

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. During the meeting, issues pertaining to the ministry of railways and aviation division came under discussion, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. They also discussed the overall political situation of the country.

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KARACHI (NNI): A fisherman from the coasts of Pakistan faced imprisonment for more than six years now in India. 40 fishermen from Sindh area, Ali Akbar Shah Goth were forced to be detained in Indian jails for more than six years, due to strained relations with the Indian government. Fishermen's families were depressed over their loved one's imprisonment and were living from hand to mouth.

Captain among five soldiers martyred in Balochistan IED blast

RAWALPINDI (INP): Five including a captain of Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded during an intelligence based operation (IBO) conducted by the security personnel in Kahan area of Balochistan, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

According to military's media wing, a clearance operation based on credible intelligence was underway in Kahan area of Balochistan since December 24.

Nation pays tribute to martyred soldiers in Balochistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday hailed and paid tribute to the five Pakistan Army's soldiers who embraced martyrdom in Balochistan. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "Heart-wrenching news from Balochistan about martyrdom of five soldiers including an Army Captain." "The nation pays its tributes & respects to our heroes who laid down their lives for Pakistan. The perpetrators of terrorism will be brought to justice. Let there be no mistake about it," he added.

The martyred soldiers included Captain Fahad, Lance Naik Imtiaz, Sepoy Asghar, Sepoy Mehran and Sepoy Shamoon. The ISPR said that these

army personnel embraced Shahadat while laying their lives in defence of the motherland against an externally perpetrated threat of terrorism.

Such cowardly acts by inimical elements could not sabotage the hard earned peace and prosperity in Balochistan, it added.

"Security forces remain determined to challenge their nefarious designs, even at the cost of blood and lives. The sanitization Operation continues in the area to apprehend perpetrators," the ISPR said.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

PM gives assistance cheque to terror victim

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved a financial package for the taxi driver who lost his life in an explosion in the I-10/4 sector of Islamabad this week.

He approved the package in light of the investigation of the law enforcement agencies. He sanctioned a financial package of Rs 10 million for the heirs of driver Syed Sajjad Haider Shah. On the instructions of the prime minister, the cheque of the approved amount was handed over to the heirs of Sajjad Haider. According to the investigation, Sajjad had no connection with the terrorists or their plan.

The blast took place in his taxi on December 23. He was from Rehana, district Chakwal and was currently residing in Muslimabad, Dhoke Syedan, Rawalpindi. He left behind his wife and four children. The family of the deceased thanked the prime minister for the financial assistance.

PM extends birthday wishes to Nawaz Sharif; praises his leadership qualities: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday conveyed birthday wishes to his elder brother and former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

and paid tribute to his political and national contributions.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said that he always sought guidance from his elder brother and leader Nawaz Sharif as his imprints on the politics of Pakistan remained permanent. Praising Pakistan Muslim League-N leader, the prime minister further said that Nawaz Sharif's selfless service to the people of Pakistan was the hallmark of his politics.

"Happy birthday to Mian Nawaz Sharif. Throughout my political career, I have always looked up to him for guidance as my elder brother and leader. His imprint on Pakistani politics remains indelible. Selfless service to the people is the hallmark of his politics," he posted a tweet. In a separate message shared by PM Office Media Wing in Urdu language, the prime minister said that on his birthday, millions of his followers, including him, prayed for his long life.

He said that he felt pride in being younger brother of Nawaz Sharif and a worker of his party.

Nawaz Sharif's life was immersed with his deep affection for the motherland and laden with his sincere

efforts, he said, adding that his brother possessed qualities of tender heart, foresightedness, understanding and wisdom. The prime minister further said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif always strived for the defence and economic prosperity of Pakistan, public welfare and improving its prestige at the international level.

Besides, he always fulfilled his commitments, he added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has formally issued a directive for the grant of Shuhada package to martyred police constable of Islamabad Capital Territory Police Syed Adeel Hussain who laid down his life during a suicide attack in Sector 1/10. The prime minister also directed for handing over a cheque worth Rs10 million as a financial package to the bereaved family of late taxi driver Syed Sajjad Haider Shah, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release on Sunday.

The deputy commissioner Islamabad would hand over this cheque to the bereaved family. The Prime Minister's Office issued directives to the ministry of interior for taking necessary steps in this regard.

Imran Khan says ‘vote of confidence before Jan 11, polls in April’

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan said Sunday that the vote of confidence will be held before January 11 while general elections are likely to be held in April. While talking to senior journalists, Imran Khan said that he is not in contact with the establishment. He predicted that general elections are going to be held in April.

"When two assemblies are dissolved then they are bound to hold general elections. We still don't care if elections are postponed even after the dissolution of the assemblies."

Khan said that they did not dissolve the assemblies immediately but after consulting the allies. He expressed hopes that they will manage to take the vote of confidence before January 11. The PTI chief expressed full confidence in Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi. He said that he is sure that Pervaiz Elahi will dissolve the Punjab Assembly.

Imran Khan said in a Twitter message on birth anniversary of the Founder of Pakistan Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, "One of the main reasons we have been unable to

realise our Quaid Mohammad Ali Jinnah's vision for Pakistan is absence of Justice through Rule of Law which ensures equality before the law for all citizens. This leads to haqeeqi azadi, true freedom, & protection of citizens rights."

"This in turn protects them from elite capture of the State & govt. Unfortunately in Pakistan bec Rule of Law was never allowed to be established, elite capture of the country has allowed powerful institutions & mafias to remain above the law as if it was their right," he added. Imran Khan summoned a meeting of his party MNAs on December 28 to chalk out a strategy regarding resignations from National Assembly. The meeting will be held at Punjab House in Islamabad. Sources told that the former premier Imran Khan would also address the MNAs via a video link from Zaman Park Lahore.

PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry confirmed that the party chairman had summoned the session.

It is pertinent to mention here that the National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf once again summoned PTI MNAs — who had quit en masse

in the aftermath of their government's ouster last month, to confirm if their resignations were "voluntary character and genuineness". The NA Secretariat wrote a letter to Shah Mehmood Qureshi in response to his letter regarding the acceptance of MNAs' resignations.

The NA speaker invited PTI MNAs for verification of their resignation in pursuance of Paragraph (b) of Sub-Rule (2) of Rule 43 of Rules of Procedure & Conduct of Business in NA, 2007.

Imran Khan summons PTI MNAs meeting to chalk out strategy on resignations: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has summoned a meeting of his party MNAs on December 28 to chalk out a strategy regarding resignations from National Assembly. The meeting will be held at Punjab House in Islamabad. Sources told that the former premier Imran Khan would also address the MNAs via a video link from Zaman Park Lahore. PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry, confirmed that the party chairman had summoned the session.

NA Spokesman says PTI members to be called to confirm resigns

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The spokesperson of the National Assembly on Sunday assured the parliamentarians of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to call them to confirm their resignations which have already been tendered to the Speaker.

The NA spokesperson has given a statement in a letter to the opposition party--the PTI's members regarding their resignations. "In the context of the news reports being circulated in Electronic and press Media regarding Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

decision to appear collectively in the office of the Speaker of National Assembly and confirm their resignations from their respective seats of National Assembly,

the Spokesperson of National Assembly Secretariat has drawn attention to the letter written by National Assembly Secretariat on 22nd December 2022 to PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qurashi in response to his letter," the statement said Sunday.

The spokesperson said in the letter that the every MNA of the PTI will have

to personally confirm his resignation as they will be called under paragraph (B) of sub-rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, 2007 for confirmation of the resignations. It may be recalled that PTI members of the National Assembly were invited to the Chamber of the NA Speaker for confirmation of resignations from 06 to 10 June 2022. And, despite being formally invited, no member of the PTI came to the Speaker's office to confirm his or her resignation.

Quetta grenade blast injures at least four: CM

QUETTA (NNI): Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo said on Sunday a grenade blast on Sabzal Road injured at least four prompting condemnation and directions for beefing up the security measures.

One of the injured is reported to be in critical condition. The news was also confirmed by Balochistan Health department media coordinator Dr Waseem Baig. Besides sparking country-wide condemnation, the incident has spurred the provincial government's directions to conduct intelligence-based operations in order to ensure the safety of the city.

ECP sets up 1,039 polling stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up 1,039 polling stations in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to facilitate voters and to ensure better turnout on the polling day.

According to ECP, as many as 3,088 polling booths have also been established for local government elections scheduled to be held on December 31, 2022.

The Election Commission has already appointed 15 Monitoring Officers (MOs) headed by one District Monitoring Officer (DMO) to ensure a close vigil on the canvassing of all candidates, and to take necessary action against the violators.

The monitoring teams have so far removed various prohibited-sized posters and banners from Union Councils 36,37, 41,42,47,48 and 130. Over one million (1,000,155) registered voters including 0.5 million (526,138) male and more than 0.4 million (474,017) female balloters will use their right to franchise in the ensuing local government elections being held in the federal capital.

KP CM handed over solid waste machinery to WSSP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has handed over newly purchased solid waste machinery to Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP).

A ceremony in this regard was held at the Chief Minister's House in which the Chief Minister handed over the machinery to WSSP, purchased at a cost of Rs 413.5 million for 11 new semi-urban union councils which have recently been included in the WSSP domain. The newly purchased solid waste machinery includes 33 mini dumpers, 55 containers, 16 tractors and trolleys, 11 arm rolls, 4 FE loaders, and 4 excavators. Moreover, the eleven new semi-urban union councils of district Peshawar added to the WSSP domain include Achini Bala, Chamkani, Larama, Pajjagi, Pakha Ghulam, Pushtakhara Payan, Regi, Sarband, Sufaid Dheri, Wadpaga and Mera Kachori.

Nation marks 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam with patriotic zeal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The nation celebrated the 146th birthday anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on December 25 (Sunday) across the country showing great zeal and enthusiasm.

The day dawned with special prayers for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan while the national flag was hoisted on the major government buildings in the federal capital, like across the country.

Public and private departments arranged a variety of events, including seminars, conferences, competitions, and discussion programmes, mostly during the last week to pay rich tributes to the father of the nation for his untiring struggle, sagacity, and leadership that led to the cre-

ation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of sub-continent.

Special events were arranged to highlight and promote the vision and messages of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, particularly with regard to rule of law, the supremacy of the constitution, and the upholding of democracy.

A special ceremony was arranged by the Pakistan Academy of Letters on December 22 (Thursday) to mark the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The ceremony was presided over by noted literary person Dr Ehsan Akbar while Haroon-ur-Rasheed Tabassum, Yusuf Aziz, Jabbar Mirza, and Dr Fakhar-ur-Islam were the special guests at the occasion. A series of programmes were arranged by the National

Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on December 25 (Sunday) at the Pakistan National Heritage Museum which included a prestigious opening ceremony featuring vibrant performances at the Heritage Museum Hall, Lok Virsa, and screening of video documentaries on Quaid-e-Azam at the Pakistan National Monument Museum.

The essay writing competition was arranged by the Nazariya Pakistan Council in connection with the YOUNG Quaid celebrations in which students of different educational institutions participated and exhibited their extraordinary oratorical skills. A cycle race was arranged by the Islamabad Cycling Association on December 24 (Saturday) around F-9 Park (Bolan Gate) on the main roads.

‘Bilawal paid expenses of official trips by himself’

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has made 20 foreign trips after assuming the portfolio on April 27.

According to a press statement issued by Foreign Office Spokesperson on Sunday, Bilawal toured thrice each to the United States and the United Arab Emirates, while two each to Saudi Arabia, China, and Uzbekistan.

Foreign Minister Bhutto took charge as Foreign Minister on April 2022, after which he paid 20 visits to 11 countries, of which 13 were individual visits as Foreign Minister, while seven were accompanied by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also visited Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Germany, Switzerland, Cambodia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

However, the foreign minister claimed that he bore the expenses of tickets and hotels during his foreign visits to reduce the financial burden on the national exchequer.

"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."

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahira Baloch also confirmed that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid the expenses of official trips by himself.

"Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto's foreign visits are meant to explore trade opportunities, restore ties with friendly countries and remove misunderstandings."



Admin foils nine bids to smuggle 3787 wheat, flour bags

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police while foiling nine bids to smuggle wheat and flour seized 3787 bags here during the last seven days.

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Potohar Division police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up nine drivers namely Rohullah, Naem, Hussain, Ishaq, Bahadur, Umair, Imtiaz, Rashid and Arif and recovered 3787 wheat, flour and fine flour bags.

The Superintendent of Police said strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against wheat smugglers.

The spokesman said, the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the authorities concerned were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids.

Railways retrieved 961 acres land

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 961 acres of its land worth Rs19, 603 million during various anti-encroachment operations across the country from the land grabbers.

"Around 474 acres retrieved in Punjab, 135 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 329 acres in Sindh and only 23 acres in Balochistan acres land had been retrieved by the Pakistan Railways," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached. The official said that in the light of orders of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all Divisional Superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment.

"The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added.

He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades.

"The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments," he added. He said the government was taking several steps to retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including a detailed survey being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation by various government departments.

Sharjeel ays rich homage to founder of Pakistan

KARACHI (NNI): Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has paid rich homage to founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birthday anniversary for his vision and relentless struggle for the independence.

He said that December 25th reminds us of the democratic and legal struggle of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for the Muslims of the subcontinent. The struggle under his

leadership enabled the Muslims of the subcontinent to get a free and independent state. The minister added that Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah did politics with the power of argument for the supremacy of law, democratic values. His entire life is based on the politics of principles, he added. The minister stressed upon to follow the guiding principles of Quaid-i-Azam and added it is only way to stabilized the country and steer it towards the path of development and prosperity.

Pakistani young generation to pursue Quaid-e-Azam's footprints, hopes German CG

KARACHI (APP): The Consul General of Germany to Karachi Dr. Rudiger Lotz paid tremendous tributes to Pakistan's father of the nation on his 146th birthday anniversary. He said, "Today, we are celebrating the birthday of founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah."

The Consul General hoped that the young generation would follow footprints of their Quaid.

Dr. Rudiger Lotz also wished Christmas to Christian community of Pakistan.

He said that the year of 2022 was not an easy one and faced Covid-19.

The German Consul General said that Pakistan also dealt with flash floods in 2022. He said that the war between Russia and Ukraine continued in the same year. He hoped that the world would advance with happiness in 2023.

PPP all set to observe 15th death anniversary of BB

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Rawalpindi Chapter has finalized arrangements to observe the 15th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto shaheed on December 27 in a befitting manner.

Talking to APP here Sunday, former media advisor to ex-prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, Mian Khurram Rasool, said that the city would be decorated with the portraits of former Prime Minister Zulifqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), Benazir Bhutto and Bilawal Bhutto. He said ZAB and BB devoted their lives to the people and democracy. They both created awareness among the people about social, civil, economic and political rights among the masses and stabilized the country by uniting the four provinces, he said.

Meanwhile, Vice-President PPP, Punjab Malik Khalid Boby, said that Quran Khawani would be held at 1:00 p.m. and 'Dua' would be offered at 5:05

p.m. He informed that federal ministers and central local leadership would attend the ceremony.

Talking on the occasion, PPP city president Raja Kamran Hussain said that members from local bodies, People Students Federation, People Youth Organization, Women Wing, People Lawyers Forums and People's Unity of PIA would participate in the event.

He said that Shaheed BB was a leader of international stature and her services would be remembered forever.

Speakers will highlight the achievements of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, who struggled for democracy and sacrificed her life for the people of Pakistan, he told and added that Bhutto Langer would also be distributed on the occasion.

It is mentioned here that Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007, soon after addressing an election rally at the Liaquat Bagh.

PAF releases special song to pay tribute to Quaid

KARACHI (PPI) Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on Sunday released a special song to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as nation observed his 146th birth anniversary.

The video of patriotic song features a message of the founder of Pakistan about the importance of air force. "A country without a strong Air Force is at the mercy of any aggressor. Pakistan must build up its own Air Force as quickly as possible. It must be an efficient Air Force, Second to None," reads the Quaid's message.

Earlier in the day, a spectacular change

of guard ceremony was held at the Mazar-e-Quaid where Pakistan Military Academy Kakul assumed the ceremonial guard duty from Pakistan Air Force cadet guards. Major General Umar Aziz was the chief guest on the occasion.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in their separate messages in connection with birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam, have urged the nation to follow the guiding principles of the father of the nation to ensure progress and prosperity of the country.

Thalassemia awareness campaign soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Amir Fida Paracha has said that PBM has planned to launch a nationwide awareness campaign on prevention of Thalassemia among the children soon.

According to a report,

approximately 100,000 patients are suffering from Thalassemia in Pakistan and every year 5,000 babies are born with this deadly disease.

These patients need regular blood transfusion and iron chelating agent after consultation with a qualified Hematologist

along with regular diagnostic investigations on monthly basis which is unaffordable by the poor families in Pakistan. Talking to APP, Amir Fida Paracha said, "Thalassemia is a disease which can be controlled through educating people about its prevention."



LAHORE: People from Christian community performing their religious rituals during special service on Christmas Day at St Peter's Church.

Faryal Talpur participated in annual Parents' Day ceremony at Bakhtawar Cadet College

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Central President of PPP Women's Department and MPA Faryal Talpur participated as a special guest in the annual Parents' Day ceremony at Bakhtawar Cadet College, District Shaheed Benazirabad.

Air Vice Marshal Khalid Mahmood also specially participated in the ceremony. Provincial Education Minister Sardar Shah, former Law Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar, members of Sindh Assembly Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Qasim Siraj Soomro and Sadia Javed, party leader Ali Akbar Jamali and others were also present on this occasion.

Faryal Talpur received a grand welcome on his arrival at the college, with cadets giving a salute during the march past. On this occasion, she also planted a sapling in the college, inaugurated the arts and science exhibition and the newly constructed hostel block. Faryal Talpur distributed prizes among the position holder students of the college and appreciated their passion and dedication.

Faryal Talpur said that Bakhtawar Cadet College was the first educational institution of its kind in the country, after the

establishment of Bakhtawar Cadet College, an example was set for others to emulate. She added that today's function may be just a college activity for the guests here, but for me today is an opportunity to re-examine my dream.

The present moment reminds me of the days of struggle for the beginning and fulfillment of this dream.

Faryal Talpur further said that considering the success of this college, we have established the second Girls Cadet College in Larkana, when she came here in the year

2018, there were only 60 female students at that time but today this institution is outstanding in every respect.

She said that Bakhtawar Cadet College is a milestone in realizing the dream of martyr Ms. Benazir Bhutto. Making women independent and creating permanent leadership was the dream of Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

Addressing the ceremony, she further said that President Asif Ali Zardari always guided the establishment of this college to completion as soon as possible and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto

Zardari is actively working to complete the mission of his mother Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

Faryal Talpur appreciated the efforts of the principal, administration and teachers of Bakhtawar Cadet College. Provincial Education Minister Sardar Shah said that all possible resources will be used to provide more facilities to Bakhtawar Girls Cadet College. Provincial Education Minister also announced a bonus salary for the better performance of the cadet college administration.



Even 'Environmental Emergency' couldn't do much good for Lahore

LAHORE (APP): As the city areas remain covered by a thick layer of smog, even the Environmental Emergency imposed in Lahore could not do much good for the residents as almost all areas of the city remained under smog cover most of the time.

During the week ending this Sunday, the provincial metropolis witnessed thick clouds of smog covering heritage monuments, tall buildings and residential areas with the sun appearing just for a couple of hours.

With over a hundred thousand people dying every year due to air pollution in the country, the recent phase of smog was exposing more and more people to health hazards by inhaling Co, Co2, Sulphur and ammonia gases emitted by vehicles and industrial units. The city's air index was badly affected over the time due to massive tree cutting and erasing green areas for constructing housing societies and industrial units. Burning of crops residue and brick kilns emissions is another phenomenon adding to air pollution. Although the provincial government has imposed Environmental Emergency in the city by banning crops residue burning, shifting brick kilns to zigzag technology, raising anti-smog squad to check vehicular and industrial emissions and closing schools three days a week, yet desired results are still awaited. "Globally ambient air quality standards for Sulphur Dioxides, nitrogens and carbon emissions have been produced for protection against air pollution," remarked an environmental expert, Professor Dr. Ijaz Bhatti. "SO2 is of great importance for being used globally as an indicator for group of gaseous Sulfur Oxides (SOX)."

Farooq Baig, another environmentalist mentioned that with the help of some local entrepreneurs, construction of a 25-foot solar-powered "smog tower" was on cards that will filter clean air for about 95,000 residents in its vicinity.

He hoped, the project would pro-

vide some relief to residents in the worst smog-hit areas. "But, it was not a long term solution as even a dozen smog towers would be insufficient for this mega city." "We need to change our overall lifestyle, fuels usage mechanism and strict monitoring of farmers, brick kiln owners, vehicles and industries and penalizing those polluting the environment," he said.

The city's air quality level that sometimes brings Lahore atop the most polluted cities list, it worries citizens especially the mothers of junior classes students.

"We are worried about health of our children. This unending smog is really a nuisance," said 45 years old Maryam, a scary mother in Daroghawala area.

"No matter that we all are responsible for this situation. But now the time has come to strictly implement respective laws sparing no one and penalizing polluters across the board whatever the position or post," she stressed. "How long we can see our children coughing with inflamed eyes, soaring throats and headache," she said. "It is too much. Authorities must go for an action no matter it is me or any influential politician, industrialist or a bureaucrat."

Health experts are also worried about prevailing situation with more and more patients rushing to hospitals with complaints of multiple diseases.

"The current smog and polluted toxic environment greatly affects our health," said Dr. Kashif Saleem, a dermatologist at Mayo Hospital. "Smog and air pollution exposes citizens to asthma, coughing, emphysema, allergies, chronic bronchitis, lung infections and irritation of the eyes, throat, nose and chest infections."

He said different epidemiological studies have revealed that smog and a kind of Sulphur-laden air pollution contribute to increasing morbidity (especially at respiratory levels and cardiovascular), premature mortality

and even cancer.

"We see more and more patients coming to hospitals during the smog season. This phenomenon not only create health hazards for people but also exert extra financial burden on poor people," Dr Kashir said.

Amidst complaints by different segments of society on air pollution, Punjab Environmental Protection Department (PEPD) officials claim that air pollution level in the city was within the permissible limits of Air Quality Standards.

"We have seen significant outcome of measures taken by the government," said PEPD Director Nasim-Ur-Raman. "Air Quality Index has visibly improved during last few days." He also mentioned to regular checking of smoke emitting vehicles and industries by anti-smog squads. "We have nine anti smog squads working across city and so far 586 smoke-emitting industrial units have been sealed imposing a fine of Rs34 million." Nasim said the farmers were being provided modern harvester "Hepper Seed" to destroy crop residues instead of its open burning. "We are also ensuring conversion of brick kilns to zigzag technology. Farmers and brick kiln owners, violating environmental laws have also been fined."

