

Rupee extends loss against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 02 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 225.42 against the previous day's closing of Rs 225.40. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 232.4 and Rs 234.7 respectively.

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RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the officers and soldiers at Combined Military Hospital (CMH), who were injured during CTD Complex Bannu Operation.

‘One man’ behind efforts to end PTI’s politics: Imran Khan

LAHORE (NNI): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has held responsible ‘one man’ for the ouster of his government, claiming that ‘one man’ was still behind the efforts to end party’s politics.

The former premier made these remarks while addressing the protestors, who had gathered outside the Punjab Governor House in Lahore to ‘bar’ Governor Baligh ur Rehman from taking any ‘unconstitutional’ step. Without naming anyone, Imran Khan said that one man’s decision toppled his government and that was the reason why the country plunged into political and economic crises. He lambasted the ‘one man’ over the ‘atrocities’ faced by PTI and its members and asked: “What was their fault. Only that we refused to accept the gang of thieves you imposed on us?”

The PTI Chief pointed out that the whole nation come out when his party was ousted. “It was giving one message that the imported government was unacceptable,” he added.

Imran Khan claimed that the ‘one man’ was still behind the efforts to end PTI’s politics. “When they saw that nothing was working out, they decided to kill me and remove me from the way,” he said, asking what more steps would be taken to force the nation to accept the imported government? He also lambasted the move of leaking ‘videos and audios’ on social media, saying that such things were being done to black mail his party.

At the outset of the address, Imran Khan lambasted the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) for submitting a no-confidence motion submitted against Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Pervaiz Elahi.

He noted that the PDM’s were making attempts to not let him exercise his “constitutional right” of dissolving provincial assemblies. “Initially, the PML-N challenged us to dissolve the assemblies. But now, when we did that, a vote of confidence and no-trust motions were moved in the Punjab Assembly,” he regretted. The former prime minister



pointed out that he wanted to dissolve the provincial assemblies because they fear that if immediate elections are not held, the country will slip out of our hands.

He also criticised the coalition government for ‘running away’ from the elections, claiming that the ‘convict sitting abroad’ and Asif Zardari were scared. “They have a one-point agenda to hide their theft and they will hurt the country in the process. All they want is an NRO 2,” he alleged.

“Elections the way out”

Imran Khan once again called upon the institutions to play role in holding immediate and transparent elections. He asked the institutions if they were not worried about where Pakistan was heading and its future.

“Are you not worried today that our country is heading towards a point where there will be no coming back,” he asked and then stressed that snap polls was the only solution.

The former premier noted that as soon as elections are held, the country would get a chance to get out of this mess. “Without political stability, there is no economic stability,” he concluded, Punjab Crisis

The political crisis in Punjab intensified after the Centre and the province came face-to-face over the no-trust voting against Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi, PA speaker and deputy speaker.

The crisis deepened after the governor and PA speaker rejected each other’s rulings regarding the no-trust voting and summoning of a special session for vote of confidence today.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) submitted no-trust motion against Punjab chief minister, speaker and deputy speaker to the provincial assembly’s secretariat.

Confirming the development, PML-N leader Khawaja Imran Nazir has claimed that the opposition parties will give a good surprise to the people of Punjab.

He confirmed that the particulars related to the no-trust motion were received by the PA secretary. Nazir said that the no-confidence motion was submitted in accordance with the law after completing the required numbers. The development came after Imran Khan announced to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23. The former premier announced the decision while addressing the nation alongside the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief ministers, Pervaiz Elahi and Mahmood Khan, respectively. Imran Khan thanked the two provincial chiefs for their cooperation with his party, and said he had consulted PTI’s lawyers about the move, adding that the Constitution did not allow elections to be delayed beyond 90 days of an assembly’s dissolution.

No KP assembly dissolution until Punjab’s fate is decided: CM Mahmood

PESHAWAR (NNI): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Mahmood Khan said on Thursday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would not dissolve the KP Assembly until the discussions on the Punjab Assembly were going on.

Speaking to media outside the Hayatabad Sports Complex, he said: “PTI chief Imran Khan will first decide the future of the Punjab

Assembly.” “Up until now, Imran has not given me any directions on the dissolution. I will contact Imran but first a decision regarding the Punjab Assembly will be taken,” he added.

Earlier, Imran Khan had announced that he would dissolve the Punjab and KP assemblies on Dec 23. The former prime minister, while addressing the PTI supporters via video link from his residence in Lahore’s Zaman Park, flanked by Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaz Elahi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM Mahmood, said: “I want to inform the people about why I decided to dissolve the two provincial assemblies.”

“In this country, until free and fair elections take place [...] fears will still remain that the country might sink,” he said.

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), she urged New Delhi to stop massive human rights violations immediately. She said India must be held accountable for these injustices. The only way to lasting peace in South Asia is by granting the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, she said.

The Spokesperson said we are concerned over the rise of extremist nationalism in Indian and its expansionist designs for the region. She termed the reports of Bilawal Bhutto’s arrest in New York a “lie” and “contrary to facts”.

Pakistan reiterates to continue engagement with Afghanistan for regional peace

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan believes in peaceful neighborhood and reiterates that it will continue engagement with Afghanistan on different issues for regional peace and stability.

This was stated by Foreign Office Spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing here in Islamabad on Thursday. She said Pakistan and Afghanistan have the mechanisms of talks to resolve issues which yield positive results.

She said Pakistan is committed to countering terrorism and we will definitely defeat the terrorists again. Replying to a question, she said all required step will be taken to protect sovereignty and citizens of the coun-

try. The Spokesperson said war and instability in Afghanistan caused huge loss to both Pakistan and Afghanistan. She urged the Afghan interim authorities to revisit their decision of banning girls from education as they have full right to participate in all aspects of life.

Talking about the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari’s visit to the United States, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said it will definitely yield positive outcomes for Pakistan. She said the visit was an important step towards further strengthening Pakistan’s broad based bilateral ties with the United States. About the grave human rights violations committed by the Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), she urged New Delhi to stop massive human rights violations immediately. She said India must be held accountable for these injustices. The only way to lasting peace in South Asia is by granting the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, she said.

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The Frontier Post

Haroon Yousaf gets bail

ISLAMABAD (APP):The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday granted 14 days protective bail to Haroon Yousaf, with the directive to appear before the relevant court in a case pertaining to assets beyond sources of income filed by the National Accountability Bureau. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard the protective bail case.

Writ of state to be established at all costs: PM

RAWALPINDI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the government would establish writ of the state at any cost and no one would be allowed to derail the hard-earned gains of war on terrorism.

“Writ of the state will be established at all costs and no one will be allowed to derail the hard-earned gains of war on terror achieved through unparalleled sacrifices of the nation and valiant armed forces,” the prime minister said talking to the officers and soldiers at CMH Rawalpindi who got injured during the CTD complex Bannu operation.

The prime minister met the injured officer and soldiers and paid tribute to the courage and valour of the troops who cleared the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) complex in Bannu. He said the martyrs and their families had rendered supreme sacrifices for ensuring the safety and security of the people of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said, “We are determined to fight out terrorism in its all forms and manifestations, and break the nexus between terrorists and their supporters and sympathisers till achieving a peaceful and stable environment.”

Rights of religious minorities to be protected: PM: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday assured that the government would protect the rights of people from all religious minorities, including Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and Parsis, and ensure a secure environment for them.

Speaking at a ceremony organized here to celebrate Christmas, he said, “We want that Pakistan should move forward according to the thinking and teachings of the Quaid-e-Azam and

Allama Muhammad Iqbal, who called for peace and brotherhood among all religions.” He reminded that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his speech on August 11, 1947, gave a clear message about the equality of rights of minorities. Under the Constitution of Pakistan, people of all religions in the country had equal constitutional and political rights, and they were allowed to take part in all fields of life, he added.

Unfortunately, PM Shehbaz said, due to extremism and terrorism in the last decades, a number of incidents happened which was unfortunate and weakened the protections given to the minorities who felt threatened and vulnerable.

However, the Pakistani state succeeded in eradicating terrorism and extremism, he said while referring to the latest incident in Bannu where terrorists made people hostage but later they were killed by armed forces. The personnel of armed forces embraced martyrdom during the incident, he noted.

While felicitating the Christian community on Christmas, he said, “We all share the happiness of the Christian community on this auspicious occasion.”

He lauded the Christian community for its sacrifices and services for the nation right from the start of the movement for the independence of Pakistan. People from all walks of life including teachers, students, religious scholars, doctors, engineers and labour contributed to the country’s freedom, he observed.

“We value from the core of our heart your services for Pakistan. Your services for the progress and develop-

ment of Pakistan will be remembered in golden words. Justice Cornelius, Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry, and Sister Ruth Pfau who was German and served the Pakistani nation for 55 years, were examples of service to Pakistan.” He said the Christian community contributed immensely in the fields of education and defence. “I myself got education in a missionary school Sacred Heart”.

He said Hazrat Isa gave a message of peace, brotherhood and love to the humanity. The Holy Quran mentioned Hazrat Isa and Hazrat Maryam on numerous occasions, he said, adding all religions promoted peace and brotherhood in the world.

“People from all religions across the world whether Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis or Muslims wanted to live in peace and harmony. Nobody should oppress and do injustice to others or violate rights of others and change religion of each other by force. Islam nor any other religion allow this.”

Islam ordered that rights of people of all religions should be protected, he stressed.

He assured that as per demand of the religious minorities a national minority commission would be formed after legislation in the Parliament. Minister for Religious Affairs Mufti Abdul Shakoore, while speaking on the occasion, said Islam taught that followers of all religions should be treated equally. He felicitated the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

The prime minister along with bishops and leaders of the Christian community and other minorities also cut a Christmas cake at the event.

Another soldier involved in CTD Bannu op embraces martyrdom

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Another soldier involved in the CTD Complex Bannu operation embraced martyrdom Thursday at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Sepoy Haleem Khan who was injured during a clearance operation at CTD complex Bannu embraced shahadat due to severe injuries he received from terrorists fire during the clearance operation.

Sepoy Haleem was 29 years old and a resident of Hijira, Distt Poonch, Azad Kashmir. He was survived by three children.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif last Tuesday confirmed that “all the terrorists” of the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) who had taken hostages at a Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) centre in Bannu were killed in an operation conducted by the Pakistan Army. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, Asif said that 33 terrorists were under arrest at the CTD compound and one of them had managed to snatch a gun from an employee after hitting him in the head with a brick.

Afghan students protest against ban on females’ higher education

DIR LOWER (APP): The Afghan male and female students at University of Malakand on Thursday staged a protest demonstration here against the ban on females’ higher education by the Afghan government.

The students condemned the Afghan government step and termed it unjust with female students, adding that the education was the basic right of every individual and as per Islamic teaching females were equally asked to get education. The protest demonstration started from Gate No. 1 and culminated in Gate No. 2 wherein students Bilal Khan and Ziaullah of the university were the main speakers. They said that getting education is the fundamental right of every Afghan man and woman and the government was depriving them of their basic right. They demanded the Afghan government to reconsider its policies.

Pakistan to work with U.S. on region’s peace: FM

WASHINGTON (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Pakistan would continue working with the United States to promote peace and stability in the region.

The foreign minister expressed these views in a meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman. In a tweet, Bilawal mentioned that he had a productive meeting with Wendy Sherman, where he appreciated the role of the U.S. in flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. “Pakistan and the United States will continue to work together to further enhance and diversify bilateral relations, and promote peace and stability in the region,” he said.

In a meeting with Senator Chris Van Hollen, the foreign minister

thanked him for his steadfast support for Pakistan.

The two sides discussed US Congress’ important role in strengthening Pak-U.S. cooperation in flood relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Bilawal claims he is only FM to have borne expenses out of his own pocket: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari claimed on Thursday he was the only FM to have borne expenses out of his own pocket for his foreign tours. FM Bilawal responded to a question regarding his international travels by saying, “I do not burden the national exchequer with the expenses of my abroad visits and even if I do, it is my prerogative as a foreign minister. I am the only Foreign Minister of Pakistan who purchases his

own ticket and pays his own hotel bill.”

Mr Bhutto-Zardari said, “Pakistan’s citizens, not I, had benefited from my travels overseas. While the majority of people presumably travel abroad to spend holidays, Pakistan was able to remove itself from the FATF’s ‘grey list’ because to my efforts. Pakistan is currently in charge of the G77, a global grouping of developing nations, as a result of the economic advantages of the visits.

Mr Bhutto-Zardari said, “The inclusion of disaster relief on the COP27 agenda was a major accomplishment for all developing nations, including Pakistan. It has been urged that rather than helping the rich, international financial institutions should help the less developed nations”.

Many PTI lawmakers requested not to accept resignation: NA speaker

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Thursday said many

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members requested not to accept the resignations of parliamentarians.

The NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz said many PTI law-

makers came to me personally and requested not to accept the resignations of the other lawmakers.

The speaker said that all those assembly members who resigned have to satisfy me first, there is no pressure on them, and they are voluntarily resigning adding to this he said one

has to appear before the NA Speaker to confirm their resignation.

A confirmation letter has been written to all the resigned members, I will give them time to confirm the resignations, and I would like to hear back from every member, the speaker added.

Pervaiz Elahi to attend Punjab Assembly session today

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi has decided to attend a session of Punjab Assembly (PA) tomorrow after the submission of no-confidence motion.

According to details, the chief minister decided to attend the PA session as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) submitted no-confidence motion against him.

CM Pervaiz Elahi would meet Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan and also chair a joint parliamentary meeting of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

In a statement, Elahi said that PML-Q and PTI are and will always remain allies. “We will jointly fight the no-trust move and thwart every Pakistan Democratic Movement’s (PDM) moves,” he added.

“No conspiracy can stop the ruling Punjab government from serving the people”, he said, directing the all lawmakers of PTI and PML-Q to attend the session tomorrow.

It is pertinent to mention here that a session of the Punjab Assembly (PA) was

adjourned till December 23 (Friday) without any proceedings amid ruckus by opposition. PA Speaker Sibtain Khan adjourned the session of Punjab Assembly till Friday without any proceedings. The quorum was not fulfilled and the session was lasted for only 15 minutes.

Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) submitted no-trust motion against Punjab chief minister, speaker and deputy speaker to the provincial assembly’s secretariat. While talking to ARY News, PML-N leader Khawaja Imran Nazir confirmed the development. He claimed that the opposition parties will give a good surprise to the people of Punjab. He confirmed that the particulars related to the no-trust motion were received by the PA secretary. Nazir said that the no-confidence motion was submitted in accordance with the law after completing the required numbers.

The development came after Imran Khan announced to dissolve Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 23.



Amir Zulfiqar appointed IG Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The federal government has appointed Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan as Inspector General of Police Punjab, said a notification issued on Thursday. He belongs to 19th Command of Police Service of Pakistan.

He was performing his duties as Deputy DG Anti-Narcotics Force these days.

Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan has also served as IG National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) and IG Islamabad Police.

Amir Zulfiqar Khan had also been posted as Additional IG Operations Punjab.

He joined Pakistan Police Service as ASP in 1991. He held the posts of DIG Operations

Lahore, RPO Multan, DIG CTD Punjab, DIG Operations CPO Punjab.

Imran Niazi is habitual liar: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon has described Imran Niazi as a habitual liar in a statement on Twitter on Thursday.

He said that PTI chief Imran Khan always accuses his opponents without any evidence.

Sindh Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Imran Khan's statement regarding the expenses of official visit of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are completely baseless.

Sindh Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon asked Imran Khan to bring forth the evidence of false and fabricated figures or tender apology.

14 dead, 921 injured in 891 road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least fourteen persons were killed and 921 injured in 891 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of whom, 489 people were seriously injured who were shifted to different hospitals, whereas, 432 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams.

Analysis showed that 467 drivers, 37 underage drivers, 117 pedestrians, and 351 passengers were among the victims of road accidents.

Statistics show that 226 road accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 226 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 68 in Faisalabad with 66 victims and at third Multan with 66 road accidents and 61 victims.

As many as 727 motorbikes, 65 autorickshaws, 98 motorcars, 22 vans, 13 passenger buses, 37 trucks and 90 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road accidents.

Sindh CM directs action against banned outfits, street criminals

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting on law and order has directed law enforcement agencies to speed up targeted operations against the terrorists and comb out street criminals from the city through their coordinated efforts.

The meeting was held here at CM House on Thursday and was attended by Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, DG Ranger Major General Azhar Waqas, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Adl IG CTD Imran Yakoob, Adl IG Special Branch Khadim Rind and provincial heads of intelligence agencies. The chief minister in his opening remarks pointed out two threats, terrorist outfits, and street criminals. He added that the banned outfits pose a standing threat, therefore an effective and intelligence-based operation must be started against them.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the street criminals have created unrest among the citizens of Karachi, and their number was not so high that they could not be crushed. "I want the police and Rangers to work out a plan to launch an operation against them [street criminals] and ensure deployment of their forces at the hot spots which are very much identified," he said.

The chief minister was told that the banned outfits were not strong in the province, however, strict vigilance of their movement would be intensified.

Chief Minister Sindh, in consultation with the participants of the meeting, pre-

pared close coordination between all the intelligence agencies including the police so that immediate action can be taken on sensitive information.

The chief minister said that street criminals killed seven people in December alone. "This is unacceptable and a challenge to the government, therefore I want the police and Ranger to work together to eliminate the menace," he said.

It was decided in the meeting that street criminals were more active, and would be secured by police deployment.

The gangs operating in the city would be busted through a joint operation by the police and the Rangers.

The meeting was told that during 2022 2258 encounters were made with terrorist and street criminals, as a result, 1259 gangs were busted, 16612 criminals arrested and 204 were killed. The chief minister decided to keep vigilance at the exit and entry points of the city and the province so that criminals' movement could be checked. The chief minister gave 15 days to the city police to launch aggressive operations against the street criminals and then a review meeting would be held to assess the results. It was pointed out that various illegal immigrants were coming to Karachi, but they were being returned regularly. The chief minister said that he would take up the issues of illegal immigrants' arrival in the city with the federal government so that they could be stopped at the borders.

Govt speedily working on resolving issues of overseas Pakistanis: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi said on Thursday the government was speedily working on the resolution of overseas Pakistanis' problems.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of the high-rise Commercial Building at the OPF Housing Scheme Phase-I Khayaban-e-Jinnah here, he said that it was right of the overseas Pakistanis to be adjusted in new projects. He said the staff of the ministry listen to the calls of overseas Pakistanis even in the late night to resolve their problems.

He said a summary had been approved to constitute special courts for the resolution of overseas Pakistanis' problems, adding the government wanted to resolve these issues in 6 months.

The minister said that special opportu-

nities of investment in the OPF schemes were being provided to the overseas Pakistanis, adding that educational issues of the overseas Pakistanis were also being resolved and they would be provided with the scholarships through the Higher Education Commission.

He said the development work in the OPF schemes would be completed in January 2023.

The minister said that skilled workers would be sent to South Korea, Azerbaijan, Romania and other countries and a target of sending one million people to these countries had been set.

He said that 500 houses had been handed over to the Punjab government in Texla after construction, adding that a number of houses had been constructed in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that 5500 flats would be handed over to the workers in February 2023.

Police prepare comprehensive security plan for Christmas

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mahmood Dogar said on Thursday that Lahore Police would provide foolproof security to the Christian community as well as citizens on Christmas.

The Lahore Police have chalked out a comprehensive security plan to provide security to churches and Christian community during religious activities and celebrations of Christmas.

More than 6,000 police officers and officials including divisional SPs, SDPOs and SHOs would be deputed at different churches, christian residential areas, parks and important places of the city.

Ghulam Mahmood Dogar directed the police officers to implement the security plan for churches

and parks under their own supervision by deputing snipers and commandos for the security of 'A category' churches.

He said that monitoring through CCTV cameras of sensitive churches, besides search and checking of citizens using walk-through gates and metal detectors would also be ensured. The Commander Lahore Police said that three layers security would be provided to all people visiting churches and parks on Christmas.

He further said that teams of elite force, Dolphin Squad, Police Response Unit and also police stations would ensure effective patrolling around the churches, Christmas Bazaars and residential areas of Christmas community. Search and sweep operations have already been conducted on regular basis in and around

churches and Christian residential areas.

Checking of vehicles and persons at exit and entrance points of the city had already been enhanced in the wake of Christmas. Persons visiting churches on December 24th and Christmas to attend religious sermons and other activities would only be allowed to enter after complete identification and a thorough checking, he added. Ghulam Mahmood Dogar directed the police officers concerned and administration of churches to ensure the use of walk-through gates and metal detectors at churches premises. The CCPO Lahore informed that additional force would also be deputed on related parks and recreational places including 08 big parks of the city on Christmas and Quaid-e-Azam day.



LAHORE: U.S. Consul General in Lahore William K. Makaneole in a group photo during his visit to the Museum.

Pakistan-Belarus ready to work together for disaster management

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A three-member delegation of the Republic of Belarus called on Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, Chairman NDMA today in his office. The Belarus delegation was led by Deputy Minister for Emergency Situation, Major General Bolotov Igor, including members Colonel Fesenko Siarhei, Lt Col Haishun Kanstantin of Internal services. Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Andrei Metelitsa was also present during the meeting.

Chairman NDMA thanked the visiting delegation of the Belarus and its government, for the humanitarian aid provided for flood affectees of Pakistan. Chairman NDMA deliberated upon the need for cooperation

among both countries in the field of disaster management specifically exchange of experts for learning purpose from each other's experiences. He stressed upon the need for devising an institutionalized mechanism at regional level for dealing with the challenges posed owing to the climate change.

Chairman NDMA also proposed to make an executive common group of regional stakeholders based on three basic components, i-e, formation of academic group including think tanks/researchers, training of disaster managers on latest technology driven modules and collaboration of international partners to provide funds for the first two components. He also informed the delegation that Pakistan is working on transforming its

approach towards disaster management for being proactive rather than reactive.

Maj Gen Bolotov Igor head of the delegation, on behalf of President of the Belarus expressed solidarity and offered condolences on the loss of precious lives owing to the devastating floods. The visiting delegation assured full support from the Government of Belarus in the fields of disaster management training, exchange of experts, officials and students Both sides agreed to work on aspects of key action areas of mutual cooperation and engagement during emergency response and disaster mitigation. The officials at the end signed the handing/taking documents of relief assistance provided by the Belarus Government.

US Consul General cuts Christmas cake at Lahore Museum

LAHORE (APP): United States (US) Consul General in Lahore William K. Makaneole cut Christmas cake among the Christian staff of the Lahore Museum during a ceremony at the museum here on Thursday.

The staff from Pakistan Bible Society also attended the ceremony.

US Consul General Makaneole felicitated the audience on the advent of Christmas and wished all a safe holiday season, adding that Christmas is about sharing love with each other. The diplomat said Pakistan and

the US share strong cultural ties and this museum makes this possible, adding that many exhibits at this museum are a direct reflection of how important our ties are. "The exhibits here also show cultural and religious diversity in Pakistan and we hope of peaceful coexistence of all religions in this great country- Pakistan," Makaneole said. He said that United States values its strong relations with Pakistan, adding this year is more significant as US and Pakistan cel-

ebate 75 years of friendship. He said "We are all committed to working towards an economically strong and prosperous Pakistan."

