

'Welfare of media persons'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that the present government was taking all possible measures for the welfare of journalists. Congratulating the newly elected office bearers of Lahore Press Club, she said the PML-N government fully believed in freedom of speech and independence of the press.

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PM confident about steering country out of economic woes, post flood challenges

DIKHAN (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed the resolve that despite myriad economic challenges including the post-flood situation, the coalition government was determined to steer the country out of the current difficulties.

Addressing a ceremony after laying foundation stones of different uplift communication, road, hydel, and power infrastructure projects, the prime minister said: "These challenges might be manifold but 220 million people of the country should not get worried, the coalition government with the support of its partners will steer the country out of the challenges."

He said for the achievement of progress and prosperity, they would have to work hard with devotion. "Nations always faced difficulties and the coalition government will put Pakistan on the path of development only through hard work," he added.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Advisor to PM on Political Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam, Amir of Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam-F Maulana Fazlur Rehman, relevant authorities and a large number of people were present on the occasion. The prime minister said that he had laid down the foundations for the commencement of mega-development projects in the backward areas of the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He mentioned that during his previous visits, these areas were inundated with flood water and the people of the areas had faced immense destruction, from Nowshera to Swat, Kalam, Kohistan, Dikhan and Tank districts were badly affected by floods.

Destruction in Swat was caused mainly due to man-made structures erected in the middle of the course of the river, he said, and criticized the provincial government of PTI for its

flawed policies.

The prime minister sarcastically referred that the PTI provincial government always talked about the introduction of an efficient system, but the people had witnessed the crumbling of that system whereas the government's blunders in this regard could not be neglected.

He said, however, that collective efforts were being made by all the governments to overcome the flood situation, but still different areas in Sindh were still under flood water and the people in Gilgit Baltistan were shivering from the biting cold. The prime minister said that the federal government had allocated a huge amount of Rs90 billion for the flood-affected populace and each affected family was given Rs25,000 each besides, ensuring the provision of medicine and food.

The magnitude of the disaster was huge, he said, adding, on 9 January a donors' conference would be held in Geneva and they would remind the world that the climate-induced calamity was the result of global carbon emissions by the developed nations. Pakistan had less than one percent of carbon imprints, but it had been pummeled by the extreme weather due to carbon emissions of the developed countries, he opined.

The prime minister further assured the nation that the federal coalition government in collaboration with the provincial governments, would not rest till the complete rehabilitation of the flood-affected people.

The prime minister said that the construction of the Hakla-Yarak motorway which had hugely reduced the travel time from Islamabad to DI Khan had been conceived and implemented by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

He said the whole country had been connected with a network of motorways and Nawaz Sharif solely deserved credit for the launch of such mega projects, adding that he had laid

the foundation stone of the last segment of the Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway section recently.

The prime minister reiterated that dream of Nawaz Sharif for a prosperous Pakistan would be fulfilled.

He regretted that during the past PTI government, all these uplift projects, initiated during the PML-N government were brought to a grinding halt. Citing the Hakla-Dikhan motorway, the prime minister said it was part of CPEC conceived in 2017, but the PTI government put these projects into cold storage, thus affecting the development and progress of the country. The prime minister also regretted that due to the faulty policies of PTI's government, the friendly nations including China were dismayed.

In a veiled reference to former prime minister Imran Khan, he said that the PTI leader had brought disrespect to the country after selling out the precious gifts donated by foreign leaders. They gave these precious gifts as a sign of fraternal ties with the people of Pakistan, but the former ruler sold them out in open markets, he added. The prime minister said that when he had taken the oath, he did not realize the economic disaster was heading to Pakistan and that it would soon be on the verge of default, but due to the efforts of the coalition government and all other relevant institutions and prayers of the nation, they saved the country.

He said still they were faced with economic challenges. Pakistan suffered a whopping loss of about \$30 billion due to floods and these woes were multiplied by global inflation and recession, the Russia and Ukraine conflict, and exorbitant price of gas and oil at the international market. He regretted that Imran Khan had no concerns for the public welfare and that his past government had never accorded any priority. The prime minister said the coalition government has still eight months' tenure left and after that period, elections would be held in the country.

Russia's removal from UN

KYIV (AFP/APP): Ukraine on Monday called for Russia to be removed from the United Nations, where Moscow can veto any resolution as a permanent member of the Security Council. "Ukraine calls on the member states of the UN... to deprive the Russian Federation of its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and to exclude it from the UN as a whole," the foreign ministry said in a statement.



DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif laying foundation stone of development projects for Southern Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Punjab assembly cannot be dissolved before Jan 11, Imran told

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Assembly cannot be dissolved before January 11, the legal experts told former prime minister Imran Khan.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan was briefed by his legal team on the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly in light of the Lahore High Court verdict. The legal experts informed Imran Khan that the Punjab Assembly cannot be dissolved before January 11 as the matter has been conditionally attached to the court's verdict.

The former premier was also informed that the legal status of a no-confidence motion also ended after Speaker Sibtain's ruling.

Legal experts were of opinion that Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman has to ask CM Pervaiz Elahi again to take a vote of confidence from the house.

Earlier, Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibtain Khan also said that the assembly cannot be dissolved till January 11 following the ruling of the Lahore High Court (LHC). The Lahore High Court (LHC) has restored Punjab Chief Minister 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

Imran asks party workers to shun smearing state organs

LAHORE (NNI): Former prime minister Imran Khan has directed PTI members to refrain from campaigning against the army and other state organs.

According to sources, Imran Khan told the key party figures during a meeting that the members should not campaign against the state organs. "Our fight was with General Bajwa," he stressed during the meeting that took up the ongoing political situation and the party strategy.

"We have no issue with the current leadership of the army. We have no issue with the current establishment, Imran Khan," he said and directed the participants to send the directives through video messages to the party members. The sources quoted Imran as saying: "The members will face the music if they go for smearing against the state organs. They should take a soft stance on Azam Swati's case."

Elahi to not dissolve the Punjab Assembly.

Board approves amendments in PDA Auction Regulations-2021

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Board of Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) has approved the proposed amendments in PDA Auction Regulations-2021 with the purpose of enhancing the existing lease period for various PDA properties including shops, open spaces, halls, commercial units, flats, parking space, restaurants, cafes, sasta bazaars, wedding halls and petrol/CNG pumps etc.

The 10th board meeting of Peshawar Development Authority was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Monday with the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. Provincial Ministers Taimoor Salim Jhagra and Faisal Amin Gandapoor, Member Provincial Assembly Peer Fida, Principal

Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Local Government Zaheer-ul-Islam, DG PDA Fayaz Ali Shah and other Board Members attended the meeting. In order to create a conducive environment for private investment and to implement the development initiatives in an efficient and sustainable manner, the board formally approved the proposals regarding development of various PDA properties on public private partnership basis.

The forum principally approved the revised budget estimates for 2021-22 and budget estimates for the year 2022-23 for Peshawar Development Authority. The forum also approved the revised logo of New Peshawar Valley which is in coherence with public sector housing schemes. Moreover, the board accorded approval regarding adoption

of the revised pay scale 2022 and allowances already notified by the provincial government for the employees of Peshawar Development Authority. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan directed the PDA to chalk out an annual calendar for the auction of its properties.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan further directed the authority to streamline its affairs in accordance with contemporary needs, adding that the provincial government is working for the empowerment of autonomous institutions so as to minimize their fiscal dependence on the provincial government. On this occasion, PDA also handed over a cheque of Rs. 7.5 million, contributed by employees of PDA to the Chief Minister's Flood Relief Fund.

COAS, CJCSC attend funeral of Captain martyred in Balochistan

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Chief of Army Staff Gen Syed Asim Munir and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza on Monday attended the funeral prayer of Captain Fahad who embraced martyrdom in Balochistan's Kahan area during a clearance operation.

Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported that the funeral prayers were offered in Army grave-

yard and later the martyred was laid to rest with full military honors.

Senior civil and military officers, soldiers, and other citizens also attended the funeral. Earlier, an Improvised explosive device (IED) exploded while the Army was conducting an intelligence-based clearance operation in Kahan area of Balochistan resulting in the martyrdom of five army men including Captain Fahad and four sepoy.

Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR), in its press release, stated "Captain Fahad along with four other brave sons of soil Lance Naik Imtiaz, Sepoy Asghar, Sepoy Mehran and Sepoy Shamoon have embraced Shahadat, laying their lives in defence of the motherland against an externally perpetrated threat of terrorism". "The operation was underway in Kahan area of Balochistan since 24 Dec 2022", the statement added.



RAWALPINDI: CJCSC General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), and other carrying coffin of late Captain Muhammad Fahad Khan, who embraced shahadat yesterday in IED Blast near Kahan Balochistan for funeral prayer at Army Graveyard Rawalpindi.

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Customs seize mobile phones, other items worth millions

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Customs on Monday foiled a smuggling bid of mobile phones and accessories worth millions of rupees at Karachi Airport and arrested a passenger.

According to spokesmen for Customs, the Customs officials posted at Arrival lounge of Jinnah International Airport (JIAP) intercepted a passenger on suspicion, travelling from Dubai to Karachi. On investigation, they recovered about 65 iPhones, chargers, laptops and other valuables.

The worth of seized items was Rs 7.1 million. A case had been registered and further investigations were underway.

B.Com (Regular) Annual Exams 2021 result announced

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi on Monday announced the result of B.Com (Regular) Annual Examinations 2021. As many as 11, 261 students registered for the exams, of which 10, 794 students appeared in the exams. Among the successful candidates, 718 passed in first division, 2, 665 students were placed in the second division while three candidates managed to clear their exams in the third division.

The overall pass percentage was 31.37 percent.

The gazette shows that Zuhra Rizwan d/o Rizwan Ali Khan, having roll number 107396, and a student of D.A. Degree College for Women (Phase-VIII), secured 1087 marks out of a total of 1400 marks and clinched overall first position. It also shows that Urooba d/o Ashfaq Hussain, having roll number 107020, and a student of Khatoun-e-Pakistan Government College for Women, obtained the second position with 1059 marks while Maryam Sajid d/o Sajid Hussain Khan, having seat number 105776, and a student of Government Degree College for Women (Korangi No:4) got the third position with 1056 marks.

Ch Salik appointed PML-Q senior vice president

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In yet another twist and turn of the events in Punjab, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) has appointed Chaudhry Salik Hussain as party's senior vice president.

PML-Q president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain accorded approval of his appointment. Following the approval, party's secretary general Tariq Bashir Cheema issued notification of the Salik's appointment.

Earlier, PML-Q General Secretary Tariq Bashir Cheema had terminated Kamil Ali Agha's basic party membership for accepting a resolution seeking the removal of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain from the president's slot.

In a termination letter, it stated that multiple show-cause notices were issued to Mr Agha to seek an explanation for a meeting held at the PML-Q House on July 28, but he "turned a deaf ear" to the notices.

CM chairs 21st meeting of PMA

LAHORE (APP): The 21st meeting of the Punjab Masstransit Authority (PMA) was held under the chair of Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi at his office on Monday.

PMA Managing Director briefed about the procurement of new buses.

The chief minister stated that new buses would have separate seats for women, blind and differently-abled commuters who would be provided seats near the bus entrance. Plying environment-friendly hybrid buses would reduce environmental pollution and smog while passengers would benefit from a cheap and quality transportation system, he added. He announced that exclusive bus stops would also be set up for women commuters in Lahore. The CM ordered to expedite the buses' procurement process and said that a timeline should be set for the implementation of the decisions. The process should be completed without delay and a report be submitted while deciding necessary issues, he concluded.

Principal Secretary to CM Muhammad Khan Bhatti, authority members, MPAs including Col (R) Ghazanfar Abbas Shah, Khadija Umar, Shamim Aftab, Khawar Hayat, Ghazala Farid, secretary transport, chairman P&D, secretary finance, secretary PMA and others attended the meeting.

CM felicitates line depts for maintaining peace on Dec 25: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has congratulated the cabinet committee on law and order, police, administration and other law enforcement agencies for the best security arrangements on the occasion of

the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Christmas.

In a media statement issued here on Monday, the CM said that line departments deserve accolades for their role in protecting the life and property of the people. With the grace of Allah Almighty and the effective measures of the Punjab government, both celebrations were held in a peaceful atmosphere across the province, he added. He said that the Christian community celebrated Christmas in a safe and perfect environment and wonderful arrangements were also made for Quaid Day celebrations, for which, he felicitated the line departments.

Similarly, cabinet committee members performed the responsibility of establishing peace by maintaining a coordinated liaison with line departments; he said and maintained that the way departments worked, as a team, was commendable. "We have to continue working with the same zeal for maintaining peace in the country" he added.

Punjab govt striving to improve living standards of people: CM: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has said that improving the living standard of the common man was the main concern of the Punjab government.

He was talking with the former member provincial assembly (MPA) Abdul Rashid Bhatti who called on CM at his office here on Monday to discuss different matters.

The chief minister said that historic legislation had been passed regarding the exaltation of religion and the Finality of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).

Governor Punjab defends decision of de-notifying CM

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has defended his decision of de-notifying chief minister Punjab after the latter failed to attain vote of confidence from the house on the given time and date.

Speaking at a seminar 'the role of business community in current economic situation' at a local hotel on Monday, he said, "I de-notified the chief minister under powers vested in me as governor by the constitution," and added that Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) has always believed in supremacy of law and constitution. Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said top priority of the coalition government is to make the country economically strong, adding that role of the business community in the development of the country's economy as well as in welfare work is commendable.

The Governor Punjab said continuity of policies is very important for the stability of the economy. He said there has been

foreign direct investment and continuity of the policies for many years in the countries that showed rapid progress.

The Governor said the Charter of Economy is indispensable for boosting the economy of the country and all political parties should be on the same page on the charter of economy. Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said economic crisis arose due to record deficit and heavy debts borrowed by the previous government. He said PML-N had brought stability to the country in the worst load shedding and economic crisis in 2013, despite unfavorable conditions and the same experienced team is determined to end the economic crisis in the country and achieve economic stability. He said instead of spreading despair in the nation, there is need to give hope.

Later, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman distributed awards among the businessmen for outstanding performance.

PBM launches social protection intervention for education of orphan girls

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Baitul Maal (PBM) has launched the first ever social protection intervention for education of orphan girls under its Orphan and Widow Support Programme by releasing the payments to deserving families.

PBM Managing Director Amir Fida Paracha initiated the process of releasing the payments in a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Iqbal here on Monday. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Parliamentary leader in Punjab Assembly, Syed Hassan Murtaza, PBM Director Projects Qasim Zafar, PBM Regional Director Mian Muhammad Azam and a large number of programme beneficiaries attended the ceremony. Addressing on the occasion, PBM MD Amir Fida Paracha said the education of orphan girls was often neglected in our society after the death of father.

He said the initiative was aimed to provide financial support to such girls so that they could continue their education and become future educated mothers. He said that it was the first ever initiative with an emphasis on education of orphan girls, adding that it would prove a milestone.

Amir Paracha said that special efforts

were made to ensure transparency of the initiative, adding that more efforts would be made to make the payments to deserving families though ATM cards in future. He said the scope of initiative would soon be extended to other provinces.

He said the PBM aimed to support the poor masses and this platform could be used by individuals for sharing the goal. He appealed to philanthropists to come forward and play their role in this regard. PPP Parliamentary Leader Syed Hassan Murtaza appreciated the initiative and termed it a good omen in difficult times.

PBM Director Projects Qaim Zafar highlighted various features of the initiative, saying that it was the first programme launched with the aim of educating orphan girls. He said that the orphan girls of BISP registered widows were selected for the initiative and they were being provided financial support for education in schools, colleges and universities. He said that it was a pilot project and would be evaluated after three months. He said that Rs 6000-Rs 12000 were being given on monthly basis to the families depending upon the number of girls through the UBL Omni.



KARACHI: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi during her visit to KDSP Learning Center.

Quaid-e-Azam guaranteed minorities' rights: CM Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, while addressing a Christmas Cake Cutting Ceremony, here at the CM House, on Monday said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah addressing the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, had clearly guaranteed the freedom of minorities.

The CM quoting the father of the nation said, "You are free to go to your temples, You are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste, or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State."

He said that this was the "manifesto of the Pakistan Peoples Party".

The programme was attended by the provincial ministers, advisors, special assistants, MPAs, and PPP

office bearers of the minorities wing of the Karachi division, and of all the districts of the province, clergy, including Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Bishop Kaleem John, people from Pentecostal Church and notables.

The CM said that the last few years had been difficult for many of us, with the ongoing challenges and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. "But through it all, we have remained strong and resilient, and have continued to find ways to come

together and support one another," he said and added to move forward into the new year by holding onto the hope that the new year would make the world a better place for all.

Murad Shah said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari always upheld the rights of minorities. "If any incident happens with any member of the minority community, he starts questioning me and directs me to redress the matter and report him," he disclosed. Mr. Shah said

that PPP was the only party in the country that took all the religious communities together. "Our one MNA and two MPAs are directly elected in the general elections and there is no such example of any other political party in the country."

The CM said that six of his cabinet members were from minorities. "The PPP has never discriminated against any person on the basis of religion, caste, and creed but provides them with equal rights and opportunities," he said.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

SINGLE STAGE SINGLE ENVELOPE

The Procuring Entity, Executive Engineer Maintenance-I C&W Department Peshawar, invites sealed bids from eligible firm/contractor enlisted with C&W Department, licensed by the Pakistan Engineering Council in the appropriate category and duly pre-qualified with the then Maintenance-I C&W Department for the work as under:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Million)	Earnest Money 2% Earnest Money + Stamp Duty	(a) Last Date of Submission of Form (b) Date & Time of opening	Completion Date
01	F/S and Design of Additional Office Block at Provincial Assembly Peshawar. ADP No.496/220913 (2022-23). Sub Head: CIVIL & ELECTRIFICATION, MECHANICAL AND PLUMBING.	PK-C-4 and above	Earnest Money 2% Earnest Money + Stamp Duty	a. 11.01.2023 At 12:00 Noon b. 11.01.2023 At 12.30 PM	As per work order
02	Design of Chief Minister's Office and Conference Hall/Interior Decoration on main Block (First Floor) at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House Islamabad. ADP No.474/170549 (2022-23). Sub Head: Renovation / Uplifting of main conference room, construction of additional kitchen, beautification, land scapping in KP House, Balance work and furniture / furnishing item for KP House Islamabad.	PK-C-4 and above	--do--	--do--	--do--
03	AOM&R / Special Repair of Foodgrain Godowns Kohat Road Peshawar. Sub Head: Civil, Electrical & Sanitary works for the year 2022-23.	PK-C-6 and above	--do--	--do--	--do--

TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

- Bid Documents Instruction. Condition to bidders can be downloaded up to one day prior to the opening date from C&W web site www.cwd.gkp.pk. A Complete set of Bid Solicitation Documents may be obtained on submission of a written application one day prior to the opening date from office of the undersigned otherwise bids submitted without these documents will not be responsive.
- Original Bid Security in the shape of Call Deposit in the name of Executive Engineer Maintenance-I C&W Department Peshawar shall accompany the bid.
- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, established Under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa No. XXI of 2013) for works , consulting and Non-consulting services as listed in Schedule-II of the Act/bid.
- Each bidder shall submit his bid through sealed cover as under:-
 - ORIGINAL and each copy of the bid shall be separately sealed and put in separate envelopes and marked as such.
 - The Envelope containing the ORIGINAL and copies will be put in one sealed envelope and addressed to Executive Engineer Maintenance-I C&W Department Peshawar.
- The item rate system is replaced by Above/Below system on BOQ based on Market Rate System.
- Bid will be valid for Ninety (90) days.
- If the bid rate / cost of two or more than two bidders are same then the successful bid will be decided through toss.
- All Federal/Provincial duties/Stamp duties/Taxes will be recoverable as per directions of the Government issued from time to time.
- Execution of Work will be subject to release / availability of fund.
- The Competent authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tender by assigning the cogent reason in consultation with authority at any time prior to the award of contract.
- All other terms & conditions can be seen on official website of the C&W Department or from the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours. A part of Notice Inviting Tender (NIT). Moreover, the bidding entry fee @ 0.03% of tender cost may be revived, and collected along-with earnest money, which will be non-refundable.
- Additional bid security Should be received as per Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Notification No.. S.R.O (14) / Vol: 1-24/2021-22 dated 10.05.2021 / 6058-71
 - The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate.
 - The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineers' Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
 - [Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis] . In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
 - In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
 - The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
 - After commencements of work by the successful bidder, the procuring entity may replace the Additional Security with a bank guarantee of the same amount from the scheduled bank; if the already deposited security is not in the form of bank guarantee.
 - The Additional Security shall be released to the contractor in four installments i.e. 1st installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 25% of the project, 2nd installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 50% of the project, 3rd installment of 25% to be released upon completion of 75% of the project and the 4th installment of 25% to be released after 100% completion of the project.
 - All previous orders, instructions and regulations issued regarding additional security shall stand superseded.

Executive Engineer Maintenance-I,
C&W Department Peshawar

INF(P) 7177/22



LAHORE: Federal Minister, Ayaz Sadiq addressing during the death anniversary of Khawaja Muhammad Rafiq Shaheed at Local hotel.



IC's retired employees: PHC orders Peshawar's varsity to release pension

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered University of Peshawar to immediately release pensions of 262 retired employees along with their widows of Islamia College which was stopped since August 2022.

A divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Lal Jan Khattak and Justice Sahibzada Asad Ullah heard writ petition of Professor Sher Haider along with 261 retired

before establishment of Islamia College University.

The counsel Nazir Ahmad Advocate informed that petitioners were receiving pensions regular basis but in August 2022 the pensions were attached with observation that the pensioners employed in Islamia College while UOP couldn't liable to pay retirement benefits.

University of Peshawar's lawyer argued that the varsity is facing critical financial crisis and cannot able to pay pensions and added that Higher

Education Commission has constituted committee to redress the issue. He added that liability of pensions shall be place either on Islamia College University or University of Peshawar after conclusion of report.

PHC observed that University of Peshawar has paid pensions till August, now stoppage of pension is unacceptable for prudent mind while added that attachment of retirement benefits equal to creating financial hurdles. PHC ordered that it is responsi-

bility of UOP to provide pensions immediately and should continue till redressal of the issue by HEC's committee.

The divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Lal Jan Khattak and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah directed University of Peshawar to continuously pay pension to 262 petitioner employees because they are already obtaining from Peshawar's varsity while accepted writ petition of retired employees of Islamia College.

