

ISLAMABAD (INP): Public Accounts Committee Chairman Noor Alam Khan has sent a written request to the Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial for sharing details of the Supreme Court dam fund created by his predecessor Saqib Nisar. He was of the view, "Money collected in the dam fund is public money and it is inevitable for the supremacy of the apex court and ensuring transparency to make the details public for information."



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 341

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-US-SANI 05 1444 -- THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29 2022

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

Price. 20

PM sets up committee to curtail electricity use in government offices by 30pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed to set up a committee to work on reducing electricity consumption in the government offices by 30 percent.

The committee will comprise the Federal Minister for Energy, Federal Minister for Planning, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Resources and relevant secretaries. The prime minister gave the direction while chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet.

The meeting was apprised that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (National Energy Efficiency and Conservation) have also prepared an awareness campaign about energy-saving and austerity. The federal cabinet discussed the 'Proposed Energy Saving Plan' presented by the Power Division. The meeting was briefed on the consultation conducted so far with the stakeholders regarding the energy saving plan.

In this regard, the prime minister said that the consultation process with all the stakeholders including

the provincial governments, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan governments should be completed as soon as possible to ensure the implementation of the 'Proposed Energy Saving Plan'.

The prime minister emphasized that the nation needed to adopt austerity measures with regard to energy and urgently required change in attitudes. He said the implementation of the energy saving plan and the use of alternative energy was indispensable to reduce the import bill in terms of fuel. The federal cabinet condemned the arrest of senior parliamentarian Chaudhry Ashraf by the Punjab Government in a 53-year-old case as a step of political vendetta.

The cabinet offered Fateha for those martyred as a result of the incidents of terrorism in different parts of the country. The federal cabinet paid tribute to the security forces for their continuous fight against terrorism.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing by the Ministry of Industries and Production regarding the generalization of the use of electric bikes across the country. It was highlighted

that currently 90 companies were manufacturing motorcycles and auto rickshaws in the country with a capacity to manufacture 6 million motorcycles annually.

It was informed that 22 companies had been issued licenses to manufacture electric bikes in Pakistan. The meeting was further informed that the promotion of electric bikes would save a lot in terms of fuel. The use of electric bikes will not only save fuel, but will also prove eco-friendly by reducing carbon emissions.

The Prime Minister issued instructions to submit a detailed plan regarding electric bikes to the Economic Coordination Committee.

The federal cabinet accorded final approval to the report of the Cabinet Committee on Soybean. The federal cabinet approved the Government-to-Government Commercial Transaction Act 2022 (G2G Commercial Transaction Act 2022).

On the recommendation of the Board of Investments, the Federal Cabinet approved, in principle, the One Stop Service Act to provide facilities to investors in Special Economic Zones established across the country.

Imran wants elections before departure of his facilitators from scene: Bilawal

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that if the general elections are held in the country on their scheduled time, then there will be no facilitators of Imran Khan in any institution at that time.

According to a Press release issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, talking to the media after visiting the newly-constructed modern Trauma Center at Chandka Hospital, the PPP Chairman said that Imran Khan wants a dictatorship to come to power through the backdoor. He said that Imran Khan's biggest concern is that after the departure of his facilitators from the establishment if the elections are held on time, his facilitators from other institutions will also leave adding that this is the reason why the PTI chairman is now using all kinds of tactics including lies, hatred, division, and arson to call for an early election.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that all remnants of Musharraf, including Imran Khan, are now a story of the past, and if they do not support democracy and its development, and their narrative has been that the army should help him so that he

can turn institutions into his personal Tiger Force. If he is plotting to become the prime minister again through this Modus Operandi then it is authoritarian and undemocratic thinking adding that the people of Pakistan have always defeated the undemocratic and selected forces whenever they have had the opportunity.

Foreign Minister further said that the general elections in the country will be held on time as per the constitution and law. He said that it is the success of our struggle that earlier assemblies were dissolved after every year or two, but now two assemblies have completed their term from 2007 to 2018, while this third assembly is also going to complete its term. If the Parliament completes its third term, it will be a great victory for democracy, he added.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, while appreciating the construction work of the Trauma Center and the process of installing modern equipment there, said that the Center has been built on modern and international standards. In 2018, it was known that the conditions of Chandka Hospital are quite bad, as people from Larkana as well as Qamber Shahdadkot, Jacobabad and even from

Balochistan and South Punjab come here for treatment. He said that we are grateful to the Chief Minister of Sindh and the Health Department that they have made the Trauma Center functional with international standards. This Center will be linked to Karachi's Trauma Center, while the Rescue 1122 ambulance service is also launched. He said that the number of ambulances has been increased, and I want ambulance service to be available like in Karachi in other major cities of Sindh, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana. He said that this network will be extended to all divisional headquarters in the first phase and then to the district level for facilities like Trauma Center in Karachi.

He said that the resources are few and the need is high, but health facilities are gradually improving in Sindh. Most difficult situation is in an emergency, and the Government of Sindh along with Child Life Foundation has brought the emergency facilities for children to international standards.

Meanwhile, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited various departments of the Trauma Center of Chandka Hospital and appreciated the passion and dedication of the staff.

Vawda tenders' resignation from Senate seat

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former PTI leader and senator Faisal Vawda has announced to submit his resignation from the Senate seat to the chairman of the upper house on Wednesday. "The seat was trust of Imran Khan," Faisal Vawda said in a social media statement. "I have fulfilled my moral duty as well as to comply with the Supreme Court's order," he said. "I am grateful to Almighty Allah, and thanks to Imran Khan and all senators," he added. The ECP in line with the orders of the Supreme Court, had withdrawn the notification of de-seating Vawda from the Senate, and restored his Senate membership recently. However, it was a short-lived arrangement as Faisal Vawda, under a commitment given to the Supreme Court, had to resign as a Senate member, paving the way for fresh election on the upper house seat from Sindh.

MNA remanded to ACE custody

LAHORE (APP): A local court on Wednesday handed over Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MNA Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf to Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Punjab on two-day physical remand in an alleged land grabbing case.

Earlier, the ACE officials presented the PML-N MNA before a judicial magistrate and requested to grant physical remand for investigations. However, the defence counsel opposed the plea, saying that it was a politically motivated case.

The court, after hearing arguments of the parties, handed over the PML-N MNA to the ACE Punjab on physical remand and directed for producing him on Dec 30. Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf was elected Member of National Assembly (MNA) from NA-161 (Sahiwal-II) constituency. The ACE has accused the lawmaker of illegally occupying government land through forgery in collusion with the patwari.

Farah Gogi challenges NAB inquiry

LAHORE (TLTP): Farhat Shehzadi, aka Farah Gogi, has challenged the housing society inquiry launched against her by National Accountability Bureau (NAB). According to the details, former first lady Bushra Bibi's close friend Farhat Shehzadi has moved LHC against NAB notices sent to her in the housing society scam. The TLTP learnt that in a petition, she maintained that the anti-graft watchdog has reopened the inquiry which was closed against her in 2019.

She said ironically Imran Khan had the audacity to blame those for economic woes who inherited him the national economy with 6.3 per cent growth rate.

The minister dared the PTI members of the National Assembly to appear before the speaker for acceptance of their resignations. It was astonishing as to why the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was not dissolving assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, she added.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet meeting.

Corps commanders resolve to fight terrorists without any distinction

RAWALPINDI (NNI): The two-day 254th Corps Commanders' Conference on Wednesday resolved to fight against terrorists without any distinction and eliminate the menace as per the aspirations of the people of Pakistan.

The conference, presided over by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, was held here at the General Headquarters from December 27-28, an Inter-Services Public Relations



news release said. A comprehensive review of professional and organisational matters of the army was undertaken during the conference.

NA speaker to meet PTI MNAs today to discuss resignation issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Parvez Ashraf has asked PTI lawmakers to meet him on Thursday morning for verification of their resignations, which have been lying pending with him despite the lapse of several months.

Speaker Raja Parvez Ashraf told media persons that PTI's chief whip Malik Amir Dogar had contacted him last day via telephone seeking time for meeting to discuss confirmation of resignations. Speaker said he told Dogar he was in Larkana and will return back to Islamabad on Wednesday.

"My flight was on Wednesday, luckily I got a flight on December 27 and

reached Islamabad."

Speaker said he was in his chamber on Wednesday and waited for PTI lawmakers but they did not turn up. Speaker said he himself contacted Malik Amir Dogar, who asked for a meeting on Thursday morning instead of Wednesday.

Earlier, he said the PTI members were personally summoned to the National Assembly to confirm the resignations, but not a single MNA bothered to appear to confirm the resignations in a personal capacity. The speaker also reiterated that there was a clear procedure in the Constitution of Pakistan and the rules of business of the National Assembly regarding the

confirmation of resignations of MNAs and this procedure would be followed in letter and spirit. As a speaker, he has the power not to accept the resignation of a lawmaker as he was the speaker of all parties. The matter of confirmation of resignations will be dealt with in accordance with the constitution, law, rules, and regulations of the National Assembly.

"If Shah Mehmood Qureshi comes to the National Assembly, I will welcome him," he said while replying to a question adding the PTI MNAs should attend the National Assembly proceedings as the Parliament was the representative of over 220 million people of Pakistan.

KP Governor sends back 'helicopter legislation' to govt

PESHAWAR (INP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sent back legislation on the use of official helicopter for review to the government on Wednesday.

Talking to media, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali urged the government for new legislation over the matter. "According to the bill, the official helicopter can be given to ministers, advisers and special assistants for use," governor said. "I have told them to review the bill over the use of the government helicopter," he further said.

"What was the need of the new legislation on official helicopter," he questioned. "A copter has been out of work and another under the use of the chief minister," he further said.

"We are clearing the dirt of the past," Haji Ghulam Ali said.

Barrister Saif's statement has been at variance to the provincial government, Ghulam Ali said.

"I will knock the door of the court over the bill," KP governor said.

"I had thrice requested for helicopter," he said.

"We want to demand the rights of the province alongside the provincial government from the federation," he said. Governor Ghulam Ali said the country passes through a very critical phase. "Even chief minister could not visit Swat today to seek vote," governor said.

IHC stops DG Hajj posting till Jan 11

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered to stop the process of the appointment of the Hajj DG and issued a stay order in this regard till January 11.

Grade 20 officer Saima Saba had filed her application for her appointment as DG Hajj. The TLTP learnt that earlier, a single bench of the IHC comprising Justice Babar Sattar had dismissed Saima's plea declaring it inadmissible. The applicant, in her appeal, contended that she was one of the two candidates who had passed the test for the said position among the 48 contestants, adding that she had acquired 71 out of 100 marks.

Subsequently, Saima maintained that she had a "very good interview" and that she answered every question "correctly".

The applicant said she was told that she had not qualified, adding that she was "disqualified on the basis of gender".

She requested the court to hear the recording of her interview and declare the single bench's decision null and void, saying that stopping the appointment process on the basis of gender was a "violation of the rights as mentioned in the Constitution". Later, a division bench of the IHC led by Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued directions to the Ministry of Religious Affairs to stop the process of appointment of the DG Hajj.

26 coronavirus cases

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan has reported no death in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of confirmed positive cases surged to 1,575,736. The nationwide tally of fatalities stood at 30,636 on Wednesday. According to the latest figures issued by the National Institute of Health (NIH), at least 26 people tested positive for Covid across the country in the past 24 hours.



People suffering due to Imran Khan's wrong policies: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said people were suffering due to the wrong economic policies of Imran Khan-led government which had resulted into extreme inflation and massive unemployment.

The minister, in a news statement, said Imran Khan was a "thief and foreign agent", whose four-year stint had turned a prosperous Pakistan into a ruined

state. His was the worst experiment in the country's history. The group of "incompetents and foreign agents", imposed on Pakistan in 2018, was thrown out of the Parliament in April, she added. Marriyum alleged that Imran Khan had traded off national interests, including the Kashmir cause, in return of foreign funds, and malicious campaigns against the martyrs of army and the institutions were launched at his behest.

She said ironically Imran Khan had the audacity to blame those for economic woes who inherited him the national economy with 6.3 per cent growth rate.

The minister dared the PTI members of the National Assembly to appear before the speaker for acceptance of their resignations. It was astonishing as to why the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was not dissolving assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, she added.

CM KP reiterated his commitment not to compromise on law and order

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has reiterated his commitment not to compromise on law and order in the province and said that the incumbent provincial government is investing huge resources to cope with contemporary challenges.

Maintaining law & order is the first priority of his government and a number of initiatives have been completed to this effect during the last four years which have resulted in significant improvement in the overall policing in the province, he said, and added that additional allowances have been approved for the employees of the Counter Terrorism Department, whereas other required resources would also be provided on emergency basis.

He expressed these views while chairing a high level meeting regarding the law and order situation in the province. The forum reviewed the overall law and order situation and important decisions were taken to effectively counter prevailing challenges.

Provincial Minister

Taimur Salim Jhagra, Advisor to Chief Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Babar Salim Swati, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr. Shahzad Bangash, IGP Moazzam Jah Ansari and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was informed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and CTD are working under a well-devised and comprehensive strategy to maintain law and order in the province. It was disclosed on the occasion that substantial success has been achieved in thwarting the nefarious intentions of extremists, adding that 82 percent of the threats have been neutralized during 2022.

Addressing the participants, the Chief Minister said that peace is indispensable for the development and prosperity of the province. "Maintaining law and order has been the first priority of our government since day one", he added.

The Chief Minister paid rich tribute to the police personnel for their sacrifices in the line of duty. He assured that the provincial

government has extended all-out support to the police department and will continue to do it in future. However, the Chief Minister made it clear that maintaining peace and tranquility is our collective responsibility, for which all stakeholders would have to play their respective role in letter and spirit. He directed for heightened coordination amongst the relevant departments and agencies, adding that there should be close liaison among all relevant institutions in order to have an effective response mechanism.

He maintained that efforts for welfare and development can only yield results if there is peace in society. He made it clear that combating militancy and terrorist activities is the responsibility of the federation, because all the relevant institutions and agencies fall under the domain of the Federal Government. He regretted that the indifferent attitude of the incumbent Federal Government was a matter of serious concern which is causing multiple issues for the province.



Governor optimistic of overcoming economic challenges

LAHORE (APP): Members Punjab Assembly (MPAs) called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed various issues including the current political situation in the country during separate meetings at the Governor's House, here on Wednesday.

In a press release issued here, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) has always respected the institutions and upheld supremacy of the law and the constitution. He said the experienced

team of Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar is trying to steer the country out of economic crisis.

He said after making record payments by the federal government in the first week of December, the risk of default has been averted and the political and economic conditions will improve further in the coming days.

The MPAs were of the unanimous opinion that the constitutional order of the Punjab Governor asking the Chief Minister of Punjab to obtain vote of confidence was the need of the hour.

They said the chief minister has lost trust of majority of the members, but he refrained from taking vote of confidence, which proved that the Punjab Chief Minister was afraid that he would not be able to take the vote of confidence.

The parliamentarians said the previous government pushed the country towards economic crisis by taking record loans, adding that the same political party is still pushing the country towards political and economic instability through politics of anarchy.

The MPAs were of the

view that people have recognized the faces of those politicians who wanted anarchy, and will not allow them to succeed in their conspiracy to create instability in the country.

IGP calls on Governor Punjab: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Aamir Zulfikar called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House here on Wednesday.

The Governor Punjab expressed good wishes to the IGP Aamir Zulfikar on assuming the office.

Muhammad Balighur

Rahman said maintaining law and order and protection of life and property of the people are among the priorities of the government. He urged the IGP Punjab to take effective measures to ensure the safe-

ty of life and property of the people and to prevent crimes. "I hope that under your leadership, Punjab Police will perform its professional duties in a better way," the Governor said, adding the police station

culture should change and the police should help the masses in the true sense.

IGP Punjab Aamir Zulfikar said maintaining law and order in the province is his top priority and assured the Governor

Punjab that the police will discharge its duties to the fullest. The police chief said in view of the recent incidents of terrorism in the country, security has been put on high alert in the province.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Published Through This. Notice That I.Muhammad Abdul Rahim Khan S/o Sarwar Khan R/o Mateena Aya Khel Sabir Abad Tehsil & District Karak is The owner of Plot no 2418 Size 5 Marla Registration no 740 PHA Hangu Town Ship Tehsil & District Hangu Has Appointed as Mr Kamran Ali S/o Aslam Khan R/o Imran Khel Rehmat Abad District Karak Through (Special) Deed no 479 Bahi no 04 Dated 28/07/2021 which is Registered in The office of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar Kohat The Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer The Above Said Plot If any Bank/Institution/ Firm/ Person Has Any objection About The Transfer He Should Contact The Hangu PHA office Kohat Within 15 Days in Writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will be Accepted (Manager RFC Kohat PHA Hangu Town Ship Phone.0922-514515)

Amir Muqam presents Rs.10m cheque to Firdous Jamal



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Division Engr. Amir Muqam, on behalf of the prime minister, presented a cheque of Rs.10 million to veteran actor Firdous Jamal as financial assistance from "Federal Government Artists Welfare Fund" at his residence, here on Wednesday.

He assured every assistance to the ailing artist for his medical treatment. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while praying for his early recovery, was pleased to approve Rs.10 million as financial assistance for his medical treatment. He further said that the artists were an asset of the society and steps were being

taken for their welfare.

Firdous Jamal thanked the federal government for the financial assistance and assurance for medical treatment, adding that he had been recently diagnosed with cancer. The family members and artist community were present on the occasion.

Later, talking to the media, the adviser said he came on behalf of the prime minister and his party to present a cheque for the medical expenses of Firdous Jamal.

Adviser to Prime Minister on Political Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Division Engr. Amir Muqam appreciated

the services of the veteran actor, adding that he was an asset of the country. He said the government would bear all expenses of his medical treatment.

To a question, he said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan did not care about the country and national interest. Imran Khan always remained involved in politics of allegations but time and again all his allegations against political opponents were proved false, he added.

To another question, he said that the elections would be held after completion of five-year tenure of the assemblies.



Mobilink
Microfinance Bank
Mera Fone Mera Bank

PUBLIC NOTICE Auction of Gold

Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customer mentioned below. The customer has neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Microfinance Bank along with the markup thereon.

Details:
Branch Haripur
Branch code 0017
Date of auction 30-Dec-2022
Time 1:00 PM
Call Deposit Rs. 800/-

Customer Name	Account #	Address
AHMED FARAZ	131172397	Post Office Ghazi Salm Khand Tehsil Haripur

Notice is hereby given to the customer in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to MMBL within 1 day of the publication of this notice, MMBL shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.

Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelope E-Bidding System)

The C&W Division Dir Upper Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms/contractors in accordance with KPPRA Procurement Rules 2014, amended up to 15-09-2021 on Single Stage Single Envelope procedure for the following work(s).

S.No.	Name of Work	Required PEC Category	Bid Security i/c Stamp Duty	Tender Fee @ 0.03%	Period of Completion	Last date and time for submission of E-Bids	Date & Time of Opening of Financial Bid
	ADP NO. 332/20026-Upgradation of 150 Primary Schools to Middle level in KPK.						
	SUB HEAD:-						
01	Up-gradation of GPS Mishmano Banda PK-11	C-6	Rs. 386010/-	Rs. 5510/-	As per Work Order	25-01-2023 At 12:00 PM	25-01-2023 At 12:00 PM

- Bid Solicitation Documents and Instructions to Bidders can be obtained from the office on any working day or downloaded from C&W website (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date/time.
- The bidders should submit their E-bids as per KPPRA Notification No. SOR(14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated 10-05-2022 and Notification No. SRO(15)/Vol:1-25/2022-23 Dated: 22-08-2022.
- Complete Detail of Bid Security in shape of CDR i.e. Bank Name, CDR Number(s) and Date(s) must be submitted electronically along-with E-bid on the E-bidding System.**
- All bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under Finance Act, 2013 Act No. XXI of 2013.
- Venue of Bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Dir Upper.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
C&W DIVISION DIR UPPER, PH/FAX No. 0944-880836

INF(P) 7210/22



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No.CCD/DIK/AB/Tender/576

Date: 27/12/2022

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited as per PPRA procedure "Single Stage Single envelope" for the following development works on percentage basis on Pak PWD Schedule of rate 2022 from Pakistan Engineering Council Registered contractors/firms should also be registered with income tax Department and available on Active Taxpayers list of Federal Board of Revenue. The applications for tenders with the documents as per terms and conditions below well be received in the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day up to 17-01-2023 and tender documents will be issued till 20-1-2023, after verification of documents. The individual applicants for each work should be submitted on written request at company's letterhead accompanied with attested copies of **CNIC, PEC, Firm Documents, NTN & Bid Security**. The tenders should reach in the office of undersigned on 23-01-2023 up to 1:00 PM and will be opened on the same day at 1:30 PM in the presence participants or their authorized representatives.

