

FM briefs PM

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here in Islamabad on Friday. The Foreign Minister briefed the Prime Minister about his recent visit to America and Resilient Pakistan Conference to be held in Geneva next month. Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar were also present in the meeting.



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National Security Committee reviews economic, security situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Security Committee (NSC) met here Friday under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and reviewed the country's economic and security situation. The federal ministers, service chiefs and heads of intelligence agencies attended the meeting. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar briefed the participants about the economic situation and challenges of the country and briefed the participants about the economic strategy and the measures adopted by the government. The heads of intelligence agencies gave a briefing on the overall law and order situation in the country and informed the meeting about the factors behind the recent wave of terrorism and the measures to deal with them. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar briefed the meeting on the situation in Afghanistan and informed

about Pakistan's relations with the interim government of Afghanistan. The meeting expressed an unequivocal opinion that Pakistan's national interests would not be compromised and no one would be allowed to harm national security. It was stressed that the interests of Pakistan's survival, security and development would be protected with great courage, consistency and steadfastness. The meeting paid tribute to the great sacrifices of the martyrs who lost their lives in terrorist incidents and expressed sympathy. The meeting termed the terrorists as enemies of Pakistan and expressed resolve to eliminate them. It was emphasized that the entire nation was united on the common narrative against terrorism and terrorists. The National Security Committee (NSC) will finalize its decisions on Monday in line with the recommendations.

Balochistan govt forms commission on missing persons

QUETTA (INP): The Balochistan government on Friday formed a parliamentary commission of inquiry on missing persons, a hand out issued by the Directorate General of Public Relations (DGPR) said. The commission has been formed on the directives of the Baluchistan High Court. The hand out said that Provincial

Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langau will be the chairperson of the commission and Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem will assist him as the secretary of the commission. Members of the provincial assembly Asad Baloch, Zahid Reki, Malik Naseer Shahwani and Zamaruk

Achakzai have been notified as members of the commission. The parliamentary commission of inquiry is tasked to examine each missing person case and make efforts for recovery of the missing persons. The commission will also devise a mechanism to help and support the families of the missing persons, if not involved in anti-state activities.

Putin tells Xi he wants to ramp up military cooperation

MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Russian leader Vladimir Putin told Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday he was keen to ramp up military cooperation and hailed the two countries' efforts to counter Western influence. Battered by unprecedented Western sanctions over Moscow's assault against Ukraine, Putin has hoped to strengthen political and military ties with China. Moscow's offensive in Ukraine is a sensitive issue for Beijing. China has sought to position itself as neutral

over the conflict but has offered diplomatic backing to its strategic ally Russia. "We aim to strengthen cooperation between the armed forces of Russia and China," Putin told Xi by video link at the start of the talks, calling the Chinese leader a "dear friend". The Kremlin chief also hailed the efforts of Moscow and Beijing to counter "unprecedented Western pressure and provocations". "In the context of growing geopolitical tensions, the importance is growing of the Russian-

Chinese strategic partnership as a stabilising factor," Putin said. "We share the same views on the causes, course and logic of the ongoing transformation of the global geopolitical landscape," he added. As the West seeks to cut reliance on Russian oil and gas, Putin has looked to energy markets in Asia. "Russia has become one of the leaders when it comes to oil exports to China," Putin said. The Russian leader said he was expecting Xi in Moscow on a state visit next spring.

KP CM terms tourism as backbone of economic uplift

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the tourism sector as the backbone for economic stability and said that the incumbent provincial government has initiated multiple development projects alongside necessary legislation to establish tourism sector as an industry. He added that in the last four years, substantial investment has been made with the sole purpose to provide state of the art facilities to national and international tourists and create livelihood opportunities for local people. In a statement issued here from the Chief Minister's secretariat, Mahmood Khan stated that the provincial government is going all out to promote

tourism activities in the province adding that development projects coupled with institutional and legal framework have ensured substantial progress in attracting national and international tourists to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In order to promote, preserve and revive our traditional, cultural & religious heritage and to regulate tourism in the province, "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority" has been established, he remarked. According to the details, in the last four years, numerous steps have been taken for the development of tourism sector including establishment of special purpose development authorities for Kumrat, Kalash and Upper Swat with the aim to boost tourism activities at local level. Similarly, K.P Tourism Police has been introduced to

facilitate tourists and ensure their security. In order to provide state of the art tourism facilities and attract national and foreign tourists to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a project for the establishment of Ghanool, Mankyal and Madaklasht integrated Tourism zones is in pipeline which is the first of its kind initiative of the provincial government. Furthermore, camping pods have been installed at 11 different tourists' sites while establishment of camping pods at 10 other sites is also underway. In order to provide legal framework for the development of tourism sector on sustainable basis, legislations have been carried out including KP Tourism Act 2019, KP Government Rest Houses and Tourism properties (Development, Management and Regulation) Act 2020 and others.

PPP convenes CEC meeting on January 5th

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has convened a meeting of its Central Executive Committee (CEC) on January 5 to discuss the country's current political and economic crisis, on Friday. PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will preside over the meeting at Bilawal House, Karachi. The CEC will discuss the overall political and economic situation of the country. The meeting would be attended by the senior leadership of PPP. The meeting comes after reports of installing a technocrat

government to take 'tough' decisions to save the country's economy emerged. Earlier, the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) of the Pakistan People's Party Qadir Mandokhail claimed on Wednesday that PPP and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will not accept a technocrat government. Qadir Mandokhail, while talking to the ARY News programme '11th Hour' today, said that there is no mention of a technocrat setup in the Constitution.

Court sends MNA to jail on 14-day judicial remand

LAHORE (APP): A local court on Thursday sent Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MNA Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf to jail on 14-day judicial remand in an alleged land grabbing case. Earlier, Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Punjab officials produced the MNA before Judicial Magistrate Kamran Zafar on expiry of his two-day physical remand. The court, after hearing arguments of the parties and examining the record, sent the MNA to jail on judicial remand and directed for producing him on January 12. The court directed the ACE officials to file the challan of the case by the next date of hearing. Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf was elected Member of National Assembly (MNA) from NA-161 (Sahiwal-II) constituency on the ruling PML-N's ticket. The ACE has accused the lawmaker of illegally occupying government land through forgery in collusion with the patwari.

PTI chief hails IHC order about Islamabad LG polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan on Friday hailed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order regarding the Islamabad local government (LG) polls and urged masses of active participation. In a special message to the citizens of Islamabad, the PTI chief congratulated the people of the federal capital on the IHC's order to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold LG polls tomorrow as per the announced schedule. Imran Khan was of the view that the Islamabad people can now elect their local government via their votes. He said that it is unfortunate to see a nexus between an 'imposed corruption gang' and the ECP. He alleged that the election commission always takes anti-democracy decisions to support the 'thieves' but the honourable courts always reject its illegal steps. The PTI chief said that the 'corrupt gang' is afraid of the order and fleeing the elections every time. "These thieves are making efforts to maintain their possession of the country," Khan slammed that the mafias used to trade consciences and horse-trading to extend their rule. He added that the mafias have no option left after facing complete rejection from the nation. Imran Khan gave the call to the Islamabad citizens to actively take part in the LG polls tomorrow. He expressed his hope that the nationals will defeat the 'corrupt gang'.

Security of parliament house beefed up

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the wake of the current wave of terrorism in the country, the federal government has strengthened the security of the Parliament House by deploying Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel. According to details, the capital police have banned the entry of unauthorized people into the premises of Parliament House. Moreover, all scheduled meetings of standing committees have been postponed for an indefinite period. The security was beefed up after a suicide attack in Islamabad which claimed the life of a policeman and injured four fellow cops. The slain officer was identified as Head Constable Adeel Hussain. Recently, the Islamabad police issued a special security plan amid possible threat of a terrorist attack following the suicide bombing in the I-10 Sector. According to the security plan unveiled by the Capital police, temporary security check posts have been established at 25 different locations in Islamabad while Safe City cameras will record Red Zone entrances.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the National Security Committee.

IHC orders ECP for LG polls tomorrow

Govt to challenge IHC decision to hold LG poll

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday terminated the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone the local body elections in the federal capital and directed the institution to conduct polls on December 31, as per its schedule. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir announced the verdict on the petitions moved by Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) and Jamat e Islami against the decision of ECP for postponing the polls. At the outset of the hearing, the ECP submitted its written comments which stated that the institution was serious to render its constitutional responsibility. It had issued a schedule for timely elections but the order was suspended by the IHC. The ECP said that the changes in the laws by the provincial and federal governments used to create hurdles in timely elections. It said that section (1)219 of the local government act empowered the ECP to conduct polls in provinces and center within 120 days. The ECP said that there was a recommendation for amendments in Article A140 of the constitution and section 219 of the local government act. The purpose of the amendments

was to stop the electoral process on its schedule. It stated that the institution had consulted with the law minister through the attorney general of Pakistan and insisted to complete the process in 120 days. However, the law minister later agreed on this timeline. The ECP was told that

Arbab Muhammad Tahir, who was hearing petitions filed by the PTI and the Jamaat-i-Islami against the ECP's decision. During the meeting of ECP, it has been decided to file an intra-court appeal against the court's verdict. The election commission will seek at least a week to conduct the polls stating it requires time for the printing and delivery of ballot papers, the sources said. ECP officials also held a meeting with Munawar Iqbal Duggal Additional Attorney General over the inability to conduct the polls. Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Raja also reached Islamabad and held a meeting on the situation.

while a total fund worth Rs15,72,48694 had been allocated for this. The payments were made against the printing of ballot papers, election material, stationery, and fuel charges. The petitioner's lawyer argued that the ECP had tried to shift its burden on IHC, adding that the court had never directed to postpone the elections. The ECP's stance was based on proposed legislation, he added. Justice Arbab remarked that if the election schedule was not challenged before any court then it was still in course. Whether the ECP could conduct elections if the court admitted the petitions, he asked. The court also expressed annoyance over non submission of comments by the federation into the matter. It said that it had fixed the case for this day with the consent of the respondents. Justice Arbab asked what was the reason for increasing the number of union councils just 12 days before the elections. The ECP had given assurance to the court for timely elections, he noted. The AAG said that the UCs' number increased due to the rise in population after 2017. He said that the new legislation had also changed the method of election of mayor and deputy mayors.

PHC stays execution of five convicted by military courts

PESHAWAR (TLTP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued a stay order against the execution of five terror convicts and suspended action on their death sentences awarded by military courts. Two single-member benches issued notices to the defense ministry seeking its response to the petitions filed by convicts against their respective sentences. The TLTP learnt that the courts declared that as the matter was related to the division bench, the petitions should be placed before the available division bench after the ongoing winter vacation. Advocate Shabbir Hussain Gigyani appeared before the courts for the petitioners pro bono and said that they were kept in different detention centres and were not aware about their convictions. He said that recently they were shifted to the Peshawar Central Prison where they came to know that

they had been convicted by the military courts and were sentenced to death. The petitioners included Mohammad Munir of Kohat district and Sharafat Ali, Anwar Ali, Rehmat Ali and Mohammad Ali, all residents of Swat district. The counsel insisted that all five petitioners were previously 'missing persons' and that they were taken into custody during different periods, while their whereabouts were not known for some years. A news release issued by the ISPR in Sept 2018 declared one of the petitioners, Mohammad Munir, as part of a proscribed militant organisation. It added that Munir was involved in an attack on the personnel of law-enforcement agencies, which killed police constables Khursheed Khan, Enayat Khan and Moeen Khan and two other officials, and injured 12. The news release also revealed that

the then chief of army staff had confirmed the sentences of death awarded to 13 terrorists, including Mohammad Munir. However, the counsel for Munir insisted that his client was taken into custody on May 11, 2017, and kept at an undisclosed detention centre before being shifted to the Kohat Internment Centre. He said that the records showed the arrest of his client in 2017, while failure of authorities to produce him before the relevant court was an illegal and unconstitutional act. About the other four petitioners, the counsel said that no information was available on record as to when they all were convicted by the military courts and for what acts of terrorism. The military courts were established in 2015 through the Constitution (Twenty-First Amendment) Act, 2015, to hear the cases of terrorism for a period of two years, which ended on Jan 6, 2017.

KP governor signs bill covering up past use of govt chopper

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali on Friday signed a bill that provides legal shelter to use of provincial government-owned helicopter since 2008 despite reservations on it. The governor has also written a dissenting note, saying he was not satisfied with the bill. Mr Ali is of the view that the bill was approved by the PTI-led provincial government just to protect unauthorised past use of the helicopters by Imran Khan. "Legislation to facilitate one person is unconstitutional," he said, adding that anyone could challenge it in court. The governor said he had first

returned the bill with objection but it was sent to him again as a finance bill. "It is not a finance bill and I have informed about it the KP Assembly speaker," he said. Earlier this month, the provincial assembly passed the KP Ministers (Salaries, Allowance and Privileges) (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022, amid resistance by the opposition parties, which claimed that it would provide 'blanket immunity' to those, who illegally used the provincial government's helicopters. The raised objection over the Section 7B(7) of the amended bill, saying it would protect the illegal users of state-owned helicopters.

Section 7B(7) of the amended bill reads, "All official journeys, any excursions, so carried out and undertaken on my aircraft or helicopter of government by the chief minister, any minister, advisor or special assistant to chief minister, public servant or government servant, or any of his support staff, aides, any other individual, on and from 1st November, 2008 till the commencement of the KP Ministers (Salaries, Allowance and Privileges) Act, 2022, shall deem to be validly carried out and undertaken under this Act and shall not be called in question for want of any deficiency of procedure or approval, as the case may be."

Four policemen injured

D.I.KHAN (APP): Armed terrorists attacked Takwara Police check post of Kulachi police station late Thursday night leaving four policemen injured. According to the police spokesman, the terrorists attacked the check post with hand grenades, rocket launchers and heavy weapons in the precincts of Kulachi Police station. The terrorists hurled 25 to 27 hand grenades and fired around 17 RPG7 rocket launchers at the check post.



Sindh govt seeks teachers' biometric record within four weeks

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh government on Friday has directed the education department to submit complete biometric records of teachers within four weeks' time.

Meanwhile, the District Educational Offices (DEOs) have also been assigned with the duty to furnish complete record of the teachers, enrolled in various schools, within four months. It may be mentioned that the Education Department of Sindh, earlier, had stopped the disbursement of salaries of more than 2,000 ghost teachers across the province.

The action came in the wake of a letter, penned down by the department to the provincial Accountant General, seeking to stop the salaries of 2,019 ghost teachers. In return, the AG Sindh had then seized the disbursement of salaries to the ghost teachers.

Akbar Laghari, the provincial education secretary, said they would sack all those employees who were receiving remunerations by sitting at home.

New year's night security plan reviewed

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police has devised a coordinated security plan to maintain peace and law and order on new year's night and to ensure the protection of lives, property and dignity of people. Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mahmood Dogar has said that the security would be very strict on new year's night. Hooliganism, aerial firing, fireworks, one-wheeling would not be tolerated at any cost.

He said that the respect of the citizens was above all else and vandals and lawless elements involved in disturbing the peace of the city by aerial firing, hooliganism, fireworks and one wheeling would be behind the bars.

More than 6000 police officers and officials including six SPs, 35 DSPs, 83 SHOs, 400 upper subordinates, personnel from Dolphin Squad, Police Response Unit (PRU), Elite Force, Anti Rights Force and lady police officers would be deployed on roads, squares and public places on new year night.

CCPO Lahore said that door knocking of the law breakers with previous record has been continued. Teams of Dolphins squad, PRU, Elite Force and police stations would ensure continuous patrolling at sensitive and important places. Security would also be increased at the entry, and exit points of the city as well. Citizens should report suspicious persons and activities to the police immediately, he added. Ghulam Mahmood Dogar directed the police officers to review the security arrangements personally at main roads and public places.

CM announces district status for Jampur

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Friday announced to grant status of district to Jampur. He was chairing a meeting at his office in which Provincial Minister Raja

Basharat, Member National Assembly Sardar Nasrullah Khan Dreshak, Provincial Minister Sardar Mohsin Khan Leghari, MPA Farooq Amanullah Dreshak, Sardar Awais Dreshak, Chaudhry Zaheeruddin, Former Assembly Member Meena Leghari, Dildar Cheema and Ali Bahadur Dreshak were present.

The chief minister said that a decision had been made to grant Jampur the status of a district on the long overdue demand of the people. He mentioned that with the formation of a district the problems of the masses would be resolved, adding that thousands of employment opportunities would be generated with Jampur becoming a district. He said the service delivery system would improve in Jampur, Muhammad Pur and Dajal. The CM informed that a university would also be established in Jampur in which students especially female students would be provided opportunities to obtain higher education.

CM outlined that Jampur was like Gujrat to him, saying that he wants progress and uplift of Jampur from his heart and soul.

Member National Assembly Nasrullah Dreshak said, "We are deeply thankful to CM Parvez Elahi for making announcement to grant Jampur the status of a district."

Nasrullah Dreshak acknowledged that the CM has resolved the long overdue problem of the people of Jampur. Mohsin Leghari remarked that people of Jampur highly appreciate the decision of CM Parvez Elahi to grant Jampur the status of a district.



KARACHI: Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Mukesh Kumar Chawla, Adviser to Chief Minister Sindh on Prisons Aijaz Jakhrani and Special Assistant to Chief Minister Sindh on Media Affairs Fahad Haroon addressing the joint press conference.

PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES P.F. 14-1328/M.K C.N) PIMS-IH Islamabad, dated: 18-06-2022

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

Whereas, you Mr. Muhammad Kashif, while employed as Charge Nurse (BS-16) have committed the following acts prejudicial to good order and service discipline and unbecoming of an officer which come within the clause 03 (a) & (b) under the Civil Servants Efficiency & Discipline) Rules 2020.

Whereas, you are found continuously absent from your duty w.e.f.16.01.2022 to till to date without any intimation / prior permission.

Whereas, your explanation was called vide this office letter of even number dated 15.03.2022 but you failed to submit your reply within stipulated period.

WHEREAS, the authority is of the opinion that there is no need to issue Charge Sheet / hold regular inquiry under Section 7 (b) of E&D Rules 2020 as sufficient evidence is available in the record.