CG Makaneole thanked Director Museum Muhammad Usman and Deputy Director Asim Rizwan for inviting him to the ceremony which, in itself, is reflective of religious diversity. Later, Consul General William K. Makaneole was presented a memento. Public Affairs Officer (PAO) US Consulate Bryce A. Isham was also present.

Punjab govt approves Rs 220m for different bar associations

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has approved a grant of Rs 220 million for different bar associations.

This approval was given in a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Business held under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Environment Protection and Cooperatives Muhammad

Basharat Raja, here on Thursday.

Provincial Law Minister Khurram Shehzad Virk, Secretary Law Akhtar Javed and Secretary Agriculture also attended the meeting.

The grant issued on the direction of Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi would be distributed among the Supreme Court, High Court, District and Tehsil

Bars accordingly.

On the occasion, Chairman Committee Muhammad Basharat Raja expressed the hope that the grant would provide necessary facilities for the lawyers community. "The grant will enable the purchase of books and other essential materials for libraries of the bar associations" he elaborated.

He pledged that all possible resources would be provided for the betterment of lawyer community.

Meanwhile, a MoU of Plant Wise Program of Agriculture Department was also approved in the meeting.

Raja Basharat said the signing of MoU would bring stability in safe agricultural production and pesticides programme.

Ministerial delegation of Somalia calls on Qamar Zaman Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Ministerial delegation of Somalia headed by Minister for Interior, Federal Affairs & Reconciliation Ahmed Moalim Fiqi Ahmed called on Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira here on Thursday.

The meeting discussed the issues of mutual interest with particular reference to the issues pertaining to the governance system and federalism. The delegation comprised of the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR), Ministry of Justice and States of Somalia, which is on seven days study tour of Pakistan, said a press release.

The purpose of the visit is to learn from Pakistan's experience regarding 18th amendment, National Finance Commission, Council of Common Interests and process of consensus building and reconciliation involved in this respect. Highlighting the importance of National Finance Commission, Council of Common Interests and 18th amendment, the Advisor said that above constitutional setups

have proved very fruitful in strengthening the Federation of Pakistan.

He also briefed the delegation regarding due process of reconciliation and consensus building involved in this process. He said that fair distribution of power between the centre and the federating units was the backbone of a strong Federation. The feeling of inclusiveness is key to build a state on strong footings which ultimately leads to the prosperity of a country, he added. The Advisor also highlighted the delegation of powers to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan territories in recent years.

Qamar Zaman Kaira said that Pakistan Peoples Party has always been a staunch advocate of delegation of power to the provinces. He took pride that Pakistan People Party owns the credit of passing the 18th amendment as a result of which maximum powers have been delegated to the provinces. He stressed the need of inclusiveness of all communities, tribes and clans in a federation which is only possible through the process of devolution and fair distribution of power among the federating units.

WILFUL ABSENCE / FINAL NOTICE

Whereas Mr. Arbab Babar Zaman S/O Arbab Shaker Ullah Khan, Operator Cum Chowkidar (BPS-03) on Water Supply Scheme Gulbela, Public Health Engineering Division Peshawar-I is charged under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government Servants (Efficiency & Discipline) Rules, 2011 on account of the following acts of omission and commission prescribed under Rule-9 of the Rule, ibid.

- That you have been keeping yourself absent from duty without application / prior permission.
 - That you were directed to resume duty and explain the reasons for absence from duty vide this division's memoranda / letters dated 10.01.2022 vide letter No.01/E-II and dated 02.02.2022 letter No.02/E-II & dated 06.09.2022 letter No. 01/E-5-A. Your wilful absence notice was also published vide INF(P)/6513/2022 in leading Newspapers but you failed to resume your duty.
 - Your above acts are tantamount to inefficiency and wilful absence toward official duty.
- Now therefore, you hereby directed to resume your duty with in **Fifteen Days of this Publication/final notice in the press.**
 - Your written reply to the Wilful Absence Notice Should also reach to the undersigned within 15 days of the publication of this notice failing which ex-parte decision shall be taken against you.
 - You are also called upon to convey in writing if you would like to be heard in person.
 - In case of non-compliance and failed to resume duty, you will be treated under Rule-9 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government Servants (Efficiency & Discipline) Rules, 2011 which tantamount towards "Removal from Service" under ibid Rules.

Executive Engineer
Public Health Engineering Division
Peshawar-1

INF(P)# 7101/22, The Frontier Post Peshawar, Date: 23-12-22



LAHORE: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah talking to the media outside the Governor House.



Governor urges universities to ensure transparency in appointments

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Thursday urged the public sector universities to uphold merit and transparency during appointments and administrative affairs to avoid litigation and legal complications.

Addressing the Senate meeting of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) here, he said that universities should focus more on education and character building of youth instead of wasting energies in unnecessary matters, litigation and court cases.

“We are not all against each other, but the common goal of all of us is to strengthen the higher edu-

cational institutions and maintain the educational quality and prestige of these institutions of higher education besides providing the best educational environment to students,” he remarked.

The Governor said SBBWU was providing modern education to the women of the entire province including Peshawar in the best educational environment which was commendable.

He said that he has great respect for educational institutions and expects that all the valuable time and attention of the universities should be focused on imparting quality education as well as training the

younger generation.

In the Senate meeting, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Safia Ahmed presented the report of the University Syndicate regarding the action plan on the inquiry report of the Governor Inspection Team regarding recruitment irregularities in the varsity.

It was decided on the occasion that a sub-committee of the Senate would review all aspects of the report submitted by the University Syndicate to the Senate and give its decision within 14 days.

Under the chairmanship of Secretary Higher Education Department Dawood Khan, the sub-committee would include

Vice Chancellor SBBWU, Additional Secretary Governor Saiful Islam and representatives of the Finance Department and Establishment Department.

Vice Chancellor SBBWU Professor Dr. Safia Ahmed, Justice (R) Mrs. Irshad Qaiser, Higher Education Commission representative Dr. Rasool Jan, Principal Secretary to Governor Mahmood Hasan, Secretary Higher Education Department Daud Khan, Additional Secretary Finance Department, Additional Secretary Other members of the Senate including the Department of Establishment participated in the meeting.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan inaugurating cricket stadium at Hayatabad Sports Complex.

Thalassemia increases day by day: Ijaz F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hamza Foundation Thalassemia Welfare Hospital Ijaz Ali Khan said that government along with other stakeholders must join hands for controlling the disease because patients of thalassemia is increasing day by day.

This he said while addressing a session on Thalassemia at Hamza Foundation Welfare Hospital Peshawar in which Medical Director Tariq Khan, Landy Doctor Shafiq Sahar and parents of thalassemia patients were present. He claimed that 1442 patients are only registered in Hamza Foundation while it is increasing day by day across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The speakers stressed governments both at federal and province to lay down comprehensive plan for thalassemia to control the fatal disease in the country.

GJGA new cabinet takes oath F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Newly elected cabinet of Gems, Jewellers and Goldsmiths Association (GJGA) took oath of their office, on Thursday.

The newly elected Amin Hussain Babar said that he will continue to facilitate traders involved in gems, jewelers and goldsmiths in every odd situation. He claimed that welfare of GJGA members should top priority and voice will be upheld at every forum.

During oath taking ceremony provincial general secretary Haji Fayyaz Durrani, Nawab Ali Shah and Muhammad Saeed along with other GJGA's members were present.

Canals closure schedule notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Department of Irrigation has announced closure of all canals, lift irrigational schemes, tube wells, and solar channels from January 10, 2023 to February 9, 2023 for annual repair.

The closure dates of selected schemes would be extended after evaluating desilting and repair work. The most appropriate closure dates have been selected keeping in view harvesting season and to minimize effects on crops, said an official release issued here Thursday from Chief Engr South KSP Irrigation Department.

Winter vacations cancelled

PESHAWAR (APP): The Elementary and Secondary Education on Thursday notified cancellation of winter vacations in summer zone of the province to complete the course work.

It said that the directorate has decided to waive off winter vacations in summer zone till any unusual change in the weather condition because the working day for academic session 2022-23 were not sufficient to complete the course work.

Similarly, it said that the winter vacations in winter zone have also been reduced and schools in these areas would remain closed from January 1, 2023 to February 15, 2023.

CJ: Citizen didn't demand concrete but needs public's parks

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid observed that establishment of parks are the need of Peshawar and its citizens to take breath in clean air neither needs more concrete buildings while remarked that conversion of public parks shouldn't be allowed to commercial areas.

This was observed by CJ PHC Justice Qaiser while hearing Fazal Hanif petition in which Amin-ur-Rehman Yousafzai and Amir Javeed Advocates appeared on behalf of petitioner and Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) respectively.

During hearing Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid ordered PDA's authorities to

ensure in written that parks property should only be utilized for public's park. He remarked that PDA should neither convert park's land to commercial nor to establish Sunday Bazaars on the garden's estate.

The counsel Amin-ur-Rehman Yousafzai Advocate informed that Sunday Bazaar was established on park's land at Regi Model Town which was demolished after court's intervention and added that the situation demands permanent solution into the issue.

In the meantime, Chief Justice PHC remarked that court should direct PDA to resolve the issue on permanent basis while PDA's lawyer informed that seven parks have been completed out of 14 at Regi Model Town and remaining should be completed soon.

PDA's lawyer Amir Javeed further added that Hayatabad Sunday Bazaar was established on land Civic center as per 1992 maps and argued that 188 Kanals land is acquired for Sunday Bazaar at Ring Road while PDA will utilize spare land. He added that PDA also shifted SOS village Phase-5 Hayatabad.

Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid remarked that we cannot afford further concrete because people need public parks to breath in clean air and added that parks must provide entertain to citizens. Chief Justice PHC Justice Qaiser Rashid ordered concerned lawyers to take written oath from PDA that Park's land should only be utilized for public's parks and it shouldn't be converted to commercial areas.

10th death anniversary: Asfandiyar pays tribute to Bashir Bilour Shaheed

PESHAWAR (INP): Central President Awami National Party (ANP), Asfandiyar Wali Khan has said that valiant political personalities like Bashir Ahmad Bilour Shaheed are born after centuries.

In his statement issued from Bacha Khan Markaz on the 10th death anniversary of Shaheed Bashir Bilour here on Thursday, Asfandiyar Wali Khan said when the wave of terrorism was at its peak in the province, ANP stalwart Bashir Bilour Shaheed did not hesitate to continue the political struggle for the wellbeing of his people and kept criticizing the nefarious

objectives of the anti-state elements.

Asfandiyar further said that Shaheed Bashir Bilour practically proved his love for the nation and demonstrated himself as a true soldier of Bacha Khan. Due to the anti-violence policy of ANP, he said the anti-state elements were still targeting the people of their party.

Once again, he said, terrorists were on the prowl in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provincial government seemed clueless about rectifying the situation. He said his party will never take a back step from its stance on terrorism.

Khan continued that the

sacrifices of their party leaders and workers were for the survival and security of the nation. Terrorists and terrorism have no religion or boundaries, he said, adding that those who killed a man like Bashir Bilour were not even humans.

The terrorists, he said, snatched a very beloved friend and political partner from them but the mission of Bashir Bilour Shaheed would continue. How the family of Bashir Bilour Shaheed exhibited its bravery and valiance in the aftermath of the situation was a beacon for the entire nation.

RTS commission redresses 5 complaints



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Services (RTS) Commission, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held here redressed five public complaints on Thursday.

The meeting of the RTS Commission was held here with Chief Commissioner RTS, Mohammad Saleem Khan in the chair and redressed the public complaints.

The commission has received a complaint from a disabled person, Said Mand, a resident of the tribal district Bajaur, who have complained of delaying tactics in the registration of his First Information Report (FIR) by the police.

The concerned Station House Officer (SHO), Mazoom Khan appeared before the commission, which after detailed review of all documents directed the District Police Officer (DPO), Bajaur and SHO

concerned to register the FIR and re-appear before them.

Mohammad Shakil, a resident of Peshawar had filed an application with the commission regarding hardships in the delimitation of his ancestral properties. The officials of the revenue department appeared before the commission and presented a record of the case.

An inquiry into the matter revealed negligence in the transfer of the properties, which prompted the commission to direct the concerned officials to correct the procedure within a period of 14 days.

A resident of Mohmand, Malik Rasool have had lodged complaint regarding hardships in the obtaining of domicile certificate. The commission directed issuance of domicile within a period of 10 days and directed the Deputy

Commissioner (DC) to continue the process of verification.

In the case of a resident of Upper Kohistan, the commission decided the matter in light of the inquiry report of the DPO and said that matter is civil issue. Therefore, he should move to judiciary.

Meraj, a complainant from Peshawar did not attend the proceeding due to his personal engagements, so the commission granted him a period of 14 days.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Commissioner, Mohammad Saleem Khan said that timely provision of basic services to the people is the basic responsibility of each public sector institution and their employees and the commission will continue its endeavours to create a sense of responsibility in them.

Muqam visits regional offices of SNGPL, USC and NADRA



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Prime Minister and Provincial President of PML-N Engineer Amir Muqam on Thursday visited the regional head offices of Sui Northern Gas (SNGPL), Utility Stores Corporation and NADRA in Peshawar.

While on visit to Regional Headquarters of SNGPL, he directed the authorities to start working on all the approved development schemes of SNGPL in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa immediately as the federal cabinet has approved to proceed with the works on these schemes and now it is necessary to ensure their completion as soon as possible.

On this occasion, he was given a detailed briefing by the authorities of SNGPL Mardan and Peshawar Regions regarding the current status of the respective

development projects.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that they were well aware of the problems of public pertaining to gas supply and that the federal government's priority is to provide maximum relief to the people in this regard.

He directed the authorities to start working on new gas pipelines, replacement of old lines and other related matters, he termed these priorities and also directed officials to pay special attention to solving the complaints of the people of the province related to low gas pressure and gas load shedding.

On the occasion of his visit to the Zonal Office of Utility Stores, the Adviser

to the Prime Minister also inspected the utility store established in the Zonal Office and talked to the men and women waiting for flour and Ghee. The adviser disapproved of and enquired about those responsible for the delay in supply.

Engineer Amir Muqam expressed his displeasure over the fact that people have been waiting outside the store since eight in the morning to get flour and ghee.

He added that despite the passage of several hours, the supply of these commodities has not started. He strictly instructed the concerned officials to ensure timely delivery of the said

commodities on a daily basis so that the people coming to the store do not have to wait.

On this occasion, he also took a briefing regarding the utility stores in the province and directed the concerned authorities to work not only to increase the number of stores but also to make more mobile units active, throughout the province; so that the supply of cheap flour and other commodities to the poor people of the province at their doorsteps is ensured.

Engineer Amir Muqam took a briefing regarding the activities of NADRA Centers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the occasion of his visit to NADRA Regional Headquarters.

He directed the concerned authorities to ensure maximum convenience for the people of the province in providing NADRA facilities and pay special attention to redressal of public grievances.

The plans of new gas pipelines in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also discussed.

Murder victim's brother seeks justice

PESHAWAR (APP): A victim of a murdered brother from district Mardan on Thursday urged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police chief to provide him justice as the killers were still at large despite passage of nine months of the incident.

Addressing a press conference here, the victim Fawad Ali s/o Wazir Faqir while telling his plight said that he was working in fields along with his brother in Lond Khawar Badargo area in district

Mardan on April 19, 2022 when the accused Salim and his son Mushtaq opened showered bullets at them with automatic weapons killing his brother on spot.

He said luckily he remained unhurt in the incident of firing, adding that the accused escaped from the scene after committing the crime.

He said an FIR was lodged with local police station under section 302, 324 and 34 on the same day

but unfortunately both the accused were not arrested rather they roam in the village freely while carrying illegal weapons.

The victim said that he had also lodge an online complaint at KP police online complaint desk on August 16, 2022 and was marked to DSP Takhat Bhai but to no use.

He urged the police chief to take notice of his complaint and order the local police to arrest the culprits and provide him justice.

Closure of markets, wedding halls: Traders urge govt to review decision

PESHAWAR (APP): President, Traders Unity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mujeeb Rehman here Thursday urged Federal Government to review its decision regarding closure of markets and restaurants at 8p.m. and marriages halls at 10p.m.

In a press statement here, he said that traders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had

suffered great financial losses due to terrorism first and later in COVID-19 pandemic and early closure of markets, restaurants and marriage halls would adversely affect their business.

He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were relatively placed on disadvantage location due to its distance from Karachi port and its traders were spending more

amount on transportation of goods than others provinces.

He expressed the hope that the decision regarding closures of markets and wedding halls would be reviewed in the largest interest of the traders and business community and decisions in this regard would be taken after consultation of traders leadership.

PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Thursday notified power suspension from various grids of the province from December 23 to 31 due to unavoidable maintenance work.

Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Jamrud Grid Station on December 24 and 31 from 9 AM to 3 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Hayatabad Old, Express 1, Khyber, Hayatabad 9, Hayatabad 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Hayatabad, Health Care Hospital, Northwest, Kidney Center, RMI, Gull Abad, PIC, Mohmand Steel, Nathren Botling,

Hayatabad Surgical Hospital, Peshawar General, Health Net Hospital, Shakas 1 feeders would face inconvenience.

Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Phase 7 Hayatabad Grid Station on December 24 and 31 from 9 AM to 3 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Hayatabad 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, Hayatabad Old, Deans Heights, Shaikat Khanam, Hayatabad 4, PC Hotel, Frontier Ceramics, Domel, Khyber 1.2 feeders would face inconvenience.

Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar University

Grid Station on December 23, 27 and 30 from 8 AM to 12 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV University Campus, Ring Road, Canal Town, Malkandher, Engineering, Regi, Gull Abad, Taj Abad, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara Road, Achini Mera 1, 2, Rahat Abad 2, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, HMK, Askari 6, Achini Mera, Safdar Abad 2, RMT feeders would face inconvenience.

Power supply would remain suspended from 220

KV Mardan Grid Station on December 24, 29 and 30 from 9 AM to 3 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Muhabatabad, Sheikh Maltoon, Express Industrial, Bacha Khan MED College feeders would face inconvenience.

Power Supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Grid Station on December 24, 29, 30 and 31 from 9 AM to 3 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Jan Abad, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Town, New Charsadda, Manga, Saleem Khan, Gujar Ghari, Muslim Abad and New Saleem Khan feeders would face inconvenience.



In brief

Man killed in road accident

SARGODHA (APP): A man was killed in a road accident at Sarai Muhajir, in the limits of Mankeera police station on Thursday. Police said that Muhammad Arslan (44) r/o Mankeera area was going to Bhakkar by a car when his four-wheeler collided with a rashly driven truck near link road due to dense fog. He died on the spot. Rescue-1122 team along with police reached the spot and shifted the body to a nearby hospital for necessary legal formalities. Meanwhile, the Agriculture Department have booked three farmers on the charge of burning residue of crops near here on Thursday. According to the official sources, a team of the department visited Alipur Syeda village, Zain Pur and Phularwan Road and found that Amjad, Abdul Razaq and Manzoor Ahmad were involved in burning the crop residues. The team got registered cases against the farmers.

2 POs arrested in Pabbi F.P. Report

PABBI: Police has arrested six alleged culprits including two proclaimed offenders (POs) during search and strike operation while recovered contrabands from their possession. During search and strike operations police had also arrested 19 alleged suspects along with two POs and four drug-dealers in the premises of Akbarpura police station. Police has recovered two pistols, one kilogram of Ice-drug and four kilograms of hashish from their possession. Police has registered separate First Information Reports against alleged culprits and started further investigation.

Teachers set up farewell party F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A farewell party was organized in honor of headmaster Bahadar Khan on his retirement here in government high school Ghafoor Khan Kalley last day. The impressive gathering was attended by assistant district education officer, Inayat Ullah Afridi, chief of all private school association Haji Iqbal Afridi, teachers, students and people from different walks of life. Teachers and students presented bouquets and gifts to the retired headmaster and lauded services; he rendered to educate children of the area. Speaking on the occasion Bahadar Khan thanked his colleagues, students and their parents for giving him honor and respect and said school was his real home as he had spent precious years of age in spreading knowledge in the area.

Relief goods distributed F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Al-Khidmat Foundation distributed relief materials consisting on winter package to the flood and rain victims of Kisu village. These goods were distributed to 130 families whose houses were affected by floods or rains and they were facing great difficulties with the arrival of winter. It includes mattresses, pillows and warm beds. Talking to the media, president Alkhidmat Foundation Lower Chitral Abdul Haq said that the first flood occurred in Chitral Lower on 28 July 2022 and many villages were affected by it. On July 29, Al Khidmat Foundation Chitral started the relief work. Food packages, tents, tarpaulins, clothes and beds were distributed among the three thousand victims of the affected areas.

Govt promoting renewable energy sources: Dastagir

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engineer Khurram Dastagir Khan here Thursday said the government was promoting renewable energy sources including wind, hydropower, coal, solar and bioenergy in order to make Pakistan self-sufficient in electricity for speedy economic growth and development.

He was addressing after inspection of ongoing construction work on high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station at tehsil Azakhel Bala in Nowshera district. The Minister also laid the foundation stone of a 500KV HVAC grid station at Nowshera.

The Nowshera converter station was being constructed under CASA-1000 Project for transmission of 1300 megawatt inexpensive, clean and environment friendly electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan.

CASA-1000 Project is a great example of mutual cooperation of governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan aimed at harnessing clean energy and building a shared regional electricity market, fighting climate change and increasing standard of living for their populations.

The minister said that CASA-1000 project was a mega project of electricity's trade that would usher in a

new era of economic prosperity and development besides meeting the growing energy demands of the country. Focus was being made to utilize domestic resources on priority basis to increase energy production while the power transmission system was being strengthened in the country.

Recalling PTI's four years of poor performance in the government, he said it was a dark era with regard to poor and development in which the country's progress as well as economy had suffered greatly. He said the coalition government had revived the pace of economic and energy development and started scores of electricity and energy projects in all four provinces of Pakistan. He said all sectors in KP would largely benefit from the CASA-1000 project after completion.

The Federal Minister said that works on different renewable energy projects were underway in the country that after completion would address the energy's shortfall and promote industrialization. He said energy infrastructure, generation and transmission projects in Gawadar, Thar, Faisalabad, Quaid e Azam park and other areas of Pakistan would change the destiny of people.

Khurram Dastagir said that about 100MW inexpensive and affordable electricity would be provided to all coastal areas of Balochistan after its purchase from the neighbouring

country. He said work on the Thar coal project having capacity of 1320MW has been started and that a strong foundation of making Pakistan energy surplus was laid.

Kurram Dastagir said that electricity in flood hit areas in all provinces including KP, Sindh and Balochistan were quickly restored for which NTDC and other relevant organizations deserved appreciation. The Minister was accompanied by Managing Director National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC), Engr Dr Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, senior officers of Wapda and Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) besides other authorities associated with the mega project.