Sr. No.	Name of Schemes	Estimated Cost Rs.(M)	Bid Security Rs. (M)	Cost of Tender (Rs.)	Completion Period (months)
1	Construction of Check Dam at Landi Ragzai Tehsil Tiarza.	3.525	0.075	1000	3.0
2	Construction of Check Dam head supply-line at kundi Wam, Tehsil Tiarza.	18.229	0.375	2000	3.5
3	Construction of Lwarga water supply line Kashoor pond Tehsil Tiarza	6.852	0.140	2000	3.0
4	Construction of Check Dam in Tanai Tehsil Wana.	5.300	0.120	2000	2.5
5	Construction of Check Dam in Gaza Peza Tehsil Wana.	2.151	0.045	1000	2.0
6	Construction of Check Dam in AngarZirat pal, Tehsil Wana.	3.172	0.070	1000	3.0
7	Construction of Check Dam in Wachakhura near Agri Park, Tehsil Wana.	2.863	0.060	1000	1.5
8	Construction of Check Dam in ZawalkotTarran Tehsil, Wana.	4.367	0.090	1000	1.5
9	Construction of Check Dam in Laman Tehsil Wana.	5.037	0.110	2000	2.0
10	Construction of Check Dam in DargaKwat Tehsil Wana.	15.924	0.320	2000	3.5
11	Construction of Check Dam in TattaiDotani, Tehsil Wana. Flood Protection Wall Khaysoor and Wana	41.082	0.850	2000	4.0
12	Construction of Check Dam in Santoi Tehsil Shakai.	3.265	0.070	1000	1.5
13	Construction of Check Dam in Kalota, Tehsil Birmal.	3.773	0.080	1000	1.5
14	Construction of Check Dam in Nargasi Tehsil Birmal.	4.651	0.095	1000	2.0
15	Construction of Check Dam in Zalia TehsilBirmal.	6.684	0.140	2000	3.0
16	Construction of Check Dam in KazaPanga, Tehsil Birmal.	6.062	0.125	2000	3.0
17	Construction of Check Dam in Zamilana Tehsil Toi Khula.	6.544	0.135	2000	3.0
18	Construction of Check Dam in Toi Khula Spaly Parron C-Kuch Tehsil Toi Khula.	8.381	0.170	2000	2.5
19	Construction of water supply gavity in Mantol Tehsil Shakai.	5.660	0.120	2000	3.0
20	Construction of 3KM Blacktop Road in Ghulam Khel & Dasi Khel, Tehsil Birmal	34.386	0.700	2000	4.0
21	Construction of 2 KM Blacktop Road in GhawKhwa, Tehsil Wana	19.314	0.400	2000	3.5
22	Construction Of 5KM Shingle Road in Gorgora/Jatara Tehsil Tiarza	11.685	0.250	2000	3.5
23	Construction of 3KM Shingle Road in Spin & Tanai, Tehail, Wana.	7.011	0.145	2000	3.0
24	Construction of 2KM Shingle Road in Togy Khel section Tehsil Wana	4.679	0.100	1000	1.5
25	Construction of 4KM Shingle Road in Tehsil Birmal.	9.359	0.200	2000	2.0
26	Construction of 2KM Shingle Road in Tehsil Shakai	4.679	0.100	1000	1.5
27	Construction of 2KM Shingle Road in Tehsil ToiKhula	4.679	0.100	1000	1.5
28	Construction of 1KM feet PCC Road in Khasoor Star Kalai, tehailTiarza. Construction of 1KM PCC Road in PaligyQurash Tehsil Tiarza. Construction of 1KM PCC Road in Gul Kuch Tehsil ToiKhula . Construction of 1KM PCC Road in YargulkhelAzam Warsak Tehsil Birmal. Construction of 1KM PCC Road in Utman Khel Section Tehsul Birmal. Construction of 1KM PCC Road in Tojy Khel Section Tehsil Wana	40.570	0.820	2000	3.5
29	Construction of 1KM PCC Road in GhwaKhwa Tehsil Wana Construction of 1KM PCC Road in Tehsil Shakai. Construction of 3KM PCC Road in DobDoag&Zarinoor Tehsil Wana. Construction of 1KM PCC Road in Ragzai TehsilWana.	40.570	0.820	2000	3.5
30	Construction of PCC Road in SherZadaKorrora Village WaraiNoor, Tehsil Birmal. (-1- KM x 12')	6.749	0.135	2000	3.5

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Bid security in the shape of Deposit at call in favour of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division No.V Pak.P.W.D. Islamabad issued by any scheduled bank functioning at Islamabad /Rawalpindi from the account of the firm may please be submitted with the application.
- The applicant firm should have completed similar nature of work worth equal to N.I.T amount within the last three years in time. Documentary evidence to this effect in the shape of completion certificate duly attested by the concerned Project Director /Engineer incharge be submitted with the application for tender issuance. One completion certificate will be considered only for issuance of one bidding documents. If any firm interested for issuance of more bidding documents, separate completion certificate of the schemes are required alongwith other relevant documents.
- The applicant firm should submit separate application for issuance of each bidding documents alongwith all relevant documents .
- An affidavit on judicial paper worth Rs.100/- to the effect that the contractor /firm is not in any dispute /litigation with any Government Department is a prerequisite for issuance of tenders.
- The tenders shall be issued only to the owner of the firm or his authorized representative having legal Authority Letter/Power of Attorney. In case of joint venture the applicant shall have to produce partnership deed duly registered with the court of law whereas in the case of a sole proprietor, the tenders shall be issued only to the sole proprietor of the firm.
- No applications for issuance of tenders through e-mail, fax, Telex would be entertained.
- No tenders would be sold on the specified opening date.
- Any information/clarification regarding the details of work, specifications and conditions etc, can be seen in the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours.
- The submission of bids implies that the bidder is fully conversant with the nature of work, scope, site conditions, applicable rules and codes etc.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rule 2004, the undersigned reserve the right to accept or reject all bids /tenders at any time prior to of bid /tender.
- Tender notice can also be downloaded from PPRA Website (www.ppra.org.pk).

(Farhan Ali)
Executive Engineer,
Central Civil Division, Pak PWD D.I.Khan

PID(P) 320/22



Commissioner requested to take notice of unplanned development

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Mehsud has been requested to convene a meeting of experts and civil society members to discuss the planned development project of 10 km walking, bicycle and jogging tracks along the canal from Hayatabad towards University Town. In a press statement issued here on Wednesday by Sarhad Conservation Network (SCN), the commissioner is also requested to involve local communities to make it sustainable

and to prevent further thoughtless destruction of Peshawar's shrinking natural heritage. Nespak has been awarded the contract for 10 km of walking, bicycle & jogging tracks along the canal from Hayatabad toward University Town, added the press statement. "The so-called development mafia in connivance with the local administration, in the name of cycling and jogging track is cutting down old trees from the green belt," it alleged.

The shocking part is that they have yet to demarcate the proposed track, neither carried an Environmental Impact Assessment nor consulted environmental experts before embarking on such an important project. This concept was first drafted by the SCN team in 2021 & shared with DG PDA Ammara Khan. The concept paper for a biodiversity park in line with Islamabad walking trail was also discussed. These sustainable and green plans were being considered by PDA in light of Peshawar's increasing population and associated environmental issues.

It may be recalled that SCN had earlier challenged the illegal auction of this green belt across the Khwar (dry canal) opposite the Zarghoni Masjid by PDA and was granted a stay

order by PHC. Henceforth, PDA cancelled the auction and planned commercialization of the green area opposite Zarghoni Masjid towards the Phase 7 roundabout in the phase 2 area. SCN also mentioned the recent mindless uprooting of many old trees and natural flora comprising amaltas, and other indigenous varieties along the proposed walking track route by PDA bulldozers to pave way for the proposed walking tract in the green belt.

It thanked Commissioner Peshawar who took notice and issued directives for halting of the activity. Without public participation or an independent advisory board this proposed plan would end up uprooting all indigenous trees & flora along this tract, SCN warns.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan chairing a meeting regarding law and order situation in province.

JUI-F decides to convene APC on Jan 1

PESHAWAR (INP): Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) has decided to hold All Parties Conference (APC) in Peshawar to take country out of the prevailing economic and political crisis.

The JUI-F has decided to convene a multi-party conference in Peshawar on January 1, sources say.

JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other party heads would attend the APC, they said.

Earlier, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) had postponed the multi-party conference on political and economic stability in the country.

Awareness walk in City on 7th national census today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In order to highlight the importance of the 7th National Census, a Grand Public Awareness Walk has been organized in Peshawar, which has been organized by the Census Division and Census Office Peshawar in collaboration with the Department of Local Government and Elections KP. The walk will start today (Thursday) at 11 am from Statistics Office State Life Building, will pass through Fakhar Alam

Road, Green Shadi Hall, State Bank Building and Cantt Railway Station whereas it will culminate at Press Club Peshawar.

People from all walks of life, including government employees, businessmen and industrialists, religious scholars, lawyers, students and teachers have been invited to participate in the walk. During the walk, the participants will raise various slogans on the great benefits of census, besides they would be carrying placards on the impor-

ance of the 7th national census and the country's first digital census.

Meanwhile, KP Minister for Local Government, Elections and Rural Development (LGE&RDD) Sardar Faisal Amin Gandapur, Secretary LGE&RDD Syed Zaheerul Islam Shah, Deputy Census Commissioner Akhtar, Secretary Coordination and Elections LG Sajid Gul have strongly appealed to the citizens from all walks of life to fully participate in this purposeful walk.

Saniya Safi posted as ADC

PESHAWAR (APP): Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has posted Saniya Safi (PAS BPS-17) as Additional Deputy Commissioner (General). In a notification issued here on Wednesday, she was posted in her own pay and scale against the vacant post in the public interest with immediate effect. Prior to current appointment, Saniya Safi was serving in Planning and Development Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali inspecting Khyber Eye Foundation during his visit.

PHC orders to de-seal 3 markets at Chowk-e-Yadgar

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered to de-seal three markets in Chowk-e-Yadgar on submission of Rs5, lac surety bond by each owner with Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Advocate Asad Danyal Chamkani appeared before PHC's judge Justice Waqar Ahmad on behalf of Noor Muhammad, Hafiz-ur-

Rehman and Haji Niaz Muhammad while stated that the petitioners are owners of Azad market, Faiz market and City market respectively. The counsel informed that FIA has sealed above mentioned three markets on 11 December 2022 on allegation of money laundering under section 5 of 1974 Act. He argued that FIA has no jurisdiction to seal these markets because action

should only take against a person involved in illegal business neither to seal the whole property. After conclusion of argument Justice Waqar Ahmad has ordered to de-seal three markets at Chowk-e-Yadgar on Rs5 lac of surety bonds with Investigation Officer while forwarded the writ petitions to divisional bench of PHC and FIA to submit report.

Digital Media Report and Authentication organized



F.P. report

PESHAWAR: The two-day training workshop organized by Pakistan Information Department, Peshawar and Pakistan Information Centre under the umbrella of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting on "Digital Media reporting & authentication" concluded in Peshawar. On day two, Mr. Ali Imran Associate Professor of the Journalism Department University of Peshawar shed light on the methods and sources of authenticating digital media news. The participants were engaged in various practical exercises on the spot which is one of the special features of this workshop. Mr. Faheem a senior anchor person educated the participants about various challenges while reporting and the importance of the credibility of source, followed by an interactive session.

Participants interacted enthusiastically and discussed various issues regarding the dispensation of news to the general public with the responsibility. Later on, the Chief Guest, Mr. Faizullah Jan Chairman Journalism Department at Peshawar University in his remarks said that the workshop was aptly themed & arranged by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, PID & PIC and their efforts in this regard are dully acknowledged. He added that with advancement of communication technology journalism has evolved from centralized to decentralized profession; now consumers of Media has also become producer of news and other content. However, it has also led to the spread of fake news. He emphasized that journalists need to learn how to use modern technology to effectively perform their

professional duties and in the same time counter fake news. He concluded that such trainings are important because midcareer journalists cannot afford to enroll themselves in universities in order to enhance their skills set. Director General Press Information Department Peshawar Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil in his remarks highlighted the purpose of the training workshop. He added that Ministry of Information & Broadcasting aims at not only enhancing the capacity of young and midcareer media persons but also impart knowledge to meet challenges in the world of Digital Media. At the end, certificates were distributed among the participants. The two-day workshop was attended by journalists from various newspapers, TV Channels and student of Journalism Department of university of Peshawar.

KP Governor visits KEF

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali here on Wednesday various sections of Khyber Eye Foundation (KEF) to review the facilities being provided to patients. He also visited different wards of the facility and met with patients. He congratulated the administration of the eye foundation for completing 20 years of service and said the foundation was helping the ailing community without any discrimination. He also urged the administration to increase facilities and assured his cooperation and assistance. He said the business community would be invited to help the eye foundation in importing machinery and needed equipment. On the occasion, KP Governor was briefed by Chairman KEF, Ghayur Sethi, and Board of Governors about facilities being provided to patients.

ANP submits call attention notice

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party (ANP) on Wednesday submitted a call attention notice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly against unscheduled power load shedding and demanded of the provincial government to raise the issue in Council of Common Interest (CCI). Parliamentary Leader of ANP Sardar Hussain Babak submitted a call attention notice in Assembly Secretariat mentioning that KP is producing the cheapest electricity but unfortunately the people of the province are facing more than 18 hours load shedding. He said that KP is producing low cost hydel electricity while its people are getting it at increased rates. He demanded of the provincial government to raise the issue in CCI on priority basis.

RMS capacity building workshop concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): First Master trainer workshop for the capacity building of the staffers of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the use of Result Management System (RMS) during the upcoming general elections concluded here the other day, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Admn), Mohammad Javed Khan distributed certificates among the participants of the training. Addressing the participants of the capacity building workshop, Mohammad Javed congratulated the trainees on completion of their training and appreciated the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in this regard. A total of nine such training workshops for the staffers of the ECP have been planned and the process will continue till December 31, 2022.

UVAS Swat to be completed soon

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Department Mukhtiar Ahmed was briefed on various projects of Livestock Department in the office of Director General Livestock Extension, it was told that the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences is being established in Swat district which will be completed soon. In the briefing, it was

further stated that there are a total of 1577 million poultry and more than 30 million animals in the province, whose medical and other needs are met by the Livestock Department. Likewise, Secretary Livestock was also briefed about Harichand Charsadda Dairy Farm, Jamrud Dairy Farm, Sheep Farm in Mansehra, DI Khan Buffalo Farm, Achai Cow Farm in

Dir, Azakhail Buffalo Farm in Swat and Model Dairy Farm in Bajaur district. The Secretary was told that in the merged districts work will continue on three dairy farms. The Secretary was also briefed about poultry

schemes and other projects. On this occasion, Director General Livestock Extension Dr. Alam Zeib Mohmand, Director General Research Ijaz Ali, Additional Secretary Livestock Asghar Khan, Deputy Secretary Sajid

Nawaz and other relevant officers of the department participated. Secretary Mukhtiar Ahmed directed the concerned authorities to help farmers and resolve their problems on priority basis.



PESHAWAR: Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Elections) KP Javed Rehmat Khan addressing during a meeting.

PILL celebrates Int'l Disability Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of the International Disability Day, Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning (PILL) in collaboration with Paraplegic Center Peshawar organized a grand event in honor of persons with disabilities. More than 60 patients with spinal cord disabilities, their caregivers and therapists participated in this grand function followed by the banquet organized in the auditorium of Paraplegic Center Hayatabad. Chief Executive of Paraplegic Center Peshawar Dr. Syed Mohammad Ilyas, Dr. Aamir Zeib, PILL's Mrs. Kainat Farooqui, Gul Rukh and Sara Niamat, Clinical



Psychologists and Gohar Rehman Physiotherapist delivered lectures in the inaugural session and taught the participants about psychological manifestations of disability and simple to learn exercises. Sanaullah, MIT supervisor, spoke about his remarkable journey in physical rehabilitation, spreading

awareness in the community and making it clear that all persons with disabilities can become valued members of society just like him. Dr. Ilyas Syed CEO PCP was given excellence award by PILL on his outstanding services for the rehabilitation of disabled patients with spinal cord injuries and Clubfoot children.



In brief

BB's anniversary observed F.P. Report

GHALANI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP), tribal district Mohmand observed 15th death anniversary of late Chairperson, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed by organizing a ceremony in Mohmand Press Club at Ghalanai, said a press release issued on Wednesday. Besides, party office bearers including district president, Malik Israel Khan, Haji Mir Afzal, Dr Faraz, Noor Islam Safi, Sher Azam, Sanaullah, Rais Khan and Sataj Khan a large number of party workers attended the ceremony and paid tributes to the services of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and PPP founding chairman, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed. The speakers also highlighted the services and achievements of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed including initiating of nuclear programme, convening of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and declaration of Qadianis as non-Muslim. They further said that the foundation of the development of tribal areas was laid by none other than Bhuttos and vowed to carry their mission forward and render all kinds of sacrifices in this regard. At the end, the participants of the ceremony prayed for eternal peace of the soul of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and progress and development of the country.

Faisalabad awaits funds

FAISALABAD (INP): The safe city project for surveillance in Faisalabad, the third largest city of Pakistan, has been stalled due to a lack of disbursement of funds. The project was launched in May 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs157 million and it was to complete in a period of one year. However, it is still incomplete despite a lapse of five years as the government has released only Rs80 million so far. Criminal elements are busy in their activities without any fear and lives of people are at risk as authorities await funds to complete the monitoring project in the city. Sources said the buildings department had demanded Rs73 million from the Punjab government to complete the project but the amount was not released as a result of which the project came to a standstill. The city police officer (CPO) said the safe city project hanged in the balance due to shortage of fund. He hoped that working on it would resume soon. Sources said the delay had increased the cost of the project by Rs40 million as against the original estimated cost of Rs157 million.

Flour mill in Jhang sealed

JHANG (INP): The local administration foiled an attempt to smuggle flour from a local flour mill on Wednesday, seizing 992 bags of 20kg each from a vehicle. In reaction the flour millers in district Jhang announced strike for unlimited period of time, saying the mills will not supply wheat and flour. Pakistan Customs curbs smuggling of narcotics worth millions. According to the Jhang Deputy Commissioner, Sabir Flour Mills have been sealed, the owner and his driver have been arrested and booked in a case. He made it clear that any misappropriation of wheat won't be tolerated and that indiscriminate action would be taken against flour millers who get involved in illegal steps. On the other hand, Flour Mills Association Jhang chapter president Zahid Khan Baloch held an emergency meeting and announced the strike.



QUETTA: Activists of All Balochistan Municipal Workers Association holding protest in favour of their demands.

Law and order situation in Malakand reviewed

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A high-level meeting was held at the Commissioner's Office, Saidu Sharif, to review revised plans of the National Action Plan and the law and order situation at the divisional level. The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai. Regional Police Officer Sajjad Khan also participated in the meeting. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, officers of Intelligence, Anti-Terrorism, Anti-Narcotics, Customs, National Financial Institutions and Police. The concerned authorities briefed the meeting in detail on the measures and future action plans regarding law and order at the division level.

and the revised action plan under the NAP.

The meeting reviewed actions on prevention of terrorist financing, prevention of illegal weapons, illegal explosives, counter-narcotics, anti-smuggling, and prevention of extortion, cyber-crime and illegal documentation. The meeting also reviewed measures for bringing terrorists and their facilitators to justice while measures to eradicate extremism also discussed.

While presiding over the meeting, Malakand Division Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai expressed satisfaction over the overall law and order situation.

The Divisional Commissioner said that the protection of life and property of the people is the primary responsibility of the state and no sacri-

fice will be spared to fulfill this important duty and all institutions should utilize all resources in this regard. While giving instructions to the officers, he said that the officers appointed in administrative and other positions have a great responsibility and the trust between the people and the state depends on the performance of the officers.

He said that peace was established by passing through difficult situations and making great sacrifices and it is the responsibility of all of us to maintain it. Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai also directed the district administration to continue the comprehensive measures at the district level and to continuously review the situation related to law and order.

Man poisons wife to death before killing himself

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A man in Mian Khel village of Katlang tehsil in Mardan district on Wednesday poisoned his wife to death and later committed suicide by taking the same poison.

Katlang police said the husband gave poison to his wife and later took the same toxin to kill himself. Some domestic issues led to the unfortunate incident, the police said. Bodies of both the deceased were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Katlang for medico legal procedure.

Stern action against illegal housing societies directed: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mardan, Captain (Retd) Abdul Rehman has

expressed anguish over illegal housing societies in district Mardan and vowed stern action against them.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding illegal housing societies across the district. Besides, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Engineer Syed Shahzeb, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mardan, Ayesha Tahir and AC Takhtbai, ACs Katlang, Rustam and Ghari Kapura also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the newly posted Deputy Commissioner was briefed in detail regarding illegal/unregistered housing societies operating across the district without obtaining permission/no objection certificate from

the concerned departments. These illegal housing societies have been sealed several times in the past and complete bans have been imposed on sale and purchase of plots in them.

The Deputy Commissioner has clarified in unequivocal terms that no one is allowed to establish housing societies on agricultural land and the government is very much clear that such activities should be carried out only on barren land. He said that beside owners, builders of such societies would also face stern action and transfer of land would also be banned. He said illegal housing societies are eating agricultural land in the district and food shortage is looming large.

‘Socio-economic uplift of Hafizabad top priority’

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Establishment of district Hafizabad is my first major achievement and I am proud of getting status of district from tehsil Hafizabad whereas establishment of University of Hafizabad for children of poor and less resources people of district will be my second major achievement of my political career while progress and prosperity of the district Hafizabad is my mission.

These views were expressed by the leader of PTI and ex-Member National Assembly Ch. Mehdi Hassan Bhatti while

addressing a press conference, last night.

He said that construction work on completion of University of Hafizabad and new building of district headquarters hospital with the cost of Rs. 18 billion and with the completion of these mega projects, the best healthcare and higher educational facilities would be available to the people of Hafizabad as well as surrounding areas.

Expressing his desire, he said that I would delight when I would see to students going to University of Hafizabad. He claimed that our district was developing

day and night and we would get all incentives only for the people of district without any personal gains.

