

PA sitting rescheduled

LAHORE (APP): The Speaker Muhammad Sibtain Khan has rescheduled the date of sitting of the Punjab Assembly and the house will meet in the 42nd session on January 11, 2023 (Wednesday) at 1pm in the assembly chambers instead of December 26, 2022 (Monday). The Speaker has issued orders under the powers vested in him under Rule 25(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab 1997.



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PM urges nation to follow footsteps of Quaid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on the nation to take guidance from the life of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and follow his principles to ensure the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

In a message on the occasion of birth anniversary of Quaid e Azam, he said the whole nation was celebrating the 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with patriotic fervor and zeal. The founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam valiantly fought the constitutional and political fight for the rights of Muslims of Indian subcontinent, as a result, today all Muslims were living independently in Pakistan, he added.

The struggle of Quaid-e-Azam was against the idea of a majority usurping the rights of minorities on the basis of numerical superiority, he said, adding the Quaid had strived for the restoration of a unique way of life of Muslims and for their separate social, and economic, political and cultural identity in the comity of nations.

He said Quaid-e-Azam made the Muslims of the

subcontinent truly aware of their rights and also ensured that after independence Muslims should live their lives independently and peacefully, while enjoying religious and cultural freedoms, getting equal opportunities for progress.

The PM said the efforts of Quaid e Azam were directed not only for the creation of a separate and independent state for the Muslims but also wanted a state in which the minorities lived without any fear or danger and were given equal opportunities of development and complete religious freedom.

The prime minister pointed that because of the rising religious animosity and the thinking of extremist Hindutva, India as a state had failed to protect rights of the minorities. This situation made evident the farsightedness of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and proved right his arguments for the two-nation theory, he stressed.

Shehbaz Sharif said the life of Quaid-e-Azam was a practical demonstration of his steadfastness for principles, constitutional struggle, political sagacity, and of the golden principles of

faith, unity, and discipline. He emphasized that the Pakistani nation today needed to follow Quaid's thought and principles, adding in Quaid's Pakistan nobody would have superiority on the basis of language, class, religion or numerical strength.

The Constitution of Pakistan truly represented the 14 points of Quaid-e-Azam and under it without diminishing the individual strength of any federal unit, everyone would have equal opportunities for achieving progress and prosperity.

The prime minister said Pakistan was going through a difficult phase at present and the need to follow the principles of Quaid which had become more necessary to follow than ever. The best way to pay tribute to the founder was to make Pakistan an Islamic welfare state. "We have to put an end to internal chaos and work tirelessly for the advancement of Pakistan," he said.

The prime minister appealed to parents and teachers to inform the new generation about the lives of Quaid-e-Azam and other leaders of the Pakistan movement so that they could know about the strug-

gle for the creation of Pakistan and consider the lives of their leaders as a guiding light and play role in the progress and development of Pakistan with renewed enthusiasm and passion.

"Let us today on the anniversary of Quaid make the pledge that we will take guidance from the life of Quaid and follow his principles to ensure progress and prosperity of Pakistan," he concluded.

PM felicitates Christian community on Christmas:

The Prime Minister felicitated the Christian community in Pakistan and around the world on the auspicious occasion of Christmas.

In a message on the occasion of Christmas to be celebrated on December 25, the PM said that Christmas gave a message of universal love, brotherhood, tolerance, and sacrifices and these values played a crucial role in putting a society on the path of development.

He said Hazrat Isa (AS) was a panacea for the sorrow of humans and spread God's message to the whole humanity.

Imran's dream for snap polls won't come true with mere predictions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday, rubbing PTI Chairman Imran Khan's prediction regarding the early polls, said the general election would be held on completion of the constitutional term of the coalition government.

"The election will not be held on mere predictions, rather it will be held on completion of the constitutional term (of the coalition government)," she said in a news statement while react-

ing to Imran Khan's remarks about the early polls.

Earlier in the day, a private television channel reported that the PTI chief had predicted the general election to be held either in March or April 2023.

However, Marriyum asked Imran Khan whether his prediction about the general election was pointing toward April 2024.

Responding to Imran Khan's allegation regarding a deal between a political party and an institution, the minister claimed that it was

he who "wanted to seal a deal by offering a lifetime extension to Gen. Bajwa." She said it was Imran Khan who wanted a "deal" from the DG FIA, but to no avail.

Marriyum alleged that Imran Khan managed to seal a deal with the former NAB chairman by abducting Tayba Gul in the Prime Minister's House. She said that the masses continued to suffer the pain of inflation and unemployment even after the ouster of Imran Khan from power. Imran pushed the country into an

economic quagmire during his four-year misrule which was marred by corruption, bad governance, and incompetency, she added.

The minister said Imran Khan lost the trust of the masses as the historic debt was taken during his government's tenure as well as false promises of giving 10 million jobs, and 5 million houses to the people were also made. He did hurt their sentiments by making compromises on the Kashmir cause and national interests, she added.

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Talking to senior journalists at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore on Saturday, Imran Khan said PTI MNAs will go to the National Assembly on Monday for confirmation of their resignations.

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LAHORE: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah addressing a press conference.

PM reviews solar energy projects

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday, here, chaired a review meeting on the use of solar energy to meet the requirements of electricity in the country.

He stressed for converting the electricity used in federal government buildings to solar energy.

He issued special instructions for formulating a comprehensive strategy to effectively resolve the issues faced in the early completion of the solar energy projects.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the use of solar energy in the production of electricity could effectively resolve the issues including the energy crisis in the country and rising prices of electricity.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, former prime minister and Member of National Assembly Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir, Minister for Trade Naveed Qamar and Minister for food security Tariq Bashir Cheema attended the meeting through the video link.

Advisor to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Ahmad Cheema, Special Assistant to PM Jehanzeb Khan, and other high ranking officers also attended the meeting.

PML-N started polls preparations in Punjab: Rana Sana

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders have said that the Lahore High Court's order which has restored Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi's government in Punjab is just an interim relief, adding that the chief executive will have to seek vote of confidence.

The PML-N leaders including Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Railways Minister Saad Rafiq were addressing a presser on Saturday. He said that it is the constitutional duty of the governor to ask the chief minister to seek vote of confidence. He said that assemblies are constitutional and democratic institutions, but they are being ridiculed.

Talking about the LHC order which restored Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi as chief minister, he made it clear that it is an interim relief and not a permanent relief. He said the next 18 days, they (Punjab rulers) would loot public money. He said government would not announce general elections, rather elections would be held in the province only whose assembly would be dis-

solved.

Sanaullah enunciated that there are some legal complications which could imperil the province. He further said that if the government announced elections in 90 days then the country would have defaulted in just 45 days. He lashed out at PTI Chief Imran Khan and his coterie saying they are accomplishing agenda of Pakistan's enemies.

The interior minister said that his party has started preparation for the election in Punjab. But, he asked the chief minister to seek trust vote before dissolving assemblies. He said that the Elahi-led Punjab government is enticing assembly members by doling out funds and money on them. He revealed that "we have got reports that they are offering Rs2 billion to the members".

He went on to say that on the other hand, the CTD has not got their salaries for the past several months and the police department is also in shambles. The interior minister hit out at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government saying that the KP rulers have been sitting in Zaman Park for the last 6-7

months.

Speaking on the occasion, Railways Minister Saad Rafiq said that the elected institutions should complete their constitutional term. He said that when the PDM-backed PML-N government took reins of power, the country was on the verge of default.

"We defended state at the expense of our politics," the railways minister said ruing that we carried the burden of Imran Khan's sins on our shoulders.

He took a jibe at the PTI chief and his cronies saying they made a hullabaloo regarding assemblies' dissolution. "But the truth is, Pervaiz Elahi does not have a majority in the Punjab Assembly. After yesterday's ruling of the LHC, now they should fulfil the legal and constitutional requirements and seek a vote of confidence," he added.

He prodded the PTI on the KP Assembly issue saying if they want, they could dissolve the provincial assembly there. "But these people want to pour debris only on Punjab. Nonetheless, the Punjab government is standing on the stay order only," he jeered.

Imran foresees elections in March or April PTI MNAs will go to NA on Monday for confirmation of resignations

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has alleged that the election is being controlled by the establishment but he is sure that general elections would be held in March or April next year.

Talking to senior journalists at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore on Saturday, Imran Khan said PTI MNAs will go to the National Assembly on Monday for confirmation of their resignations.

He lashed out at the PPP and the PML-N, stating that they had nothing except horse-trading of lawmak-ers. He asserted that economic and political stability was linked to fresh elections, adding that he would not make any compromise for coming into power. "I will not hurt people's trust for the sake of power."

Imran continued his criticism of former chief of army staff Gen (Retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa and said if there was 'another' army chief, we

would have cleaned the country of corruption.

"I came to know in the last year of my government that Gen Bajwa did not want accountability in the country," he alleged, adding that Gen Bajwa had made a deal with PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

The former prime minister said that Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi was on his side and he still had trust in him. "There is the

possibility of an election alliance with PML Q because they supported PTI," he added.

He said that Bilawal Bhutto made more foreign visits than Imran Khan and if he is traveling on his own money, are these private tours of Bilawal? "PPP and PML-N have no receipt of funding. On the other hand, PTI has a database of 40 thousand of donors," he added.

He said that the Supreme Court had said that the case

of all the parties should go together regarding the prohibited funding.

Imran Khan recalled Gen Bajwa thought that the rise of PTI would decrease but it did not happen. He said the Election Commission of Pakistan is not an independent body rather it is being "controlled" by the establishment.

Earlier, PTI chief Imran Khan said that Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari were running away from general polls due to his fear.

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(Address to students at Dhaka University, 1948)

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PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan inaugurating newly established Block of Khyber College of Dentistry.

Faiq voices concern over spate of terrorist attacks

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faiq Shah has expressed serious concern over the recent spate of terrorist attacks in various parts of the country over the last few days. The heinous attack include the targeting of personnels of police and law enforcement agencies (LEAs), political figures and the general public, the ATP chief noted.

Faiq in a statement issued here on Saturday said that a fresh wave of terrorism is again taking its roots in Pakistan and the attempt of enemies strengthening clutches. But, he

noted, the political festival 'Mela' doesn't end in the country. He added that the federal capital has not remained secure.

"We demand to craft a unified policy and actions should be taken by revisiting National Action Plan (NAP)." Shah noticed terrible incidents have occurred in Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Chaman Border and Islamabad. He warned that if slackness was done, then the country would confront its dire consequences.

Whether governments set up in Punjab and Islamabad or the governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, all of them have kept focus on

'tug of war' for gaining power, the ATP chief noted. Faiq continued to say someone wants to end the crisis and someone is trying to prolong it, and somewhere 'Lotacracry' [Switching of loyalties] is at peak and somewhere injustice is rampant.

He maintained the country, people, economy and society have been put at stake. The ATP chief asked to take assistance from the latest resources by devising a comprehensive security network. He demanded to hold dialogue by jointly sitting under the leadership of the President of Pakistan for bringing political stability so that the stability would come.

Gap between men and women register voters

Laraib Athar

"My vote registration cannot make any difference", believed a 30-year-old woman Musarat from district Shangla. "I know my boundaries, and those do not allow me to cast vote". Musarat waited for a 12 years long period to apply for a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) as it is considered [in her patriarchal family] of no use for women.

According to rules of National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA), any citizen reaching 18 years of age can apply for CNIC. Musarat, resident of Kabulgram [Small village in Shangla] is now applying for CNIC. "I want to have CNIC so I can get enrolled for Ehsaas Emergency Cash Program". She added, "Since our males do not allow us to exercise the right to vote, I do not have any interest in registering my vote", she explained.

She further added that domestic violence is even not considered a crime, let alone to talk about woman getting out of home to cast vote in any polls. "I am not the only one, but almost every woman [in the village], unlike males, does not take any interest in the polls because many do not have their CNICs", she mentioned. On the question of zero interest in vote process, Maria, 35-year-old woman from the same village, stated by agreeing to the reason of Musarat, "Alongside all the societal hurdles, second biggest problem is of too far away polling stations which makes it impossible for us to convince our males". These are some of the key reasons for lower number of female voters registered with ECP.

According to data retrieved from ECP website, there are 203,560 female voters out of total 447,436 voters. The variation between male and female voters is 40,316. Referring to constitutional rights, the Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Peshawar Shahida Aman explained that although the Article 106(2) of the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees right to vote to every citizen above the age of 18, there is a need to create

awareness among women as well as men about the usefulness and importance of women in electoral process, and the ECP in this regard, has the key role to inform the voters of their concerned polling stations while separate and nearest to homes polling stations must be established in order to bring the issue to a conclusion.

"Under the Election Act 2017, the ECP holds the power to annul any election where participation or turnout of women voters is 10 percent less than the total polled votes which is certainly a big and welcome step for women's participation in elections", added Shahida Aman. Apart from this, the voter registration procedure has now been made completely easy whereby you can register your vote at the same time as you apply to NADRA for CNIC. You can also specify whether you want to vote at your 'current' address or 'permanent' address.

According to the Census 2017, the population of Pakistan has 207.9 million whereas the number of registered voters with ECP is almost 124 million which is half of the total population. Total population consists of 106.3 million men and 101.3 million women; however, male voters are 68,029,866 in number and female voters are 56,723,479. The male voters are 55% and female voters are 45%.

According to NADRA Chairman Tariq Malik, 10 million women had been added to the electoral rolls since 2018 general election to take the total number of female registered voters to around 56 million. Tariq Malik stated that the overall gender gap in the country has now reduced to 8.9 percent, and NADRA is further focusing on the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan where the gender gap is more than 10 percent. An important means of reducing this gap is to appoint women as in-charges in NADRA offices, ninety-six percent of NADRA offices in the country are staffed by women, he added.

An Election Commission official said on condition of anonymity that this door-to-door registration is not

that easy as there are many structural issues, which need to be addressed. "Mostly in areas such areas where people graze sheep or cattle or live in very remote areas, women are not registered, nor do they have to buy or sell", source added.

According to ECP source, "women of such districts do not look for education as well as jobs, therefore, they don't need a national identity card, and as a result, they cannot register as a voter". "Government, ECP and NGOs want and try to get every citizen registered, but without their will to get registered, it is not possible", source grieved.

Provincial Election Commissioner Shamshad Khan said that ECP is committed to making efforts for registration of more female voters to reduce the gender difference in the number of male and female voters in the province particularly. With regards to Shangla, district election commissioner has been asked to urge people to contact his office or AROs' offices for registration and transfer of their vote, he informed.

Rescue 1122 extinguishes fire near Chamkani

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The teams of Rescue Emergency Response Unit extinguished the fire that erupted in the Sui-gas supply pipeline near Chamkani at GT Road here on Saturday.

Soon after receiving the information regarding the fire eruption, the four fire vehicles were rushed to the spot and the firefighters of Rescue1122 extinguished the fire in a professional manner within one and a half hour. Meanwhile, District Emergency Officer Engr. Naveed Akhtar appreciated the efforts of firefighters and said that each member of Rescue1122 was ready to serve the people during all kinds of emergencies.

Life in death

Shahzad Hassan Yusufzai

SOME die while living; you live after death,

Some hardly glimmer in life but you glitter while dead,

People still remember and they praise and praise, All the great things you did to ease their lives.

Remembered as first beam of sunshine on droplet,

Not only by us; but all you interacted,

Ahh! All that you used; muttered of being futile,

I have seen them muttering; slowly but loudly.

With your name! All the family gathering starts,

It ends on it, remembered as first love,

Like star and sunshine; you can't be touched,

But your presence is felt by everyone, everywhere.

It is heart wrenching to think of past,

But aching pleasure it gives us all.

Commissioner lauds RTPSC role

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar chaired divisional starting committee meeting and ordered to overcome hurdles in good governance.

Data Analyst Right to Public Service Commission (RTPSC) Shahab Khan briefed the participants on available data and added that total 102079 received by the commission from various provincial departments. He also presented service delivery report to Commissioner Peshawar of five districts.

Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud ordered to remove all hurdles in service delivery and added RTPSC has provided stipulated timeframe should ensure good governance in public's sector. Commissioner appreciated RTPSC role in good governance and ordered competent officials to display services, timeframe, fees and officers designate on visible spots at public's offices.

Gas supply remained suspended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) has suspended gas supply to various localities due to immediate repair work on the gas supply line on G.T. Road at Chamkani Flyover, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The areas wherein the supply of Sui gas was suspended include localities situated on G.T. Road from Tarnab till Hashtnagri, Old City, Ring Road and Peshawar Cantonment including Governor's House, Chief Minister's House, Saddar, Shami Road, Dalzak Road and Charsadda Road.

According to the company, speedy repair work is being carried out to complete it in the shortest time period. Consumers have been directed to put off all gas appliances to prevent themselves from any kind of loss during the gas suspension period.

Fatimid observes Quaid's Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fatimid Foundation arranged awareness session on thalassemia to observe Quaid-e-Azam Day at Peshawar center, on Saturday.

The prominent social welfare organization for awareness with name of Jihad for Zero Thalassemia delegation participated in the function on special invitation. The delegation visited different sections of Fatimid Foundation facility and appreciated its work for thalassemia patients. Administrator Fatimid Foundation Badr Hussain along with other staff briefed delegation on provision of services and operation at Peshawar center. Administrator Badr Hussain praised Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah struggle for independent Muslim state in Indian Subcontinent.

Full Court Reference in honor of Justice Lal Jan

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A Full Court Reference held to pay tribute to Justice Lal Jan Khattak who will be retired on 2nd January 2023 and praised his services for judiciary.

Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid along with other judges of high court

while judicial officers of trial courts were also present at Full Court Reference.

PHC's administrative staff along with PHC bar association president Rehman Ullah, General secretary Muhammad Farooq Afridi, Peshawar Bar Association president Ali Zaman and large number of senior lawyers also participated.

On the occasion, the participants praised judgments of Justice Lal Jan Khattak in favor of public interest for establishing justice in the society. Latterly, PHC bar association arranged farewell party in honor of Justice Lal Jan Khattak while Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid and other judges participated in the gathering.

1500 personnel deploys for Christmas security

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi has said that over 1500 police officers and officials will perform duty on Christmas in the provincial capital. He said that a special security plan has been devised in Peshawar on the occasion of Christmas.

"Under the special security plan, more than 1500 policemen and officers will perform security duties," CCPO added. Kashif Aftab Abbasi maintained that expert shooters will be posted on all important buildings in the vicinity of all churches located in Peshawar, adding that adequate security measurements have been ensured for the day at the main gate and the inner parts as well.

According to the plan, Bomb Disposal Unit (DBU) and sniffer dog teams have also been deployed around all the churches along with special blockades. In order to make the security effective on the occasion of Christmas festival, city patrolling, ladies police and Ababil squad have also been assigned special responsibilities.



Moreover, ATS team, RRF unit, BDU teams will be deputed to keep the security on the occasion full-proof. SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi has said that protection of all minority communities, including the Christian community, was a top priority of the police.

SSP said that all available resources are being

utilized to protect the minority community. "All Christian places of worship are also being monitored through CCTV cameras," Kashif Aftab Abbasi. He lauded the role of the minority community in the development and prosperity of the country and in establishing peace and order and has called them as national assets.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif giving away shields to position holders students at a ceremony.

Birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak observed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sikh community living in provincial metropolis and adjoining areas here on Saturday observed 553rd birth-anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak – the founder of Sikhism in historic Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh situated at Mohallah Jogan Shah, Dabgari.