Admin: 38 shopkeepers arrested for profiteering

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar in crackdown against profiteers arrested 38 shopkeepers from various localities on Monday.

The arrested shopkeepers include fruit & vegetable vendors, nanbais (bakers), butchers, milkmen, grocers and others.

On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Shafiullah Khan, the officers of district administration carried out raids on shopkeepers in various localities including interior city and suburbs and arrested 38 shopkeepers for overcharging, sale of underweight roti, lacking of official price list and unhygienic conditions.

Deputy Commissioner Peshawar has directed all administrative officers to keep check on the prices of essentials and ensure the implementation of the officially issued price-list in letter and spirit.

3 laborers hurt in wall collapsed incident

PESHAWAR (APP): Three laborers sustained injuries when a wall of an under construction house suddenly fell on them at Nishtarabad here on Monday.

Police said the incident occurred after the laborers made deep excavations under a wall of an under construction house that suddenly fell on them. As result, Najeeb Khan, Abdul Haq and Syed Umar sustained injuries and were shifted to hospital by Rescue 1122. The condition of laborers was stated to be out of danger.

Meanwhile, motorcyclist Salman Khan, resident of Latifabad Peshawar sustained injuries after making resistance to thwart snatching of his vehicle's attempt near Pandu Chowk by unknown robbers. He was shifted to hospital after sustaining injuries. Police registered cases and started an investigation.

Hindko music gala on 31st Dec

PESHAWAR (APP): To promote Hindko music, the Gandhara Hindko Board and Gandhara Hindko Academy are organizing the seventh music gala at Cultural Hall of the Nishtar Hall here on 31ST December (Saturday).

Joint Secretary Gandhara Hindko Board, Ahmad Nadeem Awan would be the coordinator for the event while famous TV anchor Nauman Raoof and radio broadcaster Tahira Rifat would be the stage secretaries.

Young Hindko vocalists Abdul Qadir, Shayan, Asfandyar, Hassan Raza and Faryal Munir will perform in the event, besides well known singers Zeeshan Ghaznavi, Zulfiqar Bhatti, Muhsin Ali Shah (Shah Gee), Shakir Esakhelvi and Asif Chisti will also enthrall the audience with their voices.

The preparations for making the event successful are continued in full swing. The Gandhara Hindko Board had earlier organized six successful events for the promotion of Hindko music.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali listening people problems at his office.

SIDB accords approval to set-up new industrial parks

PESHAWAR (APP): The Board of Directors (BoD) of the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has accorded approval to the establishment of four new industrial parks and the master plan of the board.

The decision was taken in a meeting held here the other day with Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM), Abdul Karim Khan in the chair, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The board has further directed the management of the SIDB to publicize plots in the Peshawar Industrial Park with immediate effect besides local, overseas investors should also be

given the opportunity on a priority basis.

The board has also identified prioritized sectors for the establishment of units in the Peshawar Industrial Park that include agriculture, surgical, sports, carpet manufacturing, solar panel, mobile phone, auto-mobile and cycle manufacturing units.

During the meeting, the Special Assistant further directed the management of the SIDB to also ensure land acquisition for Small Industrial Park Peshawar and another 1250 Kanal land for Small Industrial Park Bannu near Kasho Bridge connected to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route as soon as possible.

The board has also granted approval to the establishment of industrial parks in Kurram Upper, Kurram Lower, and Dir Lower to promote industrialization in these areas to generate employment opportunities for the people at the local level and bring these deprived areas to par with other developed areas of the province.

The special assistant said that after a long period of six decades a new industrial estate is being established in Peshawar, which is a revolutionary step. The new industrial estate will not only attract investors rather will also generate employment opportunities for the locals.

CPSP approves KMU for FCPS training

PESHAWAR (APP): The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) Karachi has accorded approval to Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar for providing Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (FCPS) training in the subjects of Public Health (Community Medicine), Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Physiology at Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar.

With this decision, KMU has become the first medical institution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to get approval for FCPS training and degree program in basic medical sciences, reads a press release issued here.

It is worth mentioning here that the inspection team of CPSP which consists of regional director Professor Dr Waqar Alam Jan, Brigadier (Retd) Prof. Dr Naila Azam, Prof. Dr

Huma Musarat Khan, Prof. Dr Alamgir Khan and Prof. Dr Aamir Rashid visited KMU-IBMS and KMU-IHS few days back and reviewed the facilities available for FCPS training. Now CPSP has given official approval to start FCPS training in the above-mentioned four programs.

Meanwhile, the vice chancellor KMU Professor Dr. Zia ul Haq has welcomed this decision of CPSP and termed it a sign of full confidence in KMU. He thanked college for this decision and congratulated all the relevant institutions of KMU including IBMS and IPH&SS.

VC KMU said, "The approval of FCPS training in Public Health (Community Medicine), Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Physiology will open new avenues of knowledge and research in these fields, which will not only

provide an opportunity for new talent to come forward and also improve the overall health system in the province."

He said, "In the context of KMU's vision of becoming a global leader in health education and research the approval of FCPS training is an important development in this direction."

Prof. Dr Zia ul Haq said, "Starting this training in KMU will create new opportunities for close interaction and cooperation between CPSP, PGMI and KMU in medical education and research."

He said, "KMU education is being imparted in various fields from Diploma and Bachelor to MPhil, Master, and PhD levels and now with the approval of FCPS training in four disciplines, KMU has achieved another milestone which is a great honor and contentment for its family."



PESHAWAR: Laborer roasting peanuts at his workplace at Firdoos area.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan chairing 10th meeting of Peshawar Development Authority Board.

ECP starts capacity building of staff on RMS

PESHAWAR (APP): The process of the training workshops for the capacity building of the staff of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)'s master trainers on the use of Result Management System (RMS) for results of the polling in upcoming general election began here in a local hotel on Monday.

These trained master trainers will further impart training to other staffers in their respective districts.

The training workshop being organized with the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) collectively consisted of 9 training sessions that will continue till December 31, 2022.

During the session, three groups will be imparted training separately on a daily basis. Each group will consist of 20 members. The officers of the Information Technology Department of the Election Commission of Pakistan are performing their duties as trainers.

Two persons arrested F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During flight clearance of Flight No. EK636 arrived from Dubai to Peshawar two persons (husband and wife) named Mati Ullah and his wife at Bacha Khan International Airport.

According to details, Iqbal residents of Peshawar, holding passport No. QA2748361 and BG3099882 respectively were carrying F/O gold jewelry weighing almost 1168g with them.

Upon questioning, they could not produce any legal document. Gold has been detained and transferred to SWH. The value of recovered Jewelry is around Rs.15 million.

Further investigation is under process.

Cold and dry weather to prevail

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted that mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most districts of the province, while partly cloudy and very cold in upper parts during the next 24 hours.

It said that moderate to shallow fog is likely to occur over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi and D.I. Khan districts, as well as over Peshawar to Swabi Motorway during morning and night hours. The center advised the travelers on motorways and national Highways to adopt precautionary measures during travelling.

During the last 24 hours very cold and dry weather occurred in most districts of the province, while dense fog prevailed over most plain areas of the province.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were as Peshawar City 18/01, Chitral 11/-4, Tirmigara 14/-1, Dir 13/-4, Mirkhani 15/-1, Kalam 10/-8, Drosh 16/-2, Saidu Sharif 18/04, Pattan 16/01, Malam Jabba 06/-3, Takht Bhai 16/01, Kakul 14/01, Balakot 17/00, Parachinar 20/-3, Bannu 20/03, Cherat 14/05, D.I. Khan 17/05.

The lowest temperature recorded in the province was -8C in Kalam.

FPCCI, SBP launch joint awareness drive

PESHAWAR (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KP-ITB) launched awareness campaign for women entrepreneurs and beginners regarding soft loans, projects and future cooperation.

In this connection, a training session was organized in the FPCCI Regional Office here on Monday. Besides, Regional Coordinator, FPCCI, Sartaj Ahmad Khan, Senior Officer SBP, Abdullah Afridi, Secretary KP-ITB Mohammad Khalid, Managing Director KP-ITB and representatives of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSE),

women stakeholders in various businesses attended the session at large.

During the session, the women entrepreneurs were briefed in detail on all aspects of the SBP Banking on Equity Awareness Session for Women led Businesses and PM Youth Loan, which could prove helpful in the expansion and success of their business.

The SBP official, Abdullah Afridi told the women entrepreneurs that a project for ensuring effective representation of women is continued under the policy of the government and the SBP has taken a lead in adopting that policy completely.

He said that now other banks are also following

the footsteps of the central bank and have also started hiring women employees. He explained that under the policies of the government a financial scheme has been introduced to facilitate women in the promotion of their business.

Under the scheme, he said soft loans upto millions of rupees have been offered to women entrepreneurs. He urged the women entrepreneurs to take benefit of the scheme.

During the session women entrepreneurs were also provided essential information regarding the stock exchange and told how they can put their share in it and take advantage of modernism in the business world.

5th convocation of IMSciences organized

PESHAWAR (APP): The fifth convocation of the Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) was held on Monday and was attended by passed out graduates, their parents, dignitaries from academia and people from different walks of life.

Kamran Khan Bangash, Minister for Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the chief guest on the occasion and distributed medals and degrees to the graduating students.

A total of 07 graduates from various undergraduate programmes were awarded gold medals and 04 students were awarded silver medals.

One posthumous MS degree was awarded to Muhammad Javed. IMS is the first and only educational institute to award this degree in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa. Provincial Minister Kamran Bangash congratulated the graduates on successful completion of their studies. He also appreciated the role of IMSciences in producing graduates who have the ability to actualize theory into practice.

He appreciated IMSciences for holding the event in a very organized way and said that IMSciences is one of the best educational Institutions of the country and wished it more success.

In his welcome address, the Director of IMSciences, Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Khan welcomed Kamran Bangash for sparing his time to grace this important event of the Institute and considered his participation as a source of motivation.

Director informed the participants that the convo-

cation is being held after a gap of four years. However, he stated that the event would refresh the old memories of the Institute's graduates. He also informed the participants that IMSciences has been focusing on entrepreneurship and the graduates have initiated their startups.

In addition to core subjects, IMSciences has also expanded its focus to other areas such as Development Studies and Social Sciences.

He briefed the participants that the IMSciences is based on guiding principles of merit, transparency and open door policy.

He stated that this convocation is not a farewell ceremony, but it is a day of recognition of the success and achievements of students of IMSciences.



PESHAWAR: Members of All Secretaries Association NCs KP chanting slogans during a protest for their rights. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Duo of young Pakistani researchers wins TRC

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member team of young researchers from Pakistan have won the prestigious Transformative Research Challenge (TRC) hosted by the World Food Forum.

The WFF organizes TRC to inspire research and innovation in sustainable development to end hunger and transform the agri food systems. The researchers, Sidra Khalid and Najeeb Ullah, are associated with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) as senior research officers -- Gender and Social Inclusion, Monitoring-Evaluation and Learning Specialist, respectively.

IWMI is a research for development organization operating in more than 30 countries on water and land management challenges faced by poor communities in developing countries.

Both Sidra and Najeebullah are among the eight finalists who were chosen from 162 entrants for their outstanding research on improved fish farming in Pakistan. They won the special prize for their research pitch on 'Transforming nutritional practices and livelihoods through improved fish farming in Pakistan' under the TRC category, 'Better Life'.

"Saline aquaculture is not a major sector right now in Pakistan, but there's a lot of potential for it to grow, including opportunities for women and youth to be involved. And it easily lent itself to this year's TRC theme," explained Sidra Khalid while talking to APP.

"Because of rising salinity levels due to climate change, most farmers involved in freshwater aquaculture in Pakistan

have lost their livelihoods. In this context, saline aquaculture provides an alternative means of livelihood," she elaborated.

"Around 40,000 acres of land per year is being affected by secondary salinity in Pakistan. One cannot grow on salinized land, but farmers can easily counter this issue by switching to saline aquaculture because there's plenty of groundwater that is saline in the region," said Najeeb while corroborating the viewpoint of Sidra.

These practices can be strengthened through capacity building, providing farmers with incentives, ensuring the necessary structures are in place, improving water quality, and equipping farmers with improved fish species that are saline resistant, he suggested.



In brief

Six suffocated to death in Punjab

FAISALABAD/OKAR A (PPI): Six people, including three children, were suffocated to death by smoke in two separate incidents on Monday. In a cold weather, three people, were asphyxiated while sleeping in a house in Nasir Town of Faisalabad. Four persons were sleeping in the night while burning coal in the room to keep it warm. Three of them died by suffocation, while the fourth has been transferred to hospital for medical assistance, rescue sources said. In another incident of asphyxiation, three children died of smoke during sleep in Shergarh in Okara. Deceased children have been identified as Noor Fatima, Usman and Iqra, police sources said. Two women Abida 25, and Bushra 45 were shifted in precarious condition to hospital for medical support. The victims had burnt wood to keep their room warm while sleeping in a closed place in a frosty weather, police added. Moreover, in an incident of gas leakage blast in Dhok Hassu of Rawalpindi, a mother and her child sustained serious injuries. They were transferred to hospital for medical attendance, rescue sources said.

60 wood sleepers recovered F.P. Report

DUR UPPER: District administration here on Monday recovered 60 wood sleepers from Sur Qamar area and 22 numbers of different size wood from Achar Bala, Sheringal. On the directives of Commissioner Malakand Shaukat Ali Yousafzai regarding illicit cutting of forest wood, the teams of district administration led by Assistant Commissioner Hafeezullah along with Levy and Forest staff raided Sur Qamar Forest and recovered 60 wood sleepers from a nullah. Similarly, in another raid conducted in a house located in Achar Bala and recovered 22 numbers of different size wood. In this regard, seven persons were booked under 3MPO (Maintenance of Public Order) and sent to jail.

Retired workers stage rally

LARKANA (PPI): The members of Government Retired Employees Welfare Association took out a rally and held a protest demonstration in Larkana on Monday for acceptance of their justified demands which have already been ordered by the apex court and implemented by all other three provinces but are denied only by the Sindh government. The participants including Abdul Latif Ujan, Imamuddin Solangi, Muhammad Mithal Shaikh, Ghulam Murtaza Jakhro, Imdad Ali Abbasi, and Shah Nawaz Jamali marched from Pakistani Chowk to Jinnah Bagh of the city, chanting slogans against the injustice. They told media persons that they had been deprived of their rights since long by the provincial rulers including payment of group insurance, benevolent fund and 10% increase in monthly pension announced by the Prime Minister in the budget. They said that non-implementation of these commitments would deprive the rulers of thousands of precious votes in the upcoming general elections which would be very unfortunate. They said three provinces had paid those amounts to their retired employees but the Sindh government was avoiding to pay the same despite apex court order. They once again urged the provincial rulers to immediately pay group insurance, benevolent fund amount and a 10% increase in monthly pension as declared by the PM or earn their curses.



FAISALABAD: A gypsy man riding donkey cart as carrying his belongings on his way at Sumandri road during chill weather.

KP IGP hails role of CTD

F.P. Report

BANNU: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Moazzum Jah Ansari has said that the Counter Terrorism Department has played an effective frontline role to counter militancy and eliminate terrorism.

This he said while Chairing a high-level meeting in Bannu and added that the CTD and Bannu regional police fought the menace bravely and the supreme sacrifices rendered by cops would be written with golden words in the history. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Syed Ashfaq Anwar, Bannu District Police Officers Bannu Dr Muhammad Iqbal, Lakki Marwat Ziauddin Ahmed,

Bannu SP investigation Shafeeq Khan Wazir and other police officials were in attendance.

An official said that the provincial police chief inspected the CTD compound which had been taken over by detained terrorists after snatching weapons from their interrogators last week. The Pakistan army's Special Service Group (SSG) commandos had retrieved the building after a two days long gun battle.

The official said that Ansari also visited the under-construction building of the counter terrorism department and directed the authorities concerned to complete construction work without any further delay. At the meeting, the

provincial police officer stressed the need for putting in place more stringent measures to maintain peace in the entire region and eliminate terrorists.

IGP directed the police authorities to improve liaison with local elders, public representatives and civil society as it would help to curb the menace of militancy completely. He also issued special instructions with regard to improving the law and order situation and ensuring protection of people's lives and properties. He paid rich tributes to the policemen who laid down their lives in the line of duty, saying that the entire nation salutes to the sacrifices of martyred cops as they are our heroes.

Imran lacks democracy agenda, patriotism: Khuhro

LARKANA (PPI): PPP Sindh President Nisar Ahmad Khuhro said on Monday that Imran Khan is not a patriotic person, his agenda is not democracy and Pakistan, as he is a supporter of terrorists and is silent on the activities of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

After losing the power, he went crazy and wanted to make the assemblies and others as scapegoat, Khuhro said while addressing a meeting of party leaders and workers on the occasion of the 15th death anniversary of martyred Benazir Bhutto at his residence. He further said that if Imran Khan was a supporter of democracy, he would not have asked for the resignations of his and PTI members from the assemblies. He said that Imran Khan, who claimed to have good relations with Afghanistan, was not ready to speak a single word against the activities of terrorism in Pakistan.

He said that the talk of Imran Khan for becoming the President of the country was empty and futile because Khan could be a candidate for the president only if Arif Alvi resigned from the post of president, after which the candidate for the election of the pres-

ident would be constitutionally elected from all four provinces. He said that there was no room for technocrat and presidential system in the constitution, as only the caretaker prime minister and the caretaker cabinet could be technocratic in the caretaker government and the bureaucrats could also be in the caretaker government.

Talking about the gas crisis in Sindh, he said: "Constitutionally, the province from which gas is produced has the first right to the gas, so the federal government should constitutionally provide its legitimate share of gas to Sindh." He said that due to the gas crisis, the domestic consumers were suffering from severe anxiety and the industries were also suffering huge losses.

Khuhro said that Imran Khan was responsible for the economic collapse in the country, but 'we democratic forces are making efforts to improve the country and the economy'. He said that a Charter of Economy was needed to deal with the economic crisis. He said that the killing of Benazir Bhutto was a conspiracy to suppress the voice of the people and was against democracy, but we saved the country and

democracy by chanting the slogan "Democracy is the best revenge".

He said that the place where Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was martyred was clean washed as dictator Perviz Musharraf did not provide security to her, hence, Musharraf should also be included in the investigation. He said that the dictator Perviz Musharraf was allowed to leave the court and the government of that time did not take any measure to prevent him from going out while Imran Khan regime did not bring Perviz Musharraf back to the country.

Meanwhile, Khuhro together with other party leaders reviewed the arrangements for the martyrdom anniversary of Benazir Bhutto to be observed in Garhi Khudabakhsh Bhutto. He also inspected the camps of the four provinces in the meeting ground.

He also visited the reception camps and met the workers. He further said that all the preparations for the 15th martyrdom anniversary of Benazir Bhutto had been completed which will be addressed by PPP's Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

AWP founder 4th death anniversary observed

F.P. Report

BUNER: Awami Worker Party (AWP) observed 4th death anniversary of party's founder Fanus Gujar in which central, provincial, Gilgit Baltistan and Buner leadership along with large number of activists were present to pay homage to their late leader.

The AWP central, provincials, GB, Buner leaders workers leaders of other political parties and masses participated. The participants were actively waving party flags and shouting slogans with pledge that Fanus political struggle and mission to be continued. The party central vice chief Shahab Khattak, provincial presi-

dent Haider Zaman, the GB president Baba Jan, the KP general secretary Malka Khan, the Buner coordinator Jihanzeb Khan, Advocate Khyal Mphammad, Pr. S.F Islamabad leader Fatma, Mazdor Sherani, Shams Buner and Atlas Khattak of the ANP, Afzal Khamosh of Mazdor Kisan, Chairman DDAC Syed Fakhar Jihan, Engineer Nasir, Rafiq Ullah Advocate, Mehboob Ayub, Sardar Tilak Chand, Mizullah Khan, Gul Rehman and dozen others delivered speeches.

The speakers highlighted personal simple life of late Fanus Gujar and his great political struggle for the great cause of enlightening the marginalized segments of society and creat-

ing awareness among them about their due rights and share in the national assets. The speakers especially praised Fanus Gujar for uniting leftist minded small political parties under single platform of the AWP and continued struggle for the rights of the oppressed and suppressed classes till last breath.

The speakers recalled hard working political agendas of the late Fanus Gujar due to which he got popularity as leftist leader at national level and international level as well and finally got the name of Quaid e Awam Fanus Gujar. The speakers pledged they have respect for late Fanus Gujar and his mission to be continued.

5 killed over land dispute in Nowshera

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHEHRA: As many as five people were shot killed over a land dispute in Tangi Khattak area of Nowshera while Rescue 1122 shifted dead bodies to district headquarters hospital, on Monday.

Police said two rival groups exchanged fire over a property dispute as a result of which Nawab Ali, Adil, Suhain, 35, Wajid Ali, 45, and Israr were killed. The bodies were shifted to the Qazi Hussain Ahmad Medical Complex in Nowshera for medico-legal formalities. Police cordoned off the area and launched a search for the fleeing suspects.

Meanwhile, two women were critically wounded in a firing incident at Kali Peeran's house in Pishin on Monday. Police are probing the matter. Rescue 1122 on emergency call reached to the spot along with medical teams but they were dead on the spot while their dead bodies were shifted to district headquarters hospital for autopsy.

Bara press club elects new cabinet

F.P. Report

BARA: Bara Press Club (BPC) elected new cabinet including Munir Khan Afridi as President while Zakir Afridi as General Secretary for 2022-23.

The new cabinet comprised as Saeed Ullah Afridi was selected by ballot as vice-President and Jahan Zeb Afridi Finance Secretary for 2022-2023 cabinet. Members of the Bara Press Club utilized their right of votes.

Number of media persons from Jamrud and Landi Kotal press clubs attended the election process as observers carried out in Bara press club. Earlier, the election committee comprising by its chairman Hussain Khan, Khayalmat Shah Afridi, Shafiq Afridi and Qadeer Afridi conducted the election. People from different walks of life visited Bara press club and congratulated the new office bearers of the press club. The newly elected President vowed that he would utilize all energies to work for the betterment of the journalist community of Bara.

FIRs registered

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has registered the first information reports (FIR) of three consecutive blasts that occurred on Sunday in different areas of Quetta.

At least one person was killed and 15 others, including three policemen and women, were injured in five grenade attacks in different parts of Balochistan on Sunday.