He further said that it was need to work for the progress and prosperity of the country with the spirit of Pakistan Movement for making the country according to aspirations and dreams of the Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He also cut the cake of birthday of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah alongwith Chairman Press Club Rai Ghazanfar Ali Khari, General Secretary Malik Hamid Raza and other journalists.

LG employees hold rally F.P. Report

NEWSHERA: The employees of local government department along with tehsil municipal administration workers led by Assistant Director Ilyas Afridi arranged protest and rally against Iqbal Wazir's attitude, on Wednesday.

The supervisors of three tehsils namely Sajjad, Akhtar and Asim Ullah along with presidents and general secretary participated in the rally. The protestors chanted slogans in favor of their demands while condemned Minister for Relief Iqbal Wazir behavior with public servants.

The speakers claimed that protest will be continue till denotification of Iqbal Wazir as Minister otherwise the protest should be multiplied with passage of time. They demanded transparent inquiry into the hostage of local government employees by relief's minister.

Strike in Gwadar enters third day

GWADAR (PPI): A shutdown strike was observed in Gwadar city on Wednesday for the third consecutive day against the police firing and baton-charge on the Haq Do Tehreek activists during their protest.

Speaking on the occasion, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman said that the peaceful protest would continue till the acceptance of demands. The security personnel attacked the peaceful protesters without any justification, he added. He demanded that those arrested should be released, adding that illegal trawlers be removed from the Gwadar Port.

It may be noted here that the situation in Gwadar became tense after the police baton charged the protesters of Haq Do Tehreek and fired tear gas shells at them. The protesters surrounded the house of the Gwadar deputy commissioner in response to the police shelling and baton charge. The personnel of police and Frontier Corps also arrested the activists of Haq Do Tehreek from their houses.

Dir press club elects office bearers F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The annual elections of the district press club Timergara for the year 2023 were held under the supervision of senior journalists Malik Zia-ur-Rahim and Khalid Mahmood.

According to the results announced by the election supervisors Ismail Anjum of the Aaj News was elected as president, Nawab Badshah of the Neo News as vice president, Rehmatullah Swati of the Such News as general secretary, Tahir Shah of the Daily Ausaf as joint secretary, Habib Muhammad Khattak of the Daily Mashriq as information secretary, Malik Akbar Saeed of the Statesman as finance secretary, Bahramand Syed of the Frontier Star as office secretary while Rohullah Shakir of the Dunya News was elected as the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The newly elected cabinet members expressed their commitment to utilize their skills and expertise for the welfare of the journalists' community and the press club. They said that the press club would be strengthened with the help of fellow journalists.

Godown sealed F.P. Report

KHAR: Assistant Commissioner Khar, Muejeeb Ullah here Wednesday sealed a store house that was used for refilling of subsidized flour in to sacks printed with address of Punjab.

The store house was situated in Nawaidand area of Bajaur tribal district. District administration said that flour of Bajaur Flour Mills that was sold on Rs 1200 per bag was filled in sacks printed with address of Punjab.

Causeway opens in Tirah Valley



F.P. Report

BARA: A causeway (suspension bridge) was inaugurated in Wacha wana locality of Rajgal, Tirah valley here on last day. In this connection a gathering was organized that was attended by Brigadier Razul Hasnain, Director World Food Majid Khan, Director SIF Anis Gul beside elders and general masses.

Speaking on the occasion tribal elder Faizullah

Jan Koki Khel and others thanked the 27 Brigade (North) and other donors for setting up the suspension bridge and said the causeway would certainly help the locals to cross the river Rajgal. Since long the forces have been adopting valuable initiatives to restore durable peace in the area, they remarked.

They vowed that the tribesmen would extend every possible assistance to

the forces and other government and non-government organizations for establishing peace. The speakers maintained that World Food and SIF, besides supplying food commodities to remove nutrition deficiency among locals, set up useful development projects for the welfare of the people was a good omen. At the end the officials cut the ribbon to formally open the suspension bridge.

Traffic police issues annual performance report

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Traffic Police Abbottabad released annual performance report. SSP Traffic Warden Malik Ijaz released the 2022 performance report. During the year 2022, release the detailed report of all the actions taken by the traffic warden and also release the details of the measures taken by the traffic warden during the year 2022 for the convenience of the public.

According to the details, SSP Traffic Warden Malik Ijaz issued a detailed report about the performance of Traffic Warden and Traffic Warden measures during the year 2022 under the supervision of Regional Police Officer Hazara Region Zeeshan Asghar, DPO Abbottabad Umar Tufail. Told that traffic warden police stopped 4985 motorcycles in Abbot Abad district during the year 2022. In which 973 motorcycles are unregistered/applied for, while action was taken against 3059 motorcycle riders due to lack of helmets, while 336 minors' motorcycles were locked up. The children

were released after taking affidavits from their parents. Similarly, 443 motorcycles were closed under section 523/550 while 831 motorcycles related.

After registering with the department, they were allotted a regular number. During the year 2022, the Traffic Warden Police take actions against illegal money bases, conducting successive operations on 566 money bases across the district at different times in 2042. Action was taken against the vehicles.

Similarly, traffic warden police fined and issued challans for 3,45,084 vehicles. Similarly, action was taken for various violations on the duty road, including 3049 vehicles from overloading, 4989 vehicles from nine parking at illegal mini bases, 8440 vehicles from using mobile phones while driving, while 3391 vehicles were unsafe. Driving, 556 vehicles with pressure horn, 1166 vehicles for not having fitness certificate, action was taken.

Similarly, the traffic warden police during the year 2022 38815 vehicles

driving without a driving license while the Abbottabad traffic warden police during the year 2022 along with these operations and the measures taken keeping in view the convenience of the public include mobile app, FM Radio, Helpline, Traffic Warden Education Unit which educates students about traffic rules in institutions across the district.

Along with giving awareness, it continues to give guidance on important principles. Similarly, the driving license mobile unit was sent to remote areas for the convenience of the people. While keeping in view the convenience of tourists in Galiyat, Workshop Mobile, Accident Response Unit was activated which benefited thousands of people.

Along with taking measures for the convenience of tourists, International Driving License and Warning System have been issued by the Traffic Warden Police. Refreshment was also done. This initiative of the traffic police was well received by the people.

Crime rate multiplied in Kurram following merger

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: It revealed that crimes ratio multiplied several folds in Kurram district of erstwhile Fata in last two years following merger with

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after constitutional amendment.

According to details, Death Rate Record Rise in Two Years Kurram which area is mainly divided into three major tehsils. The headquarters of Upper Kurram, Lower Kurram and Central Kurram have been known as Parachinar Kurram is a paradise valley with a population of more than twelve lakhs at the time of merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Following merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rs100 billion funds were announced for each district of erstwhile Fata.

While granted status of a district to each Agency. The judicial system was established and district rules were introduced. Since 2013, District Kurram has seen a statistically significant increase in the percentage of crime in almost nine years, but it has also seen a rapid increase.

Thus, district KaramThere has also been a significant increase in various types of small and large incidents Compared to former FATA, related institutions in the district law, education department, health department,

fake medicine, public health department, agriculture department, forest department, WAPDA department, even in charitable institutions, there is a double digit corruption market.

On the one hand, long-standing enmities in the tribal areas and on the other hand, territorial disputes between different tribes have been the cause of bloody crimes for a long time, due to which the trend of lawlessness is increasing. Compared to former FATA, the district administration is looking very weak and helpless, as we know that there is a judiciary in Kurram district, the revenue department, police and civil administration are apparently very stable and active, but what is the reason for justice in these big institutions?

The supply is not far away. Perhaps the helplessness of these institutions may be the complete division of powers. For the first time, we have seen such districts where The establishment is nominal, the police is nominal, the judiciary is nominal and the military leadership is also nominal. No dispute in the area is resolved on an emergency basis unless there is loss of life and property, even though it is the work of ten soldiers to take strict notice of such minor issues and establish peace or enforce government

writes.

Till today, the judiciary has not taken even a single notice of what is happening in Kurram district, even under the law of the forest. The real reason will be a territorial disputeFor years, the case will continue to be heard in the judiciary court, while decisions are made on many cases, but they see helplessness. Those decisions cannot be implemented. Lawyers, writers, civil society, businessmen, educated citizens of Kurram district have also expressed their fear that it is not possible to prevent the problems faced in Kurram district under such a system of laws.

The positive role does not exist far away, it is not visible, the system has been handed over to him, who is not legally responsible for it, nor is it his job. The citizens told the media that the problems of the district are not territorial disputes, not even long-standing enmities, but the helplessness of the current rulers. The first thing to do is to end this helplessness, which can be done through constitutional and legal procedures. The silence of the judiciary is surprising. Judiciary is the supreme institution in the countryFrom the welfare of the people, we have to move forward to prevent the spread of crimes and deaths like cancer in the society.



Thursday, December 29, 2022

Chinese hospitals, funeral homes ‘extremely busy’

CHENGDU (Reuters): Chinese hospitals and funeral homes were under intense pressure on Wednesday as a surging COVID-19 wave drained resources, while the scale of the outbreak and doubts over official data prompted some countries to consider new travel rules on Chinese visitors. In an abrupt change of policy, China this month began dismantling the world's strictest COVID regime of lockdowns and extensive testing, putting its battered economy on course for a complete re-opening next year.

The lifting of restrictions, which came after widespread protests against them, means COVID is spreading largely unchecked and likely infecting millions of people a day, according to some international health experts. The speed at which China, the last major country in the world moving towards treating the virus as endemic, has scrapped COVID rules has left its fragile health system overwhelmed.

China reported three new COVID-related deaths - numbers that are inconsistent with what funeral parlours are reporting, as well as with the experience of much less populous countries after they re-opened. Staff at Huaxi, a big hospital in the southwestern city of Chengdu, said they were "extremely busy" with COVID patients. "I've been doing this job for 30 years and this is the busiest I have ever known it," said one ambulance driver outside the hospital who declined to be identified.

There were long queues inside and outside the hospital's emergency department and at an adjacent fever clinic. Most of those arriving in ambulances were given oxygen to help with their breathing. "Almost all of the patients have COVID," one emergency department pharmacy staff member said. The hospital has no stocks of COVID-specific medicine and can only provide drugs for symptoms such as coughing, she said.

Car parks around the Dongjiao funeral home, one of the biggest in Chengdu, were full. Funeral processions were constant as smoke billowed from the crematorium. "We have to do this about 200 times a day now," said one funeral worker. "We are so busy we don't even have time to eat. This has been the case since



the opening up. Before it was around 30-50 a day." "Many have died from COVID," said another worker.

At another Chengdu crematorium, privately-owned Nanling, staff were equally busy. "There have been so many deaths from COVID lately," one worker said. "Cremation slots are all fully booked. You can't get one until the new year." China has said it only counts deaths of COVID patients caused by pneumonia and respiratory failure as COVID-related.

Zhang Yuhua, an official at the Beijing Chaoyang Hospital, said most recent patients were elderly and critically ill with underlying diseases. She said the number of patients receiving emergency care had increased to 450-550 per day, from about 100 before, according to state media. The China-Japan Friendship Hospital's fever clinic in Beijing was also "packed" with elderly patients, state media reported. Nurses and doctors have been asked to work while sick and retired medical workers in rural communities have been rehired to help. Some cities have been struggling with drug shortages.

In a major step towards freer travel, China will stop requiring inbound travellers to go into quarantine from Jan. 8, authorities said this week. The global financial hub of Hong Kong also said on Wednesday it would scrap most of its last remaining COVID restrictions. Online searches for flights out of China spiked from extremely low levels, but residents

and travel agencies suggested a return to anything like normal would take some months yet, as caution prevails for now.

Moreover, some governments were considering extra travel requirements for Chinese visitors. US officials cited "the lack of transparent data" as reasons for doing so. India, Taiwan and Japan would require a negative COVID test for travellers from mainland China, with those testing positive in Japan having to undergo a week in quarantine. Tokyo also plans to limit airlines increasing flights to China. The Philippines was also considering imposing tests.

China's \$17 trillion economy is expected to suffer a slowdown in factory output and domestic consumption as workers and shoppers fall ill. News of re-opening borders sent global luxury stocks higher, but the reaction was more muted in other corners of the market. US carmaker Tesla plans to run a reduced production schedule at its Shanghai plant in January, according to an internal schedule reviewed by Reuters. It did not specify a reason.

Once the initial shock of new infections passes, some economists expect Chinese growth to bounce back with a vengeance from what is this year expected to be its lowest rate in nearly half a century, somewhere around 3%. Morgan Stanley economists expect 5.4% growth in 2023, while those at Goldman Sachs see 5.2%.

Taiwan to test arrivals from China for COVID from Jan 1

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan will test arrivals from China for COVID-19 from Jan. 1 in response to a surge in cases there, the government said on Wednesday, joining other countries in stepping up controls on people coming from China. Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Centre said all passengers arriving on direct flights from China, as well as by boat at two offshore islands, will have to take PCR tests upon arrival.

The government will conduct virus sequencing for those who arrive from China and test positive to track new variants of the coronavirus, it said in a statement. The measures, which will run until the end of January, do not include those arriving from Hong Kong or Macau, the centre added. Those who test positive will be able to isolate at home, it said.

The majority of those affected will be Taiwanese citizens who live and work in China and their Chinese spouses and children, as Beijing banned Chinese tourists from visiting the island in 2019. Many of those Taiwanese who live in China traditionally return to Taiwan for the Lunar New Year holiday, which falls next month. In an abrupt change of policy, China this month began dismantling the world's strictest COVID regime of lockdowns and extensive testing, putting its battered economy on course for a complete re-opening next year.

The lifting of restrictions, which came after widespread protests against them, means COVID-19 is spreading largely unchecked and likely infecting millions of people a day, according to some international health experts. After effectively shutting its borders to visitors to control the pandemic and enforcing strict quarantines for all arrivals for almost two years, Taiwan re-opened to the world in October and ended mandatory isolation.

Hundreds of Rohingya leave BD in rickety boats

DHAKA (Reuters): About 180 Rohingya Muslims fleeing grim conditions in Bangladesh camps are presumed to have drowned at sea in recent weeks, possibly after their rickety boat broke apart, in what could make 2022 among the deadliest years for the community. Rights groups have recorded a major rise in the number of Rohingya leaving the camps in Bangladesh from about 500 in 2021 to some 2,400 this year. Nearly 1 million Rohingya from Myanmar live in crowded facilities in Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

At least five boats carrying Rohingya have sailed from Bangladesh since around the end of last month, according to Chris Lewa of the Arakan Project, an NGO that provides support to Rohingya refugees. Two boats carrying Rohingya also reached Indonesia early in November. Following are details of the boats: At least 154 Rohingya were rescued by a Vietnamese oil ship from a sinking boat off the Myanmar coast on Dec. 7 and turned over to Myanmar's navy. The Rohingyas are a minority in Buddhist-majority Myanmar and seen by Myanmar authorities as illegal immigrants from South Asia. The Sri Lankan navy on Dec. 18 rescued more than 100 Rohingya adrift off the Indian Ocean island's northern coast.

A boat carrying 180 Rohingya sank off the Sri Lankan coast during the first week of December, according to Lewa, who cited the captain of the boat rescued in Sri Lanka on Dec. 18, as the two boats were sailing near each other. All people on this boat are presumed to have drowned. At least 57 Rohingya were rescued in Aceh province on the Indonesian island of Sumatra on Dec. 25 after being adrift for nearly a month. A boat carrying 185 Rohingya, adrift at sea since Dec. 1, washed ashore in Aceh, according to Lewa.

Philippine rain, flooding cause 25 deaths, damage

MANILA (AP): The death toll from heavy rains and floods that devastated parts of the Philippines over the Christmas weekend has risen to 25, with 26 others still missing, the national disaster response agency said Wednesday. Nearly 400,000 people were affected, with over 81,000 still in shelters and nine others injured, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said.

Sixteen of the 25 deaths were reported in Northern Mindanao region in the south, while 12 of the 26 missing are from the eastern Bicol region, the council added. A shear line — the point where warm and cold air meet triggered rains in parts of eastern,

central and southern Philippines, the state weather bureau PAGASA said.

The weather disturbance disrupted Christmas celebration in affected provinces, with photos from the southern province of Misamis Occidental showing rescuers carrying an elderly woman on a plastic chair as they waded through a flooded street. Some residents in the province were seen hanging on to floaters as coast guard rescuers pulled them across chest-deep flood using a rope. The disaster management council said 1,196 houses were damaged by the floods, while sections of 123 roads and 12 bridges were affected. Some areas

remain without power or water supply.

While the effect of the shear line has weakened, a new low pressure area may bring moderate to heavy rains within the next 24 hours to the same areas affected by the Christmas weekend floods. The weather bureau said Wednesday that flooding and landslides are likely, especially in areas with significant prior rainfall. Each year about 20 typhoons and storms batter the Philippines, one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. The archipelago is located on the "Ring of Fire" along the Pacific Ocean's rim, where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur.

Hong Kong to scrap almost all its Covid rules

HONG KONG (BBC): Hong Kong is dropping almost all its Covid restrictions this week, following a similar move by mainland China. From Thursday, people arriving in the city - a special administrative region of China - will no longer have to do mandatory PCR tests. The vaccine pass system will also be scrapped - but compulsory masks in public places will continue.

It is a dramatic move by the city, which once had some of the toughest restrictions in the world. Also being scrapped from Thursday is the rule that limits the number of people allowed to gather outside to 12. This was increased from four people in October as part of measures to begin reopening the city. Hong Kong's leader, John Lee, cited high vaccine rates as one of the reasons for lifting restrictions.

According to government figures, 93% of the population have had two vaccine doses, while more

than 83% have received three. Unlike mainland China, which has developed its own vaccines, Hong Kong has also used mRNA vaccines - including the BioNTech jab made in Germany - that have been shown to be more effective. "Hong Kong has a sufficient amount of medicine to fight Covid, and healthcare workers have gained rich experience in facing the pandemic," Mr Lee said on Wednesday.

The society has established a relatively extensive and overall anti-epidemic barrier," Mr Lee added that instead of the vaccine pass, which has limited access to public places for unvaccinated since it was introduced in February, the city would take "more targeted measures" - including promoting vaccination for the elderly and children. More than 11,000 people have died with Covid in Hong Kong, according to official numbers, from more than 2.5m cases. Since the pandemic began, the city has

largely followed mainland China's lead in efforts to tackle the virus, including attempts to eliminate it with a "zero-Covid" strategy.

This has been criticised by some residents and business owners - who said the policy damaged Hong Kong's economy and international standing. The scrapping of the Hong Kong's Covid restrictions comes weeks after mainland China made a similar move following landmark protests against the strict controls.

Beijing announced further plans to ease travel restrictions. Hong Kong has said that it will fully reopen its borders with the rest of China before mid-January. The mainland is currently experiencing a surge in cases, with reports suggesting hospitals are overwhelmed and elderly people are dying. Hong Kong is part of China and is governed by the "one country, two systems" principle, but Beijing has tightened control in recent years.

Medvedev predicts war in West

MOSCOW (Reuters): Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, an arch loyalist of Vladimir Putin given a new job this week, predicted war between Germany and France next year and a civil war in the United States that would lead to Elon Musk becoming president.

Medvedev, deputy head of Putin's advisory security council, served as president during a four-year spell when Putin held the office of prime minister. He appears to have seen his fortune rise in the Kremlin, which said he would now serve as Putin's deputy on a body overseeing the military industry. In his list of

predictions for 2023, published on his personal Telegram and Twitter accounts, he also foresaw Britain rejoining the EU, which would in turn collapse.

Musk, the Tesla boss who now owns Twitter, responded to the suggestion he would emerge as US president by tweeting back "Epic thread!!", although he also criticised some of Medvedev's predictions. Medvedev has praised Musk in the past for proposing Ukraine cede territory to Russia in a peace deal. Since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, Medvedev has reinvented himself as an arch-hawk, framing the

conflict in apocalyptic, religious terms and referring to Ukrainians as "cockroaches" in language Kyiv says is openly genocidal. Last week he made a rare foreign visit to China, holding talks on foreign policy with President Xi Jinping.

Political scientist Vladimir Pastukhov said Medvedev's newly outspoken public persona appeared to have found favour with his boss. "Medvedev's Telegram posts have found at least one reader, and indeed an admirer: Putin," Pastukhov, a political science professor at London's University College London, wrote on his own Telegram.

Philippines' food worries

MANILA (BBC): Felix Pangibitan runs his hands through what is left of his precious rice crop. The stalks in nearly two-thirds of the field are bent double; most are flattened, others have been snapped at the neck by strong typhoon winds which reached more than 150mph (241km/h).

"It looks so pitiful," he says in a video which has now gone viral across the Philippines. "It's a waste. It's so hard to be a farmer."

It's a loss both Felix and the country can ill afford - especially this year, as food costs have soared to alarming levels. His farm in Nueva Ecija on the main island of Luzon was one of thousands in the path of a powerful storm which hit the country's so-called "Rice Bowl". More than \$22m (£18.2m) worth of crops were destroyed in 24 hours. "I can't remember all the typhoons and their names but this has been the most heartbreaking one yet," he told us. His simple heartfelt videos struck a chord across the Philippines, especially among the poorest communities which have been hit by multiple crises.

As in much of the world, the price of food, fuel and fertiliser have all increased here since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February. But the Philippines is particularly vulnerable. It has to import food - including rice

and all cereals such as wheat - to feed its growing population, making it one of the most food-insecure countries in Asia. And as Felix can testify, even the food the Philippines does grow is far from guaranteed in a country which is the most disaster-prone in the world.