The anniversary organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Auqaf Department was attended by

large number of Sikhs. Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Minority's Affairs, Wazir Zada and Sikh pilgrims from foreign countries were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Wazir Zada said that the purpose of observing the religious festival of the Sikh community was to promote peace and interfaith harmony among all religions. The members of the Sikh community expressed gratitude to KP

Aquard Department for holding of 553rd birth anniversary of their beloved Guru Nanak Devji and said that event would promote a soft image of the province besides promoting friendship, tolerance and mutual coexistence between people living in the country. Wazirzada said that Sikh pilgrims who were visiting Pakistan are our guest and they would be provided assistance and facilitation during their stay.

TNFJ urges authorities to form judicial commission

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman Tehreek-e-Nafaze Jaffaria (TNFJ), Agha Syed Hussain Muqadasi here on Saturday urged authorities to constitute judicial commission to investigate Kocha Risaalard bomb blast and identify the culprits involved in the brutal act of violence.

Addressing a press con-

ference held in Imambargah Haji Rehman at Mohallah Marvi Ha, Muqadasi alleged that most of the banned outfits were machinating to target innocent people for fulfilling their nefarious designs. He said incidents of Lakki Marwat and Bannu have proved the presence of extremists that are trying to create anarchy by sabotaging peace.

He also demanded resolving the issue of Kotli Imam Hussain in DIKhan and said that the shrine of Badshah Anwarghag in Orakzai should be opened for pilgrims. He stressed for devising a comprehensive policy to cope with militancy and urged all the political parties to join hands for eradication of terrorism.

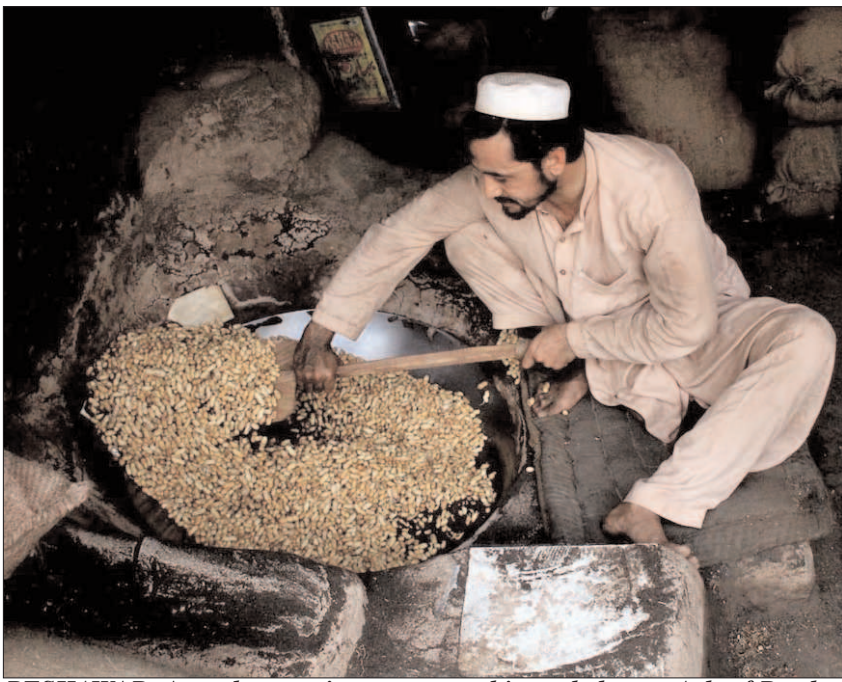
Dead bodies of two youth recovered

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dead bodies of two young men were recovered Manra area of Barmal tehsil district South Waziristan while deceased were tortured before killing, on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Akhtar Jan and Qamar Zaman while no banned outfit took responsibility of the murderers.

It is worthy to mention that the deceased youth were kidnapped on Friday from Wana bazaar by unknown abductors while latterly their tortured dead bodies were recovered from Manra area of Barmal tehsil.



PESHAWAR: A vendor roasting peanuts at his workplace at Ashraf Road.



In brief

Christmas ceremony held

SARGODHA (INP) A special ceremony was organized by the University of Sargodha (UoS) in connection with Christmas here on Saturday. Addressing the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Qaiser Abbas said the Christian employees of the university were valuable asset and all Pakistanis celebrated their happiness together which was a clear example of inter-faith harmony, unity and brotherhood. He added that the role of the Christian community in development of the country was very important. Prof Dr Qaiser Abbas and Durand Father David John also addressed the ceremony. Later, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Qaiser Abbas cut a Christmas cake. Deans of various departments, teachers and Christian employees were also present.

Demo held in Quetta

QUETTA (PPI): Afghan students held a protest demonstration under the aegis of TALC outside Quetta Press Club on Saturday against the closure of higher educational institutions for Afghan girls by the defacto government of Taliban in Afghanistan. The Afghan students, studying in Pakistan, arranged a protest demonstration condemning the closure of higher educational institutions for Afghan girls in Afghanistan. Addressing the protest demonstration, speakers said that instead of providing conducive environment to Afghan girls for seeking and pursuing education, the government of Taliban in Afghanistan had shut higher educational institutions for Afghan girls. They called on UN and other international institutions and actors to stress on the government of Afghanistan to open educational institutions for Afghan girls. Carrying placards inscribed with slogans in English, Pushtoo and Persians, demanding opening of educational institutions in Afghanistan, protestors chanted slogans in support of their demands.

Drug peddler arrested

SARGODHA (INP): Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a drug peddler and recovered 7-kg heroin. According to a police spokesman, during an ongoing crackdown against drug peddlers and weapons holders, a team of Urban Area police station under the supervision of ASP Uman Aziz Meer conducted a raid and arrested Muhammad Ashraf of Sadowala village and recovered 7-kg heroin from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused.

Security made high alert

FAISALABAD (APP): Christmas security has been made high alert in Faisalabad to foil nefarious designs of the miscreants before occurrence of any untoward incident. Police spokesman said here on Saturday, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani had deputed more than 2000 officials for security duty whereas 107 pickets were also established at entry and exit points in Faisalabad. CPO also directed the dolphin force and elite force to remain in action and ensure thorough patrolling especially in sensitive areas whereas divisional SPs would ensure proper checking of security arrangements across the district, he added.



QUETTA: Activists of National Students Movement holding a protest against the educational restrictions on women in Afghanistan.

Crackdown against milk sellers in full swing

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Punjab food Authority (PFA) on Saturday has launched a crackdown against adulterated milk sellers and disposed off 1300 litres adulterated milk. Dairy Safety team under the supervision of Director Operations Muzaffargarh region stopped two milk carrying vehicles during the blockade at Jhang road.

The team seized 1300 litres milk which was found lack of natural nutrients and fat. Mixing of detergent and water also found in the milk. The hundred of litres milk was disposed off on the spot after adulteration proved.

In a statement, Director

General PFA Mudassar Riaz Malik said that the milky white poison was being supplied to hotels and milk shops in Muzaffargarh city and suburbs. He said that the adulteration of milk would not be tolerated at any cost.

Road accident claims 3 lives: At least three persons including a minor kid of a family were killed while two others sustained injuries as a trailer ran over a motorcycle near Bhuttapur flyover Muzaffargarh. According to Rescue 1122, five persons of a family riding on a motorcycle were coming to Muzaffargarh from Baseera. When they

reached Bhuttapur flyover a speeding trailer crushed them. As a result, three persons died on the spot while two others sustained injuries. Upon receiving the information, Rescue teams rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies and injured to the district headquarters hospital in presence of the police concerned.

The deceased was identified as 16 years old Khadija Bibi d/o Pahlwan Khan, Pahlwan Khan and five years old Gul Sher. While Kausar Bibi w/o Pahlwan Khan and six years old Gulfaam sustained serious injuries. Sadar police have registered a case and started further investigation.

Rescue-1122 ambulance services launched

HYDERABAD (APP): Adviser to Sindh Chief Minister Haji Rasool Bux Chandio Saturday inaugurated five state-of-the-art, fully equipped emergency ambulances as part of the Rescue-1122 Sindh Emergency Services in the Badin district.

The Rescue-1122 emergency services has been launched in collaboration with Sindh Integrated Emergency and Health Services (SIEHS) which will operate these emergency ambulances. The Secretary Rehabilitation, Muhammad Ali Khoso, Project Director Sindh Resilience Project, Ghulam Asghar Kanasro Director Dr. Abid Jalaluddin Shaikh, Deputy Commissioner Badin Agha Shah Nawaz Babar, General Manager SIEH Shaikh Nadir Hussain, Deputy General Manager Lutaf Ali Mangrio, Murtaza Abbas and Wazeer Zoar were also present at the launching ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the Advisor praised the work and services of Sindh Emergency Services Rescue-1122 and said that the addition of these ambulances will save many lives by providing immediate response and enroute treatment to patients in the Badin District. This expansion of the emergency ambulance service in Badin will not only provide quality pre-hospital emergency

services to those in need in the district but also create employment opportunities to technically trained residents of Badin district, ensuring improved quality of life, he said.

He informed that Sindh Health Department has planned to continue expanding Emergency Ambulance services operated by SIEHS in other districts of the province in the coming months so that every person in need of emergency pre-hospital care can avail it, free of charge. It is mentioned here that SIEHS is operating the Sindh Emergency Service ambulances in Karachi, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Larkana and Qamber Shahdadkot.

The SIEHS is a section 42 not-for-profit company formed in collaboration with the Sindh government. This service is a realization of the commitment of the provincial government to strengthen the Primary healthcare structure in Sindh through a public-private arrangement ensuring delivery of timely, effective, patient-focused ambulance and holistic healthcare services, free-of-cost.

The SIEHS under its ambit, operates and manages ISO 9001:2015 certified ambulance service called Sindh Emergency Service (Rescue 1122). The SIEHS operates according to international protocols and is equipped with

advanced medical equipment, life-saving drugs and qualified paramedics and nurses, providing immediate pre-hospital emergency care to those suffering with acute health trauma. The quality emergency services are available to all those who need it, across the social spectrum.

SSP Operations cuts Christmas cake

FAISALABAD (APP): SSP Operations Abdullah Ahmad cut cake to celebrate Christmas with Christian employees of police department here on Saturday. The Christmas cake cutting ceremony was arranged on special direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani at Police Lines where police officers were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, SSP said that Christians were integral part of Pakistani society and they were also serving the country equally for national development and prosperity. Therefore, the police department would also extend full support to Christian employees for celebrating Christmas, he added. Later, the SSP also distributed prizes among the police officials who showed excellent performance for bringing laurel for the police department.



QUETTA: Provincial president of PML-N Jamal Shah, Minority Wing president Tariq Gul and others cutting a Christmas cake.

Anti-polio drive to start from Jan 16

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The three-day polio prevention campaign will start on January 16 and continue till January 18, 2023, in which more than 799,000 children under 5 years of age will be vaccinated.

To review the arrangements for the anti-polio drive, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zahid Parvez Waraich at his office. The DC said that no child should be left unvaccinated. He urged the members of the anti-polio teams to perform their duties with zeal and dedication during this campaign.

He said that effective monitoring should be done to evaluate the performance of polio teams in the field. The DC reviewed the arrangements made for the polio prevention campaign. He directed that all the concerned persons should perform their duties properly during the campaign.

In the meeting, District Health Officer Dr Khalid Mahmood Arain said that the polio prevention campaign will continue from January 16 to January 18, 2023. Polio teams will go door-to-door and administer vaccines to children. The left-out children will be vaccinated on January 19 and January 20, 2023, as part of the catch-up activity, he added. Dr Shiraz said that 3,168 mobile teams, 195 fixed teams, and 136 transit teams have been formed for the campaign. During this time 122 Union Council Monitoring Officers will serve in the field.

Facilities to be provided in Mango Orchard Park: Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar on Saturday visited Mango Orchard Park here. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zahid Pervez Waraich, Assistant Deputy Commissioner General Naeem Sadiq Cheema, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur City Dr.

Anam Fatima, and Assistant Commissioner General Muhammad Tayyab. Commissioner said that the park will be upgraded with state-of-the-art facilities. He said that different rides for children will be installed in the park. Moreover, jogging tracks and other recreational facilities will also be added to the park. He said that the master plan of the park will be completed in a public-private partnership in order to provide the best possible facilities to the people.

Board examines 37 cases

SARGODHA (APP): A meeting of the District Quality Control board held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Arshad Wattoo here on Saturday.

A total of 37 cases against medical stores involved in violations of the Drug Act were examined during the meeting and out of which 20 cases were referred to the drug court while warning notices were issued to 14 and directed them to make best arrangements. Three cases were adjourned till next hearing. The ADC also reviewed the performance of drug in spectors and directed them for accelerating the drive against sale and manufacturing of spurious drugs.

Govt urged to include Gujar language in curriculum

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The special assistant to Prime Minister, Sardar Shah Jehan Yousaf has said that the history of the Gujar tribe is full of sacrifices and resistance against the oppressors. He was addressing the International Gujar Language and education conference organized by the Tehreek Huquq e Gujar Pakistan (THGP) at Shamlai area of Adenzai as chief guest here on Saturday.

The members of the Gujar community from all parts of the district attended the function which was also addressed by the chairman Gujar Qaumi Movement Haji Zarin Khan, THQP central president Bakht Zada Gujar, Raza Khan Gujar, MPA Punjab assembly Imran Yousaf Gujar, advocate Tanveer Gujar and others. Delegates from Punjab, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and abroad also participated in the conference.

The speakers said the



Gujar had strongly resisted the British aggression in the 1857 war of independence. They said the Gujar tribe always stood by the Pakistan army in times of difficulty and need. They said that the tribe would never hesitate to fight for the nation's sovereignty and integrity.

They said the Gujar had its own language, norms and traditions and they would never compromise on them. The speakers said that they would continue

the struggle for the economic development and unity of the Gujars across the country. They said the Gujar were kept backward by all rulers since the partition.

Through a unanimously passed resolution in the conference, the participants demanded the government to include the Gujar language in the schools' syllabus and allocate a separate column for them in the national census.

Intra-tehsil sports gala concluded

F.P. Report

BUNER: Intra-tehsil six Sport Gala concluded at college ground in Swari in which several teams for different categories of games from six tehsils of district Buner participated.

The chief guest chairman was District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Syed Fakhar Jihan Bacha, Deputy commissioner Shabir Khan, DPO Salahuddin Kundi, ADCs along with AACs and nazim Mandanr Naseeb Khan, nazim Chaghorzai Haji Sharif Khan, TMOs Gagra Khalique Rehman, Daggar Amin Khan, Gadezai Ikhtyar Hussain distributed trophies, shields, certificates and

cash among the winners and runner up sports teams besides those were having distinction in activities related to education, health, social welfare, police, administration and media.

The grand gathering was hosted by TMA Gagra where in large number of department heads, elected public representatives, area elders, sportsmen and youths were participated. The final rounds of football, volleyball, cricket, tug of war, traditional Kabadi and Mukha were played in the presence of the dignities which the participants enjoyed.

Speaking on the occasion the focal person ADC Latif said it was a healthy activity well played at tehsil level and talent dis-

played at district level. He wished the government would extend support in future too adding district administration would play due role in promotion of youth.

The chief guest Syed Fakhar Jihan told KPK government was committed to promote youth talent through sports adding facilities were provided at tehsil level and to be expanded union council level. He claimed heavy funds were approved for a gymnast at college ground in Swari to facilitate all seasons game. He was sure to say Buner district was included in zone 6 adding educated youths would best utilize this opportunity and to be entered in high level jobs in near future.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for Culture and Tourism Syed Sardar Shah cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the 8th Ayaz Mela.

Role of minorities in history of Pakistan hailed

F.P. Report

WANA: District Youth Office in collaboration with Civil Administration Lower Waziristan organized a program for the Christian community at Wana Church in FC Camp. "the program titled "Role of Minorities in the History of Pakistan", on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Ashfaq Khan participated as a spe-

cial guest in the program and spoke in detail about these people of the Christian community. District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir was also present on this occasion.

"Who played their role in the history of Pakistan", DC Ashfaq Khan also listened to the concerns of the Christian community and their problems that they will solve these problems very soon, on this

occasion, DC also cut the cake.

Pastor Zeeshan Alam and PTI Wing Vice President Akash Masih were accompanied by both men and women from the Christian community. DC Ashfaq Khan also distributed Christmas gifts among the men and women of the Christian community at the end of the program and assured all possible cooperation.

Barrick congratulates Balochistan CM on gold project signing

QUETTA (PPI): Mark Bristow, Chief Executive Officer, Barrick Gold, made a telephone call to Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo to felicitate him on the signing of Rekodiq Copper and Gold Project.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat here on Saturday, the solid and clear stance of Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, on

Rekodiq Copper and Gold Project deserved to be appreciated, said Mark Bristow, adding that Barrick Gold Corporation would submit plan regarding feasibility study of the project and social development.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister Balochistan said that Rekodiq Copper and Gold Project was aimed at altering the lot of Balochistan, adding that social develop-

ment projects reflected in Rekodiq Copper and Gold Project would soon be executed.

During the course of discussion between Mark Bristow, Chief Executive Officer, Barrick Gold and Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, it was agreed that confidence of the local people and their sense of representation carried immense significance.



Cross-Channel migrants in UK decry Rwanda deportation plan

LONDON (AFP): If the UK government has its way, the tens of thousands of migrants arriving on England's southeastern shores each year, after crossing the Channel in small boats, will face swift deportation to Rwanda. Although the controversial plan is on hold amid legal challenges, some of those who have completed the perilous journey said they are spooked by the prospect.

"It's really terrifying," Abdulhakim, a 24-year-old Ethiopian who arrived in April, told AFP outside a London hotel where he has since been staying. "In April, we used to talk about it," he added, noting all the migrants in the discussions were "terrified" by the stalled policy which would be "devastating" for them. "Rwanda is not a safe place -- there was a genocide there!"

The UK government insists such views of the eastern African country, which saw a genocide in 1994 by Rwandan Hutu extremist groups against the Tutsi population, are outdated. Ministers claim it is now a safe destination, but hope that the plan will act as a significant deterrent for those considering trying to reach Britain by small boats. A deal costing more than £120 million (\$145 million) with Kigali, agreed in April by former prime minister Boris Johnson, will see all those who arrive illegally on British soil sent there.

They will be flown to east Africa before consideration of their asylum claims has even begun and, if eventually granted refuge, they will remain in Rwanda rather than return to the UK. The policy will apply irrespective of where applicants hail from. The High Court in London ruled it was lawful following a legal challenge by migrants and campaigners, prompting the government to say it hopes to start flights as soon as possible.

Despite further legal action by opponents looking likely first, the mood among migrants already in Britain is fearful. Mohammed, a 24-



year-old Sudanese man who arrived by boat two years ago, said he "can't sleep anymore" as the court battle unfolds. "This plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is very scary," said Iranian Kurd Amir, another asylum-seeker living at the London hotel -- which sits in the shadow of the financial district's gleaming towers -- while claiming asylum.

"It makes people nervous in the hotel. What can they do there?" He arrived in the UK four years ago, stowed away in a lorry, and is confident that the policy will not impact him. The 24-year-old expects a decision on his status soon. But after spending so many years surrounded by migrants who have fled war or persecution, he is sceptical the threat of being sent to Rwanda will stem the flow of illegal arrivals.

"It's not going to stop them. They will still come," Amir said. In 2022, a record of more than 45,000 people crossed the Channel -- one of the world's busiest waterways -- on small inflatable vessels, ill-suited to the rough conditions often seen there. Earlier this month at least four died when their boat capsized, while dozens drowned a year earlier in another tragedy. Others desperate to reach Britain also stow away in lorries headed there from mainland Europe.