He also claimed that air pollution level recorded at different locations in the city showed downward trend to 130 on Air Quality Index (AQI) that is moderate and below the permissible pollution level. Nasim said the Punjab government has also directed ethanol manufacturing units to document their current status regarding installation of wastewater treatment plants to treat effluent in compliance of Punjab Environment Quality Standards (PEQS).

Despite the claims of PEPD, the ground situation feels worrisome and there is dire need of concrete measures to fight out this menace to secure human health and overall environmental conditions.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Information Technology (IT) Syed Aminul Haque cutting cake celebrating the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

IGP opens CTD PS; reviews police performance

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police (IGP), Moazzam Jah Ansari on Sunday inaugurated newly constructed police station of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in Kohat.

Regional Police Officer Kohat Tahir Ayub, District Police Officer Kohat Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, SP Operations Kohat Bilal Ahmad, SP CTD Kohat Region Fazal Wahid, and SP Special Branch Khan were also present during the ceremony.

IGP KP expressed satisfaction over the functioning of CTD police station in Kohat and visited different sections of the station. He reviewed the internal and external security and

inspected the CCTV monitoring system.

Speaking on the occasion, He said that policemen are responsible to protect lives and properties of people and to deal with different challenges including terrorism. He said that several measures are being taken for development of infrastructure and providing honorarium to police employees.

He said that the objective of CTD police station in Kohat region was to eradicate terrorism and militancy from the area and to cope with other natures of crimes. He said no leniency would be tolerated for those found guilty of taking law in hands and stern action would be taken against criminals.

Later, IGP KP chaired a performance review meeting in Police Club Kohat. He was briefed about the law and order situation in the region, police performance and actions taken by CTD in various cities of Kohat region.

He said that we can achieve the goal of a crime free society by imparting information about the main reasons behind the happening of crime.

He said a man who was subjected to harassment, child abuse or other psychological misdeeds often find a escape root by involving in criminal activities adding that proper steps for eradication of these social evils could help reduce crime ratio and decrease burden on prisons.

People urged to follow Quaid's principles

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Sunday urged general public to play their participatory role for the development and prosperity by following the guiding principles of the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah of unity, faith and discipline.

In a message issued here on the occasion of Quaid's Day, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that we have to serve with dedication in all sections to make our country prosperous.

To ensure security and prosperity, the unshakable consensus and unity in our ranks should be made more fruitful; he added that we have to pledge to make every kind of sacrifice for the development and security of the motherland.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan handing over newly purchased Solid Waste Machinery to Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar.

Quaid visits three times to ICP to acknowledge its students' role during Pakistan Movement

PESHAWAR (APP): Father of the nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had visited the historic Islamia College Peshawar (ICP) three times in his life to acknowledge the outstanding role of its students in completion of his mission for Pakistan.

"The great Quaid had special fondness for the historic Islamia College Peshawar due to dynamic role of its students during Pakistan Movement and visited here three times signified his love for this great alma-mater," said Yunus Khan, Chairman Pakistan Studies Department, ICP while talking to APP.

He considered students of ICP and people of KP and erstwhile Fata as a frontline force in his constitutional and peaceful struggle for independence of Pakistan, he added.

Yunus said the great Quaid had visited ICP in 1936, 1945, 1948, and was greatly impressed by the devotion of its faculty, staff and students besides the building's domes, lush-green lawns, and majestic edifice of its beautiful architecture.

In his last visit to the ICP as Governor General of Pakistan on April 12, 1948, the great Quaid presented glowing tributes to the services of its students towards making of Pakistan in these words.

"I am indeed very happy to be present here today and to have the privilege of addressing the students of this great Darul Uloom, who are the future builders of Pakistan."

In fact, he reminded the students that now we have achieved the national goal of Pakistan and it was our collective responsibility to work hard in our respective professions with high-level of dedication, commitment and sincerity to make it one of the greatest state of the world.

He advised the students to develop a sound sense of discipline, character, initiative and a solid academic background and devote themselves wholeheartedly towards studies.

"Now we have our own government, therefore, we must be constructive in criticism and students can make a big contribution towards promotion of harmony,

unity and development of Pakistan."

Quaid e Azam while addressing students said that remember your government was like your own garden. "Your garden flourishes by the way you look after it and the efforts that you put towards its improvement. Similarly, your government can only flourish by your patriotic, honest and constructive efforts to improve it."

On students' demands, he said establishment of a quality university in Peshawar was very nearer to his heart, which would be great centre of culture and learning from where the rays of knowledge and culture can spread upto the Middle East and Central Asia and soon people of this province would get a quality university here.

Following a gap of one year, the Government of Pakistan, had established the University of Peshawar near Islamia College Peshawar in 1949.

Yunus said Quaid e Azam also became an honorary member of the Khyber Union, a debating society of the college, in 1936.

He said Mr Jinnah's love for ICP could be judged from his will written on May 30, 1939 in Bombay in which he declared ICP, Muslim University Aligarh and Sindh Madrassatul Islam, Karachi, as among the inheritors of his property.

The Quaid Trust later paid Rs10.81 million in different instalments to the college. The amount was spent on the establishment of Quaid-i-Azam College of Commerce, University of Peshawar, construction of Jinnah residential quarters for the college employees, Jinnah College for Women and the newly-constructed Takbeer block.

Quaid-e-Azam also received a rousing welcome when he came to ICP in 1945. The students and Muslim Students Federation ICP presented him Rs8,000 as fund for the Pakistan Movement and assured him to present 8,000 committed educated workers for accomplishment of his mission when he came again to ICP.

The arrival of the man committed to the cause of a

separate homeland for Muslims had moved the people of K-P (then known as NWFP).

They had decorated their homes, bazaars, and towns with Muslim League flags inscribed with different slogans of Pakistan and Quaid e Azam Zindabad to welcome their beloved leader.

It was the love of people of K-P with Quaid Azam that Muslim League had won more than 50 seats in this province and after that nobody could stop independence movement of Pakistan from here.

He said that Quaid e Azam was a great symbol of independence and democracy who strongly believed in power of the masses, rule of law, equality and supremacy of constitution and that was the major reasons that he had created Pakistan after a short time of seven years following adaptation of historic Pakistan Resolution at Lahore on March 23, 1940.

The college's clock tower, which now becomes the pride symbol of Peshawar, has for long figured on the back of Rs 1000 currency note.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali with Christian community members cutting cake on Christmas day. — F.P. photo

Christian community celebrates Christmas

PESHAWAR (APP): Likewise other parts of the country, the Christian community living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday celebrated their religious event Christmas with zeal and enthusiasm.

The day was started with cake cutting ceremonies with Christmas trees in churches including St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar Cantt., All Saints Church, Kohati Gate, Cathedral Church, Sunehri Masjid Road, Diocese of Peshawar, St. Michael Catholic Church, the Mall, Peshawar, St. Thomas Church Tarnab Farm Peshawar.

The participants extended greetings to each other and offered prayers for the sovereignty of the country.

Special Christmas ceremony was hosted by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor House that was attended by Bishop Diocese of Peshawar, Humphrey Sarfaraz Peter and a large number of Christian communities. The ceremony was beautifully decorated with colorful bunting and banners. Special gifts were distributed among the children and the social workers.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan said in a message that all minorities in Pakistan have equal rights as citizens of the country. Our religion, Islam, teaches equal rights to minorities and our constitution guarantees them to celebrate their religious worship, rituals and festivals with complete freedom.

CCPO Mohammad Ejaz visited All Saint Church in Kohat Gate and met with leaders of Christians. He was accompanied by SSP Operation and other concerned police officers. He said that city police have ensured foolproof security arrangements in all the churches in provincial metropolis.

Similarly, Chief Secretary KP Dr Shahzad Bangash congratulated Christians and said that KP government has taken different steps for welfare of Christian's community by providing maximum facilities to them.

Meanwhile, DC Kurram Wasil Khan Khattak attended a cake cutting ceremony

held at Dhandar Road, Parachinar and extended greetings to Christian community.

DPO Kohat Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani made detailed visits to the churches of the Christian community and reviewed security arrangements.

Minister inaugurates water supply scheme

Village Rajdahani was completed at cost of 8.6 Millions rupees and main karwali and link road karwali at cost of 13 Million rupees in village Karwali.

On this occasion, the people of the area participated in the opening ceremonies in large numbers.

Provincial Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan while addressing public gatherings said that the Tehreek-e-Insaf government is working on mega projects in every district without any distinction across the province By

Minister inaugurates water supply scheme

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Inaugurate water supply scheme in village Rajdehani at a cost of Rs.8.6 Million, main Karwali and link road in village Karwali at a cost of Rs 13 Million.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan along with former Provincial Minister for C & W Yousuf Ayub Khan inaugurated various projects in Khanpur.

In inaugurated projects Water supply scheme at

which people's lives are improving.

The provincial government has done reforms and record development works in the province which is unprecedented in the past.

Record development projects have been completed in Haripur while development work is ongoing on some projects.

The local elders thanked Provincial Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan for the development projects and assured all kinds of cooperation.

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PESHAWAR: Provincial president of PML (N) Shazia Aurganzeb with party workers cutting cake to celebrate birthday of Quaid-e-Azam and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Quaid-e-Azam changed world geography through democratic struggle

PESHAWAR (APP): Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the only leader, who changed the world geography through a peaceful democratic and legal struggle besides received praise from across the borders due to his matchless services for Pakistan.

Stanley Wolpert, a renowned US academics, historian and writer while praising Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his famous book 'Jinnah of Pakistan' published in 1984 said, "few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three."

Likewise, Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pundit, a prominent figure and Nehru's sister remarked, "If the Muslim League had 100 Gandhis and 200 Azads and Congress had only one Jinnah, then India would not have been divided."

These popular statements reflect the fact that it was only Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who bravely fought the case of Muslim nationhood in India and won it purely through a democratic struggle

gle and constitutionalism.

The international experts had made a praiseworthy endeavour to sum up different aspects of the life, personality and leadership qualities of the great Quaid, who created a separate homeland for the Muslims of Subcontinent i.e Pakistan on August 14, 1947 within seven years of adoption of the historic Pakistan Resolution at Lahore on March 23, 1940.

Pakistan Resolution had set a clear direction for the Muslims of subcontinent and Quaid-e-Azam.

The great Quaid had reorganized All India Muslim League (AIML) by making repeated visits to all Muslims majority provinces of the British India including NWFP (now Khyber Pukhtunkhwa) to mobilize people and students of the province for accomplishment of his mission for Pakistan.

He also visited the historic Islamia College, Peshawar (ICP) in 1936, 1945 and 1948 to acknowledge the outstanding role of its students during Pakistan Movement.

The legendary Quaid was highly impressed by the patriotism, commitment and devotion of its students for Pakistan besides ICP's

building domes, lush-green lawns and majestic architecture.

In 1945, Mr. Jinnah had received a rousing welcome when he came to ICP where its students and Muslim Students Federation (MSF) presented him Rs8,000 as fund for Pakistan Movement.

The students and MSF assured him to present 8,000 committed educated workers when he came again to this great alma-mater.

Manzoorul Haq, former ambassador said that the arrival of legendary leader committed to a cause of a separate homeland for the Muslims of subcontinent had moved people of KP, who decorated their homes, bungalows, bazaars, markets, villages, towns and vehicles with national and Muslim League flags besides holding placards inscribed with different slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad.

He said the KP's people had showed an immense love for Quaid-e-Azam as evident of AIML's highest number of seats won by it in 1946 elections.

"After that historic victory nobody could stop independence movement of Pakistan from Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa."

Ambassador Manzoor said a sea of people with national flags and portraits of Quaid-e-Azam had arrived from across KP and erstwhile FATA to see few glimpses of their beloved leader when he came here in 1945 and later as first Governor General of Pakistan on April 12, 1948.

He said the spirit and enthusiasm of people was historic as this ancient city had been beautifully decorated with national flags hoisted atop of all major buildings and vehicles wearing a festive look.

The great Quaid also paid his last visit to ICP as Governor General of Pakistan on April 12, 1948 and presented glowing tributes to services of its students towards making Pakistan in these words.

"I am indeed very happy to be present here today and to have the privilege of addressing students of this great Darul Uloom, who are the future builders of Pakistan."

Reminding the students, the great Quaid said, "we have achieved the national goal of Pakistan and now it was our collective responsibility to work hard in our respective professions with a high-level of dedication,

commitment and sincerity to make it one of the greatest countries of the world."

He advised the students to develop a sound sense of discipline, character, solid academic background and devote themselves towards studies. "Remember your government was like your own garden. Your garden flourishes by the way you look after it and the efforts that you put towards its improvement. Similarly, your government can only flourish by your patriotic, honest and constructive efforts to improve it," he told students.

Ambassador Manzoor said that Quaid-e-Azam's speech to students of ICP was historic and that any goal could be achieved in life by strictly adhering to it. The great Quaid had laid great emphasis on education and constructive criticism on the government for the sake of improvement and reformation rather than making point-scoring for political and personal gains.

The great Quaid knew that students were future builders of Pakistan and that was why he made repeated visits to ICP despite his hectic engagements and poor health condition.

Following a gap of one year, the Government had established University of Peshawar near ICP in 1949 in line with the Quaid's vision.

Mr. Jinnah's love for ICP could be judged from his historic will written on May 30, 1939 in Bombay in which he declared ICP, Muslim University Aligarh and Sindh Madrassatul Islam Karachi, as among the inheritors of his property. Later, the Quaid Trust paid Rs10.81 million in different instalments to ICP.

The amount was spent on the establishment of Quaid-i-Azam College of Commerce, University of Peshawar, construction of Jinnah Residential Quarters for the college employees, Jinnah College for Women and the newly-constructed Takbeer block.

Quaid-e-Azam had also an immense love for tribesmen of merged tribal districts (Erstwhile FATA) for their strong loyalty, supreme sacrifices and consistent support during Pakistan Movement.

Despite hectic official engagements as First Governor General of Pakistan, he addressed a Grand Tribal Jira at Governor House, Peshawar on April 17, 1948.

During his historic

address to tribal jirga with overwhelming representation of tribal people, chieftains and maliks from all tribal districts, he highly praised the strong commitment, patriotism and support of tribesmen in completion of his mission for Pakistan.

He laid great emphasis on education and social economic development of the tribesmen. He considered quality education especially technical education, science and technology as prerequisite for attaining goals of development and economic prosperity.

He also visited historic Khyber Pass and Landi Kotal in Khyber tribal district where he met with tribal people, elders and Maliks. Tribal maliks presented many gifts including goat, rifle, turban, cap etc to the charismatic leader.

He told tribesmen that Pakistan has now been created and great responsibility rested on them to work tirelessly for its progress and development.

Ambassador Manzoor said the great Quaid had foreseen that problems of tribesmen could only be addressed by equipping students with the ornament of education and, "today after the passing of 75 years of

Pakistan, we have now realized how much education was important for tribesmen."

Meanwhile, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like others provinces of Pakistan celebrated the 146th birthday anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with national enthusiasm on Sunday.

National flags were hoisted on top of all major government and private buildings while walks, seminars and declamation contests were held besides cake cutting ceremonies.

In his message on the occasion of Quaid e Azam birthday, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali has urged people to play their active participatory role for the development and prosperity of Pakistan by strictly following the guiding principles of the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah i.e unity, faith and discipline.

He said "we have to serve our country with full dedication and professional commitment to make it economically prosperous."

Earlier, the day was dawned with special prayers in mosques for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan and eternal peace of his departed soul.



In brief

3 of a family gunned down

MARDAN (INP): Three members of a family including two women were killed by unidentified miscreants inside their house here on Sunday. Police said that unknown culprits barged into a house in Katlang Babuzai of Mardan, shot dead mother, a daughter and a son and escaped the scene after committing triple murder. Knowing about the incident, rescue teams and heavy contingent of police reached the scene. The bodies were shifted to District Katlang Hospital for postmortem and police cordoning off the area started search operation. Police said that incident seems to be outcome of old enmity, however, a case has been registered against unidentified murderers and investigations were in progress.

Car lifter held with arms

SUJAWAL (INP): Police arrested an accused of car lifting with arms and recovered two vehicles here on Sunday. On a tip-off, the police conducted operation near Jara Water area of Sujawal. Police managed to arrest a car lifter identified as Usman Bobak besides recovering a TT pistol and six bullets while his other accomplices managed to escape. Two vehicles were also recovered during the operation. The police after registering a case against detainee started raids to arrest his other accomplices.

CPO inspects Churches

FAISALABAD (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani checked security of city Churches here on Sunday and made the security officials more alert till the culmination of Christmas celebrations. Police spokesman said, the CPO went to various churches and cut Christmas cakes there. The CPO also participated in Christmas services and directed the security officers to beef up the security in Christian graveyards, parks and recreational points so that the Christian community could celebrate their Christmas festival in a most befitting manner.

Bubar bridge damaged

GILGIT (APP): The bridge in Buber district Ghezer Valley that was severely damaged owing to 2022 floods was restored and opened for traffic on Sunday following speedy construction work on it. In an official statement issued from the office of the Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan, two schools that were damaged in the same floods have also been repaired, renovated and transformed into Smart Schools with High-Tech Labs and infrastructure. "Both the boys as well as girls school will be inaugurated in next two days to provide the youth of the valley quality education" the statement said.

Police directed to take action

BAHAWALPUR (INP): District Police Officer, Bahawalpur, Abadat Nisar has directed the district police to take immediate stern action against those found indulged in aerial firing, one wheeling and fire-works on the occasion of New Year's night. According to a spokesman for Bahawalpur police, the DPO has issued a security plan for New Year's Night. He directed all officials concerned including SDPOs and SHOs to ensure the maintenance of law and order on the occasion of New Year's night. He emphasized the need that no one should be allowed to be indulged in aerial firing, one-wheeling of bikes and fireworks.

Govt revises winter vacation schedule

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In view of the abrupt and unusual change in the weather conditions, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department KP on Sunday has reviewed its earlier winter vacation plan and ordered to start vacations with immediate effect.

Keeping in view of the severe cold in Hazara division and other parts of the province, the Met Department forecast the weather for the province a sudden change of weather and a new cold waver has struck the region.

Now the winter zones public and private schools would remain closed with immediate effect from 25th December 2022 to 1st January 2023 and winter zone schools would also remain closed from December 25, 2022, to 15th February 2023.

Earlier, during last week provincial government KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department notified the winter vacation

schedule and said that the working days for the academic year 2022-23 are not sufficient to complete coursework in schools of the province.

It has therefore decided to waive off the winter vacations in the summer

zone of the province till any unusual weather changes, likewise winter vacations in the winter zone have also been reduced and schools in the winter zone shall remain closed from 1st January 2023 to 15th February 2023.

Commuters to avoid unnecessary travel on Motorway: Saqib Shah

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Superintendent of Police Hazara Motorway Syed Saqib Hussain Sunday advised the citizens to avoid unnecessary travel during foggy days. He expressed these views while talking to the commuters.

Saqib Shah said that dense fog continues to blanket the plain areas of KP and Punjab due to which visibility has been reduced and drivers need to take extra care while driving. He urged that citizens should travel during the sunlight hours and that they should also install fog lights on their vehicles at both, the rear and front sides and ensure that windscreen wipers are functional.

SP Hazara Motorway adding said that use of high beam light in fog impairs visibility so headlights should be kept at low beam. Drivers should always maintain a safe distance while traveling on Highways and Motorways. In case of any assistance or information, contact the National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) through the 130 Helpline.

WSSC honors its Christian staff on Christmas Day

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Water and Sanitation Services Company Abbottabad (WSSCA) Sunday organized grand ceremony in honor of the field staff besides organizing a cake cutting ceremony as part of the Christmas celebrations by the Christian employees. During the ceremony, commendation certificates were distributed among the employees who showed the best performance.

Addressing the participants, medical specialist Dr. Khizr Hayat advised the field staff, especially the sanitation staff, to take care of their health during work and prevent infectious diseases. He gave a detailed briefing regarding precautionary measures.

Chairman Board of Directors WSSCA Major

Zulfiqar Ahmad (R) said that the Company was proud of the performance of the field staff by providing the best facilities with their full capabilities and good manners. Congratulating them, he termed field employees a valuable asset of the Company.

Major Zulfiqar also expressed best wishes for the Christian staff on the occasion of Christmas and appreciated their excellent performance for public service. He thanked Malik Tanveer, President of Al-Khidmat Foundation Abbottabad, for giving winter packages to the WSSCA staff and taking responsibility for sponsoring a child of a sanitation worker who was recently died.

WSSCA Chief Executive Officer Engineer

Rehan Yusuf said that the administration of the Company was always following the door policy where all the staff can contact at any time for their suggestions, complaints or problem solving. He extended them his best wishes on Christmas Day and said that the institution was taking all kinds of measures for their welfare. He advised them to perform their duties with spirit by using Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) while performing their duties to protect themselves from diseases and accidents.

During the ceremony, certificates of appreciation were distributed among the best performing staff besides announcing winter package provided by Al-Khidmat Foundation.

Girl killed in aerial firing, accused arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): A minor girl was killed during aerial firing in a Mehndi function, whereas the Satiana police on special direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani arrested the accused within 24 hours.

Police spokesman said here on Sunday that some participants of a Mehndi function restored to aerial firing to celebrate the ceremony in Azafi Abadi of Chak No.432-GB on Saturday night but all of sudden a stray bullet hit an 11-year-old girl Afsha Kashif in her head.

As a result, the girl received critical injuries and was rushed to hospital but in vain and she breathed her last on the way.

On receiving information, CPO Faisalabad Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani took serious notice and directed the area police to immediately arrest the accused.

Therefore, police teams under supervision of SP

Jaranwala, DSP Jaranwala and SHO Satiana police station remained active throughout the night and succeeded in arresting one Hassan, the main accused of firing incident, on Sunday afternoon.

The accused was locked behind the bars while raids were still continued to arrest his remaining accomplices, spokesman added.

Motorcyclist killed in road mishap

A motorcyclist was killed in a road mishap in the area of Ghulam Muhammad Abad police station.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday, a speedy mini loader hit a motorcycle near Baba Tikka Shop Marzi Pura. As a result, motorcyclist Muhammad Nasir, 32, received serious injuries and died on the spot before getting any medical assistance.

The police took body into custody and started investigation, he added.

Elite force to perform duties in 3 shifts

City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani Sunday said that Jawans of Elite Force would perform duties in three shifts.

According to police spokesman, the City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani had received complaints that Jawans of Elite forces were engaged in continuous duty of 16 or 24 hours which was sheer violation of police rules and regulations.

Therefore, the CPO issued necessary directions and made the Jawans of Elite force bound to perform their duties in three shifts. Each shift would comprise of 8 hours.