The CTD spokesperson said the FIRs against all three blasts have been registered, including Sabzal Road, and Mosa Colony blasts. The FIR was registered under sections 302 (punishment for premeditated murder), 324 (attempted murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

KP govt approves another tehsil in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa board of revenue and estate department has properly issued its notification regarding the establishment of Talash tehsil in Lower Dir. The special assistant to chief minister on prisons MPA Shafiullah Khan while talking to local journalists at Timergara here on Monday said that one of his important promises had been materialized as the government had issued its notification to declare the Talash area in Lower Dir as a separate tehsil that consisted of 20 village councils with a total population of 134464 according to the national census, 2017.

The lawmaker said that all the four union councils like Noorakhel, Shahikhel, Dushkhel and Bandagai that covered an area of 234 square kilometers. The proposed tehsil will comprise of 49 big and small villages. Muhammad Ibrahim, a former district councilor and the PTI activist in Talash said the Commissioner Malakand division Shaukat Ali was visiting the area on Tuesday (today) to formally inaugurate the project along with the local MPA Malik Shafiullah Khan. He said the establishment of a separate tehsil had been a long standing demand of the locals and the PTI government gave it a practical shape.

Meanwhile, different walks of life celebrated the announcement at Talash and thanked the provincial government. The KP chief minister Mahmood Khan during a public rally at Timergara had announced the establishment of the tehsil after which the area elders and political activists had expedited their effort to get it properly approved.

M.PHIL scholar: The University of Malakand (UoM) scholar Arshad Hussain on Monday successfully defended his M. Phil thesis, titled "Applications of J-transform in fractional differential equations" in Mathematics under the supervision of Assistant Prof Dr Amir Ali. His external examiner was Dr Anwar Zeb from COMSATS University Abbottabad Campus. The chairman department of Mathematics, UoM Dr Imtiaz Ahmad and faculty members congratulated the scholar and his research supervisor. The chairman also motivated the scholar to continue the area for further exploration in future.

Political and social activists urge government to withdraw its decision of imposition of taxes in Malakand: Jamaat-i-Islami deputy provincial chief MPA Inayatullah Khan on Sunday announced to hold a public jirga at Bathkela Malakand on Dec, 30 and in Swat on Jan, 7 against the government's plan to impose taxes in the tax-free zone of Malakand. He was addressing a social media conference organized by activists of different political parties held at Timergara Rest house as chief guest. The conference was also addressed by Imran Takur of

ANP, engineer Yaqubur Rehman and Malik Sher Bahadar of JI, social activist Akbar Khan, Shahab Utmami of PPP and social media activists Wajidullah and Khan Badshah.

MPA Inayatullah said that all people of Malakand were agreed and united to resist the imposition of taxes in the region. He said that Malakand with a total population of 8.6 million people and covering an area of 29872 square kilometers was the largest division in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that Swat, Dir and Chitral, the princely states were merged in Pakistan in 1969 under an agreement that the government would not impose any tax therein. He said that under the agreement it was agreed that the people of Malakand would utilize their own resources and was given constitutional cover under the sections 246 and 247.

Inayatullah said that neither the local lawmakers nor the area elders were taken into confidence before extending the custom and other taxes to the region and the ground realities were also ignored. He said the people of Malakand had been raising their voice against the tax imposition while the government had kept silent. He said that the government would not be allowed to collect taxes from the people of Malakand.

About the local resources, the lawmaker said that water from the Panjkora and Swat Rivers were enough to irrigate the fertile lands in the province and also generate hydel power at the cheaper rate. He said the Koto Hydro power project had to be completed till Dec, 2019 but it was yet to be used for power generation. He demanded the government to initiate practical work on the Shago Kas and Sharmal hydro power projects so that the issue pertaining to the energy crisis could be resolved.

Man injured: A man identified as Majid Saeed, 36 was injured when an unknown motorcyclist opened indiscriminate firing on him near the Timer Afghan refugees' camp in the jurisdiction of Timergara police station here on Sunday, residents and police said. They said the attackers escaped from the scene after the crime while the victim was shifted to the district headquarter hospital Timergara by the Rescue 1122 health emergency team. Later he was referred to Peshawar due to his critical condition. The Timergara police registered a case and started an investigation. The motive behind the incident could not be ascertained.

Also in the day the assistant director consumers' protection council Ibrahim Mohmand directed the plastic shopping bags' dealers to utilize their stock by Dec, 31. Talking to the media he said the government had banned the use of polythene bags. He said the dealers had been informed to finish their stock till Dec, 31. Otherwise, he said legal actions would be taken against the dealers of polythene bags in the district.

Plastic factory directed to dispose off raw material

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Assistant Director Industries Lower Dir Ibrahim Mohmand inspected the Zarian Plastic Factory at Chakdra and issued a notice to the owner to stop making polythene bags and dispose of their stock by December 31 as the government has imposed a ban on polythene bags.

Assistant Director Industries Lower Dir Ibrahim Mohmand told the media that the government has banned the production and sale of plastic polythene bags, so factory owners and shopkeepers and plastic stockholders should eliminate plastic polythene bags by January 31. Later,

legal action will be taken against the sellers of plastic polythene bags.

Education key for development: Without education, no nation can progress. Through education, we must remove the darkness of ignorance and travel towards the light. Izhar Principal Islamia Oriental Public High School Sahibzada Ehsan, Professor Saeedur Rehman, Professor Riyaz, Principal Ghulam Zahir, Malik Fataullah, Chairman Suliman, Shah Hussain, Principal Bakht Rawan and others addressed at Parents Day and annual prize distribution organized by Islamia Oriental Public High School Hayasiri Maidan.

Addressing the event on

the occasion of the parents day ceremony, the speakers spoke on the importance of education and said that no country and nation can develop without education. They said that parents, teachers and students are a triangle and all three have a heavy responsibility.

So, they don't need to be disappointed, there are many other departments. Give encouragement and guidance. They said that modern and religious education is necessary and necessary for students to get religious education along with modern education. Shields were distributed among the students who got positions in exam.

Security plan finalized for BB's martyrdom anniversary

LARKANA (INP): The 15th martyrdom anniversary of the former prime minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto will be observed with utmost devotion and respect today on December 27th at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

In this regard, SSP Larkana Dr. Muhammad Imran Khan presided over a joint meeting, in which a security plan for the said day was discussed in the wake of Pakistan Peoples Party's public rally, with the SP Special Branch Munir Ahmad Khuhro, SSP Kamber Shahdadkot Captain (Retd) Saddam Hussain, SSP Shikarpur

Capt (Retd) Faizan Ali, SSP Khairpur Ruhul Khoso, ASP Shikarpur Fazil Bukhari, ASP Larkana City Atiqur Rehman Mekan, and other officers were in attendees.

Addressing the meeting, the SSP said that the foolproof security and traffic arrangements had been completed by the police as 8,140 police officers and jawans would perform their duties. Besides, it was apprised that the help of Sindh Rangers would also be taken in this regard. Moreover, SSP Larkana briefed the police officers regarding the formation of various checkpoints, alter-

nate routes and parking routes.

He said that the police patrolling had been increased by establishing checkpoints on the pathways coming from Larkana district and Naudero city. He also said that a strict checking of the participants coming in the rally had been ensured through modern machines, walk-through gates and watch towers. The SSP said that the police would provide foolproof security to the participants. He further said that Naudero city and mausoleum would be monitored through CCTV cameras and other modern tools.

PESCO to install high-power transformer at Tajazai grid station

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) has decided to install an additional high-power transformer in the 132KV Tajazai grid station in Lakki Marwat to resolve low voltage and electricity tripping problems.

"A high-power trans-

former (20/26 MVA capacity) has reached the grid station and work on its installation will begin soon", said PESCO executive engineer Fida Muhammad Mehsud on Monday. He told this scribe that the new transformer would help to resolve low voltage and tripping problems faced by

local residents. He said that the power feeders in Tajazai grid station were overloaded and the installation of an additional high power transformer would help equal distribution of power load on existing feeders thus proving helpful to eliminate tripping and low voltage issues.



58 weak Rohingya land on Indonesian beach after weeks at sea



BANDA ACEH (AP): Dozens of hungry and weak Rohingya Muslims were found on a beach in Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh after weeks at sea, officials said. The group of 58 men arrived on Indrapatna beach at Ladong, a fishing village in Aceh Besar district, said local police chief Rolly Yuiza Away. Villagers who saw the group of ethnic Rohingya on a rickety wooden boat helped them to land and then reported their arrival to authorities, he said.

"They look very weak from hunger and dehydration. Some of them are sick after a long and severe voyage at sea," said Away, adding that the men received food and water from villagers and others as they waited for further instructions from immigration and local officials in Aceh. At least three of the men were rushed to a health clinic for medical care, and others are also receiving various medical treatments, Away said.

The United Nations and other groups urged countries in South Asia to rescue as many as 190 people believed to be Rohingya refugees aboard a small boat that has been adrift for several weeks in the Andaman Sea. "Reports indicate those onboard have now remained at sea for a month in dire conditions with insufficient food or water, without any efforts by States in the region to help save human lives," the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, said in a statement. "Many are women and children, with reports of up to 20 people dying on the unseaworthy vessel during the journey."

Away said it wasn't clear where the group was traveling from or if they were part of the group of 190 Rohingya refugees that has been adrift in the Andaman Sea. But one of the men who spoke some Malay said they had been at sea for more than a month and had aimed to land in Malaysia to seek a better life and work there. More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled from Buddhist-majority Myanmar to refugee camps in

Bangladesh since August 2017, when the Myanmar military launched a clearance operation in response to attacks by a rebel group. Myanmar security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and the burning of thousands of homes.

Groups of Rohingya have attempted to leave the crowded camps in Bangladesh and travel by sea in hazardous voyages to other Muslim-majority countries in the region. Muslim-dominated Malaysia has been a common destination for the boats, and traffickers have promised the refugees a better life there. But many Rohingya refugees who land in Malaysia face detention.

Although Indonesia is not a signatory to the United Nations' 1951 Refugee Convention, the UNHCR said that a 2016 presidential regulation provides a national legal framework governing the treatment of refugees on boats in distress near Indonesia and to help them disembark. These provisions have been implemented for years, most recently last month when about 219 Rohingya refugees, including 63 women and 40 children, were rescued off the coast of North Aceh district aboard two rickety boats.

"We urge the government of Indonesia to rescue the boats and allow them to safely disembark," Amnesty International Indonesia's executive director Usman Hamid said. "We also urge the Indonesian government to lead a regional initiative to resolve the refugee crisis." The UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, urged governments in South and Southeast Asia "to immediately and urgently coordinate search and rescue for this boat and ensure safe disembarkation of those aboard before any further loss of life occurs."

"While many in the world are preparing to enjoy a holiday season and ring in a new year, boats bearing desperate Rohingya men, women and young children, are setting off on perilous journeys in unseaworthy vessels," Andrews said in a statement.

China stages big military incursion, Taiwan says

HONG KONG (BBC): China is staging one of its biggest incursions so far in the seas and skies around Taiwan, according to data from the island's defence ministry. It said that 71 Chinese air force planes, including fighter jets and drones, had entered Taiwan's so-called air defence identification zone. Taiwan is self-ruled - but China sees it as a break-away province with which it will eventually reunite.

Tensions between the two sides have steadily increased in recent months. In August, Beijing was enraged by a visit to the island by US Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, the most senior US politician to visit Taiwan in 25 years. China responded to that visit by holding what was then its biggest-ever military exercises in the seas around Taiwan, and also blocked some trade with the island. Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu condemned China's action then as highly provocative. China has never said it would not use force to bring Taiwan under its control.

On Monday, Taiwan's defence ministry said 43 Chinese aircraft had crossed over the so-called median line, an unofficial buffer separating the two sides inside the air defence zone. China said it had conducted "strike drills" around Taiwan in response to what it said was provocation from the island and the US.

Washington has always walked a diplomatic tightrope over the issue of Taiwan. On the one hand it adheres to the One-China policy, a cornerstone of its relationship with Beijing. Under this policy, the US acknowledges that there is only one Chinese government, and has formal ties with Beijing rather than Taiwan. But it also maintains close relations with Taiwan and sells arms to it under the Taiwan Relations Act, which states that the US must provide the island with the means to defend itself.

Shots fired near NATO patrol

PRISTINA (Reuters): Shots were fired near a NATO patrol in the northern part of Kosovo where local Serbs have set up roadblocks to bar police from Pristina from patrolling the area marred by ethnic tensions in recent months, NATO said. No one was injured and the car was undamaged when the shots were heard in the area of Zubin Potok, NATO's mission, KFOR, said in a statement. KFOR did not say where the shots came from. Some 3,760 NATO troops maintain the fragile peace.

Local Serbs, a population of around 50,000 in Kosovo's north, set up barricades after police on Dec. 10 arrested a former Serb police officer on charges of assaulting serving police officers during a previous protest. The local Serbs, who do not recognise the state of Kosovo and are backed by Belgrade, are demanding the release of the arrested officer and other demands before they will remove the barricades.

Head of Russian shipyard dies

MOSCOW (Reuters): A major Russian shipyard that specialises in building non-nuclear submarines said its general director had died suddenly after 11 years in the job, but gave no details. Admiralty Shipyards, based in the western port of St Petersburg, announced the death of Alexander Buzakov in a statement. He had been in the job since August 2012.

His main achievement, it said, had been preserving and strengthening the shipyard's order books for modern non-nuclear submarines, surface ships and deep water vehicles. Tass news agency said the shipyard is building improved Kilo-class diesel-powered submarines capable of launching Kalibr cruise missiles. In April, Moscow said it had used a diesel submarine in the Black Sea to strike Ukrainian military targets with Kalibrs.

Extreme cold, travel chaos: Woes from deadly storm continue

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP): The deep freeze from a deadly winter storm that walloped much of the United States will continue into the week as people in western New York deal with massive snow drifts that snarled emergency vehicles and travelers across the country see canceled flights and dangerous roads. The massive storm has killed at least 34 people across the US and is expected to claim more lives after trapping some residents inside houses and knocking out power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

The extreme weather stretched from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico. About 60% of the US population faced some sort of winter weather advisory or warning, and temperatures plummeted drastically below normal from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians. The National Weather Service said the frigid arctic air "enveloping much of the eastern half of the US will be slow to moderate."

That's especially unwelcome news for Buffalo, which saw hurricane-force winds and snow causing white-out conditions that paralyzed emergency response efforts. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said almost every fire truck in the city was stranded and implored people to respect an ongoing driving ban in the region. Officials said the airport would be shut. The National Weather Service said the snow total at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport stood at 43 inches (1.1 meters) at 7 a.m. Huge snowdrifts nearly covered cars and there

were thousands of houses, some adorned in unlit holiday displays, dark from a lack of power.

With snow swirling down untouched and impassable streets, forecasters warned an additional 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 centimeters) of snow was possible in some areas through early Monday morning amid wind gusts of 40 mph (64 kph). Police said that there were two "isolated" instances of looting during the storm. Two people died in their suburban Cheektowaga, New York, homes when emergency crews could not reach them in time to treat their medical conditions. Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said 10 more people died there during the storm, including six in Buffalo, and warned there may be more dead.

"Some were found in cars, some were found on the street in snowbanks," Poloncarz said. "We know there are people who have been stuck in cars for more than two days." Freezing conditions and power outages had Buffalonians scrambling to get to anywhere with heat amid what Hochul called the longest sustained blizzard conditions ever in the city. But with streets under a thick blanket of white, that wasn't an option for people like Jeremy Manahan, who charged his phone in his parked car after almost 29 hours without electricity.

"There's one warming shelter, but that would be too far for me to get to. I can't drive, obviously, because I'm stuck," Manahan said. "And you can't be outside for more than 10 minutes

without getting frostbit." Ditjak Ilunga of Gaithersburg, Maryland, was on his way to visit relatives in Hamilton, Ontario, for Christmas with his daughters when their SUV was trapped in Buffalo. Unable to get help, they spent hours with the engine running, buffeted by wind and nearly buried in snow.

By 4 a.m. their fuel nearly gone, Ilunga made a desperate choice to risk the howling storm to reach a nearby shelter. He carried 6-year-old Destiny on his back while 16-year-old Cindy clutched their Pomeranian puppy, following his footprints through drifts. "If I stay in this car I'm going to die here with my kids," Ilunga recalled thinking. He cried when the family walked through the shelter doors. "It's something I will never forget in my life."

Travelers' weather woes continued, with hundreds of flight cancellations already and more expected after a bomb cyclone — when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm — developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow. The storm knocked out power in communities from Maine to Seattle. But heat and lights were steadily being restored across the US. According to poweroutage.us, fewer than 100,000 customers were without power Monday at 7 a.m. EDT — down from a peak of 1.7 million. Concerns about rolling blackouts across eastern states subsided after PJM Interconnection said its utilities could meet the day's peak electricity demand.

China's Zhejiang has 1 million daily COVID cases, expected to double

BEIJING (Reuters): China's Zhejiang, a big industrial province near Shanghai, is battling around a million new daily COVID-19 infections, a number expected to double in the days ahead, the provincial government said.

Despite a record surge of cases nationwide, China reported no COVID deaths on the mainland for the five days through, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Citizens and experts have called for more accurate data as infections surged after Beijing made sweeping changes to a zero-COVID policy that had put hundreds of millions of its citizens under relentless lockdowns and battered the world's second-largest economy. Nationwide figures from China had become incomplete as the National Health Commission stopped reporting asymptomatic infections, making it harder to track cases. The commission

stopped reporting daily figures, which the China CDC then published.

Zhejiang is among the few areas to estimate their recent spikes in infections including asymptomatic cases. "The infection peak is estimated to arrive earlier in Zhejiang and to enter a period of elevated level around New Year's Day, during which the daily new infection number will be up to two million," the Zhejiang government said in a statement.

Zhejiang, with a population of 65.4 million, said that among the 13,583 infections being treated in the province's hospitals, one patient had severe symptoms caused by COVID, while 242 infections of severe and critical conditions were caused by underlying diseases. China narrowed its definition for reporting COVID deaths, counting only those from COVID-caused pneumonia or respi-

ratory failure, raising eyebrows among world health experts.

The World Health Organization has received no data from China on new COVID hospitalisations since Beijing eased its restrictions. The organisation says the data gap might be due to the authorities struggling to tally cases in the world's most populous country. "China is entering the most dangerous weeks of the pandemic," said a research note from Capital Economics. "The authorities are making almost no efforts now to slow the spread of infections and, with the migration ahead of Lunar New Year getting started, any parts of the country not currently in a major COVID wave will be soon."

The cities of Qingdao and Dongguan have each estimated tens of thousands of daily COVID infections recently, much higher than

the national daily toll without asymptomatic cases. The country's healthcare system has been under enormous strain, with staff being asked to work while sick and even retired medical workers in rural communities being rehired to help grass-root efforts, according to state media.

Bolstering the urgency is the approach of the Lunar New Year in January, when huge numbers of people return home. Visits to Zhejiang fever clinics hit 408,400 a day - 14 times normal levels - in the past week, a Zhejiang official told a news conference. Daily requests to the emergency centre in Zhejiang's capital, Hangzhou, have recently more than tripled on average from last year's level, state television reported, citing a Hangzhou health official. The eastern city of Suzhou said late its emergency line received a record 7,233 calls.

Paris shooting suspect wanted to kill migrants: Prosecutors

PARIS (AP): The man suspected of fatally shooting three Kurds in Paris ahead of Christmas weekend told investigators that he had set out that morning aiming to kill migrants or foreigners and then himself, according to prosecutors. The 69-year-old man killed three people outside a Kurdish cultural center and wounded three others, and was then disarmed and subdued by one of the injured victims, the Paris prosecutor's office said.

He was detained at the scene and transferred to psychiatric care. His name hasn't been released. If he is released from psychiatric care, he faces potential charges of racially motivated murder, attempted murder and arms violations. The prosecutor's office said in a statement that the suspect told investigators that a 2016 burglary at his home marked a turning point for him, sparking what he called a "hatred toward foreigners that became completely

pathological."

The shooting in a bustling Parisian neighborhood shook and angered the Kurdish community, and stirred up concerns about hate crimes at a time when far-right voices have gained prominence in France and around Europe. The suspect told investigators that the morning of the shooting, he took his weapon first to the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis with the aim of killing foreigners but changed his mind, the prosecutor's statement said. He then went to the Kurdish center in Paris, which is near his parents' home. He opened fire on one woman and two men there, then entered a Kurdish-run hair salon across the street and fired on three men. One of the wounded men in the hair salon managed to stop him and hold him until police arrived, the prosecutor's statement said.

He told investigators he didn't know his victims, and described all "non-European foreigners" as his enemies,

the statement said. Two of the injured were still hospitalized with leg injuries. Investigators are studying his computer and phone, but haven't found any confirmed links to extremist ideology, the statement said.

Members of France's Kurdish community and anti-racism activists joined together in a demonstration of mourning and anger. The gathering was largely peaceful, with marchers holding portraits of the victims. Some youths threw objects and set a few cars and garbage bins on fire, and police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd. A spokesperson for the Kurdish Democratic Council in France said the violence began after some people drove by waving a Turkish flag. Some of the marchers carried flags of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

In 2013, three women Kurdish activists, including Sakine Cansiz, a PKK founder, were found shot

dead at a Kurdish center in Paris. Turkey's army has long been battling against Kurdish militants affiliated with the banned PKK in southeast Turkey as well as in northern Iraq. Turkey's military also recently launched a series of strikes from the air and with artillery against Syrian Kurdish militant targets in northern Syria.

Turkey, the United States and the European Union consider the PKK a terror group, but Turkey accuses some European countries of leniency toward alleged PKK members. That frustration has been the main reason behind Turkey's continued delay of Sweden and Finland's NATO membership. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said the violence in the Paris protests was a result of leniency toward the PKK. "The snake France fed is now biting them. Everyone should now see the real face of this terror organization," Akar said.

Russia says it shot down Ukrainian drone near airbase

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): The Russian military reported on Monday that it shot down a Ukrainian drone approaching an airbase deep inside Russia, the second time the airbase has been targeted this month, raising questions about the effectiveness of Russia's air defenses if drones can fly that far into the country. Russia's Defense Ministry said the incident took place in the early hours of Monday, and three servicemen were killed by debris at the Engels airbase that houses the Tu-95 and Tu-160 nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes on Ukraine.

Engels is located in Russia's Saratov region on the Volga river, more than 600 kilometers (more than 370 miles) east of the border with Ukraine. No damage was inflicted on Russian aircraft, the ministry said. Ukrainian Air Force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat, speaking to Ukrainian television on Monday, did not directly acknowledge his country's involvement in Monday's incident, but said: "These are the consequences of Russian aggression."