AND WHEREAS, aforesaid acts omission and commission on your part constitute inefficiency / misconduct in terms of E&D Rules Section 3 (a) & (b) and call for major penalty i.e. "Dismissal from Service" as specified in Section 4 (3) (e) of E&D Rules 2020.

Now, therefore, you Mr. Muhammad Kashif, Charge Nurse under the above mentioned Rules are required to Show Cause within 14 days of the date of issuance of this notice that why the afore mentioned penalty of "Dismissal from Service" should not be imposed upon you in terms of Rules, mentioned above.

You should at the same time also indicate whether you desire to be heard in person.

In case no reply is received within the specified period, it would be deemed that you have no defense to offer and action against you shall be taken ex-parte.

This issues with the approval of Hospital Director, PIMS / FMTI

(DR. M. FARRUKH KAMAL)
Deputy Executive Director

Mr. Muhammad Kashif | Charge Nurse (BS-16)
Qtr. No.108, Civil Hospital Servant Quarters
Chand Bibi Road, Saddar Town, Karachi.

PID(I) 4117/22

PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD TENDER NOTICE

PROVISION OF TENTAGE SERVICES FOR ABBOTTABAD CRICKET STADIUM AND BUGTI STADIUM QUETTA

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) wishes to invite sealed bids from eligible parties who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue for the provision of Tentage Services at Abbottabad and Quetta Cricket Stadiums.

Bidding documents can be obtained free of cost by interested parties from the undersigned/ respective venue In-charge from Monday to Friday during office hours (09:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. Pakistan Standard Time) by or before 12-01-2023.

The bidding documents can also be obtained through following email (Muhammad.Khalid@pcb.com.pk).

Complete sealed bids should be submitted in the manner specified in the bid documents at below given address by or before 10:30 am on 17-01-2023. The bids shall be opened on same date/ day at 11 am. This advertisement is also available on websites of PCB (www.pcb.com.pk) and PPRA (www.ppra.org.pk).

Parties providing unsubstantiated and/or incorrect information are liable to be disqualified. The disqualified bidders will be informed of the grounds of rejection upon receipt of a written request by PCB.

Information obtained from any other source shall not be deemed official.

Brigadier (R) Jahangir Akram Cheema, SI (M)
General Manager Administration & Coordination
PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD
GADDAFI STADIUM, FEROPUR ROAD
LAHORE – Pakistan
Tel: 042-3571-7231-4, Fax: 042-3571-1860

PCB reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel or amend the bidding process at any stage and may reject any or all bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance.

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-

S.No	Description & IT No.	Tender Fee (Rs.)	Fixed Bid Security (Rs.)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place
1.	SLA for LAN Infrastructure equipment at AIIAP, Lahore for three years No. HQCAA/2405/040/XXIT	1000/-	Total Rs. 275,000/-	17-01-2023 11.00 Hours (strict)	17-01-2023 11.30 Hours (strict)

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents obtainable from under mentioned office through request letter which must be attached with proofs of Active Taxpayer, GST/INTN certificates, professional tax certificate of the bidder. Bid documents can be obtained on any working day between 0900 Hrs to 1300 Hrs (subject to change in working hours/timings due to Govt. Orders) by paying Tender Fee (non-refundable) through bank challan in Account No. 6-1-2-20614-714-115525 through bank challan in Habib Metropolitan bank Ltd., Star gate Branch (METRO), Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi or Pay order (for out of city firms) in favour of Civil Aviation Authority. No Bid Documents would be issued on the Bid opening date. Bids must be dropped in Tender Box placed at under mentioned office by or before due date as per schedule. Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period. PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk and CAA website www.caapakistan.com.pk.

Warning: Any financial instrument submitted by bidder, if found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR, I.T,
HQS CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY, JIAP KARACHI.
TEL: 021-99072191; FAX: 021-99242181

www.caapakistan.com.pk

PID(K)#1841/22

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) CORRIGENDUM NO.02

DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF 0.3 MGD SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, AT NEW GWADAR INT'L AIRPORT, GWADAR.

1. Referring to the tender notice and corrigendum no. 1 published in the leading newspapers including daily The News and Daily JUNG as well as on PCAA and PPRA websites on 26th October 2022 and 15th December 2022, respectively for the subject Project.

2. The Date for obtaining the documents and submission/ Opening of Bidding Documents for subject work is extended to 29th & 30th January 2023 respectively. The time for submission and opening and all other terms & conditions of the Tender Notice published earlier shall remain the same.

DIRECTOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, B-6, KDA Scheme No.1, Karsaz,
Shahra-e-Faisal Karachi, Tel: 021-34370374
Email: Director.PDE@caapakistan.com.pk
PID(K)#1846/22 www.caapakistan.com.pk

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BOARD
KPITB
Plot No: 134, 135 & 136, Industrial Estate Phase V, Hayatabad, Peshawar,
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, 091-5891513, 091-5891516, Fax: 091-5891511
info@kpitb.gov.pk www.kpitb.gov.pk

ADDENDUM NOTICE

With reference to the "Invitation for Bid" bearing Procurement Reference Number KPITB/22/IFB/061 & INF(P)/7111/22, RENOVATION WORT AT CITIZEN FACILITATION CENTER PESHAWAR issued with the bid submission date of 06th January, 2023, has been extended till 13th January, 2023 at 11:00 AM. The opening of the bid will be made on the same date at 11:30 AM.

All other terms and condition will remain unchanged.

Assistant Director Procurement,
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board
(KPITB) Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,
134-Industrial Estate, Hayatabad,
Peshawar, Pakistan. INF(P) 7236/22

www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com

AUCTION OF SULPHUR

Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) the largest Exploration & Production listed Company of Pakistan invites Sealed Bids from the interested parties for Auction of Sulphur, registered with Federal/ Provincial Income Tax & Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue, as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rule:

S. #	TENDER ENQUIRY NO.	Material & Location	Approx. quantity in MT/ Tons	Base Price (Exclusive of Taxes/ Duties) Per MT/Ton in Pak Rs.	Bid Bond (Amount in Pak Rs.)	Bidding Procedure	Bid Submission Date	Bid Opening Date
1	PROC/ LF/PT/ COMM/ SUL- PHUR- 18959/ 22	Auction Round # 141: Sale of Sulphur in 31 (Thirty One) Lots i.e. 100 M.Tons (10 lots), 200 M.Tons (10 lots) and 400 M/Tons (11 lots) each from Dakhni Oil Field, District Attock, Near Jand, Punjab Province.	7,400	50,000/-	5% of Gross quoted value	Single Stage Single Envelope	16.01.2023 AT 11:30	16.01.2023 AT 12:00

- The Master Set of Tender Document/ bidding documents containing Annexure(s), SOR/TOR, detailed terms & conditions, Tender Notice and procedure for submission of bids are available on OGDCL website for the interested bidders which can be viewed and downloaded from www.ogdcl.com under the title bar of Tenders/Tenders Download without any cost.
- The bids/offers, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must reach at the address mentioned below on or before the date and time mentioned above and the same will be opened as per above mentioned schedule above against each Tender.
- Bidders are requested to contact Manager Supply Chain Management (SCM) Local at Phone # +92-51-92002-3983/ 2623127 for any further queries/ information.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk and OGDCL website at www.ogdcl.com.

GENERAL MANAGER
(SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT)
OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
OGDCL HOUSE, JINNAH AVENUE, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN
PHONE NO. 92-51-92002-3795/3540, FAX NO. 92-51-9244139
LARGEST TAX PAYERS COMPANY OF THE NATION "SAY NO TO CORRUPTION" WE EXPLORE PROSPERITY

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

TENDER NOTICE

(SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPE E-BIDDING SYSTEM)

C&W Department Highway Division-I Peshawar invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms/suppliers in accordance with procurement rules 2014 on single stage two envelope procedures for the following IT Equipment up to 18-01-2023.

S.No.	Item of Work	Quantity
1	(SMD P 1.8 SMD screen) P 2.5 SMD Screen 11ft X 6ft Fix installation (modules panel) LED Type led2020 Refresh rate > 1920Hz Control way Computer, real time, off-line, wireless, and internet etc. Communication Distance Cat5 UTP 100 meters, max, 130 meter; or optical fiber Processor : 3 in 1, USB, HDMI,VGA, DVI, CVBS, LAN, AUDIO INPUT, OUTPUT Laptop (Branded) : core I 5, 500gb hd, 4 gb ram Sound system : 30 watt speaker wall mounted qty 8 Mixer 700 watt, 4 channel, Input 220v Table mic qty 01, wireless mic qty 02 Installation + commissioning complete in all respect with all type of supporting item as required.	1
2	Color Printer (Branded) Print, scan, and copy (network control), speed 26 copies/prints per minute, reverse auto documents feeder, print resolution 1800x600 dpi, full color and B/w scanning, file formats: JPEG, TIFF, PDF etc. Touch screen pannel, 1-year warranty, printable paper size: A5, A3, banner paper max 1200 x 297mm	2
3	LCD (Smart TV Branded) size "55" inch Resolution standard 4k, pixel 3840x2160, HDMI, USB, Ethernet, analog Audio input, smart TV Features	2
4	IPAD (Branded) 254.7 x 166.3 x 6.9 mm, Non-removable Li-Po 8720mAh battery Charging Fast charging 33W Power Delivery 3.0, 256GB built-in, 6GB Ram UFS 3.1 Card slot microSDXC (NO), Octa-core (1x2.96 GHz Kryo 485 Gold & 3x2.42 GHz Kryo 485 Gold & 4x1.78 GHz Kryo 485 Silver) Qualcomm Snapdragon 860 (7nm) GPU Adreno 640, Bluetooth 5.0, A2DP, LE USB Type-C, WLAN (Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g/n, Wi-Fi Direct, hotspot).	7
5	External Hard Disk 1-TB Faster, reliable, convenient, large capacity, 960 GB, 450MB/S Read and Write etc	10
6	Mouse 4-Track Wireless Wireless, 2.4 GHz, with usb nano receiver, optical tracking, one month Battery life.	20
7	USB 64-GB 2.0/3.0 Read Speed 130MB/s	10

TERMS & CONDITION:-

- The Firm/bidder must be register with Income Tax/Sales Tax Department and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) reflected as Active Tax payer on the list of FBR.
- Firm/Supplier should at least three years of experience in supply of I.T equipments
- Bid documents and instruction to Bidder can be downloaded up to one day prior to the opening date from C&W website www.cwd.gkp.pk KPRA website
- The Supplier shall be registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (P.E.C) for the year 2022-23 in the relevant category & field of specialization EE09, and must be enlisted with C&W Department of Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Nonrefundable bidding entry fee @0.03% of tender cost notified vide Section Officer (Confidential) Chief Minister Secretariat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar No. SO(C)/CMS/KPK/2021/2828-31 dated 05-04-2021.
- The firm must have bid security of 2% in the shape of call deposit in the name of under signed.
- Evaluation of Technical Proposal will be carried out with pass/fail threshold in passing all the fields in the Technical Evaluation Criteria in the bid solicitation document. Technical Bid shall be sealed in a Sealed envelope clearly marked "Technical Bid" addressed to the Executive Engineer Highway Division-I Bacha Khan Chowk Peshawar and shall be submitted through Pakistan Post/UMS/Courier before closing time.
- Technical and Financial Bids shall be prepared as per the specification given in the tender document. Manufacturer warranty for two year and free of cost repair during the warranty period mentioned on official letter head of the Firm. Financial bids of only technically qualified bidders shall be opened and evaluated
- Bids validity period shall be 90-days.
- A pre-bid meeting shall be held on 16-01-2023 at 11:00 AM in the office of the undersigned for clarification of any query regarding the evaluation criteria, bid solicitation documents RFP or any other related documents to be attended by the interested bidders. Minutes of the said meeting shall be considered as part and parcel of the Contract agreement.
- For all other terms/conditions/documents related to the proposal the undersigned may be contacted on any working day during the office hours.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
HIGHWAY DIVISION-1, PESHAWAR
Phone # 091-9211371

INF(P) 7237/22



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan performing groundbreaking of the project regarding construction and beautification of University Road, University Town under Peshawar Uplift Programme Phase-II.

Education for Afghan girls a must for development

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As the world agonizes over Afghan Taliban's clampdown on girls' education and exclusion of females from employment, tribal elders and intellectuals from Pakistan and Afghanistan's border region remain divided over the issue. This division became obvious during a Pak-Afghan Tribal Stakeholders Dialogue held at Peshawar. While most of the two dozen participants declared education as a fundamental right for girls, many attempted to justify Taliban's orders by saying impediments to girls' education are not entirely due to religion, but cultural and tribal attitudes of the society too.

Currently, around 850,000 Afghan girls are out of secondary schools - up to 80% percent of the total female student population above the primary education level. The dialogue, organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in collaboration with OESP, Afghanistan, was meant to measure the potential leverage of the tribal leaders with the Taliban regime on the issue of education and employment for women. The participants of the dialogue included CRSS Executive director Imtiaz Gul, Project Director (OESP) Shafiq Hassan and tribal elders from the bordering areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Ningarhar, Shinwaar,

Mohmand, South and North Waziristan, Kurram, Khyber).

Some of the elders opined that the international community should not make its support for the needy millions in Afghanistan conditional with the permission to girls' secondary education and employment. The Pakistani elders expressed concerns regarding the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the problems following the influx of refugees into Pakistan. They also stressed the need for the world community to nudge Taliban into compliance with the commitments they made in the Doha Peace Agreement, especially concerning Afghan girls' education and human rights. They noted that governments on both sides should realize and legitimize the tribal leaders' centuries-old role in peacemaking. Only the masses (Oolas) can bridge the gap, therefore, the consultation process and people-to-people ties need to be strengthened.

In the interest of economic and people-to-people connectivity, a robust mechanism should be devised to address the issues in trade and public movement, and new infrastructure and border markets should be developed as an essentiality to enhance relations. "850,000 Afghans have applied for a Pakistani visa, in addition to already documented nearly two million Afghans in Pakistan. This

situation is overwhelming the administration," said a participant about the surge in refugee influx.

Trade should be apolitical; not be held hostage to geopolitics. The rampant corruption in the trade and transit process should be dealt through joint mitigation efforts. The participants expressed concerns about the shrinking trade volume between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the brisk decamping of Afghan traders from the economic sphere due to the inimical business environment. The gathering evoked an insightful discussion on women's rights, where the participating tribal elders deemed Taliban's attempt to pull women off the public sphere as of a serious concern. They noted that Islam empowers women and thus, they need to be included in the economic workforce in the light of

Sharia and culture. While efforts should be made to include them, external interference in these matters cannot be accepted, hence, a domestic discourse on these issues needs to be carried forward. The elders said that the pursuit of knowledge is imperative but needs to be within the boundaries of Shariah and norms of the territories. The participants demanded measures from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to ensure education for all its citizens with dignity, including women.

Depts directed to submit reports to RTPSC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shafiullah Khan has directed all subordinate departments to regularly submit their monthly reports to the Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC).

These directives were issued during a meeting regarding the Right to Services Commission in the provincial capital held here on Friday. Besides, District Monitoring Officer, Samia Sarwar Shah, officers of the subordinate departments attended the meeting at large. The meeting discussed the performance of the departments in detail and directed for the redressal of the public complaints immediately and display of the details of services outside their offices till January 5, 2023 and also mentioned the name of service and their fee.

The subordinate departments have also been directed to mention the names and telephone numbers of the responsible officers and those who failed in the provision of services. The meeting also decided to initiate action against those officers, who are not submitting regular reports of their departments. The meeting was told that 37 more services have been included in the jurisdiction of the Right to Services Commission. So maximum relief could be extended to the people. At the end of the meeting, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shafiullah Khan distributed commendation certificates among the best performing officers regarding Right to Services.

Fatimid Foundation role praised

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Rotary Club University Town and famous businessman Naem Akhtar lauded Fatimid Foundation role for thalassemia during his visit to Hayatabad center, on Friday.

During his visit to Fatimid Foundation he met with Administrator Badar Hussain. Fatimid Foundation Administrator briefed Naem Akhtar on different facilities at center while the guest also met with thalassemia patients.

The guest granted Rs25 thousand and said that thalassemia patients are children of nation while committed to continue his support. Fatimid Foundation Administrator Badar Hussain paid thanks to Naem Akhtar for his support and hopeful that the foundation will continue to serve humanity.

CTO visits Traffic Police Line

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Shehzada Omar Abbas Babar paid a surprise visit to Traffic Police Lines here on Friday to review security and other arrangements.

Besides, DSP Traffic Headquarters, Zahoor Khan, Line Officer and other traffic police officials were also accompanied him on the occasion. During the visit the CTO checked daily diary, record, personal statement, lockup, uniform godown and various other sections.

Similarly, during the checking of the residential barrack, he also collected first hand information from the traffic police personnel regarding problems and issued special directives for provision of all possible facilities and improvement in security and other arrangements.

Culture show today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ghandhara Hindko Board Peshawar with aegis of Ghandhara Hindko Academy would arrange its seventh musical and cultural show here on Saturday. According to a press release, the cultural show would be held at Nishtar Hall Peshawar at 3 p.m.

WAPDA, PEDO sign MoU for professional engineers training

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An agreement has been reached between Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) and Hydro Power Training Institute (HPTI) Mangala WAPDA for training courses related to staff skills in using machinery and other technical issues will be conducted, which will increase the capacity of professional engineers and provide them with opportunities to learn modern skills.

In this regard, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed

between PEDO and HPTI Mangala WAPDA. The signing ceremony of the agreement was held at PEDO House Peshawar under the chairmanship of Chief Executive Engineer Naem Khan. On behalf of PEDO Director Admn/HR Mohammad Idrees Khattak and Director Mechanical Dr. Akram Ali from HPTI signed the MoU, said an official handout issued here on Friday.

Speaking at the event, Chief Executive PEDO Engineer Naem Khan described the training program as a milestone for the professional engineers asso-

ciated with the power sector. He said that under the said training program, engineers of WAPDA and PEDO will be able to learn modern skills about running power plants and using machinery at the same place.

He thanked HPTI that they will enlighten the professional engineers related to the energy sector in the province with modern skills, which is a big step towards the development of energy in the province and PEDO will emerge as Mini WAPDA a developed institution of the province in the coming days.