The CPO also directed the Town SPs, DSPs and SHOs to conduct surprise checking of beats of Elite Force and strict action should be taken against the negligent, lethargic and delinquent elements, spokesman added.

Three killed in accident

BAHAWALPUR (INP): As many as three persons died when a speeding trailer rammed a van from behind near Ahmedpur East Toll Plaza on N5 National Highway due to heavy fog.

According to Rescue 1122 sources, three persons were going in a van loaded with vegetables when a speeding trailer hit them from behind due to heavy fog. As a result, the three unidentified van riders died on the spot.

The bodies of the deceased were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Ahmedpur East. Police have registered the case and investigating.

Commissioners visits General Bus Stand, Wall of Bahawalpur

Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar on Sunday visited General Bus Stand Bahawalpur and reviewed the renovation work.

He took a detailed briefing from the administrative officers regarding the construction of the General Bus Stand.

He also inspected the ongoing construction work of the Wall of Bahawalpur.

Commissioner Bahawalpur Division was told that the history of Bahawalpur will be presented in a beautiful way through pictures on the Wall of Bahawalpur and a green belt will be established around it.

Commissioner Bahawalpur Division directed that all the construction work of the General Bus Stand should be completed on time.

He further said that the concerned officers should visit the field regularly to maintain transparency in the development plans.

Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zahid Pervez Warraich, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur City Dr. Anam Fatima, Assistant Commissioner General Muhammad Tayyab, and other concerned officers were also

present at the occasion.

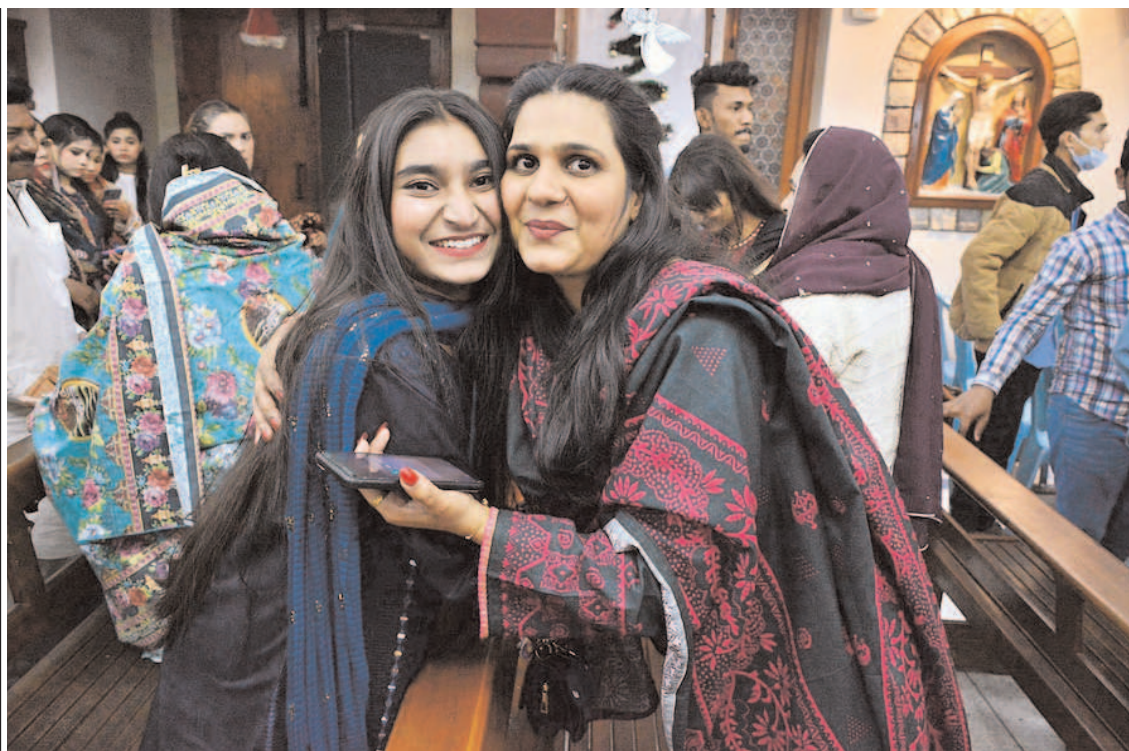
Drug peddlers nabbed

The district police have arrested nine alleged drug pushers and recovered 451 liters locally made liquor from their possession during raids conducted in different areas.

A spokesman for Bahawalpur police said here that acting on a tip-off, police teams of several police stations conducted raids at dens detected within their jurisdiction and took nine alleged drug peddlers into custody.

The police recovered 451 liters of locally made liquor and two liquor factories from the possession of the accused.

The police of police stations that participated in the operation against the drug pushers included PS Cant PS Abbasnagar, PS Musafirkhana, PS Head Rajkan, PS Khairpur Tamewali, PS Dhor Kot and PS Hasilpur. The police have registered separate cases against the suspects.



HYDERABAD: Christian community greet each other after performing their religious rituals on occasion of Christmas Day celebrations at St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral Church.

Ammunition, narcotics recovered

D.I.KHAN (INP): The Dera police claimed to have arrested 32 accused, recovering arms, ammunition and narcotics from them besides 110 motorcycles were locked up during snap-checking at various places across the district.

According to a police spokesman, on the directions of District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Shoaib, the district police have carried out snap-checking at all entry and exit points and other sensitive places in the district.

Under the supervision of DSPs, snap-checking teams led by SHOs were checking suspicious vehicles and persons while taking safety measures. The police locked up 110 motorcycles without number plates in police stations besides the tinted glasses were removed from 148 vehicles.

The police have arrested 32 accused and recovered three pistols, 25 cartridges, one litre of liquor and 48-gram hashish from them. The main purpose of snap-checking is to maintain law and order, to ensure the safety of life and property of the people and to create a sense of security among the masses.

Christmas celebrated in D.I.Khan

D.I.KHAN (APP): The Christian community in Dera Ismail Khan also celebrated its religious festival of Christmas enthusiastically on Sunday.

The Christian community organized their religious ceremonies in churches located in different areas of the city where the celebrations started from last midnight. The children and elders of the Christian community actively participated in the worship while at the beginning of the day they greeted each other on Christmas.

The cakes, drinks and soups were arranged for them during worship.

The district administration had also made special security arrangements for the Christian community.

Tehsil Mayor Sardar Umar Amin Gandapur visited various churches and congratulated the Christian community on the occasion of happiness and presented a beautiful gift of cake.

Christian community praised the tehsil mayor for joining their celebrations and welcomed him.

Quaid's birthday celebrated

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): People across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) celebrated the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation - Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with great enthusiasm and devotion.

Elaborate programmes were chalked out by various social, political, governmental, and non-governmental organizations and forums in various parts of AJK and paid rich tributes to Quaid-e-Azam.

Big ceremonies were held in Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Kotli. The organizing Committees with the coordination of various social and political organisations paid tributes to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Passing out Parade, Parents Day held

NAWABSHAH (APP): The second Passing out Parade and Parents Day was celebrated here on Sunday at Bakhtawar Cadet College for Girls Shaheed Benazirabad.

MPA Faryal Talpur was Guest of Honor, while Chairman Board of Directors of college Air Vice Marshal Khalid Mehmood was Honorary guest of the occasion.

Provincial Minister Education Syed Sardar Ali Shah also attended the programme as guest.

Addressing the programme, MPA Faryal Talpur said that no sector of the world remains incomplete without the participation of women.

She said that women have played an important role for the construction and development of Pakistan since its creation. MPA said that the foundation of Bakhtawar Cadet College was laid on the basis of this theme. She said that this college gained the steps of promotion in a short span of time and now it is playing an important role in the formation of society. MPA was confident the passing out cadets would become proud not of Sindh but Pakistan in the practical field through exemplary training and strong character.

Addressing the occasion, Provincial Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah said that Sindh Government under the theory of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was striving to get the rights of women folk on equality basis and for the education of girls

Pakistan's first Bakhtawar Cadet College for Girls Shaheed Benazirabad was established here while the second Cadet College was established at Larkana.

Minister said that 11 colleges including two Girls Cadet Colleges were established in Sindh where education activities were in progress while four more colleges are under construction.

Minister congratulated the passing out cadets and expressed good wished for them. Presenting the Annual Report of College, Principal Dr Fareeda Shaikh said that administration of the college is jointly operated by Sindh Government and Pakistan Air Force.

She said that at present 300 cadet were getting education here. Principal said that cadets achieved a prominent position Board's examinations and lightened the name of this college and Sindh by showing outstanding performance in curricular and extra-curricular activities at national and international level for the untiring struggle of college administration and teaching staff worth appraisable.

The Sword of Honor went to Cadet Nida Liaquat and Quaid-i-Azam award went Cadet Maria Abbasi while Marvi House remained champion of the year.

Later the fifth house 'Bilquis House' was formally inaugurated on the occasion. During the colorful ceremony programme, Chief Guest visited science

arts exhibition and watched different science projects prepared by cadets. MPA Talpur appreciated the representation of all provinces by cadets at Culture Corner while cadets presented salute of guest on the occasion.

On the occasion cadets paid tribute to brave and courageous 'Hazrat Khola' through 'Khola Squad' formed first time in the history side by side with gymnastic and PT show and also performed through special drill.

Chief Guest awarded certificates of commendation to best performing cadets and college staff while Principal presented Commemorative Shield to chief guest.

The programme was also attended by MPA Ghulam Qadir Chandio, former Provincial Law Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, MPA Muhammad Qasim Soomro, DIG Police Muhammad Younus Chandio, Principal Commandant Cadet College Sanghar Commodore Zeeshan Ali Goraho, Vice Chancellor Quaid-i-Awam Engineering University Prof Dr Saleem Raza Samo, Vice Chancellor Peoples Medical University for Women Prof Dr Gulshan Ali Memon, Additional Commissioner SBA Fayyaz Hussain Rah-ulo, Deputy Commissioner SBA Shehryar Gul Memon, SSP Capt (Rtd) Ameer Saud Magsi, parents of cadet, members Board of Governor, high civil and military officials and guests in large number.

Quaid Day celebrated

MULTAN (APP): Like other parts of the country, the birthday of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was celebrated here Sunday.

Different ceremonies were organized in educational institutions and other offices to mark the day. The educational institutes organized seminars and speech competitions to pay tribute to the great leader of the subcontinent and founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The speakers highlighted the need of following the ideology of the Father of the Nation to bring prosperity in the country. They said that Jinnah was a great leader and he started the fight for an independent

country Pakistan and achieved the target. They paid rich tributes to the struggle of Muhammad Ali Jinnah for an independent country for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Meanwhile, Muslim League (N) organized a cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate the birthday of founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the leader of the Muslim League-N Nawaz Sharif at Madni Chowk in the constituency PP-215.

Addressing the ceremony, PML (N) leader Syed Babar Shah said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made Pakistan after a long struggle and rendered eminent sacrifices for this cause. Paying rich tribute to the founder of Pakistan and his companions, he said that after

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mian Nawaz Sharif was the leader who made the country a nuclear power. He said that Mian Nawaz Sharif always worked for the welfare of the country and the nation. Along with developing the national economy, he also raised the standard of living of the people.

Later, another cake-cutting ceremony was organized at residence of the city president of the Muslim League-N Women's Wing and former member of the provincial assembly (MPA) Sultana Shaheen to mark the day.

A large number of party workers and civil society members participated in the ceremony. They also felicitated the Christian community on Christmas celebrations.

Four dacoits arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): The police have claimed to arrest four dacoits from different parts of Faisalabad during last 12 hours.

Police spokesman said on Sunday, CIA police headed by ASI Mujahid Hussain on a tip-off conducted a raid and succeeded in arresting 3 dacoits, including ring leader Gulfam, Usman and Bashir who were wanted to the police in different dacoity, robbery and other cases. The police recovered 2 motorcycles, 3 pistols, cash, mobile phones and other items from their possession and locked them behind the bars for further investigation.

Meanwhile, SHO Raza Abad police station Ali Akram Goraya signaled the suspects riding on two

motorcycles near a picket at Rajbah Road but the accused instead of stopping accelerated their vehicles by opening indiscriminate firing on the police team.

The police also returned fire and started chase. Therefore, the accused abandoned their bikes on the road and took shelter behind a building and once again opened firing.

The police in self-defense also returned fire and during this encounter one of the outlaws received bullet injuries and fell on the ground whereas his accomplices managed to escape from the scene.

The police arrested the injured accused and shifted him to hospital for treatment. Later on, the accused was identified as Sabir alias

Zain (22) son of Yaseen resident of Gulzar Colony, who was involved in an encounter case during which he had injured police officials Sajid and Zeeshan near Bohar Chowk on October 27, 2022 in the area of Jhang Bazaar police station. He was also wanted to the police of Raza Abad and Batala Colony police stations in a number of cases.

The police also took 2 motorcycles into custody in addition to recovering illicit weapons, cash, mobile phones and other valuable items from the injured accused. Further investigation was under progress. A special team was also formed to trace whereabouts of the escapees and arrest them on priority basis, spokesman added.



‘Changed radically’: How women fight in Ukrainian city

MYKOLAIV (AFP/APP): The very day Russia launched its attack on her country, Svitlana Taranova enlisted in the Ukrainian army in the southern city of Mykolaiv, her birthplace.

"At 11 am on February 24 my contract with the territorial defence was signed," said the former construction firm manager who is in her 50s.

"It was the only possible decision, not a sacrifice," she said.

Mykolaiv came under threat rapidly after Kherson, 70 kilometres (43 miles) to the east, was taken by Russian forces.

President Vladimir Putin's army needed to take Mykolaiv if it was going to conquer the Black Sea transport hub of Odessa, its main target and a two-hour drive to the west.

So the Russians began to pound Mykolaiv with artillery, massively and methodically.

Taranova, by now in the infantry, often found herself in close combat with Russian troops.

"In the beginning, I was terrified of the cluster bombs, my heart missed a beat every time one went off," she said.

But then the fear gave way to grim determination. "I no longer feel I need to hide. All I want is revenge," she said.

While an AFP team was in Mykolaiv in September and October, the city was bombarded almost every night.

As Taranova was battling Russians in combat, other women contributed to the war effort in different ways, an AFP team found.

"We're fighting here, too," said Svitlana Nitchouk, 41, a bakery employee. "We feed the soldiers."

When AFP met with her, she was watching an emergency unit clearing the rubble of an old apartment block in the city centre. The bakery where she works, on the ground floor, was badly damaged.

The remains of a nearby regional authority building miraculously holds up after a Russian missile destroyed seven floors.

Julia, a resident living nearby, said her apartment had already been hit three times.

The IT worker in her thirties took her daughter to the relative safety of western Ukraine, but regularly returns to Mykolaiv -- mostly to distribute cars or military equipment to the fighters, funded by online appeals she has launched.

In another neighbourhood Julia Kirkina, a musicologist, sings and plays piano in a restaurant every Friday.

"Music is one of the best cures for the spirit," she said. "My vocal therapy helps people stay calm and be optimistic."

Mykolaiv remained within range of Russian artillery fire for 262 days, and escaped bombing for barely 50, according to local authorities.

Then, on November 13, Kherson was recaptured by Ukrainian troops and Mykolaiv was no longer part of the war's frontline.

By then more than 150 of the city's residents had been killed and 700 injured.

Between 300,000 and 500,000

people had fled. Four-fifths of the women have left, according to the regional administration, making Mykolaiv a city populated almost entirely by men.

Millions of Ukrainian women have left their homes since the start of the war, some fleeing what the United Nations in a recent report called "alarming increases in gender-based violence". Despite their increased vulnerability, many women in Mykolaiv refuse to see themselves as victims, said psychoanalyst Irina Viktorovna.

"They have no time to panic or lose themselves," she said, although she acknowledged there had been cases of breakdowns.

The military threat has been repelled for now, but life remains precarious, residents told AFP by telephone.

Like elsewhere in Ukraine, cuts to supplies of electricity, heating and water are commonplace since Russia targeted civilian energy infrastructure.

Aleksandra Savitska, who used to work as a hairdresser, has not returned to her old job.

Instead, she and her husband now run an NGO which distributes food and supplies to soldiers and civilians.

A video on her Instagram account shows the 25-year-old in Kherson, wearing a helmet and flak jacket, after handing out food and hygiene products.

"My life has changed radically," she told AFP by telephone. "I used to make women look beautiful. Now I'm a volunteer. That's my job."

South Africa fuel tanker blast death toll rises to 15

JOHANNESBURG (AFP/APP): The death toll from a fuel tanker explosion in a South African city east of Johannesburg has risen to 15, the health minister said Sunday.

"Yesterday (Saturday), the death toll was at 10 people and now we are sitting at 15 as of this morning," Joe Phaahla told reporters at Tambo Memorial Hospital.

The tanker, transporting liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), was caught beneath a bridge close to the hospital and houses on Saturday morning in Boksburg, east of Johannesburg.

The minister said three hospital employees, two nurses and a driver, died

later from severe burn injuries.

Thirty-seven people were injured, including 24 patients and 13 staff members who were in the hospital's accident and emergency unit at the time of the blast.

They "sustained severe burns and have been diverted to neighbouring hospitals", Phaahla said.

Others were hit by shattered glass, he added, while some were hurt as they were in the parking lot or in front of the hospital.

"We send our deepest condolences for the families that lost their loved ones," he said.

Videos on social media

showed a huge fireball under the bridge, which the tanker appeared to have been too high to go under.

It was carrying 60,000 litres of LPG, which is used especially in cooking and gas stoves, and had come from the southeast of the country.

The health minister said the blast severely damaged the hospital's accident and emergency unit and X-ray departments.

"The roof was damaged, ceilings fell, windows broken, and other equipment damaged," Phaahla said.

On most of the hospital's floors, windows had shattered, he added.

Witness Jean Marie Booysen described on

Saturday how she felt a "huge jolt" in the early hours of the morning, shortly after 6:30 am (0430 GMT).

"I went upstairs to have my cup of tea and I saw immense flames, I thought a house was on fire."

She said she later learned of the deaths of "two... here across the road, 16, the girl, and 25, the boy, who came and did my lawn every weekend for me".

Another witness named William, who did not give his surname, said people nearby had felt the blast.

"I think I was 50 metres (164 feet) away from the scene... We did burn behind our backs," he said.

Defying Russia, some Ukrainians embrace Christmas in December

KYIV (AFP/APP): Church bells and chanting rang throughout Ukraine's capital as Orthodox Christians attended Christmas services on Sunday, a defiant break from Russian religious leaders who will mark the holiday in two weeks.

The decision by some Ukrainian churches to observe Christmas on December 25 and not January 7, as is customary in Orthodox Christianity, highlights the rift between church officials in Kyiv and Moscow that has deepened with the ongoing war.

Worshipper Olga Stanko told AFP on Sunday she supported any move that would distance Ukraine from Russia -- and said she believed shifting the Christmas date was overdue.

"The war has brought us so much grief," the 72-year-old said, tearing up as she mentioned her son fighting near Bakhmut, the hottest point on the front line in eastern Ukraine.

"We forgot that they were our enemies, we were so gullible. And now a war has come to us, a calamity."

An Interfax-Ukraine poll showed that, like her, nearly half of Ukrainians are in favour of moving the holy day, up from 26 percent in 2021 -- though 31 percent were still against it.

Ukraine had been under Moscow's spiritual leadership since at least the 17th century, but part of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church broke with Moscow in 2019 over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in the east.

In May of this year, three months into the invasion, the Russia-backed branch of Ukraine's Orthodox Church also said it had severed ties with Moscow.

Packed into a church near St Michael's G o l d e n - D o m e d Monastery in central Kyiv, wearing coats to guard against the winter chill, worshippers lit candles and lined up to give confession on Sunday morning as an all-male choir led the chanting.

In his sermon, Archpriest Mykhailo Omelyan appeared to allude to widespread power and heating cuts caused by Russian attacks that have affected millions in and beyond the city.

"The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and to those who are in the land and shadow of death, the light has shone on them," he said, adding a harsh word for the Russians.

"Not everyone accepts the light that has shone... There are those people who loved the darkness more than the light, because their deeds were evil."

Other reminders of the war included burnt-out



Russian tanks on display in the square outside the church, and an air raid siren that sounded about 25 minutes into the service.

On social media, some users added a militant twist to traditional Christmas imagery, for example by replacing the Three Wise Men -- who are said to have visited Jesus after his birth -- with armed soldiers.

Olena Zakharova-Gorianska said she was happy to be celebrating Christmas on December 25 for the first time -- describing it as an obvious choice after surviving Russian occupation in the town of Gostomel, north of Kyiv.

"I do not want to have anything to do with the occupiers, with the enemy," she said.

Yet the same church will also hold a Christmas service on January 7 to accommodate those who aren't ready to change, said Father Andriy.

"In my opinion, this is a transitional period... There are some things that we

cannot change radically in one moment," he said, predicting it would take several years before celebrations on December 25 fully catch on.

He added: "In fact, we must remember that we celebrate not the date, but the event -- the birth of the Saviour. We do not know the exact date, so there is no need to emphasise it."

Omelyan also acknowledged that strident calls to abandon the January 7 Christmas celebrations completely did not represent the will of all, or even most, of Ukraine's Orthodox faithful.

An official breakdown was not available, but he said only a "minority" of churches were holding Christmas services on Sunday.

"We see that a really large part of society still wants to celebrate on January 7," he told AFP.

"Yes, there are a lot of Facebook believers who are only 25 and categorical. But often people write, and rarely come to church."

Salvadoran troops encircle capital district in second gang crackdown

SAN SALVADOR (AFP/APP): More than 1,000 soldiers surrounded a district in El Salvador's capital on Saturday as part of President Nayib Bukele's war on gangs, the second such operation this month in the Central American country.

"As of this morning, the Tutunichapa district in San Salvador is totally surrounded," Bukele posted on Twitter.

"More than 1,000 soldiers and 130 police officers will extract the criminals who still remain," he added.

Images released Saturday by the office of the president showed heavily armed soldiers entering Tutunichapa, where small houses mostly constructed of concrete blocks stand alongside one of the many polluted streams that run through San Salvador.

Defense Minister Rene Merino later tweeted that

23 people had been arrested so far in Tutunichapa, a populous district of San Salvador, without specifying whether they were accused of being gang members or drug traffickers. "All terrorists, drug traffickers and gang members will be removed" from the area, President Bukele said in another tweet, adding that until recently it was a "bastion of crime."

"Honest citizens have nothing to fear and can continue to live their lives normally," he wrote.

Local resident Edwin Diaz, 51, cheered the law enforcement action, saying the area has long been considered a dangerous place due to gang activity and drug sales.