He added: "If the Russians thought that the war would not affect them in

the deep rear, they were deeply mistaken" Ukrainian officials have never confirmed sending drones into Russia. They have maintained ambiguity over previous high-profile attacks, including drone strikes on Russian military bases earlier this month.

On Dec. 5, unprecedented drone strikes on Engels and the Dyagilevo base in the Ryazan region in western Russia killed a total of three servicemen and wounded four more. The strikes on the airbases were followed by a massive retaliatory missile barrage in Ukraine that struck homes and buildings and

killed civilians. In Ukraine, at least four civilians have been wounded in Russian shelling of five regions in the country's southeast over the past 24 hours, according to the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko. Overall the intensity of the shelling the night into Monday has been significantly lower.

For the first time in weeks, Russian forces didn't shell the Dnipropetrovsk region, which borders the partially occupied southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, its governor, Valentyn Reznichenko, reported on Telegram.

Heavy snow in Japan leaves 17 dead

TOKYO (AP): Heavy snow in large swaths of Japan has killed 17 and injured more than 90 people and left hundreds of homes without power, disaster management officials said Monday. Powerful winter fronts have dumped heavy snow in northern regions since last week, stranding hundreds of vehicles on highways, delaying delivery services and causing 11 deaths. More snowfall over the Christmas weekend brought the number of dead to 17 and injured to 93 by Monday morning, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Many of them had fallen while removing snow from the roofs or were buried underneath thick piles of snow sliding off rooftops.

Municipal offices in the snow-hit regions urged residents to use caution during snow removal activity and not to work alone. The disaster management agency said a woman in her 70s was found dead buried underneath a thick pile of rooftop snow that suddenly fell on

Ethiopian federal govt delegation heads to Tigray

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters): A delegation from the Ethiopian federal government is on its way to the northern region of Tigray to oversee the implementation of last month's peace agreement, the government communication service said on Monday. This is the first high-level federal delegation that has travelled to Tigray in two years, the government said. Tadesse Chafo, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, is leading the delegation. "This gesture is an attestation to the peace agreement getting on the right track and progressing," the statement said. The federal government and Tigrayan forces signed an agreement to permanently cease hostilities on Nov. 2, after two years of fighting that killed thousands and displaced millions. A follow-up agreement on the disarmament of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fighters, humanitarian access guarantees and entry of the Ethiopian military into the Tigrayan capital of Mekele was signed on Nov. 12.

her in Yamagata prefecture's Nagai City, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) north of Tokyo, where snow piled up higher than 80 centimeters (2.6 feet). In Niigata, known for rice growing, some makers of mochi, or sticky rice cakes that are staple for New Year's celebration meals, said there have been delivery delays and their mochi may not reach their cus-

tomers in time. Many parts of northeastern Japan reported three times their average snowfall for the season. Heavy snow knocked down an electric power transmission tower in Japan's northernmost main island, leaving about 20,000 homes without power on Christmas morning, though electricity was restored in most areas later that day.

Nepal's new govt seeks to balance ties with India, China

KATHMANDU (Reuters): Nepal's new government, led by the former Maoist rebel chief, will try to balance ties with its immediate neighbours China and India as it seeks economic growth in one of the world's poorest countries, officials of the ruling coalition told Reuters. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who still goes by his nom de guerre Prachanda, unexpectedly became prime minister for a third time after leaving his previous coalition and securing the support of the opposition Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) party and five other smaller groups. Last month's election had returned a hung parliament.

The UML leader and former prime minister, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, is believed to be pro-China. Nepal is one of several South Asian countries where India and

China both seek influence. India has long considered Hindu-majority Nepal, a Himalayan country of 30 million, as a natural ally based on their close historical ties and long open border. "We'll maintain relationships of proximity with both our neighbours," Narayan Kaji Shrestha, a senior member of Prachanda's Maoist Centre party, told Reuters. Shrestha was later named as a deputy prime minister.

"We must immediately focus on containing inflation, maintain reserves, raise capital expenses, narrow the trade deficit and lower interest rates," Prachanda also named six other ministers and gave the key finance portfolio to Bishnu Prasad Paudel of the UML party. Paudel has been finance minister twice before.

Another key appointment is that of Rabi

Lamichhane, a television talk show host, to the home (interior) ministry. Prachanda kept the foreign ministry for himself. Beijing and New Delhi have poured billions of dollars in aid and investment into Nepal, which is rich in potential to generate hydroelectric power. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, which is Nepal's biggest trade and economic partner, was one of the first foreign leaders to congratulate Prachanda on his appointment.

"The unique relationship between India & Nepal is based on deep cultural connect & warm people-to-people ties," Modi said on Twitter. "I look forward to working together with you to further strengthen this friendship." A Chinese embassy spokesperson in Kathmandu, in a Twitter post, also congratulated Prachanda.

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Anti-Islam campaign and social media

SOCIAL media has become an easily accessible and free playground for cybercriminals, terrorist organizations, drug smugglers, human traffickers, and people with bad/criminal intentions relating to any field including trade fraud, racism, vulgarity, religious and sectarian hate along with providing a fertile land and feasible conditions for the recruitment of new prospects, as well as communication and liaison with other domestic and transnational criminal groups across the globe. Over the past few years, there have been repeated complaints regarding the circulation and publishing of distorted translations of the Holy Quran and indecent contents against the Holy books and pious personalities that were generated within the country, particularly from Punjab that seriously hurt the religious sentiments of the Public. During the hearing of a blasphemy case, the Lahore High Court (LHC) directed the concerned departments to take steps for removing blasphemous content from social media. However, the court verdict was challenged by the PTA and the Ministry of Information Technology in the Supreme Court, which had been pulled back by the Federal government, to pave the way for subsequent action against the perpetrators by the relevant authorities.

Realistically, the emergence of modern technologies, the internet, and the latest scientific innovations have transformed the world into a Global Village. While unprecedented development not only brought unimaginable luxuries and comforts for mankind but also introduced new trends and methodologies in street crimes, computer hacking, and misuse of social media for rights abuse, harassment, and victimization of opponents. Cyber crimes and misuse of technology happen unhindered in all countries of the world, but it is the duty of the states to devise means to restrict and arrest culprits at the early stage of crime.

According to reports, anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam elements are widely using the internet and social media for character assassination of pious personalities and disseminating anti-Islam literature to distort the divine teachings of the Holy Prophet and Quran. Muslim Scholars and religious organizations remain on guard against such heinous activities of certain non-Muslim factions and had always brought these issues to the knowledge of the government to effectively block these activities in the country.

Historically, the criminals routinely exploit religious freedoms and civil liberties through social media platforms to secretly attack Islam, propagating their nefarious and anti-Islamic literature to distort the true version of Islam. Although, there had been multiple laws and government institutions including the Police, FIA, PTA, and SECP but all those arrangements were mostly used for political purposes and usually played the role of blind and daff elephants that can neither see, nor listen to public grievances and violation of the law, even they do not act on whistleblowing.

The constitution of Pakistan profoundly protects all religious and citizenry rights of its masses including minorities but the government and Law Enforcement Agencies must be proactive and unbiased in their approach toward full implementation of the law otherwise these bulky ledgers have no use except library decoration. The Pakistani nation had always stood up in the support of religious freedom and civil liberties but no one will be allowed to wage a secret war against Islam in the garb of religious and civil liberties. Therefore, the government and public institutions must protect and preserve the core ideology of the country mechanically without waiting for public pressure or political intervention by the stakeholders, so the security and preservation of the great Muslim ideology and divine Islamic verses could be ensured in the future.

Turk-Saudi rapprochement

SAUDI Assistant Minister for Defense, Eng. Talal bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi has recently paid an official visit to the Republic of Turkiye at the head of a high-level delegation from several agencies. According to the details, Saudi Minister met with top Turkish defense authorities and visited multiple defense installations, and production units along with holding in-depth discussions on Saudi-Turk defense cooperation and research collaboration between the two countries.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia have rapidly enhancing their bilateral relations which had been entirely scratched after the horrific killing of famous Saudi-origin US Journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul more than four years ago. Meanwhile, Ankara's support to Doha during the years-long Gulf crisis was another reason that the Saudi-led Gulf bloc separated its way from Turkey and pushed Anakara into regional isolation, the gap Erdogan filled with frequent tours to Islamabad, Baku, and Kuala Lumpur over the past year. However, Biden's betrayal of Riyadh and Ankara's growing economic crisis compelled both nations to take benefit of each other specialties in defense and economic sectors. Currently, the Saudi Crown Prince has much interest in the Turkish defense industry, Turkish state-of-the-art armed drones, helicopters, and Naval warships whereas Erdogan's eyes on the lucrative Middle East oil market and economic investment by Riyadh, UAE, and Kuwait, which can easily rescue Ankara out of the current economic fiasco.

In fact, the Turk-Saudi ties were fully reset and normalized during Crown prince Muhammad Bin Suleman's visit to Ankara a few months back while the recent visit of the Saudi Assistant Defense Minister aimed at implementing the decisions taken during the visit of the de facto ruler of the Kingdom. Currently, Saudi Arabia intends to enhance its defense cooperation through the procurement of the latest Turkish arsenal to counter Houthis' threat and also seeks defense and security collaboration with Turkey to strengthen its defense capabilities and attain self-sufficiency in the defense sector. Hopefully, Turk-Saudi cooperation would have far-reaching effects on peace and strategic stability in the broader Middle East region in the coming years.

Quote of the day

I have always been fond of the West African proverb "Speak softly and carry a big stick"; you will go far. — Theodore Roosevelt, American President [1901-1909].

China emerges as a credible contestant for global preeminence

WHEN Deng Xiaoping opened China to the world four decades ago, Americans were ready to do what we most enjoy doing – showering foreign countries with insistent, well-meaning advice about how to conduct themselves at home and abroad. Henry Kissinger wryly observed at the time that China had somehow managed to get along without American counsel for 4,000 years before the United States was born. This is a useful reminder that the state system or “order” in East Asia did not spring into being when we Americans arrived there. It has taken many forms over the millennia, only a few of which have involved an American presence – and then only in the past 180 or so years.

Now a renewed version of the pre-American dynamic may be in prospect. Geography is the DNA of geopolitics. It has a way of re-expressing familiar patterns that history seemed for a while to have killed off.

Historically, the East Asian order was a sort of “three-body problem.” In physics and orbital mechanics, a three-body (or n-body) problem describes the difficulty of charting the patterns and predicting trajectories created by the

interaction between competing gravitational centers, each of which is in motion. In East Asia, the three centers of gravity were China, the Northeast Asian nations of Japan and Korea, and the great sea empires of Southeast Asia – Srivijaya and Chola – which linked South India with what are now Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Of these, China had the greatest mass, but the others had their own independent political systems and cultural identities and projected their own fields of influence. The interactions between these three bodies politic and their effects on those in the spaces between them wrote the geopolitical history of East Asia.

The replacement of native Southeast Asian empires by European imperialism in the 16th and 17th centuries did not really change this dynamic. But Japan's turn inward toward the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603 and its adoption of a “national lockdown” [sakoku] policy in 1633, combined with the Choson Dynasty in Korea's earlier self-isolation, removed Northeast Asia as an active participant in the region's dynamics, leaving Western powers based in Southeast and South Asia to contend bilaterally with China. This birthed a Sino-Western contest that set the long-

standing three-body interactions of the East Asian order aside.

The United States became a factor in regional affairs only in 1835, when President Andrew Jackson established an American “East India Squadron” off the China coast. Jackson's initiative was driven by the weight that China then had in the global economy. At the time, it accounted for over one-third of the planetary product. The new American republic did not want Britain and other European powers to corner the markets of Northeast Asia, as they had those in South and Southeast Asia. So, in 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry forced Japan to open itself to relations with the United States and, by extension, to other foreign countries. As Japan adopted the norms of Western political economies and modernized, it began to project its power throughout the region, briefly restoring a three-body dynamic to the region involving China, itself, and Western imperialism.

In 1874, the Japanese army occupied southeastern Taiwan. In 1876, Tokyo forced Korea to follow it in opening to foreigners, something an American military expedition five years earlier had failed to achieve.

Chas Freeman

By then, China was imploding under the combined impact of European efforts to divide it into spheres of influence and internal rebellions – the Taiping and Nian. These disturbances took some 20 – 30 million lives, many more than the 14 – 17 million people of all nationalities who died in the First World War. China ceased to be an actor in regional affairs, becoming instead the playground of global imperialism. In 1900, the combined armies of Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States suppressed the Chinese “Boxer” rebellion against foreign domination, killing tens of thousands of Chinese, and looting Beijing.

For the next five decades, China was mired in domestic anarchy, foreign invasion, and civil wars. Only in 1949 did it re-emerge as an independent force. By then China's GDP had fallen from one-third of the global total to a mere four percent of it. China's new rulers adopted a planned economy and turned to the Soviet Union to help their country restore its vanished wealth and power.

While China was falling apart, Japan was on the rise. The Meiji period (1868 –

1912) saw Japan become the first non-Western country to industrialize and emerge as a modern military and economic power. Having absorbed and adapted Western knowledge, Japan then introduced it to China, Korea, and other neighbors, creating a Japanese sphere of cultural influence with lasting linguistic and other effects. But when the Taisho democracy of 1912 – 1926 yielded to the militarism of the early Showa period, Japan went to war first with China and then, in 1941, with the United States, Britain, France, and the Netherlands, quickly erasing their empires in East Asia.

Japan's defeat in World War II left it destitute and disarmed. This created a power vacuum in the region, which the United States filled from bases in the occupied Japanese home islands. Soon thereafter U.S. forces found themselves compelled to defend Japan's strategic perimeter in Korea. The U.S. then built a “hub-and-spokes” security system for East Asia, assumed the central responsibility for its strategic stability, bilateralized US-Asian military relationships, and effectively preempted the possibility of any NATO-like collective defense arrangements among the states of the region.

Over the seventy years since its militarist catastrophe, Japan has become the third largest economy in the world, coyly rebuilt formidable military capabilities, and ceased to be a political wallflower in its region. Korea, divided by the Cold War into two states, has seen the Republic of Korea (in the southern half of the peninsula) develop a larger economy than Russia or Brazil. Despite practicing what a Soviet leader once called “pantless communism,” the rival regime in north Korea now has the world's fourth-largest army and nuclear weapons.

Southeast Asia is also back as an independent participant in the region's affairs. ASEAN coordinates the policies of its ten member states, including assertively independent and rapidly developing Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, an increasingly independent Philippines, and relentlessly realistic Singapore.

China remains deeply divided by its unfinished civil war, but, from a standing start in 1949, both Taiwan and the mainland have rapidly achieved unprecedented wealth. The People's Republic of China, which controls the China mainland, has emerged as the economic nucleus of its region and a credible contestant for global preeminence.

An ‘entangling alliance’

Paul Schwennessen

RUSSIA'S Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov sounds increasingly frantic. This is not good news, since his warning that “Washington's increasing involvement in the Ukraine conflict carries growing risks” seems to be falling on ever-deaf ears. With longer-range American missile shipments in the offing, and proposals pouring in for precision bombs to be attached to rockets, Washington doesn't appear to be over-inclined to heed Russian demands. And with good reason, as Russia continues to callously pummel civilian infrastructure, cutting off power and water as a long cold winter sets in.

As a national strategy, though, does the US policy of “heavy aid” make long-term sense? Are we charting a wise course that will pay dividends in our own increased security, or are we getting drawn into an “entangling alliance” that will ultimately play to Russian advantage?

From a sentimental Norman Rockwell perspective, we've enjoyed portraying ourselves as giving Little Brother a stick to fend off the town bully. It satisfies our souls on several levels: we can feel (for a change) that we did the “right thing;” we get to witness our technical superiority on an international stage; and, though we won't much admit it, we also get to enjoy the daily spectacle

of watching a tormenter's nose get bloodied without getting any on our fronts... And God, how we love a scrappy underdog—especially one so decidedly European as a Ukrainian.

But the world isn't a Rockwell painting, and things aren't always as they seem. What is really at play here, and where do we draw the line of our national interest? We've become so inured to “lines” lately—red lines, bright lines, “deconfliction” lines—that it becomes difficult to even know what such a distinction would practically mean.

A place to start would be in clarifying our endgame. I recall a few years back when somebody said (rather brilliantly, I thought) that the national security objective should be written on a Post-It note: “We intend to live as free men and women in the continent of North America.” Period. If decisions about the deployment of troops, delivery of weapons, and administration of aid align directly with that simple doctrine, then you have the basis for a wise and sober national policy. Unlike the current National Security Strategy, which is chock full of bromides like “inclusion” and “food security,” it would enforce clarity of purpose.

Granted, such a simplification is just a beginning—all kinds of things can be crammed into various interpretations of even this simple creed. Remember when Mitt Romney was laughed off the stage for stating that

Russia was our “number one” geopolitical threat? And how, years later, everyone had to admit that his “1980s” foreign policy was spot-on? In that vein, perhaps our engagement this last year in Ukraine has been an especially prudent move: topping the primary existential threat to our way of life with a “mere” \$20 billion (much of it in the form of expiring or obsolete weapons stores). As France bled its mortal foe England by aiding our upstart colonial rebellion, maybe having Little Brother knock out a few of Boris's teeth has made our lives just a little bit safer.

Then again, maybe we're getting played. Maybe, as we get carried away in a tempest of our own moral righteousness, we are setting the scene for a direct confrontation with Russia. Putin, for his part, would dearly love any plausible semblance of a direct war with “The West” since it bolsters his power at home within a highly fragmentary federation.

Unfortunately, despite compelling arguments either way, anyone dissenting from the current Stand-With-Ukraine mantra, Left or Right, is mobbed off the stage. And by “Stand With Ukraine,” the mob means spend vastly more money on vastly more large-scale weapons. Will Ruger has been exorciated by both sides of the spectrum as a “shill for Putin” when he

argues for “restrained prudentialism” in our national security policy. But Will has a point: our way of life as free people in North America is unlikely to be seriously threatened by the war in Ukraine.

While neo-isolationists and make-the-world-safer-for-democracy activists haggle over the proper level of U.S. government aid to Ukraine, the moment is ripe for a third way: Liberty-loving private action. The depth and degree of spontaneous private giving in Ukraine is stunning, with more than \$5 billion in cash donations alone and untold hours of volunteer labor. In addition to offering genuine and effective support to Ukrainians, concerted private action does two things: First, it lets us stand on moral principle—demonstrating our resolve to support free people against aggression without escalating geopolitics into World War III because people, not the state, are supporting Ukraine. Second, it reminds us how we can effectively broaden the sphere of collective action beyond government. Not everything worth doing can, or should, be done by the state, and private support for Ukraine's resistance shows us the power of collective, uncoerced action.

To be sure, \$5 billion and a bunch of volunteer hours do not compare to hundreds of billions in allied government spending, and

the Ukrainians I know prefer Stingers to care packages. But maybe, as a matter of national policy it's time to recognize that enough is enough—and to pass the battle baton back to the private sphere. The strategic damage has been done to our former primary threat (now a distant second), and the message has been sent to those who would fill Russian shoes: the West is not entirely absorbed in effete woke navel-gazing.

Instead of ratcheting up the pressure (and expense) for ever-diminishing geopolitical returns, the U.S. could announce it is provisionally plateauing its arms shipments as the conflict grinds into a likely stalemate in the Donbas. Signal that it is ready to ramp up arms deliveries if Russia attempts any further incursions, but that in the interim it is turning the impetus over to its prosperous, motivated, free citizens.

Some of the limited things the U.S. government might do during this strategic “idle”:

a. Facilitate volunteer travel, especially ex-military, who are willing and able to train or fight, with visas and expedited passport processing. Diplomatically clear the Polish and Ukrainian bureaucratic border thickets.

b. Promote voluntary private donations, such as to the Arsenal of Liberty, which channel donated weapons and ammunition to the front. Help the Ukrainian population bris-

tle with lethal defense.

c. Give 1:1 tax deductions and credits for all donations to the Ukrainian cause (including hourly in-kind volunteering). Make giving less onerous.

Doing these things while leveling off major weapons deliveries would govern the spooling-up machinery of our military-industrial complex and will ultimately help make us safer. Such a strategy of calibrated national restraint could not only be good for our national interest, but for our national character as well. In a country culturally tuned to “more,” we need to become better at knowing what “enough” looks like.

Russia's Ryabkov says that he is “...sending signals to the Americans that their line of escalation and ever deeper involvement in this conflict is fraught with dire consequences. The risks are growing.” He's probably right, the risks are growing, though largely because of Russia's breathtakingly poor battlefield performance. The bluster, however, is part of the Russian strategy: they are teasing us, knowing that (as big dumb Americans) we can't resist a pugnacious jab at a thinly veiled threat. If we take the bait, as we seem inclined to do, they win. All the more reason to hit the “pause” button and turn the heavy lift of this resistance over to free people helping other free people. The message, both at home and abroad, would be unmistakable.

Americans should welcome Macron's remarks

Daniel Larison

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron made yet another appeal last week for reducing European security dependence on the United States.

Returning from a meeting in Jordan, Macron explained his view to a group of journalists: “An alliance isn't something I should depend on. It's something that I should choose, something I work with.... We must rethink our strategic autonomy.”

After decades of European “free-riding” on U.S. military protection, Americans should welcome Macron's remarks. The Biden administration would do well to endorse Macron's comments and urge other European allies to work with him.

The war in Ukraine and the U.S.-led allied response to it have reconfirmed how much European governments still rely on the U.S. for the defense of their own continent. This overreliance has become a cause of frustration for many in the United States and a source of embarrassment for European governments. Macron has been one of a very few European leaders to face up to this imbalance and to demand that it be corrected, but he has so far found few takers in Washington or in other European capitals for

greater European self-sufficiency in defense.

It is in the best interests of both the U.S. and its European allies if the allies begin taking up a larger share of the burden for their own security. The war has exposed how much weaker Russia is than Western governments supposed, and Russian losses in the war mean that Russia will pose much less of a conventional threat to Europe for the foreseeable future than it did just a year ago. European allies are more than capable of protecting themselves, especially against t his badly weakened Russia, and the main thing the U.S. can do to support this is to get out of their way.

This is an opportunity for European governments to take more responsibility for their own defense as they should have been doing for the last thirty years, and the U.S. should be supporting and welcoming European efforts to do this.