Typhoons batter the islands with growing frequency and severity. There have been a total of 16 severe storms this year which have destroyed or partially damaged more than \$225m (£186m) worth of agricultural land, according to the latest figures from the Department of Agriculture. This country may need more farmers to feed them, but farmers are already struggling to feed themselves. More than two million people who rely on farming are living below the poverty line. "Our situation right now is the hardest so far," said Felix, who's been farming for 30 years.

"The price of goods has increased, along with fertilisers and fuel. Meanwhile, the price of our crops has stayed the same for decades. It means what we harvest is worthless," Philippines President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr has appointed himself as minister for agriculture and promised to get the country growing again. But even he has admitted that inflation is running

"rampant and out of control" mostly due to rising food costs. Last month's 8% inflation rate is the highest recorded since November 2008, when it soared to 9.1% - and it's hitting ordinary Filipino families hard.

Forty-one-year-old Mary Ann Escarda pushes her squeaky cart through a maze of dark back alleys in the capital Manila every morning before dawn. She sells bread rolls known as pandesal to commuters, which earns her around \$4 a day - just under the minimum wage in the Philippines. Her husband also brings home a salary. But even their combined income is not enough to feed their four children. "To save food, I have put the children on a diet. We used to eat three times a day but now we only eat lunch and dinner," she told us as she gave one of her children the last of the powdered milk. She lives in a small house with 17 members of her family to keep costs low. She's also facing a dilemma. The prices of ingredients for her rolls have gone up.

"I can't increase the price to sell them because my loyal customers can't afford that change. They won't buy from me any more if I do. "I don't know what will happen later - maybe next month when the prices increase, we won't be able to eat.

In South Africa, ransom kidnappings are on the rise

SEOUL (Agencies):From an eight-year-old girl snatched on her way to school to a wealthy businessman who was abducted and murdered, South Africa is experiencing a surge in kidnappings for money. During the festive season, police have been warning parents to be vigilant around beaches and shopping malls - potential hotspots for child abduction.

"They should take extra care of their children," said Robert Netshunda, a police spokesman in the southwestern province of KwaZulu-Natal. "Children go missing and a crime of kidnapping is a reality," he told the AFP news agency.

South Africa has long had a reputation for violent crime and is often described as one of the most dangerous countries in the world outside a war zone. But kidnapping for ransom or extortion "is comparatively new", noted Jean-Pierre Smith, a Cape Town municipal security councillor. The phenomenon started to rise in 2016 and is now experiencing explosive growth, according to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-

TOC), a non-profit organisation.

Police recorded more than 4,000 cases between July and September, a twofold increase in the same period last year. The number of kidnappings today is "the highest ever in the history of South Africa," anti-crime activist Yusuf Abramjee told AFP.

"It has become an established and lucrative criminal practice," GI-TOC said in a report in September. Last month, the country was stunned when eight-year-old Abirah Dekhta was kidnapped on her way to school near Cape Town by five gunmen in two cars. Missing-person posters showed her wearing a pink dress and matching headscarf. She was freed during a spectacular police raid following a tip-off.

Dekhta had been held in a shack in the impoverished township of Khayelitsha, one of the largest in the country, guarded by seven men, police said. Her captors recently appeared in court, seeking bail. Most cases of kidnapping in South Africa are a side-effect of carjacking, robberies and rapes but crime experts say an increasing number of victims are now

being singled out directly.

In one of the most high-profile cases, four sons of a South African businessman, aged between six and 15 years, were kidnapped in a Hollywood-movie manner while on their way to school. In such cases, ransom demands can run into the millions of rand (tens of thousands of dollars).

Kidnappers sometimes brazenly demand that the ransom be paid into "foreign bank accounts via Bitcoin or via money exchanges in Dubai," said Abramjee. But in other cases, the victim is simply killed after his bank account has been emptied. One such death was Kevin Soal, a businessman in his late 60s with a passion for horse racing. His luxury car was found abandoned in a township on the outskirts of Pretoria days later.

Soal's body was discovered afterwards in a nearby area with gun wounds police investigators reportedly said were consistent with targeted killing. Large amounts of money had been withdrawn from his account, said a police source. Police and private detectives are investigating the case. On November 23,

at a press conference where he unveiled the country's dismal crime figures for 2022, Police Minister Bheki Cele singled out kidnapping as a priority for the forces.

Sporting a fedora hat almost echoing the fashion style of 1920s US crime-buster Eliot Ness, Cele ordered his force to "deal decisively with these most feared crimes". Analysts say kidnappings have been fuelled by locals working with foreign crime groups suspected to be operating from Mozambique and Pakistan and other countries. Indian business people, Pakistani, Somali and Ethiopians are among those increasingly becoming victims of such campaigns, according to Abramjee.

A Somali businessman was recently snatched from a Johannesburg hotel lobby, he said. Muslim families of Indian origin, who are rumoured to hold large funds abroad, are especially at risk, said a police source. Police last year set up a special unit and officials recently said they were "closing in on several syndicates" responsible for kidnapping for ransom cases.

Kosovo shuts main border crossing with Serbia amid protester

KOSOVO (Agencies): Kosovo has closed its biggest border crossing after protesters blocked it on the Serbian side to support their ethnic kin in Kosovo in refusing to recognise the country's independence. Wednesday's move has left only three entry points between the two countries open, with two other crossings on the Serbian border closed by similar protests on their Kosovar sides since December 10.

The latest protest came hours after Serbia said it had put its army on the highest possible level of alert following weeks of escalating tensions between Belgrade and Pristina. Serbs in Serbia used a truck and tractors to create the latest roadblock, close to the Merdare crossing on Kosovo's eastern border, Belgrade-based media reported. The obstruction is preventing thousands of Kosovars who work elsewhere in Europe

from returning home for holidays.

About 50,000 Serbs living in ethnically divided northern Kosovo refuse to recognise the government in Pristina or the status of Kosovo as a country separate from Serbia. They have the support of many Serbs in Serbia and its government. "If you have already entered Serbia then you have to use other border crossings ... or go through North Macedonia," Kosovo's foreign ministry said on its Facebook page, announcing the closure of the Merdare crossing.

The closure took effect at midnight, though the crossing was apparently already unusable. The Merdare entry point is Kosovo's most important for road freight. The country has international rail links. Since December 10, Serbs in northern Kosovo have exchanged fire with police and erected more than 10

roadblocks in and around Mitrovica.

Their action followed the arrest of a former Serb policeman for allegedly assaulting serving police officers. Two more roadblocks were erected in the north. Kosovo's interior minister has accused Serbia, under the influence of Russia, of attempting to destabilise his country via the protests. Serbia denies it is trying to destabilise its neighbour and says it only wants to protect the Serbian minority living in what is now Kosovan territory but is not recognised by Belgrade.

Moscow said on Wednesday that it supported Serbia's attempts to protect ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo but denied Pristina's accusation that Russia was somehow stoking tensions in an attempt to sow chaos across the Balkans. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was "wrong" to

search for a destructive Russian influence. "Serbia is a sovereign country, and naturally, it protects the rights of Serbs who live nearby in such difficult conditions, and naturally reacts harshly when these rights are violated," Peskov said.

"Having very close allied relations, historical and spiritual relations with Serbia, Russia is very closely monitoring what is happening, how the rights of Serbs are respected and ensured," he added. "And, of course, we support Belgrade in the actions that are being taken." Albanian-majority Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 with the backing of the West, following a 1998-99 war in which NATO intervened to protect ethnic Albanian citizens. Kosovo's government has asked NATO's peacekeeping force for the country, the approximately 4,000-strong KFOR, to clear the barricades.

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573
E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com
Lahore Office: 0335-4026284
Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com
Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253
Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com
Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907
Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com
“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 415-3704551

Economic woes and adminstrators’ Dogma

THE Pakistani nation has been battling the worst economic crisis over the past several months which multiplied the impact of the global price hike of energy products after the coalition government slashed all subsidies in the power sector. The heavy shortfall in energy production vis-a-vis growing power consumption led to long electricity outages, industry breakdowns, and business closures across the country. According to government statistics, the energy import bill has crossed \$27 billion per annum which has intensified the energy crisis and become a grave risk for the nation's survival.

Pakistan is a developing economy with scanty domestic revenue, a weak industrial base, and growing energy issues coupled with aggravating impacts of the rising inflation and global energy crisis which presents a meek picture of Pakistan's future economic outlook. Presently, the country owes nearly 3 trillion rupees in power sector circular debt along with due debt payments to foreign lenders in the coming months. The situation becomes grave when the country's foreign reserves have reduced to below \$6 billion and the IMF does not agree to release the next installment of the IFF program worth \$ 1.1 billion without settlement of the current circular debt, while the friendly governments also hesitate in providing economic assistance amid fear of a looming payment default. Surprisingly, the grave economic situation of the Country neither affects the politics nor policies of the ruling elites.

The federal and Provincial governments are non-stop inaugurating towery development projects amid weak economic conditions and the risk of economic collapse, which cause enormous concerns among the masses. Ironically, Pakistani leaders and bureaucracy always seek the resolution of all economic, and management issues in foreign support, loans, and grants or demanded sacrifice from the public without making cuts on their amenities. The current economic fiasco needs General Elections. After all, the nation has to pay price for the incompetence and disloyalty of its rulers.

Tact of public leaders

ACCORDING to the media, the Republic of Peru has detained six people, including three active service police generals, as part of an ongoing probe into accusations of corruption against former President Pedro Castillo, who was impeached and removed from office earlier this month. According to the details, Peru's anti-corruption unit carried out a mega operation as a part of its ongoing investigations into the allegations that the former President authorized irregular/out-of-turn promotions for Police and Military officers during his term in office. Peru's interior ministry conducted over two dozen searches across the country including the homes of the former Defense Minister and former President and seized documents relating to the ongoing investigation.

Politics and politicians have similar trends and techniques in all parts of the world ranging from East Asia to North America and developed nations to third-world countries as well. Every ruler ever tried to prolong his term, introduced new laws and regulations to consolidate his rule, and absorbed all powers in their sole personality. The famous union leader and Puro's lift-wing former President Pedro Castillo was removed by the Country's legislature after he presented a plan to dissolve the parliament and grabbing maximum constitutional powers for himself through an executive order. Meanwhile the parliament blocked his way through the constitutional process and put him behind the bars on the charges of sedition, corruption and influence peddling.

Interestingly, after Castillo's removal from the Presidency, several senior bureaucrats including the former commanders of the Peru Army, Air Force, and Police alleged that Castillo pressurized them to promote officers who did not qualify for higher positions. The country's Attorney General's office launched an investigation and arrested six people including active police generals having enjoyed Castillo's alleged blessing and out of turn promotions in exchange for money. Apparently, democracy, transparency, public rights, merit and the rule of the law are only wordly saloganeering and tools for the Statesmen, otherwise the majority of the so-called nations' saviours have ugly faces in reality. Some of them have been exposed to the public, while others would be brushed on the doomsday.

Quote of the day

It is characteristic of the unlearned that they are forever proposing something which is old, and because it has recently come to their own attention, supposing it to be new.

— Calvin Coolidge, American President [1923-1929].

A new kind of great power competition

WHEN Russia invaded Ukraine in February, governments across the world faced a stark choice. They could line up behind Ukraine and its Western backers, or they could take Moscow's side.

For U.S.-based observers, the moral decision was obvious. After all, Russia was clearly the one who started the war, and Moscow's actions blatantly violated international principles of sovereignty, self-rule, and non-aggression.

But many states ended up going for the Goldilocks option. Mid-sized powers like Turkey and India condemned the war while rejecting Western efforts to levy comprehensive sanctions on Russia. Within months, their ties with Russia and the West had largely returned to business as usual, allowing them to avoid the economic and political pitfalls of picking sides in a great power conflict.

In many ways, this is a perfect example of the most striking foreign policy shift of 2022: the geopolitical rise of the world's so-called "middle powers." In the past year, Turkey, India, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and numerous others have carefully expanded their influence in global affairs, taking advantage of great powers that are determined to shore up their support on the world stage.

This might sound like a Cold War redux, but there's one key difference: Unlike last century, middle powers now have enough economic and geopolitical clout to throw their weight around without lining up behind a single superpower sponsor.

In practice, this means that India can dramatically increase its imports of Russian oil and undercut Western sanctions without facing any retaliation from the United States. And Saudi Arabia can hike oil prices during a global inflation crisis and sign expansive new economic deals with China, all while President Joe Biden fights tooth and nail to block a congressional effort to end U.S. support for Riyadh's brutal war in Yemen.

There is, of course, one big asterisk when it comes to middle powers. Though they can be remarkably effective at pursuing their interests within the international system, they have little if any ability to shape it.

In other words, there is no reason to believe that Ankara will create new international institutions, but there is also no doubt that it will take advantage of its place in NATO to earn concessions from its fellow member states.

From Washington, assertions of independence by middle powers are viewed as annoying at best and dangerous at worst. But the international system has fundamentally changed in the last few years, and it's time for the United States to accept this brave new world, according to Sarang Shidore, the director of studies at the Quincy Institute.

"[The U.S. is] trying to make the world system in the way it sees it," Shidore argued. "Trying to make it first fit into your vision and then trying to fashion a strategy based on that idealized world is not going to work."

A new kind of great power competition.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union were unabashed in their goals. Each side sought to create a larger, more strategically useful bloc of allies than the other, sometimes going to great lengths to transform the internal politics of states they viewed as junior partners.

When leaders resisted these efforts, Washington and Moscow would often resort to coups and strategically dubious proxy wars in order to secure their interests. The U.S. had a particular knack for covert operations, through which it helped bring friendly governments to power at least 26 times during the Cold War, according to Lindsay O'Rourke, a non-resident fellow at the Quincy Institute.

Middle powers were sometimes able to turn the tables when one of the superpowers had a perceived vital interest at stake. The most famous example of this came in 1973, when Arab oil producers blocked exports to countries that supported Israel in the October War against Syria and Egypt.

This was the first time that a middle power managed to strike directly at the U.S., leading to a permanent shift in American energy policy. But the embargo, which was meant to force Israel to retreat to its original 1949 borders, failed on

its own terms, and the effort was scrapped within six months.

America's roughshod approach to the world's smaller states continued well after the collapse of the USSR. Between 1990 and 2017 — the peak years of the so-called "unipolar moment" — the United States undertook more than 130 military interventions abroad, including numerous efforts to unseat unfriendly leaders in the Middle East.

But things have started to change. Decades of with-us-or-against-us policy by great powers have made leaders around the world skeptical of a bloc-based foreign policy. And, as the Global South has developed economically, coercion has gotten much harder.

Of course, that doesn't necessarily mean that the U.S. has stopped trying. Just ask Venezuela and Iran, a pair of prominent middle powers that Washington has pushed toward Moscow and Beijing through years of punitive policies.

But that approach is little more than a unipolar hangover. And, when it comes to Venezuela, leaders in Washington have shown signals that they're starting to sober up.

After pretending for years that exiled politician Juan Guaido is the country's legitimate president, the U.S. has begun engaging directly with Nicolas Maduro, the actual leader in Caracas. As Geoff Ramsey of the Washington Office on Latin America recently noted, the Biden administration has "created a set of incentives that brought Maduro back to the negotiating table" with the opposition. If this process goes well, it could end the failed attempt to drive the leftist leader out of office by economically and politically isolating Caracas.

Many factors have contributed to this shift, including the election of left-wing presidents in both Brazil and Colombia, two of Latin America's most prominent middle powers. But the biggest reason is more about economics than great power competition. As Russia's war in Ukraine has driven up oil prices, the prospect of blocking Venezuelan oil from reaching world markets has

become less and less attractive. This is no doubt why Washington signed off last month on plans for Chevron to restart drilling operations in the country.

This more pragmatic approach is similar to that of China, which tends to ignore the internal politics of foreign countries in favor of a focus on economic cooperation. This is particularly apparent in the Middle East, where Beijing has recently expanded economic ties with a range of autocratic leaders.

The region's middle powers have had particular success in balancing between great powers, in part because of their strategic location or natural resources.

Turkey has led the pack on this front. Through its careful balancing act between Russia and the West, Ankara has rapidly expanded its geopolitical clout, in part because of its role in mediating a deal that restarted Ukrainian grain shipments in the Black Sea.

And now, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has started to cash in on his expanded leverage. As Finland and Sweden have pushed to join NATO, the populist leader has taken advantage of the alliance's consensus-based decision-making to force changes in their stances toward Turkish human rights abuses. Even the U.S. Congress, which has largely viewed Erdogan as persona non grata in recent years, dropped its opposition to selling American fighter jets to Turkey following a pressure campaign.

Gulf powers have also succeeded in navigating choppy political waters. "The Gulf states have made it clear they're not going to pick and choose sides in geopolitical battles they don't feel concern them," said Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, a fellow at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

"Having benefited from the rise in energy prices as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they feel they have more leverage," Ulrichsen told RS. "They're becoming more assertive, I think, in choosing how and when to deploy that leverage in the international system."

This helps to explain

how Saudi Arabia has managed to expand ties with Russia and China while still forcing Biden to drop his campaign promise to turn Riyadh into a "pariah" following the 2018 killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi. And other Western leaders have followed suit, including French President Emmanuel Macron, who de facto Saudi leader Muhammad bin Salman visited in Paris earlier this year.

Further east, several large Asian countries have also started to forge their own geopolitical paths. Despite Western pressure, Indonesia refused to boot Russia from this year's G20 summit in Bali, and Indonesian leader Joko Widodo has met with both Russian and Ukrainian leaders in an effort to encourage peace talks between the two countries. And India has continued to import vast quantities of Russian goods while strengthening ties with American leaders over a shared concern over China's rise.

As Kishore Mahbubani, Singapore's former UN ambassador, recently argued, the United States will have to accept this new reality if it wants to craft an effective strategy in Asia. "Singapore wants to stay friends with the United States and China," Mahbubani said. "The rest of the world would appreciate a more thoughtful strategy moving forward."

The world as it is

So far, American leaders have struggled to adapt to the rise of middle powers. Despite India's renewed importance, it's been almost two years since the U.S. had a confirmed ambassador in New Delhi. Meanwhile, leaders in Congress have fought for months to force Biden to designate Russia a state sponsor of terrorism — a move that could force Washington to sanction any entities that do business with Moscow, including many U.S. partners.

As Shidore told RS, the Biden administration has also alienated numerous middle powers by pushing a narrative of global politics as a battle between autocracy and democracy. "These kinds of labels may resonate in Washington, but [they] mean very little for these middle powers," he said. "They just see this as

empty rhetoric."

For Shidore, a better policy approach requires an effort to deal with other countries on their own terms instead of trying to fit them into the international trends of the day.

Take the case of Brazil, where left-wing firebrand Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will take over as president next month. Observers expect Lula to break with his predecessor Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy, which focused on forging close ties with Washington, in favor of a return to Brasilia's traditional non-aligned approach.

"Lula holds that Brazil benefits most from an independent foreign policy that does not go out of its way to ingratiate itself with the U.S. or its geopolitical rivals du jour," said Andre Pagliarini, a professor at Hampden-Sydney College. "The idea here is that Brazil does not usually have a stake in the squabbles of larger, wealthier powers and that it makes no sense to choose sides when it can be to Brazil's benefit to keep all channels of trade and communication open."

This shift will provide a crucial test for Washington, which bristled at Lula's efforts to pursue an independent foreign policy during his first stint as Brazil's president.

If the Biden administration seeks to work with Lula, then it could see significant progress toward resolving the political crisis in Venezuela and protecting the Amazon rainforest, a key part of any effort to fight climate change. If Washington chooses to shun the left-wing leader, it will likely struggle to get much of anything done in Latin America, a region in which Brazil has significant economic and political clout.

"[Lula] sees his ability to work productively with Washington, Beijing, Moscow, Caracas, and Havana as a potentially legacy-defining feat," Pagliarini said. "He'll want to be able to say he built bridges instead of casting his lot with one side or another."

America's adversaries will no doubt jump at the chance to work with Brazil on a range of non-zero sum issues. The question for 2023 is whether Washington will do the same.

Sometimes it is vital to be clear who you won't help

Benjamin Friedman & Natalie Armbruster

AT a recent virtual summit, NATO leaders reaffirmed their intent to admit Ukraine to the alliance.

In doing so, they indicated an odd preference to directly defend Ukraine at some point, just not now while it's under attack. As the dominant power in the NATO alliance, this puts the United States in the familiar, but dangerous, position of vaguely and half-heartedly offering to defend a non-ally.

These states, which we call "quasi-allies," in our recent report, are not true allies, in that the United States has no treaty commitment to defend them. But they hover in a kind of geopolitical purgatory, encouraged by Washington to believe that they might be under the U.S. defensive penumbra. Quasi-ally status creates danger, not only for the United States, but also for those states it feints at protecting. Washington should stop creating quasi-allies, with word and deed, and either commit to defending states or, as should be the case most of the time, be clear that we won't.

Quasi-allship is a murky status, created by official rhetoric, such as overzealous Congressmen or specifying presidents talking falsely — calling states "allies," speaking of "enduring bonds," and "ironclad" commitments. Heavy arms sales and talk

of formal commitments exacerbate the trouble. Quasi-ally status generally applies to states — Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Ukraine, Georgia, and Taiwan, and probably Israel, which is arguably so close to an actual ally that it is one — but can also describe relations with sub-state entities like the Mujahideen fighting the Soviet-backed government in 1980s Afghanistan or the Kurds in Syria today.

Quasi-allies create danger for the U.S. due to potential entanglement in wars or controversies where U.S. interests are scant. Alliances intentionally entangle nations in each other's defense. However, while treaty alliances are at least intended to serve U.S. security interests, the U.S. interest in defending quasi-allies is generally dubious, which is typically a reason why the U.S. has no treaty obligation to these states.