Opponents of the Rwanda plan

argue it fails to tackle the biggest problem: a lack of safe legal routes for asylum-seekers and refugees to come to the UK. At a parliamentary committee hearing earlier this week, the UK's right-wing Home Secretary Suella Braverman insisted the country was "very generous" in its refugee policies. "We do have to have a limit on our capacity in the UK to accept people who are fleeing difficult circumstances," she said.

But Braverman struggled to detail how those fleeing war and persecution could reach Britain legally without family members already present. A senior official flanking her noted routes offered by UN agencies were one option. But the migrants at the hotel were doubtful. "It's impossible to come legally," said Abdulhakim. "Perhaps with a student visa, but I couldn't afford to study," he added, noting he also didn't have a passport.

Amir said it was impossible to claim asylum in his homeland Iran. "I'm Kurdish, do you think Iran will give me a passport?" he said. Although Rwanda garnered little support, Mary, a 23-year-old Iranian who left the country with her husband two years ago, said she would still prefer it to her country. "If I went back to Iran, I would be arrested," she said. "I know nothing about Rwanda. I only know it's in Africa."

Cockfighting: Charges laid over alleged kidnappings

MANILA (BBC): Six people have been charged over the kidnapping of a group of people linked to the world of cockfighting in the Philippines. The group of six is thought to have been abducted on their way to a fight in the capital Manila in January. It's part of a wave of mysterious disappearances to hit the industry, which is a popular betting sport.

Taxes from livestreamed cockfights helped the government replenish its finances after the Covid pandemic. But former President Rodrigo Duterte eventually banned online fights, while allowing traditional cockfighting to resume. The six suspects reportedly deny the allegations.

Meanwhile, three former police officers have also been charged with allegedly abducting a cockfighting enthusiast from his house in August 2021, according to the AFP news agency. The victim had been accused of running a fake betting website, AFP reports. The charges come as at least 27 people connected to the lucrative industry remain missing, but hope of finding people alive is fading.

"I wouldn't even want to call them missing cockfighters," Justice Secretary Jesus Remulla said this week. Cockfighting in the Philippines typically attracts large crowds, who bet high sums over which rooster will win in a fight to the death. Sharp metal spurs are tied to the birds' legs. The sport is banned in many other countries but has become even more popular in the Philippines in recent years since Covid restrictions saw it move online.

Former President Rodrigo Duterte had resisted calls to ban "e-sabong" - the online version of the sport - following reports of addiction and violence, admitting that monthly taxes of roughly 640 million pesos (\$11.5m; £9.6m) had helped to replenish the government's finances following the pandemic. He eventually outlawed the livestreamed fights shortly before he left office in June. Traditional cockfighting has been allowed to resume.

Nagorno, Karabakh in for 'long winter'

TBILISI (Reuters): Ethnic Armenians in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh are preparing for a "long-term blockade" by Azerbaijan, a top separatist official said, after nearly two weeks without fresh supplies of food and medicine. Azerbaijani civilians identifying themselves as environmental activists have been facing off since Dec. 12 with Russian peacekeepers on the Lachin corridor, the only road across Azerbaijan that links Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United States and the European Union have urged Azerbaijan to unblock the corridor, warning of severe humanitarian consequences and damage to the fragile peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which have fought two wars in the past three decades. Azerbaijan denies blockading the road and has said the Russian peacekeepers closed it.

Ruben Vardanyan, head of the breakaway region's government, told Reuters on a video call from the main town Stepanakert that the "blockade" was exerting "big psychological pressure" on the population. "We will not starve, because there's enough food. But some products we cannot get on our internal market," he said, adding that fuel and certain medicines would be in short supply. "It's a long winter we have in front of us. It's 100 days or more before we will get any grain, or herbs, or any other food we can grow in our own land.

So we are preparing ourselves that it will be a long-term blockade." Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but its 120,000 inhabitants are predominantly Armenian and it broke away from Baku in a first war in the early 1990s.

Eastern Congo's M23 rebels retreat from occupied territory

BENI, Congo (AP): Eastern Congo's M23 rebels retreated from some of the territory it held, the group's first withdrawal since it began seizing swaths of land more than a year ago. The rebels left the Kibumba area and its positions were taken over by the East African Regional Force -- a multinational force charged with protecting the area. This retreat is in line with an agreement made last month at a summit in Angola, Lawrence Kanyuka the M23's political spokesman said in a statement.

Kibumba, in the Nyiragongo territory of Congo's North Kivu province, has been held by the M23 since November and it was the closest that the rebels got to Goma, eastern Congo's regional capital. Speaking to reporters from Kibumba, Gen. Jeff Nyagah, commander of the East African force, called on the civilian population to return home promising that they would be safe. "We are determined to conduct operations in strict compliance with international humani-

tarian law and other conventions," he said. "We appreciate the complex nature of the operating environment but our zeal and determination remain undeterred."

The M23 rebels are largely Congolese ethnic Tutsis who became prominent 10 years ago when their fighters seized Goma, eastern Congo's largest city on the border with Rwanda. The group derives its name from a March 23, 2009, peace deal, which it accuses the Congo government of not implementing. The group has been largely dormant for nearly a decade. Since resurfacing more than a year ago, the M23 have been accused of killing civilians and seizing land in eastern Congo's Rutshuru territory.

Earlier this month the United Nations accused the rebels of being responsible for massacring more than 130 civilians in two villages. The group is believed to be receiving weapons and troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to a report by UN experts. The rebels' withdrawal comes on the heels of growing

international pressure on Rwanda to cease support for the M23. Earlier this week the governments of France and Germany each condemned Rwanda for supporting the M23. In a tweet earlier this week, the German foreign ministry's director for sub-Saharan Africa, Christoph Retzlaff, said the M23 should quickly contribute to a solution to the "disastrous" crisis.

While the M23's withdrawal from one of its positions in eastern Congo is a first step toward a resolution, it remains a fraction of the areas that the rebels control, say regional experts. "Hours ago, they were still engaged in fighting in Masisi territory showing opposite intentions.

They should withdraw from all positions, their commanders and their backers involved in serious crimes should be held accountable," said Thomas Fessy of Human Rights Watch. It's unclear how much more territory the group will cede. It still accuses the Congo government of attacking its positions and killing civilians.

Lawsuit over Arizona AG race struck down

ARIZONA (Agencies): A judge in the United States has thrown out a lawsuit from Republican candidate Abraham Hamadeh, who challenged the election results in his race against Democrat Kris Mayes for Arizona attorney general.

The judge, Mohave County Superior Court's Lee Jantzen, has concluded that Hamadeh did not prove the errors in vote counting that he had alleged. The ruling came after Hamadeh's attorney, Tim La Sota, acknowledged during litigation that his client had not gained enough votes to change the outcome of the race. Mayes finished 511 votes ahead of Hamadeh in one of the closest elections in state history. Approximately 2.5 million votes were cast.

"You haven't met the burden" of proof, Jantzen told La Sota shortly before ruling against Hamadeh. As part of the litigation, the parties in the case were allowed to inspect a sample of 2,300

ballots. Through the inspection, Hamadeh said he gained a net six votes, while Mayes maintained she netted three votes. "If you extrapolate the numbers, they are not going to get us to 511 votes if you take the sample we have," said La Sota, who had pushed for a larger sample size.

Hamadeh, whose race is the subject of a separate automatic recount conducted by the state due to the close results, complained on Twitter about election operations in Maricopa County, Arizona's most populous county. He said his team "will await the results of the recount before deciding our next steps". Andrew Gaona, a lawyer representing Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, who oversees the state's elections, said the lawsuit was a "spectacular waste of everyone's time".

Under Arizona law, Hamadeh faced the high bar of proving not just that election officials erred but that he would have won without

their misconduct. In his lawsuit, he alleged that problems with printers in Maricopa County led to a series of issues that disenfranchised voters. He also alleges his race was affected by improper handling of ballots that were duplicated or adjudicated by people because they could not be read by mechanical voting tabulators.

Dan Barr, a lawyer representing Mayes, said Hamadeh did not present evidence to support his claims. "What on earth are we doing here?" Barr asked during closing arguments. "People can't file complaints [over elections] with no facts." A court hearing is scheduled for December 29 to present the results of recounts in the races for attorney general, state superintendent, and a state legislative seat. Another judge is considering Republican Kari Lake's challenge of her loss to Hobbs in the state's governor's race.

Chile to open embassy in Palestinian territories

SANTIAGO (Reuters): Chile plans to open an embassy in the Palestinian territories, President Gabriel Boric said, which could make the Andean country one of only a handful to have an embassy-level office in the territories that are contested with Israel.

Chilean Foreign Minister Antonia Urejoa confirmed the plan but said there was no timeline in place yet and that Chile continues to recognize both Palestine and Israel as legitimate states.

Leftist Boric, who has repeatedly expressed support for the Palestinian people's demand for an independent state, made the comments at a private ceremony in Santiago hosted by the city's important Palestinian diaspora. "I am taking a risk (saying) this... we are going to raise our official representation in Palestine from having a charge d'affaires; now we

are going to open an embassy," Boric said, without giving details on where the embassy would be located.

A spokesperson for the Israeli embassy in Chile said it would not be making a public statement on the matter. The Palestinian Authority's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment sent outside of business hours. The Palestinian territories, which Palestinians want recognized as a state, encompass the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and contest control over East Jerusalem. Israel captured those areas in a 1967 Middle East war and there have been regular clashes since.

The West Bank has experienced some of the worst levels of violence in more than a decade this year, much of it concentrated around Nablus and the nearby city of Jenin, with at least

150 Palestinians and more than 20 Israelis killed. Israeli forces killed a Palestinian combatant in clashes near a flashpoint site, underlining the continuing violence in the occupied West Bank that will confront Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's incoming government.

Netanyahu has secured a coalition with religious and ultranationalist partners who oppose Palestinian statehood and want to extend Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Chile's Boric said the embassy was meant to give Palestinians the representation they deserve and to demand that "international law be respected." In September, Boric postponed receiving the credentials of Israel's new ambassador to Chile after Israeli forces killed a Palestinian teenager. Israel criticized the decision, saying it "seriously" harmed bilateral ties.

Migrants near US border face cold

EL PASO, Texas (AP): Hairdresser Grisel Garcés survived a harrowing, four-month journey from her native Venezuela through tropical jungles, migrant detention centers in southern Mexico and then jolting railcar rides north toward the US border. Now on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande across from El Paso, Texas, she anxiously awaits a US Supreme Court decision on asylum restrictions expected to affect her and thousands of other migrants at crossings along some 1,900 miles (3,100 kilometers) of border from

Texas to California. And she's doing so while living outside as winter temperatures plunge over much of the US and across the border.

She told of fleeing economic hardship only to find more hardship, such as now shivering through temperatures that have fallen into the 20s (below -1 Celsius) at night, colder than she's ever experienced. "You just turn yourself over to God's mercy," said Garcés, who left a school-aged daughter behind, hoping to reach the US with her husband.

Their savings exhausted,

some days they don't eat. And, Garcés waited and watched as hundreds of migrants formed a line to gradually pass through a gate in the border fence for processing by US immigration officials. She fears immediate deportation under current asylum restrictions and doesn't dare cross the shallow waters of the Rio Grande within view. Dozens of migrants have been spending their nights on the concrete banks of the river, awaiting word of possible changes to the asylum restrictions put in place in March 2020.

Bloody property disputes a dark side of Mexico real estate

MEXICO CITY (AP): A grisly pre-Christmas killing of two young men and their uncle at an early 1900s house in Mexico City cast attention on the dark side of the capital's booming real estate market, fed by a lack of legal documents and gangs that illegally seize properties.

Actor Andrés Tirado, his musician brother Jorge Tirado and an uncle whose name was not released were found dead Sunday, all with their throats slashed. Prosecutors said the apparent motive was an ownership dispute over the property. In another case, a young woman posted a desperate video on social media from a rooftop on the city's south side in which she can be heard screaming: "Police! Help! They have kidnapped me!"

Police said the woman told them relatives had erected a metal door to prevent her from leaving her home, trapping her inside with four children. Police said a dispute over property ownership was behind the alleged abduction and that an investigation was underway into the illegal takeover of the property. Authorities have known for

years there are armed, violent gangs that specialize in taking over houses. The trend is enabled by the fact that many properties -- perhaps as many as one-fifth of homes -- have no legal papers or have titles listed in the names of dead people who left no will.

According to a 2021 report by the city government's public policy evaluation agency, the percentage of homes in the capital that are occupied by squatters, that have ownership in legal dispute or that had owners who died without a will rose from 10.9% in 2010 to 19.9% in 2020. Mexico has a costly, inefficient, antiquated and corruption-riddled legal system.

In 2019, Mexico City prosecutors said in some of the 311 active property-seizure cases that year, notary publics, lawyers or real estate firms had falsified papers to force out legitimate owners. Because it costs so much to have a will drawn up in Mexico, many people do not do so, often leaving those who inherit homes with problems in protecting their rights.

That appears to have been the case in the killings

of the Tirado brothers and their uncle. The elderly brother of the uncle's wife died recently after a long illness, but his nurse who had cared for him continued to live on the ground floor of the house in the thriving Roma neighborhood, made famous by the Oscar-winning 2018 movie "Roma." Prosecutors gave the following account:

The nurse tried to claim the house was hers based on her supposed romantic relationship with the deceased man. The man's sister moved into the upstairs to prevent the nurse from seizing the home. The Tirado brothers came to live with their aunt and uncle in August, in part to protect them. The nurse had brought her daughter and son-in-law to live on the ground floor, and the Tirados apparently feared they could become violent.

What followed was a tense, five-month coexistence, with one family downstairs and one upstairs. The downstairs family "began to act in such a manner that it progressed to this type of violence," prosecution spokesman Ulises Lara said.

The nurse, her daughter and son-in-law have been

ordered jailed pending trial on kidnapping charges. One of the men who may have carried out the killings -- also believed to be related to the nurse -- has been arrested on drug charges, but is under investigation in the case. In other cases, gangs have simply forced their way into a property and kicked the occupants out. The city estimates there are 23 home seizure gangs operating in Mexico City, some of them linked to drug gangs and others to quasi-political groups.

"A problem we have in practically the entire city is the problem of property takeovers," Mexico City prosecutor Ernestina Godoy said in 2019. In 2016, for instance, a police operation evicted a violent group of squatters from a house in the upscale Condesa neighborhood that the group had seized years before. After the building was recovered, police found underground bunkers and tunnels dug beneath the structure. Weapons and stolen goods were also recovered. The building was so badly damaged it had to be torn down, in the midst of rising prices and rents and a housing shortage in the city.

'A very hard road ahead' for China as COVID-19 cases spiral

BAZHOU, China (AP): Nearly three years after it was first identified in China, the coronavirus is now spreading through the vast country. Experts predict difficult months ahead for its 1.4 billion people. China's unyielding "zero-COVID" approach, which aimed to isolate all infected people, bought it years to prepare for the disease. But an abrupt reopening, which was announced without warning on Dec. 7 in the wake of anti-lockdown protests, has caught the nation under-vaccinated and short on hospital capacity.

Experts have forecast between a million and 2 million deaths next year. Predicting deaths has proven tricky throughout the pandemic, since it is influenced by varied factors and China presents an especially complicated case because of opaque information sharing. It's not clear exactly how large the current outbreak is, as China has reduced testing and stopped reporting most mild cases. But in cities and towns around Baoding and Langfang, in Hebei province, an area that was among the first to face an unchecked outbreak, Associated Press reporters saw hospital intensive care

units overwhelmed by patients, and ambulances being turned away. Across the country, widespread reports of absences from work, shortages of fever-reducing medicine, and staff working overtime at crematoria suggest the virus is widespread.

China belongs to a small club of countries that managed to stop most domestic transmission of the virus in 2020, but it's the last to end restrictions. Experiences of ending vary: Singapore and New Zealand achieved high vaccination rates and bolstered medical systems during restrictions, and reopened relatively smoothly. Hong Kong, where omicron overcame defenses while many elderly people were unvaccinated, suffered a disruptive COVID-19 wave in 2022. Nearly 11,000 people died of the illness this year in the city of 7.4 million, with 95% of them older than 60, according to Hong Kong's department of health. Data from the city showed a 15% fatality rate for those older than 80 and unvaccinated, said Jin Dong-yan, a virology expert at Hong Kong University.

China has higher vaccination rates than Hong Kong did at the time of its omicron

outbreak, but many people are vulnerable to infection, especially the elderly. The country has exclusively used domestically made vaccines, which rely on older technology than the mRNA vaccines used elsewhere that have shown the best protection against infection.

A study conducted in Hong Kong, which has administered both an mRNA vaccine and Sinovac's CoronaVac, suggested that CoronaVac requires a third shot to provide comparable protection, especially for the elderly. An ordinary course of the vaccine is two shots, with an optional booster later. Most people vaccinated in China have received either CoronaVac or a similar vaccine produced by SinoPharm, but the country has administered at least five other vaccines. Comparable real-world data isn't available for these vaccines.

While China counts 90% of its population vaccinated, only around 60% have received a booster. Older people are especially likely to have not had a booster vaccine. Over 9 million people older than 80 have not had the third vaccine, according to China's official Xinhua News Agency. Vaccination rates have

increased over 10-fold, to over a million doses administered a day, since the start of the month. But Dr. Gagandeep Kang, who studies viruses at India's Christian Medical College in Vellore said prioritizing the elderly would be key. Unlike other countries, China prioritized vaccinating the more mobile young to prevent the virus from spreading, said Ray Yip, the founding director of the US CDC office in China. A campaign targeting those older than 60 started in December, but it is unclear how successful it has been.

They "did not pay enough attention to assure everyone gets full vaccine protection," Yip said. "How well do they perform this particular catch up effort might determine some of the outcome." Around Baoding and Langfang, hospitals have run out of intensive care beds and staff as severe cases surge. Patients lay on the floor, while others drove from hospital to hospital searching for beds for relatives.

The National Health Commission said China had 10 intensive care beds for every 100,000 people on Dec. 9, a total of 138,000 beds, up from 4 for every 100,000 people on Nov.

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Putin’s quest for dialogue

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has informed the world that Russia wants an end to the war in Ukraine and seeks a diplomatic solution to the issue. According to the powerful oligarch, his country does not intend to spin the flywheel of military conflict, as all armed conflicts end one way or another with some kind of negotiation. The sole architect of the Russian Special Operation in Ukraine blatantly claimed that he never gave up diplomatic track and the sooner the other side realizes the fact, would be the better.

After ten months of enraged war and fierce hostility, Russian belligerence has resorted to negotiation and diplomacy to de-escalate the conflict which largely seems to be an outcome of continuous defeats and a significant backslide in Moscow's military position in the ongoing war in Ukraine. Interestingly, Russia had used all its military might to undermine the Ukrainians' will to fight by sending barrages of missiles and destruction of essential supply lines including water, heating, and electricity to Ukraine's major population centers amid freezing winter but could not comprehend its agenda. Apparently, western collective strategy and unrestricted economic and military assistance to Ukraine along with stringent economic sanctions against Kremlin successfully neutralized the Russian invasion and desperate Moscow was left with limited options, either negotiate peace with its staunch enemy or expand the war to other nations to achieve strategic superiority over its foes.

Putin's statement came a day after US President Joe Biden hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the White House and promised him continued and unwavering US support against Russia. Western officials term Russia's quest for a dialogue a time-buying technique to provide some space to its exhausted Russian military that had made repeated retreats over the past weeks. On the other hand, the Zelensky regime in Kyiv is over-optimistic about Kyiv's military position and demanded Russia halt its attacks and give up all territory it has seized so far.