KPRA awards top five withholding agents

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue

Authority (KPRA) has awarded top five withholding agents on the basis of their outstanding performance in revenue collection. A taxpayers' appreciation ceremony was held at the KPRA headquarters here where the representatives of the best-performing taxpayers were invited.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance Taimur Jhagra was the chief guest at the ceremony which was also graced by the members of KPRA's policy board including provincial ministers, secretaries and private members of the board. The award-winning taxpayers were including businesses run by individuals, and associations of persons and companies from both the corporate and non-corporate sectors. Besides this, certificates of appreciation were also given to the KPRA's

best-performing officers during the financial year enabling the KPRA to achieve its targets.

To recognize role of its taxpayers, KPRA presented awards to the top contributing taxpayers in the financial year 2021-22. KPRA presented mementos to a total 51 taxpayers selected from 10 different sectors and awarded the top five withholding agents on the basis of their revenue contribution to KPRA in the financial year 2021-22 and their tax overall compliance level.

KPRA Director General Muhammad Kabir Afridi welcomed the taxpayers and members of the KPRA's policy board in his remarks and appreciated the role of the taxpayers and the team of the KPRA for their contribution in enabling the Authority to achieve its revenue and non-revenue targets. "Our aim is to make our province fiscally self-reliant so that our government has enough

funds for its developmental schemes for uplift of the province," Kabir Afridi said adding that the number of registered taxpayers has exceeded 19,000 which shows the trust of the taxpayers on the KPRA and the provincial government.

Minister Finance Taimur Khan Jhagra appreciated the efforts of the KPRA team and the role of the taxpayer, adding that KPRA's annual growth rate was rapidly increasing as compared to other provinces. "This year we are hopeful to take our revenue collection to Rs40 billion," he said adding that the taxpayer's satisfaction has reached 99% in the taxpayers' perception survey which is excellent and shows taxpayers' trust in KPRA. The aim of the event was to recognize the contribution of those who are in the tax net and deserve to be recognized and we will arrange a bigger event in the coming year, he added.

Gynaecology unit inaugurated

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Well-equipped and modern gynecology obstetrics unit and nutrition stabilization center were opened here in district headquarter hospital, Landi Kotal on Friday. The facilities have been established by the world health organization (WHO) with a cost of approximately nine million rupees.

On the request of the medical superintendent (MS) an elder of the area cut the ribbon to formally inaugurate the facility. Sharing details MS of the health center Dr Jamshed Saeed Sherani that the facility includes a labor room, pre and post delivery wards. Separate rooms were set up for HIV, HBS, HCV patients, he added.

He maintained that a stylish ward for mal-nutrition children had been set up to ease the affected children. Admission ward, play room and provision of nutrition supplement were among the services that would be available in the section. With the setting up of the new capability, additional treatment would be provided to the visiting patients and would help to decrease referral cases. He urged the locals to take their female patients to the DHQ hospital and exploit the facilities being supplied to them.

Cheque handed over to KP govt

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Haripur University Vice Chancellor Professor Shafiqur Rahman presented a check of a large sum of money to the Secretary Provincial Government on behalf of the university employees. According to the details Vice Chancellor Haripur University Professor Dr. Shafiqur Rehman donated a check of Rs 1283939 Rupees.

9 officers replaced in bureaucratic reshuffle

F.P. Reprot

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has ordered transfers and postings of 9 officials of BS-19 and BS-18 in a major reshuffle of the bureaucracy, said an official notification issued by Establishment Department here on Friday.

According to the notification, Muhammad Nasir Khan (PMS BS-19), Additional Secretary, Information & Public Relations Department) has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Tribal District Lower South Waziristan against the vacant post while Rehan Gul Khattak (PMS BS-19) Director Food Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa has been posted as Deputy Commissioner, Tribal District North Waziristan by replacing Shahid Ali (PMS BS-18), who has been posted as Deputy Commissioner Buner.

Similarly, Capt (Retd) Bilal Shahid Rao (PAS BS-18) Project Director, SDLR NMAs P&D Department has also been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner Mansehra by replacing Adnan Khan Behtani (PAS BS-18), who has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Chief Minister's Secretariat, Peshawar against the vacant post.

Abdul Haleem Khan (PMS BS-18) Additional

Secretary, Home & Tribal Affairs Department has been relieved and directed to report to Establishment Department while Capt (Retd) Sanaullah Khan (PAS BS-18) who was awaiting posting in Establishment Department has been posted as Additional Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs Department. Furthermore, Muhammad Yasir Hassan (PMS BS-18) Additional Secretary Zakat, Ushr & Social Welfare Department has been transferred and posted as Director Food Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Shabir Khan (PMS BS-18), Deputy Commissioner, Buner has also been directed to report to Establishment Department.

CCPO visits checkpoints

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: CCPO Peshawar Mohammad Aijaz Khan paid late night visits to different check posts. He visits Sirband, Achinni Cross and Budhabar check posts. CCPO lauded the courage of policemen for repelling an attack on the

Achini Cross check post a few days ago.

During the visit, he made a detailed review of the security arrangements inside and outside and around with the help of night vision. Instructions were issued to cops on the duty to ensure use of bullet proof jackets and helmets during the duty.

The CCPO also directed the police officers to conduct intelligence-based operations against the miscreants and widen the scope of search operations on credible information. Aijaz Khan interacted with the cops and got information about their problems in the check posts.



PESHAWAR: Former MNA Ayesha Gulalai addressing a press conference. - F.P. photo



PESHAWAR: Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Admn) KP giving away certificate to a participant of Master Training Course of RMS at Sareena Peshawar. — F.P. photo.

Peace must be a priority for national progress

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faig Shah has praised the initiatives that have been made in

Corps Commanders Conference (CCC) chaired by COAS Gen Syed Asim Munir is highly laudable. Shah demanded the implementation of National Action Plan (NAP) for maintaining law and order at border regions and thwarting indian's conspiracies hatched against Pakistan.

A statement issued here on Friday, the party chief emphasized that political parties, military institutions, establishment and all seg-

ments should jointly reshape the National Action Plan. He warned any amnesty and leniency can lead to national loss.

Faig noticed as long as there was peace but political disputes hampered the pace of progress. The ATP chairman stressed it is a dire need of the hour to be united for national security. He asked for sacrifices for institutions and the whole nation rendered for peace that should not go into vain. "We've render 'unmatched' and 'countless' since for two decades, so world should recognized them,"

Shah held the world institutions responsible for instability and human catas-

trophe in war-torn Afghanistan so they should take serious steps for their elimination. Cooperation needs to be enhanced with the incumbent Afghan government, he asserted. The ATP chief stressed the need for bringing peace and stability in "war-torn" Afghanistan to pave the way for progress in the whole world.

Faig asked the parliament, political parties and religious leaders to raise their voice under a single platform. He added peace should be prioritized in the country. He called upon the media, think tanks and all segments to fulfill their due responsibility.

KPCTA DG calls visits Khana-e-Farhang Iran

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Director General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cultural Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan has said that both the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran shared centuries-old culture and they can mutually work for the promotion of tourism and cultural activities. He was talking to Director General Khana-e-Farhang Iran, Mehran Iskandaryan who called on him in the office of KPCTA.

DG KPCTA desired to prepare a plan for the exchange of stakeholders related to the tourism, culture and sports sectors. He

said that it would strengthen cordial relations between the two Muslim countries besides exploring new vistas of economic and trade promotion. Speaking on the occasion, Mehran Iskandaryan proposed holding a cultural fair by both countries in Nishtar Hall Peshawar. He said cultural stalls; pictures of historic places would be displayed while movies featuring the culture of Iran would also be screened at the fair.

He said that event would apprise people about the cultural similarities between both countries and provide a platform for stakeholders of both countries to promote tourism and culture.



In brief

Two notorious bandits killed

KASHMORE (PPI): Two notorious bandits have been gunned down by Buxapur police on Friday during an encounter who were carrying headmoney of millions of rupees and were also involved in several inhuman criminal cases. One of them, Sharif Shar was recommended for Rs.5 million, and was a *symbol of terror* in Kashmore district. He was declared head of dacoits after the killing of Sultan alias Sultoo Shar. He was wanted in more than 30 heinous cases of kidnapping for ransom, police martyrdom, encounters & murders. He was also nominated in the Ghotki incident in which 5 police officers embraced shahadat recently. During the encounter his accomplice notorious dacoit Wahab @ papoo Bhangwar was also killed. Deputy General of Police (DIGP), Larkana Range, Mazhar Nawaz Shaikh, on hearing the news, immediately rushed to the area in the morning and appreciated the efforts of the police party which is working round the clock to eliminate gangsters and dacoits.

Three kite sellers arrested

SARGODHA (INP): Factory area police arrested three kite sellers and recovered 2600 kites from them here on Friday. Police said that the team during a crack down conducted raid in Mandi chowk, Bhakkar and arrested two kite sellers Muhammad Ashraf and two others. Police launched investigation.

Empowerment of women

MIRPUR (INP): Speakers at capacity building workshop exclusively for women mediators emphasized on equal access of both men and women to education, healthcare, and technology to ensure their vibrant and result oriented constructive role in all sections of the society. The day-long workshop was hosted by the world fame Kashmiri think tank, Center for Peace, Development, and Reforms (CPDR) here Friday encourage the women participation in all spheres of life with due powers. The participants comprising about 20 women activists from the Muzaffarabad region discussed the role of women in the socio-economic sphere of life in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and to formulate strategies to improve their representation in decision-making. There was broad agreement on this occasion that empowering women and promoting gender equality can fundamentally liberate human potential. Seasoned academician of Pakistan Prof. Dr. Shaheen Akhtar said that women's participation was crucial to maintaining peace in longstanding and durable practices. The involvement of civil society groups and incorporation of women's organizations in social systems minimizes their failure chances by 64 percent, endorsing that negotiation and mediation are the fundamental methods of conflict resolution", she added. She criticized the existing power structure and exclaimed that it required modification and an improved discourse on gender. "The literacy rate of women in AJK is 67 percent, indicating the high level of girls' enrollment in schools as compared to other regions where noticeable gender disparity exists," she articulated. However, women still have limited access to information, training and decision-making powers. Hence, their creativity, insight, and entrepreneurial inspirations remain challenged.



UPPER DIR: Adviser to Prime Minister Amir Muqam addressing a gathering at Warhi area.

Jirga offers support to police for peace

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The unity of the police, the business community and the people to create a society free from crime and drugs, assurance of full cooperation from the public and businessmen to the police authorities to free Swat from all kinds of crimes and create a peaceful society.

A Grand Jirga was held in Javed Iqbal Police Line, Kabal. Bodies belonging to different schools of thought, Traders Federation political and social figures, officials of DRC, business community, lawyers community, elected local body representatives and others participated in full.

On this occasion, the Jirga assured DIG Malakand range Sajjad Khan, DPO Swat Shafiuallah Gandapur and other relevant police officials of full cooperation to eliminate social evils and assured full cooperation and offered free services with the police to create a crime-free society.

Regional Police Officer

Malakand Sajjad Khan has said to the Grand Jirga that the present atmosphere of peace and order in Malakand Division has been established thanks to the sacrifices of the police and the people. The situation here is completely peaceful now, the police have conducted search and strike operations in the difficult areas of the entire division and the area has been declared clear. The police will take timely action on the information.

DPO Swat Shafiuallah Gandapur, SP Special Branch Pir Zarbadshah and other police officers were also present in the ceremony. On this occasion, RPO Malakand said that the police have shown their bravery in all situations and against terrorism and will play a leading role. He said that it is our firm determination that this atmosphere of better peace should be established in Swat and other areas of the division and the police will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to achieve this goal.

On this occasion, the

RPO appealed to the parents to keep an eye on their children so that they stay away from drugs and other bad associations. The RPO said that all the DPOs have been instructed to adopt a better attitude towards the public in the police stations. From the ceremony, DPO Swat Shafiuallah Gandapur said that the Swat Police is standing firm against criminals and here. Law and order will be maintained in any case. He said that the efforts of Swat police are going on to bring the drug dealers to the role of infidels and in recent days many drug dealers have been arrested and huge quantities of drugs have been recovered from them and the perpetrators have been sent to jail, he added that the police need the full cooperation of the public. On this occasion, President Malakand trade Federation Abdul Rahim said that they will fully cooperate with the police for the complete elimination of crimes. In this regard, the actions of DIG and DPO are commendable.

Thar power plant synchronized with Grid

ISLAMKOT (PPI): A 330 MW Thar coal-fired power plant was successfully synchronized with the National Grid from Islamabad area, lifting the total power production from Thar coal to around 3,000MW on Friday. The project is a joint venture among Hub Power Company Ltd (Hubco), Thal Engineering Ltd, Novatec Limited, and China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) which is also the EPC contractor.

ThalNova Thar Power Limited is a 330 MW Coal Fired Power Project based on Thar coal. It is part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Minister for State Dr Mahesh Malani, on behalf of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah whose private flight was canceled due to bad weather in Thar, inaugurated the synchronization of 330MW of ThalNova with the national grid by switching the button in the control room of the project.

Hubco Group CEO Kamran Kamal and CEO ThalNova Saleemullah Memon gave a detailed briefing to Mr Malani about the project and lauded the efforts of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for his support and

encouragement to the investors for generating electricity from Thar coal. The Chief Minister in his message to the inauguration ceremony said that the addition of power plants like ThalNova that utilized local fuel would significantly support Pakistan in reducing its dependency on imported fuel. He added that ThalNova has also created hundreds of direct employment opportunities for locals.

Shah said that the Thar coal reserves could be used to generate 100,000MW electricity for over 200 years. "The utilization of Thar coal would immensely impact Pakistan's development, allowing the government to save up to \$6 billion on fuel imports," he said. The project started in March 2019 to ensure the earliest utilization of indigenous Thar coal. The project experienced delays due to COVID-19 pandemic. However, it has now been synchronized with the national grid. The chief said that ThalNova would utilize indigenous coal from Phase 2 of Sindh Engro Coal Mining at Thar Block 2, and it would bring the cost of energy from Thar Coal Block 2 to Rs 9/kwh-rs versus the imported coal

plants which cost around Rs 20-30/kw-hr.

Passengers rescued

RAWALAKOT (INP): A tourist bus that was stuck in snow somewhere between Abbaspur and Mehmood Gali in Rawalakot was rescued on Friday. According to the rescue sources, the bus was carrying 30 passengers including women and children.

The police personnel and volunteers took part in the rescue operation. The passengers in the bus reached Rawalakot safely. The bus had stuck on road while moving towards Haveli. Meanwhile, due to heavy snowfall in Abbottabad and Galyat, dozens of vehicles of tourists and locals are stranded on the Murree Road in Kandla. Hundreds of tourists were trapped in their vehicles in Abbottabad as Murree Road has been blocked after a snowfall. The TV channel report said that the temperature has been dropped in Abbottabad so tourists including women and children began to shiver in the cold as up to one foot of snow has fallen in Abbottabad and Galyat.

Flour shortage hits Quetta Utility Stores

QUETTA (INP): A massive flour shortage has hit the Quetta Utility stores despite the government's subsidized flour scheme.

As per details, the prices of flour have skyrocketed in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan. Now a 1-kilo bag of flour is sold at Rs130 which was previously available at Rs125 in the province. Whereas the 20 kg is sold for Rs 2500, the 50 kg bag is raised from Rs 6000 to Rs 6500. The 100 kg large bag now cost Rs 12000.

The flour mills association said that the hike in prices is the result of inefficiencies of the government. If flour is not provided to flour mills then the situation will get worse. Earlier, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) taken important decisions regarding the subsidized gas supply to fertilizer companies, the wheat flour scheme for KP and others.

Mother with two children electrocuted

BOUREWALA (INP): Two minors along with their mother on Friday received burn injuries, with one in critical condition after coming in contact with highly transmitted electric wires dangling over the rooftop of their home.

Locals had constructed homes below high-voltage power wires and they were already served notices to adopt alternative measures, said a Mepeco official. According to Rescue 1122, the victims identified as Ali Hassan (6) and his sister Noor Fatima (4), children of a local labourer, while playing on the rooftop of their home, touched the wire passing closely over the open area that sparked and burnt them.

Their mother, Nasreen Akhtar also got electrocuted when she tried to detach them from the wire. Rescuers reached the spot upon receiving the call and shifted the injured to THQ hospital, where the condition of Ali Hassan was stated to be critical. Meanwhile, the locals said they had submitted numerous applications to the Mepeco officials to rectify the situation but in vain. The Mepeco official responded that the respective wires were installed in 1978, but the citizens started constructing double-storey homes under high-voltage wires. Warning notices were issued many times before to avoid construction near wires, but nobody paid heed to it, he added.

Imran 'failed to deliver' in KP: Amir Muqam

F.P. Report

DIR UPPER: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and Culture Division Engr Amir Muqam, here, on Friday, said that "Imran Niazi has failed to deliver for masses" despite his party's nine-year-long rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa".

Addressing to the party workers and people of Dir Upper, after inaugurating electricity projects, including an electrical feeder at Akhgram, Engr Amir Muqam said that "Imran Niazi has ruined the country's economy, and social values and was found guilty of taking foreign funding even though from rival countries in a bid to destabilize and bankrupt Pakistan".

He said the people of KP were now looking towards PML (N) for the resolution of their problems and would "reject the looter of Toshakhana" in the upcoming general election. "Imran Khan has brought disgrace to the country after [allegedly] selling the Haram Sharif's model watch for monetary gains in the market," he said, adding that such expensive gifts

were given to the prime minister by foreign dignitaries as a mark of respect and strengthening of friendship rather than selling it in the open market.

Engr Amir Muqam said that even close friends of Imran Khan were now talking about how he (Imran) was selected in the 2018 general election and imposed on the country.

Meanwhile, Amir Muqam has said the government is aware of the public grievances and will try its best to provide relief to them. He was addressing a party gathering after inaugurating a sui gas Town Border Station (TBS) at the Timgara Shaheed Chowk as chief guest here on Friday. Besides party workers, executive engineer SNGPL Nadar Khan, executive engineer construction Fayyaz Khan, JUI-F district chief Siraj ud Din and area elders attended the function. The gathering was also addressed by the PML-N divisional president Malik Jehan Zeb, district president Farooq Iqbal, general secretary Sardar Javed Akhtar, Timgara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanudin Din and others.