Entanglement with quasi-allies occurs by two mechanisms. First, rhetoric from U.S. leaders about quasi-allies can create the idea amongst the U.S. public that the country has a collective obligation to that state or group, as arguably occurred recently with Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Kurds. This can put political pressure on U.S. leaders to get involved and run needlessly risk if the quasi-ally is threatened or attacked.

The second source of entanglement with quasi-allies concerns credibility among U.S. leaders. They often fear that once the United States has made even a murky commitment to defend someone, not defending them will undermine U.S. credibility to actual allies. Even though history suggests this belief is wrong, it persists and threatens to make half-hearted promises that help quasi-allies into real military problems.

U.S.-Gulf relations are one example of such an entanglement. The U.S. relationship with Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia, has contributed to the sprawling and costly basing infrastructure in the region, resistance to negotiations with Tehran, and heightened risk of war with Iran. Entanglement with despotic quasi-allies like Saudi Arabia can be costly and harmful to the United States even if it doesn't lead to war, due to reputational damage by association with aggression and human rights abuses, as with the bombing of civilians in Yemen.

Quasi-allship is arguably even more dangerous for the quasi-ally than the United States. That is because of moral hazard. Moral hazard in international politics occurs when a state runs excessive risk because it expects another

state will bear the cost. In other words, states with vague commitments from the United States take dangerous chances in the expectation that they will avoid the consequences due to U.S. protection.

Moral hazard leads states to misconstrue the real balance of power. That can lead to insufficient self-defense. For example, should Taiwan turn out to be wrong that the United States will assist them if China invades, they will have badly mismanaged self-defense investments. Moral hazard more commonly leads to undue risk-taking. Georgia in 2008 and Saudi Arabia during the Trump administration are arguably both examples of states that took excessive risks in relations with neighbors expecting some greater degree of U.S. support and suffered attacks as a result.

Of course, these are all examples where U.S. military help — beyond the indirect kind — never arrived when an attack came. So why, you might ask, would the next quasi-ally under duress be deluded into thinking the U.S. cavalry would arrive? For one, they might think that the mere threat of U.S. intervention in adversaries' minds will be enough to protect them. Further, leaders under pressure, and buoyed by nationalistic poli-

tics, may tend toward dangerously wishful thinking.

Ukraine is a tragic example. The United States has continually and deliberately encouraged Kyiv's hopes that they will get U.S. protection, causing Ukraine to take a harder line in relations with Russia than it otherwise would have. In 1994, with the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, the United States seemed to commit to protect Ukraine, though the text actually commits signatories only to not violate Ukraine's sovereignty and complain at the United Nations if someone else does. In 2008, at the Bucharest Summit, the United States pushed NATO to say Ukraine and Georgia would eventually join, though neither got Membership Action plans, the standard first step toward membership. Instead, Ukraine got increased U.S. military support, especially after Russia seized Crimea in 2014 and a NATO "Enhanced Opportunities Partner" designation in 2020.

As Russia began its buildup along Ukraine's border in 2021, the Biden Administration repeatedly emphasized its "unwavering" and "ironclad" support, held a series of exercises with Ukraine, and in November signed a vague Charter of Strategic Partnership with Ukraine. NATO leaders, meanwhile, insisted Ukraine's door to

membership remained open.

It is difficult to assess the counterfactual where the United States did not make all this effort to imply its support for Ukraine. Maybe Russia would have invaded anyway. But it seems likely that Ukraine might have made more concessions to Russian demands, most importantly committing to neutrality and fully implementing the Minsk II accords. After being attacked in 2014, Ukrainian politics naturally became more nationalistic and resistant to compromise, and U.S. support gave its leaders false hope of salvation and reason to avoid the politically painful steps that would have been required. Thus, Ukraine's status as a U.S. quasi-ally was not perhaps a direct cause of Russia's invasion. But it was arguably a reason that Ukraine did not do enough to avoid it.

The partial U.S. embrace of quasi-allies has proven quite dangerous. It encourages confusion and excessive risk-taking in the United States, though U.S. geography and power let us opt out of danger at the last minute, as generally occurs. This leaves quasi-allies like Ukraine in the lurch, encouraged to hope for protection that never arrives and thus overly cavalier as dangers mount. Sometimes it is vital to be clear who you won't help.

A ‘decapitation blow’

Irina Alksnis

SERGEI Lavrov commented on the information that Washington is considering a "decapitation blow" against the Kremlin, that is, the physical elimination of the Russian president, among the measures to counter Russia.

The corresponding insider was published at the end of September by Newsweek magazine. Then it was connected with the hysteria promoted by the West itself that Moscow was about to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Moreover, the voluptuousness with which Western officials and the media discussed this topic leaves no doubt that this

was a very desirable development of events for them and, in fact, they tried to provoke the Russian leadership to take the appropriate step. It was at that time that "military sources" in the Pentagon told Newsweek reporters that among the options under discussion for a US "strong response" was the assassination of Vladimir Putin. Yesterday, the Russian Foreign Minister returned to this topic and noted that "if such ideas are actually hatched by someone, this someone should think very carefully about the possible consequences of such plans."

True, there is no certainty that his warning will be

heard across the ocean. The Americans are enjoying the current format of the war with Russia too much and believe that it is not only beneficial for them, but, in fact, makes them invulnerable: the States are convinced that they have picked up the master key to the global security system that has developed after World War II.

The problem of the assassination of the head of state by another state - a geopolitical adversary, has a dual character in world history and politics. On the one hand, according to all written and unwritten rules, this is considered absolutely unacceptable, even when it comes to openly warring

countries. On the other hand, the reality is much more complicated. The clearest example here is Fidel Castro, against whom the States organized dozens of assassination attempts - and this is practically not hidden by them.

Here, of course, one could attack the United States with angry moralizing revelations, but in fact the fact of their attempts on Castro reveals the wrong side of the historically established veto on the assassinations of heads of state. It is not at all a matter of moral considerations or some kind of nobility of the

great powers. Everything is much simpler and more pragmatic, if not cynical: the idea to kill the leader of a rival power can arise from the state (and, as the Newsweek publication showed, it does) when it is impossible to win by other methods. But this usually happens when it comes to opponents close in strength, and in such a case, the act of retaliation is guaranteed to be so painful for the initiator that it immediately discourages resorting to such methods.

This principle reached its apogee with the advent of nuclear weapons. The USA

and the USSR could converge in an extremely tough confrontation, but everyone knew that in the event of, for example, an attempt by the CIA on the General Secretary of the CPSU in Moscow, the red button would be immediately pressed. Therefore, such an option, by definition, was not in the methods that were used during the Cold War.

In the case of Fidel Castro, this principle did not work - Cuba did not have the opportunity to inflict unacceptable damage on the United States in response to the hypothetical assassination of its leader. Therefore, the Americans felt that they had a com-

pletely free hand in this matter, and this was far from being limited to the Cuban leader.

Thanks to nuclear weapons, modern Russia inherited from the USSR both the inviolability of its leaders and the impossibility of using other "unconventional" methods of geopolitical struggle against the country itself. And it is obvious that the further the process of disintegration of the unipolar world and the loss of its hegemony by the United States, the more they are annoyed by the existing restrictions.

However, over the current year, Washington seems to have become con-

vinced that it has found a way around the rules. When people talk about the hybrid nature of the current war of the West against Russia and about Ukraine as its proxy weapon, they usually mean the events in the war zone. But in fact, everything is much more complicated and larger.

In particular, in recent months, Russian infrastructural and military facilities, including in the depths of our territory, have been under terrorist strikes, which clearly follow the Ukrainian trail. A couple of days ago, while repelling a drone attack, three servicemen

(Continued on Page 7)

US abandons traditional aspiration to set economic rules in Asia

THE first step in devising more fruitful approaches to stabilizing the Indo-Pacific must be to reexamine the conventional wisdom, set aside delusions based on obsolete realities, and look at the world as it now is. There is a lengthy list of shibboleths to scrutinize and reconsider.

Reasoning about China by analogy to Germany, Japan, or the USSR in the 19-30s misconstrues the challenges to the existing order that China now presents. The Chinese are focused on domestic tranquility, economic development, and ending the division of their country by civil war. They are not engaged in a search for Lebensraum, a program of imperial annexation of neighbors, or a campaign to impose their authoritarian ideology abroad.

China has benefited greatly from the American-sponsored world order. It is for the most part supportive of it and seeks adjustments to it, not its overthrow. If, indeed, the United States is right that China is the only country capable of reshaping this inherited international order, it is folly for Washington to sever respectful dialogue with Beijing about how to improve the international system to mutual advantage.

The Asia-Pacific region is much easier for self-reliant security architecture than current U.S. policies

presume. These policies foster continued dependence on U.S. capabilities by American security partners in the region, rather than encouraging them to enhance their own. It would serve U.S. interests to initiate an open-ended process of international consultation with allies and friends, as well as China, to define common interests and to map a path to their realization.

President Trump's "America First" policies stimulated allies' concerns about the reliability of U.S. defense commitments everywhere, but especially in Japan and South Korea. This had the salutary effect of forcing them to focus on greater self-reliance. But the Trump presidency also coincided with the breakdown in US-China understandings that now threatens to reignite combat in the long-suspended Chinese civil war. At the same time, decades-long U.S. policies stimulated North Korea to acquire a capability to strike the United States with indigenously developed ICBMs and nuclear warheads. Both developments intensified regional concerns that the United States might not be willing to risk nuclear attacks on its own cities to defend those it has pledged to protect abroad. And now, as the level of belligerence in Sino-American relations rises, U.S. security partners like Japan and the ROK have begun to worry that the U.S.

Chas Freeman

will insist on involving them in wars they would much prefer to sit out.

Asian governments have taken note of Washington's reluctance to challenge Russia directly in Ukraine. This has made Ukraine the battleground in a Russo-American proxy war in which Ukrainians, not Americans are dying. Asians have also noticed that the major burden of Washington's sanctions against Russia has fallen on U.S. allies in Europe and Russia's other trading partners rather than on the United States itself.

Meanwhile, American economic influence in Asia has unmistakably declined. U.S. engagement with Asian institutions is increasingly sporadic. And the U.S. military's qualitative edge over the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has eroded. Yet Washington is ever more insistent that its Asian security partners join it in attempting to isolate and weaken Beijing. From the perspective of the countries in the region, this does not compute. The prospect that the next U.S. administration might return to a grudgingly self-centered approach to relations with allies like that of the Trump presidency just adds to the pressure on American allies and friends to hedge.

When Washington withdrew from the Trans-

Pacific Partnership, Tokyo stepped up to lead it. Japan, which has the world's third largest economy, is also an influential participant in the regionally contrived Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), from which the United States is conspicuously absent. America appears to have abandoned its traditional aspiration to set the economic rules in Asia.

As part of its return to status as a 'normal country,' Japan now plans to double its defense spending and to develop its own strategic power projection capabilities to supplement or, if necessary, replace its previous exclusive reliance on the United States for deterrence. Every step Japan takes for the declared purpose of enhancing its contribution to its alliance with the United States also increases its ability to act independently of that alliance. Japan already has the world's fourth-largest navy and its ninth-largest air force. It has begun to draw on its industrial might to strengthen others in its region, like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, and to cooperate and exercise bilaterally with Australia and India, not just as a member of the "Quad."

The emergence of an independent Japanese-led regional defense network is something the United States has every reason to encourage and support. In

their own interest, the countries of the region must discover ways to band together as they also accommodate the ineluctable reality of China's return to wealth and power. The development of regional defense relationships beyond the U.S. hub-and-spokes 'alliance' system is laying the basis for a more mutually agreeable and balanced U.S. partnership with Japan. This opens the way to an Asian-based security system in which Washington participates without assuming the entire burden of maintaining regional stability.

Japan is far from alone in developing bilateral military cooperation with others in the region. South Korea has become the world's fifth-largest export economy. It has the best educated workforce on the planet and ranks at the top of the world's most innovative societies. The ROK boasts a robust defense industry that produces a wide variety of aircraft, naval vessels, ground vehicles, and other weapons. It has become the world's tenth-largest arms exporter and the largest vendor of naval vessels and aircraft – both rotary and fixed wing – to the Philippines. Just last month, ROK marines conducted their first exercise with their Filipino counterparts. Seoul is helping Jakarta develop fighter aircraft and submarines.



Getting Washington's Taliban policy right may spare US from circumstances that again force America's return

Javid Ahmad & Douglas London

AS we prepare to close out another tumultuous year, the world confronts uncertainty that evokes déjà vu, outrage, and at times an urge to look away. With much attention rightly drawn to Ukraine, it's understandably challenging to remind the world of the danger in the Taliban's campaign to turn Afghanistan into a hermit kingdom, from where its leaders can insulate themselves from external pressure or internal dissent and from which no distance or distraction will provide reprieve.

Despite assurances from two U.S. administrations that the Taliban would have no alternative but to work constructively with the world in a new beginning, the Taliban unsurprisingly has followed a historically consistent religious guidebook. And although decades of American engagement failed to produce a meaningful change in the Taliban, it did contribute to a now untenable version of the "Afghan Dream" for millions of Afghans.

Much of the debate around America's engagement in Afghanistan had been puzzled by a curious paradox: Every time Washington pushed to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, it ironically created the conditions to remain or later return. That irony now informs the current paradox that the country had never seemed safer like today under the Taliban, or likewise more dangerous. And yet, as in the past, Afghanistan's crippling dependence on U.S. cash and involvement for survival still reinforces America's centrality there and across the region. The truth is, as bad as things are now in Afghanistan, it can get worse, and the country's collapse into a rump state or decadency into dystopian existence would not stop at its own borders.

The Taliban's return has transformed the terrorism landscape into a veritable commercial jihadist enterprise, enabling terror groups to which it feels kinship and some degree of obligation from years of collaboration. Once competing jihadist forces are variously negotiating separate accords while others realign to establish tactical partnerships, developments facilitated under the Taliban's protective umbrella.

The Taliban has quietly cemented or adjusted its own arrangements among a troubling jihadist constellation involving Pakistani, Uzbek, Tajik, Uyghur, Arab and Baloch groups. Taliban rulers are reportedly registering foreign fighters and issuing them weapons permits and travel documents. Concurrently, the Islamic State's Afghan chapter, ISIS-K, has emerged as the most kinetically active group rivaling the Taliban, which the ISIS-K depicts as apostates, Western puppets.

Externally, the Taliban has clashed with almost every neighboring country and regularly exploits the threat of militant violence to extract concessions. None of the Taliban's neighbors has been able to offer the Taliban enough to walk away from regional

jihadist groups, despite determined efforts by China, Iran and Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors. Conversely, the Taliban's cooperation largely depends upon the degree to which each regional country supports or opposes anti-Taliban groups.

Domestically, the Taliban has extended their minoritarian tyranny and engaged in a class conflict to consolidate power, acquire resources, and remove competition. This power consolidation is done through a combination of vice and virtue politics, punishments and retributions, political alienation, and selective patronage. Sharia courts proliferate the country and civilian bureaucracy has become largely militarized and operated by Taliban fighters. Scores of Afghans, especially women, continue to bear the brunt of the Taliban's brutality, forced marriages, segregation, hunger and unemployment.

Taliban rulers have knitted together a strictly conservative Sunni Hanafi state in which they have wedded clerical and executive powers. The Taliban's clerics have validated themselves as the vanguard for pure Islamic leadership, each burnishing their originalist credentials and proclaiming how their religious legitimacy grants them political legitimacy. What's more, Taliban leaders see no need for a national dialogue to establish an acceptable government even if they end up leading it.

To avoid their previous fate, the Taliban has carefully distributed power and authority covering domestic policy, business partnerships, and foreign relations among a tight circle close to Emir Haibatullah Akhundzada and secondarily to the powerful acting interior and defense ministers, internationally wanted terrorist Sirajuddin Haqqani and Taliban founder's son, the young Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, respectively. But as a supreme cleric, the emir has the final word on all things. He acts in a manner far less concerned than Haqqani or Yaqoob about outward appearances that might play better in attracting international support and cooperation, or internal compromise to cross political divides. Inside the Taliban, the new rulers primarily use patronage to ensure cohesion, including through appointments, shares in revenue collection, and land distribution.

While hardly progressives or friends of America, Haqqani's international criminal syndicate and illicit business interests and Yaqoob's national political ambition account for their greater openness to global outreach than the insular Akhundzada, who believes that doing so risks Afghanistan's independence and freedom from external pressure. Among such posturing, Yaqoob welcomed the American media to his Kandahar compound in August 2022 following Haqqani's televised, and carefully scripted, May 2022 interview with CNN.

No Afghan group has emerged to credibly challenge the Taliban, nor does any command the Taliban-

like, longer-term tactical or religious staying power. Washington shows little appetite to muddy the already toxic waters by supporting any of the fledgling and politically problematic resistance organizations. Internally, this hopelessness has forced many ordinary Afghans into becoming accidental or part-time Taliban. And America's desire to move on leaves in question its obligation to the thousands of Afghans it worked with, either trapped and left behind, or in legal limbo in the U.S. and elsewhere.

While no Taliban action thus far is redeemable, their staying power requires Washington to diversify its approach and engage the clerical leadership, potentially by developing new sources of pressure and leverage. There is evidence of low-visibility engagement. In October, the State Department acknowledged "an interagency" American delegation, code for a group that likely included U.S. intelligence community elements, which met with Taliban administrators in Qatar.

In December, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) released a communique regarding a meeting in Abu Dhabi between Yaqoob and the U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan, Thomas West. It is likely that individual U.S. agencies are concurrently pursuing their own direct contacts, some publicly showcased in Qatar and some, perhaps, more discreetly occurring in alternative venues such as the UAE. But Haqqani and Yaqoob are not operating without the emir's full blessing, though what they share with outsiders might not accurately convey their superior's true views or agenda.

Such contact, albeit none directly with rulers in Kandahar, ideally aims to find a common language to understand the ruling clerics' ideological priorities and explore areas for accommodation and compromise. As it develops, the engagement might benefit from deploying a special U.S. liaison team to staff a small American diplomatic support facility in Kabul.

In the end, there is no zero-risk approach to dealing with the Taliban, which contains all the ingredients for its own destruction — one that might put neighbors at risk and force U.S. involvement. But dialogue with the ruling clerics could help Washington integrate necessary regional collaborators and enforcers whose common interest is mitigating the Taliban's inclination to facilitate destabilizing extremist factions residing within its borders. That would be a useful start in helping the clerics in Kandahar interpret their own religious priorities within which they might be nudged toward acceptable engagement, requiring them to ease social restrictions and start an inclusive national dialogue.

Getting Washington's Taliban policy right could spare the U.S. from circumstances that again force America's return. That starts with passing the Afghan Adjustment Act and working to influence developments in Afghanistan, rather than reacting to them.

How should US react?

ON the eve of Catholic Christmas - "Silent Night, Holy Night..." - the RAND Corporation (a think tank serving the US military) released a report on the US escalation strategy in the confrontation with Russia.

Interestingly, despite the loud cooing of Western political "doves" calling for negotiations with Russia on the Ukrainian case, the US military is preparing not to freeze the conflict in Europe, but to aggravate it. Even more interesting is how they plan to manage this escalation.

Washington's main task in the current crisis, as RAND analysts formulate it, is to "punish" and "contain" Russia. However, this must be done in such a way that Russia does not have a reason to use its nuclear weapons and the situation does not slide into a full-scale war between Russia and NATO.

The RAND report ritually places our country in charge of the next round of the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine. This is such a classic propaganda approach that legitimizes all American provocations in advance. Everything is exactly the same as with the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant: it was bombed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, while the Americans, meanwhile, threw endless accusations against Russia into the world information field.

One of the tasks of such "analytics" is to drive into the minds of readers that Russia will begin the escalation. In this narrative, whatever the Americans do in response will only be "defending" themselves and their NATO allies.

American experts do not consider the option that Russia will strike at the territory of the United States, in their opinion, the scenarios will be completely different. Here it is impossible not to agree with them. The option of using weapons of mass destruction by Moscow - nuclear, biological or chemical - was also taken out of the scope of the study.

The authors of the report discuss an exceptionally limited non-nuclear strike by Russian troops on the territory of European countries - NATO members or on US and NATO military facilities, including those in space. The escalation scenario

involves three acts. The first step is a hypothetical Russian attack on a US NATO ally. The second is the reaction of Washington. And the third is Moscow's reaction to this reaction.

The key for the Americans is, of course, the second step. On the one hand, Washington must demonstrate to its allies that Article 5 of the NATO Charter works and that Uncle Sam will always protect his European vassals. On the other hand, the second step should be taken in such a way as not to provoke Russia into further escalation.

"The goal of US war policy so far has been to avoid a war between NATO and Russia," the authors of the report recall. "A limited Russian attack on NATO does not negate this goal."

Four combat scenarios are considered. The first begins with Russia launching a missile attack on a warehouse or an empty airfield, say, in Poland, while publicly demanding that Washington stop supplying weapons to Ukraine. How should the US react?

A NATO ally, naturally, will demand kinetic action - in American Newspeak, this means missile and bomb strikes and military operations in general. However, a more than proportional kinetic strike against Russian territory will almost inevitably lead to a further escalation of the conflict. Equally risky are destructive cyberattacks against infrastructure. New economic sanctions are fraught with problems not only for Russia, but also for other states.

In this option, RAND analysts consider the possibility of a US response only with the help of diplomatic pressure and economic measures. However, the dissatisfaction of the injured country, a NATO member, and a possible split among the allies are inevitable here. A symmetrical limited missile attack on Russian territory is also being considered as one of the "less escalating" measures.