In fact, diplomacy is a kind of soft war during which contesting parties achieve their desired objectives by peaceful means and prove their claim through undeniable research work and scholarly evidence. Historically, diplomacy had been the most effective tool for securing global peace and resolving the most complicated and sensitive issues relating to global security such as the global Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Strategic Weapons Reduction Treaty, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Global Climate Accord as well as Iran Nuclear Deal. Thus Ukraine dispute merits a responsible diplomatic approach, national resilience, and patience from all stakeholders to reach an endurable and long-lasting peace in the region.

Russia and the west, both had used their wits to defeat others in the ongoing war in Ukraine, while the America-Russia rivalry had destroyed the Ukrainian nation and billions of dollars of resources would be needed for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the East European Nation. At the same time, the Washington-Moscow tussle had also ruined the global economy and pushed a number of world nations into an economic upheaval. Currently, Western nations and Russia face no hazard to their sovereignty other than internal chaos and economic vulnerability, therefore they should not exaggerate the self-imaginary threats to them. Fueling the ongoing conflict has no other outcome except shoving the world into a global conflict thus negotiation is the only way forward to reach a consensus that protects the interests of all neighbors and guarantees territorial sovereignty and peaceful coexistence of all regional states.

Unemployment and Insaf Rozgar Scheme

CHIEF Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has launched the second phase of the ‘Insaf Rozgar Scheme’ with a total cost of Rs 700 million. Under the scheme, interest-free loans from 50 thousand up to One million rupees will be provided to the jobless people of newly merged districts, while people in the age group of 18-50 years, would be eligible to get benefits under the scheme. According to government statistics, 4576 jobless people across the province have been provided interest-free loans during the first phase of the scheme in 2020.

Pakistan is a developing nation with limited resources and many parts of the country except major cities and towns could not get the due attention of the rulers and subsequently lagged behind in the race for development and prosperity in the past. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the merged districts of Erstwhile also could not maintain the pace of development due to a lack of funds and discrimination from the rulers.

The decades-long civil insurgency and terrorism badly shattered civic life and businesses in Erstwhile FATA while poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy provide fertile conditions for anti-state elements to subvert national youth against the country.

The Insaf Rozgar scheme is undoubtedly a poor-friendly initiative of the provincial government that has provided self-employment opportunities to jobless citizens, however, there is a dire need for a third-party audit that will ensure that the funds only reach rightful individuals and subsequently expended for the desired purpose so the nation also realize the full economic and financial dividends of this magnificent endeavor in the future.

Quote of the day

Government is like a baby: an alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other.

— Ronald Reagan, American President [1981-1989].

LGBT lobby issues an ultimatum to European education

A gender theory invented by the New Zealand "guru" of psychology John Money, which has practically no scientific basis and justification, but only the fantasies of its creator, decorated with rainbow colors (for brightness) and slogans of equality (for the convenience of political technologists), at first studied almost exclusively from curiosity and optional, today it is slowly but very consistently creeping into the curriculum of European schools. Starting from elementary school. And even from older groups of kindergartens. The invention of a charlatan, which in the middle of the last century already led to a double tragedy : twin brothers David and Brian Reimer, one of whom, on the advice of a psychologist and "sexologist" Mani, was raised by parents as a girl, as a result committed suicide.

Mani argued that biological sex does not matter, and gender is formed solely as a result of the influence of the environment. As well as the result of all the same upbringing, including sexual orientation can be. Anti-scientific nonsense, like the one from the Middle Ages, when alchemists were looking for the philosopher's stone, and astronomers, until the discovery of Copernicus, were convinced that the Sun revolves around the Earth, if and when they try to refute it, today it goes boldly and burns everyone

who disagrees with it with napalm.

Countering underage brainwashing attempts these days (at least in France) is next to impossible. Associations of LGBT activists come to schools and practically impose conditions on the teaching staff: "Either you allow us to "sex and gender education" of children, or..." The ultimatum turns out to be effective.

So, in French Brittany, a region where conservative people live - skippers and fishermen, far from the games of the rainbow mind - such lessons (instead of subjects like physics or mathematics) have become almost a routine practice.

Parents, to whom children bring knowledge about what, it turns out, are "non-binary, transgender and transsexual" people, tried to sound the alarm timidly - after all, the LGBT community likes it or does not like it, but sex education is a family business, not a school - bitten their tongues pretty quickly. Wrong word or wrong look, and that's all - you are labeled homophobic or transphobic, and this is a sign of racism in modern united Europe. And racism in the same united Europe is not an offense, but a crime.

The second half of the twentieth century, when Europe tried to patch up its past, which was full of both racism and xenophobia, was marked by a movement for civil rights and freedoms on the continent. The protests of the late sixties,

when well-fed youth dreamed of getting rid of the guardianship of their elders and finally, instead of work and education, devote themselves to hedonism, the search for pleasure and other joys, gradually faded away. But the undisguised craving for carnal pleasures and their almost constant consumption of youthful fun has become a lifestyle.

"Prohibit prohibit" - and under this well-known slogan, not just sensual pleasures, a part of life, important, but intimate, that is, not put on display, but real vices, as such, were considered to be before the advent of "gender theory" crawled out of all the cracks. And with its emergence and popularization, with the abolition of prohibitions, vices and perversions gradually turned into the norm of behavior. Not Breton skippers and fishermen, of course - they had and have where to spend their energy - but Parisian bohemia. Becoming a trendsetter and a leader in the promotion of all these deviations, which have been named. Habit. Behavior feature. A creative way of relating to one's own sexuality. A feature of gender self-identification. In other words, even if it is impossible (including because desires can be criminal), it is still possible.

It is today, starting from a tender age, that they are urged not to be ashamed of any desires and openly express them, calling

Elena Karaeva

taboos and prohibitions dictated by "patriarchal values", but thirty years ago this was customary to hide.

In a book published a few years ago, its author Fabrice Thomas describes the mores of those who dictated the current agenda of the LGBT community and generously sponsored numerous NGOs that were supposed to promote and popularize the rights of sexual minorities.

Monsieur Thomas came to apply for a job. To a fashion house that bore the name of the creator, Yves Saint Laurent. The business and amorous partner of the famous couturier Pierre Berger answered him that hiring goes through his, Berger, bed. Monsieur Thomas, a heterosexual, broad-shouldered handsome man, agreed to such a personnel policy. When Berger had had enough of them, he handed over Fabrice to Saint Laurent.

The details of what happened behind the scenes, in these luxurious estates, villas, hotel apartments, as Fabrice Thomas himself says, could make even Harvey Weinstein blush. Violence and sadism were the most popular way to get pleasure. Then the silence of the participants in orgies was most often bought. And every time new sensations were needed. And that means new - let's say it again - victims.

In public, Pierre Berger - a billionaire, philanthropist, art connoisseur - was one.

Private to others. And politically - the third. It was he, Pierre Berger, who was the main lobbyist for the media (as one of the shareholders at that time influential Le Monde) and financial (he had enough funds) legalization of same-sex marriages in France. And to the then presidential candidate Hollande, he stated unambiguously: full financial and PR support for bohemians, intellectuals and other philosophical fraternity in exchange for the adoption of the law. And Hollande accepted the offer. Because to refuse Berger was to commit political suicide.

The law, perhaps the only one that marked Hollande's leadership as president, was adopted with a number of amendments, conditions and reservations. They concerned, among other things, that the school (in the broad sense of the word, as an educational institution) would be left aside from the agitators and propagandists of "gender theory" and "rainbow diversity." Biology as a science - yes, but the promotion of "non-binary and fluid" - no.

Well, today the price of all these promises is visible.

Yves Saint Laurent, truly a fashion genius, a truly outstanding stylist who managed to liberate a woman and her body (our favorite trouser suits are him, our gentle perfume intoxicating men who love us is also him, our black turtlenecks, our leather jackets are also Saint

Laurent), died exhausted by melancholy and drug addiction. His heart failed.

Fabrice Thomas, who spoke about the morals of those who sponsored the "fight for equal rights of sexual minorities", was forced to leave France for Quebec. Where did he get married. He gave birth to children. And he works as a bricklayer.

And, apparently, he is satisfied with his life as a heterosexual middle-aged man, family man and father.

Here are just children from Breton cities and their parents from all this persistent passive (yet) aggression, when those who actually have no right to do this interfere with the most intimate - self-identification, growing up girlish or youthful - there is nowhere to run.

Well, "rainbow" activists are boarding schools with threats, ultimatums and loud screeches about discrimination. Therefore, you should not ask for whom the pipes and castanets, painted in these very iridescent colors, whistle. They whistle through today's European children and teenagers. Some of which can repeat (situations are different) the fate of Fabrice Thomas. Or the fate of those, unknown to anyone, from whom Berger and Co. paid off, having previously broken their lives. If not suicidal at all.

Harvest victims of "gender theory" has already begun.

‘Solely for planning purposes’

IN October, the US Department of Defense issued a request for information (RFI) to assess how a new electric aircraft might be deployed for military operations. The Pentagon said that the RFI, which is “solely for planning purposes,” aims “to better understand the current cost benefit” of the plane.

The Pentagon continues to move toward rolling out its first-ever electric plane amid a technological war with China, a US media

outlet has reported.

According to the outlet, the Chinese drone manufacturer DJI currently has an estimated 74% global market share, and the US Department of Defense (DoD) is concerned about a possible scenario where its drones become “a tool for Chinese espionage in US skies.”

The outlet noted that the US Air Force (USAF)'s Agility Prime program has pumped more than \$100 million into the battery-powered aircraft known as

Oleg Burunov

“electric vertical takeoff and landing” (eVTOL) vehicles since 2020.

With a number of US companies developing eVTOLs for civilian use as air taxis and transport planes, the Pentagon reportedly plans to use electric planes in utility roles to ferry people and cargo far from airstrips at a lower cost than conventional helicopters.

“Because they’re quiet, they may also be useful to slip troops behind enemy

lines and to conduct rescue operations,” the US media outlet argued, referring to Will Roper, who launched the Agility Prime program when he served as the USAF's procurement chief under the Trump administration.

The outlet cited Roper as saying that the USAF's “involvement attests that these are real airplanes — not toys, not flying cars.”

He added that shifting to the procurement of the

electric aircraft would become “a big milestone” in the US Department of Defense as several companies participating in the Agility Prime program believe that the military will start acquiring eVTOLs in 2024.

“The bigger impact of Agility Prime is that this is an emerging market that’s likely going to be worth a lot in terms of its value, in terms of jobs created, in terms of global impact. It will be a market with a US ZIP code,” Roper claimed. He spoke a few months

after US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan unveiled the country's new national security strategy, saying that the document views China as the “most consequential geopolitical challenge” to America.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin earlier said that Beijing calls on Washington to stop spreading the outdated theory of the Chinese threat and better engage in building a new concept of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Vietnam’s policymakers can congratulate themselves on a stellar economic performance in 2022

VIETNAM'S policymakers can congratulate themselves on a stellar economic performance in 2022. The country will conclude the year as the best-performing economy in Asia, largely due to its ability to attract foreign investment relocating from China. As other emerging markets seek to recover from the damage wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, many leaders are looking to emulate Vietnam's model.

While it is tempting to attribute Vietnam's success

environmental standards to achieve carbon neutral emissions.

Existing foreign investors, such as Samsung and Intel, have deepened and expanded their operations. Total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) increased 15 per cent year-on-year, adding 1570 new projects worth US\$9.9 billion, total export and import turnover grew 5.7 per cent to US\$58.3 billion. The International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank predicted that GDP growth will hit 7 and 6.5 per cent in 2022

ter of 2019 and nearly doubled in the technology sectors that were targeted by US tariffs. Vietnam's wages were another attraction at less than half of equivalent wages in China in 2019.

Since 2020, FDI migration from China has accelerated due to President Xi Jinping's zero-COVID-19 policy, which has made it difficult for companies to return to pre-COVID-19 production levels. FDI migration will likely increase as protests over zero-COVID-19 spread and

Edmund Malesky

activity, as infrastructure and human capital were considered ill-suited. Vietnam proved to be better positioned than expected, bolstered by forward-thinking reform efforts by its leaders.

International media has focussed on Vietnam's ‘blazing furnace’ anti-corruption campaign, which has targeted 1200 politicians and business leaders including sitting Politburo members. But less attention has been given to the government's effort to reduce

in these reductions is the government efforts to streamline administrative procedures through the Master Program on State Administrative Reform and the National Digital Transformation Plan. E-governance efforts have reduced corruption by removing discretionary powers from lower-level officials, constraining opportunities for bribery through administrative hold-ups and a lack of clarity on formal fees.

Vietnamese policymakers have also focussed on improving human capital.

ty has steadily improved for both general education and vocational training.

Expanding and enhancing infrastructure to improve investment absorption has also been a goal of Vietnamese policymakers. The 2018 PCI report found that Vietnam's infrastructure was not a comparative advantage for foreign firms choosing an investment location.

On a six-point scale, investor evaluations have leaped over 2017 and 2021 in road quality (from 3.72 to 4.44), port-to-highway connections (from 4.02 to 4.49), and railway-expressway connections (from 3.97 to 4.41).

Enterprises in the high-tech electronics industry have an even better perception in all infrastructure categories. There is more work to do in all these areas.

According to the 2021 PCI survey, FIEs are more optimistic about future human capital improvements in their assessments of the value of technical and professional training programs in Vietnam. FIEs’ rating of local labour quality has steadily improved for both general education and vocational training. Expanding and enhancing infrastructure to improve investment absorption has also been a goal of Vietnamese policymakers. The 2018 PCI report found that Vietnam’s infrastructure was not a comparative advantage for foreign firms choosing an investment location. On a six-point scale, investor evaluations have leaped over 2017 and 2021 in road quality (from 3.72 to 4.44), port-to-highway connections (from 4.02 to 4.49) and railway-expressway connections (from 3.97 to 4.41). Enterprises in the high-tech electronics industry have an even better perception in all infrastructure categories. There is more work to do in all these areas. Corruption is nowhere near zero and human capital and infrastructure still have significant deficiencies. Still, Vietnam’s post-COVID-19 success story demonstrates how countries can construct good fortunes through incremental progress and hard work on the fundamental factors that drive investor productivity.

to a perfectly executed template, the true story is both more mundane and achievable — prior reform efforts positioned Vietnam to take advantage of a serendipitous turn in international politics.

Vietnam's foreign investment attraction in 2022 was impressive. At least 11 Taiwanese companies in Apple's supply chain have relocated to Vietnam and negotiations are underway for increased production of tablets and smartphones. Lego opened a US\$1 billion plant in Binh Duong province that will include cutting-edge

respectively.

Investor interest in Vietnam has grown steadily over time and further accelerated in 2018 when US tariffs raised the costs of doing business in China. Many companies had already been producing most of their goods in China while maintaining some facilities in Vietnam as a hedge against uncertainty. Due to the US tariffs, these companies executed these insurance contracts and shifted production to Vietnam.

Vietnam's exports to the United States increased by 40 per cent in the first quar-

ter further disrupt supply chains in China.

Vietnam has managed to reduce significant COVID-19 outbreaks through prevention strategies and vaccinations while maintaining economic vitality. As Nikkei Asia noted in ranking Vietnam in the top 10 of countries worldwide for its COVID-19 management, it is well positioned to receive foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) fleeing more problematic locations.

In 2019, it was unclear whether the Vietnamese economy had the absorptive capacity to handle the new flows of investment

petty corruption by streamlining administrative and regulatory procedures. These efforts have reduced bribery.

The 2021 Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) survey of domestic and foreign businesses reported a decrease in the amount of businesses claiming that it was common to pay informal charges during business transactions from 66 per cent in 2016 to 41 per cent in 2021. Foreign firms that did not report paying any informal charges reached 41.9 per cent.

An understudied factor

Revisions to the Higher Education Law in 2018 and the Labour Code in 2019 specifically emphasised human capital improvements. While low wages and high literacy attract FIEs, they have often complained that workers lacked specific skillsets and skilled workers were hard to retain.

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4.49) and railway-expressway connections (from 3.97 to 4.41). Enterprises in the high-tech electronics industry have an even better perception in all infrastructure categories.

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So what can stop him from winning?

ON the eve of the centenary of the formation of the USSR, Vladimir Putin again and again turns to the issues of the collapse of the country and national unity - not on purpose, but because without this it is impossible to understand what is happening now in Ukraine. And if on Wednesday at the collegium of the Ministry of Defense the president spoke about the success of the long-term Western policy of fragmenting the Russian world, then the next day, during a conversation with the press, Putin dwelled in more detail on the "Divide and rule" strategy that is being used against Russia:

"This is a very delicate issue - the unity of the

And they launched a war against them in 2014 - a war."

The President also recalled that in the United States back in the Soviet years, "entire institutions worked in Ukraine, <...> prepared the ground, searched for people, determined meanings," and then, after the collapse of the USSR, despite all our efforts, "first we were pulled apart, separated, and then played off." In this sense, they achieved results, of course, and in this sense we suffered a well-known fiasco, Putin admitted. But this was not the main thing in his speech:

"No one wants the unification of the Russian people. Disunity - please, this is a pleasure, they will continue to shred. But no one wants unification and

Petr Akopov

if the Russians are the largest divided people, it just so happened, there is nothing to twitch now, be patient and watch how your fellow tribesmen are converted into Ukrainians or Latvians outside the borders of Russia. What can we say about reunification, if in Russia itself, for almost half of the three decades of our post-Soviet life, the word "Russian" was at first semi-forbidden, almost abusive, and then bashfully hushed up.

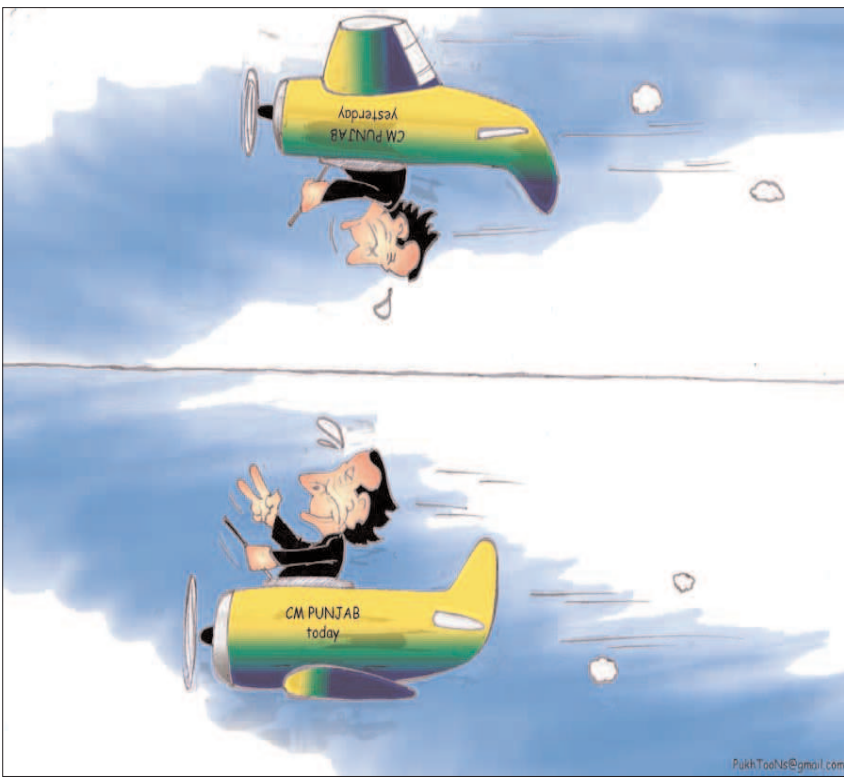
Even three years ago, when it was proposed to write in the Constitution that "the state language of Russia throughout its entire territory is the Russian language as the language of the state-forming people," a cry immediately arose -

really considered themselves part of it. Our Western opponents cannot interfere with us either: despite all the successes of their bets on pitting Russia and Ukraine, now the process has gone in the opposite direction: in a civil war, there can only be one winner - the one who defends the interests of national unity. But who, then, can prevent the reunification of the Russians?

