise's declared resolve of 'Together for Peace.'

The resolve will not only help to eradicate terrorism and pledging peace and harmony in the region, but in fact the regional navies can ensure

a smooth route to prosperity via trade, by strengthening multi-layered security cooperation and enhancing interoperability in Naval Ops and cross culture interaction.

Pakistan Navy believes in inclusive policy and if the world stands together, there will be great benefits for all. The IOR is experiencing swift geostrategic changes which have arose a number of challenges for Pakistan but have also provided many opportunities that promise a security improvement not only within Pakistan but also in the region at large.

The strategic security environment of the world is being transformed by dynamism observed in global maritime trade and therefore, there requires an increase in security arrangements in and around the IOR. Regional nations that heretofore have provided periodic coastal protection may find they must expand patrols from the Strait of Hormuz to Egypt's Suez Canal, transiting between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and down the east coast of Africa to secure the waterways. The Arabian Sea and Eastern waters would always be of immense importance and cannot be ignored. Hence, AMAN exercise also targets this particular aspect to warrant global Maritime security.

Furthermore, to combat the design to maintain Maritime Superiority by certain countries, especially in IOR, Pakistan encourages the nations to join hands and equip themselves to face traditional as well as non-traditional threats in the Sea. Maritime security challenges in the IOR are both multidimensional and multifaceted. Threats like maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, and piracy have acquired international dimensions. Stymieing Maritime aspirations of conventional and unconventional threats, the AMAN exercise would help work against human trafficking,

narcotics smuggling, and terrorism in the region.

Cooperation between international fleets is essential for fending off growing threats, underscoring the necessity for a strong naval presence. Megaprojects present a wide range of regional and transregional economic opportunities, particularly in the marine sector, and Pakistan, a key player in the Arabian Sea's maritime security, is completely dedicated to preserving freedom of navigation and the rule of law.

In the harbour phase of Exercise AMAN-23, there will be an international maritime conference, a maritime terrorism demonstration, roundtable discussions on professional topics, and various cross-cultural activities. During the sea phase, advanced naval drills including anticipatory tactics, counter terrorism operations, maritime security operations and an International Fleet Review will be conducted.

With the launch of the AMAN series of exercises, the Pakistan Navy is taking the lead and laying more emphasis on international cooperation in an effort to make the world a safer place. Pakistan's naval forces actively participate with other fleets in the IOR as a leading nation and significant contributor in the fight against terrorism, narcotics trafficking, people smuggling, gun running, and high seas piracy.

Hence, the strong realization that no one nation can single handedly cope with the quantum of this prevailing threat, making cooperative maritime strategy a matter of compulsion rather than choice and that the importance of this collaboration will enhance with the complete operation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Gwadar Port - which are meant to bring prosperity not only to Pakistan but the region and beyond.

2 child saved from abductors

KABUL (Agencies): The Commendar police informed rescuing two children who were abducted from from capial Kabul lately. A spokesman for Kabul police commander Khaled Zadran, said their Police personnel were able to rescued these two children kidnapped from around Kabul on their efforts. The kidnappers, left the kidnapped children in the Surubi market and ran away from the area, before the arrival of police he added.

Eight people arrested

KABUL (Agencies): Local security officials of Paktika and Nangarhar say that 8 people have been arrested in these provinces on charges of drug dealing and trafficking. The Paktika Police said in a statement that a person arrested with 29kgs of drugs on that province. Meanwhile, Nangarhar local security officials say that 7 people have been arrested along with 700 tablets of pills, weed and heroin in Jalalabad city, the capital of this province.

Suspension of women’s higher education sparks widespread reactions

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate’s decision to suspend higher education for women has sparked widespread reactions at national and international levels.

The Ministry of Higher Education in a letter on Tuesday ordered the suspension of higher education for female students in Afghanistan until the next announcement.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement that he is “deeply alarmed by news reports that the Taliban have suspended access to universities to women and girls.”

According to Guterres, the denial of education not only violates the equal rights of women and girls but will have a devastating impact on the country’s future.