Amir Muqam said the

federal government would complete its tenure and general elections would be held on time. The PML-N leader said there would be no early election on the dictation and will of a 'failed' political leader. He said the country president had admitted that the establishment had helped bring Imran Khan into power in 2018. He said the PTI had no issue in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so it should dissolve the provincial assembly. He claimed the PNL-N Supremo Nawaz Sharif had included the Chakdara Chitral route in the CPEC project while the PTI government had dropped it.

He said the former premier Imran Khan had ruined the economy of the country and the PDM had been trying its hard to steer the country out of that turmoil. He alleged that Imran Khan had done a financial terrorism with the country and he should be taken into accounts. He said that the PTI chief was leveling baseless allegations against Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mian Shabbaz Sharif but the foreign courts had proved him wrong.

Highway widening and repair work started

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Peshawar Chitral highway widening and repair work has been started by National Highway Authority (NHA), the construction and repair of these roads will make travel easier for local people and tourists, on the other hand it will also reduce the rate of accident after construction of these roads, there was a wave of happiness among the people of the area.

Roads play a key role in the development of any region or country. Chitral is a tourist district where every year Brughal, Qaqalisht, Shandoor festival is held as well as various annual religious festivals also organizing by Kailash tribe. Tourists from all over the world, including Pakistan, come here every year to see the unique culture and unique festivals of Kailas community. But every tourist who comes here has one complaint that the roads of Chitral are very

rough. The roads should be improved so that these tourists do not face while they travelling on these roads.

From Ziarat to Ishrit near Lowari Tunnel, the work on the road has been left unfinished by NHA for many years, the commuters have to face a lot of hardships. However, now the National Highway Authority has started the construction and repair work on the main highway of Peshawar Chitral through Pasban Contractors, which caused a wave of happiness among the local people.

The road will be quite wide upto 40 feet. The opening and necessary repairs of these roads will not only make it easier for local people and tourists to travel, but it will also reduce the ratio of accidents. Bibi Shakra, a woman councillor from Drosh, says that the construction and repair of these roads women can be easily

rushed to the hospital while earlier that they deliver babies or die on the road before reaching hospital.

Engineer Zeeshanul Haque also thanked the NHA for opening and repairing these roads, which will also promote the tourism of Chitral. Abdul Qadir, Chairman of Village Council Drosh Bazar, has described it as very important for promotion of tourism. He says that when the repair work of these roads will complete, it will be easy for people to come and go, as well as it will also promote our tourism. Along with the black topping of the Peshawar Chitral road, concrete work is being done for the first time on the shoulders on both sides of road by transit mixer machine, which will not only ensure the safety of this road, but also the vehicles can be easily overtake or crossing each other as a result the rate of accidents will also be reduced.

Rescue 1122 Dir Lower release annual report

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Rescue 1122 Dir Lower has released its annual performance report for 2022. In the year 2022, Rescue 1122 of Dir Lower district provided services in more than 6169 different accidents.

Unnecessary, dropped and fake calls are included. According to the details, Rescue 1122 Dir Lower under the leadership of District Emergency Officer Abrar Ali provided timely emergency facilities to the public in 6169 different

types of accidents and incidents throughout the district in 2022, 2322 medical emergencies, 421 road traffic accidents, 210 fires, 42 shootings and 39 drownings due to fights, 11 building collapses and other 291 incidents are included. In which the doctors have confirmed the death of 26 people. Rescue 1122 Dir Lower has transported 96 flood-affected people to safe places in the month of August 2022, along with the bodies of 12 dead people. have been recovered and transferred to various

hospitals which were later handed over to the heirs.

By the end of the year, the performance of the Health Referral Ambulance Services led by Rescue 1122 Dir Lower was also unparalleled. Rescue 1122 Dir Lower had treated 2833 patients. Transferred from one hospital to another. In which 1580 within the district and 1253 outside the district were transferred to hospitals. Rescue 1122 became a lifesaver for humans as well as speechless animals and rescued many animals.

SHOs warned for illegal confinement of citizens

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: District Police Officer Hafizabad Rai Mazhar Iqbal has warned SHOs of all police stations that illegal confinement of people and torture in police stations will not be tolerated at all and strict department and legal action will be taken against those who would found to violate the law while SHOs do not need to permission for registering FIRs and all SHOs would ensure timely registration of FIRs without any delay. He issued these directions while surprisingly visiting Police Station Sukheki Mandi.

DPO inspected record, lock up, front desk, barracks of constables and other areas of the police station. He asked questions from accused in lock up regarding provision of basic facilities in the lock up. Taking notice of closure of CCTV Cameras, DPO served show-cause notice to Muharrar police station and directed the SHO to make functional all CCTV cameras without any delay.

Rai Mazhar Iqbal also directed the SHOs to make effective roads patrolling during foggy season and enhance security of all important government installations, worship places and other sensitive installations. He also directed to accord due respect to people visiting for seeking justice and death with patiently and good manners whereas SHOs would ensure their presence in police stations from 3 pm to 5 pm on daily basis for listening their grievances, otherwise, strict action would be intuited against those who would commit violation of directions.

He further said that SHOs would be given quick response on 15 helpline calls and would inspect crime scene of dacoities and highway robbery personally whereas expedite crackdown on drugs peddlers and illicit arms in the district.

Construction of road started: On the special directions of Chief Minister Punjab, Ch. Perviz Elahi, construction work on new carpet Road from

Hafizabad to Head Khanki has been started and this road would be completed with the cost of Rs. 8.25 billion for providing shortest route and easy approach to people of the district to Divisional Headquarter Gujrat.

Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Touqeer Ilyas Cheema visited the road to review pace of work on this mega project. Deputy Director Development Hafiz Mubbashar-ul-Hassan and officers of highway department were also accompanied by him.

DC Directed the officers of highway department and constructor to expedite pace of work on this people welfare project and warned that no negligence and slackness would be tolerated at al. He said that with the completion of this 45 carpet road, distance between district Hafizabad and Divisional Headquarter Gujrat would be reduced in the great extent.

PPP praised Benazir Bhutto: District President Pakistan People's Party

Hafizabad Muhammad Arshad Mehind and President District Bar Madam Khalida Shahid said that anti-Pakistan elements tried to eliminate affection of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto from the hearts of masses to remove candle of Bhatti family from the way but great scarify rendered by Benazir Bhutto was created new spirit among workers of the PPP whereas despite bearing shock, the workers of PPP were committed many years ago to continue mission of Shaheed Muhatrama and that commitment was underway so far.

They were addressing a ceremony held to observed 15th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Shaheed Muhatrama Benazir Bhutto. Prominent lawyer Muazzam Hayyat Bhoon, Sarfraz Arshid, Muhammad Junaid, Secretary PPP women wing Shabnum and a large number of PPP workers attended the ceremony.

Paying tribute to Benazir Bhutto the speakers said that address on December 27, 2007

of Shaheed Muhatrama was very important and every word of her speech was echoing in the minds of people so far. While pinpointing difficulties confronted by the country, Benazir Bhutto was said that our country was endangered and "Sohni Dharti" was calling me, we would never surrender before terrorists while National Flag of Pakistan would be hoisted forever in tribal areas of the country, speakers said and added that Pakistan had to confronted unreparable loss due to martyred of Benazir Bhutto.

Four distribution points established to overcome flour shortage: Taking notice of shortage of wheat flour in the city, Assistant Commissioner Hafizabad Rab Nawaz Chadhar set up two flour points at Fawara Chowk in the heart of the city for ensuring availability of flour in abundance to the people.

AC warned the shopkeepers and sales points owners that punitive action would be taken against those who would found involve in hoarding and over-

charging. He determined that supply of flour would be ensured in the areas according to requirements of the people without any hurdle. The consumers thanked the district administration for providing subsidiary flour on fixed price.

Awareness walk for driving during fogs held: Rescue 1122 Hafizabad arranged a walk under supervision of District Emergency Officer Adnan Nawaz to create awareness about careful driving during foggy season and implementing traffic rules for not only save themselves but also other people from accidents. They carrying banners of the walk were participating inscribed with slogans regarding to adopt road safety measures.

Rescue officials paste reflector tap at back side of rickshaws, tractor trolleys and donkey carts so that drivers could look rickshaws, tractor trolleys and donkey carts in night easily. Officers urged the road users to ensure observe road safety guidelines for saving from accidents.



Peru president backs investigation into protest deaths

LIMA (Reuters): Peruvian President Dina Boluarte said she will provide all necessary resources to prosecutors so they can investigate the more than two dozen deaths during protests that have rocked Peru following the ouster of her predecessor. An estimated 22 people have been killed in clashes during the protests and another six have died in traffic accidents related to street blockades, according to government data.

"We're going to give all the resources possible to the prosecutor's office to investigate the deaths," Boluarte said at a news conference.

Boluarte assumed the presidency earlier this month after leftist President Pedro Castillo was ousted in an impeachment vote hours after attempting to illegally dissolve Congress. She was previously Castillo's vice president.

Castillo was arrested and remains in pretrial detention while under investigation on rebellion and conspiracy charges. His ouster led to days of sometimes violent protests in Peru. In response, Boluarte's government implemented a state of emergency that granted security forces special powers and limited freedoms such as the right to assembly. Human rights groups have accused authorities of using firearms on protesters and dropping smoke bombs from helicopters. The army says protesters have used weapons and homemade explosives.

"The police and army went out on the streets to protect the lives and calm the fears of the 33 million people living in Peru," Boluarte said, but added that the deaths would not go unpunished. "We are not going to allow impunity, they need to be investigated," Boluarte said. A Reuters investigation found



several cases of people who were shot dead in the city of Ayacucho after the military moved into the region to wrest back control.

Interior Minister Victor Rojas said in the conference alongside Boluarte he had information that the protests could reignite, particularly in the south, on Jan. 4 after pausing during the Christmas holidays. He said human rights would be protected if more protests were to break out. "No one wants to repeat the deaths that happened in the first round of conflicts," he said. Boluarte said some neighboring countries had "wrongly interpreted" what happened to Castillo.

In the days after Castillo's ouster, the leftist governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico and Colombia issued a joint statement calling for the protection of Castillo's human rights and said those who removed Castillo should prioritize "the will of the citizens." Another leftist bloc of Latin American countries including Cuba and Venezuela said days later it rejected "the political framework created by right-wing forces against Constitutional President Pedro Castillo." Boluarte pushed back on those criti-

cisms. "What did happen was a breakdown of the constitutional order by (Castillo) wanting to carry out a coup d'état," she said.

Castillo's family have received asylum in Mexico, while Mexican authorities have offered Castillo protection as well, Mexico has said. Peru declared Mexico's ambassador to Lima "persona non grata" and ordered him to leave the country earlier this month, for what it considered Mexico's meddling in Peru's internal affairs. Boluarte said that Peru's foreign ministry was "working hard" to normalize relations for its ambassadors in Mexico, Colombia, Argentina and Bolivia.

"It is important for us, especially for the Pacific Alliance, the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and the Andean Community, to continue working with all the countries in the region," Boluarte said. She maintained that she will remain in office until 2024, when she has proposed to hold new elections, a move that Congress has not yet approved. Boluarte said she would not step down and that her resignation would "generate anarchy in the country."

Eritrean soldiers leave major towns in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters): Eritrean soldiers, who fought in support of Ethiopia's federal government during its two-year civil war in the northern Tigray region, have pulled out of the major towns of Shire and Axum and headed toward the border, three witnesses told Reuters.

The withdrawals follow a Nov. 2 ceasefire signed by Ethiopia's government and Tigray regional forces that requires the removal of foreign troops from Tigray. Eritrea, however, was not a party to the deal, and its troops' ongoing presence in major Tigrayan population centres has raised questions about the durability of the accord.

It was not immediately clear if the Eritrean troops were leaving Tigray entirely or just pulling back from certain towns. Eritrea's Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel told Reuters he could neither confirm nor deny the troops

were withdrawing. Getachew Reda, a spokesperson for the Tigrayan forces, and Ethiopian national security adviser Redwan Hussien did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Friday.

Aid workers in Axum and Shire said they saw several trucks and dozens of cars packed with Eritrean soldiers leaving toward the border town of Sheraro. One of the aid workers said the soldiers were waving goodbye. Tigray residents have accused the Eritrean soldiers of continuing to loot and arrest and kill civilians after the ceasefire.

Eritrean authorities have not directly responded to the allegations. During the war, Eritrean troops were accused by residents and human rights groups of various abuses, including the killing of hundreds of civilians in Axum during a 24-hour period in November

2020. Eritrea rejected the accusations. Eritrea continues to consider the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which leads Tigrayan forces, its enemy. Eritrea and Ethiopia fought a border war between 1998 and 2000, when the TPLF dominated the federal government.

After a slow start, Ethiopia's government and Tigrayan authorities have taken several steps in the past week to implement the peace deal. Representatives from both sides met in Tigray's capital Mekelle to set up a monitoring team to assess progress on the disarmament of Tigray forces, the restoration of services and humanitarian aid, and the withdrawal of foreign troops. Federal police also entered Mekelle in accordance with the truce, state-owned Ethiopian Airlines resumed flights and Ethio Telecom reconnected its services to the capital and 27 other towns.

Opp says foreign assets will not pass to Maduro

CARACAS (Reuters): Opposition lawmakers in Venezuela seeking to remove interim president Juan Guaido said that step will not result in foreign assets passing to President Nicolas Maduro's government. Three of four major opposition groups - Justice First, Democratic Action and A New Era - are backing a bill to oust Guaido and create a five-member commission to manage foreign assets, especially US-based

refiner Citgo, a subsidiary of state-owned oil company PDVSA. The effort received initial approval last week and a second vote could take place on Friday. Guaido and some lawyers have warned that Maduro could take control of assets abroad. Protections for Citgo and for over \$1 billion in gold stored at the Bank of England are

"based on a non-recognition of Maduro which will also be maintained," Justice First lawmaker Alfonso Marquina told legislators and journalists during a virtual meeting.

Guaido has been the global face of Venezuela's fractious opposition since 2019, when he invoked the constitution to assume an interim presidency, garnering backing from the United States and other governments that reject Maduro's 2018 reelection as fraudulent. But Maduro has remained in control of nearly all Venezuela's institutions, including its security forces. International support has waned for Guaido's interim government, which controls some foreign assets and runs many embassies.

"I repeat that what they have told us is that they will continue to support

Venezuela in its fight, they will continue supporting the national assembly," said A New Era lawmaker Nora Bracho.

The interim government has been a pebble in Maduro's shoe, Guaido said in a Twitter video, as he urged lawmakers to replace him instead of dissolving it.

"You have the votes to destroy the interim presidency," Guaido said. "But you also have the votes to maintain it and name the people who form it." Opposition parties hope the United States will extend a license protecting Citgo from possible creditor seizures. The Supreme Court in the United Kingdom - where Maduro has sued for access to the gold - has ruled British courts are bound to accept their government does not recognize Maduro.

Kazakhstan to deport Russian major

ALMATY (Reuters): Kazakhstan is preparing to deport a Russian security officer who fled his country because he objected to the invasion of Ukraine and hoped to find refuge in the West, his wife said. Hundreds of thousands of Russians fled to Kazakhstan and other neighbouring states after the war started. Many of them were civilians, crossing legally as they sought to avoid mobilisation.

As an officer of the Federal Protective Service (FSO), which is tasked with protecting the Russian president, Major Mikhail Zhilin, 36, was barred from leaving Russia and he illegally crossed into Kazakhstan in September when it became clear he could be sent to Ukraine. His wife Yekaterina travelled to Kazakhstan legally with their two children at the same time. Zhilin was detained in Kazakhstan and sentenced to deportation which he tried to preempt by flying to Armenia, only to get detained again before he could board the plane.

Zhilin's wife said a Kazakh court reaffirmed the deportation verdict and Zhilin was already en route to the border while she was contacting human rights lawyers in an attempt to prevent his deportation. Kazakhstan's interior ministry could not be immediately reached for comment. Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic which denied Zhilin's request for refugee status, treads a fine line between staying on friendly terms with Russia, a major trading partner, and not carrying out actions that could make it look like it is taking a pro-war stance, especially since most Kazakh citizens are against the invasion.

Attack kills 10 in Syria

BEIRUT (AP): A militant rocket attack in eastern Syria on Friday targeted a bus with oil industry employees, killing at least 10, the government said. To the north, Syrian Kurdish-led forces announced they arrested 52 militants in an operation against the Islamic State group's sleeper cells.

According to Syria's petroleum ministry, the rocket struck in the Al-Taym gas field in eastern Deir el-Zour province. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said IS was behind the attack. The Observatory also reported a higher death toll from the rocket attack, saying at least 12 workers were killed.

Also Friday, the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said their raids had reportedly thwarted an attack planned for New Year's Eve. The IS militants were hiding in residential areas and farms, a statement from the forces said. The yearslong US-backed campaign had succeeded in crushing the militants' territorial control in Iraq and Syria, but IS fighters maintain sleeper cells and have staged attacks that have killed scores of Iraqis and Syrians in the past months.

The Syrian Kurdish-led forces announced their operation, citing a surge in IS attacks and saying that "Operation Al-Jazeera Thunderbolt" aims to target sleeper cells in al-Hol and nearby in Tal Hamis areas. Since 2011, Syria has been mired in a bloody civil war that has drawn in regional and global powers. Syrian President Bashar Assad has mostly regained control of the country, but parts of its north remain under the control of rebels, as well as Turkish and Syrian Kurdish forces.

Also, some 900 US troops in Syria support the Kurdish-led forces' fight against IS and have frequently targeted IS militants, mostly in parts of northeastern Syria under Kurdish control. The US Central Command reported conducting some 313 operations against IS in 2022 in Syria and Iraq, mostly in cooperation with Kurdish-led forces. According to a CENTCOM statement, 215 militants from the Islamic State group were arrested and 466 were killed in Syria.

EU doesn't follow Italy with COVID checks on China arrivals

BRUSSELS (AP): The European Union is assessing Beijing's rollback of its strict anti-infection controls but refrained from immediately following EU member Italy in requiring coronavirus tests for airline passengers coming from China.