Maybe internal Russian separatism? The West, after all, is betting on him too - it is no coincidence that all the talk about the "decolonization of Russia" and all kinds of "forums of free peoples of post-Russia." Shake up the situation in the country, ignite interethnic problems - and that's it, the Russians will not be up to reunification, not up to

of the unity of the Russian world. Only a bet on a "riot of patriots" can work for the West, because in no other way can Russia be stopped and defeated.

There are always grounds for dissatisfaction with the authorities, especially during a military conflict, which in itself is both a turning point and a time of growing tension and anxiety. A lot of problems and even crimes (for example, embezzlement in the army), the vices of our transitional socio-economic and state system (and someone believed that post-Soviet Russia - initially under-Russia - is ideal and forever, forgetting Putin's words that us a lot "on a living thread"?), weakness and even betrayal of part of the elite (for example, stars and oligarchs) - all this



What comes next?

THE criminal referrals and report released by the Jan. 6 committee may not provide a clear-cut path to charges for Donald Trump. But they lay a roadmap for an investigative agency with the tools to compel cooperation and gather more evidence from many of those closest to the former president.

The panel's final two acts effectively accuse Trump of betraying the country, recommending the Justice Department pursue four different criminal charges against him, while encouraging Congress to use the 14th Amendment to bar him from ever serving in office again.

And while it held back on making such recommendations for many in Trump's orbit, its 845-page report leaves a trail of breadcrumbs on a number of plots and people involved in working to prevent the transfer of power.

"What the committee has done is to refer the former president for criminal prosecution for his role in attempting to foment a rebellion against the United States and or its system of law. That has treason written all over it," said Jeff Robbins, an attorney who has served as both a federal prosecutor and a Senate investigative counsel.

The criminal referrals, and even the broader package of evidence laid out in the report, are merely suggestions for the Justice Department, which has its own sprawling, if less visible, investigation into what Attorney General Merrick Garland summarized as "whether any person or entity unlawfully interfered with the transfer of power."

But the sheer weight of the evidence presented to the public, along with the detailed argument breaking down the illegality of the plots, could put pressure on a Justice Department that has often — at least publicly — lagged behind the committee.

Taken together, the committee said there was enough evidence on hand to charge Trump with inciting an insurrection, obstruction of an official proceeding, and — with his lies about winning the election and effort to submit false slates of electors — conspiracy to defraud the United States and conspiracy to make a false statement.

They stopped short, however, of making referrals for the bulk of the names that have become central figures during their 18-month probe, like Trump chief of staff Mark Meadows, a slew of Trump attorneys including Rudy Giuliani, and Jeffrey Clark, the DOJ lawyer who was prepared to initiate an investigation into Trump's baseless claims of election fraud if the former president made him attorney general.

"This is a very delicate balancing test that the committee had to engage in, knowing this is a statement for the American people and for history, and that if they present like a machine gun, simply going after wide swaths of people at the point of making a criminal referral, that would damage their credibility," Robbins said.

On the other hand, they want to point out, and they did point out, that there are other people whose conduct should be investigated.

The report, while trailing the bombshell revelations laid out in its summer hear-

Rebecca Beitsch

ings, delves much deeper than the initial criminal referrals presented Monday, including offering some new details about the extent of efforts to pressure state officials to overturn the election and submit false slates of electors.

The path ahead will be determined by Special Counsel Jack Smith, who was appointed to oversee the Justice Department investigation on the Jan. 6 front as well as its probe into the handling of records at Mar-a-Lago once Trump announced his 2024 bid for the White House.

But the Justice Department has both powers and limitations the committee did not, particularly when it comes to presenting a case that can convince 12 jurors of a former president's guilt.

"They have tools available to them that are unavailable to the Jan. 6 committee, like search warrants to obtain phones where they can find encrypted messages, and the grand jury where they can have witnesses testify with subpoenas that actually have some teeth that can result in jail time if you refuse to testify. Or they can grant immunity and compel witness testimony," said Barbara McQuade, a former U.S. attorney.

"They most certainly have a much more difficult task than the committee does in presenting a case."

Trump charges face legal hurdles

Any charges against Trump would have to meet a series of legal tests — including, for some of the crimes, demonstrating intent. For others, the department would have to combat defenses from Trump that he was exercising his free speech or relying on the advice of his counsel in pursuing novel legal strategies.

"I do not think that anybody can reasonably say that any of these charges against the former president — these four charges — are a slam dunk," Robbins said. The charges for inciting an insurrection — while among the weightiest — could also be the most difficult to prove.

"While there is a very formidable body of evidence pointing to guilt, that doesn't mean that the former president is naked — and I'm sorry for the imagery — when it comes to a defense," he said.

"His team will have formidable legal and factual arguments that he is essentially being charged for speech....Politicians use phrases like 'fight like hell,' all the time. Politicians urge their supporters to demonstrate all the time," he said.

A 1969 Supreme Court decision protects speech other than that designed and likely to produce imminent lawless action.

McQuade, however, said the committee framing could pass that bar, focusing not just on his fiery speech directing a mob toward the Capitol, but fanning the flames once violence was underway by firing off a tweet attacking Vice President Mike Pence.

"When he wrote those words, he knew exactly what he was doing. Before President Trump issued the tweet, a White House staffer cautioned him that the statement would imply that he 'had something to do with the events that happened at the Capitol' — but he tweeted it anyway," the

panel wrote in their report.

"The stroke of genius I thought, in the committee's referral, was to base it on that speech, but also on the tweet that Donald Trump sent at 2:24 p.m. where he said that Mike Pence lacked 'the courage' to do what was right," McQuade said, noting he sent the tweet after watching the violence unfold at the Capitol.

"I think it's that tweet — and they frame it not as inciting an insurrection, but as assisting in an insurrection — I think that tweet probably passes that [Supreme Court] bar," she added.

But she said the Justice Department could hit roadblocks in proving intent, an element necessary for the conspiracy charges.

"It requires that you knew what you were doing was wrong. The old George Costanza line: 'If you believe it, it's not a lie.' To what extent did Donald Trump believe these things and to what extent did he know it was all just a fraud and a lie? So all of those things have to be considered by the prosecutors in a way that the committee didn't have to deal with," McQuade said.

But the committee stopped short of recommending seditious conspiracy charges for Trump or those in his orbit, even as DOJ has successfully pursued such charges against members of the far-right Oath Keepers militia and prepares for a similar case against members of the Proud Boys.

The panel failed to fully tease out the ties between Trump, his associates, and members of the two extremist groups, even as some confidants like Roger Stone were connected with their leaders or relied on them for security.

Also outstanding is whether the Justice Department will see fit to pursue any charges against the other Trump associates named in the report.

McQuade said the transcripts alone — some of which have been released, others of which will be released in the coming days — could be a shortcut for the department, helping them determine any outstanding witnesses they may wish to speak with or prod for more information using DOJ leverage.

But the public nature of the release could also inhibit the investigation too.

"Not only can DOJ see that witnesses said, so can the rest of the world, and so it allows people to get their stories straight to say, 'What are the other witnesses saying about this? Oh, I better say the same thing,'" she said.

"Or it allows Trump and others to frame their messaging in certain ways to or just to discredit some of these witnesses that they knew said damaging things about them...So there's some downside to having all of this out there in addition to the upside that the Justice Department gets from this."

Any action from the Justice Department could still be months away, with the agency only just beginning to get much of the information it requested the committee share.

"The department, the special counsel, and their staff are already going very slow on this. The last thing that anybody wants to do in that department, in that special counsel's office, is to bring a prosecution of the former president and lose," Robbins said.

"No one wants the unification of the Russian people. Disunity - please, this is a pleasure, they will continue to shred. But no one wants unification and strengthening, except us - and we will do it and we will do it." This is the most important statement of the President - not just programmatic, but historical. Of course, from the very beginning of the special military operation, it was clear that its goal was not just demilitarization and denazification (that is, preventing Ukraine from joining NATO and dismantling the "anti-Russia" project), but also the reunification of Russian lands and the Russian people. But for the first time, Vladimir Putin stated this quite clearly. This is much more than any message from the President: this is the strategic goal of the country and our people. The strengthening of Russia is impossible without the unification of Russians - this idea is finally becoming an axiom. We do not need to prove this to any foreigners, but for many years in our own country this simple truth was ignored by a large part of the "elites". They didn't just reject it - some even ridiculed it as "nationalist nonsense, revanchism and Russian fascism." So what if the Russians are the largest divided people, it just so happened, there is nothing to twitch now, be patient and watch how your fellow tribesmen are converted into Ukrainians or Latvians outside the borders of Russia. What can we say about reunification, if in Russia itself, for almost half of the three decades of our post-Soviet life, the word "Russian" was at first semi-forbidden, almost abusive, and then bashfully hushed up.

Russian world. "Divide and rule" - this slogan has been in force since ancient times and is still actively used in real politics. Therefore, our potential adversary, our opponents have always dreamed about this and have always been engaged in this; they tried to divide us and then lead separate parts.

What's new here? The idea was born long ago on its own Ukrainian separatism, still within the framework of a single country. You see, I talk about this all the time: if someone thinks that a separate ethnic group has formed and wants to live independently, for God's sake, you should never go against the will of the people.

But if this is so, then this principle should be universal, and in no case should one go against the will of that part of the people who feel themselves in a different hypostasis, considering themselves part of the Russian people and the Russian world, believing that they are part of this culture, part of this language, part of this history and tradition. And you can't fight against them either.

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how is it, why is this mention of a state-forming people, we have a federation! Although the continuation of the quoted phrase read: "part of the multinational union of equal peoples of the Russian Federation" (that is, the equality of all the peoples of Russia was emphasized), there were enough dissatisfied with "Russian nationalism", especially among the "creative class", which, alas, was largely cosmopolitan in our country. Less than three years have passed - and now the president is talking about the unification of the Russian people, and a large part of those very "fighters against Russian nationalism" openly wish Russia's defeat and victory for Ukraine and the West.

But they cannot prevent the Russians from uniting - both because they are terribly far from the people (and many of them are already far away in every sense), and because they have already reached the shameful division into "bad" and "good" Russians, and some even to the point of abandoning their people, although there are many among them who never

the re-creation of a big Russia: they would save it from collapse. A bet on such a scenario is also being made, but on a residual basis. Because it is absolutely unrealistic - despite the demographic and migration processes that are unfavorable for Russians, Putin did everything to ensure that the unity of the federation was not formal, but real. The Russia of 2022 is not like the sprawling Russia of the 2000s, one that was really in danger of collapse. The national question is of great importance for the unity of the country, but the country can not be destroyed"

So what can stop him from winning? Only he himself - only the Russian people can prevent the victory of Russia. If he allows external opponents to play the card of dissatisfaction with the authorities, that is, he will repeat his own mistakes of a hundred years ago, the First World War, which led to the catastrophe of February 1917. Moreover, we are talking about dissatisfaction with the authorities precisely on the part of the patriots, those who wish Russia's victory and the restoration

gives a lot of reasons for discontent and denunciations of those in power and the rich. And the course of hostilities is completely: generals are fools, officials are thieves, everyone is weaklings and scoundrels. Some part of our society thinks something like this, and then they are carefully prompted: "and also traitors, and at the very top." And some agree: yes, we ourselves thought so. "But you need to save the Motherland, don't you agree?" they ask. "Real patriots must throw off this power and win the war." "Well, yes, of course," real patriots answer.

All this has already been in our history - and God forbid we see a repetition of this. But we won't see. Because the authority of Vladimir Putin, the historical experience and wisdom of the majority of the Russian people serve as immunity against the "virus of February 17th." The Russian people will reunite, put forward a new, real elite from their ranks, Russia will change, become stronger and fairer - not because Putin said so, but because our people themselves want it.

‘Whoever gets close to him he just attacks’

REPUBLICANS are struggling to navigate an increasingly complicated relationship with former President Trump, who has emerged from the midterms in arguably the weakest position he has been in but who remains deeply influential among the GOP's conservative base.

After a midterm election that many Republicans saw as a rejection of Trump and his slate of chosen candidates, some party officials and operatives have begun to wonder how the GOP can move past the former president, whose dominance in Republican politics has yielded lackluster results for the party over three consecutive election cycles.

Things became even more difficult for the former president on Monday after the congressional committee investigating the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol voted to refer Trump to the Justice Department for allegedly inciting an insurrection, among other potential crimes.

Doing so, however, won't be easy. Not only does the former president still command the devotion

of a loyal faction of conservative voters, but he is once again running for the White House, ensuring him a place in the national spotlight — at least for the time being.

"There are three types of people: pro-Trump people, anti-Trump people and those who just want to move on," one Republican strategist and former GOP official said. "The difficult part, I think, is that we all have to exist in the same party. There's gotta be some deference for President Trump, even if you're in the camp that wants to move on."

That doesn't, however, make Trump untouchable. Since last month's midterm elections, a growing chorus of prominent Republicans has placed blame on the former president for isolating moderate and independent voters, elevating untested candidates in GOP primaries and putting Republicans on the defensive in a year when they should have had the political wind at their backs.

"Our ability to control the primary outcome was quite limited in '22 because the support of the former president proved to be very decisive in these primar-

Max Greenwood

ies," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told reporters last week. "So my view was to be the best you can with the cards you're dealt. Now, hopefully, in the next cycle we'll have quality candidates everywhere and a better outcome." At the same time, there are signs that other prospective Republican presidential contenders — most notably Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis — are gaining traction among the party's voters, despite Trump's best efforts to maintain his vise-like grip on the GOP.

A survey from The Wall Street Journal released last week showed DeSantis scoring 52 percent support to Trump's 38 percent, while a USA Today-Suffolk University poll released around the same time found DeSantis leading Trump 56 percent to 33 percent in a hypothetical primary match-up.

But even if Trump fails to capture the GOP's presidential nod, he's not likely to disappear. Democrats still managed to effectively weaponize Trump's controversial political brand during the 2022 midterm elec-

tions, despite the fact that he wasn't on the ballot.

There's also some concern among Republicans that too forcefully breaking with Trump could cause backlash, not only from his most loyal supporters, but also from the former president himself, who has a penchant to attack anyone he perceives as an enemy or rival — including those in his own party.

"Whoever gets close to him he just attacks," said Keith Naughton, a veteran Republican strategist. "That's been Trump's playbook from the beginning and I don't see that changing at all."

Trump's various controversies and legal problems could also make it harder for other Republicans to ignore him.

He's facing a special counsel investigation into whether he illegally kept sensitive government documents upon leaving the White House, as well as a grand jury probe in Georgia focusing on whether he and his allies sought to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The former president is also facing a civil suit filed by New York Attorney General Letitia James

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UAE, Pakistan trade growth termed satisfactory

ISLAMABAD (APP): The total trade between the UAE and Pakistan reached Dhs19.7 billion in 2021, with a growth rate of 23 percent compared to 2020, and the growth rate of trade volume between Ajman and Pakistan reached 30 percent during the last five years.

Abdullah Al Muwajji, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ajman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), has affirmed the Chamber's keenness to consolidate its external relations and build strong partnerships to

achieve sustainable future growth for the economy of the Emirate of Ajman.

This came during his meeting with Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the UAE at the ACCI headquarters on Saturday where they discussed joint economic cooperation, ways to consolidate bilateral relations and examined available investment opportunities in the industry, trade, tourism and education sectors.

At the beginning of the meeting, Abdullah Al Muwajji welcomed the attendees, praised the deep-rooted brotherly relations between the UAE and Pakistan at the leadership and people levels and stressed the importance of

this meeting to discuss opportunities for cooperation and partnership between Ajman and Pakistan in many sectors, explaining that the ACCI is keen to consolidate its external relations and partnerships to achieve sustainable future growth for Ajman's economy.

Faisal Niaz Tirmizi praised the development renaissance in Ajman and stressed the need to exchange delegations and visits to learn about the available opportunities in all fields, explaining that the economic potential and opportunities available in both Pakistan and Ajman would open new horizons to increase the volume of intra trade and joint cooperation, Emirates news

agency reported.

The ACCI reviewed the investment opportunities in Ajman in industry, trade, construction, real estate, tourism, health, transportation and infrastructure among other sectors, in addition to the efforts made to provide an economic climate characterized by flexibility and speedy completion of transactions. An overview of the most prominent exhibitions and events organised by the Ajman Chamber was also presented.

The meeting was also attended by Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Nuaimi, Second Vice Chairman of the ACCI, and Mohamed Ali Al Janahi, Acting Director-General of the ACCI.



ISLAMABAD: Member Parliament UK- House of Commons Khalid Mahmood meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.

Khalid Mahmood called on Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khalid Mahmood, Member Parliament UK - House of Commons, called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar.

SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mahmood Pasha also attended the meeting, said a press release issued here.

Bilateral relations as well as issues of regional importance were discussed during the meeting.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Khalid Mahmood exchanged views on Pak- UK bilateral relations.

The Finance Minister expressed satisfaction at the level of friendship between the two countries and hoped that the existing cooperation between both countries will further strengthen in the future.

Khalid Mahmood felicitated the Finance Minister on assuming the finance portfolio and also expressed sympathy on the loss of lives and properties in the devastating monsoon rains and flood.

Khalid Mahmood is the longest serving Member Parliament UK, House of Commons, elected from Birmingham Perry Barr.

Sales attract consumers to markets

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent brands and outlets are running on hot sales and offering mega discounts in the twin cities to make the arrival of the new year as an unforgettable event.

A citizen Rukhsana Afzal on Saturday said mega discounts from stores and brands have made women cheerful and they are out for shopping. She said customers are enjoying reasonable discounts online and in-store sales.

She said that her spirit feels the essence at a new year's start after getting the benefit of exciting offers. "People from various walks of life are also visiting markets to get the benefit of concessional offers", she added.

Another customer Sundas Waheed said that shopkeepers turn the year-end into an opportunity by announcing the sales as it helps them to clear winter stock. She said shopkeepers save expenses of warehouses and customers set aside the winter stuff for the next season after availing of discounts at sales.

Yaqoob Khan, on the contrary, said that mega sales and promotions motivate customers to purchase unnecessary items which is not a good practice in routine to follow and it also disturbs the house budget in times of inflation.

Global stocks mixed as oil prices jump on Russian threat

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stocks were mixed at the end of a meandering session Friday, characterized by light pre-Christmas trading volumes as oil prices were jolted higher by a Russian threat to curtail production.

After opening in the red, US indices bounced back and finished moderately higher following mixed economic data, while the US Congress reached final passage of a \$1.7 trillion package to keep the government running.

"Ultimately, a late afternoon push higher left the main indices near their best level of the session, albeit with slim gains, to close out the first day of the so-called Santa Claus rally period," said Briefing.com.

The broad-based S&P 500 finished up 0.6 percent for the day, but with a narrow loss for the week.

Orders for big-ticket US manufactured goods dropped more than expected in November due to a slump

in new orders for aircraft.

Meanwhile, the personal consumption expenditures price index, eyed closely by the Federal Reserve as a gauge of inflation, increased 0.1 percent from October to November and 5.5 percent from November last year.

The annual figure was below October's level but still significantly higher than policymakers' two percent inflation target.