The U.S. has traditionally discouraged any move towards European autonomy because it has seen that as detrimental to its own influence and to NATO, but the time has come for Washington to rethink its hostility to this change. If European governments are going to increase their military spending and assume a larger part of the burden for

security, they should have greater freedom and influence within the structure of the alliance as well. The U.S. has often criticized its allies for spending too little, but then it has swatted down every suggestion that European governments exercise greater autonomy. The U.S. needs to recognize that it isn't likely to get significantly larger spending commitments from its allies without letting them have more autonomy at the same time.

Macron clarified that he does not see reduced reliance on the U.S. as a threat to NATO, and he insists that greater European autonomy should take place in the context of the alliance. There should be a way to reform and reimagine the alliance so that it is not so heavily dominated by the U.S. Europe is home to some of the wealthiest states in the world, and they should be expected to take responsibility for their own defense almost eighty years after the end of WWII. This would be a desirable change for the U.S. and our allies, as it would free up U.S. attention and resources from Europe and give European governments the incentive to reclaim their proper role in providing more for their

own security.

Despite intense criticism this year over his willingness to engage with Moscow diplomatically, Macron has not given up on that position, either. The French president has courted some controversy with allied leaders by keeping lines of communication open. Earlier this year, the Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki condemned Macron's outreach to Putin and objected that “nobody negotiated with Hitler.” The obvious counter to these attacks is that there need to be open channels available for de-escalation and negotiation for the day when the Russian government is looking for a way to extricate itself from the disastrous war that it started.

Patient diplomatic engagement can often be a thankless task, and it will seem to be of no use for years until it eventually pays off with a negotiated solution that doubters claimed was never possible. As the Carnegie Endowment's Christopher Chivvis said in an interview a few weeks ago, “So far it hasn't produced any results, but it might someday look prescient if Russia and Ukraine end up in negotiations.”

When we have every

reason to expect that this war will end in some kind of negotiated settlement, it is necessary to keep the option of talking available even when it seems that there is currently no point in talking.

Most recently, Macron has suggested the outlines of a new security architecture for Europe that would provide reassurances to all sides, including Russia. If any new security architecture for Europe is to succeed, it will have to take at least some Russian interests into account or it will not be a stable and enduring arrangement.

It is worth noting that Macron has also spoken about how he understands the Ukrainian position and compared the Russian seizure of Ukrainian territory to the German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War, so he has been clear that he believes that nothing should be imposed on Ukraine against its wishes. Instead of bashing Macron for “appeasement,” his European colleagues should give him credit for trying to plan for the post-war world and how to stabilize Europe once the conflict has ended.

One of the criticisms of Macron's outreach to Russia is that it has damaged his standing in other parts of Europe and under-

mined his effort to promote autonomy, but the one shouldn't have much to do with the other. If European allies are too dependent on the U.S., and they are, that is a problem that needs to be corrected no matter the disagreements that individual governments may have with each other about a particular policy.

Part of developing greater European autonomy in security matters will have to involve hashing out differences among European states. The existence of these disagreements should not be allowed to serve as an impediment to improving European military capabilities.

The U.S. should want to have many more capable European allies that pull their own weight and far fewer dependents. That is desirable not only because the U.S. has other more important concerns elsewhere in the world that require its attention, but also because the U.S. should not have to subsidize the defense of some of the wealthiest countries in the world in perpetuity. Both the U.S. and its European allies have become used to the current arrangement in which the U.S. is their main security provider, and it is long past time to overhaul it and bring it up to date.

Scotland finds way to independence

IN the Middle Ages, and even later, issues of war and peace, the annexation of territories or, conversely, the division of land were often resolved through dynastic marriages and subsequent childbearing. Far from always, those who entered into a family union reciprocated, but relations between the sexes were sacrificed to politics. Modern leaders have moved to a new gender level in solving issues of state building. The authorities of Scotland, not having the legal opportunity to secede from the United Kingdom, decided to secede from the hateful England by passing their law on gender reassignment.

The strategic decision was given to the Scottish parliamentarians with great difficulty. Opponents of the bill desperately tried to stop him. I had to vote for each item, and the discussion dragged on for two days. A disgruntled crowd buzzed at the walls of Parliament. Feminist activists seeped into the ranks of the audience. One of them, in the best traditions of British suffragettes, bared her lower body with the words: "If you want to be decent, then I will be obscene." The law was adopted by a majority of votes: 86 against 39.

The key points of the Scottish "gender revolution" were the permission to change sex at 16 without a medical examination and the reduction of the period of "stay in a new gender identity" from two years to three months. All this is contrary to the laws in force in the rest of the United Kingdom: in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Thus, Edinburgh threw down the gauntlet to London, offering to partici-

pate in another political duel.

Not daring to encroach on the rights of transgender people - in the West it is now suicidal - the London publications began to repel the insidious attack of the Scots using the arguments and means available to them. Critics of the new law assure everyone that those accused of sexual offenses will now declare themselves to be transgender en masse. As a result, male rapists will have to be treated as women in courts, prisoners will be required to be transferred from male to female prisons, and "transgender" tourism awaits Scotland.

Edinburgh's gender escalation is a purely political matter, and the British government will have to respond anyway. Sunak's cabinet would like to block the Scottish Bill, preventing King Charles III from signing it. But gender issues are within the purview of the Scottish Parliament, so lawyers in London are now trying to urgently find contradictions with other laws of the kingdom. Edinburgh promises to closely monitor that London does not violate the constitutional rights of the Scots.

The leader of the opposition Labor Party, Cyrus Starmer, called for a law identical to that of Scotland to be in place throughout the UK. The idea was favored in the European Union - Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic welcomed the decision of the Scottish parliamentarians, adding that nine of the 27 EU countries have already approved similar bills. Among the distinguished congress of Spain, which approved the right of children to freely change sex from the age of 16.

Alexander Khabarov

From 14 to 16, parental consent is required, from 12 to 14, court approval is required. Before the age of 12, gender change is prohibited, but such children may change their name and require that they be addressed in accordance with their choice.

However, Spanish activists believe that this is not enough: they intend to seek the removal of any age restrictions. And few people in Europe today risk arguing with such "progressive" ideas. The Spanish law on transgender people has a separate system of punishments for violations of it. For example, for refusing to hire or provide housing for rent to transgender people, as well as adherents of non-traditional sexual orientation, the violator faces a fine of ten to 150 thousand euros.

It is not easy for opponents of the transgender offensive to voice their thoughts today. For a timid attempt to defend the preservation of "at least something feminine" in Britain, the writer J.K. Rowling was pecked, even screen "children" disowned her - actors who gained fame thanks to their roles in the Harry Potter films. Journalist Hadley Freeman was forced to resign from the Guardian newspaper, where she worked for almost a quarter of a century. She claims that she was banned from publishing materials that cast a shadow on LGBT organizations: "I never had problems publishing interviews of activists defending the rights of transgender people, but it was forbidden to present the opposite point of view."

The journalist was banned from covering the

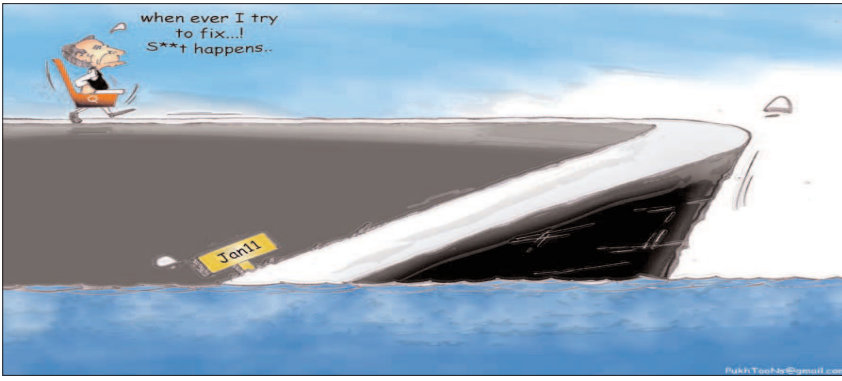
scandal surrounding the charitable organization Mermaids ("The Little Mermaids"), "supporting transgender, non-binary and other children with gender changes." It turned out that one of the trustees of this fund, a visiting professor at the London School of Economics Jacob Brislow, was associated with an organization that seeks "truth and dignity" for pedophiles. "The Little Mermaids" sent underage girls who thought about changing their sex elastic bandages to squeeze their breasts. The foundation's website published material on how sex blockers are safe drugs, and gave advice to children aged 12 to 15 on how to get funds for hormone therapy. The commission for charitable organizations became interested in the activities of the Little Mermaids.

In the course of "inclusiveness" - the acceptance of everything, no matter how terrible it all seems. The UK's National Health System is now complaining about a lack of funds and at the same time is ready to spend £100,000 on a program to train maternity staff to take care of transgender male women in labor. Midwives are invited to change their usual vocabulary: instead of "breastfeeding" they should say "giving milk", avoiding the words "woman" and "mother", replacing them with "people in labor".

From political salons and hospital wards, the slippery topic reached the Anglican Church. During a Sunday service at Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge University, visiting scholar Joshua Heath presented the flock with several medieval and Renaissance paintings of the crucifixion of Christ. The researcher drew the

audience's attention to the side wound on the body of Jesus in the painting by the Dutch artist Jean Maluel and suggested that it was deliberately isolated "to look like a vagina." Joshua Heath gave a few more arguments confirming his version, using other canvases, and concluded his speech with the words: "In these works, the body of Christ is presented both as a male and as a female, and if his body unites both sexes, then it can also be considered transgender body. The parishioners were shocked. According to eyewitnesses, after such a sermon, cries of "Heresy!" were heard in the chapel, someone left in tears. The scandalous story did not end there. Trinity College Dean Michael Banner stated that the claim that Jesus Christ could be transgender, has the right to life: "I believe that the reasoning on this topic is quite reasonable, even if someone does not agree with such an interpretation of artistic images and with an attempt to connect with modern issues of transsexuality."

The breadth of views of the scientific community in Britain is well known. The problem is that politicians use these dashing thoughts with might and main, dressing them in laws, which then need to be followed by everyone else, regardless of whether they share or not the proposed innovations. Scottish parliamentarians can feel as much as they want that by passing their "transgender" law, they have shown everyone their independence. In fact, they simply seized the initiative from the British, moreover, temporarily. So it does not make sense for the Scots to draw a gender line - they have no one to separate from.



‘To hell with the EU!’

WE have finally been explained the very rules of the "rules-based world" that all Western leaders talk about. It turns out that everything is very simple. Practically the only rule is the unconditional submission of absolutely everyone to the "liberal hegemon" - the United States. Nothing else is required. Simply!

Let me remind you that recently the phrase "world order based on rules" has become universal in the West. Now it is difficult to say who was the first to introduce this into the global discourse, but the first to draw attention to this as a systemic problem was Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who wrote the article "The World at the Crossroads and the System of International Relations of the Future" in 2019.

It was in this article that our chief diplomat named the reason for this phenomenon: "From the unwillingness of the West to accept today's realities, when after centuries of economic, political and military dominance it loses the prerogative of the sole formation of the global agenda, the concept of "rule-based order" arose. These "rules" are invented and selectively combined depending on the current needs of the authors of the specified term, which the West is persistently introducing into everyday life."

Lavrov then noted that the concept of such a world, in fact, replaces the rules that really existed until now, which developed after the Second World War. They boiled down to unshakable observance of international law and subordination to the decisions of the UN Security Council, within which the superpowers for decades were forced to seek painful compromises for themselves.

With the beginning of the Russian special operation in Ukraine, the term "world based on rules" has become absolutely dominant in the speeches of Western leaders, experts, and journalists. Russian President Vladimir Putin in his recent speeches has repeatedly mentioned this notorious formula, pointing out its odiousness.

It is no coincidence that the head of state remembered it at the solemn moment of the admission of new subjects of the Russian Federation on September 30 of this year. Putin then said: "We can only hear from all sides: the West defends an order based on rules. Where did they come from? Who even saw these rules?" It's just designed for fools. Russia is a great millennial power, a country-civilization. And it won't live by such rigged, false rules."

As the use of the notorious formula became more frequent, more and more questions began to sound about what kind of "rules" these are and where they can be read. Well, in fact, since you accuse Russia of violating the global order based on certain rules, then you must show the world at least some kind of code where these rules are formulated at least in a concise form. And then somehow it became uncomfortable - almost like in the classic interlude by Arkady Raikin: "How much did you do today? - What? - Well, what you have to do, how much."

And this obvious gap was decided to fill in by Foreign Affairs magazine, which has been the world flagship of the ideological struggle against Russia for a century now. In its latest issue (for January-February of the next year), a fundamental programmatic article by the well-known ideologist of global liberalism Robert Kagan "The Free World If You Can Keep It. Ukraine and American Interests" was published.

Just in case, it should be made clear that Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Kagan is no ordinary political scientist. At one time he

Vladimir Kornilov

worked at the State Department, advised the most anti-Russian presidential candidates (like John McCain and Hillary Clinton), constantly defending the need for external armed aggression. He is considered one of the architects of the war in Iraq, since it was Kagan who was the author of the allegations that Saddam Hussein was involved in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York. It's probably not worth saying that it all turned out to be a lie in the end, from start to finish. But who cares after the war?

And although now Kagan appears in public only as a theoretician, his influence on the practical formation of US foreign policy can hardly be overestimated. Suffice it to recall that he is the husband of US Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland. Yes, yes, the one who organized the Kiev Maidan in 2013, having become famous throughout the world for distributing cookies and the rude phrase "F**k the EU!" (in mild translation: "To hell with the EU!"). It would probably be naive to assume that Kagan does not share his theoretical developments with his high-ranking wife, thereby influencing her position when formulating the current American strategy regarding Ukraine.

And the fact that the Nuland-Kagan family clan has a huge influence on building the aggressive policy of the United States is an obvious fact. The well-known American investigative journalist Robert Parry proved in a number of his publications that this clan actually created a complete closed cycle of family business in the war. True, almost immediately after these publications, Parry died suddenly (but we, of course, reject any conspiracy theory - we are not Western media).

Here's what the described clan looks like now. Robert Kagan provides the ideological backing for the aggressive US foreign policy. His brother Frederick Kagan is considered a military expert and is directly connected with the military-industrial complex. In particular, he worked as an adviser to the head of the CIA, David Petraeus, which now acts as one of the main "talking heads" in the Western media on the Ukrainian conflict. Kimberly Kagan, Frederick's wife, is also well known as the founder and director of the Institute for the Study of War, whose daily briefings and openly biased analytics form the basis for the world's media coverage of the war in Ukraine. Well, and closes this effective chain of family ties is the same Victoria Nuland, who in practice carries out an aggressive policy. Such a family business on the blood.

So Robert Kagan, in his recent article, is trying to fill the ideological vacuum that has developed in the course of constant appeal to the formula "Order based on rules." At the same time, he answers the question, what is the US national interest in fomenting a military conflict in Ukraine. And such a question is increasingly heard in the mouths of some figures, including the popular TV presenter Tucker Carlson who constantly asks him.

Kagan clearly explains to the public: the United States has been bearing a heavy burden of protecting "liberal hegemony" since the beginning of the last century. And as soon as America turns away a bit, to deal exclusively with its own problems, unreasonable Europe and Asia immediately start world wars, and "gangster nations" try to crush liberalism. Here the States have to intervene in global conflicts even at a time when nothing threatens the secu-

rity of the United States itself.

The word "liberal" in its various derivatives is used almost fifty times in Kagan's article! Analyzing the current situation, the author comes to a simple conclusion, which is highlighted separately by the magazine: "Defending Ukraine is protecting liberal hegemony. When Republican Senator Mitch McConnell and others say that the United States has vital interests in Ukraine, they do not mean, that the United States will be directly threatened by the defeat of Ukraine. They mean that the liberal world order will be threatened if Ukraine loses."

It would seem, where is Ukraine and where is liberalism? What does the dictatorial regime of Kiev, using Nazi symbols, ideology, practice, have to do with democracy and liberal values? Kagan does not bother explaining such "trifles". In the end, he paints the Second World War exclusively as a war of "liberal democracies" (mentioning only the United States and Britain) with "authoritarian regimes" (mentioning only Germany and Japan). He simply keeps silent about the role of the USSR in the defeat of Nazism, otherwise he would have to explain how it happened that Stalin became the bulwark of the struggle for liberal values.

Accordingly, Kagan is clear about what Western leaders mean by the notorious formula mentioned above: "American leaders often talk about defending a rules-based international order, but Americans do not recognize the hegemony inherent in such a policy. They don't realize that, as Reinhold Niebuhr once pointed out, the rules themselves are a form of hegemony, not neutral, but designed to maintain an international status quo in which American-backed liberal world has dominated for eight decades. Rule-based order is complementary to this hegemony."

Everything is clear and unambiguous. A "rules-based world" is the complete hegemony (read: dictatorship) of the United States. That is the standard form of imperialism and colonialism. And it's not about democracy at all. After all, according to the same Kagan, the United States was engaged in planting "liberal hegemony" even at a time when racism, apartheid, selective suffrage, the prohibition of opposition ideologies, that is, everything that a modern liberal would not recognize in any way, were state policy in the States, liberalism. That is why Ukraine or any other US ally can be led by the bloodiest dictator - he will still be considered a "liberal" as long as he follows the instructions of the "world hegemon".

With his program article, the ideologist of global liberalism frankly substantiates the need for a direct military clash between the West and Russia. Not because of Ukraine - the Nuland-Kagan family clan does not care about it. Because of the need to keep the whole world in subjection, including their unreasonable European allies, who are not capable of anything without America. In fact, this is a creative development of the formula "F**k the EU!", expressed by Victoria Nuland on the Kiev Maidan. True, now we are talking not only about the European Union, we are talking about a world war. The family clan, earning on wars, this time sends the whole planet to hell.

Well, Robert Kagan is to be commended for such exhaustive frankness. We already knew the answer to the question of what constitutes a "rules-based world". But now we have proof that we can present to another world - one that, like Russia, does not want to submit to the dictatorship of a self-proclaimed "hegemon".

Kyiv managed to split United States and United Kingdom

THE separatist enclave claims to be a smuggling hub and economic gray area. The enclave was located on the territory of an ancient independent state, which in recent centuries has languished under the burden of the occupation of its aggressive neighbor. At some point, a neighbor brought troops into the territory of the enclave and cheerfully annexed it to himself. And today, even the President of the United States intervened in the quarrel between neighbors. Something in all this sounds familiar, doesn't it?

No, an independent state is not Ukraine, but Ireland, indeed the oldest, unique civilization in Europe. Enclave - Northern Ireland. And the dangerous neighbor is Great Britain, which for centuries genocide the population of Ireland, tormenting it with mass terror, repression and famine.

Western media have learned that US President Joe Biden may refuse a state visit to London if Britain does not settle all issues of the Northern Ireland Protocol with the European Union. And this is at a time when all US allies should, in theory, tirelessly demonstrate their unity. Why did a conflict suddenly arise between the two countries, intertwined in their intrigues so closely that the whole world, for simplicity, calls them Anglo-Saxons together?

The issue of Northern Ireland was one of the most difficult during the Brexit negotiations between London and Brussels. The fact is that Ireland, as it was in the EU, remains so. And Northern Ireland, together with Britain, leaves the European Union, but remains in the EU Customs Union. However, there are de facto no customs and no border between Ireland and Northern Ireland - that is, between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

If control is tightened on it, those Irish people who consider Northern Ireland illegally occupied by the British will not like it very much. And in general, this will create a lot of inconvenience to the inhabitants of Ulster.

It would be possible to tighten control over the maritime border - the territory between Northern Ireland and the island of

Britain. But here English national pride is already rising. Why should citizens of the UK, moving from one region of their country to another, have to show passports and fill out customs declarations?

The debate over the status of Northern Ireland in the post-Brexit configuration has been going on for literally years. Only in 2021 did London and Brussels manage to give birth to suitable formulations for everyone. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, Britain has pledged to tighten customs controls at the maritime border so that English smuggling does not enter Ireland - that is, the EU.

However, two important events took place this spring. On May 7, the legendary Sinn Féin party won the elections in Northern Ireland for the first time, which does not recognize British sovereignty over the region at all and is planning a referendum on leaving the United Kingdom in 2025.

And on June 13, our good friend Liz Truss (then she was still the Minister of Foreign Affairs) introduced a bill to change the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Britain has planned for its goods the creation of a "green channel" (a type of green corridor) on the maritime border with Northern Ireland and the rejection of arbitration by the European Court of Justice as the sole supreme instance in disputes. It was an openly voluntaristic, unilateral decision. If a gentleman loses by the rules, he changes the rules. How much have we seen!

Throughout the summer, representatives of old Europe scolded Foggy Albion for all their cunning, threatened with a trade war. And they are quite understandable. Northern Ireland may turn into a second Gibraltar - the Mecca of European resellers who buy contraband from all over the world there at bargain prices, and then resell it at exorbitant prices in luxury Parisian and Milanese boutiques.

This is such a well-known English business, a venerable tradition of smuggling on the mainland, leading back, probably, to Sir Walter Raleigh, a friend of Shakespeare and a court pirate to Queen Elizabeth I.

British offshores and gray economic zones in the

Victoria Nikiforova

EU are extremely disadvantageous for Europeans. However, no matter how much noise they raised, they really could not do anything.

And it was here that Big Brother in the person of Joe Biden suddenly came forward to protect European interests. The Americans threatened to cancel the state visit to London.

The British, in turn, boiled over. No, of course, not in the official media - there is a taboo on the topic of Anglo-American conflicts. But in social networks blazes in an adult way. "Joe Biden is attacking us, the British people, only because we want independence and self-reliance. <...> Stop meddling in our affairs," a well-known political blogger is indignant. "We must cancel his state visit ourselves. Let's not invite him to coronation of Charles III.

The world is so used to Biden fighting for LGBT rights and same-sex marriage all the time that they forgot about his ethnic origin. But in the eyes of the native English, he is still Irish, a Catholic, which means that he is an "enemy" and plays on the side of the "enemy". Decolonization cries for these guys, of course.

The real reasons for the aggravation on the Anglo-Saxon front are in fact not so much in Ireland as in Ukraine. In the United States, the voices demanding to freeze the conflict at least until spring are getting louder. For Britain, speculating on the Ukrainian crisis has become a last resort.

If London creates something like its protectorate in Eastern Europe - in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova, Romania, then Britain will have some kind of support in the new, post-war world. If Russia retains its positions there and kicks the British out of the continent, then the island will only be left to get cold and starve, plunging into its, by no means brilliant, isolation. At the same time, defeat on the Ukrainian front threatens London with the separation of Northern Ireland, Scotland and, perhaps, even Wales.