"All our lives we have suffered the stigma that here there is drug dealing, gang members, bad things, and today with this security they have set up, there is nothing to fear," Diaz told

AFP by phone on Saturday. Echoing Bukele's remark, Diaz added: "He who owes nothing, fears nothing."

Earlier this month Bukele, who has declared a state of emergency to quash gang violence, sent 8,500 soldiers and 1,500 police officers to surround Soyapango, the country's third largest city, with a population of nearly a quarter million.

The president had announced last month a plan to use troops to surround cities while house-by-house searches are conducted for gang members. Soyapango was first on the list. The siege there has seen armored military vehicles, some with artillery, carrying out constant patrols while heavily armed police search houses and people as they leave their neighborhoods, as well as random searches of public transport.

As of Saturday, some

650 suspected gang members had been arrested in Soyapango, Merino said.

"We continue working in the rest of the territory looking for terrorist criminals," the defense minister added.

Almost 60,000 suspected gang members have been arrested since the launch of the state of emergency in March, which has prompted humanitarian groups to question what they see as heavy-handed tactics.

Despite that criticism, El Salvador's Congress on Thursday once again extended the state of emergency for a month.

Over 75 percent of Salvadorans approve of the emergency declaration, and nine out of 10 Salvadorans say that crime "has decreased" with Bukele's policies, according to a Central American University (UCA) poll published in October.

Saudi Assistant Minister of Defense Visits Turkiye

ANKARA (SPA/APP): Assistant Minister of Defense, Eng. Talal bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has paid an official visit to the Republic of Turkiye at the head of a high-level delegation from several agencies. During the visit, he met with a number of Turkish officials.

He began his visit with a meeting with the Turkish Minister of National Defense, Hulusi Akar, during which they discussed the importance of defense cooperation between the two countries in all fields, activating the agreements signed between the two countries in this field, and strengthening and developing them to serve common interests and support the security and stability of the



region.

Then, he met with the Turkish Deputy Minister of National Defense, Yunus Emre Karaosmanoglu. The meeting dealt with the situation in the region and ways to enhance joint defense cooperation. Eng. Talal Al-Otaibi also met with the Deputy Minister of National Defense of Turkey, Mohsen Dara, and

the meeting discussed strengthening cooperation in the field of defense industries, in addition to areas of cooperation between the defense ministries of the two countries.

Then, the Saudi Assistant Minister of Defense met with the Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Yaar Güler.

Assistant Minister of Defense also paid a visit to the Presidency of Turkish Defense Industries, and met with its President, Prof. Ismail Demir. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the field of military industries and develop scientific research.

A briefing was also given to Eng. Al-Otaibi on Turkish military industries. The Assistant Minister of Defense concluded his visit to the Republic of Turkiye, by visiting a number of companies affiliated with the Turkish National Defense Ministry, during which he was briefed on their products, toured a number of their factories, and listened to an explanation of their departments and workflow.

India logs 227 new COVID-19 cases

NEW DELHI (Xinhua/APP): India's daily COVID-19 caseload Sunday increased to 227, officials said.

According to federal health ministry data released on Sunday morning, 227 new cases of COVID-19 were reported during the past 24 hours.

According to data released by the government, the active caseload stands at 3,424.

The country also logged

two related deaths during the past 24 hours, pushing the overall death toll to 530,693 since the beginning of the pandemic, the ministry said.

The ministry said so far 44,142,989 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals.

Malaysia reports 766 new COVID-19 infections, 1 new death: Malaysia reported 766 new COVID-19 infections as of midnight Saturday, bring-

ing the national total to 5,022,910, according to the health ministry.

There are no imported cases, with all 766 cases being local transmissions, data released on the ministry's website showed.

Another new death has been reported, pushing the death toll to 36,831.

The ministry reported 1,026 new recoveries, bringing the total number of cured and discharged to 4,971,955.

There are 14,124 active cases, with 42 being held in intensive care and 21 of those in need of assisted breathing.

The country reported 942 vaccine doses administered on Saturday alone and 86.1 percent of the population have received at least one dose, 84.3 percent are fully vaccinated and 49.8 percent have received the first booster and 1.9 percent have received the second booster.



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Quaid’s Day and today’s Pakistan

Yesterday, the entire Pakistani nation celebrated the 146th birthday of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with pledges to uphold his guiding principles of unity, faith, and discipline. The political leadership, Academia, and Union leaders paid rich tributes to the father of the nation for his untiring struggle, sagacity, and leadership that led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indo sub-continent. While special events had been arranged across the country to highlight the legacy and thoughts of Quaid-e-Azam, with a particular focus on rule of law, the supremacy of the constitution, and the upholding of democratic traditions.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was an iconic leader, renowned lawyer, political Strategist, and a great Muslim Scholar who not only put a new sole in the Muslims' struggle for a separate homeland but also entirely turned the tide of the politics in the Indo-Subcontinent through his sagacious leadership, unshattered resolve and unmatched commitment to the political cause of Muslims of India. Historically, the Quaid-e-Azam led the Muslims of the Indo-Subcontinent for over thirty years, fought relentlessly and inexorably for their inherent rights, guided their affairs, and organized their efforts through coherence and unity to achieve their ultimate aspirations for a separate, independent, and free homeland comprising of the Muslim Majority territories in the South Asian region. The world wondered, how the Quaid-e-Azam led an inchoate and downtrodden minority to unite them for a consensus cause, created a nation out of scratches, and established a cultural and national homeland for them in a short period of time.

Interestingly, modern-day Pakistani leaders commonly quote the thoughts and legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and try to sell their narrative on this pretext. It has become a common phenomenon in the country, that political leaders use the charismatic personality and thoughts of the great Muslim leader to accomplish their selfish political agenda and compare their egoistic policies with the marvelous services of the father of the nation.

Unfortunately, after the death of Quaid-e-Azam, the successive rulers both civilian and military dictators had advanced personal agendas and used Islamization to garner the support of clerics and religious factions in the country. In fact, politicized Islamization not only radicalized the secular Pakistani society but also gave birth to intolerance and extremism during the seventies and the eighties while multiple Sunni, Shia, and other sectarian extremism groups took birth and grew up in the country, tarnished the Quaid's vision for a free, open, pluralistic and peaceful Pakistan by creating a wide gap and walls of hate between various segments of the society.

Realistically, Pakistan had been swaying between two peaks, i.e. democracy vis-a-vis Islamic theocracy over the past decades, while slackness of political leadership gave space to hardline religious and ethnic elements to openly preach hatred and division in the society. The Pakistani nation had lost its destiny because our leaders unintentionally cultivated a crop of zealots and lured the nation into an attenuated and narrow version of nationalism and religious fanaticism that hurt the country's image and interest globally. Pakistan's future lies in democracy and a pluralistic society that provides equal opportunities to all citizens without any segregation of cast, colour, or creed, which would provide foundations for a cohesive, free and prosperous Pakistan. In fact, December 25th demands the Pakistani nation and its leaders to come up above the typical politics and customary statements if they really intend to transform their country according to the ideals of Quaid-a-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Palestine issue and chilean legacy

Recently, the Chilean Foreign Ministry has announced a plan to open an embassy in the occupied territories, a move that the Chilean leftist President said will signal a demand that international law must be respected. The Palestinian foreign ministry and Palestinian expatriates strongly welcomed and hailed the announcement of the Chilean government. According to the Chilean Foreign Minister, the decision affirms the principled position of Chile and its president in support of international law and the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on their land.

The Republic of Chile, a tiny South American nation has demonstrated the utmost courage and commitment to the principles of justice and international law that it ignored the political pressure and economic and monetary strings attached to such a principled position that is likely to irk a hostility from Israel, influential global Jewish Community and their backers across the world. Earlier, Chile opened a representative office to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank city of Ramallah in 1998 and also recognized Palestine as a state and supported its entrance into UNESCO in 2011. Chile is home to over 300,000 Palestinians, who play an important role in the Chilean economy and politics in the country. Presently, Chile is vigorously backing UN efforts and is a strong supporter of the two states' solution to the Palestine dispute. Chile continues to recognize both Palestine and Israel as legitimate states but did not commit any timeline and location for the establishment of its embassies in opposing nations.

The rare nations in the world have been left with such courage to adopt a principled position in line with the global law or UN resolutions on contentious issues including Palestine, Kashmir, human rights, white supremism, terrorism, and its states' patronage in the contemporary world. A few nations and leaders challenge the fake standards of global influentials and expose theirs dubiously through the support of weak and vulnerable communities in the world.

In fact, World peace can't be maintained until the world nations uphold unbiased and rule-based policies regarding the global disputes so no indigenous group or unrepresented nation could be an easy prey for powerful belligerents in the future.

Quote of the day

If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch before they reach you and you have to battle with only one of them.

— Calvin Coolidge, American President [1923-1929]

“This is a madhouse!”

No jokes, no parodists, no participation of Vovan and Lexus: everything here is with bestial seriousness. Came out a list of one hundred words or expressions that are no longer recommended in English, including the word "American". True, this is a private initiative - the work of a group of enraged IT people from Stanford University, USA (the level of prestige is not worse than Moscow State University or St. Petersburg State University). And it is proposed to remove the entire black

recommended to replace it with "US citizen".

Well, then everything is according to the same methodology - no matter how you offend someone. Tables were made that various media managed to film and publish: the old word, its replacement, an explanation of the reasons for the replacement. For example, "immigrant" is now "non-citizen", something like. The reason is that it is not good to designate a person according to any one characteristic, and even such that someone does not like it. Or "blind tasting" - this is insulting for the blind, we

Dmitry Kosyrev

madhouse!" and "it's good that they're not with us." The thing is, it's not exactly crazy, it's worse. And there is no certainty that this cannot happen to us.

For a start: they want to forbid people to speak their own language, to the point that Americans are ashamed to be called Americans. There is something Ukrainian in this, and here the jokes aside. Because Ukraine has shown us that for the right to speak their own language, people can seriously offend such bans.

down.

And here is a huge machine. Well, we know how this happens: at first only Stanford, then another private structure, Twitter, adopts the same rules. If you don't know how it happens, ask Elon Musk. Inanimate text editors remove the wrong words first, then remove those who use them. And this, if you take all the social networks, a huge number of people around the world.

The technology has been worked out - everything always starts from below,

thoughtfully taken out of decent human society. But at the last stage, such initiatives become legislative, with brutal repressions:

This combination of private activism with boundless humanism can be very confusing, especially if humanism, well funded, reaches far beyond the hotbed of all the nastiness listed. And here we can recall that here, in Russia, in many media outlets arose - in the former, we admit, the era is awkwardness: the word "Negro" is now considered impolite, let's also write "African American", "African". And hamsters-

somehow it is too simple. Moreover, borrowings are very cute. Here, for example, a man who destroys a wall with a sledgehammer: what is wrong with the word "sledgehammer", despite the fact that the business he is engaged in is called "sledgehammer"? A sea of respect and kindness, the same one... And after all, everything is so Russian. In general, it's not so easy - banned, and you think that now everything will be fine.

By the way, if we return to the origins of our conversation, to Stanford, then there is a thoughtfulness

To be honest, until the moment of writing these lines, there was a temptation to check everything again and again - they would suddenly say that this was not serious. But so far they haven't given up on anything, just hidden the full list of bad words behind the password. Because the scandal turned out to be noisy, powerful. First of all, of course, because of the word "American". What is wrong with the word? And that it can offend the inhabitants of another 41 states of the American continent. It is recommended to replace it with "US citizen". Well, then everything is according to the same methodology - no matter how you offend someone. Tables were made that various media managed to film and publish: the old word, its replacement, an explanation of the reasons for the replacement. For example, "immigrant" is now "non-citizen", something like. The reason is that it is not good to designate a person according to any one characteristic, and even such that someone does not like it. Or "blind tasting" - this is insulting for the blind, we will replace it with "anonymous". A lot of good, purely American expressions like "do not whip a dead horse" fell under the Stanford knife. Because it's cruelty, even if the horse doesn't care anymore. The same with the saying "kill two birds with one stone" - for a similar reason. The sections "racism" and the one that, in terms of feminism, many sexes and genders, are just a holiday here, we are changing the whole language at the root. In general, a real boom of kindness and delicacy. It's time to go beyond the obvious reaction for any normal person - "this is a madhouse!" and "it's good that they're not with us." The thing is, it's not exactly crazy, it's worse. And there is no certainty that this cannot happen to us.

hundred words from use only on Stanford sites, and not on a global scale.

To be honest, until the moment of writing these lines, there was a temptation to check everything again and again - they would suddenly say that this was not serious. But so far they haven't given up on anything, just hidden the full list of bad words behind the password. Because the scandal turned out to be noisy, powerful. First of all, of course, because of the word "American".

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It's time to go beyond the obvious reaction for any normal person - "this is a

Especially if they want to forbid them to be Russian.

Further, one should not think that the private initiative of a group of IT specialists is idiocy of a local scale, and nothing more. The fact is that we have before us a tiny part of a powerful, like a skating rink, system for the destruction of human essence, and not only in the United States, and not only in the English-speaking countries allied to them. Destroying a person is simple - you need to forbid him everything that he is used to in life, which, in essence, constitutes this life, and it is also necessary that a person succumb to this, break

from trifles, from initiative non-governmental groups. Then they bring science under their cannibalistic ideas, including science specially created for the occasion. It is a very long time to list everything that is banned there or is being prepared to be banned, and each time not just for humane, but for super-humane reasons. In terms of ecology, medicine (a person harms himself or allegedly harms others, this should be banned), for reasons of harmony in society (no one can be offended). Kindness is such that leaves no stone unturned. If only because at first those who disagree are only shamed,

editors in all seriousness, without even asking the author, they replaced this "black". Moreover, there is no certainty that someone does not do so even now. Yes, in Russia, yes, today, and yes, we are talking about the Russian language, which, after English, is turned into a dog or bird language (we offended a lot of animals here, right?).

The question arises how to deal with this infection. In Russia, they think that if you just ban it, then you can relax. Here is our recent legislative initiative to protect the Russian language from the invasion of ugly translations from English:

about the people who came up with this list, albeit acting quite in line with other bans on normal human language going on in the United States. What are these people called? IT specialists, in English - IT-specialists? And how about replacing this term with something more humane, since IT people are generally strange (who fled from mobilization in a crowd?). And here they also made up a sadistic instruction about how other people are supposed to talk now. Soon it will be a shame to admit belonging to this profession. We are looking for a new word that does not offend anyone.

Mars is like a giant egg

NASA has officially announced the completion of the InSight spacecraft, which has been on the surface of Mars for four years. During this time, he collected detailed information about the internal structure of the planet, its liquid core, residual magnetic field, recorded hundreds of marsquakes. About the results of the mission - in the material RIA Novosti.

"Space Geologist" InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) is the first robotic module in the history of astronautics designed specifically to study the geology of another planet. Its main instrument is the SEIS seismometer, which records internal tectonic activity and meteorite impacts.

At the boundaries of the inner layers of rock with different densities, the speed of seismic waves changes, part is reflected and returns to the surface. Based on these data, you can get an idea about the structure of the planet.

Seismographs have been on Mars before, but on board vehicles, which means they could erroneously register the vibration of the hull or other instruments. In addition, they were sensitive to wind and deformed from heat. SEIS was placed directly on the surface of the planet and covered with a special casing.

Living planet On November 26, 2018, InSight landed on the Elysian Plain, and in April 2019, SEIS recorded the first quake. By May 2022, he had already recorded 1313 seismic events. Most of them are surface shocks, the waves from which

propagated only in the Martian crust. But there were also deeper, low-frequency ones, according to which geophysicists determined where the mantle and core are located.

It was previously believed that all internal

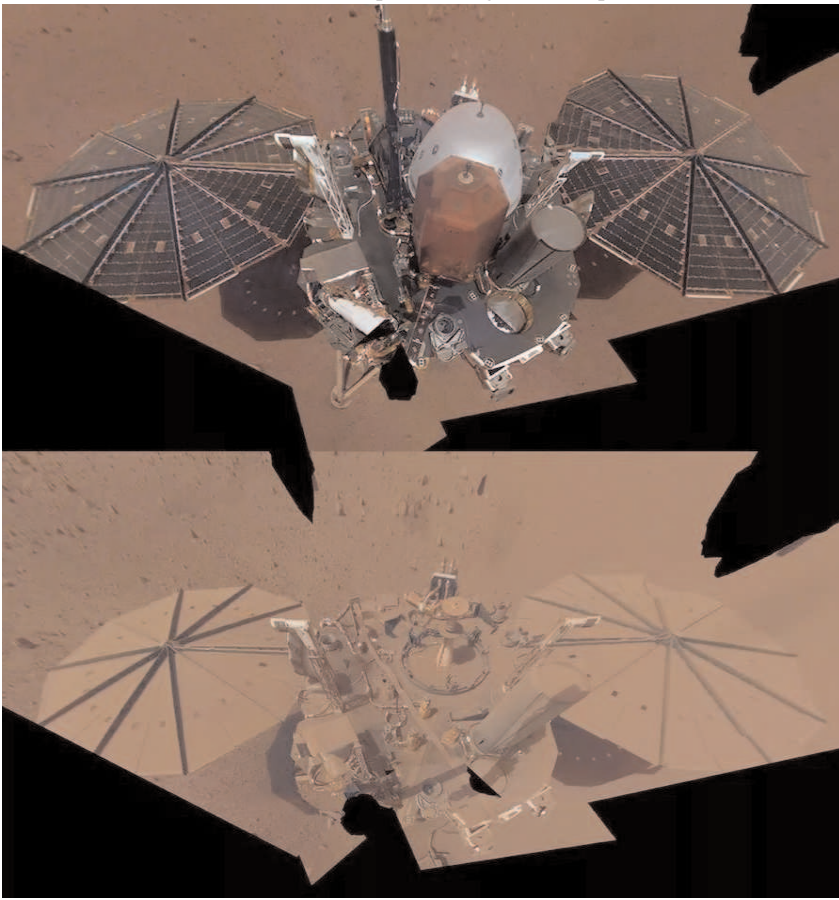
Vladislav Strekopytov

site. After studying the InSight data, scientists came to the conclusion that we are talking about tensile cracks in the central part of the dome that formed above a mantle plume rising to the

of the origin of life on the planet directly depends on its geodynamic systems.

Mars is like a giant egg

To clarify the phase state of matter inside Mars, an experiment called RISE



tectonic activity on Mars ceased three billion years ago and since then only isolated volcanoes have been active there. Now it turned out that geologically it is a living planet. The thermal and geochemical evolution of matter continues in the depths.

This made it possible to understand the nature of the Cerberus furrows crossing the Elysian plain, 1500 kilometers from the landing

surface - a giant "drop" of molten deep matter.

Thus, it was established that under the Elysian Plain, the youngest volcanic region of Mars, where large eruptions have occurred more than once over the past 200 million years, a magma formation center is still operating. In addition to purely geological interest, this is also important for astrobilologists, since the probability

(Rotation and Interior Structure) was conducted. The InSight instruments recorded vibrations of the planet's shells associated with movement around the Sun, just as you can determine by the rotation of an egg whether it is raw or boiled: the less the speed changes under the influence of external forces, the more liquid the core.

At the station, which remained in one place, have registered strange magnetic pulses and intensity fluctuations several times.

there were radio signaling facilities that made it possible to accurately measure orbital parameters. Calculating the moment of inertia of the planet, scientists have determined that Mars, like the Earth, has a liquid core with a diameter of about 3660 kilometers, consisting mainly of iron and nickel. Compared to Earth, it has more light elements such as hydrogen and sulfur.

Magnetic pulse of Mars

Soviet orbiters of the Mars series detected a magnetic field around the planet about 500 times weaker than the earth's. And it is extremely unstable, the local tension can differ by 1.5-2 times, and the magnetic poles do not coincide with the physical ones.

This indicated that the iron core is inactive relative to the crust, that is, the mechanism of the planetary dynamo, as on Earth, does not work on Mars. Therefore, the Martian magnetic field was considered residual - partially preserved in the magnetization of rocks from those times when the bowels were more active.

InSight is the first lander with a magnetic sensor. And then he, too, gave a surprise. It turned out that the magnetic field is an order of magnitude stronger than thought, and is constantly changing. Since September 2019, devices

NASA notes that it is still difficult to say what causes fluctuations in the local magnetic field on Mars. It remains to be compared data from InSight and the automatic interplanetary station MAVEN (Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution), which monitors the atmosphere over the

landing site. It is assumed that positive magnetic field anomalies are associated either with a nearby massif of older rocks, or with an electrically conductive layer below the surface containing water or solid ice particles.

It also turned out that some fluctuations are repeated every day. Perhaps the Martian magnetic field is influenced by the Sun, which throws out streams of charged particles - the solar wind. On Mars, unlike Earth, there is no global magnetic field, and it reaches the surface.

Enemy number one

It was clear in advance that the main factor limiting the resource of the apparatus is the Martian dust deposited on the solar panels. The cleaning system would have made the structure too heavy. It was believed that the planned period of two years InSight will work and so.

The problems arose in April 2021. After another dust storm, the apparatus fell into emergency hibernation. In May, the team took a number of actions to clean up the panels and InSight resumed operations.

In January 2022, the device went into safe mode again due to a dust storm. Most features have been disabled.

On Sunday, December 18, communication with the station was interrupted. The next day, NASA reported that SEIS had run out of power. The end of the mission was marked with a farewell photo showing the lander with solar panels covered in a thick layer of dust and a free-standing seismometer. Perhaps when people get to Mars, they will clean the device and it will work again.

The Palestinian-Israeli standoff

Earlier this week, Netanyahu made it clear that he is interested in full-blown collaboration with Saudi Arabia following Israel's move to offer an olive branch to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Israeli Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu plans to suspend the annexation of West Bank settlements in exchange for clinching a Tel Aviv-Riyadh peace deal under the auspices of the 2020 Abraham Accords, an Israeli newspaper has

reported.

This came after Netanyahu told a separate Israeli media outlet that he hopes "to bring about a full, formal peace [with Saudi Arabia] as we've done with the other Gulf states like Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)."

"It's up to the Saudi leadership to decide that. I hope they will. And I intend to explore that alongside my other main goals. This is a very important goal, because if we have peace with Saudi Arabia, we are effectively going to bring an end

Oleg Burunov

to the Arab-Israeli conflict," the Israeli prime minister-designate pointed out.

The remarks followed senior Saudi officials reportedly telling a meeting of American Jewish leaders that Riyadh normalizing relations with Tel Aviv was a goal of the kingdom's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir was quoted by media outlets as saying that "Israel and other Gulf states have

been gradually normalizing [ties] for years. The process must be allowed to mature."

On September 15, 2020, the Jewish State signed an agreement to normalize its relations with the UAE and Bahrain, in what became known as the Abraham Accords. The document, in particular, obliges Israel to postpone its decision to annex territories in the West Bank near the River Jordan, while urging the sides to cooperate for peace and sta-

bility in the region.