Health officials from the 27-member bloc promised to continue talks on seeking a common approach to travel rules. However, the EU's executive arm said the BF.7 omicron variant prevalent in China was already circulating in Europe and that its threat had not significantly grown. "However, we remain vigilant and will be ready to use the emergency brake if necessary," the European Commission said in a statement.

Even though virus experts in the EU have played down the immediate danger, Italy made coronavirus tests mandatory for all airline passengers arriving from China. More than 50% of people screened upon arrival at Milan's Malpensa airport in recent days tested positive for the virus. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni increased pressure on the EU to join Italy's approach. She said requiring COVID tests of all passengers from

China "is only effective if it is taken at the European level," noting that many arrive in Italy on connecting flights through other European countries.

Considering the reluctance from several EU nations and experts, the EU's health security committee said in a statement after meeting that "we need to act jointly and will continue our discussions." Holding off was certainly something Germany wanted. "There is no indication that a more dangerous variant has developed in this outbreak in China ... which would bring corresponding travel restrictions," Health Ministry spokesman Sebastian Guelde said.

A coordinated EU approach is necessary since almost all EU member nations are part of Europe's visa-free Schengen Area. The unrestricted travel means that testing in one nation would not be very effective since travelers from China could enter from another EU nation and spread the virus. After strict travel restrictions at the height of the pandemic, the EU returned to a pre-pandemic system of free travel this fall, but member nations agreed that an "emergency

brake" could be activated at short notice to meet an unexpected challenge.

"At a scientific level, there is no reason at this stage to reimpose specific border controls," Professor Brigitte Autran, a vaccines expert for France's health ministry, told Radio Classique. And even Italy's health minister came with some good news. Orazio Schillaci told the Senate in Rome that sequencing indicates the variants detected in passengers arriving from China are already in circulation in Europe, somewhat easing fears that a new variant from China could start running amok in Europe.

"This is the most important and reassuring news," Schillaci said. The United States announced new COVID-19 testing requirements for all travelers from China, joining some Asian nations that had imposed restrictions because of a surge of infections. Japan will require a negative COVID-19 test upon arrival for travelers from China, and Malaysia announced new tracking and surveillance measures. India, South Korea and Taiwan are requiring virus tests for visitors from China.

Thriving network of fixers preys on migrants crossing Mexico

TAPACHULA (AP): When migrants arrive to the main crossing point into southern Mexico a steamy city with no job opportunities, a place packed with foreigners eager to keep moving north they soon learn the only way to cut through the red tape and expedite what can be a monthslong process is to pay someone.

With soaring numbers of people entering Mexico, a sprawling network of lawyers, fixers and middlemen has exploded in the country. At every step in a complicated process, opportunists are ready to provide documents or counsel to migrants who can afford to speed up the system and who don't want to risk their lives packed in a truck for a dangerous border crossing.

In nearly two dozen interviews with The Associated Press, migrants, officials and those in the business described a network operating at the limit of legality, cooperating with and sometimes bribing bureaucrats in Mexico's immigration sector, where corruption is deeply ingrained, and at times working directly with smugglers. Fixers have always found business with those passing through the country. But the increasing numbers over the last year and Mexico's renewed efforts to control migration by accelerating document processing without clear criteria have made the work more prominent and profitable. The result is a boom-

ing business that often preys on a population of migrants who are largely poor, desperate and unable to turn elsewhere.

Legal papers, freedom from detention, transit permits, temporary visas: All are available for a price via the network. But even though the documents are legal and the cost can be several hundred dollars or more, migrants are at risk of arrest or return to their entry point as they make their way through the country, thanks to inconsistent policy enforcement and corrupt officials at checkpoints. Crossing through Mexico a country plagued by drug cartels that also make millions from migrant smuggling has long been a risk. Legal, free channels that can mitigate danger have always been available through the government. That formal process usually involved requesting asylum, even when people simply wanted documents to move legally to the US border.

But the record number of migrant arrivals has wreaked havoc on the system, particularly at offices in the south. In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, US authorities apprehended people crossing the southwest border 2.38 million times. That's up 37 percent from the year prior. The annual total surpassed 2 million for the first time in August and is more than twice the highest level during Donald Trump's presidency, in 2019.

With more people has come more waiting, desperation and protests. In response, more than a year ago, the Mexican government loosened criteria for some temporary and transit permits, especially for migrants from countries where it would be difficult for Mexico to return them. But with the influx of migrant arrivals, it takes months just to get an appointment to begin the process. Amid the waits and tension, it's tempting to pay fixers and lawyers.

And with the US Supreme Court's decision allowing pandemic-era asylum restrictions to remain in place until it hears arguments in February, it was unclear what kind of effects might be felt by the thousands of migrants already making their way through Mexico to the US border. In the south, migrants going to fixers can generally choose from different packages transit permits, temporary visas promoted on social media and adapted to various scenarios and budgets. Farther north, options are scarce, and paying specific operators may be the only way to get out of a detention center.

Migrants rarely report questionable practices. Most assume their payments and time are part of the price of getting to the US. Even when corruption is reported, authorities seldom take action, citing lack of evidence. In December 2018, when President Andrés Manuel López

Obrador took office, he said fighting corruption was a top priority. He declared the National Immigration Institute one of Mexico's most corrupt institutions. Yet in the past four years, only about one in every 1,000 internal investigations opened by the agency made it to the prosecutor's office, according to data obtained through freedom of information requests.

The National Immigration Institute did not reply to multiple requests for comment about its efforts to combat corruption, and officials there refused to be interviewed. This month, the agency said it had followed up on every recommendation issued by the internal control office as part of its commitment in the fight against corruption. The lack of accountability has made it easy for fixers to operate and exchange payments and information with officials.

The Federal Institute of Public Defenders has denounced arrangements between immigration agents and private lawyers. In response, some of its officials have been harassed and intimidated, according to the agency. "This is never going to end because there are many high-ranking officials involved who are receiving a lot of money," said Mónica Vázquez, a public defender from Puebla, in central Mexico. She and her colleagues believe the situation is only getting worse.

Few tourists, deserted streets in casino hub Macau after reopening

MACAU (Reuters): Three years of COVID-19 forced

Becky Zhang's specialty food business in Macau to near collapse. Founded by her grandmother more than fifty years ago, her store selling pastries and dried beef only survived thanks to residents who bought small quantities to help keep them afloat.

Now, even after the recent reopening of the world's biggest gambling hub, tourists are few and many businesses are shuttered, underlining analysts' views that a recovery will be uneven and take some time. "Macau has not seen any improvement after the recent reopening of the city because many people are infected with COVID, many shops are unable to open,

and no staff are working," 40-year-old Zhang said.

"Now not even 1% of the people come to Macau. Many shops on this street closed because they couldn't hold on...it's miserable," Macau, a special Chinese administrative region, closely followed China's tough zero-Covid strategy since 2019. But in line with mainland China, it reversed course toward living with the virus on Dec. 7.

The densely populated hub of 700,000 sits on China's southern coastline and has an open border with the mainland, with many people living and working in neighbouring Chinese city Zhuhai. However, Macau has been closed off to the rest of the world, including neigh-

bouring financial hub Hong Kong, for the past three years. On Dec. 22, Macau authorities announced that international arrivals including those from Hong Kong and Taiwan no longer needed to undergo a nucleic acid test after landing and could move freely, the biggest steps yet to relax stringent COVID measures. Previously visitors were also required to quarantine in a self-paid hotel for a week.

Since reopening, Macau has grappled with a widespread COVID-19 wave, impacting the number of workers across the city. There has been no sizable uptick in visitor volume in the past week, with industry executives forecasting little change until the Lunar

New Year holiday starting on Jan. 21. Some tourists who managed to travel to Macau from the mainland for Christmas said they were happy about the lack of crowds.

Huang Dandan, a 22-year old woman visiting the Ruins of St Paul, one of its most famous landmarks, said she didn't mind many of the shops being closed due to the pandemic. "It's easier for us to take good pictures at popular locations, so I am very happy about it." Shanghai residents Oscar Beltran and his wife Marta, originally from Spain, said Macau was their first family holiday in three years. "Everyone is so excited, people are outside. We are very happy to move around and travel again."

Tsai thanks troops after China military maneuvers

TAIPEI (AP): Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen thanked navy and army personnel on Friday for their service defending the island, after China sent a record-breaking number of warplanes and ships toward Taiwan this week. Tsai, addressing the Taiwanese Navy's 146th Fleet at a naval base on Penghu Island, said the military maneuvers by China earlier in the week were the largest to date this year.

"Your duty is very heavy ... and I wanted to thank you, our military brothers and sisters, for your hard

work," she said. "Taiwan is on the frontlines of democracy. Only if we are prepared for war can we avoid war, and only if we have the ability to wage war can we stop war." China's military harassment of Taiwan, which it claims is its own territory, has intensified in recent years, and the Communist Party's People's Liberation Army has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis.

At least 47 Chinese planes crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both

sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense. The incident came amid heightened tensions after China fired missiles into the sea and sent planes and ships across the dividing line in the Taiwan Strait in August after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the island.

In response, Tsai has been actively trying to reform the island's military and defense capabilities, revitalizing its shipbuilding industry while also actively purchasing weapons from the US. She announced the extension of compulsory

military service from four months to one year starting in 2024. Tsai addressed that move in her speech to troops on Friday, saying Taiwan would also modernize training for current servicemembers. Taiwan now only requires men to serve for four months in the military, which the public widely views as insufficient for the island's defense. She said the new year-long mandatory service would not be a "waste of time." Tsai visited both a naval and army base in Penghu, an archipelago of several dozen islands off the western coast.

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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 415-374551

Resource depletion and energy conservancy

PRESIDENT Dr. Arif Alvi has called for launching a consensus-based nationwide, comprehensive, and all-encompassing electricity, gas, and water conservation strategies to conserve precious national resources and divert them for the welfare and prosperity of the people. During a meeting on energy conservation at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President underscored that a comprehensive policy and program should be prepared after consulting all stakeholders, including the provinces, besides launching an awareness campaign across the country to conserve electricity, gas, and water.

Nation-building is a magnificent task that needs a sagacious approach by the government in identifying the solution to the issues, awareness and consensus building in the masses, and a wholehearted effort of the entire nation for implementation of the strategy to achieve the national objectives. Historically, Pakistanis as a nation failed to provide schooling to our children in a way that makes them a responsible and responsive citizen of the country by playing a constructive role in society. Both teachers and parents always stressed on the knowledge building of the students instead of character building, training and mannerism of the youth which made them professors instead of practitioners, and resultantly no change occurred in the economic, educational, and social life in the country.

Presently, our nation is facing severe shortages of electricity, oil, gas, and other essential commodities including wheat flour, drinking, and irrigation water almost in all parts of the country. Pakistan is persistently facing thousands of megawatts of electricity on regular basis but our roads and street lights glow the whole night, and government offices, markets, wedding halls, and Public Parks illuminate with multiple LEDs and colorful lights 24/7. Every year, our nation throws millions of gallons unused water into the Arabian sea which could be used for irrigation and electricity production if the government and its managers spare some time and use their managerial skills for public welfare. At the same time, a once agri-sufficient nation is now facing the acute repercussions of food insecurity and cartelization of various industrial groups and hoarders. All those issues are self-created woes of the successive governments and corrupt bureaucracy who never looked ahead of their nose and did not conceive long-term policies instead of ad-hoc measures for instant resolution of the problems.

The Pakistani nation has reached a decisive point and our survival has become impossible if we do not have a sincere analysis of our living and saving habits, extravagances in our social and day-to-day life, and merciless use and wastage of national resources as an individual or as a society that led us to this day. As a nation, we could not adopt such practices and measures that conserve our energy use, including electricity, oil and gas, food commodities, and water consumption so we do not suffer severe shortages and keep surplus for our rainy days.

Islam teaches us the observance of equanimity and contentment in our life while these divine values become more relevant at this critical stage when our nation faces serious challenges to its economic survival, water security, and national sovereignty.

Humanitarian work, and need of inflential

THE United Nations has said that the Taliban's banning of women from working in humanitarian non-governmental organizations is a major blow to vulnerable communities, women, children, and the country. According to the UN authorities, some of the UN agencies in Afghanistan have stopped their activities, while a few other programs will also halt their operations because the Islamic Emirate decided to ban women from working in non-governmental organizations.

Today's woman is an equally important player in the modern world and their role is not limited to only the homemaking activities but she has an equal share in nation-building, industrial development, the IT sector as well as national defense of the nations around the globe. Presently, women are playing very curicial role in our society while a few of the sectors of our national life can not groom without women' participation. Realistically, a conflict-ridden nation like Afghanistan needs more participation of women in national affairs because the women are teachers, nutrition experts, team leaders, community health workers, vaccinators, nurses, doctors, and heads of organizations, and have access to populations that male employees cannot reach. Their participation in aid delivery is unavoidable and non negotiable because the absence of female staff can seriously undermine the social and humanitarian activities of certain organizations.

Presently, Islamic Emirate's ban on girls' education and women jobs has kicked off a hot discussion in the global capitals and multilateral forums while several International Non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and aid groups had stopped their charity and humanitarian work in violence-hit Afghanistan. The United Nations and G7 countries had called the on Afghan interim government to reverse ban on girls' education and women employment in INGOs and other organizations because this restriction seriously hurt the operation of those organizations. Currently, global aid is very crucial for the survival of the Afghan nation that is already staggering for its survival amid acute hunger, food, and energy insecurity amid freezing weather. The current fiasco is a self-made crisis of the Afghan rulers, who have a special tact of discovering new issues out of nothing, but their deeds are being paid by the masses through flush and fluid.

Quote of the day

It is our theory that the people own the government, not that the government should own the people.
— Calvin Coolidge, American President [1923-1929].

China, Russia, Iran and N. Korea failed to fulfill role assigned to them by US

David Narmania

SOUTH Korea was worried about Japan's decision to radically increase military spending. Tokyo's National Security Strategy, adopted this month, aims to double funding for the Self-Defense Forces by 2027, bringing it up to the 2 percent of GDP target for NATO members, America's allies across the world. This will make the Japanese army the third most funded in the world. In total, over five years, the government of Fumio Kishida intends to spend 322 billion dollars for these purposes.

So far, political scientists have been expressing Seoul's anxiety from the pages of the country's largest English-language publication, The Korea Herald. However, there is no doubt that such thoughts are also visited by the country's leadership: historically, relations between the two countries have developed as difficult as possible.

If there is a topic where the views of South Koreans coincide with their northern

brothers, it is the assessment of the Japanese occupation of the peninsula between 1910 and 1945. The reign of governor-generals appointed from Tokyo has indeed become one of the darkest pages in Korean history - here is the forced abandonment of traditional names and the adoption of Japanese-style names, and significant restrictions on the use of the native language, including a ban on publications in Korean, and coercion local women to work in the field brothels that accompanied the Japanese army. And no amount of economic success that was achieved at that time, such memories can not be interrupted.

That is why in Seoul they perceive the remilitarization of Japan, which openly talks about plans to become a missile superpower and now allows a preemptive strike, with apprehension. This is especially acute against the backdrop of the recent incident with North Korean drones: five drones invaded the country's airspace, one of them managed to fly to

the capital's suburbs. At the same time, four subsequently disappeared from the radar, and one calmly returned to the DPRK. The military spotted them very late and could not hit a single one. Of course, there are certain differences in missile defense and defense against drones, but such events definitely do not inspire peace in the country's inhabitants.

Of course, Tokyo is in a hurry to assure everyone that the increase in military spending is due solely to Pyongyang's success in developing its missile program. But Seoul is in no hurry to believe in it. But both countries are very important allies of Washington in the region, the first line in the confrontation with North Korea and China.

And this increasingly likely cooling of relations between two important partners for the United States in the region is becoming symptomatic of the foreign policy of the White House.

The American leadership has traditionally used external threats to consolidate its allies, but in a world that is becoming more multidimensional, this is becoming increasingly difficult to do. Moreover, the United States faces a similar problem not only in East Asia.

Thus, efforts to unite the southern flank of NATO are breaking up against the harsh reality of contradictions - disputes between Turkey and Greece are growing and risk turning into an armed conflict between the two members of the alliance.

This problem is even more acute in the Middle East: an attempt to make Israel and Saudi Arabia friends against the backdrop of their common confrontation with Iran turned out to be such a failure that Riyadh actually left the American orbit and is gradually turning into an independent regional player that is building very close relations with Moscow and Beijing.

However, this process is

taking place most painfully in Europe - more and more people here are asking the question whether it is worth the effort to support Kiev. The Russian threat, with which Washington is trying to keep its allies under its control, is understood differently in each country. And it's not just about the traditional European contradictions in the Berlin - Paris - London triangle. Hungary has become a real example of how to defend your sovereignty, which is doing everything not to give it up for the sake of an ephemeral slogan about "defending democracy."

But Germany, France and Britain in this regard are much more constrained. At the same time, it is worth noting here that Britain under Rishi Sunak and Britain under Boris Johnson behave differently in Ukraine. Yes, and Emmanuel Macron, in parallel with assurances of support for Kiev, does not hesitate to talk about the growing danger of dependence on the United States. On both sides of the English Channel, little by

little, they are reminiscing about their own interests.

But Herr Scholz is a textbook example of lack of will. It is perhaps difficult to find a period in German history when the role of Germany would decline at such a pace without defeat in the war. The most powerful economy and the most influential country of the European Union, having lost access to cheap Russian resources, is giving way to Poland, acquired by overwork. The German government could have prevented all this, but the chancellor lacks the courage to call black black, white white, and the Nord Stream attack a terrorist attack. However, Berlin still has an opportunity to rectify the situation. Still, national interests are a much more permanent thing than governments.

And now this awareness of one's own national interests from a focal phenomenon acquires a systemic scope. And the ability to defend them will become one of the key success factors in the era of turbulence that the world is entering.

Comedy for the holidays

Titus Techera

IN 1994, the Coen brothers, Ethan and Joel, decided to bring Frank Capra back to the movie theaters with their comedy, The Hudsucker Proxy. Tim Robbins plays the role Capra gave to Jimmy Stewart and Gary Cooper. He's a naturally decent American, too simple for the complexities and corruption of the metropolis, with its hierarchies, intrigues, and snobs, but just the man to save the day by reminding Americans of their character and of their belief in the equal dignity of human beings.