Earlier, London posted minor gains on a shortened trading day, while Frankfurt added 0.2 percent and Paris fell by an equal amount.

Asia's main stock markets slipped after Wall Street ended well in the red on Thursday. Tokyo's main stocks index shed one percent as Japan's inflation hit a 41-year high, reinforcing expectations that the country's central bank would lift interest rates next year.

The yen surged this week after the Bank of Japan tweaked monetary policy, in a surprise move that hinted at future rate hikes.

Hopes meanwhile that China's growth will surge as it rolls back its zero-Covid strategy have been dashed by a jump in cases across the country that has kept people at home, and battered travel and economic activity.

"The spike in Covid-19 infection rates following the easing of mobility restrictions will still constrain economic activity in the December-January time frame," said Guan Yi Low of M&G Investments.

Oil prices jumped more than two percent on supply concerns after a senior official warned Friday that Russia could cut up to seven percent of its oil production next year.

Moscow is looking to follow through on a vow not to sell crude to nations implementing an international price cap over its invasion of Ukraine.

Shares of Chevron gained 3.1 percent, while Apache won 5.7 percent and Halliburton put on 4.1%.

Chinese beekeeping technology contributes to local honey production

BEIJING (APP): With the use of Chinese technology, Pakistan has witnessed a historic breakthrough in the processing of bee-related products, especially honey production.

Dr. Muhammad Asif Aziz, Associate Professor of the Department of Entomology Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, is in charge of the Billion Tree Honey Initiative and a participant in the online training course on beekeeping and honey processing technology sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and organized by Hunan Agricultural Group Co., Ltd., last year.

For him, the training came just in time as he was eager to learn more about royal jelly production, bee breeding techniques, honey production technology, and bee-related product processing to reach the goal of the Billion Tree Honey Initiative, that is to produce 70,000 tonnes of honey through the introduction of modern beekeeping equipment, training in the latest technologies, standardization and product certification, and marketing.

"It is challenging to receive technical training online, but I'm lucky to have a great online management team to make everything organized," he told China Economic Net.

"Chinese professors demonstrated the country's beekeeping technology through theoretical explanations and demonstrations on apiaries. And there were interesting introductions of Chinese culture, so we not only learned Chinese beekeeping technology but also had a deeper understanding of China", he termed the training "beyond expectation" and was awarded excellent trainee at the end of the training program.

The training made him realize that to further develop the apiculture industry in Pakistan, the first step should be to improve the skills of local practitioners in the production of various bee products, including royal jelly and other higher-value bee products, through training and capacity-building programs.

Therefore, he started to train local beekeepers in two categories. One is a

short-term course that teaches modern apiculture technology for professional bee farmers. The other is middle-to-long-term training for green hands.

Previously, local beekeepers used to think that royal jelly can only be produced in natural beeswax cups and in queenless colonies. Therefore, mostly they remained reluctant to produce this valuable product due to the fear of a loose bee population in the absence of queens and considered royal jelly production costlier than net profits.

"After learning about China's royal jelly technology, Dr. M. Asif Aziz along with his students decided to use Chinese technology. Then, he invited several bee farmers to learn and practice together. To everyone's surprise, royal jelly was successfully produced with plastic queen cells in colonies with queens.

"The approach of Chinese people to work for the betterment of humanity through knowledge sharing is remarkable, which ultimately will pave the path towards social and economic stability of both the nations", he said.

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SIALKOT: Businessmen women Lubna Advocate, Shabeena Gilani with other members of WCC cuts birthday cake of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

‘Gambit on the Devil’s Chessboard’ by Imran launched



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The grand launch event of the latest book 'Gambit on the Devil's Chessboard', written by Imran H. Khan was held at a local hotel here in Karachi on Saturday. The chief guest at the event was Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, Former Chairman, Senate of Pakistan.

Imran H. Khan has always been drawn to the world of storytelling. He is a seasoned professional who has delved into the deep realms of creativity and penned down a riveting fictional novel. His extensive experience establishing his own biotechnology company gave him a unique perspective on the deadly friction between the haves and have nots of the corporate world. This explosive and all too real unfolding scenario of clashing head-on with the powerful and even murderous elite, is the backdrop of his

latest novel.

A number of notable personalities attended the event as speakers which included Senator (R) Javed Jabbar, Ameena Saiyid, Muhammad Ali Siddiqi, Professor Huma Baqai and Professor Kaleem Raza Khan.

In his speech, Senator Raza Rabbani highlighted how Pakistan's most prominent novelists in the past decade have one thing in common, and that is they're all out of Pakistan. He shed light on how we no longer have the coffee culture that induced and instigated new ideas. "I believe, under the present circumstances, this novel is a breath of fresh air. Imran H. Khan has written an amazingly fast-paced novel. He may have penned a fictional novel, but I would call it fictional reality with the way he has drawn parallels with the real world."

Imran H. Khan expressed his deep grati-

tude to the organizers and the participants of the event. He shed light on his journey of writing the novel and said, "The backdrop of the book and the reason why I wrote this novel is to bring to light the drastic imbalance of power and wealth is something we need to be worried about." He further said, "It has indeed journey of learning to get to this point. I want to thank the organizers, my mentor for helping me in this journey."

Professor Abid Azhar speaking at the event said, "I have read this book multiple times now. Being closely associated with Imran H. Khan; recognizing his passion and drive, I can see how this book has become a reality. This book is a culmination of his relentless thirst for learning. I congratulate Imran on the successful launch of his amazing book and would encourage all of you to read it."

Mr. Kaleem Raza Khan,

one of the honorable speakers at the event shared his thoughts and commended Imran H. Khan's style of writing. His excellent use of metaphors transports one into a world on its own; as if you're watching a movie.

Professor Huma Baqai stated, "Fact is stronger than fiction; and when fiction is written with facts in mind, it creates something like no other. Imran H. Khan's novel will truly resonate with you as he bases every aspect of his novel with the real world."

Amongst the speakers was Muhammad Ali Siddiqi, Resident Editor Dawn and a renowned writer. He said, "A successful writer is one who can create an ambience for the reader. That is exactly what the writer has done."

Amina Saiyid OBE said she started off the book with thoughts that she'd complete it in 10 days. She said she completed it in 3 days straight. "The book is not only fast-paced and action packed, it is so grounded in reality that it resonates with the reader."

Senator Javed Jabbar in his speech said, "Each speaker has truly done justice to the book. What a pleasure it was to read. One of the reasons why I found it riveting was how it is so fast-paced. Yet it is very clear and precise with the flip of every page. It reminded me of our beloved Pakistan and how we can lack the intellectual freedom and the right environment to have writers like Imran H. Khan come to light."

12th Engro SGA President Cup: Saim Shazli maintains lead on second day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Second round of the 12th Engro SGA President Cup 2022 was played on Saturday at Defence Authority Golf Club. Saim Shazli from KGC maintained lead with 143, one under par. Yashal

Shah also from KGC is following Saim by scoring 147-three over par on Day 2. KCG's another duo of Samir Feroz and Arsalan Mughal is jointly holding third position on second day with their 153-nine over par.

In the Veterans 75 years

and above, Group Captain Aftab A Khan from KGC is leading with combined two-day score of 83. Col Shahid Mahboob scored 87 on Day 2 and holding second position. Dr. Zubair Mirza is holding at third from day one in this category.

Major Rizwan Farooq of

DHA Club maintained lead from day 1 in Veterans 70-75 years category, with Brig Latif Butt following him.

In the Juniors under 14 category, Waleed Bilal from KGC also maintained lead and Nyle Aurangzeb following him. Shayan Zia

is at third on Day two.

Final round of the tournament will be played on Sunday 25th December. Karachi's weather with chilled breeze and bright sunlight gives a clear view to the golfers playing at Defence Authority Club situated at coastline.



In brief

Matuidi retires

PARIS (INP): Blaise Matuidi, a World Cup winner with France in 2018, said he is retiring, a year after he last played. The 35-year-old, who started the World Cup final win over Croatia in Russia four years ago, had been omitted from Inter Miami's squad for this season. Midfielder Matuidi won Ligue 1 with Paris Saint-Germain and Serie A with Juventus after spending time with Saint-Etienne and Toulouse. He made 84 international appearances, scoring nine times before his final Les Bleus game in 2019. "I've decided to end my career as a professional footballer," he said in a video on YouTube. "I had the chance to play for the biggest European clubs, wear the France shirt, give my family a buzz, live my passion and they are images that will stay with me," he added. He is the first member of France's 2018 squad to retire. "My head, my heart, tell me to stop and to think about those close to me, my wife, my children, and this life I built," he said. "I think I've come to the end of what I'm able to bring to the table." Matuidi was present last Sunday as France lost in the final of this year's World Cup to Argentina in Qatar.

Meg returns to lead Australia

SYDNEY (INP): Skipper Meg Lanning included in the Australian women's one-day squad to face Pakistan, ending an indefinite months-long break and allaying fears that she had played her last international. The record-breaking 30-year-old announced she was stepping away from the game in August after leading her all-conquering team to Commonwealth Games gold. She said at the time it was to "focus on myself" after a hectic string of successes for Australia and Lanning that included a World Cup triumph. It was unclear whether she would return, but national selector Shawn Flegler said Friday that Lanning was "all in" to take on Pakistan at home next month. "We had always hoped she would come back and play, and a great story really," he added. "Obviously, she's taken this time to work out what's really important for her, things she needs to do to manage herself. 'You know, it's a tough gig being the Australian captain and she has done it for a long time, so just really pleased she's refreshed, happy and knows what she wants to do.'"

Messi reach agreement

PARIS (BBC): Argentina captain Lionel Messi has reached an "agreement in principle" to renew his contract at Paris St-Germain, says BBC Sport's Guillem Balague. Messi, 35, who led Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar, is out of contract at the French club in June 2023. Earlier this week Barcelona president Joan Laporta said he "would love" Messi to return to the Spanish club where he spent 21 years. But Balague says Barca have not approached Messi about a return. He will sign a one-year deal with the option of another year and the agreement has come after four months of talks between PSG director of football Luis Campos and Messi's father Jorge. That was followed by a key meeting in Doha with PSG chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi. "It is practically all agreed with PSG," says European football expert Balague. "Barcelona have not approached him or his dad to offer anything."

Shahid Afridi appointed interim chief selector

LAHORE (NNI): The new management committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday appointed former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi as the head of an interim selection committee for the men's national selection team for the ongoing home series.

The appointment means that the previous squad announced by the PCB for the upcoming series could undergo heavy alteration.

In recent weeks, Afridi has been quite vocal over team selection, questioning certain decisions over players. Team selections have come under the microscope recently owing to a poor run of form of the national team with reports of favoritism from several quarters over team selection. A recent tell-all book by former cricketing great Wasim Akram also touched upon the prevalence of nepotism in team selections also raked up unpleasant truths.

Others picked to be part of the Men's National Selection Committee include former test cricketers Abdul Razzaq and Rao Iftikhar Anjum. Haroon Rashid (member Management Committee) will be the Convener.

PCB Management

Committee Chairman Najam Sethi also wished the new selection committee well in his official statement and reposed his full trust in their capabilities.

"I welcome the interim Men's National Selection Committee and have no doubts that despite limited time, they will make brave and bold decisions that will help us produce a strong and competitive side in the series against New Zealand," he said.

"Shahid Afridi has been an attacking cricketer who played all his cricket with no fear. He has nearly 20 years of cricket experience, has featured in all formats with significant success and more importantly, has always backed and supported young talent. So, in our collective opinion, there is no better person than him to understand the rigors, demands and challenges of the modern day game."

"I remain confident that through his insight and knowledge of the game, he will help Pakistan select the best and most deserving players, and contribute in the side's success in the upcoming series."

Shahid Afridi: "I feel honored to have been assigned this responsibility by the PCB Management

Committee and will no stone unturned in fulfilling this responsibility to the best of my abilities."

"We need to get back to our winning ways and I have no doubts that through meritocratic and strategic selection decisions, we will help the national side to perform strongly in the series against New Zealand and reclaim the confidence of our fans."

"I will soon convene a meeting of the selectors and will share my plans with reference to the upcoming matches."

Shahid Afridi played 27 Tests, 398 ODIs and 99 T20Is from 1996 to 2018 in which he scored a total of 11,196 runs and took 541 wickets. He also captained the national side in 83 international matches. He was a member of the Pakistan side that won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2009 at Lord's.

Abdul Razzaq, in a 17-year career from 1996 to 2013, played 343 international matches and scored 7,419 runs and took 389 wickets. He was also a member of the side that won the 2009 side that lifted the T20 World Cup at Lord's. Rao Iftikhar played a Test, 62 ODIs and two T20Is from 2004 to 2010.

Pakistan, New Zealand hold training sessions

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan held a full-strength training session on Saturday at the National Bank Cricket Arena before the first Test of the two-match series against New Zealand, starting on Monday.

All the players of Pakistan's Test squad participated in the first training session held in Karachi with the exception of their skipper Babar

Azam, who is currently in his hometown Lahore. The captain, however, will reach here in the evening.

Meanwhile, a full-strength New Zealand squad was present on the field and carried out robust training sessions that included batting, fielding and bowling drills.

Pakistan head coach Saqlain Mushtaq and Kiwi spinner Ish Sodhi

were seen inspecting the pitch and evaluating the conditions of the venue for a long part.

It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan will take on New Zealand in a two-match Test series. The opening match of the series will commence on December 26 here, while the venue of the second Test is under consideration.



PCB plans to add Quetta as a venue for HBL PSL

LAHORE (PPI): Najam Sethi chaired the first meeting of the Pakistan Cricket Board's Management Committee at the National High Performance Centre on Friday.

The Management Committee received a detailed update on the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 and desired to add Quetta as the fifth venue for the eighth edition of the PCB's annual marquee event, which is scheduled to be held from 13 February to 19 March.

To ensure Bugti Stadium was ready to host the HBL PSL 8 matches, the Committee agreed that PCB will work closely with the local administration for upgradation and renovation of the Bugti Stadium, while separate discussions will take place between PCB security experts and local authorities to ensure the safety and security of all the participants, officials and spectators.

Mr Najam Sethi: "I am delighted

that seven years after launching the HBL Pakistan Super League, I am today announcing our commitment to add Bugti Stadium in Quetta as the fifth venue for our marquee event."

Bugti Stadium is the home ground of Quetta Gladiators and we still remember the incredible scenes when the Gladiators visited the city after winning the 2019 tournament.

"The passionate cricket fans of Quetta have been waiting for long to watch high-profile cricket in their backyard and I am pleased that we will now bring HBL PSL matches to their doors."

In this relation, I have already spoken with influential officials in the Balochistan province, who have assured me of their complete support from event delivery perspectives."

The Committee also discussed Peshawar as a potential venue to stage HBL PSL and international

matches and agreed that subject to there being no restrictions imposed by the provincial and federal governments and the stadia boasting international standard facilities for cricket, broadcast, spectators and media, matches will be held in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa capital.

The Management Committee also held preliminary discussions on The Women's League with further discussions to take place in due course.

The Management Committee discussed the domestic cricket structure under the PCB Constitution 2014 and, in the best interest of the players and event, decided to let the Pakistan Cup complete on 3 January.

On the domestic structure, which mirrors the PCB Constitution 2014, it was agreed Mr Najam Sethi, Mr Shakil Sheikh and Mr Haroon Rashid will prepare the first draft, which will be shared with the Committee for further discussions.

Second Pakistan vs New Zealand Test moved from Multan to Karachi

KARACHI (Cricinfo): The second and final Test between Pakistan and New Zealand, scheduled for a January 3 start in Multan, has been moved to Karachi - and to January 2 - because of poor weather conditions in Multan.

As reported by ESPNcricinfo on Friday, talks were on between the two boards to rejig the schedule as severe fog and even smog is expected in Punjab - Multan and Lahore are both in the area - in early January. The PCB noted in a statement on Saturday that the weather in Multan had "already disrupted flight operations and may also potentially result in the loss of playing hours".

The change means that the entire

series - two World Test Championship matches and three World Cup Super League ODIs - will now be played in Karachi.

The first Test will be played from December 26 to 30, and, with the Test starting a day earlier than expected, the ODIs will now be played on January 9, 11 and 13.

Multan hosted the second Test between Pakistan and England in early December, and while there were no visibility-related interruptions then, air quality was notably worse than it was in Rawalpindi, where the first Test was played. At the time, the flight to Multan was, in fact, delayed by almost four hours because of fog, and visibility early in the morning was significantly lower than normal.

However, the sun did burn away most of the fog by the time play started, at 10am local time, and there were no delays on that front.

Since then, though, Multan has been overcast and that is expected to continue. On several occasions over the past week, the motorway from Lahore to Multan has been closed to traffic for several hours due to foggy conditions.

Revised itinerary
December 26 to 30: 1st Test
January 2 to 6: 2nd Test
January 9: 1st ODI
January 11: 2nd ODI
January 13: 3rd ODI
All the matches will be played in Karachi



Ahead of milestone 100th Test, Warner vows to play like his old self

SYDNEY (BBC): David Warner has vowed to go back to the future on the eve of his 100th Test as he strives to end his lean three-year run in Test cricket ahead of a massive 12 months for Australia's Test team.

Warner's milestone has given him pause to reflect on what has got him to this point and what has made him the player he is. He is just 78 runs shy of 8000 Test runs, and only four openers in history have scored more than his 24 Test centuries. Yet he has not passed three figures in Test cricket since January 2020.

But with his milestone match just two days away, he has vowed to play like the Warner of old as he searches for that elusive Test century.

"I know when I'm at my best, I'm taking the bowlers on," he said on Saturday. "It goes well and it flows with the team and the guys with the other end. Now I've probably gone a bit more respon-

sible and trying to put the team into a good position without playing a bit rash."

"If anything I can probably be a bit more aggressive and go back to the older me, take them on a little bit more. But I think that also is dictated from what wickets you are getting. 'You don't want to have a dig at the curators, but the last two years our wickets have been green. If I go out there play a cover drive and nick one, you guys [the media] will have a feeding frenzy."

"But now I'm in good positions and I'm nipping off, that's the nature of the beast. This might be a wicket where I can go out and play like the old me. So you have to adapt to those conditions that's what I've been doing the last 18 months." Warner's assertion that he has been more circumspect is evident in his strike-rate over the last three years.

It has dipped to 57.21

compared to his staggering career rate of 71.18. Even more concerning though is the runs. In his last 15 Tests and 27 innings he has averaged just 26.07 with only four half-centuries. His numbers are even leaner in 2022. He has not scored a half-century in his last 10 Test innings.

Warner's claim that he needs to be more aggressive doesn't quite stack up against some of his dismissals in the West Indies series where he was out driving aggressively away from his body in three of his four innings.

But he claims he has been out of luck rather than out of form from either a technical or decision-making standpoint. "You look at some of the chop-ons and I've been in great positions when I've been nicked off," Warner said. "So there's nothing you can actually do about that."

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Bangladesh fought their way into what earlier appeared a lost cause on Saturday, knocking over four Indian wickets to leave the visitors teetering after Liton Das compiled a gritty half-century on the third day of the second Test in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh bowlers were given 145 runs to defend after Liton's steely 73 and a wagging tail steered the hosts to 231 all out.

Despite the subpar score, spinners Mehidy Hasan and Shakib Al Hasan rose to the challenge, reducing India to 45-4 at stumps with 100 still left to chase, leaving the match unexpectedly hanging in the balance.