The agreement, which was actively facilitated by the US, was later joined by Morocco and Sudan. Prior to signing the Abraham Accords, Egypt and Jordan were the only Arab states to have formal relations with Israel.

Palestinian-Israeli Standoff

With Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in place on and off for more than 25 years, a solution to the logjam has yet to be found.

For decades, the so-called "two-state solution"

has been the main focus of efforts to achieve peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something that stipulated establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Although Netanyahu, who served the Israeli PM from 1996 to 1999 and again from 2009 to 2021, endorsed the two-state solution, he at the same time continued to expand Tel Aviv's West Bank settlements, once saying that there would be "no withdrawals" and "no concessions" on the matter.

Asia wakes up

The EU is trying to soften the blow of the energy crisis. Analysts have calculated: the gas bought instead of the Russian one has already cost an extra trillion. The budget is bursting at the seams, the debt burden has exceeded all acceptable levels. And this is just the beginning. What will happen to Europe - in the material of RIA Novosti.

Hard economy
Now in the EU they are getting out in different ways: they are switching to coal, increasing the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The plans are ambitious: to reduce the consumption of Russian fuel by 66%, and by 2027 to end it completely. In particular, we are talking about accelerating

distribution and capacity management.

Saving is hard work. The Federal Grid Agency of Germany admitted that neither enterprises nor households really succeed in this.

"Temperature-adjusted consumption in calendar weeks 48 and 49 was only 12 percent below the benchmark of the last four years and is thus in the critical range," the regulator said.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the annual demand for gas in Europe has decreased by 50 billion cubic meters. However, in 2023, a deficit of 27 billion is predicted. And this is a very realistic scenario: Russian supplies will stop, and Chinese LNG imports will recover to 2021 levels.

Calculations didn't materialize

Natalia Dembinskaya

increased by almost 2.5 times (from 44.5 to 107 billion cubic meters). This was possible due to the fall in fuel consumption in Asia due to covid.

We also assessed the cost of "gas substitution". According to the plan, published back in May, the rejection of blue fuel and the solution of related problems should have cost 220 billion dollars. More came out: together with all the aid packages, subsidies and measures to protect consumers from price spikes, by the end of November the bill exceeded 700 billion.

According to Bloomberg analysts, the losses of Europeans from gas maneuvers are even larger - almost a trillion dollars. And it's still flowers.

warns Bloomberg.

And there is trouble. Freight rates soared: by mid-October, according to Baltic Exchange, they were up to \$450,000 per day, six times more than in January. Delivery of oil from the Middle East to Japan has risen in price by 100 percent.

So, at the end of October, Shell chartered the Yiannis tanker to ship to Europe at \$400,000 a day. GAIL India received Schneeweisschen for 360 thousand.

Asia wakes up

Europe can only increase purchases of expensive LNG. But, economists say, it will be more and more difficult: Asia is coming out of hibernation. According to China National Offshore Oil, imports of liquefied natural gas to China will increase by seven percent

The European Brueghel think tank claims that the "energy hunger" will drag on for years and costs will skyrocket. There is nowhere to take money from: EU state budgets are depleted. And the debt burden of almost half of European countries exceeds the 60% limit set in the European Union.

Experts believe that the situation may only partially level off in 2026, when Qatar and the United States will increase LNG production. Until then, the EU is in a race to restock every winter.

European gas futures, after peaking at 345 euros per megawatt hour in July, fell to 135. According to Bloomberg Economics, if quotes rise again to 210, spending on blue fuel will reach five percent of GDP.

Europe can only increase purchases of expensive LNG. But, economists say, it will be more and more difficult: Asia is coming out of hibernation. According to China National Offshore Oil, imports of liquefied natural gas to China will increase by seven percent in 2023. The same dynamics in Japan, Pakistan and India. To compete with Asian buyers, the European Union will have to pay even more - both for gas and for transportation. The European Brueghel think tank claims that the "energy hunger" will drag on for years and costs will skyrocket. There is nowhere to take money from: EU state budgets are depleted. And the debt burden of almost half of European countries exceeds the 60% limit set in the European Union. Experts believe that the situation may only partially level off in 2026, when Qatar and the United States will increase LNG production. Until then, the EU is in a race to restock every winter. European gas futures, after peaking at 345 euros per megawatt hour in July, fell to 135. According to Bloomberg Economics, if quotes rise again to 210, spending on blue fuel will reach five percent of GDP. This creates the risk that a brief recession will turn into a deep recession. And European governments will no longer be able to subsidize both energy companies and the population.

the transition to renewable sources. But green plans so far do not inspire much hope. Energy companies do not have sufficient experience in the construction of wind turbines, logistics,

Nevertheless, we prepared for the winter, UGS facilities were almost 90% filled. The shortage of pipeline imports was covered mainly by LNG: in January-October, deliveries

Fight for tankers

Russia will no longer help Europe to form reserves sufficient to get through the next winter.

"Competition for LNG tankers will intensify,"

in 2023. The same dynamics in Japan, Pakistan and India. To compete with Asian buyers, the European Union will have to pay even more - both for gas and for transportation.

This creates the risk that a brief recession will turn into a deep recession. And European governments will no longer be able to subsidize both energy companies and the population.

What could go wrong?

In December 2021, most Americans were looking forward to a quiet and prosperous 2022. COVID-19 cases were down, the stock market was up and jobs were abundant. What could go wrong?

Many things did. Geopolitical trauma came first. After a chaotic US military withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, it seemed that US involvement in foreign wars was drawing to an end. Yet on 24 February 2022, Russia's President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine. The ground battle then morphed into a proxy war between NATO and Russia.

US President Joe Biden was quick to declare that US boots would not join Ukrainian soldiers, but he was equally quick to dispatch US armour and CIA advisors. By the close of 2022, NATO weapons manned by Ukrainians had successfully pushed Russian forces out of the Ukrainian cities of Kharkiv and Kherson, and back towards Ukraine's eastern border.

But battlefield success was coupled with global economic distress, as energy and food prices soared. The proximate causes were Western sanctions on Russian oil and Russian sanctions on gas exports to

Europe. In the United States, elevated oil and gas prices reinforced inflationary forces unleashed by monetary expansion and fiscal stimulus.

Two new flashpoints also emerged in the US Cold War against China in 2022. The first was the battle for technology supremacy. The US public, inflamed by leaders in both political parties and by Chinese President Xi Jinping's assertive actions, became convinced that China was not merely a competitor, but an adversary out to destroy US jobs and push US military forces out of Asia.

Congress and the Biden administration's response was to ensure the United States retained primacy in all forms of advanced technology. One piece of legislation, the CHIPS and Sciences Act, lavished US\$76 billion on the semiconductor industry and US\$170 billion on advanced technologies, ranging from artificial intelligence to quantum computers to materials. The US Department of Commerce also implemented a suite of controls on US technology exports to China and on China's acquisition of technology companies.

Despite congenial atmospherics surrounding the meeting between presi-

Gary Clyde Hufbauer

dents Xi and Biden at November's G20 Leaders' Summit in Bali, all signs indicate further technological decoupling in 2023. Some members of Congress condemn any sourcing of intermediate products from China, while the distinction between civilian and military goods has become blurred.

Inflation that was initially considered transitory seemingly became entrenched. During 2021, the US Federal Reserve ballooned its balance sheet (and the money supply). It went from US\$4 trillion in December 2019 to nearly US\$9 trillion in December 2021. This was coupled with fiscal stimulus that distributed more than US\$2 trillion of outlays in late 2020 and early 2021. This joint monetary and fiscal expansion coincided with an economy that offered almost two job vacancies for every unemployed worker.

The policy extravaganza came home to roost this year as inflation soared to nearly 8 per cent. The Federal Reserve launched an aggressive monetary tightening campaign that raised the policy rate from near zero in January to a target of 4.25 to 4.5 per cent in December. This dampened the stock market and

ended escalating house prices. But it did not immediately reduce inflation, as measured by either the Consumer Price Index or the Personal Consumption Expenditures index.

Yet Federal Reserve and White House officials staked their hopes on a 'soft landing' — meaning a path to 2 per cent inflation with no recession and only modest unemployment. At the end of 2022, most economists forecast inflation to persist above 2 per cent, a recession to begin in 2023 and unemployment to exceed 5 per cent.

Past midterm congressional election outcomes, coupled with concern about inflation, led pundits to expect Republicans to sweep the US House of Representatives and possibly recapture the US Senate in November. Fortunately for Democrats, Trump loomed large. Although Trump was not on the ballot, he promoted unpalatable Republican candidates. This, together with the US Supreme Court's unpopular reversal of Roe v. Wade — a landmark court ruling that guaranteed a person's constitutional right to abortion — meant that Republicans barely achieved a narrow victory in the House, while Democrats retained control of the Senate.

The United States has

accelerated its fight against climate change. Biden's signature legislative achievement was passage of the misnamed US\$400-plus billion Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a truncated descendant of his administration's US\$2.4 trillion Build Back Better proposal. The IRA was largely a green energy law, providing more than US\$300 billion for wind, solar and other alternatives to fossil fuels. When implemented, the green projects will continue to lower US carbon emissions.

Although the IRA is ambitious, it will not significantly reduce global carbon emissions. The world continues to exceed its Paris Agreement targets for limiting the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The United States remains allergic to meaningful carbon taxes. And exploring geoenvironmental solutions remains taboo.

At the COP27 gathering in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022, the United States acceded to undetermined 'loss and damage' payments to poor countries impacted by climate disasters. As the calendar turns to 2023, the challenge of climate change looms as large as ever — for the United States, China and everyone else.



US's democrats finally prioritising black voters

Democrats are finally prioritizing Black voters, winning notes or approval from advocacy groups who represent one of the party's most loyal constituencies — one they say has too often been taken for granted.

The ascension of Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) to lead House Democrats as a successor to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and President Biden's push to make South Carolina the party's first primary state illustrate how the party is recognizing the importance of Black voters, advocates say.

Cheyenne M. Daniels

this," Trav Robertson, South Carolina Democratic Party Chair, said in an interview with The Hill.

"Forty percent of enslaved African Americans came through the port of Charleston, and 90 percent of the African American community in America can trace one relative to the state of South Carolina," he added. "It means that while we have a troubled past, we recognize the endless possibilities."

Despite their consistent support of Democrats, however, Black voters often report feeling

that sends a positive message, as does Jeffries's ascension to House Democratic leader and Rep. Lauren Underwood's (D-Ill.) election to the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee. She's the first Black female to win an elected position on the DPCC since Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.).

To send a louder message, Albright said Democrats need to make sure they are investing in Black communities everywhere. That includes investing money, knocking on doors and creating targeted advertising with com-

In order to prove they're truly prioritizing Black voters, Albright said, Democrats have to move toward enacting policy that addresses Black voters' biggest concerns. "There's a range of issues that have not been dealt with, including the issue of voting rights," said Albright. Concerns around voter suppression have increased over the last few years. Since 2021, lawmakers have passed at least 42 restrictive voting laws in 21 states, according to the Brennan Center for Justice. Between Jan. 1 and Sept. 12 of this year, seven states enacted 10 laws that made voting more difficult. Most voter suppression laws disproportionately negatively affect Black voters. "There's also the issue of police violence and police accountability," Albright added. "The George Floyd Act famously went up in flames. In fact, as we speak, there's still efforts to actually increase funding for police departments and the number of police officers on the street." Biden has taken steps that show he understands he owes his victory in large part to Black voters. He promised to appoint the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, and did so with his nomination of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. Albright acknowledged this sends a positive message, as does Jeffries's ascension to House Democratic leader and Rep. Lauren Underwood's (D-Ill.) election to the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee. She's the first Black female to win an elected position on the DPCC since Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.). To send a louder message, Albright said Democrats need to make sure they are investing in Black communities everywhere. That includes investing money, knocking on doors and creating targeted advertising with community groups. Shropshire, who was involved in the effort to move South Carolina to the front of the line in the Democratic primary, said the discussions she took part in focused on how a state with a diverse constituency of Democratic voters should come first.

"[Democrats] are fully engaging in the way that's necessary with Black voters," said Adrienne Shropshire, executive director of BlackPAC. "It matters where Black voters can be the margin of victory. They clearly understand the importance of making an investment and engaging with Black voters."

During the midterms, Black voters were crucial in some of the most closely-watched races — including Georgia, where Black voters made up almost 32 percent of the turnout in the Senate runoff election that secured Democrats the 51-49 majority.

Georgia is the state that provided Democrats with their Senate majority in two 2021 runoff elections. It extended their majority to 51 seats this year when Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock defeated Republican Herschel Walker.

Black Democrats were also critical to Biden's win in the 2020 primary, putting him well over the top in South Carolina and contributing to his victories in a number of "Super Tuesday" contests days later.

In an October poll conducted by theGrio and KFF, 61 percent of registered Black voters identified as Democrats while 13 percent said they lean toward the Democratic Party. Only about 7 percent said they are Republicans.

According to Pew Research Center, over half of the nation's Black population lives in the South. Iowa, which for decades held the first contest in the Democratic presidential primary, is a majority white state.

"Joe Biden recognizes

unheard, disenfranchised and overlooked until election season kicks up.

That's in part because many of the steps Democrats take — such as new appointments and even the primary move — are symbolic," said Cliff Albright, co-founder of Black Voters Matter.

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Albright acknowledged

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"I do think that it is a reflection of the ways in which Black voters have shown up in critical places and in critical ways for the Democratic Party," Shropshire added.

"When we think about the influence or the growing political power of Black voters, the shift that's being made is obviously an indication of that," she continued. "I think it's also an indication of the importance Black voters are to the Democrats winning anywhere, but particularly in difficult places and in swing states."

In places where prominent Black figures were running this midterm cycle, such as Mandela Barnes in Wisconsin and Cheri Beasley in North Carolina, Albright faulted the party for not making the kinds of investments it should have made.

"Black voters could have proved to be the difference," Albright said. "It's not enough just to say we care about you as voters but to really fight for and advocate on all of these issues, whether it's infrastructure or environmental justice or police accountability or voting rights," said Albright. "There's a whole agenda of issues that Black folks want to see. At the end of the day, that's what's going to determine whether or not we feel like we're being truly valued and respected."

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“There’s nobody around him who wants him to do it”

Over the past years, Jared Kushner - the husband of Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka - has been the billionaire's campaign manager, chief adviser and confidant. However, it seems he's decided not to support his father-in-law's 2024 run.

Jared Kushner no longer has any intention of helping his father-in-law, Donald Trump run the presidential campaign, US media reported.

While no specific reason was given, a source points out that Trump's actions may have been the cause, particularly a November dinner with rapper Kanye West and Nick Fuentes held at the ex-president's Mar-a-Lago residence. Both guests

were accused of anti-Semitism, after a series of controversial statements: Kanye expressed a somewhat positive attitude toward Hitler, while Fuentes allegedly denied the Holocaust.

It was from this event that Jared, who himself comes from an orthodox Jewish family, did not respond to requests related to the presidential campaign, and even gave Trump's number to his aides to completely avoid communicating with him.

"He was like, 'Look, I'm out. I'm really out,'" the source said.

US media had previously reported that Jared and Ivanka were not enthusiastic about Trump's decision to enter the presidential race again.

Egor Shapovalov

"Trump thought he could convince Ivanka this weekend to come back and campaign for him as she was the most requested speaker after the president himself last time around ... but so far she's resisting his entreaties and holding firm, as is Jared," one insider said. "They both feel they got burned in Washington and don't want to go back and expose themselves and their children to another bitter campaign."

Moreover, Ivanka did not even attend the ceremony announcing the start of the campaign, explaining that she wanted to devote herself to raising children. Jared and her have three kids: a daughter and two

sons.

"I love my father very much. This time around, I am choosing to prioritize my young children and the private life we are creating as a family. I do not plan to be involved in politics," Ivanka said in a statement. "While I will always love and support my father, going forward I will do so outside the political arena."

Trump himself has declared that he has full confidence in his family's support and fully understands his daughter's desire to leave the political limelight.

"I think that all members of my family are with me. It doesn't mean that they're going to work on the campaign, but they're always 100% with me... [Ivanka]

did a very good job, and she was treated unfairly, and I don't want to see that happen."

US media had previously reported that of those close to Trump, only his son Eric's wife Lara supported his presidential bid.

"There's nobody around him who wants him to do it," the adviser told a US outlet. "Forget Jared and Ivanka — Don Jr. doesn't want him to do it! The only person who wants him to do it is Eric's wife, Lara, because she's so ambitious."

"On November 16, Donald Trump officially announced his 2024 bid. If successful, Trump will become the second president in US history to serve two non-consecutive terms in office.



PIDE unveils crucial charter of economy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), being the nation's premier think-tank, amid continuous calls for the Charter of Economy by different segments of the society as well as political leadership, has presented its "Charter of Economy."

Former Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Renowned Economist, and Vice Chancellor of PIDE, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque in a press statement issued here on Sunday stated that the country's economic indicators over the course of its entire history have fluctuated widely without a clear and sustainable growth trajectory. Despite experiencing extreme economic and political experimentation, the country fails to get on the road to development. All thanks to the myopic approach, he added.

He said that the focus, thus, has to be long-term, as short-term quick fixes have not worked, and it must start from somewhere. The only way out of the economic turmoil that Pakistan has been stuck in has to be sustained and accelerated growth. How to achieve it? Not without a complete reset of the fundamentals of governance systems and markets.

"In this context, a political consensus in Pakistan is critical because implementing any new rules of the game in letter and spirit seems highly unlikely without a broad-based political consensus. First and foremost, the pre-requisite must be policy consistency for at least the next 15 years. Once there is a political

consensus, there should be no off-tracking from the set direction, whatever the case may be," VC PIDE added.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque further said that through this document, PIDE brings to the spotlight the real issues that matter, hitting right at the core, in an attempt to set the fundamentals right. The Charter has been divided into six broad themes that include: Governance for the 21st Century, Sludge and Deregulation, Economic Policy Focus, Developing Markets, 3Ts (Trade, Tariff, and Taxation) and Modernization.

He said that the PIDE views political uncertainty as the root cause of Pakistan's economic problems. It is evident that policy inconsistency is due to rapid governmental changes and overlapping roles. The undefined jurisdiction of the arms of the state further magnifies the policy bottlenecks.

Hence, it is essential to make amends to the political set-up for better system efficiency and smooth economic performance. So, the Charter calls for empowered local governments and local police, new rules for the cabinet and parliament as well as electoral reforms.

The suggestions include putting limits on the number of cabinet members, term limits for parliamentarians and direct Senate elections and so on.

"Moreover, it is pertinent to note that economic growth is not limited to just traditional economic indicators. Instead, in modern times as has been practiced globally, growth is support-

ed by seemingly minuscule but significantly important areas.

This involves a modern civil service and a network of independent organizations across the economy.

So, under sludge and regulations themes, the Charter envisions a modern bureaucracy with digitization at the center, monetization of perks and privileges, bidding farewell to colonial examination and lifetime job security, along with independent authorities with the sovereign board of governors instead of centralized bureaucratic control" Mr. Haque added.

He further elaborated that the third theme is about the Economic Policy Focus. Here, the Charter impresses upon the need for an independent Planning Commission to be the convergence point of all the planning and development across the country. This would bring synergy, efficiency and a collective approach leading to better outcomes.

Additionally, it recommends the Parliamentary Budget Office to enhance the technical side of the budget-making process. PIDE, here, is also in favor of initiating five years plans once again for policy consistency and stable economic signaling. Besides that, an independent Debt Agency is also included in the blueprint.

He said that the next theme is about developing markets. The Charter focuses on three key markets: energy, agriculture and real estate. The basic argument is to reduce the government footprint, mod-

ernize the processes and let the markets evolve and function on their own.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque added that then comes 3Ts. Taxation, Tariffs and Trade. Firstly, make taxation simple and progressive, while universal income tax treatment should be followed. Secondly, tariff lines must be rationalized and reduced. A clear perspective is required regarding the extent of openness, and broader guidelines for policy directives must be present.

Thirdly, a 15 - year Export Policy - owned and monitored by an "Export Cell" at the Independent Planning Commission should be initiated. Having said that, the policy should be targeted to enhance competitiveness rather than spoon-feeding.

"In the last theme, PIDE's Charter of Economy talks about vertical, dense and inclusive cities. It also urges to unlock the dead capital in Pakistani cities. In a nutshell, cities should be the engines of growth. Lastly, it makes the case for the internet for all - as a basic necessity if we are to plunge into a modern progressive society" VC PIDE mentioned.

However, he said that the PIDE emphasizes that its Charter of Economy must not be mistaken for a policy document, rather it is meant to set the direction for future policy frameworks. PIDE enunciated that the Charter should be considered as a live document, open to changes and improvement. The Institute looks forward to any consultation, feedback or dialogue in this regard.



SARGODHA: State Minister for Industries and Production Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi with members of Sargodha Chamber of Small Traders and Industries cutting cake to celebrate birthday of Quid-e-Azam.

PTH to help promote bilateral trade: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev on Sunday underlined the importance of the opening of the Pakistan Trade House (PTH) in Kyrgyzstan for promoting Pakistani products besides attracting investors and buyers in the market and further moving to the Eurasian economic union.

Speaking at a reception hosted in Lahore in his honour by Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis who is also Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Vice President Gold Ring Economic Forum, a think-tank, Ulanbek said more Kyrgyzstan Trade Houses will be established in other major cities of Pakistan for direct interaction of business community of either country to promote bilateral trade and tap huge potentials through regional connectivity which he added is need of the hour in the prevailing global scenario.

He called upon the chambers of commerce and industry to come forward and encash the existing market of Kyrgyzstan and adjacent states of the region.

He said frequent exchange of visits of businesses community will pave way for the strengthening of bilateral trade in diversified sectors, according to a press release issued here.

He said one of the major obstacles to the development of trade-economic coordination between both countries and regions is difficult logistics routes which he added will be overcome after the successful establishment of a railway link through Afghanistan.

He said he feels pleasure to announce that his government has started working on for the execution of this multinational gigantic project of regional importance.

Ulanbek Totuiaev said newly established Kyrgyzstan Trade House and his embassy is all the time available to assist the Pak traders for business visit to his country, a land with ample opportunities for investment.

He said Meher Kashif Younis is a dynamic trader of Pakistan and will exercise his sphere of influence for promoting bilateral trade between the two Muslim brotherly countries in the day to come.

President Kyrgyzstan Trade House Dr Shahid Hassan was also prominent among others.

Awareness session held at SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): An awareness session on cyber crimes and cyber threats was conducted in the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Sunday.

The session was co-chaired by Vice President SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh and Chairman departmental committee on cyber crime Naeem Yousaf.