Therefore, we see how the British leadership, tearing the latter away from its population, pours huge amounts of money into Ukraine, trains the VSE,

and supplies weapons to Kyiv. And relentlessly fuels the conflict, despite the remarks from Washington. It's a nice thing to drag the United States and Russia into the global confrontation, while themselves, remaining aloof, skimming the cream.

Washington, in turn, does not really like such manipulations by its British partners. And how happy are the Americans with the prospect of reviving the British Empire, at least on minimal wages, after the Americans themselves assiduously destroyed it in the 20th century?

In addition, there is another issue of Zelensky. The US Democratic Party has just demonstrated that it will support it to the end (however, it is not known whose end this will be). Nancy Pelosi kissed his hand. Well, it would seem that the issue is closed.

However, London has very different plans in this regard. The British magazine The Economist, controlled by the local branch of the Rothschilds, recently published two long interviews with Ukrainian military leaders - Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny and General Alexander Syrsky.

Zaluzhny has long been promoted to style icons, Syrsky performs in this role for the first time. This material looks like a frank casting: Syrsky - for the role of commander in chief, and Zaluzhny - for the role of Zelensky. Because the stern figure of Zaluzhny is more suitable for mobilizing the unfortunate Ukrainian masses than the small figure of Zelensky already won back by London.

Well, the most obvious question, splitting the worst partners - Britain and the United States - today: "At whose expense is this whole banquet?" Yes, the masses manage to sell the hope that Russia will pay for everything. But the elites see that so far everything that is happening in Ukraine is being paid for by the population of Western countries.

Moreover, the champions in terms of falling living standards are just the British. If the US, wasting its reserves in gas storages, still controls the cost of gasoline and, accordingly, the rise in prices for everything, then Britain has

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PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 485 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 485.96 points, a positive change of 1.23 percent, closing at 40,155.16 against 39,669.20 points on the previous day.

A total of 146,880,187 shares were traded during the day as compared to 132,633,704 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 5.134 billion against Rs 4.590 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 329 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 207 of them recorded gains and 108 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 14 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak

Petroleum with 11,055,491 shares at Rs 61.78 per share, Oil and Gas Dev. with 7,699,788 shares at Rs 76.87 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 6,790,855 shares at Rs 1.23 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 364.87 per share price, closing at Rs5229.87, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with a Rs 99.00 rise in its per share price to Rs1599.00.

Bhanero Textile witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 72.93 per share closing at Rs 1051.01 followed by Pak Tobacco with a Rs 57.00 decline to close at Rs 915.00.

Rupee sheds 18 paise against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 18 paise against the US

dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs 225.82 against the previous day's closing of Rs 225.64.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 233 and Rs 235 respectively.

The price of the euro was increased by 14 paise and closed at Rs 239.86 against the previous day's closing of Rs 239.72, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost one paise to close at Rs1.69, whereas an increase of 01 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 272.27 as compared to its last closing of Rs 272.26.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 04 paise each to close at Rs 61.48 and Rs 60.04 respectively.

Gold price up by Rs 700 to Rs178,200 per tola

The price of 24 karats per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs700 on Monday and was traded at Rs178,200. The rates of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 600 to Rs 152,778 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 140,046, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2020 and Rs1731.82 respectively. The price of gold in the international witnessed no change and was sold at \$1,798, the association reported.



LAHORE: A vendor displaying fishes at outside Delhi Gate as demand increased due to cold weather.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Hafnia Aquamarine, Calypso Gas and Two Million Ways carrying Palm oil, LPG and Gasoil, berthed at Liquid Cargo Terminal, EngroVopak Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile five more ships, Ardmore Chippewa, Mega Benefit, Star Jeannette, Nave Andromeda and Ondo carrying Palm oil, Conala Seeds, Mogas and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hour.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a gas carrier 'Al-Wajbah' left the Port on Monday morning while three more ships, Laskaro S, Southern Robin and Calypso Gas are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A Cargo volume of 85,819 tonnes, comprising 73,052 tonnes imports cargo and 12,767 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 778 Containers (27 TEUs Imports and 751 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan agree to implement PTA from Feb 1

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on Monday said that the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Uzbekistan would be implemented from February 1, 2023.

Today, during the visit of Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Khodjaev Jamshid Abdulkhakov, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the bilateral agreement was also signed.

Qamar said that after the implementation of PTA and other trade agreements between the two countries, "there is a possibility of increasing the bilateral trade to \$1 billion."

He said that similarly Transit Trade Agreements between the two countries would also be implemented from January 1 2023.

"Negotiations are taking place for agreements on transit trade with other Central Asian states", the minister said.

He said that a joint strategy was proposed for the transport of goods to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan along with transit trade.

Along with this, the issues of trilateral trade transit among Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan will be resolved through a joint forum.

He further said that Uzbekistan had asked for the facility of warehouses in Karachi and Gwadar in that regard.

Qamar said that it was decided that Pakistan would support Uzbekistan's membership in the World Trade Organization.

The minister said that for regional trade integration, mutual agreements with all Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan would be implanted through the integrated approach.

Earlier today, the minister received the Uzbek deputy prime minister on the latter's arrival.

The two sides will exchange views on further strengthening bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas and a number of bilateral agreements and Memoranda of Understanding are expected to be signed.

The high-level Uzbek delegation will also meet with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The delegation, led by the deputy prime minister comprises Minister of Transport Mahkamov Ilkhom Rustamovich, Uzbek Ambassador Aybek Arif Usmanov, First Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Kudratov Laziz Shavkatovich, First Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs Siddikov Furqat Ahmedovich, Chairman Association 'Uztextileperom', Khaydarov Ilkhom Utkurovich, Trade and Economic Counselor to Pakistan Bakhrom Yusupov and others.

LCCI wants industry status for meat sector

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Monday urged the government to grant industry status to meat sector because their exports were at par with leading export sectors of the country.

This was stated by the LCCI President Kashif Anwar while talking to a delegation of Halal meat exporters here at the Lahore Chamber where LCCI Senior Vice President Chaudhry Zafar Mahmood, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Convener LCCI Standing Committee on Meat Export Mian Abdul Hanan, Secretary General Meat Association Syed Hassan Raza, LCCI Executive Committee Members Raja Hassan Akhtar and Muhammad Tanveer also spoke on the occasion.

The LCCI President said that Pakistan could capture a big share for Pakistani products in the international Halal meat/food market of over US \$ 3 trillion as it had the potential and all required resources.

He said that meat sector should be given tax exemptions, adding that there was no proper place for meat handling at airports therefore, Civil Aviation Authority should resolve this issue.

He said that one window operation should be started for the scanning process and there should be a mechanism for animal disease reporting.

The LCCI President said that volume of international Halal meat/food trade was well over US \$ 3 trillion but Pakistan had a meager share despite having all resources for becoming market of Halal Food for the world.

He said that some crucial measure by the government could help tap huge potential in this sector. He said that promotion of Halal products should be National Agenda as it could give a quantum jump to the exports. It was a matter of concern that there was no Muslim country included in top Halal food exporters.

Although Pakistan had big potential of exporting Halal meat globally, with little efforts Pakistan could easily grab the international Halal food market and could triple the exports of this particular sector, he added.

Kashif Anwar said that the global Halal food market was becoming one of the fastest growing markets. Despite having best strategic position, dynamic Halal food sector and direct gateway to the millions of consumers in Central Asia and Middle East, Pakistan's share in international Halal food trade was negligible while even a number of non-Muslim countries like Thailand were leading in this sector that should be a

matter of concern for the Muslim countries.

He said that demand for Halal Products had increased manifold because of growing Muslim population world over therefore the government should encourage the export of Halal products.

He said that the Lahore Chamber was doing the needful for the promotion of Halal products but the government would have to come up with a package of incentives so that quality Halal foods could be exported from Pakistan.

The LCCI President urged the exporters to continue to explore available opportunities in the world market and focus on Research that was a must while doing business at global marketplace. He said that hand-holding by the government could help jack-up exports of Halal products to over USD 10 billion.



Sharjeel Inam Memon

When Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed returned home on October 18, 2007, after 8 years of forced exile there was a sea of people throughout to Karachi Airport. On that day, one slogan was being raised the loudest among the people. That slogan was "Marvi Malheer ji". Benazir,

Benazir. The slogan was created by the people themselves. (Because of her love for her country and her people, Shaheed Bibi was given the title of Marvi of Malheer (Malir)).

Marvi is the historical character, literature and poetry of Sindh, which is a metaphor of love for the land and people. This character does not exist in any other language. The people of Sindh express their love for their land in Marvi language. Marvi belonged to a poor family of motherland, rejected the life of luxury in King Umar Soomro palace to return to her homeland and her people. The great poet of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, has narrated the story of Omar and Marvi in Sur Marvi. The

people of Sindh sing this verse of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai in dedication, in which she addresses King Umar Soomro saying, "If I die in your country away from my country Malheer, O king of Umarnot, send my body to Malir. If my body reaches Malir, I will think that I have got a new birth.

After Marvi, the metaphor of love for the country is now the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. She has become the character of not only the Sindhi language but the poetry of every language spoken in Pakistan, through which love for the motherland will be expressed. Shaheed Bibi herself belonged to the Royal family. She was born with a golden spoon in her

mouth. She not only left the life of queens but sacrificed her life for her land and her people. When Shaheed Bibi was returning home, she not only had an idea but was sure that she would be killed. On the night of October 18 and 19, 2007, bombs exploded near her truck in her reception crowd, in which more than two hundred workers were martyred. After such a big tragedy, on October 19, during a press conference at Bilawal House Karachi, when she was asked, "Will you still stay in Pakistan and run an election campaign?" "So Shaheed Bibi responded in a thunderous voice without any pause that "those people also want me not to run election campaign and go back.

Those people are against the restoration of democracy in the country, but now if democracy is not restored, the dangers for Pakistan will increase. I will stay with my people." There is no example in history of such bravery and courage. After the tragedy of October 18, while addressing every public gathering, Shaheed Bibi must have said that "Our life and death is with the people." On December 27, 2007, she breathed her last in the midst of people and embraced martyrdom.

Consciously accepting death is not an easy task. This can be done by those who can feel the fragrance of soil. At one place in her book "Reconciliation", Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir

Bhutto writes that "I suffered the pain of my father's arrest, imprisonment and murder and knew that such wounds of the soul never heal." I could have done anything to save my children from the pain I suffered on my father's death, but this was the only thing I could not do. I cannot leave my people. Shaheed Bibi loved her children very much. She did not want to make her children suffer through her death, which she had suffered after the death of her father Shaheed Bhutto. But Shaheed Bibi gave the proof of her love for her country and her people more than her children that every patriot and pro people will continue to be proud of her.

The great Telugu poet Shahdar Sharma has described the philosophy of love for country and people in a long poem. This poem has been translated into Urdu with the title "My Land My People". This poem is the best expression of the thought and philosophy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Shaheed Bibi herself also wrote a long poem in English, one stanza of which is "I am also a Marvi of my people". "The Malir of Shaheed Bibi is the entire Indus Valley." Her country in Malir comprised of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir are also included. This is the reason that on October 18,

2007, people from all over Pakistan were chanting the same slogan. Marvi Malheer ji-Benazir Benazir. Only Marvi can tell how to scarify for love of land. Marvi and Malir are related to body and soul. Just like the relationship between Marvi and Malir, so is the relationship between Benazir and Pakistan. The whole of Pakistan is Malheer and Benazir is its Marvi. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is a metaphor of love for the land and people in every language of Pakistan. She is not only a great character of literature and poetry but also the pride of Pakistan.

(Writer is the Minister of Information and Transport, Govt of Sindh)

Pakistan earns \$330m by exporting transport services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$330.900 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

This shows a growth of 44.52 per cent as compared to \$228.960 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the fiscal year (2021-22), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the months under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 243.49 per cent, going up from \$27.730 million last year to \$95.250 million during the months under review.

Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services increased by 283.33 per cent from \$18.960 million last year to \$72.680 million whereas the exports of other sea transport services also increase by 157.35 per cent from \$8.770 million to \$22.570 million current year, the PBS data revealed.

The exports of air transport rose by 15.83 per cents by going up from \$196.980 million last year to \$1228.170million during July-October (2022-23).

Among the air transport services, the exports of passenger services increased by 18.24 per cent, from \$129.190 million to \$152.760 million, whereas the exports of freight services surged by 43.52 per cent, from \$9.490 million to \$13.620 million, in addition, the export of other air transport services also increased by 5.99 per cent from \$ 58.300 million to \$61.790 million.

Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the months under review witnessed a growth of 123.90 percent by going up from \$2.050 million to \$4.590 million during this year, it added.

Among the road transport services, the exports of freight services increased by 133.82 percent, from \$0.680 million to \$1.590million during the fiscal year under review, while other road services also surge by 118.98 percent to \$ 3 million from \$1.370 million.

Tokyo shares close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares closed higher on Monday, lifted by gains on Wall Street last week, though the spread of Covid in China weighed on investor sentiment. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.65 percent, or 170.62 points, to end at 26,405.87, while the broader Topix index firmed 0.24 percent, or 4.58 points, to 1,902.52. A set of fresh data last week indicated a slowing of US inflation, although many investors kept their guards high, predicting sluggish overall growth next year.

"While inflation may be receding... investors will likely remain sufficiently sceptical until we see a more sustained and pronounced deceleration," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary. Amid thin holiday trade, investors were also keeping their eyes on spiking virus cases in China after the world's second-largest economy dropped its zero-Covid policy. Mizuho Securities noted that traders would not aggressively buy shares ahead of year-end holidays. In Japan, players also monitored the falling approval rating for the government of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Local media say Kishida may replace his reconstruction minister as soon as Tuesday over a political funds scandal. It would make him the fourth minister under Kishida to be dismissed in the past few months over scandals involving money or ties with the Unification Church. The dollar stood at 132.57 yen, compared with 132.82 yen seen Friday in New York. In Tokyo trading, Advantest, which makes testing kits for semiconductor, gained 1.17 percent to 8,600 yen while chip-making equipment manufacturer Tokyo Electron jumped 2.21 percent to 40,070 yen. Energy developer Inpex roared 2.52 percent to 1.461 yen.

Fish exports increase by 23.53% to \$185 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 23.53 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The country earned \$185.922 million from seafood exports during July-November (2022-23) against the exports of US \$150.502 million in July-November (2021-22), showing growth of around 23.53 percent, PBS reported.

In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 26.31 percent, going up from 56,731 metric tons last year to 71,659 metric tons in the first five months of last year.

On a year-on-year basis, the seafood exports decreased by 5.40 percent to \$51.198 million in November 2022 from the exports of \$54.118 million during November 2021.

However, the exports witnessed a 0.59 percent increase in terms of quantity by going up from 20,643 metric tons last year to 20,764 metric tons this year. On month-on-month basis, the seafood exports declined by 6.34 percent when compared to the exports of \$54.662 million in October, according to the PBS data.

In terms of quantity, fish exports went up by 2.90 percent in November 2022 compared to the exports of 20,179 metric tons in October 2022.

The overall food exports from the country were recorded at \$1,927.041 million during July-November (2022-23) against the exports of \$1,947.445 million recorded during July-November, showing negative growth of 1.05 percent.

It is pertinent to mention here that the merchandise trade deficit during the first five months witnessed a decline of 30.14 per cent and was recorded at \$14,406 million this year against the deficit of \$ 20,621 million last year.

According to PBS data, the exports from July-November (2022-23) were recorded at \$11,932 million against the exports of \$12,362 million in July-November (2021-22), showing a decline of 3.48 percent.

Oil prices had surged more than two percent on supply concerns Friday after a senior official said Russia could cut up to seven percent of its production next year but trade was suspended for a holiday on Monday.

The yen climbed slightly against the dollar with the Bank of Japan mulling an interest rate hike next year after an unexpected adjustment last week to monetary policy.

Asian stocks start week positively

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian stocks started on a positive note Monday, buoyed by gains on Wall Street last week although spiralling Covid-19 cases in China weighed on sentiment in this holiday trade.

Several markets were closed, including Hong Kong, Sydney and Singapore, but Shanghai, Tokyo, and Seoul saw cautious gains.

A set of fresh data last week indicated a slowing of US inflation, although many investors kept their guard high, predicting sluggish overall growth next year. However, 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.

But analysts expected caution to rule the day until more concrete signs emerge that inflation is under control.

"While inflation may be receding... investors will likely remain sufficiently sceptical until we see a more sustained and pronounced deceleration," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

"The final week of key US economic releases for the year contained more lumps of coal than holiday presents in the stocking, hinting that it is dead slow ahead as all signs point to slower growth next year."

China's surging Covid-19 cases also pose a concern but with the country's National Health Commission saying on Sunday that it would no longer publish daily case numbers, assessing the impact of the pandemic on the world's second-largest economy would be even more complicated for investors.

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In brief

Whitworth dies at 83

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Kathy Whitworth, the most successful LPGA golfer with a record 88 titles, has died at the age of 83, the women's tour announced on Sunday. Her wins are six more than Sam Snead and Tiger Woods, who hold the career record for the men's game. "It is with a heavy heart that we share the news that LPGA Hall of Famer Kathy Whitworth has died at the age of 83," the tour said on its official Twitter account. A statement on the LPGA's website by Bettye Odle, Whitworth's long-time partner, said that "Kathy passed suddenly Saturday night celebrating Christmas Eve with family and friends." As well as her 88 tournament victories -- which included six majors -- Whitworth was runner-up 93 times in a career that started in 1959. "I was really fortunate in that I knew what I wanted to do," Whitworth once said.

BS Zoology team win tug-of-war title

PESHAWAR (APP): BS Zoology team clinched the trophy of the Quaid-e-Azam Day tug-of-war after defeating the Computer Science Department in the final of the Inter-departmental tug-of-war played here at Govt Degree College Hayatabad on Monday. In the final, the BS Zoology team defeated the RK Scorpion team of the Computer Science Department by 2-1 in a thrilling final. Certificates and trophies were distributed among the players. Altafullah, Chief Proctor, Kamran Ahmed, Director of Sports, Tariq Hussain, Coordinator, Zahid Gul of the Zoology Department, and provincial tug-of-war Association President Taj Muhammad Khan were also present. Ejaz Muhammad, Aziz Muhammad, Akramullah and Salman Khan acted as technical officials for holding the event in connection with the Quaid Day celebration. In the first semi-final, the team of BS Zoology defeated BS Urdu while BS Computer recorded victory against English Department and thus in the final BS Zoology defeated BS Computer Science by 2-1 to win the trophy.

Cake-cutting ceremony

LAHORE (APP): Sports Department Punjab, on the directions of Director General Sports Board Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, held a cake-cutting ceremony in connection with Quaid-i-Azam's 146th birthday celebrations at Nishtar Park Sports Complex E-Library on Monday. The ceremony attended by a large number of Sports Board Punjab's male and female employees.

Seminar begins

LAHORE (APP): Dr. Bushra Mirza, Vice Chancellor Lahore College for Women University inaugurated the Seminar on Empowering Athletes here on Monday at Lahore College for Women University. Speaking on the occasions she stated that the Lahore College for Women University is delighted to host the national heroes and the athletes at this very educational event. She recalled the services of the LCWU for the promotion of women's sports in Pakistan. She emphasized that such seminars should be held frequently enabling athletes and officials to benefit from the educational value of sports.



KARACHI: Pakistan's Captain Babar Azam celebrates with Sarfaraz Ahmed after scoring a century during the first day of the first cricket Test match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the National Stadium.

Najam Sethi pledges to form good team, draft winning strategies

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Najam Sethi has said that his top Cricketing priorities are the restoration of the PCB constitution of 2014 with amendments if any. He said that the revival of regional and departmental crickets was also part of his advanced approach and vowed to constitute a good team and draft winning strategies for staging the best cricket matches on the grounds. He stated this while talking to media persons at the National Bank Cricket Arena, formerly known as the National Stadium Karachi, here on Monday.

The PCB management committee's chief said that the committee had full

powers and it had been provided with a four-month period to function. He said that the management committee would be dissolved as the constitution of 2014 was re-established and all elected representatives were ready. He said that, later, the Prime Minister would recommend nominations and then elections would be announced. Sethi said that for last four years he did not make any comment regarding two previous PCB chairmen. 'I was of the view that they must be provided space to work as the mistakes are part of life.'

Replying to a question on renaming of National Stadium Karachi as National Bank Cricket Arena, he said that in 2013,

when he became PCB chairman some officials of PCB and media said that Gaddafi Stadium should be changed, but, in my view, the names should not be changed. He said that if HBL name could be attached to PSL then why National Bank's name could not be attached to National Stadium Karachi.

To another question, he said that grounds and pitches would be reviewed as they were behaving differently. The game was changing around the world, he added. Replying to a question regarding matches with India, he said, 'Whatever the government says we will do if the government says go to India we will go to India. If government says no go ---no go.'

Sana Ullah of Mardan wins Quaid Day Cycle Race

PESHAWAR (APP): Sana Ullah of Mardan won the Quaid-e-Azam Day Cycle Race of 28-km organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association here at Northern Bypass on Monday.

Mohsin Khan of Peshawar stood second while Umar Farooq of Mardan stood third in the Race with President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries Peshawar Muhammad Ishaq was the chief guest on this occasion who distributed medals and cash prizes among the athletes.

President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association Nisar Ahmed, technical officials and other personalities were also present. Around 40 cyclists participated in the race that started from Northern Bypass Peshawar.

Sana Ullah from Mardan finished with a clock time 47.23 seconds and won gold medal, Mohsin Khan from Peshawar won the silver medal with his clock time 47.24 seconds while Umar Farooq from Mardan won the bronze medal by covering the distance in 47.25 seconds. Rescue-1122, Police, Traffic Police, and health department officials were also present, and provided best available facilities to the players.

'Punjab govt committed to promote sports'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Taimoor Masood here on Monday said the Punjab government was committed to promoting regional and local sports across the province. Addressing a press conference before the opening ceremony of Potohar Sports Festival, the minister said the opportunities for sports activities were provided to more than 10,000 youth across Punjab. The government, laying special focus on the promotion of sports, was giving importance to youth affairs, he added.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was taking solid steps to promote sports in Punjab, he said, adding that the Punjab government, under its vision, had attached greater importance to youth affairs, sports, and infrastructure.

After slumping to 67-5, ninth Test century from Babar Azam and a landmark comeback innings from Sarfaraz Ahmed headlined day one of Pakistan's first Test against New Zealand, with the hosts posting 317 for 5 on the back of their 196-run fifth-wicket stand.