Earlier, the Minister was informed that construction work on the converter station at Nowshera was underway and is expected to be completed by June 2023. HVDC converter station Nowshera would be linked by an HVDC transmission line to efficiently transmit electricity from hydropower-rich Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan. The station would then link power into Pakistan's existing high voltage alternating current (HVAC) transmission network by delivering substantial benefits to the country's power grids besides benefiting a large number of electricity users in the region.

152 kanals released from land-grabber mafia

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: As many as 152 Kanals have been released from land grabber mafia during grand operation in Kanjo Township while several operatives of the mafia were arrested with and weapons were recovered from their possession, on Thursday.

A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Swat Arshad Khan while addressing a press conference along with SDDA and police officers in Kanju police station said that on 12th December 2022 plaintiff Asadullah Director Urban Area Development Authority Township Kanju Swat reported that Sector F Plot no. 215 Fayyaz Ali Shah resident of Kanju

township is trying to encroach by cutting down different types of trees and forcefully making a road in government land and occupying more government land.

A case was registered against Fayyaz Ali Shah in Kanju police station. DIG Malakand and DPO Swat Shafiullah Gandapur immediately took action and assigned the task of arresting the accused to Additional SP Lower Swat Arshad Khan, on which Additional SP Arshad Khan along with SDPO Circle Kabal and SHO Kanju police station along with other police personnel took action. Persons engaged in cutting trees and other encroachments on the spot and named 23

accused persons in this case, in which one 9mm pistol with 33 cartridges was recovered. Similarly, a rifle of 7.62 bore was recovered.

Further, one Repeater gun 12 bore 6 cartridges and one 9mm pistol with 15 cartridges, 4 small saws, ax and one big saw were seized from the tent in the occupied plot. The police arrested a total of 23 accused from the spot except Fayyaz Ali Shah. While efforts are on to arrest him. SP Arshad Khan further said that this city is not unpopular, the law is applicable here, the responsibility of every citizen to act and action will be taken against those who violate the law.



CHITRAL: Locals enjoying during Chamos Festival in Kalash. — F.P. photo

Kalash community's colorful winter festival ends

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The Kailash community's colourful 15-days annual winter festival of Chawmoss ended amid great funfair at Bumburet Valley on Thursday.

According to a press release issued here, the KP Culture and Tourism Authority illuminated the valley through lights and informative and indicative sign board at different locations. The authority left no stone unturned to provide the best facilities to the visiting tourists to enjoy the multi-coloured traditional displays of their ancient culture and performances of locals in the festival, simultaneously held in three valleys of Kailash.

On the final day, members of the ancient tribes, old and young men, women and children sang and danced to their folk tunes to

welcome the New Year. The main winter event of Chawmoss has simultaneously been celebrated in the valleys of Rumbur, Birir and Bumburet valleys.

The people of the exotic religion exchanged fruit, vegetables, flowers and dried fruits with vows to forge love, peace, friendship, and fraternity among themselves. Earlier, children had cleaned the holy place of Kailash with pine twigs before holding the annual great bonfire. Children, considered a sign of continuity of life, dressed in colourful dresses darted about the village receiving gifts of fresh fruits. As part of their religious customs, the Kailash men and women sang songs and performed folk dance to the beat of drums. Teenagers wearing animal hides and masks enthralled the audience with their performances.



BANNU: Officials and others are offering funeral prayer of CTD man Shah Wali, who was martyred in CTD compound attack. - F.P. photo

Security beefed up in Kohat: DPO Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: District Police Officer Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani on Thursday said that foolproof security arrangements have been put in place to ensure peaceful observance of Christmas in the district.

During his visit to all churches in the district to review the security arrangements, he ordered the officers and jawans to remain on high alert on the eve of Christmas and provide foolproof security besides facilitating the christian community. The DPO also met the administrators of the churches and directed police officers to finalise the security arrangements along with the administrations of the churches.

US donors' visit Talha Foundation F.P. Report

KARAK: US donors' visit to the Talha Foundation Center expressed happiness and satisfaction over the standard medical facilities provided to hepatitis and dialysis patients in the center and the full relief of the flood-affected people. Donors of the Talha Foundation based in the United States, Muhammad Zaman.

A delegation consisting of two doctors, including Gandapur, paid a surprise visit to the Dialysis Center established at Fateh Sheri Chowk by Talha Foundation in Karak. Meanwhile, the delegation inspected the modern machinery and standard treatment in the center and handed over the free medical facilities provided to the patients at the center. In addition, he was very impressed by the organization of the largest free medical campus established for the victims of the flood-affected southern districts two months ago and the free facility, quality and future planning of dialysis given to 18 patients in the center on a daily basis.

Intra-schools' IT Quiz held Saqib Mushtaq

LODHARAN: TEF organized an Intra-Schools Information Technology (IT) Quiz Competition at TIGER. Teams from core schools participated with enthusiasm, on Thursday. The competition included fundamental questions related to computer software and hardware. The Lodhran Public School team managed to win this competition, while the Government Girls High School Lodhran came second. Both teams were awarded shields and prizes. Participatory prizes were also distributed among other teams.

The competition was attended by Muhammad Kashif Sattar (Virtual University Campus Manager, Bahawalpur) as the chief guest. Overall, the quiz competition was successful and a great learning experience. Participating teams were from the following TEF core schools: Lodhran Public School, Government Girls High School, Khanwan Ghalwan School, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Wahi Salamat Rai, and Amina Girls High School.

Traders life become miserable in Hafizabad

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Two unidentified armed robbers looted a spare parts dealer near Pindi Bhattian and fled away after looting Rs.5 lakh in cash. The looting of dacoits throughout the district made life miserable for the people. While the favorite SHO of political members posted in the police stations look helpless in front of the robbers.

According to the details, Chak No. 44 South Sargodha businessman Ehsan Mahmood son of Salamat along with Muhammad Azam resident of Lalian was returning from Lahore after buying spare parts in a vehicle when two unidentified armed robbers stopped them near Kutianwala Bridge Pindi Bhattian and robbed them of five lakh rupees and ran away.

It is worth mentioning here that the other day, more than ten armed bandits escaped from the house of a Saudi Arabian man after looting 30 million, but the police have not yet been able to trace the accused and Hafizabad district has now become a haven for robbers, due to which people are worried. Public social circles have demanded the IG Punjab Police to take notice of the growing political interference in Hafizabad police department and implement the appointment of SHOs on merit.

Framers compelled to obtain fertilizer from black-market: Fertilizer dealers and shopkeepers started earning silver despite the meetings and raids of the dis-

trict administration in Hafizabad, urea fertilizer had not come to the open market. Getting fertilizer at government rates will be a dream for farmers and cultivators. Dealers and shopkeepers started earning huge profits by black marketing like last year.

According to the details, in Hafizabad, where district administration officers and deputy commissioner are making claims to provide urea fertilizer to farmers and cultivators at government rates, fertilizer is still missing from the open market.

On the one hand, the helplessness of the officers is visible and on the other hand it has become impossible for the farmers and the landowners to get the fertilizer on the first irrigation along with the cultivation of the crop. The Central Vice President of Kisan Board Pakistan, Amanullah Chatha and others have strongly protested against this and said that if the supply of urea fertilizer is not ensured in the open market at the government rates, then they will protest.

Motorcycle stolen: Unidentified thieves stole the motorcycle of a citizen. According to details, Hafiz Shahzaib son of Shah Nawaz resident of People's Colony parked his motorcycle outside the house from where unknown thieves stole his motorcycle and escaped.

In another incident, unidentified thieves stole gold ornaments, fifty thousand rupees in cash and other goods from the house of Imtiaz Hussain son of Zafar Iqbal in Thatthi Bahloolpur.

Two dead in D I Khan road accidents

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Two persons were killed and as many got injured in two accidents that occurred in different areas of the city owing to dense fog.

According to Rescue 1122, a young man was killed and another got injured when their motorcycle was hit by an unknown vehicle near the Dhanpawala police check post on Dera-Darya Khan road. The cause of the accident was dense fog in the limits of Gomal University Police Station.

The deceased was identified as Rajab Ali, son of Muhammad Hussain

Qureshi, resident of Mustafabad while the injured was identified as Rahim Qureshi, resident of Mustafabad.

In another accident, 27-year-old Misbahuddin Wazir, son of Habib and 20-year-old Muhibullah Wazir, son of Sher Ghani, residents of Naivela, were riding a bike when their two-wheeler was hit by a vehicle near Fateh Morr on Indus Highway. As a result, Misbahuddin Wazir died on the spot and Muhibullah Wazir got injured. The bodies and injured from both incidents were immediately shifted to Civil Hospital Dera.

Proclaimed offender

arrested: The district police on Thursday arrested a proclaimed offender and narcotics dealer during an ongoing operation against anti-social elements. According to the spokesman, Karri Khaisor police station under the leadership of DSP Pharpur circle Aftab Alam Khan conducted operations against criminals and narcotics dealers at different areas within limits of Karri Khaisor police station.

During the operation, the police arrested a proclaimed offender and narcotics dealer, Muhammad Saleem and Gul Khan. Both accused were put behind bars.

KP Edu Boards to start SLO-based exam system

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Boards' Chairmen Committee (KPBOCC), comprised of all chairmen of educational boards in the province, on Thursday announced to conduct the upcoming annual examinations for grade 9th students under the Students Learning Outcome (SLO) system. The announcement was made at the conclusion of a two-day meeting of the KPBOCC held at Chakdara with its chairman Prof Zamin Gul in the chair.

The chairmen of educational boards of Peshawar, Mardan, Swat, Bannu, Abbottabad, Kohat, DI Khan, Textbook board Peshawar and Technical board attended the meeting. The meeting, after a thorough review of the existing examination system, decided to conduct the upcoming board examination for grade 9th under the SLO system that aimed to end the centuries-old tradition of the Rota system. The meeting was informed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had already given its approval in this regard. The meeting also

decided to train 50 subject specialists' teachers each from the boards with the objectives to prepare SLO based question papers and marking procedure. The meeting decided that workshops for the selected specialists would be arranged.

The BISE Malakand chairman Prof Zamin Gul while talking to this reporter termed the decision as a revolutionary one and said it would have positive effects on the students' learning in future. He said the SLO-based system of examination would also help end the rota system and the students would learn a clear concept of education. He said that all educational boards had uploaded modal papers on their websites and the students, teachers and parents could benefit from them. The chairman said the educational boards had started their preparation for conducting an annual examination expected to be held in the month of April and May next year. He said the teachers and the parents should help prepare the students for this new examination system.

Students' protest: The male and female students of

the University of Malakand (UoM) on Thursday staged a protest rally and a walk at Chakdara against the Taliban ban on higher education for women in Afghanistan.

Dozens of students led by Izaz Khan and Anees ur Rehman gathered outside the university's main campus and chanted slogans in favour of education.

Two students die in mishap F.P. Report

MARDAN: Two students died after their motorcycle collided with a speedy truck in Mardan district on Thursday.

According to police, the tragic incident occurred on Malakand-Takht Bhai Road where motorcyclist Shadab and Talha were hit by a speedy truck coming from opposite direction due to wrong overtaking and died on the spot.

Meanwhile, Abdul Rehman was killed when accused Anis Khan allegedly started firing at him at Ghari Inayat in Peshawar apparently over old enmity.



Deputy UN chief urges countries to send armed force to Haiti

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): Deputy UN chief Amina Mohammed urged countries to urgently consider Haiti's request for an international specialized armed force to help restore security in the Caribbean state and alleviate a humanitarian crisis. "Now is certainly not the time for the world to turn away from Haiti," she told the UN Security Council. "It is time to step up and turn the current crisis into an opportunity for Haiti to bounce back stronger."

Haitian gangs have expanded their territory since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise. The resulting violence has left much of the country off-limits to government and led to routine gun battles with police. In September, Haitian gangs created a humanitarian crisis by blocking a fuel terminal for nearly six weeks, halting most economic

activity. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in October proposed that one or several countries send "a rapid action force" to help Haiti's police remove a threat posed by armed gangs. He was not suggesting that the force be deployed by the United Nations. So far though, no country has offered to lead such a force, though the Bahamas has said it could send troops or police if asked to do so. Diplomats have also said some African countries were ready to offer support as well.

US Deputy UN Ambassador Robert Wood told the Security Council that Washington continues "to advocate for international security support, including a non-UN multinational force, as requested by the Haitian government." "The United States has provided more than

\$90 million in security support to Haiti in the past 18 months and will continue to provide critical support bilaterally," Wood said. Russia requested the Security Council meeting on Haiti. Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said: "We have doubts that the option of sending international military force can fundamentally change the situation." The US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said in October that the United States was drafting a Security Council resolution to back a non-UN mission to boost security and allow humanitarian aid to flow. But diplomats said the measure would not be voted on until a force was formed. A council resolution needs nine votes in favor and no vetoes by the United States, Britain, France, China or Russia.

Injured Irish peacekeeper will be evacuated

BEIRUT (AP): A wounded Irish UN peacekeeper in Lebanon was transferred from a hospital to Beirut's international airport to be medically evacuated to Ireland. Unidentified attackers opened fire on 22-year-old Pvt. Shane Kearney and three other Irish soldiers with UNIFIL, the UN's peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, last week as their convoy passed near the southern town of Al-Aqbiya. The area is a stronghold of the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group.

Kearney suffered from blunt force trauma to the head in the attack, and is in serious but stable condition. 24-year-old Pvt. Seán Rooney was killed, while the two other soldiers were

lightly wounded. Rooney's body was returned to Ireland after Lebanon and the UN held a memorial for him. A security official told The Associated Press that Rooney was shot in the head. Lebanon, Ireland, and the United Nations are holding separate investigations into the attack, but have yet to share any findings or issue any arrest warrants. The official told the AP that investigators had retrieved seven bullets from the vehicle. The Irish military in a statement said Kearney will be evacuated in a "specially equipped medical aircraft" to Casement Aerodrome, a military base southwest of Dublin, and will continue his treatment at Beaumont Hospital.

UNIFIL was created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon after a 1978 invasion. The UN expanded its mission following the 2006 war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah, allowing peacekeepers to deploy along the Israeli border to help the Lebanese military extend its authority into the country's south for the first time in decades. That resolution also called for a full cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, which has not happened. Israeli troops lobbed smoke bombs at Lebanese soldiers and residents in the southern Lebanese border town of Al-Hamames, as they set up barriers and barbed wires near its frontier.

Manila orders boosting military presence near islands

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines' defence ministry on Thursday ordered the military to strengthen its presence in the South China Sea after monitoring "Chinese activities" in disputed waters close to a strategic Philippine-held island. The ministry did not specify what activities those were and its statement follows a report this week of Chinese construction on four uninhabited features in the disputed Spratly islands, news that Beijing has dismissed as "unfounded". Any encroachment or reclamation on features within the Philippines' 200-mile exclusive economic zone "is a threat to the security of Pagasa island, which is part of Philippine sovereign territory," the min-

istry said in a statement, using the Filipino name for Thitu island. "We strongly urge China to uphold the prevailing rules-based international order and refrain from acts that will exacerbate tensions," it added. The Chinese embassy in Manila reiterated that China strictly abides by a consensus reached among claimants that included not developing uninhabited reefs and islands. Asked to respond to the defence ministry's statement, it said both countries would "properly handle maritime issues through friendly consultations."

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which billions of dollars worth of goods pass each year. Brunei,

Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have overlapping claims to various islands and features. Thitu is the most strategically important of nine features the Philippines occupies in the Spratlys, located close to Subi Reef, one of seven artificial islands that China has built on submerged reefs, some with surface-to-air missiles, aircraft hangars and runways. The Philippine military's Western Command in a statement said it had observed via regular navy and air patrols a "persistent presence" of Chinese militia near Thitu island and around Lankiam Cay, Whitsun Reef and Sandy Cay. It did specify what the Chinese boats were doing.

Russia scrubs Mariupol's identity, builds on death

KYIV (AP): Throughout Mariupol, Russian workers are tearing down bombed-out buildings at a rate of at least one a day, hauling away shattered bodies with the debris. Russian military convoys are rumbling down the broad avenues of what is swiftly becoming a garrison city, and Russian soldiers, builders, administrators and doctors are replacing the thousands of Ukrainians who have died or left. Many of the city's Ukrainian street names are reverting to Soviet ones, with the Avenue of Peace that cuts through Mariupol to be labeled Lenin Avenue. Even the large sign that announces the name of the city at its entrance has been Russified, repainted with the red, white and blue of the Russian flag and the Russian spelling. Eight months after Mariupol fell into Russian hands, Russia is eradicating all vestiges of Ukraine from it — along with the evidence of war crimes buried in its buildings. The few open schools teach a Russian curriculum, phone and television networks are Russian, the Ukrainian currency is dying out, and

Mariupol is now in the Moscow time zone. On the ruins of the old Mariupol, a new Russian city is rising, with materials from at least one European company. The Associated Press found. But the AP investigation into life in occupied Mariupol also underlines what its residents already know all too well: No matter what the Russians do, they are building upon a city of death. More than 10,000 new graves now scar Mariupol, the AP found, and the death toll might run three times higher than an early estimate of at least 25,000. The former Ukrainian city has also hollowed out, with Russian plans to demolish well over 50,000 homes, the AP calculated. Death surrounds Mariupol in the rapidly growing cemeteries on its outskirts, and its stench lingered over the city into the autumn. It haunts the memories of survivors, both in Mariupol and in exile. Every one of the dozens of residents the AP spoke with knew someone killed during the siege of Mariupol, which began with the Feb. 24 invasion. As

many as 30 people arrive at the morgue each day in hopes of tracking down a loved one. Lydya Erashova watched her 5-year-old son Artem and her 7-year-old niece Angelina die after a Russian shelling in March. The family hastily buried the young cousins in a makeshift grave in a yard and fled Mariupol. They returned in July to bury the children, only to learn while on the road that the bodies had already been dug up and taken to a warehouse. As they approached the city center, each block was bleaker than the last. "It is horror. Wherever you look, whichever way you look," said Erashova. "Everything is black, is destroyed." Neither she nor her sister-in-law could bear to go inside the warehouse to identify the bodies of their children. Their husbands, who are brothers, chose the tiny coffins — one pink and one blue — to be placed together in a single grave. Erashova, who is now in Canada, said no Russian rebuilding plan could possibly bring back what Mariupol lost.

Somali troops returning from training in Eritrea

NAIROBI (AP): Somalia's government says the first group of 5,000 Somalis who were sent to Eritrea for military training has returned home, to the relief of parents who had alleged their sons had been recruited under false pretenses. Defense Minister Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur confirmed the first group's arrival in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, and said the rest will arrive in the coming days.

"They will be part of the ongoing fighting against (extremist group) al-Shabab in several regions of the country," the minister said, referring to an offensive by Somali forces and allies against fighters who for years have held large parts of the country and regularly attacked the capital. The minister did not say how many recruits returned home from the training in Eritrea, which the previous administration under former President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed initially kept secret. The recruits were first sent to Eritrea in 2019, but Mohamed acknowledged it only after his election defeat earlier this year.

Some parents feared their sons had been sent to neighboring Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, where Eritrean forces were fighting alongside Ethiopian government forces against Tigray ones. Somalia's government denied its troops had been used in combat. One mother of a man who returned from Eritrea, Hawa Awale, told The Associated Press she was thankful to see him alive.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank Allah and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who fulfilled his promise of bringing our sons home after being elected president. I am very honored to see my son decorated with the Somali army uniform and serving his country." When current president Mohamud visited the Somali soldiers in Eritrea in July and November, he promised they would soon return home.

India to test 2% of int'l travellers for COVID

MUMBAI (Reuters): India will start randomly testing 2% of international passengers arriving at its airports for COVID-19, Mansukh Mandaviya, the country's health minister, told parliament on Thursday, as the country steps up surveillance for new coronavirus variants. "The global pandemic is not yet over. The virus is changing its face from time to time," Mandaviya told parliament on Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was set to hold a meeting with top officials on Thursday to review the COVID-19 situation in the country. "Considering the upcoming festival season and New Year, states have been advised to keep up awareness of hand hygiene and the importance of masking," Mandaviya said. India's iconic Taj Mahal, which attracts thousands of tourists every day, will now require visitors to undergo a COVID-19 test before they enter, Reuters partner ANI reported.

Lawmakers attending the ongoing winter session of parliament were spotted wearing masks. Masks have not been compulsory in most parts of the country for several months. India is reporting an average of 153 cases of COVID every day, Mandaviya said. The country has 3,402 active cases of the coronavirus, according to data from the health ministry.

The government earlier this week asked India's states to keep a lookout for any new variants of the coronavirus and urged people to wear masks in crowded areas, citing an increase in COVID-19 cases in China and other parts of the globe. With more than 44 million COVID cases to date, India has reported the most in the world behind the United States. However, its number of confirmed infections has fallen sharply in the past few months.



ZHUOZHOU: A patient is turned away from the emergency room due to full capacity at the Baoding No. 2 Central Hospital in northern China's Hebei province.

WHO 'very concerned' about reports of severe COVID in China

GENEVA (AP): The head of the World Health Organization said the agency is "very concerned" about rising reports of severe coronavirus disease across China after the country largely abandoned its "zero COVID" policy, warning that its lagging vaccination rate could result in large numbers of vulnerable people getting infected.

At a press briefing, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the UN agency needs more information on COVID-19 severity in China, particularly regarding hospital and intensive care unit admissions, "in order to make a comprehensive risk assessment of the situation on the ground." "WHO is very concerned over the evolving situation in China with increasing reports of severe disease," Tedros said. He added that while COVID deaths have dropped more than 90% since their global peak, there were still too many uncertainties about the virus to conclude that the pandemic is over.

Some scientists have warned that the unchecked spread of COVID-19 in China could spur the emergence of new variants, which might unravel progress made globally to contain the pandemic. "Vaccination is the exit

strategy from omicron," WHO emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan said.

Ryan said the explosive surge of cases in China was not exclusively due to the lifting of many of the country's restrictive policies and that it was impossible to stop transmission of omicron, the most highly infectious variant yet seen of COVID-19. He said vaccination rates among people over age 60 in China lagged behind many other countries and that the efficacy of the Chinese-made vaccines was about 50%.

"That's just not adequate protection in a population as large as China, with so many vulnerable people," Ryan said. He added that while China has dramatically increased its capacity to vaccinate people in recent weeks, it's unclear whether that will be enough. To date, China has declined to authorize Western-made messenger RNA vaccines, which have proven to be more effective than its locally made shots. Beijing did agree to allow a shipment of the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine to be imported, for Germans living in China.

"The question remains whether or not enough vaccination can be done in the coming week or two weeks that will actually blunt the impact of the

second wave and the burden on the health system," Ryan said. Like

Tedros, he said WHO had insufficient information about the extent of severe disease and hospitalization, but he noted that nearly all countries overwhelmed by COVID-19 had struggled to share such real-time data.

Ryan also suggested China's definition of COVID deaths was too narrow, saying the country was limiting it to people who have suffered respiratory failure. "People who die of COVID die from many different (organ) systems' failures, given the severity of infection," Ryan said. "So limiting a diagnosis of death from COVID to someone with a COVID positive test and respiratory failure will very much underestimate the true death toll associated with COVID."