Speaker Zain Ali briefed the participants regarding various cyber laws and measures to counter cyber criminals and also recommended best practices to safe-guard one's digital presence on the Internet.

Leading economies should support Pakistan to repay its debt: Jawad

LAHORE (INP): Vice President Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Chaudhary Ahmed Jawad has called on the country's policymakers to find a possible solution to clear the country's debt saying without it, our economic growth will continue to deteriorate in the coming years.

Speaking during a cake cutting ceremony organized on the eve of birthday of father of nation Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah here on Sunay, he said that Pakistan's total debt is around \$125 billion as of today, and that's certainly a lot of money for us but not for China and the United States.

The key Chinese and American companies are three times as big as our total debt. The value of China Petroleum & Chemicals Corporation is \$326 billion and the value of Walmart Inc of the United States is worth \$570 billion.

Jawad said the burden of paying foreign debt and paying interest is increasing in Pakistan. The country continues to borrow, mainly to pay back old contributions and finance its current account (CAD) deficit.

The solution is simple, we should permanently join the US OR China on the condition of repaying our country debt and we will be your ally being an ideal geographical location in the world with readily available warm water and one of the best military. And the

\$125 billion amount is nothing to them.

If not, we will remain in the vicious circle of the IMF and other funding agencies and therefore our rupee will be even weaker, as their condition is to consistently surpass the currencies of the underdeveloped countries.

Likewise, we can increase our tax revenue, market traders must be in the tax grid with the flat tax method. Even shops in rural areas too. Also our agricultural sector must be in the tax net those who have landholding of 12 acres and above.

Similarly government expenditures must be reduced at an appropriate level. PBF official called upon all political parties to agree on economic charter in order to ensure the continuity of economic policies.

Pakistan should not afford new economic policy after every 5 years, that's why our FDI's are decreasing.

As Quid said "If we want to make Pakistan prosperous, we must focus only on the welfare of the masses"

Jawad further said PBF has supported the federal government's decision to implement an energy-saving policy, which plans to close shops at 8pm and wedding halls at 8pm. 10pm due to the current difficult economic situation. Our energy import bill has increased to \$28 billion and continuing to increase like

this will create more difficult situations, he asserted, adding that an energy saving policy Energy would guarantee national savings when the country imports oil and gas, meaning the country will save foreign currency.

He said that we suggested the government that restaurant hours may be extended by one hour until 11pm. The rest is limited to wedding venues and shop schedules will be required by the hour. This will save over 62 billion rupees per year.

The VP PBF said markets around the world close around 6 or 7 pm and Pakistan is the only country that is not using the benefits of daylight and the scheme is no longer being granted as the country is going through a difficult time and through the difficult economic situation. The current economic situation forces people to change their habits. If the country remains within its own resources, people must change their habits. Even in the very affluent Gulf countries, the market closes at 9-10pm.

He said, "We should be telling people that the implementation of these measures is inevitable and Anjuman-e-Tajran should understand that it is necessary. You are not ready for a flat tax, nor are you in favor of the government's energy dialogue policy. You must choose at least one; he lamented."

Private sector urged to develop talent

ISLAMABAD (APP): Private sector should adopt more flexible approaches to developing talent for digital jobs while workers must embrace lifelong learning of digital skills to compete modern global trends of foreign and regional markets.

Talking to a delegation of IT professionals led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's United Business Group Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik sitar-I-Imtiaz said here Sunday that as one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, Asia and the Pacific has witnessed rapid digitisation in recent years while the trend was evident before the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic catalysed a dramatic acceleration in the demand for digital skills and jobs.

He said nearly 65% of GDP in the Asia Pacific region will be digitised by end of this year. He said this transformation will require a workforce across industries with basic, intermediate and advanced digital skills and Pakistan must equip its businesses and workforce with digital literacy meeting emerging demands of new patterns of global marketing.

He said while not everyone needs to be a data scientist, foundational digital literacy is a prerequisite for nearly all job profiles across industries and regions.

Shahzad Ali Malin said digital literacy is a prerequisite and employers must add basic digital literacy to essential requirements for job as workers with intermediate or advanced digital skills were much more in demand than those with

only basic digital skills. He said employers can benefit from adopting more flexible approaches to hiring programming talent, including by identifying talent skilled through online, micro and modular learning, as opposed to more traditional degree programs.

Leader of the delegation Mian Faiz Bukhsh speaking on the occasion about gender gap said males dominate the renewable energy industries, but e-learning has a better gender balance. He said e-learning tends to have lower barriers to entry in terms of skills, work flexibility, and social acceptance, indicating progress toward gender parity. However, he said developing policies that encourage participation of women across growing industries, such renewable energy, is essential.

Furniture export 80% surge in five months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The furniture exports during the first five months of current fiscal year (2022-23) swelled by 80.46 percent compared to last corresponding period, Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council

Furniture Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday. Chairing board of directors meeting here today he informed that during the period under review furniture worth US\$ 6,791,000 was exported compared to

the exports of US \$ 3,642,000 during the same period of last year.

He stressed the urgent need for exploring more new foreign markets as Pak hand engraved wooden furniture is in great demand in global markets.

He demanded government to declare furniture industry as a full fledged sector which can earn millions of dollars of foreign exchange. He urged the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan

(TDAP) to organise more single country expos to showcase Pak products and invite foreign investors to Pakistan for joint ventures.

He also urged the government to establish expo centres at all provincial headquarters and big cities for displaying Pak products under one roof.

He said visiting foreign trade missions and investors delegation should also be taken to expos for their B2B (Business to Business) meetings.

Instability, delay in IMF program exacerbate economic crisis: BMP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the central bank has lowered its projected GDP growth from the previously announced range of 3-4 percent for the current fiscal year, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday asked the government to formulate long-term and consistent policies for high industrial growth and sizeable improvement in exports, as Pakistan's export has been stagnant for a long time.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the delay in the resumption of the IMF loan program and political instability exacerbated the country's

vulnerability through the depletion of foreign exchange reserves, as the resulting rupee depreciation amplified inflationary pressures by magnifying the effect of global price increase.

He said that a concerted approach is required to encourage increased localization of the manufacturing base, along with the lowering of energy intensity of the economy by ensuring energy efficiency and conservation.

Moreover, amid the growing issues related to climate change and inadequate food security situation, there is an urgent need to formulate a well-thought-out strategy to meet these challenges, he said.

FPCCI former president

said that trade and industry need low cost energy to bring down their cost of production, keeping their goods competitive in the international market.

He said that the government would have to reduce the price of electricity along with the cut in the prices of petroleum products to bring down the cost of doing business and to promote industrial activities.

He said that the business activities were already in decline and in this situation the government should take serious steps to cut the cost of doing business, as continued hike in oil rates would further enhance the cost of production, making transport more expensive.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the economy of

Pakistan, particularly the SMEs are striving to deal with the present economic crunch and need to get support. Instead of providing subsidies or waivers, it is unjust to overburden the industries with hike in cost of production.

He observed that the burden of the surge in oil price in the international market is immediately transferred to masses by the government but the process of reduction in the prices is always very slow, he noted.

He said that the experience from FY22 brought to the fore once again the need to address the country's structural weaknesses, such as a narrow base of foreign exchange earnings and meager inflows of foreign investment.

Our leaders liable to save economy, says Atif Ikram

KARACHI (INP): Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that saving the sinking economy of Pakistan is not an obligation for international institutions and friendly countries but the responsibility of our leaders.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that vague economic policies are resulting in nervousness among the investors which is damaging to the economy therefore government should take a clear stance on important economic matters which should support the national interests, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said that country cannot borrow more unless the demands of lenders are met and the government will have to

take unpopular decisions to tackle the economic crisis.

He said that popular decisions and lavish expenditure for decades have made the country a slave and we have no other option but to follow the dictation of lenders and now the situation has worsened to an extent that the country has to borrow for its defense needs. He noted that external debt stood at \$3.5 billion in 1970, which jumped to \$33 billion in 2004, and now it is over 130 billion dollars because of irresponsible spending.

Now Pakistan cannot pay debt and liabilities without taking new loans but there is a limit to it as many governments borrowed heavily for personal welfare and popularity which has weakened the

country economically and politically.

Now, our economy has lost the strength to withstand internal and external shocks while health, education, and development are being compromised, he observed. He said that many countries borrowed to ensure development but Pakistan mostly borrowed to bridge the current account deficit but it never tried to reduce imports.

The US has lost interest in the war against terror in the region which has reduced the importance of Pakistan but our government and masses have not learned to spend wisely.

Proper handling and reviving the economy is not the responsibility of the US or friendly countries but that of our leaders, he said.

Reduced business hours to affect tax, revenue collection

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has asked the government to review its decision to reduce business hours. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, in a statement, said that stakeholders should be consulted before making the announcement and added that the early closure of businesses, especially hotels, restaurants, or food service, will add more suffering to the masses.

He added that the government would lose billions of rupees in sales tax due to reduced business hours.

Saqib appreciated the government's efforts to resolve energy crises, but the government's revenue from electricity bills may decrease due to a reduction in power consumption during peak hours. He demanded that the government focus on finding an amicable solution to this problem by holding talks with all the stake-

holders and avoiding imposing unilateral decisions.

The business community was aware of the current economic situation; however, he remarked that it was necessary to formulate policies in consultation with stakeholders.

The RCCI president suggested that working hours should be fixed by consensus, applicable to all types of markets and shopping malls in the federal capital and all provinces.



In brief

Second NZ Test shifted to Karachi

LAHORE (INP): The second Test between Pakistan and New Zealand next month has been moved from Multan to Karachi due to "deteriorating" weather conditions, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said. The PCB said that the poor conditions, which have already disrupted flight operations, could potentially result in the loss of playing hours. The change in schedule means the whole series, which includes two Tests and three ODIs, will now be held in Karachi. The first Test is set to begin on Monday. The second Test will begin on Jan 2 after that contest and the three ODIs were brought forward by a day, the statement added.

Cowboys beat NFL-best Eagles

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Dak Prescott threw for 347 yards and three touchdowns to spark the Dallas Cowboys over NFL-best Philadelphia 40-34 on Saturday, keeping the Eagles from clinching a top playoff seeding. The Cowboys' defensive unit forced four turnovers and seized command late in a deadlocked game to stun the visiting Eagles (13-2). "This was a huge game, not only beating one of the best teams in the league, but the way we did it," Prescott said. "Just being able to make some plays right there at the end, scoring a lot of points, the defense making stops. We can use this and continue to build." The victory kept Dallas, 11-4 in the NFC East division title hunt and Minnesota, 12-3, moved closer in the fight for the NFC top seed and a first-round playoff bye. The Baltimore Ravens clinched a playoff berth on a day where most games were played in severely cold conditions, while the New York Giants missed a chance to clinch a post-season spot on a last-play loss at Minnesota. Prescott completed 27 of 35 passes and kept his poise after having an early interception returned for a touchdown. "It was just about moving on," said Prescott.

Charlo-Tszyu off as undisputed

NEW YORK (BBC): Jermell Charlo's bout with Tim Tszyu has been postponed after the undisputed super-welterweight world champion broke his hand in training. American Charlo, who holds the WBO, WBC, IBF and WBA belts, became the undisputed champion when he knocked out Brian Castano in May. After his win over Castano, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) ordered Charlo to defend his title against undefeated Australian Tszyu. No new date has been set for the rescheduled bout.

Pele's family gathers at hospital

SAO PAULO (INP): Family members of Brazilian soccer great Pele are gathering at the Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo where the 82-year-old global icon has been since the end of November. Doctors said earlier this week that Pele's cancer had advanced, adding the three-time World Cup winner is under "elevated care" related to "kidney and cardiac dysfunctions." No other hospital statements have been published since. Edson Cholbi Nascimento, one of Pele's sons and known as Edinho, arrived Saturday, one day after he gave a news conference to deny he would visit his father in hospital.

Babar Azam vows comeback in Test series against New Zealand

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam Sunday vowed to make a comeback in Test series against New Zealand.

While addressing a press conference in Karachi, he said that it was the duty of the Pakistani cricket team to show performance in the ground. He added that the players would do their best to play well against New Zealand. "The pitch looks good. I hope we will play well," he stated.

"We have not finalised the playing XI. We will do that after discussion with the chief selector," he added.

The prolific right-hander pointed out that the strategy of playing cricket was decided after inspecting the situation of the ground. The Pakistan captain also said that the focus of the

team was to win the Test series against New Zealand.

He also expressed his regret over losing Test series to England. "We could not play well against England," he regretted. New Zealand captain Tim Southee also addressed the press conference in Karachi and expressed his hope that the Kiwis would enjoy the play in Pakistan.

"Pakistan is a tough contender. We will try to play our best," he added. He also pointed out that Pakistan lost to England, adding: "But will not take it easy. We are so happy for this series." It is to be noted here that the first Test match between Pakistan and New Zealand will commence in Karachi from Monday (tomorrow). The second

Test match will be played in Multan from the 2nd of the next month.

The ODI matches will start in Karachi from the 10th of the next month. Twenty-seven full high-resolution cameras will be installed and complete Hawkeye review system will be available for the two series.

Meanwhile, New Zealand team participated in a training session ahead of the two-match Test series at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi. After the physical training, they participated in practice sessions in group format, with groups of five to six players engaged in batting, fielding, catching, and bowling practice. On the other hand, home side will commence their preparation from tomorrow onwards.

India beat Bangladesh in second Test thriller

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Shreyas Iyer and Ravichandran Ashwin held firm as India beat Bangladesh in a thrilling second Test on Sunday, dashing hopes in Dhaka of a first-ever win over their giant neighbours.

India needed just 145 to win the match and the series 2-0 but the visitors in the end won by only three wickets in a nail-biting morning's play on day four in Dhaka.

Bangladesh overcame India in the preceding 50-over series but have never beaten them in a Test. India had won 10 of the teams' previous 12 Tests, including five victories by an innings.

India won the first Test comfortably by 188 runs in Chittagong and were widely expected to romp home in the second game, cementing their position in second place in the ICC World Test Championship.

India bowled Bangladesh out on Saturday for a sub-par 231 but the home side's spinners Mehidy Hasan and Shakib Al Hasan then reduced the visitors to 45-4 at stumps with 100 still to chase.

Shakib started the slide with the wicket of captain KL Rahul for two and then Mehidy claimed Cheteshwar Pujara, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli -- all for single-digit scores.

Bangladesh then reduced India to 74-7 when play resumed on Sunday but Shreyas (29 not out) and Ashwin (42 not out) put on 71 runs in an unbroken eighth-wicket stand to steer India home.

Mehidy was the stand-out bowler for Bangladesh in the second innings, finishing with 5-63, which included two wickets in the morning. Bangladesh dominated play in the opening hour as Shakib dismissed nightwatchman Jaydev Unadkat, who hit a six in the opening over but fell in the next after making 13.

Mehidy then trapped danger man Rishabh Pant leg before for nine before he bowled unbeaten overnight batsman Axar Patel for 34 runs.

Ashwin was dropped by Mominul Haque on one at forward short leg before he grew in confi-

dence, with Iyer looking solid against spin at the other end.

After his three fours in two overs, Bangladesh were forced to finally bring pacers into the attack but to no avail.

Ashwin -- named player of the match -- took India close with a six after Mehidy changed his bowling end and wrapped up the contest with two more boundaries.

"(I'm) not going to lie, there was a lot of tension in the dressing room. It was a tough wicket to bat on, they put us under pressure in both innings," said Rahul, who captained in place of injured Rohit Sharma.

"Everyone contributed. We always knew that we had a chance... Very good Test cricket, that's what the crowds love to see," said Shakib.

"Both teams were really good. Credit goes to Shreyas and Ashwin, they absorbed the pressure well and built a partnership," Shakib said.

Rock-solid Pujara was named player of the series, with the Sussex star making 222 runs in the series.



KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Team captain Babar Azam and New Zealand's captain Tim Southee posing for photograph after unveiling Test Series Trophy ahead of first Cricket Test match at the National Stadium.

Aisam, Aqeel win doubles exhibition match

ISLAMABAD (APP): The seasoned duo of tennis ace Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Pakistan number 1 Aqeel Khan routed young Muhammad Shoab and Muhammad Abid in an exhibition men's doubles fixture at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Sunday.

The exhibition match was played instead of the doubles' final of the 8th Begum Kulsum Saifullah Khan National Ranking

Tennis Tournament 2022 due to an injury to Muzammil Murtaza, who along with Shoab was scheduled to take on Aisam and Aqeel.

Aisam and Aqeel came out on top in the contest in straight sets 6-2, 6-4. In boys 18 & under singles final of the tournament, Sami Zeb Khan defeated Muhammad Talha Khan.

Zeb lost the first set 3-6, but came back strongly to take the next two sets 6-0, 6-1

and lift the title.

In boys 14 & under singles final, Abubakar Talha toppled Abdul Basit 4-2, 4-1, while in boys/girls 12&under singles final, Hassan Usmani defeated Abdur Rehman 0-4, 4-1, 4-0.

Former Provincial Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Humayun Saifullah Khan, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, distributed prizes amongst the winners and runner-ups.

Saim Shazli claims 12th Engro SGA President Cup

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Final round of the 12th Engro SGA President Cup 2022 was played on Sunday at Defence Authority Golf Club. The main category was Amateurs HC 0-5 and winner of the championship with net score of 206, 10 under Par was Arsalan Mughal from KGC. Arsalan is the trophy holder for this tournament.

Saim Shazli of KGC maintained lead throughout the tournament and is the winner in Amateurs 0-5HC category with a gross of 213, 3 under par. Yashal Shah, also from KGC is the runner up in this category. Sameer Syed and Samir Feroz, both from KGC are winner and runner-up in Amateur net.

Aania Farooq from Airmen Club is the new leader in Ladies 0-12 HC gross category. Abiha Hanim Syed from DHA Club is the runner-up. In the net category, Amna Amjad (KGC) and Humera Khalid (DHA) secured first and second position correspondingly. In Ladies 13-36 HC gross category, Tabassum Sharif (KGC) won the trophy, with Anum Zahra and Nida Haq both from DHA

at the second and third position.

Golfers' in the Veterans 75 years and above contested for two days (9 holes each day), in Gross category, Group Captain Aftab A Khan from KGC claimed top position. Col Shahid Mahboob (DHA) scored 87 and was declared runner-up. In Net category Dr. Zubair Mirza (KGC) took the first position. Winner of Runner-up net category is Vice Admiral Shamooh Khan a three way tie between Bakhtyar Saeed and Shahid Murtaza.

Major Rizwan Farooq of DHA Club is the new trophy bearer in Veterans 70-75 years Gross category, with Brig Latif Butt also from DHA as the runner-up. Net category has Mir Ali Raza of Airmen Golf Club as winner. Sherjan Tajik of DHA was the runner-up in this category winning over Captain Safdar Amin in a tie breaker.

In the Junior's under 14 Gross category, Waleed Bilal from KGC became the new leader and Nyle Aurangzeb from DHA got the second position. The net category has M Hamzah Sheikh and M Shaffay Ali as winner and runner-up respectively. Chief Guest at the ceremony was

Rizwan Masood Raja, Chief People Officer of Engro Corporation who distributed prizes amongst the winners. Rizwan congratulated Sindh Golf Association on successfully holding the 12th Engro SGA President Cup and assured of Engro's cooperation in future as well.

SGA President Khurram Khan thanked the sponsor for support and congratulated all the winners. Khurram said, "On behalf SGA I would like to sincerely thank Secretary DHA Golf Club- Brigadier Ahsan Masood, his team on providing us the golf course in such good shape. I would also like to thank Secretary SGA- Col Zahid and all officer bearers. SGA leadership would like to appreciate the efforts and hard work of our team including Commander Shazli Azhar, Baseer and Roshan for making this tournament a success."

Secretary SGA Col Zahid said, "We have been speaking with international golf associations for training of Pakistani golfers.

Very soon we will see global trainers coaching our young girls and boys in Karachi."

Boland keeps place for Australia as South Africa mull batting shake-up

MELBOURNE (AFP/APP): Australian seamer Scott Boland was Sunday confirmed to start the Boxing Day second Test in Melbourne ahead of an "underdone" Josh Hazlewood, while South Africa suggested they could shake up their batting line up.

Boland replaced injured fast bowler Hazlewood in the opening Test at Brisbane and was a key performer with his red-hot form making him virtually undroppable.

He is now assured of another game on his home ground -- where he took an incredible 6-7 on debut against England a year ago, cementing himself into Ashes folklore.

Skipper Pat Cummins told reporters the team was unchanged from the side that won by six wickets inside two days on a hostile bowler-friendly Gabba pitch in Brisbane last week, the first of a three-match series.

"We gave Joshy every chance, (but) it just got to a stage where (he) more than anyone else felt like he was a little bit underdone," he said.

"It's a mark of the man really, he himself said 'don't feel quite right', so he kind of pulled himself out of selection.

"We talk a lot about how (as) a team we need a squad mentality,

and I think it's another great example."

Hazlewood missed Australia's last two Tests in Adelaide and Brisbane due to a side strain but had been training hard in the build-up to Melbourne, where hot and humid conditions are expected.

Boland has taken 25 wickets at 10.33 since his debut at the MCG a year ago and said Friday he was hoping his local knowledge would give him the edge over Hazlewood.

The Boxing Day Test will be David Warner's 100th, with the opener striving to end a lean run that has seen some question his position in the side.

He is just 78 runs shy of 8,000 Test runs and has vowed to get back to his best.

"This might be a wicket where I can go out and play like the old me," he said.

After his batsmen largely failed to fire in Brisbane -- where they were bowled out for 152 and 99 -- South African captain Dean Elgar said a change could be afoot.

He was not willing to go into details, although middle-order batsman Theunis de Bruyn has been tipped to come in.

"The little bit I can give away is our bowlers retain their spots," he said.

"There's probably a change

amongst the batters."

South Africa's batting struggles in Brisbane followed some poor displays earlier in the year, with only Sarel Erwee and wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne making centuries since the start of the 2021/22 season.

Despite this, batting coach Justin Sammons backed them to come good as the series progresses.

"We've got to keep the belief and the players do have the belief," he said.

"We haven't played to our potential in the last couple of Tests and we are also determined to get it right. The guys are out there doing their best behind the scenes and I'm confident that they are going to get it right."

Australia team: David Warner, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Cameron Green, Alex Carey, Pat Cummins (capt), Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Scott Boland

South Africa squad: Dean Elgar (capt), Temba Bavuma, Gerald Coetzee, Theunis de Bruyn, Sarel Erwee, Simon Harmer, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne, Lizaad Williams, Khaya Zondo



KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Team during net in Practice Session ahead of the first Test Match at the National Stadium.