Robbins plays Norville Barnes, graduate of the business school at the University of Muncie, Indiana, ready to make his way in America. More specifically, New York City, in December 1958. Norville starts in the proverbial—in this case, comically Gothic—mailroom and ends up in the boardroom in two easy steps. First, the CEO of Hudsucker Industries, the very WASP-named Waring Hudsucker (played by Charles Durning), jumps out the window to his death. No one understands his melancholia—business was very good.

Secondly, the Hudsucker board, led by Sidney J. Mussburger (played by a comically villainous Paul Newman), hires Norville to ruin the company, tank the stock, that they may buy Hudsucker's shares for pennies. The late Hudsucker had no heirs, was indeed all alone in the universe, which seems to have prompted his suicide. Who is to run the business? The board figure that the press will love an underdog story but will also love to tear Norville apart when he inevitably fails at a job he is not qualified to do, at which point they can save the day. Capitalism and

Managers

This is one of the big issues in the story. The little people should know their place, but they inevitably get uppity—so the big shots have to put them in their place. But they have to do so indirectly, by conspiracy. Why aren't they act publicly? The company sells to the public and the public buys the shares, which may be its real product after all. Mussburger's contempt for everyone less successful than himself ("Do you mean to say any slob in a smelly tee-shirt will be able to buy Hudsucker stock?") and his attempt to outdo those more successful than him is all about putting as much distance between himself and the people, as the top floor of the skyscraper eloquently suggests. He wants to succeed because he sees others failing—he has no interest in doing anything other than managing. From his point of view, Hudsucker Industries is not a productive enterprise, but a protective one—it's his castle, in short.

This probably works much of the time, but there are exceptions to the claims of competent management of such elites. Economic crises, obviously, as well as technological disruption. But the Coen brothers went out of their way to find a comic exception in the average person instead, which is not merely a symbol of democracy, but somehow a key to understanding much of what goes on in a democracy. Norville ruins Mussburger's clever plot, because he has a simple, but unbeatable idea. He invents the hula hoop and a fortune is soon made and we get a whole story out of it to enjoy.

Capitalism often enough gives the people what they want and, often enough, the people want to have fun.

The hula hoop is an insult to the too-clever-by-half lawyers and financial types who try to predict the future by rationalizing people's lives. Somehow, they don't count on either spontaneity or choice. There is something very unnatural in their plans, perhaps a certain kind of sterility. The circle, which appears in many places in the movie and symbolizes a bunch of different things, including angelic haloes, reveals their lack of imagination. Norville shows it to everyone, but they don't get it.

How can something be so clever as to make a fortune once it's a product everyone loves, yet so obvious that a child could have thought it up? This seems to be the question at the core of the story. The Coens are particularly interested in it for two reasons. We all want to know, why do we believe Jimmy Stewart or Gary Cooper could save the day? The Mr. Smiths and Mr. Deeds are mere everymen, not heroes! But are not the beliefs by which we lead our lives also something a child could know? Morality has something in common with our capitalist economy.

Frank Capra's America

The other reason is as important: Jokes are as obvious as anything once you hear them, anyone could have thought of them, we all share them, but it takes clever comic poets to come up with them in the first place. The Coens themselves depend on the American people, not just the capitalists. Hudsucker Industries is transformed into a producer of entertainment, as many others are in our age of wealth and boredom. People want to be entertained, they're willing to pay, and they have the money.

You might say, they are serious about being unserious.

Yet for all the cleverness found in this remarkable pastiche of Capra, The Hudsucker Proxy failed to make any money. Not even critics really liked it, but they were all wrong—it's hilarious and achieves its humor while avoiding anything sordid. It persuaded me it would be no great difficulty to bring Capra back to the screens. Americans loved him in his time, and we have since learned to love It's a Wonderful Life, which was no big success when it hit theaters.

I won't spoil the plot, but I trust you guessed already that the Mussburgers of this world won't easily let the Norvilles keep something they can take from them. And that the Norvilles are not above being led astray by luxury and flattery. And that, as in Capra movies, all the comedy rests on an abiding faith in the justice of the American people and their faith that there is a providence for good men brought to despair on New Year's Eve.

Comedy for the Holidays

Of course, America itself has changed since Capra's days. The economic situation has changed even more, since Capra made most of his movies during the Great Depression. Poverty isn't really the issue anymore, but Americans still need to find their heroes to have any kind of community, to hold together and to act together in trying times. The Coens show us the post-War prosperity that changed the country, but they do not believe it has put them out of business. America hasn't overcome its political conflicts, it helps to make light of some of our foibles.

The opposite of Norville's childish enthusiasm and child-like ideas about having fun is not the board of directors, but the press. This is also an element of Capra's movies, which were quite critical of the cynicism of that business. A young lady like the ones played by Jean Arthur and Barbara Stanwyck in the Capra movies appears, Anne Archer (played by Jennifer Jason Leigh). She's tough, she takes no nonsense, and she has a certain claim to superiority to go with her beauty—known as a Bryn Mawr accent back when Katharine Hepburn talked that way.

It's not an accident that Anne is the key to Norville's drama rather than her boss Al, editor of the Argus (played by John Mahoney), or her colleague there, Smitty (played by Bruce Campbell). Nobody expects men to be friendly, their very loyalty—even the loyalty of hard-drinking, chain-smoking, ambulance-chasing journalists—excludes strangers. Anne is able to enter Norville's private life, for better and for worse. This may seem a plot cliché, but it points to the fundamental connection between love and hoping for a bright future—what we call the American dream, which Norville seems to be living.

Norville's romance with Anne also connects to the movie's holiday theme. New Year's Eve is a lonelier time than ever in an America that is more unmarried than ever. For all our sophistication—after all, the Coens are very aware of all the ways in which they imitate the old Hollywood they were born too late to be part of—we are also unhappier than ever. This is probably because we find it harder to believe in either a bright future or love. One way to

invite these thoughts back in would be to treat them comically rather than too seriously.

The press in The Hudsucker Proxy, the storytellers for that fictional America, are no help. Their cynicism is a consequence of the popular lack of interest in writers. Americans care about the big dramatic changes that happen rather frequently in American life. But they like the protagonists, not the writers. The absence of national honor for writers in a nation too large to conduct its business in person is a great danger to its freedom, since writing is the only way to achieve a coherent vision of America at any moment, and thus reveal threats to freedom that are less urgent than those everyone can see, but not less important. Moreover, the successful in America, just like the people taken together, have vast fortunes, whereas journalists comparatively have precious little. That impotence leads to either populism or craven service to elites and, either way, to abandoning the all-American love of the facts, and debasing the love of stories, too.

Hence, it takes poetry. The Coens do the job Capra would have wanted them to do, restoring some hope in American life without ignoring the predicament that makes us turn to entertainment. Perhaps we can learn to take our storytellers more seriously, to demand something better as entertainment, and to remember the great stories. We might thus find it in our hearts to care for America as a whole, as it emerges in stories, not just our narrow experiences. As crushing as that attempt threatens to be—consider Norville's plight—and as comical as we prefer our entertainment, we need heroes.

‘Democracy v. autocracy’

Bill Hartung, Ben Freeman, Anatol Lieven, Suzanne Loftus, Sarang Shidore, Annelle Sheline, Steve Simon, Michael Swaine, Adam Weinstein & Jake Werner

IT'S been an extraordinary year in foreign policy, dominated by an ongoing, brutal war following the February Russian invasion of Ukraine. NATO, struggling with its mission before 2022, appears more emboldened and unified than ever.

Meanwhile, tensions have continued to roil between the U.S. and China on a number of fronts, not the least, the fate of Taiwan.

In the Middle East, Biden's post-Russian outreach to Saudi Arabia and inability to stop assistance to Riyadh in the Yemen war underscores the problematic nature of Washington's relations with despotic governments there, while trying to maintain an “autocracies vs. democracies” approach to geopolitics in other parts of the world.

After two years in office, the Iran nuclear deal looks “dead,” while the U.S. slaps more sanctions on Tehran in the wake of crackdowns on protesters and reported drone transfers to Russia.

Phew.

With so much going on, we asked our own Quincy Institute experts to weigh in on the following prompt: what needs to happen almost immediately in 2023

for U.S. foreign policy to start out on the right foot for the year? Why?

Bill Hartung, senior research fellow; arms trade, Pentagon budgets:

The Biden administration should start the year by stemming the tide of ever rising Pentagon budgets. The current budget is one of the highest since World War II, and the increase from FY2022 to FY2023 alone is higher than the entire military budget of every other country in the world except China. Large portions of these funds are wasted on price gouging, cost overruns, and weapons that aren't useful for the current challenges we face. We can provide a more effective defense for less by cutting waste, eliminating dysfunctional and unnecessary weapons programs, and pursuing a more restrained, non-interventionist foreign policy that truly puts diplomacy first.

Ben Freeman, research fellow; foreign lobbying, transparency:

Congress and the president must, finally, enact meaningful reforms to curb foreign influence in the U.S. Behind most U.S. foreign policy decisions are agents working on behalf of foreign powers — in both illicit and legal influence

operations — that often push U.S. foreign policy in a decidedly more interventionist and militarized direction. This is usually in the interests of these foreign governments, not the U.S. national interest.

To thwart this malign influence or, at the very least, to increase the public's awareness of it, a number of reforms are needed. This includes improvements to the Foreign Agents Registration Act, requiring think tanks to disclose all foreign funding (particularly when those think tank's scholars are testifying before Congress), and providing more resources to the Department of Justice and other government agencies investigating illicit election interference operations like those launched by Russia and the UAE.

Anatol Lieven, Director of Eurasia Program:

The first priority for the Biden administration in 2023 should be to seek a ceasefire in Ukraine, leading to peace negotiations. The longer the war continues, the greater the damage to the world economy and to key U.S. allies in Europe.

Ukraine has preserved its independence and saved or reconquered the great majority of its lands and

has little more of real importance to gain in this war. Further major Ukrainian advances would threaten Russian control of Crimea and risk nuclear war. They would also take Ukraine into territories whose populations are in fact loyal to Russia.

In the meantime, Russian bombardments are causing great harm to the Ukrainian population and economy, and the exigencies of wartime are increasing authoritarianism in Ukraine. Only when the fighting ends can Ukraine begin the process of reconstruction, political reform, and moves to join the European Union.

Suzanne Loftus, research fellow, Eurasia Program:

While continuing to support Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression, the Biden Administration, with the help of the international community, must start encouraging a feasible end to the war through the use of diplomacy. Concomitantly, a long-term security agreement for the future of Europe should be reached to ensure lasting peace on the continent.

Through the use of political pragmatism, Washington must help open a path to a peace that would ensure

Ukrainian sovereignty, end the ongoing suffering, uphold international law, create lasting peace in Europe, and ease current ripple effects on the world economy.

Sarang Shidore, Director of Studies and senior research fellow, Asia:

The United States should do two things to start off the new year. First, return, through concrete actions, to the One China policy that has been a solid foundation for peace and stability in Asia for decades. The current drip-drip undermining of this policy is a dangerous, slippery slope that is generating a major risk of great power war. Second, discard counterproductive tropes that stretch credibility such as “democracy v. autocracy” and “rules-based order” when engaging the Global South. Instead, begin the hard work of finding intersections of interests and fashioning new bargains that retain or expand non-militarized U.S. influence in the region.

Annelle Sheline, research fellow, Middle East Program:

The Biden administration should end all U.S. support for Saudi military actions in Yemen. If the administration fails to take

action, Senator Bernie Sanders should reintroduce the Yemen War Powers Resolution to end U.S. involvement in that devastating conflict. Biden could transform U.S. policy towards the Middle East overall by rethinking America's support for dictators by reducing arms sales to these governments, and instead prioritize partnership in the realms of economic development, education, and technology.

Steve Simon, senior research analyst, Middle East: The U.S. should declare a renewed focus on climate change and international public health challenges, especially early warning systems; schedule a major address on the administration's trade and diplomatic initiatives, especially in Asia and Africa. A policy is emerging but a statement would be useful for Congress and in foreign capitals. In the State of the Union address in January, broach the topic of a national security budget that would allocate resources to agencies and departments outside of the Pentagon; and, hearkening back to days of old, declare a renewed commitment to science education and

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NATO identifies critical weak link

It seems that NATO has found a white crow. Several leading Western media immediately attacked the Bundeswehr with sharp criticism. They were accused of many sins: from insufficient assistance to Ukraine and ending with the inability to fight. About why Berlin becomes a burden for the allies - in the material of RIA Novosti.

Problem BMP
In Germany, as you know, there is a very powerful mechanical engineering - both civil and military. German cars and military equipment have been a model of quality for many years. However, the developers of the Rheinmetall concern clearly could not bring their latest brainchild to mind. The Puma infantry fighting vehicle entered service in 2015. About 350 units were produced for the needs of the army.

This BMP has become the heaviest and most expensive in the world. On paper, performance characteristics look impressive. Combat weight - 43 tons, frontal armor can withstand a 45-mm projectile, MUSS active protection complex, rapid-fire 30-mm automatic cannon, 1088 horsepower

engine, highway speed - up to 70 kilometers per hour. Crew - three people, up to six fighters in the troop compartment. The modern fire control system improves the accuracy of fire and improves interaction with other equipment of the unit.

Problems came to light when the cars entered the troops. They turned out to be very capricious, required increased attention from technical services, and suffered from dozens of "childhood illnesses".

In recent exercises, for various reasons, all 18 Puma infantry fighting vehicles involved failed. The most common causes are defects in the turret traverse mechanism, a "wedging" gun, and malfunctions in the electronics. A fire broke out in the driver's cab of one of the cars. As a result, Berlin decided to temporarily abandon further purchases.

In January 2024, these 18 Puma infantry fighting vehicles were to be included in the NATO High Readiness Task Force (VJTF), the main multinational unit of the alliance, designed for emergency response to crises. However, after the failure, the Bundeswehr command decided to involve the Marder infantry fighting vehicles, which were put

Andrey Kots
into service in 1970.

This is unlikely to please Washington and Brussels.

Lack of artillery
Another problem is the small stocks of cannon artillery. According to the German Ministry of Defense, published in The Times, out of 121 PzH 2000 self-propelled howitzers of 155 mm caliber, two-thirds (about 80 units) are not suitable for military service. In addition, out of 14 self-propelled guns transferred to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, six have already been sent to Lithuania for repairs due to a lack of spare parts. European howitzers simply cannot withstand the pace of hostilities and quickly use up resources.

There are not enough special fuels and lubricants for the cold season. Soviet fuels and lubricants, which are still sufficient in Ukrainian warehouses, cannot be replaced. Taking into account the fact that real "mud baths" are now in the Donbass and the supply of the front is very difficult, Ukrainian artillerymen at some point risk being left without Western guns at all.

There are difficulties in the Bundeswehr with ammunition. The newspa-

per Die Welt calculated that the army would have enough shells for a maximum of several days of intense fighting. It will not be possible to quickly compensate: the defense industry is simply not designed for the mass production of 155 mm caliber.

The situation is aggravated by the shortage of raw materials. Germany imports cotton lint necessary for the production of shells from China, and in early December, for unknown reasons, the PRC delayed sending the next batch. The Bundeswehr admitted that lead times for this material have tripled in recent months.

Shortage of planes and people

The Spiegel publication claims that the armed forces are experiencing difficulties with almost all types of weapons and equipment. The combat readiness of the Ground Forces is estimated at 41 percent.

Earlier, the Air Force command informed the Minister of Defense that out of 77 multi-purpose NH-90 helicopters, only 44 are relatively serviceable, and only nine are in full combat readiness.

The situation is not much better with the Tiger attack helicopter. Of the 53 pur-

chased vehicles, 36 are in the army, and 12 are in combat readiness. Moreover, the use of the Tiger would be mandatory in any Bundeswehr operation abroad - after all, this is the main fire support helicopter.

Of the 93 Tornado bombers, 57 are in service and 20 are on alert. This is a long-obsolete model, but the German coalition government is still arguing about a successor. Thus, the SPD opposes the purchase of American aircraft.

"Tornado" refers to the third generation of jet aircraft, adopted in 1980. It is this machine that is the regular carrier of American nuclear bombs deployed in Germany.

The combat effectiveness is also seriously affected by the lack of qualified personnel, especially in aviation, artillery and cyber units. The shortage of specialists in various types and branches of the German troops reaches 21 thousand people. And it is not yet clear how Defense Minister Christina Lambrecht is going to solve the accumulated problems. German industry is directly dependent on cheap energy supplied by Russia. By imposing sanctions on Moscow, Berlin did a disservice to its own army.



Paris is not doing enough to support Kyiv's war effort

In a Monday phone call, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's help in promoting Kyiv's peace plan for the ongoing conflict with Russia.

The conversation came as India, which has dramatically expanded trade with Russia since the invasion, took over leadership of the G20. "It was on this platform that I announced the peace formula and now I count on India's participation in its implementation," Zelensky tweeted after the meeting.

For their part, Modi's team said he "strongly reiterated his call for an immediate cessation of hostilities," and emphasized the need for diplomacy in order to end the brutal war. New Delhi also declared its "support for any peace efforts" but stopped short of explicitly endorsing Zelensky's proposal.

The call is the latest step in Ukraine's rollout of its 10-point peace plan, which Kyiv says will be the center of a "peace summit" at some point in the next couple of months. Zelensky said last week that President Joe Biden agreed to support the proposal, though U.S. officials have yet to confirm that claim. Some notable demands include a full Russian withdrawal from Ukraine, including Crimea, and the creation of a special tribunal for Russian war crimes.

"The United Nations could be the best venue for holding this summit," Kyiv's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, told the Associated Press. "This is really about bringing everyone on board."

There is, however, one

Connor Echols

significant exception to the guest list. Per Kuleba, Russia can only attend the summit after facing prosecution for war crimes. "They can only be invited to this step in this way," Kuleba said, adding that he is also working to expel Moscow from the United Nations.

Russia quickly rejected the plan and reiterated its demand that Kyiv accept Moscow's annexation of Crimea and attempted seizure of large swathes of eastern Ukraine. "As for the duration of the conflict, the ball is on the side of the [Kyiv] regime and Washington that stands behind its back," said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. "They may stop senseless resistance at any moment."