Countries such as Britain, for example, define any COVID death as someone who has died within 28 days of testing positive for the virus. Globally, nearly every country has grappled with how to count COVID deaths, and official numbers are believed to be a major underestimate. In May, WHO estimated there were nearly 15 million coronavirus deaths worldwide, more than double the official toll of 6 million.

Illegal immigrant sentenced to time served, faces state charges

MEXICO CITY (Agencies): A 34-year-old deported immigrant who somehow found his way back to Hawaii from Mexico and was found sleeping in a car in Kona was sentenced to time served by a federal judge — eight months after being held in custody. A 34-year-old deported immigrant who somehow found his way back to Hawaii from Mexico and was found sleeping in a car in Kona was sentenced to time served by a federal judge — eight months after being held in custody.

Martin Medina Macias was indicted May 5 and on Aug. 23 pleaded guilty to a single federal charge of "reentry of removed alien." He did not enter into a plea agreement with the US Department of Justice. In addition to time served, Macias was sentenced to two years of supervised release, but a new deportation proceeding is expected in the case. Macias must also answer for criminal charges at the state level.

Macias was sentenced to two years of "supervised release," not probation. "A new deportation proceeding is expected in the case."

Macias, who was born in Jalisco, Mexico, in 1988, was deported Feb. 12, 2020, following a 2014 felony conviction in state court. It is not clear how Macias got back into the country. Before he had been deported, Macias came to the attention of Homeland Security Investigations after a source reported that a Mexican national, later identified as Macias, "may be residing in the United States without proper documentation"; specifically in Kailua-Kona, "according to federal court documents."

On Dec. 30, 2019, an HSI agent interviewed Macias after he was arrested by the Hawaii Police Department for a traffic violation and transported to the Kona Police Station. Macias originally told the HSI agent that he was born in Nevada and was a US citizen, according to the criminal complaint against him. The HSI agent presented evidence that Macias was lying, and Macias then admitted "he was born in Mexico and was brought to the United States at a young age." Macias allegedly told the HSI agent that after entering the United States, he was never able to adjust

his status "because of his multiple prior arrests."

Macias has at least 15 criminal and traffic violations at the state level, including abuse of a household member, promoting a dangerous drug, car theft and drunken driving. He has pending criminal cases connected to a 2014 first-degree robbery investigation and a 2019 driving-without-a-license incident, according to the complaint. The HSI agent placed Macias under administrative arrest for violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Macias was transported to Kona International Airport and turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities, who took him to Honolulu.

On Feb. 7, 2020, Macias was served a "Warning to Alien Ordered Removed or Deported" that advised him that he was "prohibited from entering, attempting to enter, or being in the United States for a period of 10 years from the date of your departure from the United States." Macias had been given the option to leave the US voluntarily, but in February 2020 he was physically removed to

Mexico via San Ysidro, Calif., according to the complaint.

On Feb. 7 two Hawaii police officers found Macias sleeping in a parked car on a roadway in Kailua-Kona, according to an affidavit in support of the federal criminal complaint that charged him with a single count of reentering the country. Macias told the officers his name was James Lopez and that he was born April 4, 1988. He allegedly refused to provide proof to the officers that he was James Lopez, and started the car despite warnings from officers to turn it off.

Macias "put the vehicle into gear and began to accelerate at a high rate of speed," according to the federal complaint. The officers avoided being struck. The officers were able to query law enforcement databases and confirmed that "James Lopez" was Macias. Macias' attorney, Assistant Federal Public Defender Maximilian J. Mizono, did not immediately reply to a request for comment. Assistant US Attorney Darren W.K. Ching, who prosecuted the case for the government, declined comment.

UN extends Congo peacekeeping force with an eye to its exit

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The Security Council voted unanimously to extend the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo with an eye to its eventual exit, and to lift a notification requirement on some arms purchases which Congo's foreign minister recently called "unjustified and humiliating." The separate resolutions were approved amid worsening security in Congo's mineral-rich east, a region rife with rebel groups and an upsurge in violence and civilian killings that has uprooted tens of thousands of its inhabitants. The resolution extending the UN peacekeeping force

known as MONUSCO until Dec. 20, 2023, strongly condemns all domestic and foreign armed groups operating in the country and demands they immediately cease all violence and destabilizing actions "and the illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources." It also demands the immediate withdrawal of M23 rebels, who have been fighting a coalition of armed civilian protection militias in the east for more than a year, as agreed at a mini-summit in the Angolan capital Luanda in late November and endorsed by the African Union. It also expresses concern about reported

links between Uganda-based Allied Democratic Forces rebels and "terrorist networks" in eastern Congo.

The Security Council said Congo "continues to suffer from recurring and evolving cycles of conflict and persistent violence by foreign and domestic armed groups, which exacerbate a deeply concerning security, human rights and humanitarian crisis, as well as inter-communal and militia violence" in areas of the country. It expressed great concern at the humanitarian situation in the country that has left an estimated 27 million Congolese in need of aid, a

growing number of internally displaced people now estimated at 5.7 million as well as 523,000 refugees from other nearby countries, and 1 million refugees from Congo elsewhere in Africa as a result of ongoing hostilities.

The resolution strongly urged all Congolese political players to implement "critical governance, security and economic reforms," and to deliver on President Felix Tshisekedi's commitments to pursue national unity, strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights, fight against corruption, and launch development programs to reduce poverty.

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Taliban’s self isolation

RECENTLY, the Afghan Interim government announced a ban on higher education for women in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Hundreds of young women were stopped by armed guards on Wednesday from entering Afghan university campuses. Afghan women and girls expressed extreme dismay over the utter violation of their fundamental rights and slammed the rulers for alleged illiteracy and low knowledge of Islam and human rights.

Seemingly, the sitting Taliban rulers had continuously repeated the history and systematically reimplemented the policies of their founding father, Mullah Omar during the Taliban's previous rule in Afghanistan before September 2001. Although, the Taliban assured the global community of their soft and molded stance regarding human and women's rights in the country. The latest decision of the Taliban government has attracted worldwide condemnation and strong criticism from their friends and foes while the global community including the United Nations, human rights organizations, and nations across the globe termed it a grave violation of women's and girls' rights in a conflict-ridden nation. The western nations and America accused the Taliban government of failing to uphold and protect human and women's rights in their country.

Unfortunately, the decision came a day before an important UN meeting was being convened on the Afghanistan issue while the aid groups and friends of Afghans were urging the global community to recognize the Afghan interim government as representative of the Afghan nation to help reduce the economic and humanitarian crisis in the country. Historically, well before the US withdrawal, the International community, human rights groups as well as Afghan women fear the reversal of the gains and progress made by the country regarding democracy, human and women rights, girls' education, and civil liberties over the past two decades. Despite promising a softer rule before they seized power last year, the Taliban have ratcheted up restrictions on all aspects of women's lives including a ban on higher education, employment in most sectors along with movement without a male escort in the country. At the same time, Afghan rulers utterly ignored the repeated calls from the global community for inclusiveness of the Afghan interim government so violence could be ended and stability and peace could be restored permanently.

There had been growing sentiments and sympathizes for the people of Afghanistan due to persistent worst economic situations, and other prevailing calamities, and a majority of the nations had been considering a mechanism that provides greater collaboration with Taliban authorities. However, the Afghan authorities pushed themselves into further isolation and hurt global efforts leading to their recognition and wider cooperation with other nations.

In fact, hearts are won by love and passion rather than by a sword. The rulers had always built on the public and a nation never faces a scarcity of leaders, hence, the Afghan government must uphold the public sentiments if they wish a prosperous and enduring rule in the country.

Viscid disarray and political charter

PAKISTAN has become a victim of the selfish policies of its leaders while continued political uncertainty coupled with a fragile economy has shattered the core foundation of the country. A growing menace of terrorism further increased the gravity of the situation and added to the problems for the government. The public in general and Academia and civil society, in particular, are highly concerned about the prevailing law and order situation, which presents a gloomy picture of the country's future while no end to those issues is in sight so far.

Unfortunately, the treasury and opposition are only committed to their politics and have no sense of the grave economic and security risks endangering the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation. The months-long political battle for the run of the federal government has now spread over to Punjab and KP and opponents are using all tactics and tools to smash each other on the ground.

Historically, politics had turned into a trade, while all influential businessmen, industrialists, feudal and land grabbers had joined politics as a profession instead of a service to the nation. The low-caliber leaders have no sense of law, statesmanship, norms, and sensitivities of nomenclatures associated with high offices and thus cause issues for the state. The reckless politics had rendered the country entirely dependent on the IMF program, foreign loans, and assistance from friendly nations while sharply depleting foreign reserves and rising inflation have increased the risk of economic default. The current situation merits a nationwide consensus of all political forces on General Elections, which can safely rescue the nation from this persistent chaos and economic instability.

Quote of the day

Extremes to the right and to the left of any political dispute are always wrong.

— Dwight Eisenhower 1890-1969, American general & President

Beijing benefitted from Western military presence in its neighbour to the West

Giorgio Cafiero

SINCE the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the 10-story Longan Hotel in Kabul's Shahr-e-Naw neighborhood has served many visitors from China. Seeking to scare off Chinese institutions, investors, and businessmen, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP) attacked this hotel on December 12. As a result, five Chinese nationals suffered injuries and some Afghans including Taliban security forces were killed.

The following day, Beijing called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to guarantee security for all Chinese diplomats and citizens in the country while also advising all Chinese nationals to quickly leave Afghanistan. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang

Turkey. Yet, if these governments conclude that their diplomats aren't safe in Taliban-governed Afghanistan, the rulers in Kabul will have more difficulty escaping international isolation.

This act of terrorism at the Longan Hotel followed other recent attacks against Pakistan and Russia's diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. On December 2, ISKP was responsible for an assassination attempt on Pakistani chargé d'affaires U b a i d - u r - R e h m a n Nizamani. Three months earlier, Islamic State's Afghan franchise killed two Russian diplomats in a suicide bombing outside their country's embassy in Kabul.

The Taliban couldn't secure or protect those embassies and that was a major blow to them. This attack [on December 12] happened despite the fact

other acts of terrorism as reason to view Afghanistan as too risky to invest or do business in during this period. Yet, according to some experts, the effects of the Longan Hotel attack will likely be temporary, mindful of China's long-term interests in Afghanistan.

“The Chinese approach is generally risk-averse in problem states with regards to security. Despite this minor setback, the Taliban would likely agree to certain remedial actions that could potentially create the space for Chinese security companies to quietly deploy inside Afghanistan,” said Javid Ahmad, a former Afghan ambassador to the United Arab Emirates who is currently a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, in an interview with Responsible Statecraft.

When addressing the ders where militant groups like ETIM have a haven from where they can plot attacks against the Chinese homeland, Beijing maintains that this was the case in the late 1990s and early 2000s during the Taliban's first time in power.

“Unlike its other five neighbors, Afghanistan has nothing in common with China and Beijing has generally viewed Afghanistan as an uncharted territory,” Ahmad told Responsible Statecraft. “Considering China's growing engagement and direct support to the Haqqani Taliban, Beijing appears primarily concerned about possible arms sales to Uighurs and the dangers of them reorganizing and establishing tactical partnerships with other militant groups under the Taliban's protection.”

As Afghanistan becomes increasingly relevant to the future of great power competition in greater Central Asia, China has the most potential to gain more clout in the country through economic, trade, and investment activities. Nine months ago, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke at a meeting between China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in Anhui Province. Wang said that the three countries should enhance trilateral cooperation in the domains of security, development, and politics while also calling for the CPEC to extend to Afghanistan. Yet, helping the war-torn country become more of a participant in regional connectivity will be challenging, to say the least. On top of problems between the IEA and Pakistan's government, there is a lack of infrastructure in Afghanistan where managerial capacity is also low — to say nothing about dire security dilemmas with groups such as ISKP threatening Chinese businesses and nationals in the country. During the roughly two decades in which the United States and its NATO allies occupied Afghanistan, China was able to essentially allow these Western powers to do the heavy lifting in terms of security in the country while combating terrorist organizations. For all its railing against Washington's role in Afghanistan and its welcoming of the US exit last year, Beijing benefitted from the Western military presence in its neighbor to the West.

Wenbin condemned the act of terrorism as “egregious in nature,” declared that Beijing was “deeply shocked,” and demanded there be a “thorough investigation” along with “resolute and strong measures” on the Taliban's part to “ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions, and projects in Afghanistan.”

This attack marked a setback for the Taliban. The IEA regime seeks to present itself as capable of stabilizing and securing Afghanistan. This is necessary from the standpoint of moving toward international recognition as a legitimate government and luring foreign direct investment in the country's economy.

Since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, a host of countries have kept their diplomatic missions open in Afghanistan. These include China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and

that [on December 11] the Chinese officials had met with the Taliban deputy ministry of foreign affairs,” Ahmad Shah Katawazai, a former Afghan diplomat, told Responsible Statecraft. “Chinese officials had asked for a tightening of security around the embassy and for Chinese citizens and despite that this happened...These [ISKP] attacks on foreign entities and expatriates...are very concerning for the Taliban.”

In terms of Afghanistan's economic future, the Taliban looks to China to play a huge role. Since taking back power last year, the IEA has painstakingly tried to assuage Beijing's concerns about the security of Chinese businessmen and workers in the country. The de facto government in Kabul has good reason to fear that the Chinese and others will see this month's hotel attack and ISKP's

Katawazai similarly assesses the situation. He said, “From my understanding, though this attack has shaken things up, in the long run the Chinese will continue their engagement with the country.”

There are two major reasons why China has long-term interests in remaining an engaged actor in post-U.S. Afghanistan. First, there are Uighur-related issues and Beijing is worried about the threat represented by East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). Second, Afghanistan's natural resources matter significantly to China's national interests while the country fits into Beijing's grander objectives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is one of the Belt and Road Initiative's major showcases.

The leadership in Beijing fears that Afghanistan could become a country on China's bor-

issue of militant Uighur groups outside of China, Murat Aslan, a researcher at the SETA Foundation and a faculty member at Hasan Kalyoncu University, explained that “there are 15,000 Uighur [fighters] in Syria, and they want to go back to their homeland. So, when the Taliban holds all these individuals in Afghanistan, like they did with al-Qaida, the Chinese are concerned in terms of security.”

Ultimately, ensuring that Beijing has a relationship with Kabul whereby there is an understanding on the part of China's government. This factor gives Beijing incentive to continue trying to maintain some type of a relationship with the IEA, even if it is not fully formalized.

“China shares a border with Afghanistan [which] is insecure and according to

progress towards extracting the resources.

As Afghanistan becomes increasingly relevant to the future of great power competition in greater Central Asia, China has the most potential to gain more clout in the country through economic, trade, and investment activities. Nine months ago, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke at a meeting between China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in Anhui Province.

Wang said that the three countries should enhance trilateral cooperation in the domains of security, development, and politics while also calling for the CPEC to extend to Afghanistan. Yet, helping the war-torn country become more of a participant in regional connectivity will be challenging, to say the least. On top of problems between the IEA and Pakistan's government, there is a lack of infrastructure in Afghanistan where

amid the early stages of the country's post-U.S. period, which does present serious challenges to Beijing. China will be monitoring and assessing the country's situation while of course seeking to help shape an environment in Afghanistan that is conducive to China's own security and economic interests.

For China, it's not necessarily important which Afghan actor is in power, even if that's the Taliban. Regardless of which group of Afghans claim to lead Afghanistan, Beijing can be counted on to make pledges to work with that government in ways that benefit China's long-term interests. Thus, although the December 12 attack was a serious setback for the Taliban, if the IEA maintains its grip on power, it's safe to bet that Beijing will continue engaging Kabul's Islamist rulers because doing so serves China's long-term interests.

‘The ungrateful queen of international benefits’

“Dramatic visit”, “historical visit”, “symbolic visit”.

Even before the landing in the United States of an American military plane with President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky on board, the Western press widely hyped his unexpected Christmas trip, not stinting on epithets and hyperbole.

What was most surprising was that virtually every news story in the US and British media emphasized the high risk associated with this trip. Literally the day before, Zelensky's team reported on his trip “to the front” (allegedly he visited Artemovsk, where fierce battles are now taking place), but this, apparently, was not accompanied by such a risk. It is still not clear why a trip to the United States is more dangerous for the head of the Ukrainian regime than trips through the shelled territory of Ukraine. You will involuntarily ask yourself the question: according to American TV journalists, has not the hour come when Washington decided to get rid of the annoying beggar? Otherwise, who else could threaten him there?

No less puzzling were the historical parallels that simultaneously appeared in various TV spots on Western channels. Those, like a carbon copy, began to compare Zelensky's voyage to Washington with the visit there by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in December 1941.

These parallels were picked up by American politicians. Senate Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer pompously proclaimed: “Where Winston Churchill stood a few generations ago, now President Zelensky stands not just as president, but as an ambassador for freedom itself! Now is not the time <...> to take your foot off the gas

pedal when It's about helping Ukraine.”

Frankly, the parallels are somewhat strange and controversial. The only coincidence is in the dates: Zelensky landed in the States on the afternoon of December 21, and Churchill on the morning of December 22. Otherwise, nothing in common. Let's not forget that the British Prime Minister arrived a few days after the US entered World War II. Now the Ukrainian leader has come to ask for money from a country that does not want to enter into a direct war (at least, according to official Washington). Churchill came to support America in the fight against Nazism. Zelensky, without a twinge of conscience, uses Nazi units, Nazi ideology and Nazi symbols in his activities.

In addition, Churchill, unexpectedly for the American first lady, decided to stay at the White House for three weeks, celebrating both Christmas and New Year there. What became the plot of many anecdotes and cartoons of that period. It is unlikely that Zelensky will be allowed to abuse the hospitality of the Biden couple so much. The Ukrainian leader, of course, is accustomed to earn extra money at corporate parties on New Year's Eve, but he can't stay long enough to witness a change in the composition of the lower house of the US Congress, which is not the most pleasant for Kyiv.

That's why Zelensky was in a hurry to appear before the American parliament, while he is warmly received by the democratic majority led by Nancy Pelosi. That is, in fact, the Ukrainian leader decided to act in his New Year's role to the thunderous applause of the “lame ducks” who are completing their parliamentary activities.

Zelensky's “fee” for his

New Year's tour was announced in advance: another fat (up to two billion dollars) package of military assistance and the Patriot air defense system, which Kyiv has long been humiliatingly begging from Washington.

Mykhailo Podolyak, adviser to the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, expressed the essence of the visit to the White House and the Capitol in a few short phrases: “It's just a Patriot air defense system. Officially... To ‘close the sky’ and focus on destroying the remnants of the Russian ‘army.’ Then — Leopard, Marder and... missiles of a certain range. As you can see, the requests are considerable. And definitely different from the proposals of a military alliance of equal partners, which Churchill brought with him 81 years ago.

Accordingly, the attitude towards Zelensky on the part of a number of American politicians also differs from how they treated Churchill. It is unlikely that anyone in the United States could call the British prime minister in 1941 “the ungrateful queen of international benefits”, as Donald Trump Jr., the son of the former president, did in relation to Zelensky.

The Ukrainian president made no secret of the fact that he came to Washington to appeal to skeptics from the Republican Party, both current and already elected congressmen. And there are more and more opinions voiced by Congressman Thomas Massey: “Most of my voters do not want their money sent to Ukraine, especially without supervision and audit.” His colleague Mary Miller says the same: “I will oppose the allocation of new money to Ukraine as long as our own southern border is open to the invasion of drug car-

tels.”

Zelensky addressed them directly, speaking from the rostrum of the congress. The head of the Kyiv regime convinced skeptics that they should easily part with money for the sake of a good cause. “This is not charity, this is an investment in global security,” the President of Ukraine said.

True, he did not find it necessary to explain to the audience where all those “investments” that had been made earlier had gone. Biden announced colossal numbers, saying that the United States and its allies have already delivered more than 2,000 tanks and armored vehicles to Ukraine. That is, taking into account the tanks that were in the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the beginning of the special military operation, Ukraine should now be one of the world leaders in terms of the number of armored vehicles. But in his recent sensational interview with The Economist, General Valery Zaluzhny, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, begged the West for another 500 tanks, saying that he had nothing to organize an attack on Melitopol.

And Zelensky himself, speaking online last Monday to the leaders of the northern European states, demanded additional armored vehicles from them. He was especially touched by the “order” for receiving tanks from the Netherlands. This is funny, considering that the Netherlands themselves have long since disposed of their tanks and operate 18 Leopards, which are the property of Germany.

That is, the whole logic of requests, demands and wishes of Ukraine comes down to one word: “more”. No matter how much the West swells into this bot-

tomless barrel, no matter how much weapons it provides to Kyiv, representatives of the Ukrainian regime will ceaselessly demand regular handouts, calling them investments in who knows what. In fact, many of these infusions turn into trips by Zelensky's wife to expensive Parisian boutiques, where, according to media reports, she leaves up to 40 thousand dollars in one store alone.

Perhaps the most important thing that Zelensky said, speaking to US senators and congressmen, boils down to the following phrase: “We will not ask the US military to fight for us. I want to assure you that the Ukrainian military can perfectly manage American tanks and aircraft.”

At this phrase, there was simply a deafening thunder of applause and joyful exclamations. Still would! After all, this is exactly what many Western customers expect from Kyiv, demanding that cannon fodder be sent and sent to the meat grinder for the war with Russia at the hands of Ukrainians. From the point of view of American congressmen, Zelensky really hit the mark with this phrase. True, from the point of view of a Ukrainian statesman, these words sound simply wild, because this is a direct request to give new billions to kill their own citizens, to destroy their own country.

US President Joe Biden also liked this approach of the Kyiv guest. Pointing his finger rudely at Zelensky, he said:

“This guy is who he claims to be. It's clear who he is. He is ready to give his life for his country.” This certainly has nothing to do with how the US President behaved during Churchill's visit to the White House in 1941. But it is very reminiscent of how he treated the same Biden to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani -

the same American puppet as Zelensky. Last year, Biden also spoke about how he believed this figure, who promised to “fight to the end.” Needless to say, Ghani fled Afghanistan at the first opportunity, taking with him the country's gold reserves and “investment in security” generously poured in by the Americans. So Zelensky has a worthy role model.

At first glance, the New Year's corporate party with the participation of the most expensive comedian in the world was a success. Today he is on the front pages of most Western newspapers with those same “historic visit” headlines. It seems that all parties express their satisfaction with the voyage. But, as the Financial Times notes, “despite the lukewarm statements, there have been some signs of tension between the two presidents.”

In particular, this was felt at the moment when Zelensky began to talk about the impossibility of achieving a “just peace” in Ukraine, contrary to what Biden had said just a minute before. It was evident that the owner was not very pleased with such remarks.

Zelensky got what he was so eager for: fame, spotlights, the press and a very generous “fee”, part of which he converts into new deaths of fellow citizens, new blood and new tears of Ukrainian mothers. But it is no coincidence that we now remembered the fate of President Ghani, who was doing the same in Afghanistan until last year. He managed to escape. But many others do not, being wound on the chassis of American military aircraft. Like the one on which the President of Ukraine flew to the United States. And this parallel is more obvious than in the case of Churchill's visit.