Mehidy claimed three wickets after Shakib's initial breakthrough, removing Cheteshwar Pujara (six), Shubman Gill (seven) and Virat Kohli (one). Shakib started the slide with the wicket of captain KL Rahul for two. Axar Patel survived the day to stay unbeaten on 26 alongside

nightwatchman Jaydev Unadkat (three), with first-innings heroes Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer yet to come in.

Liton said after the close of play that Bangladesh could keep India

under pressure and eke out a win with early wickets on Sunday.

"It is possible to win if we can take one or two more wickets in the early morning," he said.

"Rishabh and Iyer are yet to come, they are of course good players, but as I said if we can take one or two more wickets they will remain under pressure." For India, building a partnership remains vital.

"I feel we should not overthink that four wickets have gone. If one of our batsmen get set, there won't be much pressure on us," fast bowler Mohammed Siraj said.

Axar had earlier downed three Bangladesh batters and all of India's bowlers were among the wickets.

But Liton rode his luck in an innings where he was dropped twice by Kohli -- first off Axar and then Ravichandran Ashwin -- to score what could be 73 vital runs.

There was little support for him on the other end after opener Zakir Hasan (51) fell soon after lunch until wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan joined him at the crease and the pair compiled an aggressive 46-run stand.

That stand was broken by Axar when he drew Nurul out of his

crease to set up an easy stumping for Pant.

Liton then added another brisk 60 runs alongside Taskin Ahmed (31 not out) before he was bowled by a Siraj delivery that nipped back in and found the gap between bat and pad.

Even with those small pockets of resistance, India looked to be in complete control of the match, picking up regular wickets with all their bowlers getting a part of the spoils.

Ashwin had Najmul Hossain trapped leg-before for five in the second over of the day before Siraj removed Bangladesh's first-innings top-scorer Mominul Haque for the same score.

Unadkat then got skipper Shakib (13) to spoon a length delivery to Gill at cover in his first over of the day.

With the hosts struggling, Axar added to their misery on the stroke of lunch, trapping the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim lbw for nine.

He added two more to his tally after the break, getting Mehidy lbw for nought before dismissing Nurul for 31. Siraj, Ashwin, and a run-out accounted for the final three wickets.



In brief

IRSA releases 34,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 34,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 37,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1489.35 feet and was 91.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,000 cusecs while outflow as 15,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.65 feet, which was 66.65 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 39,700, 25,200, 17,800 and 2,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Abbasi tests positive for COVID-19

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has tested positive for COVID-19. As per detail, the PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's counsel Khwaja Naveed Ahmed informed the accountability court that the former prime minister has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and is currently in Quarantine. He requested the court to exempt him from personal appearance in the case as he cannot travel from Islamabad to Karachi. Earlier, Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and others appeared before an accountability court here on Thursday in alleged illegal appointments in the Pakistan State Oil (PSO).

Admin foils bids to smuggle flour

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police while foiling three bids to smuggle flour and fine flour seized 837 bags here on Saturday. 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 three drivers namely Umair, Imtiaz and Rashid and recovered 837 flour and fine flour bags. 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.

Sufi Opera Singer performs

ISLAMABAD (APP): World's first Sufi Opera Singer, Saira Peter enthralled the audience of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad here late Friday in a live concert at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The concert was a Charity Musical Show by Saira Peter and other popular singers to help and support flood victims. The show was organized by PNCA in collaboration with Art Aid and Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts while those who performed included renowned Opera Singer, Saira Peter, Nouman Lashari, Jia Nouman, Nadir Abbass and Rajea Iman.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar cutting Christmas cake with the Christian employees of Finance Division on Christmas celebrations-2022.

Mushaal condemns Modi-led govt's undemocratic approach towards Yasin Malik

ISLAMABAD (INP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation (PCO) and wife of jailed Kashmiri leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik, has strongly condemned the undemocratic and inhuman approach of Narendra Modi-led fascist government towards Yasin Malik who was denied all legal and medical facilities despite being incarcerated in fake and fabricated cases and has serious health issues.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick, who is wife of Yasin Malik, in a statement issued in Islamabad, said that her husband was not produced during the scheduled court hearing last Friday in a false and fictitious case due to his fast deteriorating health condition.

She said the court adjourned the hearing till January 23, 2023 that

raised serious questions because he had several health issues but even then he was not provided with the much-needed life-saving medicines. The fascist Modi regime has failed to break Yasin Malik's resolve for freedom despite using all inhuman and illegal tactics, she added.

Mushaal expressed alarm that the brutal authorities subjected him to torture in the jail because they had no proof that can prove him guilty in the court, saying that she was worried about the life of her husband who was kept in death cell of New Delhi's notorious Tihar jail.

The PCO chairperson said that Yasin Malik was detained and deprived of all legal and medical facilities for his sole crime for being the most powerful voice of the Kashmir freedom struggle in Indian illegally occu-

pied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She urged the world community and international human rights organizations to shun the duplicity and raise a collective voice in support of Yasin Malik and Kashmiris who have been struggling for their birthright like they are doing in the case of Ukraine.

Mushaal said that Yasin Malik was being punished because he loudly stated in the Indian court that if seeking freedom from Indian occupation was a crime, he would continue to do so and was ready to accept its consequences as well.

She urged the human rights organisations to press fascist India to release Yasin Malik, who was battling for life in Tihar jail and play role in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as per aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

ANF seizes over 250 kg drugs; arrests nine

RAWALPINDI (INP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized over 250 kilogram of drugs, 53 heroin-filled capsules, 1604 liters prohibited chemical and 100 intoxicated tablets besides netting nine accused while conducting 15 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country during last three days.

An ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday, informed 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.

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

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. During an ANF operation 50 kg charras was recovered from secret cavities of a bus intercepted near Quetta-Hazarganji Chowk.

The spokesman informed that ANF in different operations conducted in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad and netted drug suppliers. 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. ANF North recovered 30 intoxicated tablets and 250 grams marijuana and rounded up three accused in an operation on G.T.Road Rawalpindi. About 48 kg marijuana was recovered from an area near Orakzai. Similarly, 48 kg marijuana was also recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Qilla Abdullah netted from Karachi Bilal Choranghi area.

No law can force assemblies to complete term: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Saturday no law could force parliament to complete its term.

Taking to Twitter, Sheikh Rashid said the Punjab governor's notification to denotify Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as chief minister of the province was unconstitutional and stressed that the CM could dissolve the assembly.

The former interior minister said how the government, which was even afraid of the local elections in Islamabad, could announce the general election. He claimed that the PDM and its allies would try to extend the tenure of the caretaker set-up and end cases against them.

On Friday, a larger bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC) suspended Governor Balighur Rehman's notifica-

tion of denotifying Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as Punjab chief minister. Ali Zafar, CM Elahi's counsel, submitted the unertaking duly signed by Mr Elahi, stating that he would not dissolve the Punjab Assembly until he obtained a vote of confidence from the house. Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman's lawyer argued that the governor would take his notification back provided the court bound the CM that it would not dissolve the assembly.

Justice Asim Hafeez remarked that the Article 130 of the Constitution of Pakistan barred court from halting the CM to dissolve the assembly after the court conceded to the governor's offer. "You must submit your undertaking in writing as we have to find a common ground for both parties", he added.

NA Speaker, Deputy felicitate Christian community

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Saturday extended warm felicitations to the Christian Community particularly Christian Parliamentarians on the auspicious occasion of Christmas.

In his message, the Speaker said that Prophet Jesus Christ was ordained by Almighty Allah to preach love, peace and tolerance and brotherhood.

"The Muslims deeply revere Prophet Jesus Christ as one of the great messengers of Almighty Allah," he said. The Speaker, on this happy occasion, reiterated the pledge of the parliament and government to fully safeguard the rights and privileges enjoyed by all minorities according to the Constitution of Pakistan and the guiding principles of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

National Assembly Deputy Speaker Zahid

Akram Durrani has also extended greetings to his fellow Christian colleagues on the auspicious occasion of Christmas. Jesus Christ's eternal message of love for humanity and for the Members of all communities and fraternities still holds the strength to ensure harmony and peace in the world. He said that in face of the current challenging situation in the country, we should forge unity to counter the nefarious designs of the enemies.

Rescue 1122 ambulances providing emergency care at 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 of 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 percent 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 emer-

gency 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).

Federal Capital police devise foolproof security plan for Christmas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Capital police has devised a foolproof security plan according to which 1500 police personnel has been deployed to avoid any untoward situation on the eve of Christmas that is being celebrated today Sunday. The personnel of Frontier Constabulary (FC) and Pakistan Rangers would also assist the Federal capital police on the occasion.

Following the directions of IGP Islamabad, the Islamabad capital Police was put on high alert to avoid any untoward situation. It revealed in issued press release that police personnel have been deployed at Churches, markets and recreational places situated near Christian wor-

ship places.

Moreover, special pickets were set up on major avenues of the Federal capital city. The SSP Operations fully affirmed to tackle any sort of situation and to provide peaceful atmosphere to every single criticizes of Federal capital on this historic colorful event. He viewed that green belts near the Churches were bring completely searched and added that Mobile Eagle, Falcon squads and police Commandos would ensure patrolling in these areas around the clock. Duties of the security personnel at the public places including parks would be made more effective. Security measures would be tightened at entry and exit points of the

capital and special checking has been ordered for this special occasion.

The CPO Operations stated that department has already directed all DPOs, Sub-Divisional Police Officers and Station House Officers for effective patrolling in their respective areas. No one would be allowed to park their vehicles near churches.

Walk-through gates would be installed at the entrance of the churches and the incoming visitors would be checked through metal detectors. Best possible security arrangements would be ensured to avoid any untoward incident in the city, he claimed, he added. The personnel of Bomb Disposal Squad would also ensure the search process of any area.

Govt announces 20,000 paid internships for engineers

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The federal government has decided to launch an internship program with Rs40,000 monthly stipend for 20000 engineers across the country.

This was announced by the Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal while addressing the 56th annual general meeting of Institution of Engineers Pakistan in Lahore on Saturday.

"We have decided to promote the engineering

sector in Pakistan," he said, adding that a large number of unemployed engineers in Pakistan need facilities for self-employment.

He went on to say that a huge amount of budget worth Rs6.5bn has been approved for five universities. Ahsan Iqbal further said that govt has decided to establish an institution with the name of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Last month, Iqbal announced providing 20,000 scholarships to

unemployed graduates of the country. He made the announcement while addressing an International summit on higher education and workforce development in Islamabad.

Ahsan Iqbal further announced that scholarships will also be awarded to the students of far-flung areas of the country under Youth Development Initiatives (YDI), recently launched by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Quaid-e-Azam Day to be celebrated countrywide on Dec 25 with full zeal

ISLAMABAD (APP): All are set to celebrate the 146th birthday of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on December 25 (Sunday) across the country with pledges to uphold his guiding principles of unity, faith, and discipline. The whole nation is busy in the preparations to celebrate the birth anniversary of the father of the nation with traditional zeal and fervor by paying rich tributes to him for his untiring struggle, sagacity and leadership that led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of sub-continent.

Public and private departments will hold a variety of events including seminars, conferences, competitions and discussion programs to highlight the messages and vision of Quaid-e-Azam.

The national flag will be hoisted on major government buildings throughout the country on the birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan. The day will dawn with special prayers for the security, progress and prosperity of the country.

Special events will be arranged on the day to highlight and promote the ideals and views of the father of the nation, particularly with regard to rule of law, the supremacy of the constitution, and the upholding of democracy.

Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) arranged a special ceremony on December 22 (Thursday) to mark the 146th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, 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 Professor Dr. Fakhar-ur-Islam were the special guests at the occasion.

The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold special programs on December 25 (Sunday) at Pakistan National Heritage Museum. A prestigious opening ceremony featuring vibrant performances will also be held at the Heritage Museum Hall, Lok Virsa, Islamabad.

Screening of video documentaries on Quaid-i-Azam will also be shown at the Pakistan National Monument Museum.

Nazariya Pakistan Council has also arranged essay writing competitions in connection with the Youm-i-Quaid celebrations in which students of different educational institutions participated and exhibited their extraordinary oratorical skills. Islamabad Cycling Association will arrange Cycle Race on December 24 (Saturday) around F-9 Park (Bolan Gate) on the main roads. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a true and upright leader whose devotion and committed efforts resulted in the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-continent. He with his leadership qualities and his vision changed the map of the world. The new generation should make Quaid-e-Azam their role model and follow his principles. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Shaoor will arrange hiking at Trail 5 followed by a discussion on Quaid's life on Sunday with the purpose to highlight the vision of the founder of Pakistan in a unique way.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi speaks during press conference at People Secretariat.

Drivers flay spike in fuel prices

KABUL (Tolo News): A recent increase in fuel prices has affected the business of taxi drivers who say they hardly earn an amount that cannot afford their daily needs. The price for a liter of petrol is 72 Afs and it costs 90 Afs for a liter of diesel in Kabul markets. Drivers said the prices have surged at least 6 Afs in recent days. “We can only earn to pay for the expenses of the taxi and cannot take even one loaf of bread home,” said Zabiullah, a taxi driver.

Drug addicts face tough situation

KABUL (Tolo News): A number of drug addicts in Kabul said the cold weather has complicated the situation for them and that some of them have died due to hypothermia. “I went to Iran for work where we used drugs with friends and it has been one year that I have turned into a drug addict,” said Yasin, a Kabul resident. “I used drugs with friends and now I am addicted to drugs,” said Omar, another resident of Kabul.

Fuel prices up, cooking oil down



KABUL (Pajhwok): The price of fuel has increased by four percent while the rate of cooking oil dipped during the outgoing week in capital Kabul, market sources said on Saturday. According to a worker of the Ahmadyar Group of Pump Stations, the price of one litre of petrol jumped from 70 afs to 75 afs and one litre of diesel from 89 afs to 91 afs.

According to reports last week, an oil tanker overturned and caught fire inside the Salang tunnel, connecting Kabul with northern Afghanistan. But, Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kalola Pushta locality, said the price of one kilogram decreased from 63afs to

62afs.

Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders Union, said the price of a 16-litre tin of Malaysian cooking oil increased from 1,800afs to 1,750afs. He added the price 49-kilogram bag of Kazakh flour stood at 2,200afs, 24.5-kilogram sack of Pakistani rice at 3,000afs, 49 kilograms bag of Indian sugar 3,000, one kilogram of African black tea at 400afs and the same quantity of Indonesian green tea at 350afs.

Hamid Sufizada, a retailer in Dahna-i-Bagh area, said the retail price of a 49-kilogram bag of Kazakh flour was 2,250 afs, a 24-kilogram sack of Pakistani rice 3,050 afs, a 49 kilograms bag of Indian sugar

3,050 afs, a 16 litres tin of Malaysian cooking oil 1,800afs, one kilogram of green tea 400afs and the same quantity of black tea 450 afs. Mohammad Foad, a jeweler in the Temor Shahi market, said the rate of gold remained unchanged.

He said the price of one gram of Arabian gold stood at 4,150afs and the same quantity of the Russian variety 3,320afs. Haji Hussain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Company, said one US dollar accounted for 88.70afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 360afs.

Last week, one US dollar was traded for 87 afghanis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 360afs.

Clerics oppose Minister’s remarks on women’s edu

KABUL (Tolo News): A day after the acting minister of higher education, Neda Mohammad Nadim, appeared in a TV interview, highlighting reasons for the closure of universities for women in the country, many religious scholars opposed his statement and said such views could not be accepted. Speaking to RTA, Nadim outlined four reasons for the closure of universities for female students.

He said the presence of women at dormitories and their arrival from provinces without male companions, lack of observation of hijab by students, the continuation of co-education, and the existence of some faculties for girls are in contrast with the “Islamic law and Afghan pride.” The religious scholars asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen universities for women.

“The presence of women in separate dormitories under the leadership of the Ministry of Higher Education is never against the Islamic sharia,” said Fazl Hadi Wazin, a member of the international religious scholars’ council. “Nowhere has it been mentioned in the Sharia that women cannot live in separate dormitories and safe places. Such a thing has never been in Islamic sharia,” “The closure of university can inflict a heavy damage to the future and nation of Afghanistan,” said Mohsin Hossieni, a religious scholar.

Female students also expressed their concerns over the suspension of higher education for them and asked the Islamic Emirate to “immediately” reopen universities. “What is our sin? We want our rights from the Islamic Emirate. We have studied with many hardships. What will happen to our future? They should consider our future,” said Hosna Sahibzada, a student.

“We have prepared ourselves in accordance with their law. Now they that they are in power, it is better for them not to close the universities,” said Shkullah Amiri, a student. “I hope the Taliban will reconsider their order and let the doors of the universities be reopened for male and female students,” said Suraya Paikan, a women’s rights activist.

Afghanistan exports over 3,000 tons of pine nuts

KABUL (Tolo News): More than 3,000 tons of pine nuts have been sent abroad in the past eight months, a spokesman for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) said. The MoIC spokesman Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad said the pine nuts were sent to countries in the region and to Europe and the US.

Among its new commitments, the Taliban pledged to honor women’s rights within the norms of “Islamic law.” The group’s spokesman Suhail Shaheen said at the time that women would be allowed to continue their education up to university – a break from the strict restrictions under the Taliban regime that ruled between 1996 and 2001.

The promises of a softer approach were met with skepticism, both within the country and abroad. Over a million Afghans have reportedly fled since the Taliban retook power. Sixteen months on, the Taliban appear to have reneged on their word. Women and girls are facing blanket bans on education after a series of decrees steadily eroded their rights in almost all aspects of life and upended the gains they had fought tirelessly for over the past two decades. Just days after retaking power, the Taliban reinstated the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice as a public morality watchdog tasked with enforcing the Taliban’s version of Islamic law. The ministry has since been central to the systematic chipping away of women’s rights in the country.

The Taliban announced on September 12, 2021, that women could attend universities with gender-segregated classrooms while wearing compulsory hijabs. But in March 2022, the government barred girls from attending secondary school. Girls’ secondary schools were set to resume on March 23, 2021, after months-long closures imposed after the Taliban takeover. The group ordered them shut just hours after they were due to reopen. The move devastated many students and their families, who described to CNN their dashed dreams of becoming doctors, teachers or engineers. In its latest step in the clampdown on women’s education, the Taliban suspended university education

Ban on women’s education contradicts Sharia: Al-Azhar Imam

KABUL (Tolo News): The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb said that he “deeply” regrets the decision issued by the authorities in Afghanistan, preventing Afghan women’s access to university education and adding that it contradicts Islamic Sharia and conflicts with its explicit call for men and women to pursue knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

The suspension of higher education for female students has triggered global reactions and criticisms. Many world countries and international organizations have expressed concerns over the decision and have condemned it. Tayeb said he warns “Muslims and non-Muslims against believing or accepting the allegation that it banning women’s education is approved in Islam.”

“Indeed, Islam firmly denounces such banning since it contradicts the

legal rights Islam equally guarantees for women and men,” he said. He called on authorities in Afghanistan to reconsider their decision for “the truth is more deserving of being followed.” At a press conference, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the continuation of the decision will have implications. “We are engaged with other countries on this right now. There are going to be costs if this is not reversed, if this is not changed,” Blinken said.

“Heartened by Afghan unity – resignations, protests, anger, despair and resolve – powerful expressions of solidarity, community and faith,” said the US Chargé d’Affaires Karen Decker. “We see you. We hear you. We support you.” Following a mass campaign against the closure of female universities, many lecturers announced their resignations.

“I am deeply concerned. I wanted to resign as a protest and I hope these protests and actions by us will convey our voices to officials,” said Raihana Halim, a lecturer from Kabul University who studies her Ph.D. in Turkey. “I have offered my resignation to the Ministry of Higher Education as a protest and in support of our sisters. There are some other lecturers who are trying to continue their process of resignation,” said Ihsanullah Rahmani, a lecturer from Kabul Polytechnic University who is in Turkey for his master’s degree.