The sharp differences between the warring parties suggest that the conflict will drag on well into the future, according to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

"I do believe that the military confrontation will go on, and I think we'll have still to wait for a moment in which serious negotiations for peace will be possible," Guterres said. In other diplomatic news related to the war in Ukraine:

— Russia announced Tuesday that it will not sell oil to countries that attempt to enforce a price cap agreed by Western countries, according to Al Jazeera. The decision sets Moscow up for a clash with the G7 and the European Union, both of which agreed to only purchase Russian at \$60 per barrel — a significant drop from the current market price of \$78

per barrel.

— In his Christmas homily, Pope Francis renewed his call for peace in Ukraine and lamented the impact the war has had on innocent people around the world, according to AP News. "Let us also see the faces of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, who are experiencing this Christmas in the dark and cold, far from their homes due to the devastation caused by 10 months of war," the pontiff said, noting that the conflict has put "entire peoples at risk of famine, especially in Afghanistan and in the countries of the Horn of Africa."

— A top Putin aide visited the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which has faced months of intermittent shelling since Russian forces took control of it earlier this year, according to Reuters. The advisor "checked the safety of the facility and the working conditions of Rosatom employees," according to a Russia-backed local leader.

— On Wednesday, French Defense Minister Sebastian Lecornu visited Kyiv and pledged to support Ukraine through weapons transfers and maintenance for French arms already in the country, according to Al Arabiya. "France has chosen several ways to help Ukraine," Lecornu said, adding that "maintenance of what has already been given to Ukraine is just as important as the new equipment." So far, France has lagged behind its European peers in providing aid to Ukraine. This high-level visit could be an effort to undercut accusations that Paris is not doing enough to support Kyiv's war effort.

‘Democracy v. autocracy’

(Continued from Page 6)

research funded out of DoD resources.

Michael Swaine, Director of the East Asia Program:

Stop digging the hole. In Asia, the United States needs to discard any remaining aspirations for regional dominance, listen more closely and respond more realistically to the concerns and needs of the middle powers, including key U.S. allies such as South Korea and Japan.

Most of these powers want to work with both the U.S. and China to develop a more economically-oriented, inclusive, and positive-sum set of policy objectives that reverse the polarization of the region, lessen the securitization of virtually every policy sphere, and provide a revised set of regional norms and standards that most countries can support, including China. Many of these nations also want the Taiwan situation stabilized on the basis of a revived commitment by the U.S. and China to One China and peaceful unification, respectfully.

The U.S. could start this process by framing these efforts as a search, in consultation with other Asian nations, of a model for constructive, beneficial forms of peaceful coexistence

among all political systems.

This is broad and aspirational, but as a first step, requires serious listening and the dropping of the usual political slogans.

Adam Weinstein, research fellow: Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan

Washington needs to recalibrate its engagement in parts of the world where U.S. military intervention and its side-effects dictated relations for decades, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and the greater Middle East. Drawdowns and reductions in U.S. troops should not spell diplomatic and economic disengagement. Military cooperation and force are occasionally useful tools to augment diplomacy, but for too long they have eclipsed it altogether. Traditional diplomacy was relegated to putting out fires for failed U.S. military interventions in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Our generals became reckless, while our diplomats grew risk averse.

Now what is needed is a creative rethink of how diplomacy, aid, and economic engagement is conducted. These tools are less blunt than military intervention, but their results are inherently more sustainable. Washington must possess the humility to accept the conditions it cannot

positively influence, strategic patience and foresight to tackle what it can, and self-awareness to know the difference.

Jake Werner, research fellow: East Asia, China

The Biden administration should prepare a hard pivot to U.S.-China cooperation on issues of global significance, to launch at Blinken's upcoming visit to Beijing.

The administration devoted its first two years to organizing the most powerful countries in the world against China, from steady condemnation of China's system and its foreign policy, to initiatives countering China's overseas endeavors and cutting off its economy from advanced technology, as well as increasing saber-rattling around Taiwan.

The Biden record signals that China cannot survive and prosper in the world the U.S. seeks to shape. If the administration devoted as much energy and resources to working with China on the truly existential threats facing humanity — including necessary revision of some of the most hostile and coercive policies of the last two years — then the relationship could be diverted from the current path of destructive conflict toward constructive coexistence.

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A high stakes game

THEORIES of business, investment, and corporate management come and go. Recent events suggest that we might be closer to such a tipping point with ESG.

Before its very public implosion in November 2022, the now-bankrupt multi-billion dollar cryptocurrency exchange, FTX, enjoyed very high ESG ratings. Apparently those doing the rating hadn't been paying attention to FTX's failure to adhere to basic good-governance practice. Compounding matters, FTX's former CEO Sam Bankman-Fried has admitted that he regarded ESG largely as a virtue-signaling exercise. It also came to light that developing a reputation as a company that took ESG seriously was part of FTX's strategy for getting close to legislators to try and secure a regulatory environment that directly benefited FTX rather than consumers.

If that was not enough, ESG's credibility has taken another hit from statements by prominent figures once involved in forming major firms' ESG investment strategies that they do not believe that ESG works. The most thorough and empirical of such critiques has been articulated by former Blackrock senior executive Terrence Keeley. After ten years of involvement in this area, Keeley determined that ESG had largely failed to fulfill its stated objectives. Other former Blackrock executives have arrived at similar conclusions.

But these emerging critiques of ESG from within corporate America, plus the growing backlash against prominent CEOs who have sounded like Chief Wokeness Officers for some time, do not indicate that debates about ESG are over. For arguments about ESG reflect long-standing disputes about business's role in society, the obligations that companies owe to constituencies beyond their owners, and the state's role vis-à-vis commercial enterprises.

ESG and the State

This last issue is central to Jennifer J. Schulp's response to my essay "Why Business Should Dispense with ESG." Her thesis is that whatever you think of ESG and the progressive causes with which it is almost universally associated, we should be wary of using government power to pressure corporations to distance themselves from ESG.

Do we really want, Schulp argues, government officials informing investment funds that they must divest themselves from enterprises for pro-ESG or anti-ESG reasons? Doesn't anti-ESG activism on the state's part constitute just as much an interference with the economic freedom of businesses and the property rights on which such liberties are grounded as trying to force ESG priorities and methods on businesses?

These are good questions that ESG critics should not ignore. As stated in my essay, I think that a

company should be free to embrace ESG as an investment strategy and method of assessment if it does not conflict with existing corporate law or the company's by-laws, and if no pre-existing contractual arrangements preclude a company going down such a path. If investors want to pay the higher fees and accept the lower returns that ESG funds tend to deliver, and if businesses want to embrace what I regard as ESG's multiple incoherencies, they should be free to do so—provided, however, that such companies and their investors bear the full costs of any failure and don't try and pass their losses onto taxpayers.

The flipside is that the same principles should be applied to ESG advocates. They can argue in favor of ESG as much as they like, but they should refrain from working with legislators and regulators to impose ESG on others. The freedom to embrace ESG implies the liberty for those businesses who regard ESG as offering sub-optimal returns, who do not consider themselves obliged to promote assorted political causes, or who regard ESG as a way for executives to excuse subpar performance, to reject ESG and all its works. In other words, the protections accorded by market freedom should cut both ways for ESG advocates and skeptics.

The Ends of Business

This question of the nexus between business, state power, and ESG is central to Austin Stone's essay in this forum. Stone shares most of my critique of ESG. Nevertheless, he is more willing to consider using government power to push back against ESG's advance throughout corporate America. Advocates of ESG, he maintains, are not interested in questions of fairness and justice. They only care about power. And if all someone cares about is power, Stone suggests, you need to face up to that fact and act accordingly.

Variants of this argument flourish on much of the right today about a range of political and economic questions. The problem is that if you use state power to punish companies that freely adopt ESG, you validate the methods of those ESG supporters who have already shown, as Stone notes, that they are more than willing to play that game. The fact that someone acts in ways that indicate an ambivalence about justice does not legitimate a choice on your part to do the same. Even good ends never justify wrong means. Economic freedom and property rights are not absolute, but the standard for overriding them to address a problem like ESG in societies that purport to take constitutionally limited government seriously ought to be very high indeed.

What I find curious and encouraging, however, about the specific solutions to ESG floated by Stone is that they are far more free-market than power-political in their orientation. Stone

Samuel Gregg

refers, for instance, to attorneys suing investment funds on behalf of clients who believe that a corporation's embrace of ESG violates pre-existing promises to maximize shareholder value. That's a case of using contract law for redress against breach of promise. This is entirely consistent with free market principles concerning the importance of contract enforcement.

Or consider the primary example that Stone offers of using power to strike back at ESG: the decision by several state government officials to withdraw the public funds that they have invested in ESG-friendly outfits like Blackrock. Yes, the rhetoric surrounding decisions to divest state funds from these companies has been of the anti-woke variety. But the formal legal reasoning used is less a matter of intervention (in the sense of directly coercing businesses to do things that they would otherwise not do) than it is state officials judging that, to the extent that such firms embrace ESG, they are not fulfilling their fiduciary responsibility to maximize shareholder value.

From this perspective, state officials make a judgment about likely return-on-investment and then employed a market mechanism (divesting) to give effect to that choice. This sent a market signal to some major corporations: that to the extent ESG compromises a business's ability to maximize profit, some rather large investors will take their capital elsewhere. Judging from the backpedaling of some once outspoken ESG advocates in corporate America, such signals had an effect. What's important, however, is that none of these decisions involved trampling over anyone's property rights or economic freedom. On the contrary, they demonstrated the importance of these liberties and protections.

Stone's essay raises, however, a wider issue. For all its faults, he argues, ESG's rise reflects the need for business to adopt a telos that goes beyond making profits. Profit, Stone suggests, is too narrow a focus when it comes to the good that business does. The implication is that, absent a more expansive conception of the values that business should pursue, the various progressive causes which underpin ESG will enter the void.

I don't doubt that one of ESG's attractions is its appeal to people who are uneasy about working for enterprises that are in the business of making money. Immense problems, however, emerge once you seek to expand a business's core purposes beyond making profit and realizing shareholder value within the parameters of just laws. Businesses are not families or NGOs. Nor are your employees and employers necessarily your friends. Things start going wrong when companies forget

these truths. Stone himself references the fuzziness, artificiality, and false expectations that arise when the language of community gets associated with the enterprise of business.

A better way forward would be for businesses to cultivate wider awareness of the many goods whose realization becomes possible through companies pursuing profit. CEOs should, for example, take the lead in explaining that, for instance, profit usually indicates that a business is meeting its customers' wants and needs through the prudent organization and deployment of the resources at its disposal. In the absence of fraud or other injustices, business executives should stress, this state of affairs is a good thing in itself. Likewise, they should underscore that it is through pursuing profit that businesses create possibilities for individuals to exercise their talents cooperatively with others, provide people with the incomes that they need to pursue many non-material goods, and help maintain and grow the material resources that any society needs if it is to prosper in material and non-material ways.

Certainly, these good things are realized indirectly and even somewhat unintentionally when a business pursues profit. Nonetheless, CEOs should stress that it is through pursuing profit that commercial enterprises contribute to society's general welfare in ways that other organizations are not designed to do. If more business leaders were more skilled at explaining these truths, there might be far less of a values void in business that schemes like ESG try to fill.

A High Stakes Game

Russell Greene's contribution to this forum likewise focuses on the questions that ESG raises about business's core purpose. In doing so, he reminds us of an important fact: that discussions of the nature and ends of business long predate ESG's emergence and will persist long after ESG has been added to the ever-growing junkyard of redundant business theories and acronyms.

Much of that discussion, Greene observes, has revolved around the relationship between business and politics. ESG, he notes, has often functioned as a surrogate for political agendas to infiltrate businesses and eventually, if some ESG advocates had their way, become central to a business's raison d'être.

In this context some companies, Greene points out, present themselves as deploying ESG not as a matter of embracing wokeness but rather as a means of mitigating systemic risks.

Some of the risks that these companies have in mind, I'd argue, are surely those of the political kind: legislators, regulatory authorities, and various activist groups who demand appeasing.

Playing the ESG card,



PSX stays bullish, gains 673 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a continued bullish trend on Friday, gaining 673.09 points, with a positive change of 1.69 percent, closing at 40,420.45 against 39,747.36 points on the previous day.

A total of 284,512,885 shares were traded during the day as compared to

227,788,151 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 7.960 billion against Rs 7.037 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 329 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 211 of them recorded gains and 105 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 13 companies remained

unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 69,807,500 shares at Rs 2.70 per share, Pak Petroleum with 11,900,894 shares at Rs 68.14 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 11,760,099 shares at Rs 1.17 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed

a maximum increase of Rs 605.35 per share price, closing at Rs9100.00, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with a Rs 116.23 rise in its per share price to Rs1666.21. Premium Textile witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 41.05 per share closing at Rs 516.00, followed by Thal Ind. Corp with Rs 20.50 decline to close at Rs 263.00.

Gold price up by Rs 1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs 1,500 on Friday and was sold at Rs184,100 against its sale at Rs182,600 last day.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat also increased by Rs 1,286 to Rs

157,836 against Rs156,550 on Thursday and that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs 144,683 against its sale at Rs 143,504 last day, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola

silver increased by Rs 20 to Rs 2,070, and that of 10 gram by Rs 17.16 to Rs 1,774.70. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$11 and was sold at \$1,818 against its sale at \$1,807 the previous day, the Association reported.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activities reported at the Port on Thursday 29 th Dec-2022 where six ships namely, Express Rome, MSC Iris, Desert Harrier, Star Suzana, Dreggen and Al-Gharrafa carrying Containers, Coal, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Port Qasim Electric Power Terminal, Pakistan Bulk Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile three more ships, Swansea, Al-Salam and TSM Pollux carrying Containers, Gas oil and Atetic Acid also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hour.

A total of 10 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Express Rome and MSC Iris left the Port on Friday morning while two more ships, NCC Yanbu and Nave Andromeda are expected to sail on today in the afternoon. A Cargo volume of 239,088 tonnes, comprising 198,254 tonnes imports cargo and 40,834 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,998 Containers (608 TEUs Imports and 1,390 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 15 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 03 ships, Swansea, TSM Pollux and Ice Energy & amp; another ship 'Al-Marrouna' carrying Containers, Acetic Acid, Furnace oil and LNG are expected to take berths at QICT, EVTL, FOTCO and PGPCl on Friday.

FTO recover Rs 8.3 billion by resolving tax payers' cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) recovered Rs 8.3 billion by resolving complaints in tax payers' cases for providing the relief to the complainants. In this regard, Rs 18.42 million were refunded in the refund 'Suzuki case' only, out of which 151 checks were issued and 135 online payments were made, Senior Adviser FTO, Dr. Arslan Subtageen along with other advisers here in Federal office of FTO on Friday.

Senior Adviser said that similarly, 286 complainants were refunded in this case.

He said that in the 22-year history of FTO, such excellent performance of the institution has not been recorded.

He said that "we have provided maximum relief to complainants in tax cases."

Dr. Arslan Subtageen said that during a short span of one year, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah (HI-SI) has achieved a record and an incredible disposal of 6034 complaints in 2022. In the year 2022, FTO office received 6959 complaints out of which 6034 have been disposed of, as compared to year 2021, wherein 3371 complaints were received, out of which 2868 have been disposed of, he said.

He said that being a former Senior Tax Officer, the FTO has a vast experience of tax matters and has resorted to maximum utilization of Section 33 of the FTO Ordinance, 2000, regarding informal resolution of disputes. He said the FTO Office had its presence in seven cities when he took over last year on September 29th, 2021.

Senior Adviser said the FTO's presence has been expanded in year 2022 to other five cities, including Sargodha, Sialkot, Sukkur, Abbottabad and Hub to provide speedy justice to the aggrieved taxpayers at their doorstep.

Besides, as a new initiative, he has appointed 34 leading businessmen as honorary advisors after selecting them from various chambers of commerce and industry to facilitate aggrieved taxpayers in filing the complaints to the office of FTO, he informed. Dr. Arslan Subtageen said that FTO's objective is to resolve tax matters of the aggrieved taxpayers on priority basis in a transparent, swift and cost free manner within the shortest possible time span, to achieve these objectives, the FTO has introduced: He said that FTO prioritized to initiate an open door policy, quick disposal, merit based relief, awareness campaign, Advisory Committee revamped, creation of Overseas Pakistanis Grievance Redressal Cell, special research studies conducted, Translation of FTO Ordinance, 2000, in Urdu, monthly newsletter and no fee is charged against filing of complaint on mobile app of the FTO office.

He said the status of the pending complaint could be checked by the complainant by dialing 9386. Inexpensive justice is the sole and cardinal objective of the office of the FTO. Dr. Arslan Subtageen FTO enjoys the stature of Supreme Court Judge and he can award six months punishment against defiance charges or on charges of contempt of court law.

Current rain to bring positive impact on wheat , oil seeds, pulses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Much awaited first rain of the winter season will bring about a positive impact on all seasonal major and minor crops, fruit orchards and vegetable farms across the country, besides it would have far-reaching impact on human health and the local environment.

The rains are a blessing in disguise and most beneficial for wheat sown over 21 million acres, which is a major cash crop of the season and mega source to fulfill the domestic requirements of staple food and particularly it would have a positive impact on wheat sown across the rain-fed areas across the country.

Besides, recent rains would have a positive impact on pulses sown during the season as well as oil seeds including mustard and canola, said National Coordinator

National Agriculture Center Dr Sikander Khan.

Commenting on the impact of current widespread rains on different crops, he said that these rains are most beneficial for wheat as the crop was passing through initial stage (tillering) and will help to strengthen the health of the plant to enhance local output during the season.

The rains would put a positive impact on wheat sown in Potohar region and other rain-fed areas in the country, he said, adding that a large number of small-scale farmers cultivating different minor crops and seasonal vegetables in these areas and timely rains will help them to enhance their farm income by enhancing output. The irrigated areas of the country would also be the beneficiary of the blessed rains as it would

save the cost of electricity and other costly fuels, he said adding that current rains have fulfilled the irrigation requirements naturally and it would reduce the cost of input as well.

Dr Sikander said that it was the right time for applying fertilizers to fields for achieving maximum output during the season, particularly the use of urea fertilizers in wheat fields. He also advised the farmers to take appropriate measures to eradicate weeds to achieve maximum per-acre output. In order to achieve higher per-acre wheat output during the current season, he said that NARC had evolved a strategy to impart training to farmers and other field extension workers and conducted about 17 training programs and trained about 21,000 farmers across the country.