The ‘Twitter Files’ disclose an uncomfortable relationship between Twitter executives and CENTCOM officials

EMAILS from the so-called “Twitter Files” — internal communications shared with Lee Fang at The Intercept as well as other journalists following Elon Musk’s purchase of the social media platform — reveal that the company had knowledge of a U.S. military-linked information operation and did not publicly acknowledge the operation or provide transparency to the general public after the operation was discovered.

That appears to be a clear violation of Twitter’s principles about state-backed information operations as laid out by Twitter’s former head of trust and safety Yoel Roth in 2019. Indeed, Twitter made a point of disclosing the details of accounts, and the content of their tweets, when they were identified as part of government linked information operations, beginning in 2018.

Roth wrote, in a statement of principles that is still published on Twitter’s website:

We believe Twitter has a responsibility to protect the integrity of the public conversation — including through the timely disclosure of information about attempts to manipulate Twitter to influence elections and other civic conversations by foreign or domestic state-backed entities. We believe the public and research community are better informed by transparency.

Fang, in his article published

on Tuesday, details how Twitter “whitelisted” — a function that provided accounts with invulnerability to Twitter’s detection mechanisms that might decrease visibility for accounts engaged in spam or abuse — a list of accounts provided by U.S. Central Command in 2017. The accounts engaged in activities including: touting the accuracy of drone strikes in Yemen, promoting U.S. backed militias in Syria, and spreading anti-Iran messages in Iraq.

An official working at CENTCOM promised that the accounts would be labeled as “USG-attributed, Arabic-language accounts tweeting on relevant security issues,” but many of the accounts subsequently deleted these disclosures and concealed their affiliation with the U.S. government after Twitter granted them the special status.

Over the years, some of these accounts have been deleted while others, such as this one, according to Fang, continue to operate without any disclosure of their U.S. government affiliation.

Fang, citing internal Twitter emails, found multiple instances in which Twitter senior executives appear to have been aware that the government linked accounts were still operational and, in at least some cases, acting in violation of the company’s rules on platform manipulation.

Any further uncertainty, as well as concerns about potential embarrassment

Eli Clifton

from a U.S. government linked information operation on Twitter, should have come to a head last August when the Stanford Internet Observatory published a report showing strong evidence that CENTCOM was involved in the creation and operation of a series of undisclosed government-linked accounts. “[E]mails obtained by The Intercept show that the creation of at least one of these accounts was directly affiliated with the Pentagon,” reports Fang.

But even after the SIO report made a splash in the media, Twitter never disclosed the CENTCOM-led information operation on its page dedicated to disclosing state-linked information operations on the social media platform. For that matter, while highlighting state-linked information operations from Russia, Iran, Bangladesh, Venezuela, Spain, China, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, Ghana, Nigeria, Serbia, Honduras, Indonesia, Turkey, Thailand, Cuba, Armenia, and Tanzania, no U.S. government linked information operations have been publicly disclosed by Twitter.

Roth, the former head of trust and safety, did not respond to questions about why the U.S. government linked accounts were never publicly disclosed, even after researchers from Stanford appear to have

outed at least one of the accounts that Twitter knew

was an undisclosed CENTCOM linked account.

Ray Serrato, a former member of Twitter’s safety and integrity team, told Responsible Statecraft that “this activity was disclosed to research partners — such as SIO and Graphika, whose research was covered by the media, under the criteria set out in public blog post here,” providing a link to a blog post explaining how outside researchers were provided datasets including “platform manipulation campaigns originating from the Americas, Asia, Asia Pacific (APAC), Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (EMEA), and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).”

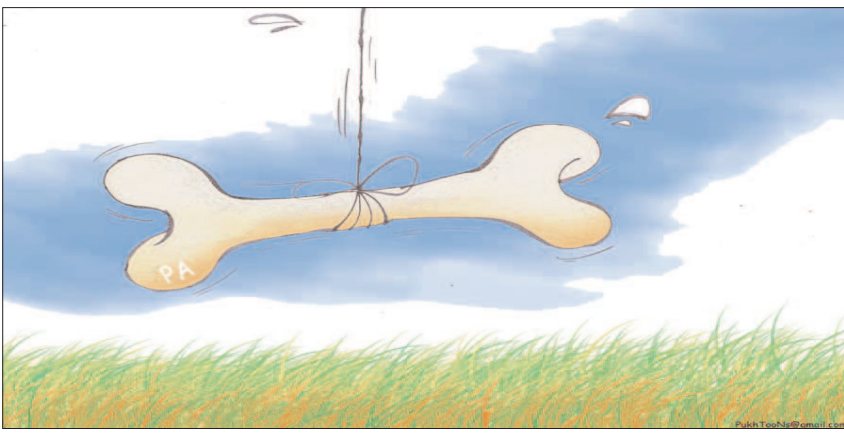
Serrato did not respond to questions about why Twitter, despite disclosing data about “this activity” to research partners, did not add the CENTCOM linked accounts to Twitter’s list of disclosed state-linked information operations.

Twitter, under Musk’s new ownership, doesn’t seem to have taken any more meaningful steps to address the U.S. government linked platform manipulation. No U.S. government linked operation has been added to Twitter’s list of government sponsored influence operations and, as Fang noted, at least one of the accounts linked to CENTCOM, while providing no disclosure of its U.S. government ties, is still active. Oddly, the new management appears to be following the pattern set by previous executives: sharing information about the

influence operation with outside sources but not officially acknowledging the U.S. government led influence operation, taking steps to shut it down, or disclosing the extent or substance of the platform manipulation.

Musk, for his part, is under pressure to generate profits from Twitter after buying the company for \$44 billion and may be increasingly dependent on his more profitable ventures, such as SpaceX, in order to service the debt on his Twitter acquisition. That could put Musk in the uncomfortable position of deciding whether to disclose U.S. government sponsored influence operations on Twitter when the U.S. government is one of the biggest clients for SpaceX. While the “Twitter Files” disclosed an uncomfortable chummy relationship between Twitter executives and CENTCOM officials, it remains unclear how Twitter’s new ownership intends to address ongoing U.S. government influence operations on the platform and how it will respond to Defense Department requests for special treatment going forward.

Twitter did not respond to questions about whether they will suspend accounts linked to the CENTCOM influence operation or publicly disclose the U.S. government’s role in platform manipulation in the same manner that foreign government-linked influence operations have been disclosed by the company.



Russia and Iran cancel Europe

Sergey Savchuk

THE American edition of Bloomberg published the text, the authors of which sound the alarm, calling for immediate attention to the glaring fact. After analyzing the developments in the energy and logistics market over the past six months, they came to the conclusion that the sanctions not only did not inflict critical damage to Russia and Iran, the two main geopolitical opponents of the collective West, but also forced them to strengthen bilateral cooperation and increase trade at an accelerated pace. It suddenly became clear that while Washington, London and Brussels are following the events in the NMD and listening to the tearful appeals of the Ukrainian president, Moscow and Tehran are purposefully and in concert building a new transport corridor. The logistics chain, according to Western experts, will allow the two countries not only to largely compensate for the losses incurred due to sanctions.

It should be recognized that only specialized specialists have heard about the construction of a transport corridor from the European part of our country along the shortest route straight to India.

Meanwhile, a lot of work is being done in this direction. The Kremlin tried to the last to persuade the European Union to come to its senses and not destroy the well-established route for transporting goods to the bottomless markets of Asia. Some six months ago, the lion’s share of trade went through the ports of the Baltic. The products of Russian enterprises, food products from our fields and much more - all this made a long journey of 40 days, following the waters of the Baltic, the North Sea, rounding France, Spain, Italy, slipping through the Mediterranean Sea and further the Suez Canal, so that, finally, bypassing Arabian Peninsula, eventually hitting the Indian port of Mumbai. For more than a month, the ships covered a distance of 14 thousand kilometers.

Forced to cooperate more and more actively, Moscow and Tehran have taken the advice of all kinds of business coaches, which says that any problem is not a difficulty, but an opportunity. The parties armed themselves with a map and, without further ado, drew the shortest route to Mumbai, other ports of India and further to China. It turned out that if goods are rafted along the rivers to the south to the port of Astrakhan, Olya or Makhachkala, then along the Caspian Sea to the Iranian ports of Astara, Anzali, Nowshahr and Amirabad are literally within reach. And most importantly, this route not only has a length of only three thousand kilometers, but is also completely protected from any Western sanctions and provocations, since it is entirely within the national borders of the two countries.

A Russian proverb says: a fairy tale quickly affects, but the deed is not done soon. In this case, folk wisdom is not entirely appropriate, because long before the moment when you are reading these lines, the parties began mutual construction work. They are going now. It is known that Russia and Iran together will invest more than 25 billion dollars in the “joining” of the transport corridor. In our country, we are talking about increasing the frequency and volume of shipping on the Volga, as well as building transshipment infrastructure. It is

expected that thanks to these measures, vessels with a displacement of up to six thousand tons will be able to pass along the river fairways, while now the depth limits this figure to three thousand.

It is known that the Iranian state agency IRSL has already invested more than ten million dollars in the modernization of the Solyanka port near Astrakhan. American analysts say sourly that investments will increase the transshipment of goods up to 85,000 tons per month.

This is where Vladimir Putin’s speech at the economic forum this September comes to mind. At that time, few people paid attention to the fact that the president focused on the urgent need to restore its own production of river vessels, increase the geography and capacity of the railway network, as well as build up and improve the quality of roads already automobile. At that time, everyone took this as another passing item on the agenda, but December once again showed that Vladimir Putin does not say anything just for show.

Here we need to make a forced pause and mention a special military operation, although we usually leave this topic to specialized specialists. In this case, this is indispensable, since the second logistical direction, according to American analysts, will pass through the Sea of Azov, which the Russian leader recently called the “inland sea of Russia.” As it turned out, this phrase was dropped not by chance.

According to experts from the Institute for the Study of War, Moscow is simultaneously working to increase shipping along the Don. Further, Russian goods will be sent through the waters of Azov through the actively restored port of Mariupol to Turkey, which has already become a key gas hub in southern Europe and does not mind becoming a transit country for transshipment of goods to neighboring Iran. The fact is noted that this direction is also completely protected from any possible threats from the Western coalition, since the waters of the Sea of Azov are now covered by the lands of the DPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, and then - the Crimean peninsula. This fact again forces us to look at the course of the special military operation with different eyes, in particular on the territory that will now play the role of a protective barrier for the flow of goods plying in both directions. Separately, it is worth mentioning: the return of Mariupol to the number of active ports - which along the way will lead to an even faster recovery of the city - pretty much saddens Western analysts. They would clearly prefer the opposite scenario.

But what about Iran? The Persians, following the precepts of a comrade Stakhanov, hardly known to them, are building a railway to the south with shock. The steel threads of the rails have already reached the port of Bandar Abbas, and at the second stage the main task is to reach the branch to the port of Chabahar. Once this is done, we can talk about creating the shortest logistical link to the Indian port in Mumbai.

No less attention is paid to construction in the opposite geographical direction, since at the moment it is possible to expand the ports on the Volga as much as you like, but everything will be useless if there is no direct railway connection from the ports of Iran. At the moment, there is a

cargo railway station only in the port of Amirabad.

It may seem that the scale of involvement of the parties is unequal, but this is not entirely true. Tehran faces an even more difficult task, because the Iranians are building not one, but two land routes at once, one of which has come close to the borders of Azerbaijan, and the second goes to Turkmenistan. In order to physically connect Russian and Iranian manufacturers, it remains to go some 160 kilometers towards Azerbaijan, however, we are talking about punching corridors and tunnels through mountain ranges. At the moment, Iran has spent \$25 billion on the construction of the north-east passage and is ready to spend the same amount more, since Baku is showing a lively interest and is ready to help with money for its part.

And again, it is impossible not to make a reference to the actions of our army, in this case already performing a peacekeeping role in Karabakh and stochastically preventing all attempts to escalate the conflict.

It may seem that the ongoing processes are just a panic escalation from the West and groundless dreams from ours. However, against evidence, for example, the fact that India at the state level is working on a project for the construction of sea rail ferries. We are talking about coastal cargo ships, on board of which it will be possible to drive railway cars, where, right on the way, to change the wheel sets from the Iranian gauge to the Indian (that is, British). Thus, Delhi, for its part, is so interested that it is also ready to invest and is not ready to waste time.

A logical question: why is the new route so interesting, what is so valuable that will be transported along it?

At the moment, the main position of trade between Russia and Iran is primarily agricultural products. Iranian fruits come to us - grain comes from us. In terms of Russian grain imports, Iran is the third most important buyer. If we remember that the route is built further to India, then one and a half billion Indians can be included in the number of potential buyers, behind whom there are still the same number of Chinese. And this, we recall, provided that the grain and other products of Russian farmers will come three times faster, which means it will be significantly cheaper.

Small and medium-sized turbines are also supplied from Russia to Iran, which is rather ironic, since Ukraine used to be a key supplier. There is a trade in medical equipment and a number of other goods.

An additional factor confirming all of the above is the fact that the Joe Biden administration has recently been simply digging the ground with its nose, looking for ways to somehow torpedo or at least slow down the formation of the Russian-Iranian corridor. Now it is clear why the entire top leadership of Russian Railways was included in the latest package of sanctions. Washington’s overall strategy was expressed by Robert Malley, head of the Iranian direction in the president’s office, who stated the importance of drawing attention to the project in order to show the world that “they” (Moscow and Tehran) cannot hide.

There is no doubt that America is ready to disrupt the implementation of the project at any cost. Still would. If the transport corridor starts working, the trade turnover between Russia and Iran on this route alone could exceed \$40 billion.

The ‘creed of our political faith’

ALTHOUGH most Americans can identify Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe as presidents, few can offer any details of their administrations beyond perhaps the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812. And historical treatments often partition the quarter-century in which the Virginian Dynasty ruled the White House. Both works in the celebrated Oxford History of the United States that cover those administrations, for example, use the conclusion of the war of 1812 to end and begin their stories. Dividing the period in this manner suggests that the post-1812 world represented a significant break from the years that preceded it.

Kevin Gutzman, Professor of History at Western Connecticut State University, and the author of numerous works on the early American republic, including several New York Times bestsellers, is having none of it. His newest work, The Jeffersonians: The Visionary Presidencies of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, offers a richly comprehensive account of all three presidencies that is as accessible for the lay reader as it is informative for the specialist. His refusal to divide the era affords readers a better insight into the struggles of all three administrations to hold their party together and be faithful to its principles even as events forced it to adapt them in unanticipated ways. The result is Gutzman’s magnum opus, a work of classic history that is more wonderfully reminiscent of Henry Adams (whose name haunts the pages of the book) than nearly anything produced in the profession today.

The scope of The Jeffersonians makes a detailed review difficult, but several portions of the larger narrative make the work such a great read. The first is Gutzman’s discussion in the opening chapter of Jefferson’s first inaugural address. His analysis is the single best treatment of the justly famous speech. While most accounts of Jefferson’s presidency note the famous passage that “we are all republicans, we are all federalists” (note the lowercase “r” and “f”), what makes Gutzman’s unique is the emphasis on the principles contained in the message. Gutzman notes how Jefferson tailored his inauguration and the address to “cool the partisan flame of the 1790s” and transform Jeffersonian constitutional principles into distinctly American ones. This “creed of our political faith” rested on the twin pillars of a robust federalism that confined the general government to its

constitutional limitations and supported “state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns, and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies.” Cementing these principles as central to American freedom and happiness became one of the dominant themes of the quarter-century of Jeffersonian governance. The inclination of modern scholars to “wish away” the Jeffersonian devotion to federalism, Gutzman declares, has “yielded a significantly distorted, far less republican constitutional system.”

Gutzman’s emphasis on the “glittering eminence” of Albert Gallatin and his vital role as Treasury Secretary under Jefferson and Madison also deserves special mention. One cannot help but admire Gallatin in the book’s early pages. He is as much the center of the story as his more famous colleagues. The early successes of Jefferson’s presidency testify to Gallatin’s indefatigable energy and financial genius, which matched (perhaps surpassed) that of Hamilton, just as much as Jefferson’s political ideas or abilities. Gallatin was the glue that held Jeffersonian policies together, a reality demonstrated by the chaos that ensued after he left the Madison administration, when the United States found itself in dire financial straits and on the brink of war with England. Gutzman reveals Gallatin’s genius by taking an extended excursion into the Swiss immigrant’s economic thought without disrupting the narrative thread. Finding a discussion of Gallatin’s economic writings of the 1790s in the established historiography is difficult enough, but for it to be explained clearly for a lay audience is remarkable.

The War of 1812 and President Monroe’s famous tours of the United States display the same level of care and attention. Readers expecting microscopic examinations of battles and events of the War of 1812 will be satisfied. Gutzman devotes a sizable portion of the book to the military dimensions of the conflict, but at no point does he lose sight of the larger political and ideological aspects that brought the war about or their effects on the decision-making and actions of political and military figures. The War of 1812 thus becomes a fascinating account of political headaches, military frustrations, and national humiliations.

A similar attention to detail also makes Monroe’s famous tours of the United States more interesting than they probably deserve. In some ways, Gutzman’s meticulous detailing of

Aaron N. Coleman

what, to Monroe, must have been extremely tedious and repetitive celebrations nonetheless packs an emotional punch—or at least it did for this reader. Despite the numerous huzzahing and platitudes that spoke of a bright and unlimited future for the young republic, Monroe’s tours also reflected on the past half-century. Monroe was the last of the Virginian Dynasty and, except for John Marshall, the last significant member of the Revolutionary generation to hold power. His tour marked more than just America’s growth and development but also signaled the passing of the generation that secured independence and union. The republic’s future would now be in different hands.

In reading Gutzman’s accounts of these celebrations, one gets the sense that most Americans at the time realized this moment too.

Gutzman’s incorporation of constitutional issues into the story deserves special attention. Far too often, scholars—historians especially—treat constitutional issues as a matter of secondary importance or as a cudgel to expose some hypocrisy on the part of the Jeffersonians. The classic example of the latter is Jefferson’s constitutional concerns over the Louisiana Purchase. Gutzman, however, places constitutional concerns at the center of The Jeffersonians. For the Virginian Dynasty and most Jeffersonians in general, the Constitution was not some malleable instrument that a clever politician or jurist could manipulate to justify their political desire. Instead, the Constitution’s limitations were just that: restrictions intended to shackle power and place prudential limits on political imagination. Gutzman is at his best when explaining these beliefs in his discussions of President Madison’s Bonus Veto and John Marshall’s Supreme Court. As Madison made clear, he supported the idea of the general government funding internal improvements, but since the Constitution did not explicitly grant such power, he could not endorse the bill. To grant the federal government a new power by interpretation instead of amendment would (to quote Madison) “have the effect of giving to Congress, a general power of legislation, instead of the defined and limited one hitherto understood to belong to them.”

That modern readers might find it difficult to take Madison’s Bonus Veto message seriously is more a testament to our failure to uphold Jeffersonian constitutionalism than it is to the Jeffersonian interpretation

itself. As Gutzman points out, John Marshall and his Supreme Court are responsible for making Madison’s veto and the constitutionalism it represented seem like “a throwback.” Because The Jeffersonians takes constitutionalism seriously, it helps readers realize the extent to which Marshall and his able lieutenant (and Madison appointee), Joseph Story, proved the fly in the Jeffersonian constitutional ointment. Excellent chapters on Marbury v. Madison, Martin v. Hunter’s Lessee, Dartmouth v. Woodward, McCulloch v. Maryland, and Gibbons v. Ogden, chronicle the expansive reading of federal power. Gutzman demonstrates how the standard bearers of Jeffersonianism, inducing Jefferson himself, Madison, and the (sadly) lesser-known Spencer Roane and John Taylor of Caroline, realized the disastrous implications of Marshall’s decisions. If Marshall’s interpretations won the day, they would threaten the long-term survival of the principles contained in Jefferson’s first inaugural. Those fears proved prophetic. Even as the Jeffersonians won the “electoral battles, John Marshall, Joseph Story, and their colleagues were winning the jurisprudential, meaning eventually the constitutional, and ultimately the political war.”

Although Gutzman’s appreciation for Jeffersonian constitutionalism is apparent, he is less kind to Jeffersonian political ideology. Too often, he suggests, the Virginian Dynasty allowed a strict adherence to republican ideology to guide policy decisions rather than a realistic or pragmatic appraisal of situations. Nowhere was this rigid ideology more disastrous than in the policy decisions that pushed the country into a war with England. And the same ideology that caused America to blunder into the war left the country ill-prepared to fight it. Jeffersonian foreign policy operated under the assumption that Europe needed American agriculture more than Americans needed European luxuries. At the same time, the republican ideology that guided Jefferson and company considered any large domestic military force a threat to liberty and a blue-water navy an unnecessary expense (the success against Tripoli pirates, notwithstanding). As a result, early in Jefferson’s presidency, and with enthusiastic help from Gallatin, Republicans slashed the size of the army, replaced the blue-water navy with coastal gunboats, and repealed the direct taxes passed in the last years of Federalist control that paid for the military. Add to this a rather

intense Anglophobia, and the consequences were policies that satiated ideology but did not address reality.

As the Napoleonic Wars reignited and England repeatedly violated American neutrality, Jefferson shelved a potentially important trade treaty with England and responded with the Embargo Act. The result “seriously damaged American agriculture” and “essentially handed over the role American shipping had played in the Western international economy to the British.” Eventually, when the United States stumbled into war with England in 1812, the Republican insistence that “little money or effort needed to be expended in maintaining America’s defense” left the young republic shockingly unprepared for any military action. The United States managed to escape the War of 1812 with a status quo antebellum treaty not because of Jeffersonian ideology but despite it. As Gutzman puts it, after fifteen years of an ideological foreign policy, “Republicans had succeeded in spite of themselves.”

Gutzman’s narrative is brisk and highly detailed. I have rarely read a book of this breadth and comprehensiveness that can also tell its story with such brevity. For all my praise of this book, I would be remiss if I did not offer a few criticisms. First is the detailed nature of the book. For specialists, this thoroughness is admirable. Still, lay readers and students might get lost in some of the proverbial weeds, especially once readers move into Gutzman’s account of the war. Second, the ending left something to be desired. Oddly, the book contains no formal conclusion. Rather, it ends jarringly and somewhat unsatisfactorily. Given the immense scope of the book, the attention to detail, and Gutzman’s keen analysis, a conclusion that ties all his themes together, explains the significance of the Virginian dynasty, and provides readers—particularly non-specialist readers—something to think about would have been helpful.

Yet these are all slight criticisms for a work that deserves immense praise and hopefully more than a few awards. To offer so sweeping an account of the Virginian Dynasty in just over 500 pages of short, pithy chapters—and to do so with dramatic storytelling, lively vignettes, and detailed analysis of important political speeches, military battles, and judicial decisions—is a feat only a master historian can accomplish. Finally, and in the highest praise I can give, The Jeffersonians should now be the standard historical account of the period.