He urged the “de facto authorities” of Afghanistan to “ensure equal access to education at all levels for women and girls.”

Former president Hamid Karzai who returned to Kabul today expressed sorrow over the Islamic Emirate’s decision to ban

women from attending universities. He asked the government to immediately reopen schools and universities for women and girls.

“Education is one of the fundamental and basic rights of all citizens. Depriving girls of this right is regrettable,” former HCNR chief Abdullah Abdullah said on Twitter.

“While all citizens of the country support girls education, I, as a citizen, expect & ask that the decision to close girls schools & universities to be reconsidered,” he said.

Former US special envoy for Afghanistan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad in a statement received by TOLONews said that the announcement regarding women’s banishment from higher education by a faction within the Taliban is shocking and incomprehensible.

“There is nothing within Islam or in Afghan history to justify such a decision,” he said. “Distinguished Islamic scholars in Afghanistan and around the

world remind us that education for women as well as for men is a basic Islamic principle.”

Khalilzad said that he calls on those “Taliban opposed to this decision and other Afghan leaders to do all they can to make sure this decision is reversed, and high schools and universities are opened for girls.”

The Foreign Ministry of Qatar also in a statement expressed concerns over the banning of women and girls from going to schools.

The statement said these negative practices will have a serious impact on human rights, development and economy in Afghanistan.

“As a Muslim state where women enjoy all due rights, particularly education, the State of Qatar calls on the Afghan caretaker government to review its decision in line with the teachings of the holy religion of Islam regarding women’s rights,” the statement reads.

The US Department of State said it “condemns the in the strongest terms the

Taliban’s indefensible decision” to ban women from universities, keep secondary schools closed to girls, and continue to impose other restrictions on the ability of women and girls in Afghanistan.

“The Taliban cannot expect to be a legitimate member of the international community until they respect the rights of all in Afghanistan,” the statement reads. “This decision will come with consequences for the Taliban.”

The State Department said that no other country in the world bars women and girls from receiving an education.

Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement urges Afghan authorities to revisit the decision to suspend university and higher education for female students in Afghanistan.

“We strongly believe that every man and woman has the inherent right to education in accordance with the injunctions of Islam,” Pakistan foreign ministry said.

Ebad meets representative of DWB

KABUL (Agencies): The country’s Public Health Minister Dr. Qalandar Ebad, discussed about the problems facing, Doctors Without Borders organization in Afghanistan with the representative of the organization on Wednesday.

The representative of Doctors Without Borders shared problems and challenges facing the organization facing in Balkh with acting Minister of Public Health, and the demand for addressing the issues.

Minister Ebad, without elaborating on the issues of Doctors Without Borders, said that the Ministry of Public Health, appreciating the services of this organization, vowed to cooperate in addressing their challenges.

Honey production increased

KANDAHAR (Agencies): Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Kandahar say that 35 tons of honey have been collected from 21 beekeeping farms in this province.

The provincial head of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Kandahar Haji Mohammad Hamid said that 21 registered beekeeping farms exist in this province, adding that their beekeepers were able to collect 35 tons so far.

Beekeeping farm owners say that in the past few months, there has been a significant increase in the production of honey in this province.

Meanwhile, the price of 1kg of pure honey in Kandahar is 1000 Afghani, the beekeepers in Kandahar urges that if a center built for Kandahar honey and the ground provided the business for beekeepers will be developed.

Poppy farms eradicated

KUNAR (Agencies): The counter-narcotics department officials of Kunar said, that the mentioned department officials eradicate 11 acres of poppy farms in the province.

Mawlawi Sarwar Sadiq, head of the Counter-Narcotics Department of Kunar province, says that poppy farms on 11 acres of land was destroyed in Naari, Sarkan and Shigal districts of this province.

Ex-govt of Ashraf Ghani officials helped smuggling of almost \$1 billion out of Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Independent Persian, quoting the Business Insider news website published in America, the results of an investigation on the smuggling of cash and gold by the senior officials of Ashraf Ghani’s government on Tuesday.