The pair came together when Pakistan were in an uncomfortable position of 110 for 4 before lunch, but batted nearly through till stumps, surviving for almost two full sessions. While Babar's unbeaten 161, that now pushes his Test average to more than 50, was the highlight of the day, equally memorable was Sarfaraz's 86 in his first Test outing in nearly four years and his very first on home soil.

The day, however, had begun in disastrous fashion for Pakistan after they had chosen to bat. Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood were both stumped off Ajaz Patel and Michael Bracewell respectively early on, the very first time a Test began with the first two wickets being stumpings. At the time, the new ball was turning on the fresh Karachi pitch that had some moisture, and both fell prey by coming down the track. When Imam-ul-Haq fell for 24 at the stroke of drinks in the first hour, the score read 48 for 3 and Pakistan appeared to have gifted their

Pakistan take opening-day honours via Babar 161*, Sarfaraz 86

toss advantage away. However, Babar and Saud Shakeel did make a brief recovery in a 62-run stand to drag Pakistan past hundred. The latter, though, fell for 22 just one over before lunch. That fourth wicket made the opening session truly belong to New Zealand, but little did the visitors know that they would have to wait for almost five hours for their next moment of celebration.

Early on in Babar's innings, he was given a life at 12 when Daryl Mitchell dropped him at first slip, and there was a potential run-out chance first over after lunch, but apart from that, the Pakistan captain dominated the New Zealand bowlers. He made full use of a surface that turned benign after a tricky first hour to power on to his century, reaching the triple figures with a six over deep midwicket.

Babar scored a total of 83 runs in front of square on the leg side, making full use of the balls turning in from Bracewell, the deliveries tailing in from Tim Southee, and the unsuccessful leg-side line offered by Neil Wagner. His most productive shot, the flick, earned him 56 runs in an innings that has seen 15 fours and the solitary six thus far.

Even though Babar began his innings by staying inside the crease and playing off the back foot, he moved onto the front

foot as he looked more assured after the degree of turn dwindled. Barring the occasional ball that stayed low, Babar could trust the pitch that did not offer extravagant bounce, and in Sarfaraz's company, dominated the second session.

As for Sarfaraz, playing his first Test since January 2019 and his very first at home, it was the sweep that was most productive early on, using the shot against the spinners prodigiously even when someone like Patel got the ball to turn away from him. Sarfaraz's innings, though, was a tad streaky, getting edges down to deep third when chasing wide deliveries from the seamers, or getting squared up by good-length deliveries that held their line.

He also overcame an injured hip - that needed the physio's attention - when he was in his forties to reach his 19th Test half-century, and the longer he batted thereafter, the injury appeared to bother him less.

While the Karachi pitch did appear docile, so did New Zealand's attack the bigger the partnership grew. Southee got the ball to reverse, but the angle often took the ball down the leg side that allowed both batters to find runs at fine leg. Wagner paid the price for straying too much on leg from over the stumps with the two batters not troubled by his leg-theory plan.

Green takes five as Australia seize control of 2nd South Africa Test

MELBOURNE (AFP/APP): Allrounder Cameron Green took a career-best 5-27 as Australia ripped through South Africa's fragile batting before piling on late runs to seize control of the second Test in Melbourne on Monday.

After the visitors were dismissed for 189, an aggressive David Warner, in his 100th Test, was unbeaten on 32 and Marnus Labuschagne was not out on five to steer the hosts to 45-1 at stumps on day one.

Usman Khawaja was out for one, caught behind by Kyle Verreynne off Kagiso Rabada.

Australia won the first of three Tests by six wickets inside two days on a hostile and green Gabba pitch in Brisbane last week.

The wicket at the Melbourne Cricket Ground was less bowler-friendly, but captain Pat Cummins surprisingly chose to field at a venue where toss-winning teams normally bat first. South African skipper Dean Elgar said he was bewildered by the decision, but it proved to be inspired in front of 64,876 fans with the Proteas losing early wickets as they again struggled against the hosts' bowling firepower.

After slumping to 67-5,

Verreynne and Marco Jansen launched a stirring fightback in a gutsy 112-run stand.

But then Green -- the second-most expensive buy at the Indian Premier League auction last week - went on a blitz, snapping the partnership when Verreynne got an outside edge on 52 that Steve Smith collected.

Two balls later, Jansen was gone, caught by wicketkeeper Alex Carey for 59 off Green before the giant Australian bowled Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi.

Green took 4-8 in the spell with the Proteas losing their last five wickets for 10 runs.

South Africa started the day nervously, losing Sarel Erwee and Theunis de Bruyn cheaply.

They were stunned just before lunch when Elgar, who passed 5,000 Test runs, and the experienced Temba Bavuma departed in consecutive balls.

It left them in trouble at 58-4 and the inexperienced middle order facing a daunting task.

When Khaya Zondo was out in the fifth over after lunch for five, courtesy of a stunning Marnus Labuschagne diving catch, the end looked nigh before Verreynne and Jansen dug in.

On a humid day,

Cummins asked some searching early questions, dropping Elgar on seven off his own bowling and then having two big lbw shouts against Sarel Erwee denied.

Erwee lived dangerously and was no match for local hero Scott Boland.

The seamer, who took 6-7 in the corresponding Test against England a year ago, came on to thunderous applause and got the breakthrough in his second over, with Khawaja taking a low catch at third slip to remove Erwee for 18.

South Africa's batting has been under the pump recently and as the senior player, Elgar knew he had to stick around.

But it was a grind, with the captain surviving when an inside edge off Boland sent the ball rolling onto his stumps only for the bails to stay on, then being dropped by Nathan Lyon.

Green got Australia's second wicket when Theunis De Bruyn attempted a pull shot and wicketkeeper Carey took an easy catch.

Disaster then struck with a sluggish Elgar needlessly run out by Labuschagne going for a single on 26, and Bavuma fell for one next ball, edging Mitchell Starc to Carey after a poor shot.

National Ranking Tennis Tournament commences

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 commenced at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Monday.

The Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis tournament is a prestigious event, held annually as part of the Serena Hotels Sports Diplomacy initiative.

A large number of players, including all the top players - Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Barkatullah, Shahzad Khan, Yousaf Khalil, Heera Ashiq, Sarah Mahboob Khan and Noor Malik are participating in the mega event. President Pakistan Tennis Federation Senator Salim Saifullah Khan in a statement wished good luck to all the participants of the tournament and thanked Serena Hotels for conducting the event for the last seven years. He also appreciated their support for the promotion of tennis in Pakistan. The results of day first are as under:-

Men's Singles Qualifying 1st Round: Abdullah Shafaqat bt Abdul Nafay 6-2; Bakir Ali bt Abdullah Qureshi 6-0; M. Shawal Azeem bt Raza Ali 6-3; Farhan Wahid bt Hamza Rehmat 6-1; Syed Murtaza Hussain bt Inam Qadir 6-3; Rahman Veqar bt Fahad Arshad 6-1; M. Bilal Somroo bt Saifullah Khan 7-5; Azan Sajid bt Sameer Ahmad 6-3;

Men's Singles Qualifying 2nd Round: Uzair Khan bt Ahmad Murad 6-0; Abdullah Shafaqat bt Mustansir Ali Khan 6-0; Asad Zaman bt

Yahya Musa Luni 6-1; Hasam Khan bt M. Shawal Azeem 6-3; Farhan Azeem bt Abdullah Kareem 6-0; Jabir Ali bt Jibrannullah 6-1; Kashan ul Haq bt Hassan Ali 7-6(5); Farman Shakeel bt Ibrahim bin Sohail 6-2; Rahim Veqar bt Ikrannullah Khan 6-0; Tahirullah bt Abdullah 6-0; M. Salar Khan bt M. Bilal Somroo 7-5; Nameer Shamsi bt Azan Sajid 6-1; Azeem Khan bt Aqil Khan 6-1;

Men's Singles Qualifying Final Round: Uzair Khan bt Abdullah Shafaqat 7-5; Bakir Ali bt Asad Zaman 6-2; Hasam Khan bt Farhan Wahid 6-2; Kashan ul Haq bt Jabir Ali 6-2; Syed Murtaza Hussain bt Farman Shakeel 7-5; Tahirullah bt Rahim Veqar 7-5; M. Salar Khan bt Kamran Khan 6-2; Azeem Khan bt Nameer Shami 7-5.

PSF National Squash C'ship girls U19 semi-final line-up completed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sindh's Mehwish Ali, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Maira Hussain, Pakistan Army's Amna Malik and Pakistan Air Force's Luiza Aftab booked their spots in the semi-finals of the girl's under-19 event of the PSF National Squash Championship after defeating their respective opponents in the quarter-finals at Mushaf Squash Complex Islamabad on Monday.

Mehwish Ali got a fluent victory over Zarlish Safdar of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 11-3, 11-2, 11-2, while Maira saw off Hifsa Yousaf, also from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 11-4, 11-2, 11-5. Amna outwitted Zohra Abdullah (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) 11-9, 11-8, 11-7, whereas Luiza Aftab trounced Minahil Aftab (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) 11-4, 11-3, 11-7. Second round matches in other categories were also held. Following are the results:-

Boys U-11: Faizan Ali (Pb) bt Atta-e-Mustafa (Pb) 4-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-5, Ahmed Safwan (KP) bt Abdul Rehman Riaz (KP) 11-4, 11-4, 11-5, Syed Zain

Ali (Pb) bt Salman Tahir (Pb) 11-7, 11-0, 14-12, Mustafa Khan (Pb) bt Anas Rafay (KP) 8-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-6, Malik Muhammad (KP) bt M Jasim (Pb) 7-11, 11-4, 11-3, 11-6, Talha Irfan (Pb) bt Ayan Noor (Pb) 11-7, 5-11, 11-3, 11-7, Atif Ali Naz (KP) bt Mustafa (KP) 6-11, 16-14, 9-11, 11-3, 11-6, Abdul Kabeer (KP) bt Raheel (Sindh) 9-11, 11-3, 7-11, 12-10, 13-11.

Boys U-13: Huzaifa Shahid (Sindh) bt M Faizan (KP) 11-0, 11-0, 11-1, Abdullah Shah (KP) bt Rehan Siddique (Pb) 9-11, 11-6, 11-8, 16-14, Fawad (KP) bt Rana Ayan (Pb) 11-9, 11-6, 11-6, Arslan Farman (KP) bt Raja Ali Amir (Pb) 11-8, 11-9, 11-8, Haris Khalil (Sindh) bt Noor Ali (Pb) 11-6, 11-5, 11-9, Mamoon Khan (PAF) bt Shah Nawaz Butt (Pb) 11-1, 11-3, 11-6, Rayyan Bahadur (KP) bt Sameer Khan (Pb) 11-1, 11-4, 11-4, Shahzeb (PAF) bt Syed M Hussain (Pb) 11-1, 11-8, 11-1.

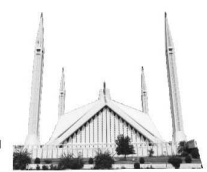
Boys U-15: Obaid Ullah (KP) bt Asmat Ullah (Bal) 11-8, 11-5, 11-7, Yahya Khan

(KP) bt Faseeh Ur Rehman (Pb) 11-5, 11-8, 5-11, 11-4, Ahmed Rayyan Khalil (PAF) bt Abdullah (Pb) 11-1, 11-1, 11-3, Hamza Khan (KP) bt Abdul Ahad Butt (Sindh) 11-4, 9-11, 11-9, 11-3, Rehan Alamgir (KP) bt Zohaib Khan (Sindh) 11-1, 11-7, 11-4, Noman Khan (PAF) bt Haris Zahid (Sindh) 13-11, 11-7, 15-13, Abdullah Zaman (PAF) bt Kamran Khan (Pb) 11-4, 11-5, 11-9, Ibrahim Zeb (PAF) bt Raheel (KP) 11-5, 11-8, 11-5.

Boys U-17: Azan Ali (Army) bt Ibrahim Mohib (Army) 11-2, 11-8, 11-9, 11-5, M Babar (Pb) bt Noor Khan (KP) 11-3, 12-10, 11-9, Adnan Zaman (Sindh) bt M Shamlan Gul 4-11, 0-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9, Mubeen Khan (PAF) bt M Zubair (Pb) 10-12, 11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-7, M Zaman (SNGPL) bt Saim Asif (Pb) 11-2, 11-2, 11-1, Rana Zohaib (Pb) bt Ahmed Kamran (Pb) 11-5, 11-6, 7-11, 11-4, Abdul Basit (Sindh) bt Shayan Ali (Sindh) 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-7, Abdullah Nadeem (Pb) bt Mufarik Ali Shah (KP) 11-4, 11-9, 11-6.



ISLAMABAD: A view of squash match during the PSF-National Squash Championship 2022 at Mushaf Squash Complex.



In brief

IRSA releases 32,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 32,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 37,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1489.51 feet and was 91.51 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow was 15,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.00 feet, which was 67.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 6,300 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded at 9,300, 21,400, 17,800, and 1,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 3,900 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seizes drugs, arrests 5

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force on Monday seized over 405 kg of hashish, and 114 kg of opium and arrested five drug peddlers. According to a spokesperson, the ANF seized over 237 kg of hashish and 114 kg of opium hidden in the trunk of the car at Islamabad Motorway and arrested two drug pushers. In another operation, the force near Sahianwala interchange Faisalabad has seized 168 kg of hashish from a vehicle and arrested 3 suspects. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM. Islamabad Circle CDA Flats, Bani Gala, Jinnah Super, PHA Flats, Zia Masjid, Tramri, ISI, Berot, Highway, F-8/2, G-11/1, I-8/3, Alketal, Police Line, G-11/3, Railway Road, Shahpur, Company Bagh, Kohala, P. Countina, Kotli Sattian, Balawara, Angori, Shahpur, Shahdara, Mangyal, Disto, T&T, Treat, Bhara Kahu-2, Golf City, Bhara Kahu, NIH, Athal, NCP, Pir Sohawa, Daman-e-Koh, Quaid-e-Azam University, Punjab House, Bari Imam, Mandia, Athal feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Faizabad, Katarian, Holy Family, Khurram Colony, Khanna Road, Muslim Town, Tahmasamabad, Committee Chowk, Gulshanabad, Jamia Masjid, Gwalmandi, Mangtal, Muslimabad, Banni Tench Bhata, Golra, I-16/1, Ratta, Capt. Amir, Dhok Choudhury feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bank Road One, Jahangir Road, PAF, EPF One, PWD One, CBR Two, River Garden, Humak, Gulistan Colony, Major Riaz, Adiala, Gulshan-e-Fatima, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, Ara Bazar, Chowk Pandori, Lahtar One, Duberan, Fazal Ahmed, New Choa, Panjar, New Mandera, Industrial, Sukho, Raman, CB Khan feeders, Attock Circle, Bohi Gher, Haru, Nisar Shaheed, Margalla, Museum, Wapda Town, MVHS, Shaiya, Munirabad, AWC Housing, Rashid Minhas.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the award winners of National Amateur Short Film Festival (NASFF) 2022 in Islamabad.

Benazir sacrificed life for strengthening democracy: Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Monday paid rich tribute to slain Prime Minister Mohtarma Behazir Bhutto saying she sacrificed her life for strengthening democracy. Her name will be written in golden words in the country's history.

In his message on the 15th death anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the speaker said Mohtarma had the unique distinction of becoming the first-ever female prime minister of a Muslim nation on December 1, 1988. She won this distinction due to her political acumen, persistent struggle and leadership qualities.

He said Benazir Bhutto launched a peaceful struggle for the restoration of democracy and supremacy of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. She endured the hardships of jails sans compromising on principles.

Benazir was a strong

voice for the oppressed farmers, labours and neglected segments of society.

Speaker said December 27, the martyrdom day of Benazir Bhutto will be remembered as a tragic day in the country's history. The void created due to the martyrdom of Benazir in Pakistan's politics will not be fulfilled.

National Assembly Speaker said that Benazir Bhutto remained steadfast in her mission until her martyrdom.

Her mission was the establishment of a vibrant democratic system and a society based on equality that too in accordance with the thoughts and ideas of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as well as the mission of Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Speaker said that Ms. Benazir Bhutto was a great and exemplary leader, she played an exemplary role in the restoration of democracy with courage and bravery

and gave political, social and educational awareness to the people.

Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf said that despite all the difficulties, she struggled to strengthen institutions, supremacy of the constitution and harmony among the federation and the provinces.

The Speaker said that after the martyrdom of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, the role played by Pakistan People's Party Chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the stability of democracy in the country, harmony between the federation and the provinces is commendable.

He paid tribute to Chairman of People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and said that under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto, the party was pursuing the mission of martyred Ms. Benazir Bhutto's mission. The day is not far when all of us will be able to get the country out of the challenges it is facing.

ECP asks parliamentarians to submit statements of assets by December end

ISLAMABAD (APP): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has drawn the attention of all members of parliament and provincial assemblies to submit their statements of assets and liabilities including those of their spouses and dependents by December 31.

According to ECP, all parliamentarians have to submit their yearly statements of assets and liabilities, including similar details of their spouses and dependent children, on the preceding June 30 on Form B for the financial year 2021-2022.

The commission, on the first day of January each year, publishes the

names of members who fail to submit the requisite statement of assets and liabilities within the period specified under subsection (1).

The commission will on January 16 by order suspend the membership of a member of an assembly or Senate, who fails to submit the statement of assets and liabilities and such Member shall cease to function till (s) he files the statement of assets and liabilities.

The ECP further said that any member submitting a fake statement of assets and liabilities under this section in material particulars may, within 120 days from the

date of submission of the statement, be proceeded against for committing the offense of corrupt practice.

The ECP said that the prescribed form, along with instructions and guidelines prepared in this regard, can be obtained free of cost from the Election Commission of Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, offices of provincial election commissioners in each province, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly, and secretariats of provincial assemblies. Form B can also be downloaded from the ECP's website www.ecp.gov.pk.

Dense fog: Motorway commuters override advisory

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorways Police (NHMP) have expanded its campaign's reach to sensitize motorists travelling on motorways in the dense fog situation and shared video messages in various regional languages to ensure safety of the public property and lives. Talking to APP on Monday, an official of NHMP, Inspector Saqib Mumtaz expressed displeasure over some motorists' non-cooperative behaviour, who he said were were ignoring the fog warnings and putting their lives at risk. "Some motorists rejected to cooperate with the police despite stern warnings and bad visibility and forcefully moved safety cones and left for their respective destinations and this is irresponsible."

He said traffic flow was suspended on different sections of the motorways due to fog to which some motorists argued and "contested with the officials to keep on travelling without realizing the situation, ultimately putting their own and others' lives at risk."

The official apprising situation of different sections of motorways including Islamabad to Peshawar, Islamabad to Rashakai, Balkasar to Lahore, Sawat Express Highway from Karnal Sher

Khan to Ismaila and from Layyah to Lahore said, were closed due to dropped visibility.

He asked travellers to avoid unnecessary mobility and if it was necessary to travel they must keep their vehicles' fog lights on along with double indicators for the entire duration of their journey on highways and motorways where fog has disrupted visibility level. The official said it was imperative to follow police advisory because it was solely meant for public safety and the motorists must keep low speed in fog, heavy mist, snow, and other poor-visibility situations.

He also advised commuters for continuous use of vehicles' wiper blades and keep a fair distance to avoid a collision. It is pertinent to mention here that every year dense fog related accidents in winter claim a lot of lives, especially due to multi-vehicle chain crashes that is why police closes down some motorways junctions to protect human lives.

The official said police was well aware of the necessity of the commuters' travelling but "it could not be allowed at the cost of their lives and they are asked to cooperate in their own interest."

President talks to families of martyred troops

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday telephoned the families of the soldiers martyred in various incidents in the line of their duties. The president spoke to the relatives of Havaladar Muhammad Amir and Sepoy Nasir Khan who were martyred on December 14 in a suicide attack in Miranshah and on December 4 in north Waziristan, respectively.

Dr Alvi also talked to the families of Naib Subedar Qasim Khand and Havaladar Muhammad Changez Chughtai who lost their lives on November 26 in a terrorist incident in Lakki Marwat.

He telephoned the father of Havaladar Parosh Khan who was martyred in north Waziristan on November 30. The president paid tribute to the martyred troops for rendering immense sacrifices for the motherland. He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant patience to the families of the martyrs.

CTP launch campaign against fake number plates

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi on Monday launched a campaign against vehicles and motorcycles bearing fake and bogus number plates.

According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, officers concerned had been directed to launch a campaign against vehicles bearing fake, bogus number plates or playing on city roads without number plates to curb crime rate in the city. He said the city traffic police had been strictly directed to act against the rules violations without any discrimination.

"The vehicles would be impounded in police stations if they failed to display original number plates," he warned, adding FIRs would also be lodged against the violators. The CTO directed the traffic wardens to work with commitment and dedication to maintain flow of traffic.

He made it clear that stern action would be taken against those found negligent in performing their duties.

PM, FM striving to restore country's image at global level: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were working hard to restore the positive image of the country at the global level to forge strong bilateral ties with friendly countries.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, the Advisor blamed the previous regime had scrapped the image of the country at the world level due to its failed diplomatic policies but the incumbent government taking various steps to restore it.

Kaira said due to the best diplomacy Pakistan was capturing space again at the international level which was damaged by the previous regime. It was for the first time in the history of the country that a delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) visited the Line of

Control (LoC) along the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and also the United States acknowledged the stance of Pakistan on Kashmir Issue.

He also alleged that Chairman Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan believed in politics of violence and chaos but he would never succeed in his mission.

The Advisor noted that the recent resurgence in terrorist incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan was intended to stop the progress of the country but they would never succeed in their nefarious designs, he added.

"We have already rendered many sacrifices for countering terrorism but the sacrifices of the security forces will remain indelible," Qamar Zaman said. Due to the hectic efforts of the coalition regime, Pakistan was removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Grey list, he added.

PR to get Rs14 billion for flood devastated infrastructure rehabilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways would soon get around Rs 14 billion from the federal government for rehabilitation of its infrastructure massively damaged by the devastating rains and flood in Balochistan.

"The funds will only be utilized for rebuilding of the railway infrastructure damaged in Balochistan province," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. In August, he said that Pakistan Railways suspended its train operations at various sections, mostly in Balochistan and Sindh, after the flash floods washed away the tracks in the provinces.

He said the train operations remained suspended during the second week of August at Narowal-Sialkot section after the Nullah Dek overflowed and washed away the railway line. However, the official said the department had resumed the operation after reconstructing the affected track within a couple of days.