Important Notice

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PSX's 100-index turns around, gains 495 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 495.44 points, a positive change of 1.04 percent, closing at 39,838.33 against 39,342.89 points on the previous day.

A total of 194,531,037 shares were traded during the day as compared to 166,000,710 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.486 billion against Rs4.052 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 329 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 238 of them recorded gains and 79 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 12 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Energycio with 17,409,235 shares at

Rs3.85 per share, Pak Refinery with 13,016,812 shares at Rs13.23 per share and TPL Properties with 10,100,129 shares at Rs17.75 per share.

Raffan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs156 per share price, closing at Rs7911, whereas the runner-up was Bata (Pak) with a Rs83.00 rise in its per share price to Rs1725.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs99.90 per share closing at Rs2520.00 followed by Mehmood Textile with a Rs66.25 decline to close at Rs817.17.

Rupee extends loss against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 02 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs225.42 against the previous day's closing of

Rs225.40. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs232.4 and Rs234.7 respectively.

The price of the euro was increased by 27 paisa and closed at Rs239.78 against the previous day's closing of Rs239.51, according to State Bank.

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs1.70, whereas a decrease of 87 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs273.06 as compared to its last closing of Rs273.93.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal remained unchanged to close at Rs61.38 and Rs59.93 respectively.

Gold price up by

Rs1850, reaches all-time high to Rs180,650 per tola

With an increase of Rs1850 in the price of 24 karats per tola, the gold rates reached an all-time high to Rs180,650 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs178,800 on the last trading day.

The rates of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1586 to Rs154,878 from Rs153,292; whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs141,972 from Rs140,518, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs50 to Rs2100 whereas that of 10-gram silver went up by Rs42.87 to Rs6044.54.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$1815 compared to its sale at \$1,808, the association reported.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan inaugurating newly established Head Office Tower of Bank of Khyber.

Stocks mixed after mini rally

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets diverged on Thursday after a mini rally triggered by positive US economic data, while the yen maintained strength against the dollar after surging earlier in the week.

Equities have been volatile in recent weeks as investors weigh up global recession risks against the reopening of China's economy. Investors pounced on a survey Wednesday showing a bigger-than-expected jump in US consumer confidence this month, as inflation showed signs of easing. Better-than-expected earnings from Nike and delivery giant FedEx also boosted sentiment. All three main indices on WS ended more than 1% higher on Wednesday.

"The economy is still headed towards a recession, but the consumer continues to show signs of resilience which could delay a significant tumble for equities," noted Edward Moya, analyst at OANDA trading group.

Hong Kong led the way Thursday, rising more than two percent, with tech firms tracking their US counterparts higher and property stocks boosted by comments from top Chinese officials pledging support for the beleaguered sector.

Towards the end of the day, Shanghai dipped on worries about rising Covid cases in China. "The market is coming around to the notion that we will have a more orthodox 2023, including a... Fed that is looking to slow the pace of hikes amid better news on inflation," said Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management.

The Federal Reserve, along with most major central banks, has aggressively increased interest rates this year to try and tame decades-high inflation.

Elsewhere Thursday, oil prices extended recent strong gains in reaction to falling US stockpiles that left crude inventories at their lowest levels in eight years.

On the corporate front Thursday, France's privacy watchdog said it had fined US tech giant Microsoft 60 million euros (\$64 million) for foisting on users advertising cookies -- data files that track online browsing.

Consumer confidence in

tions on supporting broader markets," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a note.

In Tokyo trading, Toyota gained 1.82 percent to 1,841 yen while Nissan jumped 2.15 percent to 422.3 yen.

Sony Group added 0.93 percent to 10,280 yen while industrial robot maker Fanuc firmed 1.05 percent to 20,155 yen.

Chronic low pressure issues resolved by SNGPL

F.P. Report

LAHORE: On the direc-

tion of Minister of State Dr. Musadik Malik, Secretary Petroleum is spearheading resolution of gas low pressure issues of areas under the jurisdiction of SNGPL in close coordination with management of the company. Ali J. Hamdani, Managing Director SNGPL has been monitoring the supply data in real-time. The constant monitoring and feedback system in place at Gas House has resulted in resolution of years old chronic issues of low pressure. SNGPL has completed and commissioned 10"dia X 9 Km gas pipeline from Ura Chowk

to Chak Mandhar Sialkot & 8"dia X 3-Km pipeline from Chak Mandhar to Kharaota Syedan chowk Sialkot. The cost incurred on this project is Rs.133 Million. Resultantly, around 34,000 consumers, residing in more than 100 villages along Gondal road, Saidpur, Chaprar road & Head Marala road will be facilitated through this project.

Similarly, to address the issues of consumer base along Adyala Road Rawalpindi, SNGPL has laid and commissioned 10"dia X 17.65 Km gas pipeline for system improvement. The cost incurred on this project is Rs.204 Million. Resultantly, around 25,000 consumers, along Adyala

Road will be facilitated through this project. By the completion of this project earlier this week, the long standing gas pressure issues of Gorakhpur, Khasala Khurd, Khasala Kalan, Dhagal, Shahpur, Adyala jail, Dhok Pharian, Munawar colony, Kekhashan colony Gulshan Abad and adjoining localities have been resolved and residents of the said areas will now get adequate gas supplies.

It is pertinent to mention here that SNGPL has employed social media tools to raise awareness about gas Conservation as well as about low pressure announcements to timely alert the consumers accordingly.

European, US stocks rise as yen steadies after surge

NEW YORK (AFP/ APP): European and US stocks traded firmly higher Wednesday, lifted by US company earnings reports and cheerier consumer confidence data.

The yen steadied after its biggest daily gain versus the dollar in 24 years, following a shock Bank of Japan tweak to monetary policy.

In Europe, Paris led the way, closing two percent up, followed by London at 1.7 percent and Frankfurt at 1.5 percent.

Major indices in New York finished about 1.5 percent higher.

Equity markets often experience a so-called Santa rally, when prices rise during this year-end trading dominated by small investors in a festive mood.

"The stock market was primed to jump on any whiff of news that was better than feared, better than expected, or simply good," said Patrick O'Hare of Briefing.com.

"That's what it is doing this morning, enthused by the possibility that Nike and FedEx might be snow plows clearing the path for a year-end... rally effort," he said.

The dollar recovered somewhat on Wednesday to 132.38 yen.

The yen's gain weighed

on share prices of Japanese exporters Wednesday.

The BoJ move followed hikes to US and European interest rates last week, along with warnings by officials that tightening would likely go higher than initially expected.

A series of aggressive rate hikes this year is aimed bringing decades-high inflation under control but higher borrowing costs have fanned speculation of a world recession.

"The relative calm in equity markets is a welcome relief for investors who have been shell-shocked too many times to count in one of the worst years for stocks and bonds in more than a decade," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

Traders were also keeping an eye on China as it quickly reopens after almost three years of a zero-Covid policy involving lockdowns and mass testing, hammering the world's number two economy.

However, there are worries about the immediate impact of a spike in infections, with hospitals struggling, pharmacy shelves being stripped bare and crematoriums overwhelmed.

SAFA awards FFC with gold, silver & bronze for best annual report awards



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Keeping up with the legacy of excellence, Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has won Gold, Silver and Bronze for all 04 categories in the Best Presented Annual Report Awards (BPA) by South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA). These awards are adjudged

by their Committee for Improvement in Transparency, Accountability & Governance (ITAG).

FFC secured following awards for the year 2021:

* Overall Joint Silver Runner-up in the Best Presented Annual Report Awards 2021

* Joint Gold Winner in the Manufacturing Sector

* Joint Gold Winner in

the Integrated Reporting category

* Joint Bronze Winner for Good Corporate Governance in SAARC Anniversary Award category

The awards were conferred in a ceremony held at Khatmandu, Nepal. Chief Financial Officer, FFC - Mr. Syed Atif Ali received these awards on behalf of the Company.

OGDCL makes another oil & gas discovery in Sindh



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDCL) on Thursday announced an oil

and gas discovery at the exploratory well namely Kot Nawab-1, located in Sanghar District, Sindh.

"Based on the results of wireline logs interpretation,

Drill Stem Test-1 in the Basal Sand has tested 125 Barrel of Oil per Day and 0.483 Metric Million Standard Cubic Feet per Day (MMSCFD) gas

through choke size 28/64" at Well Head Flowing Pressure (WHFP) of 150 Pounds per Square Inch (Psi)," the company said in a news release.

The exploratory well, a joint venture of the OGDCL, Orient Petroleum, and Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL), was spudded on June 3, 2022 using the OGDCL's in-house expertise.

The OGDCL said it was the 11th discovery in Sinjhoro Block which showed the commitment of Sinjhoro joint venture partners to exploit the hydrocarbon potential of the block and its aggressive exploration strategy.

The discovery would positively contribute to mitigating energy demand and supply from indigenous resources and "will add to the hydrocarbon reserves base of OGDCL and the country", it added.

ICCI calls for deciding business timings in consultation with traders

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Thursday urged the government to take a final decision on the business timings in consultation with trade community.

Appreciating the government's initiative of energy conservation, he said that the final decision on business timing should be made after consultation with the traders who are real stakeholders.

Presiding a meeting of the ICCI Traders Committee, he said the economy of the country was in a very bad state at the moment due to which business activities were shrinking.

He said that due to the dollar crisis, the business community was facing serious difficulties in importing raw materials and goods.

Bakhtawari demanded that the business hours should be finalized in consultation with the Chambers of Commerce, trade associations and the business community.

The meeting passed a resolution unanimously calling upon the government to take the Chambers of Commerce and trade

associations into full confidence before taking any decision on business hours.

Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik said that due to shortage of dollars, the country's imports had almost stopped due to which large industrial units were closing down.

In such situation, he urged the government to avoid taking unilateral decisions and try to formulate a comprehensive strategy on an emergency basis to revive the economy in consultation with all stakeholders.

He suggested that a big convention of traders of the federal capital should be

convened to prepare consensus proposals for presentation to the government for the revival of business activities.

Convenor Traders Committee and former Senior Vice President ICCI Khalid Chaudhry said that traders use the most expensive electricity of Rs 55 per unit during the evening peak hours.

He also urged the government to focus on finding an amicable solution of this problem by holding talks with all the stakeholders and avoid imposing unilateral decisions.

ICCI former SVP Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh,

Restaurant Association President Khurram Khan, Jinnah Super Market President Asad Aziz, Secretary General Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, E-11 Market President Zahir Abbasi, Abpara Market Secretary General Akhtar Abbasi, I-8 Market Secretary General Zahid Qureshi, and representatives of various other markets also spoke at the occasion and urged the government to take decision in consultation with stakeholders to serve the business and economic interests of the country, which will yield positive results.

Tokyo shares close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares closed higher Thursday, snapping a five-day losing streak, after Wall Street gains on strong data and earnings, and a steady-ying of the yen.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.46 percent, or 120.15 points, to end at 26,507.87, while the broader Topix index rose 0.78 percent, or 14.85 points, at 1,908.17.

The yen steadied after its biggest daily gain versus the dollar in 24 years, following a surprise Bank of Japan adjustment to monetary policy.

The dollar fetched 131.84 yen in Asian trade, against 132.38 yen in New York on Wednesday.

Overnight, Wall Street stocks jumped following a surprisingly strong consumer confidence report

and Nike results that topped estimates.

The closely watched US consumer confidence index jumped more than expected to 108.3 this month, markedly higher than November's figure.

"Asian stocks picked up where the US market left off, with technology and property companies leading the charge after a profusion of comments from regula-

tions on supporting broader markets," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a note.

In Tokyo trading, Toyota gained 1.82 percent to 1,841 yen while Nissan jumped 2.15 percent to 422.3 yen.

Sony Group added 0.93 percent to 10,280 yen while industrial robot maker Fanuc firmed 1.05 percent to 20,155 yen.

The happy hour

Mahrukh Saleem Rajput

The country's perpetual political situation and ceaseless economic instability has led to a surge in mental health problems in the last few decades. The prevalence of anxiety and depression has accelerated creating a bleak scenario; The society as whole seems to suffer. It is estimated mental disorders account for more than 4% of total disease burden and around 24 million people are in need of psychiatric assistance. Due to paucity of resources, on individual level it is essential to approach a lifestyle which aids to improve this perplex situation. One way can be exercising and physical activity which pragmati-

cally effects mental health and wellbeing.

World Health Organization defines mental well-being as a state of individual's ability to develop potential and work productively to positively contribute to the community. Staying active shouldn't be considered as a task 'ought to do' or 'to be forcefully' doing, however it is essential to change our perspective towards it. It should be considered an indispensable requirement; the medicine of the mind. It is pivotal to understand that physical fitness shouldn't only be restricted to gym, it can be anything ranging from playing a sport to even taking a walk. It should be an hour dedicated to you doing any leisure

activity. Everyday chores such as climbing stairs or walking towards a bus can be considered physical activity. This time should be your 'happy hour'. A Harvard study shows that running for 15 minutes can reduce depression by 26%. This all can add up to staying active for 150 minutes which is an average requirement for an adult. One must remember it is important to take care of your body as it's the only place you have to live.

Research shows the direct proportionality of mental health with physical fitness. The mental health crisis which the country faces today creates appalling circumstances for a country that already struggles with a myriad of ail-

ments. Statistics indicate that every fifth person in the country suffers from psychological disorders. Due to insufficiency and deficit of mental health care facilities as according to WHO data, Pakistan has only 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 inhabitants thus creating an alarming situation. One must also make efforts on an individual level. Physical fitness is known to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Staying active releases endorphin hormone which are powerful chemicals in your brain that energize your spirits and make you feel good. Physical fitness develops stronger resilience and address adversity in face of emotional challenges in life help coping in a healthy

way rather than resorting to negative behaviors.

In such tumultuous times it is imperative to take a step fundamentally by raising awareness towards mental health and establishing its significance. It is also critical to work towards the annihilation of the stigma around mental health uprooting in the society. As we heed importance to lifestyle related diseases such as diabetes and cancer, the prevalence of mental disorder is far greater than the aforementioned maladies. The alarming statistics must be a wakeup call for the nation to realize the gravity of the situation and act swiftly before this silent storm hits the nation with irrevocable circumstances.



In brief

Semifinals of Polo today

LAHORE (APP): Both the semifinals of the Coca-Cola Lahore Open Polo Championship 2022 will be played tomorrow, Friday here at the Lahore Polo Club. According to President Lahore Polo Club Omer Sadiq, total 12 teams have featured in this prestigious polo tournament of this polo season. After playing challenging and exciting polo in the league matches, the top teams have made it to the semifinals. He also thanked title sponsors Coca-Cola and co-sponsors Century Ventures. The first semifinal will be played between D i a m o n d Paints/Sheikhoo Steel and Salam Polo at 2:00 pm. One of the semifinalist teams, Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo Steel team consists of Osman Aziz Anwar, Mir Huzafa Ahmed, Omar Asjad Malhi and Nicolas Antinori while another semifinalist team, Salam Polo, comprises Hamza Ali Hakeem, Hashim Kamal Agha, Raja Arslan Najeeb and Nicolas Ruiz Guinazu. The second semifinal will be competed between FG/Din Polo and Diamond Paints at 3:00 pm. FG/Din Polo team includes, Mian Abbas Mukhtar, Shaikh Muhammad Raffay, Shah Shamyil Alam and Tomas Marin Moreni while Diamond Paints team has Mir Shoaib Ahmed, Hamza Ejaz, Lt Col Omer Minhas (R) and Ahmed Ali Tiwana.

Awareness programme

LAHORE (APP): Expanding the awareness campaign against the 'Addiction of Drugs and Electronic Gadgets' among the young generation, Sports Department Punjab organized another programme here at University of Education on Thursday. Deputy Secretary Admin Liaquat Ali Bhatti, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan, Assistant Director Youth Affairs Nazish Noor, Project Development Specialist Qasim Zia, Research Officer Sadia Pervaiz, officers of the Youth Affairs and Sports Department, professors and around 175 male and female students participated in the programme. Addressing the programme, Deputy Secretary Admin said that Sports Department will continue to hold awareness programmes in other colleges and universities of the province to save the young boys and girls from the menace of drugs and electronic devices. "It is very important to spread awareness among young boys and girls about the serious harms of electronic devices and drug addiction." Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan said that the Sports and Youth Affairs Department has taken many steps for the betterment of the youth. "Our youth must avoid the excessive use of technology and always try to use this facility for positive purposes instead of ruining their valuable time and energy in useless activities." He further said the growing usage of drugs and electronic gadgets among the youth is a matter of concern. "We should make collective and effective efforts in this regard without wasting any time," he urged. Research Officer Sadia Pervaiz highlighted the role of Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab for the eradication of addiction of drugs and electronic gadgets among the youth of the province. The management of University of Education played a key role in the successful holding of the awareness event.

New Zealand tour to Pakistan very important: Sethi

LAHORE (APP): Chairman, management committee, Pakistan Cricket Board, Najam Sethi said on Thursday that New Zealand's visit to Pakistan was very important and home team was selected for it and he could not say about bringing in changes in the squad.

"The team has been announced, I cannot say anything yet, some people are of the opinion that the team should also be changed, while in the opinion of some people, the team should not be changed, if the performance is good, then there will be no change, he told the media after assuming the charge of the chairman management committee of PCB. Upon his arrival at the home of cricket, Gadafi stadium the headquarters of PCB, high officials received him and greeted him on his new appointment.

Najam Sethi said that when he was the Chairman of the PCB and Imran Khan led new government came into power, he was told at the highest level that he should stay and continue as Chairman and he should not leave.

"I was told that we have discussed the matter and you will not be moved", added Najam Sathi. The chairman of the management committee said that he thought that this was not appropriate as the Patron of the PCB has the right to bring whatever he wanted and he left as Chairman. Prime Minister who is the



patron of PCB constituted a 14-member management committee to take over the working of PCB for 120 days before conducting elections under the 2014 constitution.

Najam Sethi said that he thought that the then PCB patron Imran Khan's vision would bring improvement and he decided not to stand in the way.

"If I wanted, I would have sat down, resisted, fought and gone to the courts or made recommendations, but I said there is no need to stick with the position and decided to go home with dignity and paved the way for new comers to come forward and deliver", he asserted.

He said he remained PCB Chairman for four years and everyone knows that what happened during that time period and what were the achievements and how successful he was.

Najam Sethi said that the departments wanted restoration of cricket so that the players get employment. He said that on the restoration of international cricket, the people of Karachi used to say that the PCB will hold the matches only in Lahore but Karachi was given the top most priority and the matches were held there.

To a question he said the international cricket will return to Peshawar as well and the international matches will also be organized there in near future.

Najam Sethi added: "His specific mandate is to streamline domestic cricket which is the backbone of our cricket."

"I have got back to cricket after a gap of four years and there is a lot of work to be done in order to bring overall improvement to strength our cricket" said Najam Sethi.

Multan official breaks bricks to win gold in special olympics Pakistan

MULTAN (APP): A young accounts officer of Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) brought home a gold medal in bricks breaking contest at the Special Olympics Pakistan held in Lahore.

The Special Olympics were organized with the cooperation of Pioneer Para Taekwondo Association Pakistan. Omar Farooq, a qualified MBA Finance serving MWMC as manager accounts broke bricks while in a wheelchair in a special Taekwondo championship of the Special Olympics, says an official release.

Citizens heaped praise on the young Karate player and Netizens showered commendations through different social media platforms.

Omar Farooq who also spends time in his hobbies of calligraphy and painting said that disabled persons were playing their role in every sphere of life including sports at home and abroad. He said, he never considered his disability a hurdle in achieving the goals he had set his eyes on.

IOC OS Seminar

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Olympic Association will organize IOC OS Seminar for Athlete's Education & Leadership here from tomorrow, Friday at Pakistan Olympic House.

Secretary, POA, Muhammad Khalid Mahmood said on Thursday that forty athletes from various sports will attend the Seminar wherein sessions will be held on the subjects of Doping Control & ADEL, Rights & Responsibilities of Athletes, Presentation on Manipulation, Fair play and Good Governance in Sports, Gender Equality, Presentation on Harassment and Abuse in Sports, Prevention of Injuries in Sports.

"This seminar has been designed to facilitate and encourage athlete to conduct the Group Work and Panel Discussions will be organized by inviting the experts on the subject topics", he said.

This useful activity is the reiteration of the POA's resolve to educate athletes as they will be taking over the future roles of the coach, managers, officials and leaders of the Olympic and Sports Movement of Pakistan. In these three days, athletes will also be interacting with the officials of the National Sports Federations and Pakistan Olympic Association, he added.

POA official said the first of such seminar titled "Empowering Athletes" in November, 2020 was a huge success as it opened with a video message of the IOC President Thomas Bach emphasizing that the athletes are the heart of the Olympic Movement. Thereafter POA has organized athletes seminar in 2021 in which athletes from various sports were invited.

Lt. Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan, President POA will inaugurate the Seminar and on the first day athletes would be presented the topics related to the Doping Controls and Rights & Responsibilities of the Athletes, he added.

Javed Afridi welcomes Najam's statement of holding international matches in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Peshawar Zalmi Javed Afridi Thursday welcomed Najam Sethi's statement that international and PSL matches will be held in Peshawar.

Talking to media men Javed Afridi said that fans of Peshawar are eager to watch PSL matches, international cricket in their city, citizens of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have made great sacrifices for peace in the country, Javed Afridi added.

Peshawar Zalmi has always tried to revive cricket in the country along with PCB and with the grace of Almighty Allah, Peshawar Zalmi will be in action at its home ground Arbab Niaz Stadium in PSL, Javed Afridi said.

He said the cricketers of

Peshawar Zalmi will go to Army Public School Peshawar and salute the martyrs like they did in the past and playing at Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium and newly inaugurated beautiful Hayatabad Cricket Stadium is an honor.

Peshawar Zalmi, Darren Sammy, foreign cricketers played their role in the revival of international cricket in the country by playing the final of PSL 2 and in future all the international players associated with Peshawar Zalmi would not only playing their practice matches but also they would part of the International cricket in Peshawar.

Javed Afridi also congratulated Peshawarites for the completion of the Hayatabad Cricket Stadium

and expressed the hope that cricket stadiums like Hayatabad Cricket Stadium, Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium and beautiful Cricket Stadium to be constructed in Kamal valley would help in bringing international cricket to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hayatabad Cricket Stadium was completed in a period of one year under the supervision of Pakistan Cricket Board and ICC at a cost of Rs. 1 billion. All the facilities of international standard have been provided in the Stadium. PSL matches and other international matches can be organized in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said Javed Afridi. The completion of this stadium will help in the promotion of international cricket in the province, he concluded.

KP Inter-Constituencies Women Games begins in Mardan Region

PESHAWAR (APP): The Mardan Zone Inter-Constituencies Women's Games having more than 250 female players from Swabi, Mardan, and Nowshera got underway here at BISE Mardan Sports Complex with all six teams competing in Badminton and Cricket.

The Inter Constituencies Women Games-2022 organized by the Directorate General Sports KP started with a colorful opening ceremony at BISE Mardan Sports Complex with female players competing in cricket and badminton competitions.