During the final months of the Republic government in Afghanistan, smugglers were illegally carrying hundreds of millions of dollars in cash and gold out of the country with the assistance of officials from within the Afghan government, according to Business Insider report.

The office of Ashraf Ghani, the US-backed Afghan president, had

Humanitarian aid should not be linked to political conditions



KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s Acting Minister of Foreign, during a meeting, Wednesday, urged the international community, not to link humanitarian aid to political issues.

A seminar titled the International Law of Human Rights and Afghanistan was initiated by the Department of Human Rights in cooperation with the UNAMA Office held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Minister, Muttaqi, said that today the world has changed to a village of sorrow, joy, problems, and hardships shared by all, we have a common

responsibility with the international community in addressing the problems of Afghanistan, quoting a statement released by the Foreign Ministry.

He urged the international community not to relate humanitarian aid to political issues.

He said that such seminars, are very useful in increasing awareness and capacity, and on the other hand, bring the Islamic Emirate and international organizations closer.

He called on UNAMA and other organizations to address the problems of Afghans and convey their voices at the international level.

The Head of the Human Rights and Women’s Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign said that the purpose of holding this seminar was to recognize the international conventions and the reporting method of UNAMA and other international human rights institutions.

He assured that the Department of Human Rights and Women’s Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will make every effort to increase the capacity of employees of other departments and increase cooperation and interaction with international human rights organizations.

UN envoy seeks pluralistic polity for Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS (TOLONews): The UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, said the only way forward for Afghanistan is through a more pluralistic polity, where all Afghans, especially women and minorities, see themselves represented and have a real voice in decision making.

Addressing UN Security Council’s meeting, Otunbayeva said the caretaker government in Afghanistan has rejected the “need for any sort of intra-Afghan dialogue.”

The meeting was also attended by the chargé d’affaires of the Afghanistan permanent mission to the UN, Naseer Ahmad Faik.

The Chinese ambassador to the UN, Zhang Jun stressed that Afghanistan

should be supported in countering terrorism.

The Norwegian ambassador to the UN, Anniken Huitfeldt, said the destabilization of Afghanistan would be a threat to peace and security in the world.

“Instability in Afghanistan is also a threat to international peace and security. In the year ahead, the Security Council must clearly communicate its expectations to the Taliban on human rights, and stability on dialogue between Afghans,” she said.

But the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi in a seminar of human rights law said that the international community should not link humanitarian issues with political issues.

He suggested that the

UN Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) should convey the real voice of the people of Afghanistan to the world.

“UNAMA and other organizations have the ability to address the challenges of the Afghan people and pass on the real voice of the people to the world,” he said.

“World countries should not express baseless concerns about terrorism in Afghanistan. They should use diplomatic channels and political engagement,” said Mohammad Bashara, a political analyst.

The Islamic Emirate has not commented in reaction to the UNSC’s meeting but earlier, it insisted that Afghan soil will not be used as a threat against any country.

Over 100 children died of measles in Badakhshan



BADAKHSHAN (TOLONews): The public health directorate in Badakhshan on Wednesday said that at least 100 children have died of measles in the province over the past three months while 3,400 others have suffered from the disease during this period.

Doctors at a hospital in the city of Faizabad, the center of Badakhshan, said they admit at least 10 children every day who suffer from measles.

“We have over 113 losses in Badakhshan’s districts

and its center,” said Nazir Ahmad Nazir, the deputy head of Badakhshan’s provincial hospital.

“We have 385 patients and also have losses,” said Shafiq Hamdard, head of a local hospital.

“Patients of the disease have to separate their clothes, room and dishes from others,” said Reshad Usifi, a doctor.

Some residents of Badakhshan said they are concerned about the spread of the disease among children.

“We asked the current government and health organizations to take measures for the prevention of the disease,” said Mohibullah Sadat, a Badakhshan resident.

“We call on the government to pay attention to the matter,” said Wasiqullah, a Badakhshan resident.

Loss of appetite, high fever, cough and skin itching are among the symptoms of measles and can be transmitted to others through coughing and breathing.