The second option is a targeted attack, such as the destruction of an American satellite in space. A US attack on the platforms from which the attack on satellites was carried out could lead to human casualties. In addition, an open attack on targets in Russia carries a high risk of further escalation.

Victoria Nikiforova

However, the matter is simplified by the fact that there is no need to use the fifth article of the NATO charter and argue with the allies. In this option, the freedom of action of the United States is much greater than in the first. RAND analysts believe that here it will be possible to limit ourselves to a wide range of non-kinetic (that is, non-military) attacks on Russia - propaganda condemnation, diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions.

The third option is a targeted attack. It is assumed here that Russia is launching missile strikes on three air bases in Poland and Romania, from which arms supplies to Ukraine are carried out. Soldiers and civilians are dying.

Here, non-kinetic measures (that is, diplomacy and sanctions) will only help. The main emphasis is on kinetic actions - that is, missile strikes on the territory of Russia. A less proportional kinetic strike should be accompanied by intensive non-kinetic actions, in particular, the establishment of a diplomatic dialogue on the topic of Ukraine. The United States should explain to Moscow that the conflict in Ukraine is one thing, and the confrontation with NATO is a completely different topic.

The option of a "more proportional", that is, a superior kinetic strike against the territory of Russia, is also being considered. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that Moscow does not get the impression that these strikes are a prelude to a full-scale war with the United States and NATO: "To this end, the United States should avoid targeting command and control centers, bomber bases or early warning radars."

The fourth scenario describes a massive (or "less restrained") Russian attack on US military bases in Europe, including the Ramstein base and the port in Rotterdam. In total, about two hundred victims, both military and civilian.

Here, the American leadership will have to solve a difficult task - by its actions it must make Moscow believe that it faces a choice of two defeats. In the event of further escalation, it will face defeat in the war against NATO. If it "misses

a blow" by failing to stop the supply of Western weapons, it will lose in Ukraine.

In response, RAND analysts propose to strike at the new Russian territories under the pretext that Washington considers them Ukrainian. An insufficiently powerful strike will be perceived by the allies as evidence of US weakness and unwillingness to protect NATO members. And at the same time, when striking, we must also ensure that Moscow does not perceive everything that is happening as a war with NATO, because this is allegedly not included in the plans of American strategists.

In addition, this strategy is complicated by the fact that Russia has nuclear weapons: "The possibility of using (Moscow) nuclear weapons <...> will play a decisive role in responding to any escalation of Russia."

The management of military escalation in the United States is a whole science, it is served by experts, analysts, institutions. It is interesting to see how our strategic adversary thinks. So, playing chess, we say to the opponent - if you are here, then I am here, if so, then like this.

Another thing is that the scale of disinformation and propaganda in such texts is also impressive. First, it is obvious to the most naive people that the war with NATO is not just approaching, it is, in fact, already in full swing. The supply of weapons, the training of the Ukrainian military, thousands of mercenaries, fantastic cash tranches, anti-Russian hate - everything that can be used in a hybrid war has already been used by our opponents. Their idea of inflicting missile strikes on Russian territory and its servicemen and at the same time saying that we are supposedly "not at war" looks only as a means of putting pressure on Moscow.

Secondly, Russia is portrayed here with all its might as a warmonger, although our country does not need an escalation of the conflict. It is urgently needed by the "hawks" of the US Democratic Party, who have adapted to cut a lot of money from the treasury on this conflict. The conflict will come to naught - and investigations will begin there, and quite specific people will face "terms,

A 'decapitation blow'

with what is happening. That is, even if it is proved that the perpetrators are active servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and carried out the direct order of the command, formally the West is not involved in the attack and is not responsible for what happened. This means that retribution should fall only on Kiev, and the Atlanticists will be the happier, the larger and tougher it is - and at least raze and glaze all of Ukraine to the ground.

Hence the seemingly absurd American bravado - through the media to threaten to kill the head of a nuclear power. It simply implies that the States will act through proxy, from which it will be necessary to ask. Hence the amazing frankness of anonymous officials and the military with journalists, when the Anglo-Saxons not only do not hide, but actually flaunt their role as a puppeteer in relation to Ukraine. They are terribly proud that they have created such an effective

puppet. They sincerely believe that Russia will not start a global nuclear apocalypse because of the Ukrainians, no matter what they do, and it is pointless to hit Ukraine itself in such situations, since the true interests and organizers remain invulnerable.

It is natural that in this picture of the world, Ukraine appears to Washington as the absolute weapon that will allow the United States not only to defeat Russia, but also to achieve its main goal - the

"end of history" and the preservation of its own global hegemony forever and ever.

However, as they say, it was smooth on paper. Self-admiration blinds the eyes of the United States and does not allow a sober assessment of reality. And it lies in the fact that absolute weapons do not exist. There is not and cannot be anything final and unchanging in the world, and for any cunning plan there is always a more effective one.

(Continued from Page 6)

were killed at the airfield in Engels. However, not just military aircraft are based there. This is the airfield of our strategic aviation, which, in turn, is part of the Russian nuclear triad, that is, in fact, there was an attack on the infrastructure of nuclear deterrence.

Such an act by any nuclear power would be an unconditional casus belli with corresponding consequences. But here the US seems to have nothing to do

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Pakistan Stock Exchange' 100-index loses 523 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 523.48 points, a negative change of 1.32 percent, closing at 39,279.43 against 39,802.91 points on the previous day.

A total of 258,454,294 shares were traded during the day as compared to 153,741,052 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 8.508 billion against Rs 5.537 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 352 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 74 of them recorded gains and 260 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 18 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Bank Al-

Falah with 57,893,713 shares at Rs 29.60 per share, Worldcall Telecom with 22,075,499 shares at Rs 1.20 per share and K-Electric with 17,792,500 shares at Rs 2.42 per share.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 103.19 per share price, closing at Rs1992.86, whereas the runner-up was Bhanero Tex with a Rs 37.36 rise in its per share price to Rs1037.50.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 162.75 per share closing at Rs 5415.00, followed by Rafhan Maize with a Rs 122.52 decline to close at Rs 7902.00.

Rupee sheds 22 paisa against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 22 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and

closed at Rs 226.37 against the previous day's closing of Rs 226.15.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 233.2 and Rs 235.5 respectively.

The price of the euro was decreased by 22 paisa and closed at Rs 240.65 against the previous day's closing of Rs 240.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs1.68, whereas an increase of 58 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 272.21 as compared to its last closing of Rs 272.79.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 06 paisa

each to close at Rs 61.63 and Rs 60.22 respectively. Gold price up by Rs 100 to Rs182,800 per tola

The price of 24 karats per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs100 on Wednesday, reaching an all-time high of Rs182,800 against its sale at Rs182,700 the previous day.

The rates of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 85 to Rs 156,721 from Rs156,636 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 143,661 from Rs143,583, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2050 and Rs 1757.54 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$07 to \$1803 against its sale at \$1810, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Science Foundation Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig, Advisor (Academics and NAHE) HEC Raza Chohan and Rector CUI Prof. Dr. T. Afzal cutting a ribbon to inaugurate COMSATS Projects and Careers Expo.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, MSC Sasha, Maersk Atlanta, Rigel and Sea Power carrying Containers, Palm oil and Wheat, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Grain & Fertilizer Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile a containers ship 'Lisa' carrying 'Containers' also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of 09 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Maersk Atlanta and Ullswater left the Port on Wednesday morning while five more ships, Ondo, Amali, Calypso Gas, MSC Sasha and Lisa are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A Cargo volume of 140,548 tonnes, comprising 101,404 tonnes imports cargo and 39,144 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 5,393 Containers (3,304 TEUs Imports and 2,089 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

COMSATS Projects and Careers Expo inaugurated

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Over 150 Companies participated in the COMSATS' Projects and Career Expo organized by the Career Development Center, COMSATS University Islamabad, today in the Islamabad Campus. Prof. Dr. Muhammad T. Afzal, Rector, COMSATS University Islamabad along with Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation and Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Advisor (Academics and NAHE), Higher Education Commission inaugurated the Projects and Careers Expo.

While talking to media, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tabasum Afzal, Rector, COMSATS University said that COMSATS' students receive extensive training in a variety of industry relevant skill sets and are exposed to industry problems as part of their final year research projects to

help them succeed in their careers.

Internships and apprenticeships during their degrees enables students to critically analyze situations in the industry and should be made an integral part of the curriculum. COMSATS University Islamabad has created opportunities for internships in different sectors to help its students find the right career path for themselves.

Companies participating in the expo belonged to the sectors of Architecture and Design, Banking, Development NGOs, IT/Software firms, Construction, Health Care, Hospitality, Manufacturing, Advertising and Media, Oil and Gas, Technology, Telecom and Textile.

Through this biannual event, final year students interact with industry experts from various sectors. Students from faculties of Science, Architecture, Engineering, Inform-

ation Science and Technology as well as Business Administration presented the results of their final year research projects. Each year several companies and aspiring startups participate in this expo to recruit promising young talents for their ranks.

CUI takes pride in the fact that each year hundreds of students are offered job on campus right before their graduation.

Prof. Afzal along with Dr. Baig and Engr. Chohan along with senior faculty members visited several stalls and took keen interest in the students' research projects displayed in the Expo. The Guests interacted with students, faculty members as well as the participating companies.

Representatives from local companies expressed optimism and confidence in the prospective students and said that such events must be organized frequently in all universities.

Ban of Punjab launches e-Business Qarza Scheme



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) held the launch Ceremony of BOP e-Business Qarza for SMEs today at BOP's Head Office, in Lahore. BOP e-Business Qarza is an End to End (E2E) Digital Lending Program for Existing BOP customers. Via this digital product, BOP aims to offer

a Revolving Collateral Free credit facility up to Rs. 3,500,000/- to its customers. This program is based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and decision is made on the basis of a Digital Scorecard. This program is in line with the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) vision to use relevant cash flow estimation techniques and other proxies to

assess repayment capacity of SME Borrowers. This unique proposition is an addition to our SME Products Suite, which has not only set new industry standards but is also expected to help our small enterprises to meet their immediate financial needs without any hassle.

Mr. Zafar Masud, President & CEO of BOP

emphasized that the banking industry should come forward with products focusing on ease of finance for SMEs who usually suffer a lot on this front. He added that such initiatives would help lead towards socio economic uplift of SMEs particularly our small enterprises. He also said that BOP has recently won the PBA's prestigious award for "The Best Bank for Small and Medium Businesses" which is a result of our bank's overall SME strategy and effort towards Financial Inclusion by way of efficient utilization of modern day tools. He appreciated the team for their efforts and making BOP a lead bank in offering such Digital Program. He also added that BOP fully committed and shall actively contribute towards achievement of the desired results.

Other senior members of management were also present on the occasion and extended their heartiest congratulations to the Team on achieving this important milestone.

ICI Pakistan changes its name to 'Lucky Core Industries Limited'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: We are pleased to announce that the name of ICI Pakistan Limited has changed to 'Lucky Core Industries Limited' as disclosed to the Pakistan Stock Exchange on December 23, 2022. Drawing on its core strengths, the Company's new name embodies its central role in Delivering Enduring Value through a diverse portfolio of essential products that are at the 'core' of almost every industry and a part of every home in Pakistan.

Transitioning to its new identity, 'Lucky Core

Industries', further aligns the organisation with its holding company, Lucky Cement Limited - a part of the YBG - a progressive and diversified Pakistani conglomerate.

With a legacy spanning over seven decades, the origins of the Company predate the formation of Pakistan itself, evolving from a small trading concern with a single manufacturing unit to its current standing as one of the more recognised industrial conglomerates in the country. Transforming over the decades under the ownership of ICI PLC UK and AkzoNobel, the Company

was acquired by the Yunus Brothers Group (YBG) in 2012, which has further elevated its status as a leading national company, working to create shared value for stakeholders and improving lives to build a stronger Pakistan.

The Company continues to have an iconic presence in Pakistan's industrial landscape, with diverse businesses, namely Soda Ash, Polyester, Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Agri Sciences, and Animal Health, that are aligned to enrich the country's economic and social fabric. The new identity signifies the Company's continued commitment to enriching the lives of countless stakeholders and the communities where it operates.

"As Lucky Core Industries Limited, we continue to maintain our commitment to our customers and partners as our highest priority, with core values of Customer Centricity, Integrity and Responsibility, and Delivering Enduring Value at the forefront of its operations," said Chief Executive Lucky Core Industries Limited, Asif Jooma.

Zhao Shiren presents Pak-China Friendship Award-2022 to PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Chinese Consul General in Lahore Mr. Zhao Shiren on Wednesday presented Pakistan-China Friendship Award-2022 to Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PCJCCI).

PCJCCI Secretary Salahuddin Hanif received the award here at a ceremony held in this connection.

On this occasion, Mr. Zhao Shiren appreciated the working of PCJCCI related to regional connectivity and bilateral-trade and declared it as one of the best chambers working in Pakistan.

He also praised various initiatives of the PCJCCI which included Pak China Knowledge Portal, China-Way magazine, Chinese language courses and Pak-China Technology Gateway.

Mr Zhao Shiren said, "Pakistan is the owner of all CPEC projects and we are here to facilitate them in all aspects. The trade, investment, business between two nations could be much better if we work with unity and harmony. So here, I will raise my motto; Let's work together; let's grow together".

Salahuddin Hanif thanked the Consul General for honoring PCJCCI with such prestigious award and said that Pakistan China Joint Chamber was resolute to serve as a model chamber and a vibrant platform for promoting mutual investment and friendship between Pak-China.

"Our objective is to adopt an innovative strategy to promote trade and development not only between Pakistan and China, but also over the entire region in order to ensure future stability, security and prosperity for all of us."

Bestway Foundation setup Scholarship Endowment Fund with NAMAL

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a simple ceremony held at Islamabad, Bestway Foundation and NAMAL University signed an agreement to establish Bestway Scholarship Endowment Fund of PKR 60 million for the benefit of financially challenged students enrolled at the University's undergraduate programs.

The scholarships will be given to twenty Student Beneficiaries, primarily covering their fee expenses every year.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Irfan Sheikh, Trustee Bestway Foundation and Managing Director, Bestway Cement Limited said, "Higher education is essential for building a stronger Pakistan, whereas many talented and well deserving youth is unable to continue their education due to lack of sufficient financial resources.

Bestway Foundation, in keeping with its resolve to support deserving students, decided to set up an endowment fund with NAMAL to provide financial assistance to the students applying in undergraduate degree program in either of the disciplines of Computer Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and BBA. The Foundation has already established



similar endowment funds with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)". Bestway Foundation; established in 1987 in the UK and later in 1997 in Pakistan; is the philanthropic arm of Bestway Group UK.

To date Bestway has contributed more than US\$ 47 million to fund the charitable activities of national and international societies and support projects of communal uplift in the countries in which it operates.

It is certified from the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy and ranks

amongst the Top 10 companies of Pakistan by volume of donations.

Bestway Foundation plays an active part in the socio-economic development of local communities such as provision of quality education to deserving, improving access to health services, taking part in urban development, environmental conservation programs and helping generate employment.

Since its establishment, the Foundation has provided scholarships to over 500 students to pursue higher studies home and abroad primarily in the UK, USA and Canada. Bestway is also offering 12 fully funded scholarships every year

for deserving and talented Pakistani students in the Oxford University, University of Bradford and University of Kent in the UK.

In addition to being a significant donor to various educational and health institutions in Pakistan, the Foundation also provides financial assistance to a large number of widows and indigents in the local communities in which it operates, in the form of monthly stipends.

Bestway Foundation also provides free medical facilities to more than 35,000 patients in its local communities annually through the medical units located at all of Bestway Cement's factories.



LAHORE: Labourers unloading potatoes sacks from vehicles at vegetable market.

SCCI appreciates govt for easing restrictions on import of raw material

SIALKOT (APP): President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik on Wednesday appreciated the government for easing restrictions on the import of raw material and input goods.

On December 27, 2022, the State Bank of Pakistan

(SBP), vide EPD Circular Letter No 20 of 2022 2022, allowed the imports of raw materials and input goods essential for the export-oriented industries with effect from January 2, 2023, onwards.

The president SCCI termed it the right decision to create an enabling and business-friendly environ-

ment for the export industry, adding that under the dynamic leadership and progressive approach of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government was committed to put the country on the path to economic growth and prosperity.

He expressed his heartiest gratitude to Federal Minister for Finance

Senator Ishaq Dar and Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad for honoring their commitments to protect the industry at all cost.

Malik also thanked Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif for his active role in highlighting the issues of the industry of Sialkot.



In brief

India considering bid for 2036 Games

NEW DELHI (Reuters): India is "seriously" considering a bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games, sports minister Anurag Thakur said. The world's second-most populous nation has previously hosted the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games, and Thakur told the Times of India newspaper it was the "right time" to host the Olympics. "If India is making news in every sector, from manufacturing to services, then why not in the field of sports?" India is looking very seriously at bidding for the 2036 Olympics," Thakur added.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has said it was in preliminary discussions with 10 cities but has not revealed a timeframe for when it plans to award the 2036 edition. Paris, Los Angeles and Brisbane host the next three Games. Among potential rivals for the Games are Indonesia and South Korea, as well as Qatar, which hosted this year's FIFA World Cup. Germany is considering whether to launch another Olympic bid despite strong domestic opposition. Thakur said his government would consult the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and prepare a roadmap ahead of the IOC session in Mumbai next year. "The IOC session is a prestigious event for India and whatever steps have to be taken to bid along with the IOA, the government will support them. It has to be a joint preparation." New Delhi hosted the Asian Games in 1951 and 1982 and the Commonwealth Games in 2010. Thakur suggested Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat would be presented as a potential Olympic venue. "Gujarat has several times expressed interest in hosting the Olympics," he said.

Chelsea win boosts top-four hopes

LONDON (Agencies): Chelsea boosted their top-four hopes as they resumed their Premier League season with a comfortable victory over Bournemouth at Stamford Bridge. Having failed to score in three consecutive matches prior to the break for the World Cup it took Chelsea less than 16 minutes to get up and running with Kai Havertz sliding in an effort at the back post from Raheem Sterling's low cross. With the hosts dominant, Mason Mount celebrated his 150th appearance for Chelsea in style, curling a superb effort into the bottom right corner of the Bournemouth net from the edge of the penalty area. It drew a nod of satisfaction from manager Graham Potter, who will have been delighted by the slick performance his side delivered, particularly during the first half. Christian Pulisic saw an effort ruled out after Havertz was judged to have fouled Adam Smith, while the German also spurned a second-half opportunity to extend Chelsea's lead. The result sees Chelsea move up to eighth in the table, six points adrift of fourth-placed Tottenham with Bournemouth remaining in 14th. The only negative in Potter's and Chelsea's evening came with the earlier-than-planned withdrawal of Reece James, seven minutes into the second period, on his return from the knee injury that ruled him out of the England squad for Qatar. The 23-year-old lay on the turf with his hands on his head before receiving treatment and eventually walking off unaided.

Latham and Williamson hit centuries but first Test evenly poised

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Tom Latham stroked his 13th century and Kane Williamson registered his 25th hundred as New Zealand comfortably edged past Pakistan's first-innings score on the third day of the first Test at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Wednesday.

Resuming at the overnight score of 165 for no loss in reply to Pakistan's 438, New Zealand ended the day at 440 for six. The visitors, playing their first Test here in 32 years, lead Pakistan by two runs with four wickets intact.

Latham had started this morning at 78 and became one of the three Abrar Ahmed's victims after scoring 113, while Williamson was still at the crease on 105 – his first international century in 23 months and fifth against Pakistan in 14 Test appearances. With the former captain was Ish Sodhi on one not out.

Devon Conway, who began this morning with Latham at 82, missed his fourth century by eight runs

after television replays confirmed Noman Ali's delivery would have hit the stumps after the umpire had turned down a confident LBW appeal. Conway's 92 came off 176 balls and included 14 fours.

Conway and Latham put on 183 runs for the first wicket, which was New Zealand's new first wicket partnership record against Pakistan. Latham struck 10 fours in his 191-ball innings. It was his third century against Pakistan in his 12th Test, second of the year in nine Tests and first since he scored 252 against Bangladesh in Christchurch in January.

Williamson punished Pakistan for twice letting him off when on 15 and 21 with signature strokes to all parts of the field. His 105 has come from 222 balls and includes 11 fours. Williamson's half-century came off 100 balls, while his second 50 runs came from 106 balls.

Williamson added 48 runs for the second wicket with Latham, 41 runs for the third wicket with Henry Nicholls (22), 65 runs for

the fourth wicket with Daryl Mitchell (42) and 90 runs for the fifth wicket with Tom Blundell (47).

New Zealand were strongly placed at 427 for four before Pakistan picked up two late wickets to share third day's spoils. Mohammad Wasim trapped Blundell in front of the wickets, while Michael Bracewell (5) was forced into a false shot by Abrar, who had earlier claimed the scalp of Mitchell. Abrar finished the day with figures of three for 143, while Noman Ali ended the day with two for 137.

Scores in brief

Pakistan (1st innings) 438, 130.5 overs (Babar Agha 103, Sarfaraz Ahmed 86, Imam-ul-Haq 24, Saud Shakeel 22; Tim Southee 3-69, Michael Bracewell 2-72, Ish Sodhi 2-87, Ajaz Patel 2-112)

New Zealand (1st innings) (overnight 165-0) 440-6, 136 overs (Tom Latham 113, Kane Williamson 105 not out, Devon Conway 92; Abrar Ahmed 2-143, Noman Ali 2-137).