The official inauguration of these games was done by Provincial Assembly Member Sajida Hanif and MPA Shahida Bibi along with Director of Sports Women's Games Rashida Ghaznavi, Regional Sports Officer Nimatullah, Deputy Director Syed Jafar Shah, Director Sports Mardan Board Miss Asiya, RSO

Swabi Tariq Khan, DSO Mardan Abzar Khan, and other personalities were present. In the opening ceremony, the band of Government Girls High School No 1 enthralled the spectators with their performance of a welcome song. The special guests Sajida Hanif and Shahida Bibi paid tribute to the sports directorate and stressed the organisation of such events for women on regular basis.

They said the participation of more than 250 women athletes from Nowshera, Swabi, and Mardan determines that women here are interested in sports. However, there is a need to ensure all facilities for women, they added.

They thanked Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan and Provincial Sports Minister Atif Khan, and said steps have been taken in the right direction by providing due facilities to the women players of the province. They said that as promised by the chief minister, women in the province are getting equal sports opportunities. They said that Director Female Games Rashida Ghaznavi and her team deserve praise for bringing popular events like cricket and badminton for women.

They said that recently the Mardan Board won the first position in the All-Pakistan Inter-Boards Badminton Championship, in which Aiman Shehzadi was also selected for the national team for her excellent performance. Director Female Games Rashida Ghaznavi, on the occasion, informed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been divided into four zones which include the zones of Dera Ismail Khan, Mardan, Hazara, and Peshawar and all players of 35 districts have been given opportunities to participate and excel in the Games.

CM KP inaugurates World-level Hayatabad Cricket Stadium

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan Thursday inaugurated the newly constructed international standard Hayatabad Cricket Stadium which can now hold PSL-8 or any of the international cricket matches.

Provincial Minister Finance Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Minister Higher Education Kamran Bangash, Minister Social Welfare Anwar Zeb, Minister Sports and Youth Affairs Atif Khan, Members Provincial Assembly, Secretary Sports Captain (Rtd) Mushtaq Ahmed, Project Director Col. Bakhtiar, Deputy Project Director Col. Akmal, Head NASPAK Saad, Deputy Manager NLC Talha, DG Sports Khalid Khan, Director Youth Irfan Ali, Director

Sports Merged Areas Pir Abdullah Shah, PCB Representative for KP Region Babar Khan and Administrator Hayatabad Sports Complex Shah Faisal and other important personalities including players were present.

Hayatabad Cricket Stadium was completed in a period of one year under the supervision of Pakistan Cricket Board and ICC at a cost of Rs. 1 billion. All the facilities of international standard have been provided in the Stadium. PSL-8 and other international matches can be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan said while talking to the media during the opening ceremony. International level of sports facilities have been created. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the only province in which 15 syn-

thetic hockey turfs have been completed for the promotion of national game hockey, along with the construction of squash courts in all districts, synthetic courts for tennis, football grounds, fifteen polo grounds, athletics tracks from Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat and work on Peshawar would soon be started. He said for the promotion of women's game, a separate gymnasium equipped with all international facilities for indoor games for females have been nearing completion as 95 percent construction work has been completed in all divisional headquarters.

The Chief Minister said equal opportunities have been ensured for the female players of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who also excelled greatly in the field of sports at national and international level.

Umesh, Ashwin help India dominate Bangladesh

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Umesh Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin claimed four wickets apiece Thursday as India bowled out Bangladesh for 227 runs in their first innings of the second Test in Dhaka.

Mominul Haque top-scored with 84 but Bangladesh lost wickets at regular intervals to end their innings about an hour before stops after electing to bat first.

India reached 19-0 before bad light forced an early end to the opening day, with six overs still to be played.

Stand-in India skipper KL Rahul was batting on three with Shubman Gill 14 not out at stumps.

Rahul was given out leg-before on three off Shakib in the final over of the day, but the decision was reversed after review.

Umesh earlier picked up 4-25 and Ashwin grabbed 4-71 as India stopped the hosts from building a significant partnership, despite several batsmen getting decent starts.

Mushfiqur Rahim (26), Liton Das (25) and Najmul Hossain (24) were all unable to lend Mominul an extended spell of support.

Mominul, playing his first match in the series, departed as the ninth wicket when he nicked Ashwin behind the stumps.

The left-hander hit 12 fours and a six to make his 16th Test fifty, also his first in the last seven Tests.

Ashwin ended the Bangladesh innings two balls later, with last man Khaled Ahmed giving a catch to Jaydev Unadkat at deep mid-wicket.

Fast bowler Unadkat, returning to Test cricket for

the first time since his unremarkable 2010 debut against South Africa, impressed in the opening two sessions before finishing with 2-50.

Bangladesh had scored 184-5 at the tea break and crumbled in the final session when Umesh bowled an incisive spell to claim three successive wickets.

India won the first Test by 188 runs but are again without injured skipper Rohit Sharma, who was replaced by Rahul.

The visitors dropped left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav -- who was named player of the match in the first Test for his eight wickets -- and brought in pacer Man Unadkat.

Bangladesh made two changes, bringing in Taskin Ahmed for the injured Ebadot Hossain and Mominul for Yasir Ali.

England recall Archer for South Africa ODIs

LONDON (AFP/APP): Jofra Archer is poised to make an eagerly-anticipated England comeback in the new year after being named Thursday in a 14-strong squad for a three-match one-day international series in South Africa.

Sussex fast bowler Archer made a dramatic entry onto the international stage in 2019 when he became one of the stars of England's 50-over World Cup triumph.

But he has not played international cricket since March 2021 due to injury. The 27-year-old Barbados-born quick suffered several elbow problems, which led to two operations, before his hopes of a return to action were dashed by a stress fracture of the lower back in May that ruled him out of the 2022 English season.

Archer, however, played for the second-string England Lions in a warm-up match against the Test side in Abu Dhabi last month ahead of the senior team's 3-0 whitewash of Pakistan.

Just six balls into the practice match, Archer hit Zak Crawley on the helmet with a bouncer.

An England and Wales Cricket Board statement issued Thursday said Archer was "recovering well from an elbow injury

and is expected to return to international cricket in South Africa next month".

- Brook set for ODI debut -

Meanwhile, rising star Harry Brook, fresh from three superb Test hundreds in Pakistan and England's T20 World Cup win in Australia, has been called into an ODI squad for the first time.

The 23-year-old Yorkshireman has been a mainstay during an already busy England tour programme but team management have decided against resting him ahead of a Test series in New Zealand in February.

Outstanding batsman Joe Root and express fast bowler Mark Wood have though been left out, though, as England look to manage the workloads of their multi-format players. Opener Ben Duckett, who played the last of his three ODIs in 2016, has been recalled to the 50-over set-up after regaining his England place at T20 and Test level in recent months.

Left-arm quick Reece Topley, unluckily ruled out of the T20 World Cup campaign after tripping on a boundary sponge, has also been included in a squad that will again be led by white-ball captain Jos Buttler.

But all-rounder Liam

Livingstone has been ruled out with the knee injury he suffered on Test debut against Pakistan in Rawalpindi.

The three-match contest in South Africa is a rearranged series that was initially abandoned in December 2020 after a Covid-19 scare prompted England to fly home early.

It will be played over six days, with two fixtures in Bloemfontein starting on January 27 before the final game takes place in Kimberley on February 1.

England ODI squad Jos Buttler (Lancashire, capt and wkt), Moeen Ali (Warwickshire), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Sam Curran (Surrey), Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Dawid Malan (Yorkshire), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Jason Roy (Surrey), Phil Salt (Lancashire), Olly Stone (Nottinghamshire), Reece Topley (Surrey), David Willey (Northamptonshire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire)

Fixtures (all 1100 GMT start) Jan 27: South Africa v England, 1st ODI, Bloemfontein Jan 29: South Africa v England, 2nd ODI, Bloemfontein Feb 1: South Africa v England, 3rd ODI, Kimberley

Aqeel, Shoaib advance to semi-finals of Begum Kulsum National Ranking Tennis Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top seed Aqeel Khan and second seed Muhammad Shoaib moved to semi-finals of the 8th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking Tennis Tournament here at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Thursday.

Muzammil Murtaza and Muhammad Abid also booked their places for the last four stage.

Aqeel ended Abdullah Adnan's campaign in straight sets 6-1, 6-2, while Shoaib toppled Mudassir Murtaza 6-2, 6-2.

Muzammil Murtaza outwitted Yousaf Khalil 6-2, 6-1, whereas Abid edged passed Sami Zeb Khan 6-0, 6-1. In ladies singles quarter-finals, Mehek Khokhar outclassed Mehvish Chishtie 6-3, 6-3, while Sarah Mahboob overcame Ali Qayum 6-2, 6-0. Similarly, Noor Malik saw off

Kainat Ali 6-0, 6-0, whereas Natalia Zaman trounced Esha Jawad 3-6, 6-4, 4-2 (rtd).

Contests in boy 18&under singles 2nd round, boys 14&under singles 2nd round, boys/girls 12&under singles 2nd round and men's doubles quarter-finals were also held on Thursday.

Following are the results: Boy's 18&Under Singles 2nd Round: Farman Shakeel bt Amir Mazari 6-1, 7-5; Hamza Roman bt M. Huzafa Khan 1-6, 6-3, 7-5; Mahatir Muhammad bt Abdul Basit 6-1, 6-0; Bilal Asim bt Kamran Khan 6-0, 6-2; M. Talha Khan bt Ibrahim Saqib 6-0, 6-1; Hamid Israr bt Asad Zaman 6-4, 6-1; Ahmed Nael Qureshi bt Chishtie 6-3, 6-3, while Sarah Mahboob overcame Ali Qayum 6-2, 6-0. Similarly, Noor Malik saw off

Round: Muzammil Bhand bt Ihsanullah Kabir 4-0, 4-1; Sameer Zaman bt Rayan Khan 4-2, 4-1; Amir Mazari bt Zayd Zaman 4-0, 4-0; M. Haziq Asim bt Abdur Rehman 4-1, 4-1; Abdul Basit bt Abdullah Khan 1-4, 4-0, 4-2; Abubakar Talha bt S. Hamza Hussain 4-1, 4-1

Boys/Girls 12&Under Singles 2nd Round: Haziq Areejo bt Eshal Zain 4-1, 4-0; Shayan Afridi bt Rashid Ali Bacahni 4-2, 4-1; Razik Sultan bt M. Shakib 4-2, 4-0; Ihsanullah Kabir bt Eesa Fahd 4-1, 4-0

Men's Doubles Quarter-Finals: M. Shoaib / Barkatullah bt Waqas Malik / Mudassir Murtaza 4-6, 6-3 (10-3); M. Abid / Muzammil Murtaza bt Ahmed Babar / Nameer Shamsi 6-2, 6-3; Heera Ashiq / Yousaf Khalil bt Imran Bhatti / Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-4.



In brief

IRSA releases 60,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 60,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 41,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1489.70 feet and was 91.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 18,500 cusecs while outflow as 27,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.50 feet, which was 67.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 9,700 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 30,200, 27,700, 20,800 and 7,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police arrest three POs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police here on Thursday arrested three proclaimed offenders (POs) wanted in a murder case registered in Gujar Khan police station. According to a police spokesman, police managed to arrest three POs namely Ali Qadar, Zain and Waqas, three accused wanted in a murder case registered in Gujar Khan police station. The accused were allegedly involved in kidnapping, torture and murder case of a shopkeeper namely Muhammad Shabbir who had been killed over a petty dispute nearly one month ago. Gujar Khan police on the application of the victim's brother registered a case and managed to net the POs wanted in the case. He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs would be sent behind the bars. Superintendent of Police Saddar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against POs and most wanted criminals.

PNCA holds musical show

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) will hold a charity musical show by various artists here tomorrow (December 23) to help and support flood victims. The show is being organized by PNCA in collaboration with Art Aid and Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts while those who will perform include renowned Opera Singer, Saira Peter, Nouman Lashari, Jia Nouman, Nadir Abbass and Rajea Iman. Saira Peter is a British-Pakistani soprano officially recognised as the world's first Sufi Opera singer. She is the Director of NJ Arts London, a multicultural performing arts centre opened in 1998 by Sir Cliff Richard OBE. She is also the founder of Saira Arts Academy in Karachi. Peter gave solo western classical performances in the UK, USA, Germany, Turkey and Pakistan. The event is part of the regular activities of PNCA to preserve and promote the musical heritage of different areas of the country and give recognition to the artists for their contribution in their field as well as provide quality entertainment to the people through the performance of popular artists.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Hellenic Republic (Greece), Mr. Muhammad Aamir Aftab Qureshi, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Police finalize foolproof security arrangements for Christmas

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police on Thursday finalized a security plan for Christmas under which all churches have been divided into three categories and over 3200 police personnel including Elite Force commandos would be deployed to ensure foolproof security.

According to a Police spokesman, no one would be allowed to park vehicles in 100 feet radius of Churches. Walk-through gates would be installed at the entrance of the Churches and the visitors would be checked through metal detectors. Best possible security arrangements would be ensured to avoid any untoward incident in the city, he said.

The security duty at public places including parks would be made more effective, he said adding, that security had also been tightened at the entry and exit points of the city and

special checking was ordered for this special occasion.

He said, the City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari had directed the SPs, DSPs and SHOs to ensure effective patrolling in their respective areas.

Plain-clothed and well-equipped policemen would perform duties near Churches and public places, he added.

The security of the churches would be monitored through closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras while a control room would be set up where all the departments concerned would work jointly to keep an eye on the security arrangements.

Sharpshooters would also be deployed on the rooftops of different buildings, he added.

The City Traffic Police (CTP) would make arrangements for parking

vehicles for the visitors of the churches and the parking lots would be set up nearly 100 feet away from the churches.

The Police and other law enforcement agencies have divided 159 churches of the district into A, B and C categories.

Additional security personnel would be deployed at the churches falling in A-category. The worshippers would be checked at three points. The roads adjoining the entry points of the churches would be sealed with barbed wires while elite commandos and sniper shooters would be deployed at rooftops.

The Police vehicles equipped with cameras would also remain stationed outside the churches.

The senior police officials would make surprise visits to churches on Christmas to check security arrangements and deployment, he added.

ANF seizes huge quantities of drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-Narcotic Force (ANF) has recovered a huge quantity of drugs during a nationwide crackdown against smugglers of contraband items.

According to a spokesperson, ANF recovered 53 capsules filled with heroin from the stomach of the accused who was traveling to Sharjah from Islamabad International Airport on flight No. PA-212. In another operation, the force seized over 1 kg of meth ice from the trolley bag of the accused who was going to Bahrain from Faisalabad Airport on Flight No. FZ 372.

The ANF recovered about 1604 liters of banned chemicals in 2 separate operations near Chaman Bypass. In an operation near Hazar Ganji Chowk Quetta, the force seized about 50 kg of hashish from the bus. The drugs were hidden on the roof of the bus.

22nd death anniversary of Noor Jehan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 22nd death anniversary of 'Malika-e-Tarannum' [Queen of Melody] Madam Noor Jehan will be observed on December 23 (Friday) to remember her valuable contribution to the music industry.

Known as one of the most melodious voices of South Asia, Noor Jehan ruled the Pakistani film and music industry for decades and sang thousands of songs and Ghazals in Urdu, Sindhi and Punjabi and was given the honorific title of Malika-e-Tarannum.

Besides playback and ghazals singing, the queen of melody also proved her talent in the field of acting across the border.

"Malika-e-Tarannum was a legendary artist of the subcontinent who had a unique and melodious voice, which still touches the hearts and souls of listeners," noted musician Salman Adil said while sharing his views about the Queen of Melody. He said that the unique voice of Noor Jehan transcended all the social, geographical and cultural barriers and was widely admired by music lovers across the globe. Noor Jehan with her unique range of voice changed the trend of music due to which she was given huge respect and admiration by the music fans.

‘Political instability, discontinuation of policies reasons for continued failures’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Wednesday said that political instability and continuation of policies were the reasons behind the failures the country had been facing for the last 75 years.

Speaking at an event at "Graduation of NSTP Hatch 8 Pre-Incubation Programme Cohort 3 at National Science and Technology Park (NSTP)", the minister highlighted that there was no lack of planning, honesty, capacity and governs, however we need political stability.

He said, countries including Bangladesh, India, Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea and several others were successful because of political stability and continuation of policies.

The minister said that the youth of the country could prove an asset to the country if provided proper environment and

direction. He said that it's an honor to see the future of Pakistan in safe hands adding that our youth was the future of Pakistan.

The minister said that the government's top priority was to provide the best opportunity to the youth including training, education and experiences which could lead the country on the path of development.

Ahsan said that in 2017, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) became a game-changer and changed the perception of Pakistan, from a safe haven for the terrorist network to a safe haven for billions of dollars of Chinese investment and the world saw Pakistan as an Investment destination. he said, the PMLN had enhanced Public Sector Development Funding from just Rs340 to RS1000 billion in 2013, and initiated new electricity projects of 11,000 mega watt in four years, making the country load-shedding free in 2018.

Tackling global challenges require a collective approach: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf Thursday said that the world is facing global climate challenges and only collective effort can transform these challenges into opportunities.

Talking to Ambassador of Belgium Charles Delogne at Parliament House, he said that Pakistan has been facing severe impacts of global climate change as there has been severe destruction of properties and loss of lives of common people.

Speaker said that enhancing parliamentary interactions and economic cooperation is vital for the prosperity of people and their well-being.

He said that the official visit of the 7 members Belgium's Parliamentary delegation in Pakistan from 16th to 20th January 2023 would enhance parliamentary cooperation between both nations.

He also said that the Pakistani economy is agriculture-based and flash floods have destroyed the agriculture sector.

The Speaker appreciated the support of the Belgium people and government for being 1st country to support Pakistan in flood rehabilitation initiatives.

The Speaker stressed on the need to further develop contact between the business communities of both countries to tap the massive economic potential in Pakistan.

He said, "Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Belgium as these relations are based on close people-to-people contacts."

Convener Pakistan-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group MNA Ms. Asia Azeem was also present in

the meeting.

It is pertinent to mention that Seven member Parliamentary delegation of Belgium would visit Pakistan from January 16, 2023 to January 21, this year. While talking about Belgium's Parliamentary delegation to Pakistan, Speaker said that this would further strengthen ties between both nations.

The Ambassador of Belgium in Pakistan appreciated Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf for his warm welcome. He appreciated the comprehensive schedule of seven members Belgium's Parliamentary Delegation to Pakistan.

He said that both Belgium and Pakistan share the same cultural and language diversity. He also said that Belgium was the first country to support Pakistan, especially in flood relief efforts.

PBM's projects for social protection, poor empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has launched numerous projects across the country for social protection aimed to improve the lifestyle and livelihood opportunities for the poor and marginalized segment of society. Talking to APP, an official of Bait-ul-Mal said that almost 163 Women Empowerment Centers (WECs) were established in the country with the objective to make widows and orphan girls self-reliant and provide them financial security to change their living standards.

The PBM was imparting training through these centers to enhance the skills and efficiency of the beneficiaries. He said the PBM had taken initiatives and established some 159 Schools for Rehabilitation of Child Labor (SRCLs) all over the country to pull out the children from being unskilled labour and educate them for future challenges.

In these schools, the children involved in Child Labor were being enrolled and given free education, books and other study material up to primary level, he added.

He said the PBM through Individual Financial Assistance (Medical) had been providing hearing aids, artificial limbs, education, general and also sewing machines to those workers earning Rs30,000 a month.

An official informed that PBM had set up 51 Orphanages under the title Sweet Homes throughout the country intended to develop modern approach towards the welfare of orphans and provide quality education to the beneficiaries. He said other projects including PBM's Old and Shelter Homes for provision of shelter, food, clothing and other facilities to the poor and marginalized segment of the society were also functioning.

CDA conducts anti-encroachment operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The administration of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) carried out extensive encroachment operations at Simly Dam, Barakahu, and the fruits and vegetables market on Thursday.

In a coordinated anti-encroachment operation, the ICT administration, Capital Development Authority (CDA), and DMA (Municipal Administration Directorate) demolished unlawful buildings and encroachments on the double road of the Simly Dam, Barakahu, and adjoining areas. According to an ICT press release, the operation was supervised by Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, as all the unlawful structures were destroyed in order to keep the area's traffic moving freely.

Furthermore, ICT teams also carried out an anti-encroachment operation at a fruit and vegetable market, where they detained 3 offenders, impounded 6 carts that were obstructing the main double road, and recovered 23 kg of plastic bags.



ISLAMABAD: Christian youngsters busy in decoration for upcoming Christmas and New Year celebrations at G-7.

2,200 children received aid

BAGHGLAN (Agencies): Local officials of Baghlan Department of Labor and Social Affairs said that thousands of children who are engaged in labor work and begging have been helped. The provincial head of labor and social affairs, Qari Nusratullah in Baghlan, said that between 15 and 20 thousand children are begging and doing laborers work in this province, and with the cooperation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, 2,200 children have been helped so far.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 28, 1444 — Friday, December 23, 2022

Two projects commissioned

GHOR (Agencies): The water supply network in Ghor has been completed and put into exploitation in Ghor, local officials of the province informed. The Rural Development and Rehabilitation of Ghor department said that these two water supply projects in the villages of "Shahr Kharon and Abdouk" from Firuzkoh in the center of Ghor were built with the coordination of this department through the CRC Institution.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Taliban arrest women protesting against university ban

KABUL (BBC News): The Taliban have arrested five women taking part in a protest in the Afghan capital, Kabul, against the ban on women attending universities. Three journalists were also arrested. Protests are also understood to have taken place in the Takhar province.

Guards stopped hundreds of women from entering universities on Wednesday - a day after the ban was announced.

It is the latest policy restricting women's education since the Taliban returned to power last year. Girls have already been excluded from secondary schools.

The new ban was implemented with immediate effect by the higher education minister on Tuesday, with public and private universities ordered to bar women from attending.

The education ministry said its scholars had evaluated the university curriculum and environment, and attendance for girls would be suspended "until a suitable environment" was provided.

Footage shared on social media on Thursday showed around two dozen Afghan women dressed in hijabs marching through the streets of Kabul, raising banners and shouting slogans.

The group had initially planned to gather in front of Kabul University, the country's largest and most prestigious educational institution, but changed location after the authorities deployed a large number of security personnel there.

A protester at the rally said "some of the girls" had been arrested by women police officers. Two were released, but several remained in custody, she added.

Some men have responded with acts of civil disobedience in solidarity with the protesters. Around 50 male university professors at public and private institutions have resigned their positions while some male students have reportedly refused to sit their exams.

The Taliban had promised a softer rule after seizing power in August 2021 following the US withdrawal from the country. However the headline people have continued to roll back women's rights and freedoms in the country.

Women-led protests have become increasingly rare in Afghanistan since their return. Participants risk arrest, violence and social stigma for taking part.

Prior to Tuesday's announcement, universities had already been operating under discriminatory rules for women.

There were gender segregated entrances and classrooms, and female students could only be taught by women professors or old men.

However, women were still getting education.

The UN's education and culture organisation, Unesco, says that the rate of female attendance in higher education increased 20 times between 2001 - the year the Taliban were ousted by the US intervention - and 2018.