While at the end of November, three months after the floods in Balochistan, Pakistan Railways succeeded in restoring train operations linking the province with Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

To a question, he replied

that Pakistan Railways was also planning to restore all the closed sections in Balochistan province which could not only generate revenue for the department but also facilitate the masses. "The decision will facilitate the local people of the province and also boost the business activities for the small business owners," he added.

He said that Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had also taken keen interest in this regard and asked the relevant official of the department to make a plan for restoration of different sections to generate income in the province. To a question, he replied that Pakistan Railways had also planned to start rehabilitation work of 33-kilometers track through sleeper renewal between Quetta-Boston and Quetta-Chaman section.

"The track will not only facilitate the passengers, but also connect three major cities of the province," he said. He said railway network in Balochistan province mainly consisted of Quetta Division having Dera Allah Yar-Sibi-Quetta, Quetta-Chaman, Sibi-Khost, Spezend-Dalbandin-Taftan, Bostan-Zhob which were closed for the last 15 years.

The official said there

were two passenger trains Jaffer Express (40Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Passenger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in Quetta division. He said the overall length of the railway track in Balochistan was 1,470.36 kilometer including the closed Bostan-Zhob section.

"Most of the track is more than 100 years old and on certain stretches, engineering speed restrictions have been imposed due to deferred maintenance and owing to resource constraints," he said, adding that the routine maintenance of track was being carried out with available resources. To improve railway services in Balochistan, he said, the department was taking several steps like approval of PC-I for the track's rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of another 100-km track between Ahmedwal Dalbadin on Quetta-Taftan section. The official said that rehabilitation work of track between Nokundi Kohi-Taftan on Quetta-Taftan section while 160.024 kilometers track between Bostan-Chaman on Quetta-Chaman section would be carried out.

Benazir Income Support Program

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On December 27, we express our determination at the shrine of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto that the mission, she sacrificed for the supremacy of democracy, has not yet been accomplished. These views were expressed by the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Ms Shazia Marri through a video message.

She said that December 27, 2022, is the 15th martyrdom anniversary Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. "On this day we visit the tomb of Ms. Benazir Bhutto and pay homage to her – the lady who fought a lot for democracy, human rights and economic rights of people in Pakistan" She added.

Ms Marri said that on December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto made a great sacrifice for the sake of the nation while fighting terrorism inside Pakistan. Many workers of Pakistan People's Party were also martyred on the same day, but even today, Pakistan People's Party is committed to the mission of the same martyred leader, she added.

The Federal Minister said that the Benazir Income Support Program is associated with the name of Ms. Benazir Bhutto. A program that she herself had dreamed of. She wanted the poor families to be given some kind of help so that they could lead a dignified life in this society. This program, which provides income support to 8.5 million poor families, was started by former President Asif Ali Zardari after her martyrdom, she said.

Federal Minister Shazia Marri said in her video message that on December 27, we pay our respects and tributes to the martyr Ms. Benazir Bhutto and we remind ourselves and the people of Pakistan that the mission of Bibi Shaheed is still not accomplished.

The mission through which Pakistan will touch the heights of development. Pakistan will be economically, socially and socially strong. Chairman of Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is moving forward with this mission. Let us make this determination that we have to make Pakistan a developed and progressive country, she said.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira addressing a press conference.

12 people arrested

GHOR (Agencies): Security forces arrested 12 people in connection to running a drug manufacturing factory in Ghor province. Ghor police spokesman, Abdul Rahman Badri said that the Counter-Narcotics Department officers discovered and seized a drugs production factory in the capital of the province. The security forces arrested 12 people in connection to running the illegal lab and the detainees are currently under investigation, he said.

Canal construction completed

NANGARHAR (Agencies): Local officials of Nangarhar say that a canal construction completed with a cost of 6.5 million Afghanis with the financial assistance of the Islamic Relief organization in that province. The provincial head of Nangarhar Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, said that this canal has 286 meters of retaining wall, 4 water control canals and 10 culverts that irrigate 2,100 acres of agricultural land.

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

Four global NGOs suspend operations in Afghanistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): In the wake of the ban imposed on women workers of NGO, four reputed global NGOs have halted operations in Afghanistan.

On Saturday, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) asked local and international NGOs to ban female staffers. In reaction to the Taliban move, Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE announced suspending their operations in the country.

In the absence of female workers, the leading aid

groups argued they found it difficult to help needy Afghan children, women and men.

The Associated Press quoted the NRC chief for Afghanistan as saying: "We have complied with all cultural norms and we simply can't work without our dedicated female staff."

Women workers were important for NRC to access the Afghan women in desperate need of aid, Neil Turner argued, saying the council had 468 female staff in Afghanistan.

A joint statement from Save the Children, the Nor-

wegian Refugee Council and CARE said: "We are suspending our programmes, demanding that men and women can equally continue our lifesaving assistance in Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, the International Rescue Committee, having 3,000 women workers across Afghanistan, also announced a halt to service delivery.

"For IRC, our ability to deliver services rely on female staff at all levels of our organization ... If we are not allowed to employ women, we are not able to deliver to those in need."

Separately, the International Committee of the Red Cross warned banning women from schools and NGO work in Afghanistan could result in disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Also on Sunday, the IEA scorned remarks by the US charge d'affaires, condemning the latest restrictions imposed on women by the Taliban.

IEA spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted: "We don't allow anyone to talk rubbish or make threats regarding the decisions of our leaders under the title of humanitarian aid."

FM Muttaqi called on Iran to release Afghan prisoners



KABUL (Agencies): The country's Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, met with the

Special Representative of the President of Iran for Afghanistan and Iran Chargé d'affaires in Kabul,

Hassan Kazmi Qumi and his delegation.

Welcoming Iranian Chargé d'affaires, Muttaqi as-

sured all-round cooperation and hoped for a successful mission, expressed his happiness on the increase in diplomatic ties, travel, and trade between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Special Representative of the President of Iran for Afghanistan talked about the geographical value of the two countries, and mentioned the opportunities for creating regional and international trade, infrastructural and economic projects such as mining, energy, and railways, and said Iran investors ready to invest in Afghanistan.

For his part, Muttaqi asked for the release of Afghan prisoners in Iran and the addressing of the banking problems of Afghans based in Iran.

Abdulhaq killed in Faizabad blast

FAIZABAD (TOLOnews): A blast targeted a vehicle in the city of Faizabad, Badakhshan province, on Monday morning, killing head of the provincial security department, Abdulhaq Abu Omar, the ministry of interior confirmed.

The blast happened nearby the compound of the security department, said Abdul Nafay Takor, a spokesman for the interior ministry said.

Two other forces of the Islamic Emirate were wounded in the explosion.

Security forces arrested four people in connection to the case, according Takor. No group or individuals has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Ban imposed poppy cultivation

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Interior reported that poppy cultivation has been banned nationwide since the establishment of the Islamic Emirate and that no one is allowed to farm poppy on their lands.

Preventing the cultivation of poppy is part of the counter-narcotics campaign of the ministry, said Nafi Takor, spokesman for the ministry. "The Ministry of Interior has been fighting in the field of poppy cultivation and trafficking for a year and the fight will continue to avoid this bad phenomenon," he said.

Following the issuance of the decree banning the cultivation of poppy, some farmers said that cotton production is a good alternative to cultivating poppy and requested assistance from the Islamic Emirate in this respect.

"Last year, farmers cultivated poppy but this year, they haven't," said Raz Mohammad, a farmer.

"We started cotton cultivation when poppy farming was banned. Over the past 10 days, the price of cotton has dropped from 1,000 Afs to 800 Afs," said Ata Mohammad, a farmer.

Analysts said that poppy cultivation is still underway in Afghanistan and the government should stop it.

Earlier, the UN reported that 85 percent of the world's opium is currently produced in Afghanistan and there is no obstacle to its smuggling.

AIL minister visit Aqina custom port

KABUL (Agencies): The acting Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock Minister, Mawlawi Ataulah Omari, traveled to Faryab province and visit the Aqina custom in the Chahar Bagh district of the province.

During a meeting, Mawlawi Atullah Omari spoke on agriculture production and underlined the control of fresh fruit imports and exports and cooperation in government administrations to provide better service to their nation.

Aqina custom is the main port between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan and worth thousand of million Afghani transportation has been made through this custom between both countries daily.

Two projects completed

LOGAR (Agencies): The work of two infrastructure projects in the center of Logar was completed Monday.

The provincial head of Rural Revitalization and Development of Logar department, Mawlawi Mohammad Qaseem Rashid, said that with the financial support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, nearly one kilometer of road was concreted with a cost of 17.3 million Afghanis in Pul Alam.

A total of nine thousand families will benefit from these projects, and hundreds of acres of farmland and residential houses will be protected from the danger of floods, he added.

IEA is not against girls' education, says Deputy PM



KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the board of private universities association, said that the Islamic Emirate is not against girls' education and is striving to end the delay as soon as possible.

The representatives of the private universities deemed the strengthening of the real Islamic system as the desire of Afghans, saying that they are ready

for any cooperation for the strength of the Islamic system in the country, according to a statement released by Arg.

They claimed investing in the higher education sector in this dire time for the sake of people's literacy and the country's progress.

They demanded the reopening of schools gate and universities to girls and shared their suggestions and advice on the matter, adding that Afghanistan needs to become self-sufficient in the economic and

scientific sectors.

Meanwhile, Kabir said, Afghanistan and the Islamic Emirate are the common home of all Afghans, and every Afghan has the right to offer opinions and advice.

He said that the Islamic Emirate is not against girls' education and is striving to end the delay as soon as possible.

Afghanistan needs committed cadres in various sectors and assured that their requests and suggestions will be measured.

Tax penalties waived off for firms & individuals

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has announced waiving of all previous tax penalties and dines for individuals and companies.

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar announced the waiver at a conference here in support traders and industrialists.

He noted some of businessmen were committed to paying taxes honestly, but proposed payments on an annual basis.

"No one should be deprived if their legal rights," he stressing, acknowledging that taxes played an important role in boosting government revenue.

Taxes were critical to funding the budget, strengthening security, providing public services and ensuring national prosperity, Baradar commented.

The national budget was currently being managed through domestic revenue, he explained, saying the

government, especially the Finance Ministry, was duty-bound to act more transparently in collecting taxes. He added the government was also responsible for creating a secure environment for businessmen, industrialists and the nation at large and protecting their properties.

Government assessments showed Afghan businessmen abroad were reluctant to return home due to problems related to five and three years plans, Baradar continued.

He went on to ask the Ministry of Finance to look for solutions to tax-related issue and share an executive mechanism with the economic commission.

There must be greater transparency in tax collection to prevent the loss of government's income, he insisted, cautioning against the imposition of new taxes on businessmen and industrialists. By the same token, he urged businesspeople to pay taxes in time to the rel-

evant institutions to enable the government to meet itself its domestic expenses.

Mullah Abdul Salam Hanafi, the deputy prime minister on administrative affairs, said past tax penalties had been waived off to ensure timely levy payments in the future.

Anyone violating the relevant laws would be dealt with in accordance with the law, he warned, admitting all problems could not be resolved at one fell swoop.

The government and the businessmen were trying to address the existing hurdles in the way of investments, said the acting minister of finance, Hedayatullah Badri.

After the IEA takeover, the Customs Office of Afghanistan collected some tax fines and deposited them in an account operated by trusted, Abdul Mateen, head of the Office of Customs of Afghanistan.

All those who have already paid fines will be reimbursed their payments, according to Mateen.

Criticisms continue over ban on women's work, edu



KABUL (TOLOnews): Some teachers and employees of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) said that women will face financial difficulties as a result of the suspension of work and education.

They asked the Islamic Emirate to reconsider this decision.

Sima Mohammadi, who has worked for a private organization for 20 years, said she is the sole breadwinner for her family of seven members and that their financial situation will deteriorate if she is unable to find work.

"If a mother has a job and is financially independent, I believe that her children will not beg on the street. This is not the time for a child to do labor," Sima said.

After the suspension of

females' allowance to universities, Maria, a teacher, is worried about the future of women.

"This saddens me since all the Afghan women, who currently account for 50% of Afghan society, will be illiterate in the future. Second, I don't know how to survive and feed our families," Maria said.

Meanwhile, some women's rights activists urged the Islamic Emirate provide women the chance to work.

"Women in Afghanistan should work with men for the improvement of Afghanistan's affairs" said Farah Mustafawi, a women's rights activist.

"I ask the Islamic Emirate is to please provide the work opportunities for women," said Maryam Roish, a women's rights

activist.

According to some analysts, banning women from working will lead to a rise in family poverty.

"It is one of the most surprising, alarming, and astonishing movements against women that take place within a month," said Sayed Masoud, an analyst in economic affairs.

"This would lead to foreign organizations closing their offices in Afghanistan, which will cause severe damage to the economy of Afghanistan," said Darya Khan, an analyst.

The Ministry of Economy issued a letter last week, asking all domestic and international NGOs to stop employing female staff members. Any organization that does not comply will having its license cancelled.

8,000 people to be given laborer works

KUNDUZ (Agencies): Local officials of the Kunduz Department of Economy say that 8 thousand people are provided with laborer works in exchange for food by the World Food Program in this province.

The provincial head of the Economy department of Kunduz, Allam Osama, said that WFP is conducting a project in this province with a cost of 53 million Afghanis, which will provide laborer works to 8 thousand people for at least 4 months.

With launching of the program of food in exchange for work has an effective role in raising the economy of families, he added.

US to stop interfering in Afghanistan internal issues

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, called on the institutions operating in Afghanistan to comply with the law of the country.

"All those institutions wanting to operate in Afghanistan are obliged to comply with the rules and regulations of our country," said Mujahid in his Twitter handle.

We do not allow anyone to talk rubbish or make threats regarding the decisions of our leaders under the title of Humanitarian aid, he added.

The statements of the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate are in response to the words of the charge



d'affaires of the United States Embassy for Afghanistan.

US Chargé d'affaires for Afghanistan Karen Decker tweeted on Sunday, "As the largest donor of humanitarian aid, I am asking the Taliban to explain how they will distribute humanitarian

aid to women and children in the absence of female staff."

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said no will is allowed to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs, adding that the Islamic Emirate will not allow any to interfere in the country's issues.

Kabul residents frustrated with electricity blackouts

KABUL (TOLOnews): Kabul residents on Monday said they are "frustrated" with electricity blackouts that have continued for the past three, leaving them with challenges amidst the cold winter.

The residents said they are provided electricity for four hours a day.

"Power cuts have increased. We just few

hours of electricity a day. I don't know what is the issue," said Shah Mahmoud, a Kabul resident.

"We don't have electricity but we paid power bills the same as in the past," said Humayon, a Kabul resident. The country's power distributor, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat or DABS, said that imported electricity from Uzbekistan has

decreased by 50 percent, but added that efforts are underway to address the issue.

"We provide electricity for three hours during the day and three hours at night," DABS spokesman Hekmatullah Maiwandi said. "It is 10 hours for factories." He said talks are underway with Turkmenistan about the import of power to Afghanistan in the

next year.

"We will have a trip where we will talk about an agreement in 2023," Maiwandi said.

Turkmenistan media outlets have reported that the country will extend power distribution to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan imports 80 percent of its electricity from Central Asia and Iran.

Male students boycott classes

KABUL (TOLOnews): Male students from various universities in the country have boycotted their classes over the suspension of higher education for women in Afghanistan, saying they will not return until classes are opened for female students.

The students called on the Islamic Emirate to remove the ban on higher education for women.

"We will continue our boycott and if the female classes are not reopened, we will also boycott our lessons and will not continue education," said Muzamel, a student.

"Universities are closed for our sisters. We don't want to go to university either," said Nawidullah, another student.

"My two sisters are also pursuing higher education, but due to the closure of institutions, I will not continue as well," said Mohebullah, a student said.

A number of lecturers at Kabul University also asked the Islamic Emirate to reconsider its decision.

"We ask the Islamic Emirate to reopen universities for our sisters," said Tawfiqullah, a university lec-



Alvi for service oriented conduct of officials to ensure justice to people

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Monday urged all government officials to ensure the dispensation of justice to the public and their service in its true spirit so that problems faced by citizens could be resolved in the shortest possible time.

The president was addressing an awareness seminar titled "Roles, functions and Performance of Federal Tax Ombudsman" held here at Sindh Governor House Karachi.

FTO's annual report for the year 2021 was also unveiled at the occasion.

President Arif Alvi said that it was among the primary duties of an ombuds-

man that he should expedite the process of dispensation of justice to the aggrieved citizens and find a way out for resolving the issues affecting citizens in an individual capacity or as a larger group.

The president said the written words of law sometimes cannot cater to and address all given situations therefore superior judiciary has been empowered to interpret the provision of the constitution and law.

He said that legislation is a dynamic process that keeps on evolving to cater to new development, products, emerging business and trade processes, and

development of the society which sometimes slow down the dispensation of services to the public.

Like the overall legal framework tax laws also pass through a dynamic and progressive process and they always require amendments and interpretation for their implementation in the spirit of facilitating and serving the public.

He said that there is a need to create friendly, services-oriented, and objective tax system where every taxpayer willingly and happily follows the law and pays tax obligations without any fear of exploitation, harassment, or intimidation.

NDMA directs for Anti-COVID National Preparedness Audit 2022-23

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik presided the special session of National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) today. National Institute of Health (NIH) team was called on for updated monitoring of regional trends of new variant of coronavirus and trajectories development for Pakistan without creating undue alarm.

Chairman NDMA focused on evolving COVID variants and expressed confidence in Pakistan's current strategies & National Preparedness. However, the situation will be continuously monitored by NCOC and preparedness, preventative protocols and vaccination administration system will be strengthened to tackle spike in concern.

Govt to spend all resources on youth initiatives for developing Pakistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said the government would utilize all resources to help the youth channelize their energies for the progress and development of Pakistan.

He was speaking at an awards ceremony of the National Amateur Short Films Festival (NASFF) organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in collaboration with the Dubai Port World.

The prime minister congratulated the young short film-makers for proving their mettle. "The youngsters made the nation proud with their talent." He said the parents and teachers of the award winners deserved credit for imparting education and grooming the

young men who created a distinct identity for themselves with their efforts and hard work.

He appreciated the contribution of the Dubai Port World in helping youngsters in the field of film production. The youth were making meaningful efforts to build a soft image of Pakistan through technology and modern tools of communication, he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said it was an era of technology and the young generation had the capacity, passion and enthusiasm to make Pakistan according to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He lauded the efforts of young film-makers in beautifully shining light on Pakistan's civilization, culture, heritage and natural wonders, including mountains, rivers, valleys and lakes.

"If Pakistan wants to move forward and make progress then its key is in the hand of youngsters."

The youth would have to turn their dreams into reality to build Pakistan as envisioned by its founding fathers, he said adding the nation fully realized that the youth were the country's future as they had the energy and talent to put it on the path of prosperity.

Shehbaz said the government would support the initiatives of youth and meet their financial requirements.

He announced to constitute a committee to

find young talent in Pakistan who wanted to promote culture and heritage of the country.

He said there was a time when Pakistani dramas and films were very popular in the South Asian sub-continent. The PM said 50 youngsters - 25 male and 25 female students - from all parts of Pakistan would be given scholarships on merit for film-making courses abroad. He said Pakistan would encourage investment in building of industrial parks. Group Chairman of Dubai Port World Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem in his speech expressed desire to construct industrial parks and export goods from Pakistani ports.

Film industry revival to promote Pakistan's narrative, positive image: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the government had announced multiple incentives for the film industry which would eventually get a major boost and help promote the country's narrative and positive image across the world.

Addressing the award distribution ceremony of National Amature Short Film Festival 2022 (NASFF-2022), she said the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had launched the first-ever film and culture policy, and finalized its implementation framework, which unfortunately could not be materialized due to the change of regime in 2018.

However, realizing the importance of film in building the national narrative, she said, the current PML-N led government had once again rolled out the imple-

mentation framework.

Marriyum said tax exemptions had been given on import of film production related material in the last budget. She said in the recent past film industries of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran flourished due to abolition of taxes and now Pakistan's would also develop due to tax amnesty, with injection of young and fresh blood in shape of producers, directors and filmmakers.

The minister said the film artists finance fund had been established under which medical insurance would be provided to the artists. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had issued directives for preparation of short films on the devastation caused by the recent floods which helped in getting response both at national and international levels. She recalled that PM Shehbaz Sharif during his last stint as Punjab chief minister had abolished entertainment tax on cinemas

on her request as he knew the importance of the medium of film in narrative building.

All the countries of world had already started using films for projecting their national narrative and then short film had gained much importance in the current era of social and digital media, she added. She said the film industry now was no more considered solely a source of entertainment, as screen tourism, education and narrative building had been made integral parts of film-making to project and highlight culture, heritage and civilization of a nation.

The minister said Lahore became a hub of film-making when first Pakistani film "Teri Yaad" had made debut in 1948. Pakistan's cinema was robust and vibrant and its film industry was known as Lollywood and Pakistan's narrative was projected and promoted across the globe through its art, culture and heritage by the medium of cinema.

FM Bilawal, Saudi counterpart reaffirm to further deepen bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Reaffirming the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Monday reiterated their mutual commitment to further enhance and deepen bilateral cooperation across all areas of mutual interest.

FM Bilawal, during a telephonic conversation with Prince Faisal, thanked the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for valuable flood relief assistance to Pakistan, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement. The two foreign ministers also discussed the recent developments in Afghanistan. They reaffirmed the importance of guaranteeing women's rights, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of life.

They also reiterated their support for security, stability

and peace in Afghanistan and the importance of international engagement for building a more sustainable future for the Afghan people.

Foreign Minister Bilawal apprised his Saudi counterpart of the upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, which is being held in Geneva on January 9, 2023.

The Saudi foreign minister conveyed the Kingdom's strong support for all initiatives aimed at strengthening and reinforcing Pakistan's post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

Bilawal reaches Larkana to observe BB's 15th martyrdom anniversary: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman and Foreign Minister of the country Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday reached his ancestors' city Larkana to observe Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's 15th martyrdom anniversary tomorrow (Tuesday).



PAYING TRIBUTES TO OUR GREAT LEADER

SHAHEED MOHTARAMA BENAZIR BHUTTO

On the 15th Martyrdom Anniversary
let's make her vision our guiding light

YOU CAN IMPRISON A MAN BUT NOT AN IDEA
YOU CAN EXILE A MAN BUT NOT AN IDEA
YOU CAN KILL A MAN BUT NOT AN IDEA

Benazir Bhutto



Pakistan People's Party