Many Afghan refugees overseas held protests in reaction to the ban on universities for women. A group of students from different universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in response to the decision held a protest and demanded the reopening of universities for women in Afghanistan.

Education facilities almost not existing in Kohistanat district

MAIMANA (Pajhwok): Due to the lack of professional teachers in the Kohistanat district of northwestern Faryab province girls with below class 9th qualification have been teaching, according to local residents.

The lack of school building, textbooks and other learning materials for students are other problems the resident had talked about. Nazeeza, the student of class sixth at Lolash Intermediate School, complained against the non-availability of schools and textbooks in her area.

She asked education officials to take steps for the creation of girls schools in their area because she and her other colleagues wanted to study. She hoped to become a good doctor in the future because doctors and gynecologist because there was shortage of female doctors in their area. She also termed the lack of professional teacher a huge challenge and said their teachers were not qualified and they studied until class 9th.

Mohammad Mazloomiyar, a local influential persons said the state of education in Khoistan district was not good because most schools were without building, there is no equipment — chairs, tables — in the classrooms and students were taught by teachers who studied until class ninth. He added, In boys schools, there are some professional teachers who are from the municipal education department. However, in girls’ schools, teachers are hired from the urban area, they do not show up for duty, instead, ninth grade graduates are hired as teachers, who are not familiar with the principles of the trade union, the educational system, and the obligations of a professional teacher,” he said.

He said people want the acting government to address their problems

and take necessary steps in this regard. Lolash Education Director told Pajhwok Afghan News 35 schools, including two high schools 10 intermediate and 23 primary schools were functional in their area.

Acknowledging public complaints, he said only 8 schools had building and that needed rehabilitation. The remaining students studied in rent homes, under trees and open sky. In addition, he said no textbooks were existed as well. At present, four secondary schools for women in Lolash and three secondary schools for women in Bandar do not have professional teachers, according to necessity, they are taught by girls who have already studied up to the ninth grade, as well as women who have knowledge of religious and are highly talented

According to him, due to the distance and bad roads, the girls’ elementary school in the Zindan area has not yet been able to hire a professional teacher or at least a woman who has studied up to the 9th grade. The students of the mentioned school are taught by the teachers of the local school. Maulvi Hafizullah Mo’tasim Balleh, head of education in Faryab, confirmed public and the education director of Lolash views and said the challenge of lack of professional teachers and hiring girls below the ninth grade is not unique to Lolash; Rather, similar situation prevailed in the other three mountainous districts of this province Pashtunkot, Belcheragh and Garzivan.

He said they inherited education related problems from the past administration, adding that teachers hired at districts did not attended their classes but their sent other people instead of themselves. “Over 300 teachers hired by the urban direc-

torates of education had been dismissed because they did not attend their classes. Currently 120 men and women with 12th grade diploma or religious education had been hired. They were provided training workshop with the support of NGOs for capacity building purpose.”

Faryab Education Director said the problems and issues of the past 20 years could not be resolved in one or two years but it required more effort and time to improve the situation. Ustad Niamatullah, one of the senior teachers, said professional and qualified teachers trained qualified students. Individuals who studied till class 9th are unaware of teaching method, education principles, rules and regulation so they could not train good students.

He said if the administration wanted to building up a professional and qualified education system there were countless qualified persons in the area. Azizullah Dehyar, a retired officer of the education department regarding the specialties of a teacher said: “The degree of education, the field of study and the necessary skills of a teacher should be considered and hired through open competition, not based on relationships and choice.”

He said without Kohistan, there were 10,000 bachelor and university graduates in Faryab. Educated men are going abroad for work and girls are stayed at home not allowed to work. He said girls high schools were open in Balcharagh, Pashtonkot and Garezwan districts and annually up to 100 girls graduated from high school. According to the education rules when bachelor teacher is not available in the far-flung areas 12 class graduate could be hired there, he added.

Kids inoculated against measles, polio in drive

KABUL (Agencies): Millions of Afghan children have been vaccinated during the first nationwide integrated measles and polio campaign in Afghanistan since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) came to power in August 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

Afghanistan has vaccinated 5.36 million nine- to 59-month old children against measles while 6.1 million infants to 59-month-olds received oral polio vaccine during the vaccination drive held from 26 November to 12 December. Based on the data from Afghanistan’s Ministry of Public Health Expanded Programme on Immunization, the campaign covered 329 districts in all 34 provinces of the country – with 4,341 vaccination teams of four members on each team.

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

enter the harsh winter season in the country”, said Luo Dapeng, the World Health Organization Representative in Afghanistan. “I thank all the health workers, partners and donors who made this possible”.

Measles is a dangerous disease, with complications that can include severe diarrhea and dehydration; pneumonia, ear and eye complications; encephalitis or swelling of the brain; and death. This year, many outbreaks were reported in Afghanistan, mostly among children under age five. There is no specific treatment for measles and the only reliable protection from measles is vaccination.

“While measles is highly contagious, it is also a preventable disease”, said Dapeng. “We must not lose the decades of progress we have achieved in immunizing and protecting Afghan children”. As of November, 5,484 cases were confirmed, with approximately 300 deaths attributed to

measles infection.

Prior to the nationwide drive, a series of subnational measles immunization campaigns were conducted in 141 districts covering approximately three million children. “The measles vaccine is safe and has been in use for more than 50 years”, the senior WHO official said. “The benefits of vaccination are clear, as evidence shows measles vaccination saved over 23 million lives worldwide over the past 20-year period”.

WHO and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) supported the measles campaign in Afghanistan with vaccine procurement and delivery and the development of immunization guidelines and communication materials. The UN agencies also helped to build the capacity of health workers to manage and implement the drive and ensure that all eligible children are protected through safe and effective vaccines for measles and polio, WHO reported.

Afghans show mixed feelings about US

KABUL (Agencies): Despite its chaotic military and diplomatic withdrawal from Afghanistan over a year ago, US global leadership approval has seen a slight uptick among some Afghans, a new survey conducted inside the country says. Approval of US leadership among all Afghans is measured at 18%, slightly more than the 14% measured last year, while US popularity is sharply different among different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

“The US remains popular among Afghanistan’s Hazara ethnic community; 53% are still supportive of US leadership,” Gallup said in a statement about its latest survey in the country. The Shia Hazaras are an ethnic and religious minority in Afghanistan making up 10 to 12% of the country’s estimated 36 million people.

Gallup says its surveyors interviewed 1,000 men and women from 21 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces this year. Among Pashtuns, Afghanistan’s largest ethnic group, the US remains widely unpopular with only an 8% approval rate, while among Tajiks, the second largest ethnic group, it’s reported at 23%.

Most Taliban leaders are Pashtuns who fought

against the United States in Afghanistan from 2002 until US and Taliban representatives signed a peace agreement in February 2020. Despite its complex history of engagement in Afghanistan, the US remains more popular in the South Asian country than China and Russia, whose leadership approval rates are equally ranked at 14% in the survey.

The US spent about \$2 trillion on the Afghan war for over two decades. More than 150,000 people lost their lives in the war, including at least 2,400 US military personnel. A majority of Americans, 69%, said the US mostly failed in achieving its goals in Afghanistan, according to an August 2022 Pew survey. The drastic changes Afghanistan has seen over the last year seem to have disappointed an overwhelming majority of ordinary Afghans, according to the Gallup survey.

Nearly all Afghans, 98%, rated their living conditions as “suffering” under the new regime and only 11% said they have hopes for better opportunities for the next generation. Afghans are also increasingly concerned about a sharp deterioration in women’s rights. “A

record-low 22% of Afghans say women in their country are treated with respect and dignity — down from the previous low of 31% in 2021,” reads a Gallup statement.

“The one positive we did see was in relation to the safety that Afghans feel within their communities. The percentage of Afghans who feel safe walking alone at night in their communities increased from 22% to 52%,” said Julie Ray, a Gallup analyst. The Taliban’s return to power has crippled the Afghan economy, pushing 90% of the population into poverty, the United Nations has reported.

“Taliban’s rules of the 90s and currently can be encapsulated in one word: suffering,” Malaiz Daud, senior research fellow with the European Foundation for South Asian studies, told VOA. “They lack the management, organizational and resource mobilization skills to run a polity designed to look after an entire country.” Taliban officials, however, redirect all criticisms of economic paralysis to the West saying financial sanctions, assets freeze and a cessation of development assistance have pushed the country to the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

KATI urged to enhance women's participation in business sector, labour force

F.P. Report

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) to enhance women's participation in business sector and labour force as they could play an integral part in our society. He called for taking practical and time-bound steps to increase women's inclusion in the productive workforce and creating a safe, conducive, and women-friendly environment at the workplaces.

The President expressed these views during his visit to Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that businessmen played an important role in shaping business practices as well the opinion of society, and

that they must set goals and directions in order to achieve the financial objectives of enterprises for economic prosperity, in addition to playing their role to make businesses dispense their responsibilities towards society. He said that persons with disabilities needed to be employed in different sectors of the economy, while also keeping in view their particular skill-set and the nature and extent of their disability.

While alluding to the economic success of emerging economy of Vietnam with intellectual resources in the IT sector, the President said that the intellectual and human resource development of nation must equally be focused on in addition to developing its natural resources. He urged the need to establish and strengthen the academia-

industry linkages to produce graduates that could fulfill the market's requirements, besides coming up with solutions to the problems being faced by the local industry.

The President urged the business community to follow the path of the founder of Pakistan by pursuing the unity, faith and discipline to become successful in every walk of life and hoped that the business community would continue to strengthen economy of the country.

The President further said that it was encouraging that despite the challenges, Pakistan's exports for the first time in history had touched US \$ 30 billion mark and said that the government was committed to provide a competitive and fair business environment to entrepreneurs and had taken necessary steps to

achieve the purpose.

The President applauded the role of the business community towards the economic development of the country, especially after the post-COVID-19 era, where the business community not only followed the COVID-19 precautionary measures but also contributed towards economic growth.

Faraz ur Rahman, President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry, S.M Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief KATI and M. Zubair Chhaya, Deputy Patron-in-Chief Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) also spoke on the occasion and thanked the President of Pakistan to spare his time for KATI.

Later on, the President distributed awards among the office bearers of KATI on their achievements in the economic sector.



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi addressing Korangi Association of Trade and Industry.

8-member JIT formed to investigate suicide blast

ISLAMABAD (NNI): An eight-member JIT has been formed to investigate the Islamabad suicide blast in which two people including a police official were martyred and 8 others sustained injuries.

A notification regarding formation of a Joint Investigation Team was released on Saturday.

The police authorities have formed an 8-member team which would launch a probe into the suicide blast that ripped through Islamabad's Sector I-10 on Friday.

The DIG recommended the Islamabad chief commissioner to form the JIT which will be headed by the SSP of counter-terrorism department (CTD).

The other members of the JIT included: three DSPs, SP Industrial Area, SDPO Sabzi Mandi, and two officers of the sensitive agencies.

Yesterday, the CTD police registered an FIR of the Islamabad bomb blast. The case was registered on the complaint of an injured constable of the FIR Legal Squad.

The FIR was registered under sections of murder, attempt to murder, and terrorism.

According to the FIR, when police stopped a suspicious car at a checkpoint, the man sitting in the back seat exploded his suicide vest killing police official Adil Hussain and another person.

Elahi to seek vote of confidence from Punjab Assembly

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry has announced that Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi would seek a vote of confidence from the provincial assembly.

Talking to journalists in Lahore, the PTI leader announced that CM Pervaiz Elahi would seek a vote of confidence from the Punjab Assembly, noting that they have support of almost 187 members.

"Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is ready to dissolve the Punjab Assembly," Fawad Chaudhry claimed, adding that they were ready to contest election in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Lambasting the federal government over 'failed economic policies', he pointed out that the country was witnessing growth by 6 percent during PTI's tenure. "The incumbent government has destroyed the economy", he said, adding that they have disappointed the people of Pakistan.

Expressing concern over the rising terrorist activities in Pakistan, Fawad said that the militants have attack the federal capital of the country. "Instability is increasing in Afghanistan, which will directly affect our country," he noted, claimed that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto has damaged country's foreign policy.

He reiterated that only solution to country's political and economic crises was 'immediate and transparent elections'.

He also demanded with National

Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to accept the resignations of his party's lawmakers.

"At first, they [the government] challenged us to dissolve the assembly, but when we did it, they are running away and making every effort to stop the dissolution," he said, claiming that the government was afraid of elections.

A day earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC) restored Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Pervaiz Elahi and the provincial cabinet after suspending the governor's denotification order.

The Lahore High Court (LHC) suspended the governor's denotification order after getting assurance from Pervaiz Elahi to not dissolve the Punjab Assembly.

Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman had denotified the CM Pervaiz Elahi for not seeking the vote of confidence which was challenged by Pervaiz Elahi in the Lahore High Court (LHC).

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

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

PML-N and PPP had submitted no-trust motion against Punjab chief minister, speaker and deputy speaker to the provincial assembly's secretariat.

Keel Laying & Steel cutting ceremony of HANGOR Class Submarines held

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The indigenous submarine development project at Pakistan achieved another mega milestone, wherein, the Keel Laying Ceremony of first HANGOR Class Submarine and Steel Cutting of second Submarine held at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW). Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

The defence agreement between Pakistan and China included development of 08 x HANGOR Class Submarines including 04 under constructions at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group (WSIG) in China and remaining 04 being built at KS&EW under Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement. The construction work of first submarine to be made at KS&EW Pakistan commenced in Dec 21 and now the Keel Laying is being laid which is a major mile-



stone in history of any naval vessel being constructed. Concurrently, construction work on subsequent submarine has started with its Steel Cutting at the same shipyard.

HANGOR Class Submarine is capable to undertake variety of missions as per operational dictates. The submarine possesses advanced stealth features and fitted with State-

of-the-Art weapons and sensors to operate under multi-threat environment and can engage targets at stand-off ranges.

On the occasion, the honorable Chief Guest expressed that it is a matter of great pride to witness the Keel Laying and Steel Cutting of two submarines concurrently. He added that Pakistan Navy is aware of the evolving Geo-strategic

situation in our region and will continue to develop naval potential, improve shipbuilding infrastructure and equip platforms with advanced weapons/ sensors to counter traditional as well as asymmetric threats. The Admiral showed confidence that these submarines will play leading role in catering the operational needs of Pakistan Navy.

Earlier the distinguished Rep of M/s China Shipbuilding Offshore Company (CSOC) expressed his gratitude for the ceremony. He added that his company will ensure seamless provision of all resources/ support for smooth construction of submarines in Pakistan. He further said that Pak-China friendship is deep rooted and share common objectives.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of M/s CSOC (China) and other high ranking officials including distinguished guests from Embassy of China, Ministry of Defence Production, Pakistan Navy (PN) and KS&EW.

CM pays tribute to Quaid-e-Azam

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Mahmood Khan Saturday paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his struggle to create a separate homeland for Muslims of sub-continent and said that his

dedication and unflinching resolve for the cause would always be remembered.

In a message issued in connection with birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, KP CM said that we should follow his golden

principles of unity, faith and discipline to further improve country's stature in comity of nations.

He said that we could lead country on the way of progress and prosperity by following golden principles of father of nation. He said

that animosity of India towards Pakistan has proved that Quaid-e-Azam was right to launch struggle for creation of a separate homeland for Muslims.

Mahmood Khan said that Pakistan in impregnable and its people are fully capable to foil nefarious designs of enemies. He said that defense and sovereignty of the country is our priority and nation is fully prepared to preserve it against any misadventure.

CM felicitates Christian community on Christmas: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan has felicitated Christian community on Christmas and said that minority communities are free to follow their religion and enjoy rights as enshrined in constitution of the country.

‘Quaid advocated for freedom’

KARACHI (APP): Former President and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said on Saturday that the PPP was steadfast on its resolve to make Pakistan a democratic and welfare state.

The former president said that the founder of Pakistan was a true democrat and an enlightened leader who advocated for human and religious freedom.

Asif Ali Zardari said that PPP would continue to defend freedom of expression and political and religious liberty in the country founded by Quaid-e-Azam.

He said that the 1973 Constitution given by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a guarantee of stability of the country. He said that efforts were being made to impose a certain ideology in the country in the guise of religion, which was contrary to the philosophy of Quaid-e-Azam and that could not be allowed under any circumstances.

Quaid-e-Azam Day

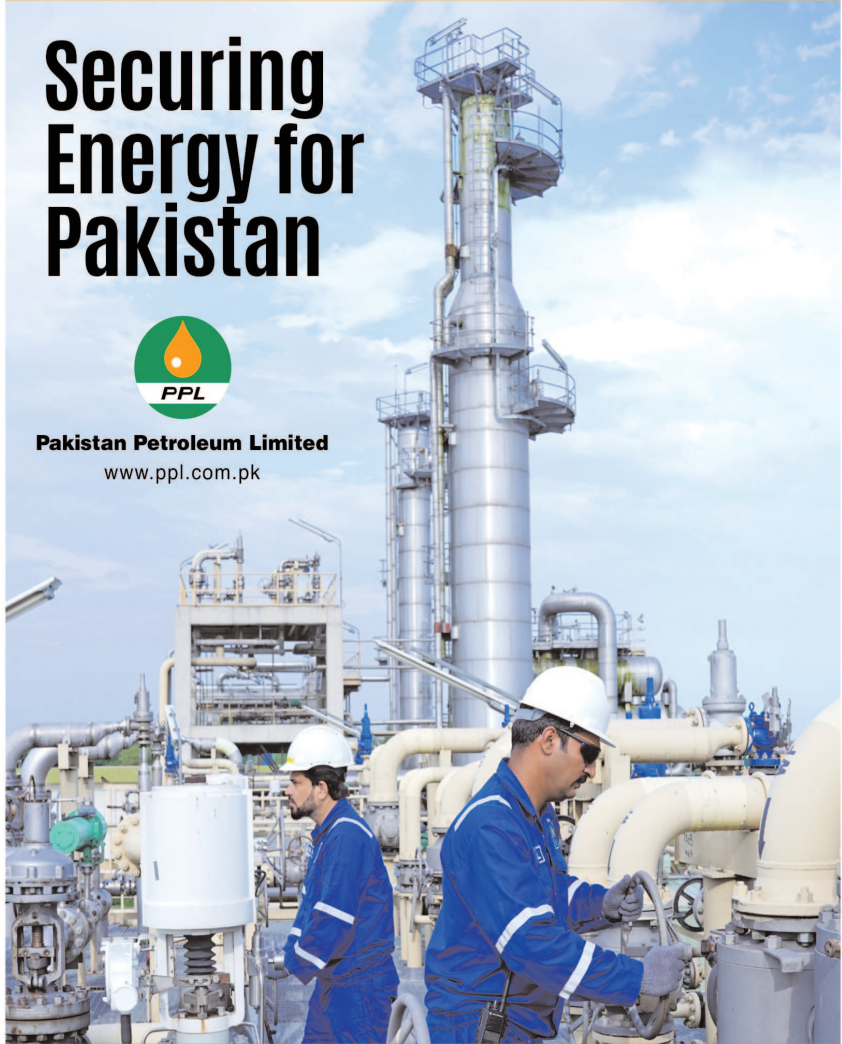
“Nature has given you everything; you have got unlimited resources. The foundations of your State have been laid, and it is now for you to build, and build as quickly and as well as you can. So go ahead and I wish you God speed”

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah
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