In brief

IRSA releases 33,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 33,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 37,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1489.43 feet and was 91.43 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow as 15,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.80 feet, which was 66.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,700 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 7,200, 19,900, 17,800 and 1,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Rescue 1122 int'l standard

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rescue 1122 is providing emergency care/service to the citizens of the federal capital round the clock through 12 medically well-equipped ambulances at international standards. "The Service has so far rescued thousands of victims in road traffic accidents and medical emergencies while maintaining an average response time of 7 minutes in all parts of Islamabad," an official of Rescue 1122 told APP. He said this is the most important function of Rescue 1122 as over 97 per cent of emergency calls were related to Emergency Ambulance Service. It is the foremost responsibility of Rescue 1122 to provide first aid to the patients in emergency ambulances on the spot and thereafter, shift them to the nearest hospital in the capital. The main beneficiaries of the Service have been the victims of road traffic mishaps and crashes, he added. He concluded that Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) was initially started as an Emergency Ambulance Service on October 14, 2004, as a pilot project from Lahore. After the success of this pilot project, Emergency Ambulance Service was established in 12 major cities of Punjab and subsequently in all districts of the province. Islamabad Rescue 1122 is working here under the supervision of the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

11 gamblers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 11 gamblers on cock fights and recovered stake money of Rs 26,080, 14 mobile phones, 03 motorcycles and 11 chickens from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday, informed police spokesman. According to the details, Kalar Syedan Police held 11 gamblers were identified as Mudassar, Tayyab, Zain, Shiraz, Imran, Khizr, Khayyam, Waqar, Adeel, Shakeel and Tayyab. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Sadder Nabeel Ahmed Kokhar appreciated the performance of police team adding that gambling was the root of other evils and action against such elements would be continued.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi along with the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi and children cutting cake on Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146 birth anniversary at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

HEC invites proposals for Technology Development Fund

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited the faculty members to submit proposals under its Technology Development Fund aimed at facilitating institutions of higher learning to serve as engines for socio-economic development of Pakistan.

An official of HEC told on Sunday that the fund would finance proposals of completed interdisciplinary applied research for prototype development and industrial value addition for technology-based product or process development.

The idea behind this initiative of HEC is to help the productive minds of Pakistan to impact the economy through the development of new and emerging technologies, the official added.

This initiative enabled the research ecosystem lied with higher education institutions to be available for

the industry with financial and technical assistance (IP, Licensing, and Commercialization) through academic scientists for the solution of indigenous industrial problems.

This program has already funded 200 joint academia-industry projects and over 160 licensed to industry for mass scaling and commercialization. A good number of such projects have already started yielding revenue and which is shared with all stakeholders. Considering the facts above, Central Development Working Party approved the project's enhanced scope to give the 4th Call for proposals.

Hence, PhD Faculty Members who have ready research, lab scale, or pre-prototype should submit the proposals with the consortia of industry and academic partners in the thematic areas including climate change and its impact on the socio eco-

nomics of Pakistan, Telecommunication, Information and Technology/Computers, Engineering Sciences, Micro Electronics, Water, Power, Energy, and Fleet Management and Biotechnology and Allied fields. The other areas include Material Sciences/Man-Made Material (Nanotechnology), Robotics, Defense and Military needs and any other applied discipline which is inductive or conducive to the success of products developed or upscale the process of Industrial level manufacturing. The proposed funded projects would be expected to develop a product or service which would positively impact, inter alia, the economy, solve a current problem, meet a market need, utilize local raw materials, move current products up the value chain, create large scale employment, and generate the revenue.

ANF seizes over 240,000 intoxicated tablets

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized over 240,000 intoxicated tablets weighing over 55 kg, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Sunday. He informed that the ANF in an operation at Pakistan International Terminal Karachi Port, managed to recover over 240,000 intoxicated tablets from a container being sent to United Arab Emirates.

He further said that the force had seized over 250 kg of drugs, 53 heroin-filled capsules, 1604 liters prohibited chemical and 100 intoxicated tablets besides netting nine accused including a woman while conducting 15 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country during last three days.

The ANF in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 434 grams heroin from the possession of a passenger resident of Buner going to

Sharjah on flight no ER-703, he said.

The ANF North also recovered 70 intoxicated tablets from the possession of an Afghan national arrested from F-11 Markaz Islamabad area.

In a joint operation, the ANF and FC recovered 36 kg charras and 1.5 kg Ice drug from an area in Khyber. In two operations conducted on Quetta and Taftan Highway, ANF seized 51 kg charras.

In an operation at Islamabad International Airport ANF recovered 53 heroin filled capsules from the possession of a passenger resident of Khyber going to Sharjah on flight no PA-212. In another operation at Faisalabad Airport, 1830 grams Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Bahrain bound passenger resident of Mandi Bahaudin.

In two operations near Chaman Bypass, ANF recovered 1604 liters prohibited chemical. 50 kg

charras was recovered from secret cavities of a bus intercepted near Quetta-Hazarganj Chowk.

The ANF conducted a raid at a flat in Gulistan Johar Karachi and recovered 4590 grams weed and arrested a female drug pusher resident of Nowshera. The ANF North recovered 30 intoxicated tablets and 250 grams charras and rounded up three accused in an operation on G.T.Road Rawalpindi.

48 kg charras was recovered in an area near Orakzai. Similarly, 48 kg charras was also recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Qilla Abdullah netted from Karachi Bilal Chorangi area. The ANF succeeded to seize nearly 10 kg Ice drug from an area near Chaman Pak-Afghan border. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 while further investigations are underway, he added.

Authorities devising strategy to enhance storage capacity of Rawal Dam

RAWALPINDI (APP): The authorities concerned of the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and Small Dam Organization (SDO) are devising a strategy to enhance the storage capacity of Rawal Dam.

According to a WASA spokesman, Chairman, Rawalpindi Development Authority and WASA Rawalpindi Tariq Mehmood Murtaza chairing a meeting had formed a committee to give recommendations to increase the storage capacity of Rawal Dam.

He informed that Managing Director, WASA Muhammad Tanveer, Chief Engineer Potohar Irrigation Department Naeem Ashraf, Project Director Small Dams Maher Manzoor, Deputy Managing Director, WASA Muhammad Saleem Ashraf and others attended the meeting.

It was agreed that solid steps should be taken to increase the capacity of Rawal Dam to meet the increasing water demand of the city.

The participants discussed various proposals to increase the existing capacity of

the dam including desalination which would help enhancing the water storage capacity of the dam.

The project would help provide an additional 50 to 60 million gallons of water per day.

The spokesman informed that a technical committee consisting of officers from the Irrigation Department and WASA was formed to prepare the TORs of the project.

The Committee would submit its report to the Chairman within one week and a plan would be submitted to the government for final approval, he added.

The Chairman said that considering the future water requirements of Rawalpindi city, this project would be of great importance adding, the underground water level was reducing and had reached an alarming level and dependence on the dams had become inevitable.

The project would not only provide a sufficient quantity of water at a low cost, but WASA already has a system to bring water from Rawal Dam to Rawalpindi city and treat it, the spokesman said.

15 fresh Covid-19 cases reported in 24 hours: NIH

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health officials on Sunday said that 15 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last 24 hours across the country.

As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio is 0.40 percent while 16 patients were in critical condition.

No death was reported from the Covid-19 in the last 24 hours while 3,749 tests were conducted. Around 406 tests were conducted in Islamabad, 107 in Faisalabad, 920 in Lahore, and 321 in Peshawar. As many as four confirmed cases with a 0.99% case positivity ratio were reported from Islamabad, one case with a 0.93% case positivity ratio was reported from Faisalabad, two cases with a 0.65% case positivity ratio from Lahore,

and two cases with a 0.62% ratio from Peshawar were reported.

Meanwhile, Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders, healthcare staff, vaccination teams, and administration working across Pakistan despite multiple challenges.

He advised all provinces and regions to administer booster doses to further improve protection against COVID-19 transmission.

He said that in view of the global pandemic situation, the Central Health Establishment (CHE) will be strengthened to enhance its functionality. The minister emphasized the importance of precautions, including social distancing and mask-wearing, especially in crowded places.

Amir Muqam pays rich tribute to Quaid e Azam on his birth anniversary

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs Engr Amir Muqam said that with his "determination and unmatched character", Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had turned the dream of Pakistan into reality.

In a message on Founder of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah Birth Anniversary, the Adviser to Prime Minister said today is the day to come together in the same spirit as the founders of the independence movement did.

Engr Amir Muqam said that let us shun our differences based on caste, creed and faith and work in unison.

"I pray Almighty Allah to grant us strength and unity to realise our des-

tiny of becoming the strongest nation on earth as envisioned by our Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah," said Adviser to Prime Minister.

He said that present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is striving for a society free of corruption and a system that helped the poor and underprivileged citizens as per the founder's vision.

Meanwhile, Adviser to Prime Minister Engr. Amir Muqam also felicitated the Christian community in Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of Christmas.

Amir Muqam sends birthday wishes to Quaid Nawaz Sharif: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Engr Amir Muqam* congratulated former

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on his birthday and paid a tribute to the latter's services for the country.

In a statement, Engineer Amir Muqam said that the great leader Nawaz Sharif's selfless service to the people of Pakistan is the hallmark of his politics. Adviser to the Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said that on the occasion of Nawaz Sharif's birthday today, millions of his fans including himself prayed for his long life. Engineer Amir Muqam said that he feels proud to be a worker and representative of Mian Nawaz Sharif. Adviser to the Prime Minister said that the great leader Nawaz Sharif has always made great efforts for the economic prosperity of the country and public welfare.

Govt started pragmatic measures to address long-awaiting energy sector issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The incumbent government under the acumen leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif soon after its inception in April this year started pragmatic measures to address not only long-awaiting issues being faced by the energy sector in the country but also to provide maximum relief to the masses.

Official sources told APP here that the coalition government had already revived and expedited the pace of economic and energy development and thus started scores of electricity and energy-related projects including generation, transmission and conservation in all four provinces.

"The special focus was

being given to generate electricity from indigenous resources- Thar coal, hydel, solar and wind", they said.

The Karot Hydropower Project, the first hydel investment project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has also started supplying 720 MW to the national grid on June 29, 2022, they added.

They said work on the 75-kilometer long 500 kV double circuit Suki Kinari transmission line project has also been kicked off with an estimated cost of Rs 18.7 billion for evacuation of power from 884 MW Suki Kinari hydropower project. This transmission line would connect the 884 MW Suki

Kinari Hydel power plant to National Grid, through which power would be further transmitted to load centres of Pakistan.

Minister for Energy (Power Division), Engr. Khuram Dasgiri Khan said that the government had also laid the foundation stone of 500 kV grid station Lahore North and 220 kV grid station Quaid-e-Azam Business Park and allied transmission lines in district Sheikhupura with a cost of around Rs.24 billion adding he told that the government was committed to generating over 60 per cent of its power from indigenous clean energy resources besides shifting of 30 percent vehicles on electricity by 2030.

He said that electricity generation from local Thar coal would also double to 2640 MW before the coming summer season. Currently, over 990 MW of electricity was being supplied to the national grid station from Thar coal-based power plants, he said.

The minister said Thar Coal would fulfill the energy requirements of the country adding that prime minister Shehbaz Sharif had already approved a project to link Islamkot (Tehsil in Thar district) to Hyderabad through the railway track. It would play a key role in the effective transportation of coal in the country through railways, he added.

Govt committed to curb blasphemous material on social media

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government's recent initiative of withdrawing its appeals from the Supreme Court of Pakistan against the Lahore High Court's (LHC) judgment directing the authorities concerned to take steps for removing blasphemous content from social media, in fact represents sentiments of the nation.

Jamia Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman and Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi played a significant role in withdrawal of appeals filed by Ministry of Information Technology and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in the apex court.

Both of them and many other religious-political leaders and scholars had strong reservations about posting blasphemous material on social media. "We can never compromise on Finality of the Prophethood (Khatm-e-Nabuwat) of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and Islamic values," said Maulana Fazl Ur Rahman who is also the chief of ruling coalition.

"Whether it is the Parliament, the courts or the civil society, we would remain fully vigilant to ensure that not even a single word is uttered against the honor and respect of our Prophet," he stated.

Hafiz Ashrafi, who is also Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman, has hailed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for taking the bold step and honoring sentiments of the faithful.

The National Assembly had also passed a unanimous resolution on November 24 to take back appeals from the apex court. Mover of the resolution, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Choudhary Faqir Ahmad has urged to control the spread of indecent content against Islam and the State on social media.

Chairman Legal Commission on Blasphemy Pakistan had also appealed the government for action

against publishing anti-Islamic content on social media.

"On December 5, the Commission also started a trend on Twitter to withdraw the appeals, which was backed by nearly 400,000 people and the message potentially reached to 103 million social media users," said Chairman of the Commission, Advocate Rao Abdul Rahim.

Lahore High Court Judge, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan in a case against the 'distorted translation' of the Holy Quran had directed Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah and Punjab Chief Minister's Principal Secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti to settle the issue once and for all with consensus.

Both Tauqir Shah and Muhammad Khan Bhatti, on behalf of their respective governments, had assured the court on implementation of its decision and reach a permanent solution to this issue.

Meanwhile, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi, speaking in National assembly had expressed apprehensions on distorted translation of the Holy Quran and sought the Chair's ruling for stopping this heinous practice.

Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani, keeping in view the gravity of situation, directed Punjab government to address grievances of believers on priority as incorrect translation of the Holy Quran was hurting their religious sentiments.

Law enforcement agencies are also on their toes to tighten noose against those involved in this criminal activity on social media and some 62 blasphemers have been put behind bars so far with nine of them awarded capital punishment by trial courts and two others death penalty by the High Courts. To curb the menace of unethical stuff on social media and other communication sites, a number of faith-based organizations including Legal Commission on Blasphemy Pakistan, Namoos-e-Risalat Lawyers Forum Pakistan, Legal Thinkers

Forum, Tehreek Tehfuz Namoos-e-Risalat Pakistan, World Khatm-e-Nabuwat Council, Anjuman Ashqaan-e-Muhammad, Tehfuz Khatm-e-Nabuwat Forum, Tehfuz Khatm-e-Nabuwat Wukla Forum, Legal and Cyber Experts Forum, Razakaran-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat and Islamabad Bar Association are playing their role by pursuing blasphemous cases at legal forums till their logical conclusion.

"Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing had booked an accused for publishing indecent content against the divine books - the Holy Quran and Bible on social media on November 29," said Secretary General Legal Commission on Blasphemy Pakistan, Sheraz Ahmad Farooqui.

"The FIA It had also arrested two miscreants from twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi for allegedly involving in proliferation of desecration material on social media," he added.

He said a blasphemer namely Sana Ullah had been given death sentence twice by the Anti-Terrorist Court (ATC). Peshawar-I on November 30. "The convict used to share blasphemous content on a WhatsApp group against the sanctity and prestige of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), Mothers of Believers (Ummahat-ul-Momineen) and the religion of Islam," Farooqui added.

He further stated that a woman 'Rabia Peerni' was arrested by Lahore Police after lodging First Information Report against her as she was involved in disrespecting the Islamic values and injunctions publicly.

"To uphold the sanctity of Islamic values, the present government was leaving no stone unturned since it had come to power," he added.

Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has also re-activated its Web Evaluation Cell to curb publishing of blasphemous material on social media.

Power supplies to be extended

KABUL (Agencies): Turkmenistan will extend power supplies to Afghanistan, the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper reported. In particular, the state electricity corporation Turkmenenergo is allowed to conclude an agreement to extend the contracts concluded with the Afghan company Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat. The company is also allowed to set the volume and price of electricity supplied. This decree was signed by Turkmen President Serdar Berdimukhamedov.

Drug factory discovered

HELMAND (Agencies): The local officials of Helmand say that their police personnel have discovered and destroyed a drug production and alcoholic beverages factories in that province. In these factories, thousands kilograms of drugs raw materials were discovered, the security source said that 7 people arrested. According to police source, the detainees introduced to judicial bodies after primary police investigations.

Taxes form national budget of a country, maintain security



KABUL (Agencies): “Wavier Tax Penalties” was organized and attended by Deputies of Prime Minister and other several officials and Ministries.

Speaking at the program, Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar, Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that taxes form the national budget of the countries and ensure the security, public services and well-being of the people.

Deputy PM Beradar called the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan responsible against all citizens, including businessmen and industrialists, adding IEA will facilitated every opportunities for the businessmen of the country by ensuring their security protecting.

Afterward, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the administrative Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, called the wavier of tax penal-

ties by the Islamic Emirate a step toward supporting businessmen and industrialists, and asked the people to pay their taxes on time.

Addressing the taxpayers, Hanafi said: “Your taxes are used for the treatment of the sick patients, the support of orphans, the payment of government employees’ salaries, the salaries of the security and defense forces, the treatment of addicts and other public services.

The Ministry of Finance is striving to provide better services to all citizens, especially businessmen and industrialists, and will provide them with more facilities.

In this program, Acting Finance Minister Mullah Hedayatullah Badri said that collected taxes from the traders by the Customs offices are returned to the concerned persons by the Ministry.

Afghanistan is the only

country, where tax penalties are waived, said the Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Nooruddin Azizi. He asked operational companies and investors to pay their taxes on time for Afghanistan’s self-sufficiency.

Meanwhile Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the Mujahidin of the Islamic Emirate sacrificed for the freedom of the country, which now the Islamic system rule the country, adding that now it’s time for businessmen and investors to lead Afghanistan to self-sufficiency and economic development with their effective efforts and good economic plans.

In the end of the program, the officials appreciated those companies who paid their taxes on time and fulfilled the rules and procedures of the Islamic Emirate.

MoMP to auction 90kg of ruby

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s Ministry of Mines and Petroleum announced auctioning about 90kg of ruby to tender.

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, in a statement asked all traders to participate in this tender and submit their applications within 10 working days to the Ministry.

Partial transactions are not allowed and the winner of the auction should transfer all the money owed to the bank either in cash or by reference within a certain period, added the Ministry in its statement.

7 tankers of low quality oil returned

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan National Standards Authority returned 7 tankers of low-quality oil Iran imported from that country. The ANSA said in a press release that it has returned 7 tankers of low-quality petrol to Iran in Nimroz port.

The amount of petrol was not in accordance with the standard with the Afghanistan National Standards Authority and has returned back to that country Iran.

ANSA asks all traders of petroleum products to import quality products into the country. The Afghanistan National Standards Authority has prevented the imports of dozens of tankers of low-quality petroleum products into the country so far, said sources of the department.

Students begin drive

KABUL (TOLOnews): Students from different universities have started a social media campaign called “Education Either for all or Nobody” to protest the suspension of universities for female students.

The campaign’s coordinator said that it will be implemented in many provinces with the goal of allowing female students to go to universities.

“We will also boycott men’s education until our sisters are allowed to study again,” said Ajmir Sadat, campaign coordinator. In reaction to the Ministry of Higher Education’s recent decision to suspend universities for female students, several male students have also left their classes.

“We will not attend our classes until our sisters and girls are permitted to attend their classes,” said Abass Qambari, a student.

Zamira Kamin, a recent journalism graduate from one of Kabul’s private universities, said that she was denied the chance to defend her diploma project.

“I worked to finish my monograph day and night, but two or three days later we heard the news. The university has informed us that you are not able to defend your dissertation nor can you obtain your diploma,” Zamira said.

IEA’s ban on women’s jobs faces widespread reactions

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Economy in a statement ordered all the national and international non-government organizations to suspend their female staff members until the next announcement.

The announcement of the Islamic Emirate faced widespread reactions at national and international levels.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a tweet expressed deep concerns about the Islamic Emirate decision’s ban on women’s jobs and said “this decision could be devastating for the Afghan people, women are central to humanitarian operations around the world.”

US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West said the Islamic Emirate has forgotten its real responsibilities to its people.

“The Taliban’s decree barring women from working to deliver humanitarian aid is profoundly irresponsible. It poses mortal risks to millions who depend on life-saving assistance,” West said.

“The Secretary-General is deeply disturbed by the reported order of the de facto Taliban authorities banning women from working for national and international non-governmental organizations,” United Nations said in a statement. This comes as the sus-

pension of higher education for female students was announced late Tuesday by the Ministry of Higher Education, a decision that sparked widespread reactions at national and international levels.

“Women no longer allowed to work for NGOs; another outrageous act against women, including all those that depend on them through fundamental and self-sacrificing NGO work. The ones who suffer are, once again, the helpers and their beneficiaries, i.e., the weakest and most in need,” said Germany’s embassy for Afghanistan.

Norway’s Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt “strongly condemned” the

decision and called for its immediate reversal.

“I strongly condemn the ban on female employees of NGOs in Afghanistan. This decision must be reversed immediately. Norway will review the situation with its partners and issue an appropriate response,” she said.

“We condemn the Taliban’s decision to ban women from working for NGOs and international organizations. It goes against humanitarian principles, further marginalizes women and girls, and impacts the poorest Afghans. We call on the Taliban to reverse this decision,” Australia’s embassy for Afghanistan.

Implementation of ban on women varsity education satisfactory

KABUL (Khaama Press): Nida Mohammad Nadim, the Acting Minister of Higher Education of Afghanistan’s interim regime expressed his gratitude for the implementation of the decree in the universities.

In a meeting on Sunday with the officials of private universities, the Acting Minister of Higher Education expressed his optimism on the exercise of baring female students from universities, saying, “there has been no opposition to the education of girls as per the recent decree of this ministry”

The minister assured the officials of the private universities in solving the many challenges they are faced with. He further added the current administration is not opposing the education of the new generation but believes in developing a comprehensive system in accordance with the Islamic Sharia and the national values of the country.

This happens as the Ministry of Higher Education on 21st December



announced a decree banning girls’ university education in public and private universities, accompanied by worldwide condemnations – calling for revoking the act and allowing Afghan women and girls to access education and work.

In order to overcome the problems of the private universities, Mr. Nadim spoke

of forming a joint commission between the Ministry of Higher Education and private university professors – reiterating these sectors should prepare in accordance with the legal provisions of the ministry.

To sympathize with female university students and protest against the gender-based apartheid policy

of the ruling regime, a number of male students from private and public universities have gone on strike, chanting the slogan “education for all or none”. Additionally, to show solidarity with Afghan women being deprived of getting an education, some university lecturers have resigned from their positions.

Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan leaves women in complete desperation

KABUL (Khaama Press): With the latest set of gender-based restrictions on women’s access to education and employment, the Taliban administration has put in place a ‘Gender Apartheid’ in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan’s interim regime has started exercising under apartheid in Afghanistan following the enforcement of a ban on women’s education and work in government and non-government organizations, prompting condemnations from the international community.

The latest move has sparked protests in different corners of Afghanistan as female university students and women activists took to the streets chanting for equal rights to education over the past couple of days.