ISLAMABAD: Players in action during PSF National Championship – 2022 at Mushaf Squash Complex.— NNI Photo

Bangladesh coach Domingo quits after India Test whitewash

DHAKA (Agencies): Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo has quit just days after the side's disappointing Test series defeat at home to India with a year left on his contract, authorities announced Wednesday.

Domingo, 48, had already been partially sidelined earlier this year when he was stripped of his role overseeing the T20 side right before the Asia Cup.

The South African's departure will leave Bangladesh scrambling to find a replacement before they host England in February. "We received his resignation letter last night. We will now start working to appoint a new head coach before our next series," Bangladesh Cricket Board operations chief Jalal Yunus told AFP. Jalal said all other coaching staff members, including pace bowling coach and fellow South African Allan Donald, will remain in their roles despite Domingo's resignation.

Bangladesh won its ODI series against India 2-1 but lost both Tests.

Aqeel, Shoaib pull off wins in Serena Hotels Tennis Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top-ranked players Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoaib continued their winning streak in the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Wednesday.

Top seed Aqeel defeated Sami Zeb Khan 6-4, 6-0 in straight sets in a second round match of men's singles, while second seed Shoaib toppled Saqib Hayat 6-1, 6-2.

There were several thrilling matches played on Wednesday. The results are as under:- Men's Singles 2nd Round: Yousaf Khalil bt Israr Gul 6-3, 6-3; Barkatullah bt Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-4; Heera Ashiq bt Faizan Fayyaz 6-1, 6-2; Muhammad Shoaib bt Saqib Hayat 6-1, 6-2; M. Abid bt M. Talha Khan 6-3, 6-2; Muzammil Murtaza bt Ahmed Nael Qureshi 7-

6(5), 7-6(3); Mudassir Murtaza bt Shahzad Khan 4-6, 6-0, 6-0; Aqeel Khan bt Sami Zeb Khan 6-4, 6-0 Ladies Singles 1st Round: Amna Ali Qayum bt Soha Ali 6-3, 6-1; Boys 18 & Under 1st Round: Asad Zaman bt Saifullah Khan 6-3, 6-2; Sami Zeb Khan bt Inam Qadir 6-1, 4-0 rtd; Hamza Roman bt Ali Zain 6-4, 6-4; Bilal Asim bt Mustansir Ali Khan 6-0, 6-0; M.

Hamza Asim bt Hasan Ali 6-1, 6-2; Boys 14 & Under 2nd Round: M. Haziq Asim bt Abdur Rehman 4-1, 4-2; Abubakar Talha bt Hassan Usmani 4-0, 4-1; Sameer Zaman bt Abdul Razak 4-1, 4-2; Hamza Husain bt Sohan Noor 4-2, 4-1; Amir Mazari bt Saqib Ali 4-1, 4-2; Abdul Basit bt Taimur Ansari 2-4, 4-2, 5-4(6); Nabeel Ali Qayum bt Zayed Zaman 4-0, 4-1; Ali Zain bt Abdullah Khan 4-0, 4-5(7).



KARACHI: Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell added 65 off 87 balls for the fourth wicket, Pakistan vs New Zealand, 1st Test, 3rd day.

Zalmi's requested PCB to hold matches at Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director Peshawar Zalmi Muhammad Ikram requested Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board to take step for holding International matches in Peshawar.

This he requested while talking to media personnel along with Director General Sports Khalid during his visit to Peshawar. He added that PCB must play first class cricket in next season and International matches as well at Peshawar.

He also visited Arbab Niaz and Hayatabad cricket stadiums while added that these facilities will improve emerging talent in Khyber Pakhunkhwa.

Anas, Mehwish claim U19 titles of PSF National Squash C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anas Ali Shah of Punjab defeated Pakistan Air Force's Abdullah Nawaz 3-1 in a 31-minute final encounter to seal boys U-19 category title of PSF National Squash Championship 2022 at Mushaf Squash Complex Islamabad on Wednesday.

Anas made a strong start to take the first game 11-4, but lost the control to concede second game 4-11. However, he stormed back to win the next two games 11-4, 11-8.

In girls U-19 final, Mehwish Ali of Sindh outwitted Pakistan Army's Amna Malik 3-0 to claim the title. Mehwish won the match in 15 minutes by a game score of 11-6, 11-3, 11-2.

Finals of other categories of the championship were also held on Wednesday. Squash Legend Jansher Khan, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony, distributed trophies and prizes among the players. A large number of players, officials and squash enthusiasts also attended the ceremony.

Results:- Boys U-11 Category: Faizan Ali from Pak Army bt Malik Muhammad from KP with a game score of 11-6, 11-8, 11-5 in 16 Minutes.

Boys U-13 Category: Huzaifa Shahid from Sindh bt Shahzeb from PAF with a game score of 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7 in 25 Minutes.

26th CN Open Golf C'ship kicked off at Karachi Golf Club

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Opening Ceremony and Media Brief of 26th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship held today at picturesque Karachi Golf Club (KGC). Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Mian Zakirullah Jan graced the occasion as Chief Guest and inaugurated the championship.

During the media brief, the Patron Pakistan Navy Golf (South), Cdre Muhammad Irfan Taj apprised on salient of championship scheduled from 29 Dec 22 to 01 Jan 23 and its conduct in various categories.

The Golf Championship will be played in professionals, amateurs, veterans, ladies and junior categories. For Professional and amateurs categories, the tournament will be contested for 72 holes matches.

36 holes by senior professionals and 18 holes matches for juniors and ladies whereas, 9 holes matches will be contested among veterans.

In 1995, Pakistan Navy instituted Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship at Karachi Golf Club (KGC), to add a national level Golf event in the calendar of Pakistan Golf Federation.

Ever since, it has become a regular and major event of national golf circuit. Such events provide a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to the world as a peace and sports loving nation.

This also helps in generating healthy activities in the society. The regular conduct of this event is the manifestation of PN's commitment towards the promotion of golf at national and international level.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by civil & military dignitaries, sponsors, golf players and media representatives.



KARACHI: Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Mian Zakirullah Jan tees off the 26th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship at Karachi Golf Club.

18th Intl. Cholistan Rally will open from Feb 6

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The 18th International Cholistan Desert Rally, a most famous car racing event, will be kicked off from February 6 to 12, 2023 in the beautiful desert of Cholistan.

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Zahid Parvez Waraich in DC office committee room to review the arrangements in this regard.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Naeem Sadiq Cheema, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Aitzaz Anjum, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Farooq Qamar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sumaira Rabbani, and Assistant Commissioners of concerned tehsils attended the video-link meeting.

Deputy Commissioner said that foolproof security arrangements should be ensured and better arrangements should be made for traffic management.

He said that Rescue 1122 camps should be established by the Health Department and improved arrangements should be made for sanitation.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General and Focal Person International Cholistan Desert Rally

Naeem Sadiq Cheema explained that Bikaneri Food Street will be established in Bahawalpur city and another food street will be established at Derawar Fort on the occasion of the rally.

Handicraft Bazaar and other stalls would be set up by Islamia University Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and Bahawalpur Arts Council.

He said that various sports activities will be organized to make the desert rally attractive, including cricket, hockey, volleyball, Kabaddi, Taekwondo, paragliding, auto show, goat show, camel ride, and other sports.

It was informed that a musical night, Qawwali night, and folk music will be presented for the participants on the occasion of the International Desert Rally.

It was further informed that for the successful organization of the rally, several committees including the Management Committee, Event Committee, Vehicle Recovery Committee, Parking Management Committee, Time Registration Committee, Vehicle Management Committee, and Medical Emergency Committee have been established.

Pakistan vs New Zealand PCB announces free entry for Karachiites during 2nd Test

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Wednesday free entry for Karachiites, in all stands except for two VIP enclosures, during the second Test between Pakistan and New Zealand.

The tickets will be available on a first-come-first-served basis, PCB Chairman Najam Sethi told the private channel. It is pertinent to mention that the Javed Miandad and Hanif Mohammad enclosures hold VIP status and their tickets are worth Rs500 per day.

Separately, PCB has also started approaching universities, schools, and other educational institutions to bring students to the stadium. The board added that it will reach out to old age homes and orphanages as well.

The second Test between the hosts and the Kiwis will be played from January 2 to January 6 at the Karachi National Stadium. Today's development comes as PCB struggles to attract people to the stadium and stands remained empty during the first Test match between the two teams. Last week, the board shifted the second Test of the series, which was initially scheduled in Multan, to Karachi due to deteriorating weather conditions in Multan — which have disrupted flight operations and may also potentially result in the loss of playing hours.



HARIPUR: Winners of the Mr Junior Hazara Division Competition posing for the photographers with Chief Guest Regional Sports Officer Ahmad Zaman.



In brief

IRSA releases 28,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 28,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 37,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1489.89 feet and was 91.89 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,200 cusecs while outflow as 10,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.40 feet, which was 67.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,300 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 9,200, 21,700, 17,800 and 500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seizes huge quantities of drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-Narcotic Force (ANF) has recovered a huge quantity of drugs during a nationwide crackdown against smugglers of contraband items. According to a spokesperson, ANF recovered 108 kg of hashish, 78 kg of opium and 6 kg of heroin from a car near D-17 centre Islamabad and arrested a drug peddler. In another operation, the force seized 102 grams of ice and 74 grams of heroin from a private courier office parcel in Islamabad. The ANF force recovered 118 capsules filled with heroin from the stomach of the accused travelling from Multan Airport to Bahrain. The force also recovered 120 capsules full of heroin from the stomach of the accused travelling from Faisalabad to Jeddah. In a joint operation, ANF and FC in Khyber recovered 35 kg of hashish and over 1 kg of ice. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

Employees allotted 'only one' plot

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has clarified that only one plot is allotted to the government employees and other specified groups during the entire service under its residential scheme. "The allotment is made as per approved policy of authority by the executive committee/board from time-to-time as per their entitlement according to their scales from BS-01 to BS-22," according to an official document available with APP. However, it said the government in 2006 had allowed an additional residential plot to the federal secretaries (BS-22) officers in pursuance of approved policy/ criteria titled-Prime Minister's Assistance Package Scheme on the recommendations of Establishment Division. About this policy, the document said the Islamabad High Court had declared this policy as illegal in 2021, directing the Secretaries of Establishment Division, Housing and Works and Law & Justice to place the matter of entitlement of second plot to Federal Secretaries before the Federal Cabinet, who shall give its approval afresh after considering the law. Accordingly, the matter was before the federal cabinet who approved discontinuation of second allotment under Prime Minister's Assistance Package Scheme.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on curbing Tobacco Smuggling and tax evasion.

PTI's irresponsible attitude over advice to return to assembly condemnable: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman has said that the "irresponsible attitude" of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership over the parliamentary role condemnable and PTI's accusing government of non-serious approach on the matter is baseless.

In series of tweets, she criticized the recent statement by PTI Vice President Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who claimed that the PTI was ready to play its parliamentary role but the government was not serious.

Sherry Rehman said the PTI leader had confirmed that its members were willing to return to Parliament, but it appeared the PTI

members were sitting out only "because of the ego of one person" (Imran Khan).

"The minister of Foreign Affairs represented the government, whereas the reaction of the PTI leader to the foreign minister's proposal was a proof of his (Shah Mahmood Qureshi) insincerity."

It is pertinent to mention that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, while addressing to the public rally on the occasion of Benazir Bhutto's martyrdom anniversary in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Larkana, the other day, asked the PTI chief to return to the Parliament.

Sherry Rehman further stated that the PTI was not advised by the government

to leave and dissolve the assembly. Therefore, accusing the government of being insincere was contrary to the facts. "Will the leaders of PTI blame the decisions of Imran Khan on the federal government?" Sherry Rehman queried.

"You are sitting outside the National Assembly, you have announced the dissolution of the provincial assemblies (KP, Punjab) and your members are not allowing the Senate session to continue.

Is this your serious parliamentary politics? If Tehreek-e-Insaf was interested in serious parliamentary politics, it would have reconsidered the advice of the foreign minister," the minister said.

CDA decides to take action against plastic bags

ISLAMABAD (APP): The management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to enforce the Prohibition of Non-degradable Plastic Products Regulations, 2013, and the Environment Protection Act, 1997 to stop the use of prohibited plastic bags across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

CDA Chairman Captain (r) Muhammad Usman Younis has decided to adopt a two-pronged policy in this connection while directing officials concerned to create awareness against the use of non-degradable plastic shopping bags and launch operations to confiscate such bags from rural and urban areas of ICT.

"We use non-degradable bags despite knowing the fact that the product is not only injurious to health but also causes environmental pollution and blockade of sewerage pipelines," the CDA chairman observed, adding that such shopping bags could not be disposed of for 100 years and also negatively impact the fertility of soil when buried anywhere. Top management of CDA has assigned Director General Enforcement to conduct an operation in rural and urban areas of the federal capital to confiscate shopping bags and stop the use of the product which is injurious to health. The management has also issued directives that environment-friendly bags made of natural fiber should be used introduced in the market.

IHC grants custody of children to Polish women

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday ordered to hand over two children to their Polish mothers in a petition with regarding to the kids' custody. The court also issued instructions to remove the names of kids from the exit control list (ECL). Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani heard the case filed by the two women nationals of Poland. The officials of Poland Embassy, petitioner women and two children appeared before the court.

The counsel for the petitioners prayed the court to hear the children inside the chamber. He said that the father of kids brought them here to spend vacations but he didn't get back to Poland. The father had illegally detained the kids for fourteen months and deprived the children from mothers. He said that the family court of Pakistan couldn't decide the kids'

custody dispute. The lawyer also gave the reference of top court's verdict in similar cases in which children were handed over to the mothers. He prayed the court to grant the custody of kids to his clients.

The lawyer said that one of his client woman had embraced Islam in 2005 before her marriage. However, the other woman told the court that she had not married the said Pakistani citizen and she had not embraced Islam. She said that the children were studying at a Poland school. The court was told that the children were also going to school in Rawalpindi. Muhammad Saleem, the father, adopted the stance that the court could take the opinion of children who were more than seven years old.

On the occasion, Justice Kayani interviewed the children inside his chamber.

Govt to decide market, business closure timings in consensus with stakeholders: Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday said the government would decide market and business closure timings in consensus with traders' associations and stakeholders for effective implementation of the national energy austerity drive.

The Defence Minister was addressing to a consultative meeting held with representatives of the All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran (APAT) flanked by Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir Khan, Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Maulana Abdul Wasay, Minister for State for Petroleum, Musadik Malik,

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haq, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ayaz Sadiq and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb.

The inister briefed the participants on the government's vision to ensure energy conservation through less consumption in the commercial sector. The initiative is also intended to relieve the burden on the country's foreign reserves that are being doled out every year for the import of oil and gas to ensure power production, he added.

The import bill of fossil fuels for power production comprised of 20 percent of

the total imports expenditure of \$80 billion a year that it could not afford further due to the growing burden on the economic resources of the country, Khawaja Asif said. "The country is blessed with 365 days a year with full shining sun that can be well utilized to generate energy which is cost-effective and eco-friendly," he added.

Chairman APAT, Muhammad Naeem Mir, President APAT, Ajmal Baloch, and others also participated in the meeting and presented their recommendations and suggestions on the government's proposal to implement closure timings of markets at 8 pm, dining halls at 10 pm and restaurants at 10 pm.

No one can challenge Pak Army's defensive capabilities: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday said no one could challenge the defensive capabilities of the Pakistan Army. He, talking to APP, commended the effective operation against terrorists at the Counter Terrorist Department Complex in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and asserted that the Pakistan Army was fully capable of thwarting and giving befitting response to the enemy's evil plans.

He said Pakistan Army was leaving no stone unturned to deal with terrorists with iron hands.

He termed the Pakistan Army the best military in the world, adding that Pakistan and its citizens were in safe hands.

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said the nation was standing by Pakistan Army through thick and thin.

He also assured the unwavering support of Ulema and Mashaykh to counter the anti-state propaganda at every nook and cranny of the country.

Besides paying homage to personnel martyred during the operation in Bannu, he prayed to Allah Almighty to award them high ranks in Jannah and speedy recovery of the injured ones.

International Workshop on Role of IT in addressing public grievances opens

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Federal Ombudsman Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi opened today an International Workshop on the Role of Integrated Computer Technologies (ICT) in the Public Grievance Redressal System. The two-day's Workshop is being held online from the platform of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) whose Permanent Secretariat is housed within the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat at Islamabad. Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi is the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA).

The Workshop is being attended by 43 participants representing ombudsmen institutions of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan as well as Provincial Ombudsman institutions of Sindh, KPK, Federal Tax Ombudsman and Banking Mohtasib Pakistan. Head of Ombudsman institution Azad Jammu & Kashmir is also taking part in the said Workshop.

Addressing the participants, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi stated that the prompt and efficient disposal of complaints is of critical importance in dispensation of justice. The use of ICT is essential in maintaining a credible, transparent, effective and efficient mechanism to sustain the trust of the general public. He added that the application of computer

technologies in any field of human endeavour required regular upgradation, R&D and adaptation in line with the emerging requirements.

Federal Ombudsman's institution in Pakistan shall be celebrating forty years of its establishment in January next year. In this long journey, it has established its credentials as an effective instrument for providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the people and addressed over 1.8 million complaints since its inception. Besides the Head Office in Islamabad, 18 Regional Offices in different parts of the country are performing their statutory functions. Recently, two complaint collection centres were opened at Wana, South Waziristan and Sadda, Kurram Agency.

The Federal Ombudsman's Office has over the years perfected its complaint handling mechanism comprising investiga-

tion, appraisal, review and implementation of decisions. It is now fully capable of resolving complaints of maladministration in large numbers, reaching out to the complainants and holding public hearings at their doorsteps, informal resolution of disputes, inspection of agencies to improve their service delivery and studying the root causes of maladministration.

It has conducted more than 27 studies on systemic issues attracting persistent complaints.

Highlighting the impact of ICT on the work of the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution in Pakistan, Mr. Qureshi added that the scope and magnitude of its work has increased manifold over the last forty years. The Wafaqi Mohtasib's Secretariat was able to successfully cope with these increasing demands through the use of

latest IT tools and upgrading the grievance redressal mechanism on regular basis. A number of modules were developed by the IT Wing internally to cater to the specific requirements of the complainants as well as the federal agencies in maintaining a transparent and credible interface with them.

Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi offered that Pakistan remained ready to share its expertise and best practices in redressing the public grievance with other members of the AOA. He hoped that the AOA, being a major non-political professional body representing more than two-thirds population of the world, offers immense scope for mutual cooperation in promoting the ultimate goal of good governance, rule of law, justice and fair play in the Asian region and beyond.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf visited the momentum situated in front of National Assembly.



Snowfall, flash floods forecast

KABUL (Agencies): AMD issued a warning for snowfall, and flash floods that are forecasted to affect 13 provinces. AMD has issued a warning that is in effect from Thursday. The warning was prompted by the newly forecasted weather that may affect the Herat, Ghor, Badghis, Faryab, Sar-i-pul, Jawzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, Bada-khshan, Panjshir, Parwan, Bamyan, Wardak Square and Daikandi may experience snowfall and heavy rains with flash floods.

Three criminals arrested

KABUL (Agencies): The security forces arrested 3 people in 3-provinces on charges of carrying illegal weapons and ordinance. The interior minister in a statement on Wednesday said that the officers of anti-terrorism department arrested 3 people on charges of carrying illegal weapons and ordinances in Paktia, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces. The security forces seized a number of weapons and ordinance from the detainees, adding that the arrested people are under police investigation.

First part of joint market opens on border with Uzbekistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): The first part of the Termez International Trade Center on the border of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan was opened on Tuesday.

Bakhtiar Roziof, head of the trade center, said the joint market has been created with the aim of developing economic and commercial cooperation between the businessmen of the two countries.

The market has four thousand shops, a health center, a restaurant, and a separate area for production and logistics and the shop started their activities.

It has been said that with the completion of the work of all parts of this trade

market, Afghan citizens can enter this market without a visa and stay for up to ten days.

“At least \$75 million has been invested in this big project, and created big trade facilities for traders of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan,” said Roziof said.

Bakhtiar said the second part of the market will be open in the first three months of 2023 for traders.

An Afghan investor said establishing the market is important for improving investment in the country.

“If Allah is willing this Market will complete soon and will inauguration, and that is a good step for the trade of two countries,”

said Nazer Ahmad, a trader.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment in Afghanistan said that finding a way for Afghanistan's products in any market is essential for the country's economy.

“It benefits Afghanistan if its products everywhere have a good market. Efforts are underway to boost the market for the products,” said Mohammad Yonis Mohmand, head of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment in Afghanistan.

At least 10,000 Afghans are living in Uzbekistan and many of them are engaged in trade activities, according to Uzbek officials.

Officials concern over hospital closure

PARWAN (Agencies): Health officials in Parwan expressed their concern over Covid-19 hospital closure in that province.

The 20-bed provincial hospital for Covid-19, which was funded and equipped by the Swedish Committee is closed until the end of December due to the lack of funding sources, according to health officials of the province.

The provincial head of Parwan's Covid-19 hospital, Dr. Abdul Hamid Alami Zhakfar said that Parwan's provincial Covid-19 hospital, which is equipped with daily facilities and equipment has been closed needs till end of 2022.

The Covid-19 hospital, were providing health services for 100 to 120 people, which is closed due to lack of funding.

Alami says that this hospital is equipped with all the facilities that was bought with millions of dollars, he urged on the Islamic Emirate and health authorities to turn it into an infectious disease hospital and maintain its facilities and doctors.