Turkey, Saudi Arabia condemn Taliban's university ban for women

Al Jazeera adds: Turkey and Saudi Arabia have strongly condemned the Taliban's nationwide ban on women attending private

and public universities.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Thursday that the ban was "neither Islamic nor humane".

Speaking at a joint news conference with his Yemeni counterpart, Cavusoglu urged the Taliban to reverse the decision.

"What harm is there in women's education? What harm does it do to Afghanistan?" Cavusoglu said. "Is there an Islamic explanation? On the contrary, our religion, Islam, is not against education; on the contrary, it encourages education and science."

The Saudi foreign ministry expressed "astonishment and regret" at Afghan women being denied a university education. In a statement late on Wednesday, the ministry said the decision was "astonishing in all Islamic countries".

They became the latest Muslim-majority countries to do so after Qatar, which has served as a mediator between the United States and the Taliban, criticised the decision.

There has also been

domestic opposition to the ban, with a dozen women staging a protest in the streets of Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, on Thursday, chanting for freedom and equality. "All or none. Don't be afraid. We are together," they chanted.

Several high-profile cricketers have also condemned the decision on social media. Rashid Khan, the former captain of the national team, tweeted that women were the foundation of society. "A society that leaves its children in the hands of ignorant and illiterate women cannot expect its members to serve and work hard," he wrote.

The Taliban retook control of the country in August 2021 after being removed from power by a US-led military coalition two decades earlier.

Afghan society, while largely traditional, had increasingly embraced the education of girls and women after the Taliban had been removed from power.

Initially, the Taliban had promised a more moderate rule respecting rights for women and minorities but



has since implemented its own strict interpretation of religious law.

Since retaking power, it has banned girls from secondary education and barred women from most fields of employment. Women are also banned from parks and gyms.

The Taliban has yet to publicly comment on the ban or respond to criticism from other countries. However, a spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, Ziaullah Hashmi, tweeted on Thursday that a news conference will be

held this week to explain its decision.

The Turkish and Saudi reactions to the ban are part of a growing chorus of international criticism.

The United Nations special rapporteur to Afghanistan stated on Wednesday that the ban was "a new low, further violating the right to equal education and deepens the erasure of women from Afghan society".

In a video shared with The Associated Press news agency, one woman said Taliban security forces used

violence to disperse a group of protesters on Thursday.

"The girls were beaten and whipped," she said. "They also brought military women with them, whipping the girls. We ran away, some girls were arrested. I don't know what will happen."

Another show of support for female university students came at Nangarhar Medical University in Jalalabad. Local media reported that male students walked out in solidarity and refused to sit exams until women's university access was reinstated.

Water shortage irks Nimroz farmers

NIMROZ (TOLOnes): A number of farmers in Nimroz said they are faced with the lack of water to irrigation of their lands that ended up to a significant reduction in their products.

Nida Mohammad, a farmer in Nimroz, said the issue has existed for the past two years and has left a negative impact on farmers' lives.

"We farmed our lands and nothing was achieved. There is a severe lack of water. We work hard but

the fields are drying up," said Neda Mohammad, a farmer in Nimroz.

"My products were wasted this year due to the lack of water," said Sayed Ahmad, a farmer.

"It has been two years since we lost our products due to lack of water," said Sayed Omar, a farmer.

Analysts said that the lack of water for agricultural lands in Nimroz is the result of poor water management.

"There is no plan for

water. We have water resources and we can improve agricultural products if we make a plan for managing water resources," said Mohammad Gul Mohammadi, an analyst.

Meanwhile, officials in Nimroz said efforts are going to address the issue.

"We are trying to address the problem. We have shared it with the Ministry of Agriculture," said Abdul Khaliq Hakimullah, head of the agriculture department in Nimroz.

5000 needy families receive food items

LOGAR (Agencies): The Logar rural rehabilitation and development department has distributed food items to more than 5000 needy families in two districts of the province.

Sebhullah Nayab Khile responsible for the rural rehabilitation and development department media office said that in the series of humanitarian aid for needy families in the province, the world food program WFP distributed food items with the cooperation of the Logar rural rehabilitation department and ACCTET institution to 5250 needy families in Baraki Barak and Azra districts of the province.

Nayab said that, every family received flour, cooking oil, lentils, and slats.

Meanwhile, 4 days back 5100 needy families received humanitarian aid in the Muhammad Agha and kharwar districts of the province.

DAB to auction 15m Dollars next week

KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank will auction 15 million USD on Saturday 24 Dec 2022 to keep the local currency rate stable in the market.

DAB in a statement asked all eligible commercial banks, and money exchangers to participate in the auction.

It is mentioned in the newsletter that partial transaction is not allowed and the winner of the auction is obligated to deliver the amount in cash at a specific time to DAB.

DAB last week also auctioned off \$13 million for strengthening the Afghani currency. Meanwhile, on Thursday one dollar was exchange for (88.70) Afghani in the market.

Uniforms distributed to policemen

JAWZJIAN (Agencies): Local security officials of Jawzjan said that they have distributed special uniforms to 1,500 policemen on that province.

The provincial Jawzjan Police Chief Qari Hafizullah Pahlwan said during the distribution of uniforms to the police that special uniforms were distributed to the police in order to separate the responsible and non-responsible security personnel in the center and districts of this province.

Meanwhile, the process of special uniforms distribution to police follows in different provinces, which have been warmly welcomed by the people.

Reactions continue to closure of universities for women

KABUL (TOLOnes): The closure of universities for women has faced continuous reactions within and outside the country.

On Thursday morning, dozens of female students held a protest near the Kabul University in the west of Kabul, calling for women and girls' access to education and work.

The European Union in a statement called the deci-

sion another violation of international obligations and said it constitutes an institutionalized and systematic "discrimination against women and girls."

"Every child should have access to both primary and secondary education without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's religion, sex, ethnic or social origin, disability, or any other status," the

statement reads.

The statement said the Afghan women are essential for the prosperity and stability of the country.

"The EU expects from the Taliban to abide by their obligations, revert their decision, and ensure universal access to quality education throughout the country," the statement regards.

A joint statement from

Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union condemned the decision of the Islamic Emirate for suspension of higher education for the girls' students.

Afghanistan vaccinates 5.36m children against measles in drive

KABUL (Agencies): Afghanistan has vaccinated 5.36 million Afghan children 9-59 months against measles while 6.1 million children 0-59 months received oral polio vaccine in a nationwide vaccination campaign held from 26 November to 12 December 2022.

Based on the data from Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health Expanded Programme on Immunization, the campaign covered 329 districts in all the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. There were 4341 vaccination teams comprising 4 team members on each team.

"It warms my heart that we were able to protect Afghan children from measles and polio as we

enter the harsh winter season in the country," says Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan. "This is the first nationwide integrated measles and polio campaign in Afghanistan since the transition in August 2021 and I thank all the health workers, partners and donors who made this possible."

In 2022, many measles outbreaks were reported in Afghanistan. As of November 2022, Afghanistan has confirmed 5484 measles cases with approximately 300 deaths attributed to measles infection. Most of the measles cases are among children under-5 years old.

Prior to the nationwide campaign, a series of sub-national measles immu-

nization campaigns were conducted in 141 districts covering approximately 3 million children.

Measles is a dangerous disease, with complications that can include severe diarrhoea and dehydration, pneumonia, ear and eye complications, encephalitis or swelling of the brain, permanent disability and death. There is no specific treatment for measles.

The only reliable protection from measles is vaccination.

"While measles is highly contagious, it is also a preventable disease. We must not lose the decades of progress we have achieved in immunizing and protecting Afghan children. The measles vaccine is safe and has been in use for more

than 50 years. The benefits of vaccination are clear, as evidence shows measles vaccination saved over 23 million lives worldwide over the past 20 year period," added Dr Dapeng.

The measles campaign in Afghanistan was supported by WHO and UNICEF in terms of vaccine procurement and delivery, development of immunization guidelines and communication materials, and building the capacity of health workers to manage and implement the campaign and ensure that all eligible children are protected through safe and effective vaccines for measles and polio. Financial support for the campaign was provided by Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance.

Construction of 50km road cost 30m USD commenced in Uruzgan

URUZGAN (Agencies): Local officials of Uruzgan says that the construction of 50-kilometer road between Uruzgan center Tarinkot and Dehrawad district has commenced with at a cost of 30 million US dollars.

The Ministry of Public Works strives to built all the extended roads of the country, says an official of the Ministry.

Meanwhile, Hakimullah, the manager of Seddiq Noor Afghan Construction Company, who is carrying out the reconstruction of this road, said that this road is 50 kilometers long and 9 meters wide, which includes a big bridge and



123 small bridges.

The construction of the road will be completed

within 22 months, he said. Lately, the ministry informed on the construc-

tion of the extended road between Kandahar and Uruzgan had started before.

136 development projects to be conduct in Parwan province

PARWAN (Agencies): Humanitarian aid coordination office provides 136 projects for rural development councils in Parwan, funded by World Bank. The rural development projects financed by the World Bank has been mentioned in the projects implementation in a meeting on that Province. The governor of Parwan,

Mawlawi Obaidullah Aminzadeh, stated that the purpose of organizing this meeting is to create more relationship and coordination between governmental and non-governmental departments in order to address the problems and improve the economic and living conditions of the people.

"We are strives to meet the needs of the departments and citizens in coordination, dealing with the supporting institutions," he said.

The governor of Parwan asked the government departments and institutions to complete their incomplete projects and make efforts to plan and implement more projects to address the needs of the people.

These projects are aimed on providing livelihood and providing emergency services in rural areas, social assistance for the most vulnerable people and strengthening social institutions to provide comprehensive services by setting the budget limit from 1,850,000 to 4,000,000 Afghanis per council in opinions have been asked.



Alvi urges political leadership for enhanced engagements with Balochistan people

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for enhancing engagement with the people of Balochistan at the grassroots level and prioritise investment in human resource development for prosperity of the people.

The president, talking to the students of Cadet College, Kohlu, at Aiwan-e-Sadr who are on educational visit to the Capital, called for fully developing and benefiting from the marine and land-based natural resources of the province to deliver economic growth.

He said that the national and provincial leadership had a responsibility to develop strong political relationships with the people of the province through increased interactions and confidence building. He especially emphasized engaging the youth of the province to motivate and enable them to play their role in provincial and national development.

President Alvi said that Balochistan was a mineral-rich province and that Reko Diq and other such projects in future could make Balochistan prosper in a short period

of time. He said that Balochistan's natural resources could be fully developed by benchmarking best global practices, discouraging corruption and corrupt practices, and utilizing human resources optimally with definite goals, KPIs and timelines. He termed eliminating nepotism, uprooting corruption in all of its forms, promoting merit, and transparency as essential for building a strong and prosperous nation.

The president said that political stability, curbing corruption, strengthening institutional framework and focusing on skill development could lead the province towards rapid progress and development. He regretted that due to various reasons Pakistan could not achieve its rightful place in the comity of nations.

Replying to a question, the president said that political stability and continuation of policies were keys for achieving financial and socio-economic stability, and promoting trade and investment in the country.

He said that all stakeholders should set aside their enmity, ego and extreme behaviours, keep the greater

national interest supreme and develop consensus through democratic means for holding free, fair and impartial elections to let people choose their representatives.

Answering a question, the president said the students should continue the pursuit of knowledge throughout their lives, hone their skills continuously, and set the right priorities for themselves while keeping their moral, ethical and family values intact. He advised them to maintain humane behaviour and observe humility in their conduct as they would not only advance in their careers but would also get happiness and satisfaction in life.

The president appreciated the Cadet Colleges of Pakistan for producing quality graduates, who after graduating, were serving the Pakistan Armed Forces and in other fields as physicians, engineers and businessmen. The Cadet College, Kohlu was announced in 2006 and the first batch of Cadets was inducted in 2016 that passed out in 2022. At present total strength of cadets is 298 with 34 faculty members.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to the cadets of the Cadet College, Kohlu, Balochistan who came to Aiwan-e-Sadr on an educational visit.

PM directs solarisation of govt buildings before summer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to complete the solarisation of the government buildings before the onset of summer season.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the promotion of solar energy, said the utilization of solar energy was inevitable to improve the economy by reducing import bill of the fuels.

Calling for the promotion of solar energy by the private sector, he instructed all the departments to expedite the process of transparent bidding for establishment of solar power plants. The solarisation of the government buildings would also

reduce the electricity bills as it was a mode of clean and cheap electricity.

The prime minister was briefed that the Federal Cabinet had already approved a framework for the generation of electricity through solar energy instead of the costly imported fuels.

Moreover, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority would define the tariff for mega solar projects by the end of current month which would follow the bidding from the investors.

It was told that three solar power plants were being planned including a 1200MW project in Layyah, and of two 600MW each in Muzaffargarh and Trimmu.

The prime minister was also briefed on the vision of converting countrywide buildings to solar energy. It was told that an expert consultant had been hired for the solarisation of government buildings.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said a centralized and transparent procurement should be opted by all the federal departments.

The process should be started from the Federal Government buildings in Islamabad. Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Syed Naveed Qamar and Engineer Khurram Dastgir, Advisor Ahad Cheema, and special assistants to the PM Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan and Tariq Bajwa, and senior government officers attended the meeting.

Pakistan & Indonesia sign grant agreement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On behalf of Government of Pakistan, NDMA signed the grant agreement amounting to USD 1 million with Government of Republic of Indonesia for addressing the impact of severe floods in Pakistan. Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and H.E. Adam Mulawarman Tugio, Ambassador to Pakistan signed the document today.

This Grant shall be utilized in recovery & rehabilitation of most vulnerable population to meet basic need of food, nutrition and shelter in the aftermath of Floods 2022. The portion of grant could be employed for resilience and disaster preparedness interventions in Pakistan.

Chairman NDMA expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Indonesia for showing solidarity and extending humanitarian relief assistance for flood affectees in Pakistan. He urged to invest in building capacity of emergency response and preparedness through sharing experience and collaborated training programs disaster management regime. He also conveyed the deepest condolences for the losses during recent earthquake in Indonesia and wished for the earliest recovery.

The Ambassador reiterated to continue the support of vulnerable communities of flood affected areas by Government of Indonesia and laid stress on international community to help Pakistan in rehabilitation phase after devastating floods.

IHC clubs petitions about LG elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday clubbed the identical petitions with regard to the local body elections in the capital and served notices to the respondents for Friday.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the petitions regarding increase in the number of union councils, changes in voter lists and seeking to postpone LG elections.

At the outset of hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan Ashtar Ausaf Ali argued that the petitioner had not challenged the notification regarding the increase in the number of UCs. Director General Election Commission of Pakistan told the court that a new notification had been issued related to the UCs and the ECP had also issued

order on it stating that the local body election in federal capital would be taken place as per its schedule.

Chief Justice asked the PTI's lawyer how it was a contempt of court as the elections were taking place in the capital. How the court should stop the Parliament from legislations, he questioned. The chief justice said that since other identical petitions had also been filed, the court had decided to club them.

Justice Aamer Farooq said that when the federal cabinet had granted approval for the increase in the number of UCs then why the petition was filed only against the Prime Minister. The court said it hoped that if there was any issue then government and ECP would address it.

The court, however, said that the petition related to changes in the voter lists was more important.

Petitioner Shahzad Aurangzeb's lawyer said that the number of UC was increased from 101 to 125. He prayed the court to stop the ECP from holding elections under old voter lists. The notification of the ECP was limited to the 101 union councils, he said, adding that federal government had also suggested amendment in local government act.

Advocate General Jahangir Jadoon also challenged the decision of ECP for rejecting federal government's notification.

The court served notices to ECP and other respondents for Friday and adjourned further hearing of the case.

Women can file writ petitions to dissolve nikah on mistreatment: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday validated the right of women for dissolving their nikah (marriage) on the grounds of mistreatment by their husbands.

The top court issued this order on a writ petition of a woman regarding the dissolution of marriage on the basis of ill-treatment by her husband. The court upheld the decision of a family court to dissolve the nikah of woman petitioner, Tayyaba Ambreen, on the basis of mistreatment by her husband, Shafqat Kayani. Turning down the decision of the appellant court and Peshawar High Court, the apex court said that the marital relationship between a husband and wife was based on trust.

The wife was authorized to file a writ petition to dissolve her nikah on the basis of mental and physical torture by her husband, the court said. The court said that husband's stance against his wife for not fulfilling the marital rights could be an attempt to avoid payment of haq-e-mahr (dower given as a mark of respect to wife).

Court issues written order

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Islamabad court on Thursday issued its written order regarding the rejection of bail petition Senator Azam Khan Swati of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in the controversial tweets case.

Special Judge Central Muhammad Azam Khan, in his six-page order, observed that it was not convinced to grant bail to Azam Swati and decided to dismiss his petition, as apparently he had repeated the same crime after getting bail in the previous act.

The court said the petitioner's lawyer Dr Baber Awan had adopted the stance that his client was being targeted by his political opponents, and that the first information report (FIR) against Swati was registered in violation of the FIA's (Federal Investigation Authority) rules.

Ukraine flags vie with Christmas decor as Zelensky visits Washington

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Days before the year-end holiday, downtown Washington's streets were dominated on Wednesday not just by Christmas decor but by the flag of Ukraine, marking the surprise visit to the US capital by Volodymyr Zelensky.

Pennsylvania Avenue, the grand boulevard which links the White House and Congress, was blocked off for the one-day visit of Ukraine's president, while banners of Ukrainian yellow and blue were paired with the US flag's red, white and blue.

Outside of the White House, Zelensky's first stop of the day, television cameras from around the world were there to record the visit of the wartime leader, his only known trip outside his country since the conflict with Russia started exactly 300 days ago.

Americans called him heroic and compared the visit to that of Britain's premier Winston Churchill,

who came to Washington in 1941 and addressed the Congress on wartime cooperation between the two allies -- as Zelensky did later Wednesday evening.

Before he addressed the special joint session of Congress, Zelensky was greeted by President Joe Biden in the White House Oval Office, where they sat next to a crackling fireplace. In the freezing weather outside, Ukraine supporters lined security barriers to show their support.

Yarema, a 17-year-old Ukrainian student in the United States, was wrapped in the Ukrainian flag, hoping to see Zelensky as well as visit the city. "I wanted to show my support to our president and my support to Ukraine," he said. Asked what Zelensky should be requesting from Biden, Yarema replied: "Arms, arms and even more arms."

Bakhtiar Mendybay, 35, who traveled nearly an hour with his children from his home in Virginia to the

White House, said he could not miss the event.

He had one hand on a stroller and the other holding a sign which showed Zelensky calling for more weapons. "I'm here today to greet the greatest man alive," said the native of Kazakhstan, which like Ukraine is a former part of the Soviet Union and still under significant Russian influence.

"Ukrainians, they're fighting for everyone, including my country, my people, I mean, they stand up against Russian imperialism," said Mendybay, who has lived in the United States for 10 years.

Security was tight, with hundreds of police and Secret Service officers out in force for Zelensky's visit.

"We are very cognizant that Russia has assets in this country and might try to do something," a senior official of the US Capitol Police told ABC television.

"We know what is at stake," the official said.

Admiral Niazi calls on Moroccan Naval Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on Naval Leadership of Royal Moroccan Navy during an official visit to Morocco. Upon arrival at Royal Moroccan Naval Headquarters, Chief of the Naval Staff was received by Naval Chief of Royal Moroccan Navy Vice-Admiral Mostapha El Alami and was presented Guard of Honour.

During meeting with Naval Chief of Royal Moroccan Navy, matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed. The Naval Chief underscored Pakistan Navy initiative for ensuring maritime security in the region through Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and participation in Combined Maritime Force. The Naval Chief invited host navy to participate in Exercise AMAN and PIMEC-23 to promote Blue Economy and highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation between armed forces of both countries through bilateral exercises and



training programs. Inspector of the Royal Moroccan Navy acknowledged Pakistan Navy efforts and commitment in support of collaborative maritime security for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Later, Naval Chief called on Commander Northern Maritime Sector and visited various installa-

tions, training unit and Royal Moroccan Navy Ship where he was given detailed briefing on roles, capabilities and training facilities of Moroccan Navy. It is expected that visit of Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.

Prudent foreign policy mends Pakistan's strained ties with world

ISLAMABAD (APP): Through a consistent high-level engagement with international community, the incumbent government pursued a prudent foreign policy to revive friendly foreign relations while effectively contesting Pakistan's case on multiple fronts – from Kashmir and climate change to the Muslim world issues.

The coalition government inherited a damaged foreign policy that isolated Pakistan at the international level; however Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, took up the gigantic task of improving the strained ties with otherwise closely allied countries.

Soon after the coalition parties formed their government, the country was hit by the worst floods affecting 33 million people and inflicting around \$30 billion loss to the national economy and infrastructure.

The current government sensitized the international community about the damages by climate change-induced floods despite Pakistan's contribution of less than 1% to carbon emissions.

The latest credit to the present government's prudent foreign policy was the establishment of Loss and Damage Fund agreed at the COP27 summit to support the developing world for the losses caused by the climate change-induced calamities.

Earlier, the removal of Pakistan from the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force also manifested the government's forceful advocacy of Pakistan's measures to combat terror financing and simultaneous successful implementation of two action plans. Prime Minister Shehbaz and Foreign Minister Bilawal repeatedly interacted with the leadership from friendly countries including the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others to strengthen the relations by enhancing the scope of bilateral and regional cooperation.

In April, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Saudi Arabia and met

Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman to further strengthen bilateral economic, investment and trade ties.

Besides participation in Open Debate of the UN Security Council on "Conflict and Food Security", and 2nd Global Covid-19 Summit by Bilawal Bhutto in May, State Minister Hina Rabbani Khar also attended High-Level International Donors Conference for Ukraine.

Bilawal Bhutto undertook his first official visit to China to discuss advancing the CPEC construction and attended the annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) in May. In the prime minister's visit to Turkey from 31 May-2 June 2022, both the countries agreed to further improve their relations in the fields of tourism, education, logistics, civil aviation and communications.

The visit of German Foreign Minister to Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto's visit to Mashhad, the visit of Secretary General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization to Pakistan and the foreign minister's participation in SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tashkent are highlights of Pakistan's diplomatic engagements in June and July this year. In August, the prime minister visited Qatar while the foreign minister undertook four-state visit to Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Following the devastating floods, Pakistan and the United Nations jointly launched the "flash appeal" seeking the international community's help for rescue and relief operations in the affected areas.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres paid a Solidarity Visit to Pakistan in September who was briefed on the flood situation by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The same month, Foreign Minister Bilawal chaired High Level event on Loss & Damage organized by Pakistan on sidelines of 77th Session of UNGA and told the international community that the floods impacted one in seven

said, "Second option we have is that parliament can pass a resolution and then governor's rule will be imposed for two months."

After two months, another resolution could be passed and the governor's rule could be extended for six months, he added. He said that Elahi could not advise to dissolve the assembly now, terming it illegal, unconstitutional and against the rules of the assembly.

Rana Sanaullah said there was no constitutional crisis, adding that if Pakistan