Weapon depot discovered in Takhar

TAKHAR (Agencies): Local officials of Takhar report on the discovery and confiscation of a depot of weapons and ammunition in Rastaq district.

The spokesperson of Takhar Police, Mobeen Safi says that the officers of the Rostaq District discovered and confiscated 16 different types of weapons from a residential house in this district. The discovered weapons include one rocket, two rifles, thirteen Kalashnikovs, and several projectiles, he added.

According to another report, the security forces arrested two groups and three professional robbers two separate operations in the police district of Talaqan.

He says that a group of two robbers were arrested last night in Talaqan city when they entered a residential house and by injuring a man, they wanted to steal the property of this family.

According to him, this man was seriously injured stabbed by thieves and died after being taken to the hospital.

Safi said the second group of robbers utilized to deceive people and extort money under various pretexts.

Senior official killed

KABUL (TOLONews): A senior official from the electronic identity cards department was killed with four members of his family in the mass fire at Salang Tunnel.

Mohammad Hanif Nashar, head of coordination for the electronic identity cards office and his wife and three children were heading from the northern province of Kunduz to Kabul when the incident happened, his relatives said.

Hanif Nashar was from

the Chahardara district in Kunduz. The bodies were buried in Chahardara on Tuesday.

“There were two lines of cars. When he (Hanif Nashar) saw the fire, he jumped out of the car but couldn’t survive,” said Arif Nashar, brother of Hanif Nashar.

“My brother was a good person. He was serving the people. His good deeds will always be remembered,” said Zarif Nashar, brother of Hanif Nashar.

Tribal elders from Chahardara asked the government to pay attention to the prevention of such incidents in the future.

“The Islamic Emirate should have plans and measures to prevent such incidents. The current officials are responsible and should pay attention to it,” said Mohammad Gul, a tribal elder.

Based on initial figures, more than 31 people have been killed and over 40 others have been wounded in the incident.

BALKH (Agencies): Hundreds of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s soldiers graduated after completing their training military courses in Balkh province of Afghanistan says local officials.

On the occasion of soldier’s graduations, the Deputy Governor of Balkh Mawlawi Noor ul Hadi Idris said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is committed to the professionalization of its military sectors.

During the graduation

ceremony of the military soldiers, the Commander of the North Zone Battalion, Qari Taj Mohammad, called on the security forces, saying that the enemy is in ambush and wants to create division and conflict among the Islamic Ummah, and your responsibility is to act wisely and protect the Islamic community.

At the end of the ceremony, the graduates have received their graduation certificates, said a statement.



President asks COMSTECH to offer online, recorded education to students in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (PPI): President Dr Arif Alvi has asked COMSTECH to offer online and recorded education to students in Afghanistan, adding that recorded lessons and training modules could be a useful instrument to impart education to Afghan students, both male and female.

The President expressed these views while talking to the Coordinator-General of the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (COMSTECH), Professor Dr Iqbal Choudhary, who called on him, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Wednesday. Talking to the Coordinator-General, the President said Pakistan could also offer educational modules and online education services through the Virtual University of Pakistan and Allama Iqbal Open University to provide Afghanistan with effective means for imparting higher education.

He added that this arrangement was the cheapest, most cost-effective and high-quality, and could

help fill the shortage of education facilities currently being faced by Afghanistan. The President underlined the need to benchmark best practices in science and agriculture sectors in other Islamic countries and replicate them in Pakistan.

He said Prime Minister's Digital Skills Program in Pakistan was a successful model of imparting digital skills to youth, irrespective of their educational backgrounds and skill level, and enabling them to earn gainful employment. He stated that this program could be replicated in other Muslim countries where there was a demand for such skill development programmes.

The President said that the proposal to hold the 16th General Assembly Meeting of COMSTECH in the 2nd half of 2023 should be explored. He appreciated various initiatives taken by COMSTECH in many Muslim countries for the provision of skills to the students and providing health facilities in less developed countries.