Meanwhile, Dr. Mohammad Farooq Sechak, the head of the Swedish Committee's field office in Parwan, says that with the cutoff of the World Bank's aid, the Swedish Committee financed and equipped this hospital from his personal budget from December 2021 until the end of this month. But lately due to the decrease in the severity of the corona virus and the lack of budget, the assistance of this office in the Covid-19 department was stopped.

Sechak mentioned saying that the office of the Swedish Committee has spent 173 million Afghanis only in the department of Covid-19 and Corona vaccine in the provinces of Parwan, Panjshir and Kapisa.

Afghanistan tops food insecurity

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan tops a high level of food insecurity among 136 countries, a report by Observer Research Foundation (ORF) shows, as the country continue to struggle with ongoing political instability.

In June, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned dozens of countries, including Afghanistan, of “looming widespread food crisis”. “According to GHI 2022, South Asian countries reported the highest levels of stunting and wasting,” ORF said, as TOLOnews quoted.

“These trends are worrying for a region that is home to 600 million children and where over 33 percent of the population faces extreme poverty, a situation exacerbated by the pandemic.”

Justifying the cause of increasing hunger and food scarcity, doctors believe poor economy in a country could increase food insecurity amongst children due to its direct connection to body's nutrition.

“Poor economic and social situation has affected children and has increased food insecurity because it has a direct connection with child nutrition,” said M. Nasir Kazimi, a doctor, as local media quoted.

Sidiqa, mother of a child who faces malnutrition, said their situation is concerning due to the poor economy and lack of access to enough food.

“When my child was born, he was in the hospital for 20 days and now, we came back to the hospital and it has been one week since we are here,” said Sidiqa. “It has been four months that my child has been sick. Doctors said that it is malnutrition and that treatment did not impact it,” said another mother of a malnourished child. According to local doctors at Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital, at least four children suffering from malnutrition are taken to the hospital on a daily basis.

Economy Minister meets AKDN's envoy



KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Acting Economy Minister, Qari Din Mohammad Hanif, on Wednesday met Akbar Pesnani, the special representative of the Aga Khan

Foundation in Kabul.

In a meeting, the two sides discussed and exchanged views on improving the supply of services in the health and education sectors in the country, according to the Ministry of

Economy's statement.

Pesnani thanked the Ministry of Economy for the cooperation with this foundation and assured the continuation of providing services in the mentioned sectors.

Based on another news, the Acting Economy Minister, met with representatives of a number of organizations to listen their ideas for the implementation of projects and programs.

Afghanistan faces severe hunger levels: Report

KABUL (TOLOnew): A report by Observer Research Foundation shows that Afghanistan faces severe hunger levels and high levels of food insecurity.

This research foundation has researched the food insecurity section in 136 countries. In this research, Afghanistan is at the top of the list among South Asia countries.

“According to GHI 2022, South Asian countries reported the highest levels of stunting and wasting. These trends are worrying for a region that is home to 600 million children and where over 33 percent of the population faces extreme poverty, a situation exacerbated by the pandemic,” ORF said.

“Poor economic and social situation has affected children and has increased food insecurity because it

has a direct connection with child nutrition,” said Mohammad Nasir Kazimi, a doctor.

Sidiqa, the mother of a child who faces malnutrition, their situation is concerning due to the poor economy and lack of access to enough food.

“When my child was born, he was in the hospital for 20 days and now, we came back to the hospital and it has been one week since we are here,” said Sidiqa.

A number of parents who took their children for treatment to the Indira Gandhi Hospital in Kabul said their children are suffering from malnutrition due to their poor economy and lack of enough food.

“It has been four months that my child has been sick. Doctors said that it is malnutrition and that treatment

did not impact it,” said the mother of a malnourished child.

Some doctors at Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital said that at least four children suffering from malnutrition are taken to the hospital every day.

The Ministry of Public Health said that nearly 2.8 million children and women have suffered from malnutrition in 2022.

“From the start of the year, 2.8 million children with moderate and severe malnutrition and nursing mothers were affected,” said Sharafat Zaman Amrkhil, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health.

India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are the countries that face food insecurity due to poor economic conditions among the people.

Seven drug dealers arrested

KABUL (Agencies): The police personnel arrested 7 people on charges of dealing drug in Nimruz, Kapisa, Balkh, Bamyan and Herat provinces.

The Interior Ministry in a statement said, that the Counter-Narcotic department of the Ministry treated 17 addicts in Nimruz, Balkh, Kapisa, Herat, and Bamyan provinces, mentioning in the statement that in the meantime the department arrested 7 drug dealers in those provinces.

Meanwhile, 2 people in Nimruz, 2 in Balkh, 2 in Herat, and one other person were arrested on charges of drug dealing in these provinces. According to the sources the counter-narcotic department of Bamyan province treated 18 addicted people, adding the addicts reunited with their families after receiving medical treatment.

Medical supply assisted to hospital

KANDAHAR (Agencies): The World Health Organization assisted medicines and medical equipment to 350- Ayno Maina hospital, say public health officials of the province.

The provincial head the hospital, Qari Abdul Hamid Aseem, told that these medicines and equipment were provided by the WHO for the treatment of malnourished children, 30 types of medical and non-medical equipment and Medicines have donated.

These medicines and medical equipment will be very useful in the treatment of malnourished children, he added.

Meanwhile, a businessman donated four types of medical and non-medical items to the said hospital, according to health officials of the province.

3 schools buildings restored

NANGARHAR (Agencies): In financial support of a Swedish organization 3 schools buildings reconstructed says officials of Nangarhar Education Department.

The 3 damaged schools located in Haska Meyna and Pachir Aw Agam districts, and now is ready for use after restoration, says local education officials of the province.

The provincial head of Nangarhar Education department, Mufti Hazrat Haqqani, said in the opening ceremony that these schools were severely damaged, in the past harsh wars, which were rebuilt by the Swedish organization with a cost of 30 million Afghanis.

Addressing journalists' problems on priority



KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Publication of the Ministry of Information and Culture Mohajer Farahi, attended the 6-month meeting of the provincial coordination of the Committee of Journalists Wednesday.

Farahi reaffirms saying that addressing the country's journalists' problem is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Farahi asked the journal-

ists and the media to reflect on the realities in Afghanistan impartially and accurately.

The Ministry of Information and Culture's spokesman Mufti Abdul Mateen Qani said in this meeting that the ministry will boost its endeavors to address the problems of journalists, adding that a joint delegation of representatives of the Ministry of Information and Culture and news organizations has

been appointed, for this purpose.

The head of the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, Abdul Qadim Sahak called on the Ministry of Information and Culture to support this committee in forming educational courses and seminars, especially for provincial journalists.

The Committee for the Protection of Journalists was held today, Wednesday and will last for two days.

Explosion rocks Takhar, leaving many wounded

TAKHAR (Khaama Press): Local officials reported an explosion took place in Northern Takhar province earlier on Wednesday, causing the injury of four people. The explosion erupted early in the morning on Wednesday in “Taliqan” the provincial capital of Northern Takhar province.

Abdul Mubin Safi, the security commander of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Takhar province confirmed the explosion and stated that a bomb was placed under a local administrative staff's desk.

Safi said that four people have been severely injured, however, unconfirmed sources reported high casualties left behind from today's bombing. So far no group

has claimed the responsibility for the terror attack.

This happens as the security headquarters of Afghanistan's de facto authorities came under attack two days ago in Bada-khshan province, as a result of which the IEA top security commander for that province was killed. ISIS took the responsibility for the attack on the security headquarters of the Taliban.

With the return of the Taliban to power last year, the optimism for bringing sustainable peace in Afghanistan was quite high. Many believed that since the Taliban had taken control of the power, there was no significant insurgent group to fight or cause terror and chaos among the

general public.

However, with each passing day, a lot is changing in the context of Afghanistan. The security situation has deteriorated over the last couple of weeks, with more terror attacks taking place in different parts of the country. The long-lasting peace people were dreaming of after the withdrawal of the American-led alliance turned into a nightmare.

Local civilians keep losing their near and dear ones in suicide attacks and bombings. The never-ending war and political turmoil in Afghanistan have taken everything away from the people leaving them in complete desperation and chaos.

Needy families received aid



TAKHAR (Agencies): In cooperation with the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the World Food Programme in Takhar distributed food to 10,430 needy and poor families in

Talagan city through the Shelter for Life office.

The officials of Takhar's Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department say that needy family received flour, oil, rice, sugar, beans and other food

items.

Meanwhile, after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan sovereignty, food aid from the World Food Programme has been continuing in Takhar for one and a half years.

President upholds order to grant COVID Health Risk allowance to 37 employees

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (WM) to grant COVID Health Risk Allowance to 37 employees of the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicines (NIRM) and Federal Government Services Hospital (FGSH) who had been deprived of the allowance earlier as being declared non-clinical.

The president gave this decision while rejecting a representation of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (the Agency) against the order of the Mohtasib recommending it to move a fresh summary to the Prime Minister Secretariat for grant of risk allowance to the complainants.

The president in his decision observed that in August 2021, the Agency had provided funds to Federal Government Hospitals/entities to grant COVID Health Risk Allowance to clinical staff and that the Federal Government Polyclinic Postgraduate Medical Institute, Islamabad was also one of the beneficiaries of the fund.

He observed that in 2020, all employees were given COVID Risk Allowance, however, in 2021, 37 employees were deprived of the allowance as being declared non-clinical. He noted that the Executive Director had recommended the Agency grant the allowance to the remaining 37 employees as all clinical and non-clinical staff worked in the same risky environment, and were equally vulnerable and exposed to

infection without any exception.

The president, in his decision, further highlighted that it was a reality that both clinical and non-clinical employees in the hospital were vulnerable and performing duties within the same premises and environment without any exception.

He rejected the Agency's view that the hospital staff had to work in a vulnerable environment usually, that it was the nature of their job, and that they were already drawing some exclusive allowances.

He also rejected the view that only the clinical staff were actively engaged by the hospital administration in various COVID-19 units during the pandemic. As per details, Magbool Ahmad and others (the complainants) had lodged a complaint with WM that during the COVID-19 pandemic, they kept on performing their duties despite their vulnerability and risk of lives on the directions of the Heads of their Departments along with so many others. According to them, COVID Risk Allowance was paid to a number of employees who performed duties like them but they were discriminated against by being declared as non-clinical staff whereas both the clinical and non-clinical employees performed duties in their hospitals while being equally vulnerable to infection.

Feeling aggrieved they approached the Mohtasib who passed the orders to grant the allowance to the complainants. The

Ministry of Health, then, filed a representation to the president against the decision of WM. The president rejected the representation of the Agency and upheld the orders of the WM as maladministration on behalf of the Agency was established on the above-mentioned grounds.

Sacrifices of martyred security officials to be remembered forever: President Alvi: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said the sacrifices of the martyred security officials while ridding the country of terrorism would be remembered forever.

The president expressed these views as he spoke to the families of the martyred personnel of police and army. He talked to the family of Police Head Constable Syed Adeel Hasnain, who was martyred in the suicide blast at I-10, Islamabad.

The president also expressed his condolences over the telephone to the relatives of the soldiers of the Pakistan Army who were martyred in the explosion in Kohlu, Balochistan on December 25. He spoke to the family members of Captain Muhammad Fahad Khan, Sepoy Asgharuddin, Sepoy Muhammad Shamoon and Lance Naik Muhammad Imtiaz.

President Alvi said the entire nation was united in the fight against terrorism. He assured the families of the martyrs of all possible support from the government. The president paid tribute to the martyrs for their bravery, dedication for duty and sacrifice for the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Muhammad Faisal Vawda tendering his resignation as Senator to Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.

PM for ensuring food security in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has directed to expedite the implementation of the Kissan Package.

He was chairing a review meeting on the historic Kissan Package given by the government for the development of the agricultural sector, here on Wednesday.

The prime minister said that we have to ensure food security in Pakistan at all costs. He said the development of the agriculture sector is the guarantor of food security in Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz Sharif directed that special attention should be paid to the cultivation and production of wheat, cotton, canola and olives for food security in the country.

Moreover, the farmers should be ensured the supply of better seeds to increase the production of other food grains including pulses.

The meeting was informed that instructions have been issued for the implementation of Kissan Package, youth loan scheme, interest waiver for small farmers and provision of interest-free agricultural loans to small farmers in flood-affected areas through State Bank notification to banks. It was informed that in the current financial year till November, agricultural loans of 664 billion have

been distributed to farmers, which is 36 percent higher than the same period of the previous financial year.

PM sets up committee to reduce electricity use in govt offices: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formed a committee to work on reducing electricity consumption in government offices by 30 percent.

The prime minister gave this approval while chairing a federal cabinet meeting here in Islamabad.

According to the statement, the committee comprise federal ministers from energy, planning, Petroleum and relevant secretaries.

The federal cabinet discussed the 'Proposed Energy Saving Plan' presented by the Power Division. The meeting was briefed on the consultation conducted so far with the stakeholders regarding the energy-saving plan. In this regard, the prime minister said that the consultation process with all the stakeholders including the provincial governments, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan governments should be completed as soon as possible to ensure the implementation of the proposed 'Energy Saving Plan'.

He said the implementation of the energy saving plan and the use of alternative energy was indispensable

to reduce the import bill in terms of fuel. The federal cabinet also condemned the arrest of senior parliamentarian Chaudhry Ashraf by the Punjab government in a 53-year-old case as a step of political vendetta.

The federal cabinet paid tribute to the security forces for their continuous fight against terrorism.

PM accuses PTI of 'criminal negligence' over failure to buy cheap gas, oil: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government showed criminal negligence by not buying cheap oil and gas.

Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif briefed the federal cabinet on coordination with provinces about the proposed energy plan, while officials of the power division briefed the cabinet on the implementation of the plan. Sources said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed that dependence on renewable and cheap sources of energy was the need of the hour as the annual import bill of just oil and gas is \$27 billion, while the country's circular debt has reached Rs2.5 trillion.

The premier further said no reforms were made in the energy sector in the past three decades; however, the coalition government was trying to address the country's problems

Pakistan will not default, Ishaq Dar assures investors at PSX

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan is heading in the right direction and will not default, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said on Wednesday while assuring investors at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Addressing a ceremony, the finance czar said that Pakistan has a "beautiful future and a resilient economy" and there is no chance of default. "We hear every day that Pakistan will default. There is no chance," he said.

"Pakistan is in tight [fiscal] position and we do not have \$24 billion in reserves which the PML-N government left in 2016 and it's not my fault. The fault is in the system and we must ensure Pakistan goes forward," said the finance minister.

He urged political parties to show some serious attitude and stop playing with the country's economy for petty political gains. The finance minister further said that the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) are of great significance in improving country's economy and government was focusing to improve their functioning.

"We have not banned imports but prioritized import items under different categories so the essential items can be imported on a priority basis," Ishaq Dar said, adding that essential items including medicine and edible oil have been put in category one, energy imports in category two, imports for export-orient-

ed industry in category three while imports for the agricultural industry in category four.

"We should learn from the mistakes of past and work together for the development of the country," Ishaq Dar reiterated.

Explaining the primary reasons for the worsening situation, the finance minister said the smuggling of the greenback to a neighbouring country, import of wheat and its partial subsidisation and smuggling of wheat and fertilisers are the three main reasons behind the deteriorating economy.

Dar said he had asked the law enforcement agencies to ensure that the smuggling of all three items was stopped.

NAB initiates inquiry in Thar water project irregularities

KARACHI (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has initiated inquiry into irregularities in Thar-Coal water project.

The Supreme Court had directed the accountability watchdog last year to investigate the corruption charges in the project.

The NAB Karachi in a letter to the Secretary Sindh Irrigation Department has demanded record of the project.

The NAB has asked about the record of the spending on the project and the authority that passed the bill. "All details of the

amount and the names of the officers who had passed bills should be provided," NAB letter read.

The details of amount spent over the project in Year 2016-17 should be provided to NAB, the accountability bureau demanded.

"The irrigation department has yet to provide the record," NAB officials said. The Supreme Court had remarked that the report of the AGP shows that the funds of Thar project were not invested in a transparent manner, RO plants were not set up as per the requirement. Solar

SC adjourns Khan's plea in Shehbaz defamation case

LAHORE (TLTP): Supreme Court's Lahore registry has adjourned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) plea against terminating his right to defense in a defamation case filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. As per detail, a three-member bench headed by justice Mansoor Ali Shah heard the case.

The TLTP learnt that PTI chief Imran Khan's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar completed his arguments in this case. The court summoned Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's lawyer on Thursday (today) to present his arguments in the defamation case and adjourned the case till December 29.

Earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday dismissed PTI chairman Imran Khan's plea against terminating his right to defence in a defamation case filed by Prime minister Shehbaz Sharif. It is pertinent to note here that five years back, Shahbaz Sharif filed an Rs10 billion defamation lawsuit against PTI chief Imran Khan for accusing him of offering a bribe to stay silent over the Panama Papers allegations against the Sharif family.

'PTI to oppose plans of imposing technocratic govt'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would oppose imposition of technocratic government in the country, said former information minister Fawad Chaudhary.

The PTI leader issued the remarks in response to reports that plans are being hatched to form an interim government for a period of six months to two and half years instead of calling fresh elections in the country. Taking to Twitter, he said the idea of replacing the government with technocratic setup was "foolish", adding that political crisis was more severe than economic turmoil.

He claimed that such schemes were being designed at the cost of the country's interests just to stop PTI Chairman Imran from regaining power.

IHC disposes of PTI's appeal against LG polls' postponement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday disposed of an appeal of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) against the ECP's decision of postponing the local government elections in the Federal Capital.

The bench comprising Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, which heard the plea of PTI leader Ali Nawaz Awan, also directed the Federal Government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce election schedule at appropriate time after completing the preparations. At the outset of hearing, the ECP's lawyer said the LG elections had been postponed due to notification of new union councils.

Justice Kayani observed that previously the PTI government was not willing to conduct elections and now the current one was doing the same.

He noted that the population of Islamabad had been mentioned as 205 million in the notification. The additional attorney general said that it was a clerical mistake.

Justice Kayani remarked that the funds of local bodies were being used by the administrator for the last two

years. Why not the court should suspend the powers of administrator as the Capital city was being ruined in the absence of elected LG bodies, he added. Justice Arbab asked who would pay the expenditure incurred on the electoral process so far. The ECP had told that till date Rs 600 million had been spent on the process, which would be paid by the tax payers, he noted.

The court observed that the ECP had submitted an affidavit to the Supreme Court. Justice Kayani remarked that it seemed that election would not take place for one year. The IHC had given a verdict that the LG funds could not be used by the Capital Development Authority (CDA). The additional attorney general said the elections would take place very soon.

Justice Kayani remarked that legislation was the responsibility of Parliament. He asked whether the Federal Government could increase the number of UCs after the announcement of election schedule. The Federal Government had not approached the ECP in that regard, he said. Whether the candidates who had been elected as unopposed would

also be de-notified, he added.

The AAG said an amendment had been approved by the Parliament with regard to the local government law and the signature of the president was awaited. Now the mayor and the deputy mayors would be elected directly, he added.

He said every citizen would have right for vote if the number of union councils would be 125.

The court remarked that LG system was for the citizens and not for the parliamentarians. The LG body funds would be given to the assembly members in the absence of LG representatives, it added.

The court said the LG system would collapse if it would not be given funds. The petitioner's lawyer said that the government had increased the number of UCs just six months ago.

The court asked whether it could give a direction for the ECP to hold elections in such situation. The lawyer said the court could ask the ECP in that regard as they had challenged its decision to postpone the elections. The court observed that the appeal was already ineffective and subsequently disposed of the case.

Govt takes measures at entry points to prevent Omicron's sub-variant

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health authorities on Wednesday said that there was a surveillance system in place at all entry points of the country to monitor the incoming passengers in the wake of threats of new BF.7 Omicron variant of COVID-19.

According to an official of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, several additional measures have been taken to prevent the spread of Omicron BF7, a new sub-variant of COVID-19.

He added that instructions have been issued to the concerned authorities to take steps so that people, coming from other countries, go through thermal scanners at the entry points of the country at airports.

He said that an efficient system with a proper management team was fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and was ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19.

He said that in case of any untoward situation the health system was fully prepared to deal with any sub-

variant of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 including BF.7 in the country. He added medical staff at intensive care units (ICU) of hospitals across the country was also active to handle any situation.

The official said that genome sequencing was started in laboratories of all four provinces and the federal capital. They added that 90 percent of the country's population already got the COVID-19 vaccine so they are safe, he added.

They said that special directions had been issued to ensure the availability of an adequate quantity of ventilators, oxygen supply, and antiviral medicines in the hospitals.

Meanwhile, as per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), 26 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last 24 hours across the country.

The case positivity ratio is 0.75 percent, while 14 patients were in critical condition. No death was reported from Covid-19 in the last 24 hours while 3,488 tests were conducted, Around 404 tests were conducted in Islamabad, 756 in Lahore,

and 363 in Peshawar. As many as four confirmed cases with a 1.10% case positivity ratio were reported from Peshawar, one case with a 0.25% case positivity ratio was reported from Islamabad, and one case with a 0.13% case positivity was reported from Lahore.

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

He advised all provinces and regions to administer booster doses to further improve protection against COVID-19 transmission. He said that in view of the global pandemic situation, the Central Health Establishment (CHE) will be strengthened to enhance its functionality. The minister emphasized the importance of precautions, including social distancing and mask-wearing, especially in crowded places. He also highlighted the need to strictly follow the guidelines for the management of markets.