Foreign governments

including the US, UK, Germany, Norway, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have criticized the earlier ban on the university education of women in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, global organizations such as the UN, UNAMA, Amnesty International, European Union, and Islamic Unions described the act as extremely disappointing and called on the Taliban administration to lift gender-based restrictions and allow Afghan women and girls to return to public life.

Taliban’s administration has accused female university students of not complying with the Islamic Hijab, mingling with male students, and not following the regulations established by the ruling regime.

“Women in Afghanistan are suffering gender

apartheid. The Taliban have imposed a system whose aim is to expel women from public spaces. It has been 431 days since girls are not allowed to attend school. More could be done. The EU must support the establishment of an independent mechanism for accountability and support ICC investigation. The EU has to set up its support for Afghan women’s and human rights, as well as for women in exile, by providing quality educational and employment opportunities” MEP Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Renew Europe Group’s Coordinator in the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, said.

Considering the dire economic situation and the harsh winter hitting ordinary people so hard, the gender-based restrictions

imposed by Afghanistan’s ruling regime is not appropriate at all. Doing so will affect the continuous flow of humanitarian aid into the country and paves the way for further isolation of the country during these difficult times.

Weapons seized

PARWAN (Agencies): The intelligence forces discovered and seized a number of weapons during an operation in Parwan province.

Provincial Intelligence Department in a statement on Sunday said that the intelligence forces discovered and seized a mortar, mines, hand grenade, 3 Kalashnikovs, 10 pistols and some other weapons in different areas in the capital of Parwan.

Women in Herat protest ban on universities



HERAT (TOLOnews): Following continued reactions to the ban on university for women, several female students in Herat province took to the streets to protest the closure of universities for women.

Protesting women criticized the Islamic Emirate’s decision and said they will not stop studying. “We only want our right. Is it stated in Islam that we should not educate?” asked a protester.

Meanwhile, the US special envoy for Afghanistan Thomas West asked the Islamic Emirate to open the universities to female students. “The whole world is witnessing Afghan unity in opposition to a damaging

and indefensible decision. Students standing shoulder-to-shoulder with their sisters, resignations, protests, dissent. We urge the Taliban to listen to their people. Not too late,” West tweeted.

“I would want to make this request to the Islamic Emirate to provide the opportunity of education for women in universities,” said Mawlawi Abdul Hamid, Imam of the Sunnah of Zahedan.

Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, expressed her concerns over the Islamic Emirate’s decision to ban Afghan women from attending universities.

“There is no religious or cultural justification for their actions. The restrictions on women are hypocritical and unIslamic,” she said.

“I’m devastated that the Taliban announced a ban on university education for Afghan women. This week, women were not allowed to enter their classrooms. Female teachers were sent home from their jobs. The Taliban have already banned girls from secondary education for a year and half,” Malala added.

“In higher education, they should create an advisory board to make the decision and then inform them that up to the end of the winter, if we manage to separate the classes, if not, then we will issue a closure order,” said Mohammad Mateen Mohammadkhail, a political affairs analyst.

This comes as Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting interior minister and Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, the acting minister of defense, discussed the reopening of universities and schools for women and girls, a source in the interior ministry told TOLOnews.

Eight people killed in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, the ban on women higher education made headlines and sparked strong reaction at home and abroad, former President Hamid Karzai met some Afghan politicians in Turkey and discussed the importance of intra Afghan talks.

Casualties: Eight people were killed in Afghanistan last week in different incidents of violence. Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the ‘Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’ (IEA), said three Daesh insurgents were killed and one held during security force operation. He did not say where the operation was conducted.

A group leader was killed in Faryab province, robbers killed one person in samangan and unknown gunmen have axed one person in Ghazni.

According to officials two armed Daesh rebels were killed in Kuna.

This comes that last year

before regime change in the country, hundreds of civilians and people from conflicting sides were killed and injured in violent incidents and clashes.

Postponment of girls’ education

Higher education ministry has postponed women higher education in Afghanistan till further notice.

In a statement, The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), said: “All public and private universities in the country are informed that based on the cabinet decision No. 28 women higher education is postponed till the next order.” It added universities should take immediate step in this regard.

The move comes at a time when girls schools above class 6th are already closed nationwide. Government move to ban women higher education sparket strong reaction at home and abroad.

Reaction from world:

The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), UN, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia have condemned the acting Afghan government decision to postpone women higher education.

Australia, Canada, France, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, UK, and US foreign ministers in a joint statement condemned the acting Afghan government decision to postpone women higher education and ban girls education above class 6th.

They asked Afghan government to reverse its decision and US warned against consequences and added the move will further complicate the recognition issue of the IEA.

G7 foreign ministers on Thursday asked the Taliban authorities to reverse the ban on women attending university, saying the move

may amount to “a crime against humanity.”

“Taliban policies designed to erase women from public life will have consequences for how our countries engage with the Taliban,” the ministers of the club of rich nations said in a statement, after holding virtual talks.

The head of Al-Azhar University, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayeb, has expressed his concern about the ban on women’s university education in Afghanistan and asked the Afghan authorities to reconsider their decision.

The Ministry of Higher Education announced on Monday that higher education for girls in the country had been suspended until further notice.

Raction at home:

According to reports former President Hamid Karzai, former President Ashraf Gani, former Peace Council Head Abdullah Abdullah, Jihadi leaders Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyaf,

Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan Head Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, some cricket stars and some former officials contradicted the Taliban decision to ban women higher education.

In reaction to this decision, some university teachers rendered resignation but higher education ministry said no teacher had resigned.

The Afghanistan National Olympic Committee Head Nazar Mohammad Motmain, Economic Affairs Head of the Foreign Minister Shafi Azam, Foreign Ministry Information Technology Head Khairullah Shinwari and some other IEA officials also criticised the move.

Political affairs experts in the country last week also demanded the postponement decision to be reversed and said the decision had no religious justification and would have consequences for the country.

In Kabul, Nangarhar

and Takhar provinces some students raised objection over the Higher Education Ministry decision to postpone women higher education.

Report showed that a group of women sent a letter to the UN asking for pressure on acting Afgan government to let women access higher education in the country.

But Higher Education Minister Mawlawi Nida Mohammad Nadim during a television talk show said without a Moharram family member girls traveling from one province to another, violation of Hijab, co-education and some higher education disciplines not suitable for women were the main reasons behind immediate postponement of women higher education in the country.

He said they have no issue with Afghan women and their right to education, adding that efforts were on a solution in the light of

Sharia law would find to address the issue.

Ex-President Hamid Karzai’s meetings:

After the fall of past government, former President Hamid Karzai travelled to the UAE on December 04 and from there he went to Germany and Turkey. Earlier there were reports that Hamid Karzai was not allowed by the acting government to travel abroad.

During Karzai’s trip to the UAE, Acting Defence Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid and US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West also travelled to the AE.

In Turkey, Karzai met with Karim Khalili, head of the Wahdat-i-Islami Party, Mohammad Mohaqiq, head of the Wahdat Islami Mardum Afghanistan party head and some other individuals.

They discussed currently issues and termed talks the only way to resolve differ-

ences among the people of Afghanistan.

Karza also met Turkey Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavusoglu who pledged continued support to peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Respect to Afghan refugees rights:

Afghanistan Embassy in Pakistan said that 2,000 Afghans had been arrested in the past three months in which 500 had been freed. Pakistani officials assured that issues pertaining to the arrested of Afghan citizens would be resolved.

According to reports some Afghans had been arrested in Pakistan due to the lack of documents and sent to jail.

Reports showed that the Amnesty International had expressed concern over the situation of Afghan migrants in Pakistan and asked the Pakistani government to issue visa regulations to Afghan so they could have access to essential services.

President visits mausoleum of Quaid, pays tribute

President urges children to focus on knowledge & character development

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi visited mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah and paid rich tributes to him on his 146th birthday anniversary on Sunday. The president also laid a wreath and offered fateha at Mazar-e-Quaid. The president also prayed for the development and prosperity of the country. He, later, inked his impressions in the book of visitors.

While talking to media persons, he said that the nation should follow the guiding principles of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for development of the country. He said that the Quaid had already known about the discriminatory behaviour of dominant majority in subcontinent with the minorities including Muslims.

The president said that the poet of East Allama Iqbal dreamt of Pakistan and Quaid-e-Azam struggled for its real creation. The President said that the dream came true by the struggle of father of the nation.

He said, 'We have to pursue Quaid's guiding principles for development of the country.' He advised the nation to follow Quaid's principle unity, faith and discipline. He said that their real destination was to develop the nation as per Quaid's vision.

Meanwhile, President Dr. Arif Alvi has urged the children to gain knowledge, focus on their character development, uphold morality and truth, and act upon Quaid-e-Azam's principles of 'Unity, Faith and Discipline' to make Pakistan a strong and prosperous nation.

The President expressed these views while addressing an event titled 'Quaid aur Bachay', in connection with the celebration of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, children from various schools of Islamabad, parents, teachers, and media persons attended the event.

Addressing the ceremony, the President said that freedom was not easy to achieve or maintain, and children and the youth of the country should play their role to protect this freedom while maintaining unity, faith and discipline in their ranks and striving to make this country a great nation with dedication, commitment and selfless effort.

He said that Pakistan was destined to become a great nation and to achieve this we should act upon the golden principles laid down by our Founding Father, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, for making this country strong and prosperous and focusing on education and proper upbringing of our children and future generations.

The President said that although the country was facing economic difficulties, however, we can progress by taking the right decisions at the right time and re-modelling our lives on the cherished moral and ethical values of Islam, sayings and the principles laid down by the Quaid, and working with unity and devotion.

The President quoted various incidents from the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah which reflected his love for children. He said that Quaid-e-Azam used to reply to letters written by children to him, adding that children too played their role in Pakistan Movement and set examples by sending donations to Quaid-e-Azam for the Muslim League through their pocket money.

The President also referred to various sayings of the Quaid for youth and children. He quoted Quaid saying "My young friends, I look forward to you as the real makers of

Pakistan, do not be exploited and do not be misled. Create amongst yourselves complete unity and solidarity. Set an example of what youth can do. Your main occupation should be in fairness to yourself, to your parents, in fairness to the State, to devote your attention to your studies. If you fritter away your energies now, you will always regret."

He also quoted Quaid's saying "You must concentrate on gaining knowledge and education. It is your foremost responsibility. Political awareness of the era is also part of your education. You must be aware of international events and the environment. Education is a matter of life and death for our country." He urged young children and students to devote themselves to their studies and parents to devote themselves to children's education and proper upbringing. The President said that even the political opponents of Quaid used to appreciate his truthfulness and strength of character and adherence to principles. He said that in order to make Pakistan a developed country, we need education, knowledge and skills and once we would become economically strong, our country's defence and security would also be assured. He said that the children and the students should focus on gaining modern and highly critical knowledge and skills to remain abreast to compete with modern-day challenges.

Earlier, the children paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam through speeches and shed light on different aspects of Quaid-e-Azam's life and his love for youth and children. Children with disabilities and students from different schools of Islamabad gave cultural performances and performed medleys highlighting the cultural diversity of the country and paid rich tribute to the Founding Father of the nation.



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi offering Fateha at the mausoleum of Quaid e Azam.

People suffering due to Imran's wrong policies: Khawaja Asif

SIALKOT (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said on Sunday that people were suffering as a result of wrong policies of Imran Khan government.

Addressing the workers' convention at Muslim League House here, he said, "We are determined to put the country's economy on the right track, for which important and concrete steps are being taken at the government level." He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and allied parties were trying to provide relief to the common man. He said that PML was the founder party of the country. He said that indecent language should not be used on social media in the political battle.

He said, "We will not fight this political battle at the level of our opponents, we should not answer the opponents in the same coin."

We have to promote the politics of patience and tolerance and we have to move forward with this tradition."

The minister said that when Maryam Nawaz went to meet her

father in Jail, the NAB arrested her in front of Nawaz Sharif in the presence of superintendent, however, despite this, our leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif did not use any foul language for his political opponents.

He said that our opponents had crossed the limits of political victimization. Asif said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif left his matter to Allah Almighty, and when someone leaves his affairs to Allah, then Allah blesses him. The federal minister said Imran Khan was dreaming of becoming the prime minister for 10 years, but as a result of the no-confidence motion, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government came into power and Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif became the prime minister.

He said during the four years rule of Pakistan-Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), false cases were instituted Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) leaders and they were kept in prisons including him. "Allah not only gave us freedom but also power so that we can serve the people," he added.

Khawaja Asif said that Imran Khan looted the country with both hands when he was in power adding Imran Khan's lust for power and wealth had no limits.

The federal minister said that the SSG commandos of Pakistan Army had once again proved that whoever tries to play with the peace of Pakistan, our forces and institutions will not leave him anywhere. He said that the Major who fought against the terrorists in the Army Public School (APS) tragedy, also was present in the operation against the terrorists in Bannu. "These people are actually our heroes whom we salute," he added. The minister said, "Pakistan Armed Forces are the guardians of Pakistan's border and we are proud of their sacrifices." Asif said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will return to his homeland soon and will contribute in the country's prosperity. He said, "Today on December 25, we all have to commit that we will take this country forward together and play our due role in the development while living within our resources."

Cracks visible in PMLQ-PTI alliance in Punjab over seat adjustment

LAHORE (NNI): Cracks have become visible in the ruling coalition of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Punjab over the issue of seat adjustment in the national and provincial assemblies.

It has been learnt from the informed sources that the PTI has agreed to give 25 seats of the National Assembly and 12 seats of the Punjab Assembly to the PML-Q. The PML-Q, on the other hand, is adamant to take 35 seats of the National Assembly and 20 seats of the Punjab Assembly from the PTI.

According to the PTI sources, senior party leader Pervaz Khattak has expressed his displeasure over increasing demands of the PML-Q and apologised to become of the delegation negotiating with the PML-Q. A faction within the PTI, led by Fawad Chaudhary, wants flexibility on the issue of seat adjustment.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan has also directed to keep the PML-Q satisfied in every case. An eight-member delegation of the PTI called on Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi on Sunday. Shah Mehmood

Qureshi, Fawad Chaudhry, Raja Basharat, Mian Aslam, Abbas Ali, and others were part of the PTI delegation that called on Pervaiz Elahi. The delegation held detailed talks with Pervaiz Elahi and Moonis Elahi on seat adjustment.

A split is also likely within the PTI over the issue of seat adjustment. The PTI delegation asked for one more day for further consideration. The final decision will be taken in the next two days. The sources with the PTI say that Imran Khan does not want to anger the PML-Q in any case.

China's Zhejiang has 1m daily Covid cases, expected to double

SHANGHAI (BBC): China's Zhejiang, a big industrial province near Shanghai, is battling around a million new daily Covid-19 infections, a number expected to double in the days ahead, the provincial government said on Sunday.

Despite a record surge of cases nationwide, China reported no Covid deaths on the mainland for the five days through Saturday, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Sunday.

Citizens and experts have called for more accurate data as infections surged after Beijing made sweeping changes to a zero-Covid policy that had put hundreds of millions of

its citizens under relentless lockdowns and battered the world's second-largest economy.

Nationwide figures from China had become incomplete as the National Health Commission stopped reporting asymptomatic infections, making it harder to track cases.

On Sunday the commission stopped reporting daily figures, which the China CDC then published.

Zhejiang is among the few areas to estimate their recent spikes in infections including asymptomatic cases. "The infection peak is estimated to arrive earlier in Zhejiang and to enter a period of elevated level around New Year's Day,

during which the daily new infection number will be up to two million," the Zhejiang government said in a statement.

Zhejiang, with a population of 65.4 million, said that among the 13,583 infections being treated in the province's hospitals, one patient had severe symptoms caused by Covid while 242 infections of severe and critical conditions were caused by underlying diseases.

China narrowed its definition for reporting Covid deaths — counting only those from Covid-caused pneumonia or respiratory failure — raising eyebrows among world health experts.

Fawad claims of having required numbers for vote of confidence

LAHORE (NNI): Senior Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Sunday they had requisite numbers for the vote of confidence. He told media in Zaman Park that assemblies would dissolve at any cost because they had 187 members for confidence vote — required numbers are 186.

Mr Fawad added that the session for discussing resignations in the National Assembly would be held on Wednesday.

Fawad Chaudhry has said that the assemblies will be dissolved at all costs. He said that a meeting of the parliamentary party will be summoned soon. "Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhary Parvez Elahi enjoys the support of the required numbers for the vote of confidence," he added.

KARACHI (PPI) Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said on Sunday that on the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's 146th birth anniversary, we should reaffirm our commitment to steer the country out of different crises by forging unity and discipline so that the country he founded could flourish.

This he said while talking to the media at Mazar-e-Quaid that he visited along with his cabinet members to pay tribute to the father of the nation on the occasion of his 146th birth anniversary.

Mr Shah said that the nation needed unity to face all the challenges, including the financial and reemerging wave of terrorism, so this beloved country that Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah founded with his untiring efforts, visions, and sagacity could attain new vistas of development and prosperity.

He said that a new wave of terrorism had started emerging. The incident of Banu and Islamabad are condemnable, the nation would nip in the bud all

the nefarious designs of the enemies of this country, he said. Shah said that on this day we must remember the sacrifices and struggles of the people of Kashmir for their just cause. He added that the people of Pakistan were with the oppressed people of Kashmir.

The CM also recalled the problems of the people affected by the devastating

floods. "The winter has multiplied their problems and we all must help them at this time of need," he said and added that his government was trying its best to rehabilitate the flood-affected people.

Earlier, the CM was received by his cabinet members, chief secretary, IG Police, Commissioner Karachi, and others when he arrived at the Mazar.

The CM received Governor Kamran Tessori when he also arrived to pay respect to the father of the nation. The Sindh Chief Minister, along with his cabinet members, laid a floral wreath and offered Fateh to pay respect and gratitude to the great leader. The CM met the family members of the father of the nation present at the Mazar.



PML-N to form govt in Punjab next month: Ayaz Sadiq

Malik Zeeshan Shabbir

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said on Sunday that in January 2023, Pakistan Muslim League (N) will form its government in Punjab, while Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would soon return to Pakistan and N-League would also win with a huge majority in the upcoming general elections.

He expressed these views while addressing a public meeting in his constituency Union Council 147 Tajpura on Sunday and later talking to the media persons.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that when the electricity problem was very serious in Tajpura, our party was in opposition, but we solved the problem here immediately and more than hundred transformers were installed in this area. He said that our effort has been to spend the development funds keeping in mind the basic needs of the people. He said, "Today is Christmas, and the birthday of founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as well as of our leader Nawaz Sharif, which is very important for us. We need to follow the orders of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali

Jinnah. I offer my heartfelt greetings to the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas and hope that the minority community will actively participate in the development of the country."

Ayaz Sadiq said that if Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had not been born Pakistan would not have been formed. "Today we are living in a free and independent country due to the selfless leadership of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the sacrifices made by our elders for the establishment of Pakistan." He said that at present Modi government in India had made it impossible for the minorities to live especially Muslims were being subjected to the worst atrocities.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would return home soon to pull the country out of prevailing crises, he said and asserted, "Our leaders are carrying forward the traditions of the founder of Pakistan and they know how to respect others while Imran Khan has always done negative politics and called his opponents by bad names."

He said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif led the country on the path to development in every period of his government and made Pakistan

invincible by making it a nuclear power, even though at that time then US president had offered five billion dollars to Pakistan but Nawaz Sharif did not accept it and preferred to make the country a nuclear power. He said that when PML-N had completed its tenure in 2018, the GDP growth was around 6 percent, after that when Imran Khan was came in power, he led the country towards ruin. "Similarly, when we left power, Pakistan had a debt of 30 billion dollars, which increased to 60 billion dollars during the 44 months of Imran Khan's government."

Federal Minister mentioned that then PML-N government had left the power circular debt of Rs 1100 billion, but the PTI government had increased this debt manifolds, and Imran Khan made such an agreement with the IMF, which created more economic crisis in the country. At the time when the prices of various goods had to be increased then PTI did not increase these because they had realized that they would soon be kicked out of the government and the incoming government would have to bear the brunt of it and now the entire nation was suffering along with the incoming government.

He said that Imran Khan was a man who forgets kindness, whoever did him a favor had not remained safe from his evil. The Muslim League (N) had given funds to Shaukat Khanum along with land and Jahangir Khan Tareen played an important role in forming her Punjab government. Aleem Khan made countless sacrifices for the PTI, while the former army chief also has a lot of favors on Imran Khan, but these favors were being forgotten and he was saying bad things to everyone. "I will say this to Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi that Imran Khan is no one's friend," he added.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that at the time when there were floods in the country, Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif was busy helping the flood victims while Imran Khan was busy in his rallies without caring about the flood victims. He said that in the next general election, Muslim League (N) would win with a huge majority and Imran Khan would not be seen for a long time.

Answering the media questions on this occasion, Ayaz Sadiq said, "We hope that Muslim League (N) will form its government in Punjab in January and we will hold municipal elections in April."

Deadly winter blizzard leaves US in pre-Christmas deep freeze

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): A fearsome winter storm that pummeled the United States with blinding snow and powerful Arctic winds left over half a million customers without power Saturday as thousands of cancelled flights stranded travelers making last-minute dashes for Christmas.

At least 17 weather-related deaths have been confirmed across eight states as heavy snow, howling winds and dangerously frigid temperatures kept much of the nation, including the normally temperate south, in a frozen grip for a third straight day.

In hard-hit New York state, Governor Kathy Hochul deployed the National Guard to Erie County and its main city Buffalo, where authorities said emergency services have essentially collapsed in the face of extreme blizzard conditions.

One couple in the lake-

side city, which sits across the border from Canada, told AFP that with the roads completely impassable, they would not be making a 10-minute drive to see their family for Christmas.

"It's tough because the conditions are just so bad... a lot of fire departments aren't even sending out trucks for calls," said 40-year-old Rebecca Bortolin.

Her fiancée Ali Lawson is having back pain, but plans to tough it out at home because driving to the hospital is just too dangerous. "We can currently see across the street, but last night we couldn't see past our porch," said Lawson. The "bomb cyclone" winter storm, one of the fiercest in decades, had already forced the cancellation of over 2,800 US flights on Saturday and the delay of over 6,600 more, a day after nearly 6,000 were scrapped, according to tracking website

Flightaware.com.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg tweeted Saturday that "the most extreme disruptions are behind us as airline and airport operations gradually recover" -- words that travelers stranded at airports including Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Detroit and New York were holding on to.

New York City resident Zack Cuyler, whose flight home to Houston on December 22 has been postponed then cancelled twice this week already, was "pretty steamed" about the chaos. The 35-year-old now hopes to reach his loved ones by December 25. "I'm just glad I'll get to see my family for Christmas," he told AFP. Road ice and white-out conditions also led to the closure of some of the nation's busiest transport routes, including the cross-country Interstate 70, parts of which were temporarily shut down in Colorado and Kansas.