The President appreciated the award of 20 fellow-

ships/ scholarships to students of Kazakhstan through the Association of Private Sector Higher Education Institutions and Universities in Social Sciences of Pakistan in collaboration with COMSTECH. He also appreciated that COMSTECH had launched 500 exclusive scholarships/fellowships (undergraduate, graduate, research visits, workshop participations etc.) for the students of the State of Palestine.

The President appreciated COMSTECH for the establishment of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences, Amman, Jordan, the establishment of 13 COMSTECH Inter-Islamic S&T Networks in various fields of Science and Technology, the establishment of Network of Academies of Sciences in the countries of the OIC (NASIC), Islamabad, Pakistan, the establishment of Computer Training Centre, Khartoum, Sudan, the establishment of Computer Training Centre, Male, Maldives, the establishment of COMSTECH-ISESCO National

Computer Training Centre, Freetown, Sierra Leone and the establishment of COMSTECH-COMSATS-MTM Information Technology Centre, Karachi.

President lauds security forces on successful Bannu operation against militants: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday lauded the security forces for carrying out a successful operation against terrorists in Bannu and expressed resolve to eliminate terrorism from the country's soil.

The president in a statement termed the success a result of the professionalism of security forces and their unwavering commitment against terrorism.

He said the nation would always remember the sacrifices made against terrorism for national defence and security.

The entire nation, he said, stands with its brave security forces on operations against terrorists.

President Alvi paid tribute to the officials of the armed forces who were martyred during the operation. He prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured officials.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator-General of the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (COMSTECH), Professor Dr. Iqbal Choudhary, calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi.

‘State will not surrender to terrorist groups’, says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the State would not surrender to any terrorist group or organization and vowed that militants would be dealt with according to the constitution and law.

Strongly condemning the activities of terrorists in Bannu and other areas, he said such attempts aimed at spreading chaos in Pakistan would be crushed. PM Sharif termed terrorism a crucial issue of national security, which required collective thinking and a plan of action.

He said the federal government would eliminate the facilitators and hideouts of the terrorists.

The entire nation, he said, would eradicate terrorism side by side with the country's brave armed forces.

The prime minister paid tribute to the valour and determination of the country's armed forces fighting against terrorism.

He prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured and directed the authorities concerned to provide them best treatment facilities.

Shehbaz Sharif said, "We will not let the sacrifices of the martyrs go to waste" and mentioned in this regard the military operations of Rad-ul-Fasaad and Zarb-e-Azb as significant measures to eradicate terrorism.

He said the great sacrifices of the personnel of armed forces, police, Rangers and other law enforcement agencies were unforgettable.

The prime minister said though main responsibility for law and order lies with the provinces, but the federation could not turn a blind eye to the problems. He assured the provinces to work along with them in fighting terrorism and vowed to fully implement the National Action Plan to eliminate terrorism. He emphasized enhancing the capacity and efficiency of the provincial governments as crucial in this regard.

Shehbaz said the federal government would assist the provinces in improving the professional capacity of anti-terrorism force and departments. He said restructuring of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's counter-ter-

rorism department would be carried out and all the requirements pertaining to modern weapons and professional training would be ensured.

Cabinet's energy conservation to provide relief to common man: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the energy conservation plan of the federal cabinet would provide relief to the common man and save precious foreign exchange. The prime minister in a tweet said the coalition government was diversifying the energy mix by pivoting to renewables, which he termed as key to energy security.

"The idea is to gradually but surely increase our dependence on indigenous resources," he said.

He mentioned that the federal cabinet had given serious consideration to an energy conservation plan. The plan will be approved after taking provinces on board, he added.

"Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures," he said. "Its effective implementation will save precious resources and help address energy crisis".

Marriyum condemns armed men's attempt to enter Shiffa Yousafzai's house

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday strongly condemned the armed men's attempt to enter into anchorperson Shiffa Yousafzai's house and alleged torture of domestic workers. The minister telephoned Shiffa Yousafzai and informed her that the police were investigating the incident and have been directed to arrest the culprits as soon as possible.

The minister expressed solidarity with Shiffa Yousafzai and her family.

Shiffa Yousafzai told the minister that she was not present at home at the time of the incident.

"Suspects assaulted, threatened domestic workers and escaped,"

Shiffa Yousafzai told the information minister. The minister said that such incidents would be prevented with collective efforts.

PM reviews flood rehabilitation activities in Khairpur: Marriyum: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reviewed the on-going efforts for the rehabilitation of flood-affected people in Khairpur, Sindh.

The prime minister was on a day-long visit to the area where a large number of flood victims were still facing challenges, she said in a tweet. PM Shehbaz was briefed by the National Disaster Management Authority chairman on the current

situation and needs gap for rehabilitation efforts, she added while sharing the pictures of the briefing.

Marriyum grieved over demise of Shireen Mazari's husband: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Dr Tabish, husband of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's leader Shireen Mazari. In her condolence message, the minister said she was saddened to hear about the death of Dr Mazari's husband. She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

PTI to hold gathering outside Punjab Governor House today

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced to hold a public gathering outside Punjab Governor House today (Thursday), which would be addressed by former premier and party chairman Imran Khan.

Speaking to journalists in Lahore, former federal minister and PTI leader Hammad Azhar said that the party has decided to hold a public gathering outside Punjab Governor House tomorrow (Thursday), wherein Imran Khan will announce a new plan of action.

He also levelled allegations against Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari of 'horse trading', saying that PTI Members of Punjab Assembly (MPAs) were getting telephone calls and Zardari's money was being used for games in Punjab.

However, he said, the public would not stay quiet this time. "The people will not become silent spectators this time," he said, adding that his party decided to thwart any move that the Pakistan Democratic Movement throws its way.

The PTI leader further said that Imran Khan will address the public gathering outside the Governor House at 5pm and announce the way forward. At the outset of the media talk, former information minister Fawad Chaudhry lambasted the ruling coalition of 'running away' from the elections. "Governor Baligh ur Rehman has violated Article 109 of Constitution", he added.

He noted that 10 members of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid have expressed confidence in Pervaiz Elahi, adding that the Punjab Chief Minister (CM) has support of almost 187 members of provincial assembly.

PML-N approaches IHC to postpone Islamabad LG polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking postponement of the local government (LG) elections in Islamabad.

The PML-N in its application, submitted to IHC, pleaded with the court to delay LG polls in the federal capital on the pretext of an increase in the number of union councils.

The party has urged the court to accept its application for an early hearing. The federal government Tuesday increased the number of union councils (UCs) in Islamabad 10 days before the scheduled polling day for local gov-

ernment elections, surprising candidates as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The federal cabinet approved the amendment in number of the union councils after which the federal government notified the increase in the number of UCs in the federal capital territory.

The notification stated that under the Local Bodies Act the demarcation of Union Councils must be based on the population figures of Islamabad thus the number of union councils to be increased to 125 from existing 101.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) said the elections would be held as per schedule on Dec 31.

"The Election Commission in exercise of its power under Articles 140-A (2), Article 218, (3) Article 219(d) and Article 222 of the Constitution read with Section 219 of Elections Act, 2017 and all other enabling provisions of law hereby decides to continue elections process notwithstanding the notification dated 19-12-2022 issued by the federal government as the said notification is in violation of Section 4 (4) of the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2015," read the ECP's order.

‘IMF program sabotaged by previous govt’

QUETTA (PPI): Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, has said that the program of IMF was sabotaged by the previous government, increasing thereby conditions of IMF.

Talking to media here on Wednesday on the eve of briefing about devising a strategy to save energy, he said that owing to scarcity of resources, floods increased hardships, hence, he added, "It becomes the responsibility of not only government but also the people to save energy. Highlighting the importance of energy, including electricity, gas, petrol and water, for the economy of a country, he said that an effective strategy had been devised to save energy, adding that cooperation of provincial government and traders was inevitable for implementing the strategy devised to save energy and to achieve its objectives.

Swati's bail plea dismissed in controversial tweets case

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Wednesday turned down the bail plea of Senator Azam Swati's in a case related to controversial tweets, holding that the "same offence" has been committed again.

Islamabad Special Judge Central Azam Khan passed the orders on the plea. The judge had earlier reserved the verdict today.

During the proceedings, prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi explained the court the process of verifying a Twitter account.

He submitted that Swati had a "blue tick" on his Twitter account and was followed by famous personalities.

"Famous journalists and political personalities follow Azam Swati," said the lawyer. He added that the senator had never distanced himself from the account. Abbasi said that

there was no question that the Twitter account was not of Azam Swati.

While concluding his arguments, the prosecutor and government lawyer urged the court not to grant bail to the senator in the case.

Besides it, the PTI senator's lawyer, Sohail Khan, argued that a cyber-crime case could not be registered over screenshots.

After hearing arguments of both, the judge reserved the verdict and said that it would be issued in 20 minutes.

A case was registered against Swati in multiple cases across the country for his controversial tweets against senior military officers.

The senator, initially, was arrested by the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA), on

October 14, after he posted a highly-hateful and threatening message against the army chief, judiciary and other state institutions, on his official Twitter account.

The senator had secured bail in that case. But on November 27, FIA once again arrested Swati for using abusive language against the top military brass, including the former army chief.

The senator was booked in multiple cases across the country related to those tweets.

On December 2, Balochistan police arrested Swati for a similar case registered against him in Quetta. At the time of his arrest, he was already on judicial remand in Adiala Jail and was shifted to Quetta under a transit remand acquired by the Balochistan police.

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky will meet US leader Joe Biden and address Congress in Washington on Wednesday, during a visit the White House said will send Russia a strong message of Western unity.

The secretly arranged trip comes on the same day Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to meet his top military officials to assess the dire results so far of the war on Ukraine and set goals for next year.

It will be Zelensky's first trip outside Ukraine since Russian forces invaded in February, when they planned for a rapid takeover of Kyiv and much of the country.

Instead, the visit to Washington comes on the 300th day of a war that has seen Russian forces halted by a stubborn Ukrainian army backed by Western arms, forced to retreat from captured territory and struggling to avoid further setbacks. The visit will "underscore the United States' steadfast commitment to supporting Ukraine for as long as it takes," White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement. Zelensky will visit the White House where Biden is to announce a new arms package worth almost \$2 billion that a senior administration official said includes Patriot air

defense missiles.

Patriot missiles are seen as crucial to help Kyiv fend off Russia's punishing missile and drone attacks on its infrastructure.

Zelensky is then expected to address a joint session of Congress, which House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said would be "a very special focus on democracy." The visit was quietly planned, beginning with a phone call between Biden and Zelensky on December 11, followed by a formal invitation one week ago and confirmation of the visit on Sunday.

Details of the visit leaked on Tuesday afternoon, with officials stressing to US media that there were still security concerns over Zelensky's travel.

In White House talks, Biden and Zelensky will discuss the arms and training provided by the United States and allies, sanctions and other pressure on Russia, and economic and humanitarian aid that Ukraine needs, the senior White House official said.

"They will discuss every element of this conflict, including the situation on the battlefield and including the question of where the war goes from here," the official said.

The visit will send Putin "a

strong message of unity and resolve from the White House, from Washington, from the free world, on behalf of all the nations supporting Ukraine," the official added.

But that does not include pressuring Zelensky into talks with Putin, the official stressed.

Zelensky flies to the United States after a risky visit to the frontlines in Bakhmut, where both sides have endured heavy tolls in constant shooting and shelling over the past two months.

Brutal trench warfare and artillery battles around Bakhmut -- once known for its vineyards and salt mines -- have flattened large portions of the city and its surroundings.

"Here in Donbas, you're protecting all of Ukraine," Zelensky told Ukrainian fighters.

"This is not just Bakhmut, this is fortress Bakhmut," he said, handing out honors to Ukraine servicemen.

Soldiers gave Zelensky a Ukrainian flag with their names signed on it and asked him to present it to Biden and the US Congress. Zelensky said they told him: "We have a difficult situation, the enemy is increasing their numbers. Our guys are braver but we need more weapons."