Meanwhile, over 5,000

bags of certified high-yielding seed varieties of wheat seeds were also provided to growers that would help multiply the certified seed production and ensure the production of high-yielding, diseases, hit and drought-resilient seeds.

It is worth mentioning here that wheat sowing across the crop-sowing country has witnessed an encouraging trend, which was attributed to incentives introduced by the government, particularly aftermaths of catastrophic floods and rains during the last moon soon season.

According to data from field extension departments of provincial governments, by the last week, wheat sowing was completed over 91 percent of set targets as grains sowing was completed over 21 million acres as against the set targets of 22.85 million acres.



RAWALPINDI: Carpenter preparing wooden stools at his work place at Bani Chowk.

Weekly inflation slides down slightly

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a slight decrease of 0.09 percent for combined consumption

group during the week ended on December 29, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group, was recorded at 217.20 points as compared to 217.39 points during the past week, according to PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of

29.30 percent.

The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed 0.07 percent decrease and went down to 225.44 points from last week's 225.59 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888 and Rs 22,889-29,517 declined by 0.12 percent and 0.03 percent respectively whereas it witnessed slight increase of 0.02 percent for consumption group from Rs 29,518-44,175 and declined of 0.12 percent for consumption group above

Rs 44,175.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 23 (45.10%) items increased, 07 (13.72%) items decreased and 21 (41.18%) items remained stable.

The items which recorded decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis included , potatoes (8.85%), tomatoes (6.02%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (1.47%), sugar (1.22%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.45%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.04%) and electricity for Q1 (2.44%).

The commodities which recorded increase in their average prices included eggs (2.86%), rice basmati broken & wheat flour (2.81%) each, bread

(2.76%), firewood (2.49%), LPG (1.61%), energy saver (1.27%) and bananas (1.18%).

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the commodities that witnessed a decrease in prices included chillies powdered (34.18%), electricity for q1 (13.96%) and gur (1.38%).

The commodities that witnessed an increase in prices on yoy basis included onions (498.08%), tea packet (65.41%), diesel (65.05%), chicken (64.20%), petrol (52.19%), salt powdered (51.99%), eggs (49.11%), pulse moong (46.94%), bananas (45.06%), pulse gram (44.42%) and mustard oil (41.64%).

Floods push economic growth below budgeted target: Economic Outlook

ISLAMABAD (APP): The economic growth for the fiscal year 2022-23 is likely to remain below the budgeted target due to devastation created by floods, the finance ministry said in a recent report released here on Friday.

"This combination of low growth, high inflation and low levels of official reserves is particularly challenging for policymakers," says the Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December 2022. It says, as in many other countries, Pakistan's economic activity remained currently below potential, implying a negative output gap. At the same time, again as in many other countries, inflation remained substantially above targets.

Furthermore, as is also the case in several other emerging economies, the global energy crisis, which has pushed up global commodity prices, also puts downward pressure on international official reserves. According to the report, in the short run, demand management policies by Pakistan's central

bank and government were designed to fight inflation and protect official reserves and protect inclusive growth. During the first five months of FY2023, Pakistan's economy showed signs of resilience to domestic and global challenges. Despite facing inflationary pressures, trade and current account deficits are continuously showing improvement, which is a sign of relief for financing challenges.

On the fiscal front, fiscal consolidation is the top-most priority to achieve the targeted fiscal deficit despite the government facing the unprecedented challenge of providing relief to people in flood-hit areas.

But in the long run, the government aims to stimulate the supply side to elevate the long-run potential growth rate of the economy. Increasing the long-run growth trends of output, per capita real incomes and employment can only be achieved by stimulating investments in new production capacities and improving overall productivity.

According to the report, the inflationary pressure

has started easing out as the Month-on-Month (MoM) Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation declined from a massive high of 4.7 percent in October 2022 to 0.8 percent in November.

The same trend is witnessed in the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), which decelerated for three consecutive weeks in December, and would also be transmitted into CPI inflation of the current month. Moreover, the recent government's decision to provide relief to the masses by slashing the prices of petroleum products is expected to translate into lower costs of food and non-food for the general public. SBP has announced an increase of 100 bps in the policy rate in order to curtail the inflationary expectation while the declining international commodity prices are expected to offset the inflation spikes that emerged due to domestic supply shocks. On agriculture productivity, the report says, standing water due to recent floods may create problems in achieving the assigned wheat sowing tar-

get, however, the federal and provincial governments are working hard and committed to enhancing wheat productivity.

The Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) output came in somewhat lower than expected on the basis of a baseline scenario.

It says, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached \$ 430.1 million during July-November FY2023 against \$ 884.9 million last year, showing a decrease of 51.4 percent. On a MOM basis, FDI was recorded at \$ 81.8 million in November 2022 as against an inflow of \$ 94.9 million in October 2022. In Jul-Nov FY2023, workers' remittances were recorded at \$ 12.0 billion against \$ 13.3 billion last year, a decrease of 9.6 percent. Pakistan's total liquid foreign exchange reserves increased to \$ 12.0 billion on December 21, 2022, with the SBP's reserves standing at \$ 6.1 billion. Commercial banks' reserves remained at \$ 5.9 billion. The KSE-100 index closed at 42,349 points on November 30, 2022 while market capitalization settled at Rs 6,768 billion.

Asia-Pacific stocks track Wall Street higher

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most Asia-Pacific stocks rose on Friday as a Wall Street rebound brought some cheer to the region's markets on the last trading day of the year.

Data on Thursday showed US jobless claims for the week ending December 24 rose more than expected, signalling some cooling in the economy. That boosted hopes among investors that the Federal Reserve's rate hikes will ease. The US central bank's aggressive campaign against inflation had sparked fears of a recession as higher borrowing costs slow down the economy.

Boosted by that optimism, the three main indexes on Wall Street ended higher on Thursday, and Asia-Pacific markets followed suit.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, and Singapore were up on Friday, while Tokyo was flat.

In early European trade, London, Frankfurt and Paris were all down.

Trading volumes have been thin in the last week of 2022, with investors in a low-risk mood looking ahead to next year, analysts said.

"Going into the new year, I think investors are going to be focusing on the same things we were focusing on this year, and that's where the central banks are going to take interest rates, and are the inflation numbers going to force them to continue to be very aggressive," Chris Gaffney, president

of world markets at TIAA Bank, was quoted by Bloomberg News as saying. Central bank policymakers have been particularly concerned about the jobs market, where demand for workers has exceeded supply, with wages picking up quickly.

Rising wages have fueled fears that the elevated cost of delivering services could become permanent, making it harder to bring down consumer prices.

But the latest jobless claims data injected some hope that the labour market in the world's biggest economy was cooling.

"The main theme for the first half of next year will be economic slowdown, as a result of rate hikes," said Chihiro Ota at SMBC Nikko Securities.

Markets are also concerned about the impact on global supply chains by the Covid surge in China -- the world's second-largest economy -- which has rolled back much of its strict zero-Covid strategy in recent weeks. South Korea on Friday became the latest country to impose a negative virus test requirement for travellers from China. The United States and Japan are among the other nations that have put China-specific restrictions in place because of the outbreak.

However, in oil markets, major importer China's reopening has

sparked some optimism that demand will rise next year, boosting prices.

The Brent and West Texas Intermediate contracts were both trading higher on Friday.

London - FTSE 100: DOWN 0.3 percent at 7,490.76

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: FLAT at 26,094.50 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: UP 0.2 percent at 19,781.41 (close)

Shanghai - Composite: UP 0.5 percent at 3,089.26 (close)

Euro/dollar: DOWN at \$1.0662 from \$1.0667 at 2130 GMT on Thursday

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.2066 from \$1.2062

Euro/pound: DOWN at 88.38 pence from 88.40 pence

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 131.91 yen from 132.96 yen

West Texas Intermediate: UP 0.7 percent at \$78.95 per barrel

Brent North Sea crude: UP 0.8 percent at \$84.09 per barrel

New York - Dow: UP 1.1 percent at 33,220.80 (close)

Tokyo, Dec 30 (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended flat Friday on the year's last trading day, with the Nikkei falling more than nine percent over 2022. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index edged up 0.83 of a point to 26,094.50, while the broader Topix index fell 0.19 percent, or 3.56 points, to 1,891.71.



MULTAN: Group photo of Mr. Khalid Khokhar, President of Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, Syed Fakhar Imam, Ex-Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Ms Rabel Sadozai, Director Marketing and Sales, Fatima Fertilizer along with her team at the fourth Kissan Day celebration.



In brief

'Pakistan gave tough time to us'

KARACHI (Web Desk): New Zealand skipper Tim Southee admitted on Friday Pakistan gave tough time to his side. Mr Southee was speaking at a press conference following the first Test match, expressed surprise at Pakistan skipper Babar Azam's decision to declare the innings. Speaking about the problems faced by the Kiwis' bowlers, Mr Southee said that the pacers were facing difficulties in these conditions. Mr Southee praised spinner Ish Sodhi's efforts, saying that making a comeback was a difficult task, but he [Sodhi] bowled exceptionally well. Saying that his team was not able to chase the target due to the bad light, Mr. Southee praised Williamson for his outstanding display with the bat.

Brazil declares 3 days of mourning

BRASILIA (INP): Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro declared three days of national mourning for Pele after the legendary footballer died at the age of 82. The measure was announced in a decree published in an extra edition of the government gazette and signed by the outgoing president who is set to leave office on Sunday. The magical Brazilian soccer star who rose from barefoot poverty to become one of the greatest and best-known athletes in modern history, died at the age of 82, his daughter said on Instagram on Thursday. He had been in and out of hospital in recent months after a tumor was found on his colon. Pele, whose given name was Edson Arantes do Nascimento, scored a world record 1,281 goals, and is the only player ever to win the World Cup three times. With sublime skills and a winning smile, he helped make soccer the world's most popular sport and he charmed popes, presidents and Hollywood stars in a seven-decade career as player and ambassador for the sport. Born on Oct 23, 1940, in the small Minas Gerais town of Tres Coracoes, or "Three Hearts", Edson Arantes do Nascimento learned the game from his father, a semi-professional player.

Thiem given wild card

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Former U.S. Open champion Dominic Thiem was given a wild card into the main draw of next month's Australian Open after his successful return from a right wrist injury, it was announced. Tournament officials said Friday that Thiem, an Australian Open finalist in 2020, received a wild-card entry along with Americans Taylor Townsend and Christopher Eubanks and French players Diane Parry and Luca Van Assche. Thiem has played strongly in his return to the tour after the wrist injury sustained during the 2021 grass-court season sidelined him for nine months. In the second half of 2022, the Austrian player rose from outside the top 350 to world No. 102. He won 22 of his last 33 matches -- including semifinals at ATP events in Gstaad, Gijon and Antwerp -- but he still narrowly missed directly qualifying for the Australian Open main draw. Thiem has a career win-loss record of 19-8 at Melbourne Park, reaching the second week in 2017, 2018 and 2021 in addition to his runner-up finish to Novak Djokovic in five sets in 2020.

Pakistan hold New Zealand for a draw

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan ended their four-match losing streak at home after brave and gutsy half-centuries by Imam-ul-Haq, Saud Shakeel and Sarfraz Ahmed denied New Zealand a chance to go 1-0 up in the two-Test series at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Friday.

Resuming the fifth and last day at 77 for two and still needing 97 runs to make New Zealand bat again, Pakistan looked down and out when they slipped to 206 for seven (32 runs ahead) with 49 overs still remaining in the match.

However, the eighth and ninth wicket partnerships between Saud Shakeel and Mohammad Wasim Junior, and Saud and Mir Hamza, respectively helped Pakistan to declare their second innings at 311 for eight.

That set New Zealand a daunting but an achievable 138 runs target in 15 overs, and when both the teams shook hands due to a fading light, the visitors were 61 for one in 7.3 overs.

New Zealand, who had last won a Test in Pakistan in Lahore in 1996, were on course to break the 26-year win drought when they left Saud Shakeel to battle out the remaining 49 overs in the day with the tail-enders.

Saud had twice considered the opportunity to help Pakistan win Tests against England earlier this month, but this time he was equal to the task when he returned undefeated on 55 from 138 minutes of watchful and laborious batting

during which he received 108 balls and struck seven fours and a six.

Saud not only conjured up his fifth half-century in fourth Test, he added 75 runs for the eighth wicket from 111 balls (71 minutes) with Mohammad Wasim Junior, while he put on 34 runs from 82 balls (50 minutes) for the unbroken ninth wicket with Mir Hamza.

Wasim showed his batting exploits and skills at probably the best time in his early days as an international cricketer when he not only survived 57 balls but also scored 43 runs with five fours and a six. Mir Hamza kept New Zealand bowlers at bay for 34 balls while scoring three not out.

Earlier, Pakistan starting the day at 77 for two, plunged into a crisis when night-watchman Noman Ali (four) and captain Babar Azam (14) returned to the dressing room in a space of 34 balls to leave the home side in a bother at 100 for four and still needing 74 runs to make New Zealand bat again. Both the batters were adjudged leg before off Michael Bracewell and Ish Sodhi, respectively.

At that stage, Imam and Sarfraz got together in a rescue act and added 85 runs for the fifth wicket before crisis struck Pakistan again.

Sarfraz, immediately after reaching his second half-century of the match, paid the price for attempting a shot to a wide Sodhi delivery and was caught at the wicket, first innings century on Salman Ali Agha missed a wrong-un from Sodhi and was bowled before Imam's

fighting knock ended when he was deceived by Sodhi to be smartly stumped by Tom Blundell. Sarfraz's 53 came off 76 balls and included seven fours, while Imam was unlucky to miss his fourth Test century when he was dismissed for 96. His 206-ball knock was laced with 10 fours and a six.

New Zealand were brilliant in the field on the fifth day. Ish Sodhi recorded his maiden five-fer while finishing with career-best figures of 36.5-11-86-6, while wicketkeeper Tom Blundell accounted for three Pakistan batters in the second innings to finish with seven dismissals in the match.

The second Test will commence at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Monday, 2 January.

Scores in brief

Pakistan (1st innings) 438, 130.5 overs (Babar Azam 161, Salman Ali Agha 103, Sarfraz 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) and 311-8d (Imam-ul-Haq 96, Saud Shakeel 55 not out, Sarfraz Ahmed 53, Mohammad Wasim 43; Ish Sodhi 6-86, Michael Bracewell 2-82)

New Zealand (1st innings) 612-9d, 194.5 overs (Kane Williamson 200 not out, Tom Latham 113, Devon Conway 92, Ish Sodhi 65; Abrar Ahmed 5-205, Noman Ali 3-185) and 61-1 (Tom Latham 35 not out)

Player of the match – Kane Williamson (New Zealand)

Result – Match drawn.

KP Sports dept fails to use development budget

PESHAWAR (Monitoring Desk): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had allocated Rs6.20 billion for the development of sports facilities in settled districts of which the directorate of sports has so far utilised Rs808 million.

The finance department has released Rs2.9bn for the development projects of the provincial sports directorate. However, according to sources of sports department, most of the projects included in the annual development of the current financial year couldn't be started because to non-supply of funds by the finance department.

Moreover, officials said, purchase of goods from abroad for most of the development sports projects couldn't be made because of the poor financial conditions of the province, due to which some important projects have been constructed but

sports facilities are incomplete.

According to document of the provincial Finance Department, the sports directorate has utilised Rs 1 million on the construction of sports grounds across the province. Rs13mn has been utilised on the 1000 sports facility project, Rs35.8mn has been spent on reconstruction of hockey stadium in Swat's Grassi Ground, Rs126.3mn has been spent on sports activities, Rs75mn on provision of missing sports facility in Swat, Rs108.3mn on

Hockey turf in Malakand and Buner, Rs76.4mn on provision of sports equipment in Peshawar sport Complex.

Similarly, Rs 46.6mn has been spent on Kalam stadium project, Rs10mn were spent on Palosai Sports Complex project, Rs8.9mn on Union Council Playground project. Rs 3.1

million has been spend the Hayatabad Sports Complex, Rs10.9 million in Talent Program Pakhtunkhwa project, Rs 17.8 million on the international standard indoor facility project in Buner, Rs 29.5 million on divisional level indoor facility project for women, Rs 10.1 million on upgradation of DI Khan and Mardan Sports Complex project.

Rs 35.99 million on Gradation Football Stadium, Rs 10.5 million on Hayatabad Swimming Pool project, Rs 2.8 million on Sports Complex in Swat project, Rs 58.8 million on DI Khan and Charsada Hockey Stadiums, Rs42.1 million have been spent on the recommendation of Arbab Niaz Stadium.

Most of the projects included in the development program of the current financial year have been delayed due to lack of funds.

Indian cricketer Rishabh Pant hospitalized after car crash

LUCKNOW (AP): Indian cricketer Rishabh Pant was hospitalized on Friday with non-life-threatening injuries sustained in a car crash in northern India.

Pant, 25, was driving the car that overturned and caught fire after hitting a road divider near Roorkee, his hometown in Uttarakhand state, Ravi Bijaria, a state government spokesman said.

He was alone in the car at the time of the accident, Bijaria said. "Rishabh has two cuts on his forehead, a

ligament tear in his right knee and has also hurt his right wrist, ankle, toe and has suffered abrasion injuries on his back. Rishabh's condition remains stable," said a statement by Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

Pant is undergoing MRI scans to ascertain the extent of his injuries and to plan his further treatment, Shah said. State police officer Ashok Kumar said Pant lost control of the car and that Pant was pulled out of the

vehicle by local villagers.

Pant's hometown is nearly 190 kilometers (120 miles) north of New Delhi. Pant has scored 2,271 runs in 33 tests. He has also represented the country in 30 one-day internationals and 66 Twenty20 matches.

Pant was part of the Indian team that defeated Bangladesh in a test series earlier this month.

He made his T-20 debut as a wicketkeeper-batsman in 2017 and played his first test and one-day international for India in 2018.



LUCKNOW: Policemen investigate the scene of a car accident near Roorkee, in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand.



KARACHI: Players shake hands after the draw.

Kvitova beats Pegula but US win United Cup tie

SYDNEY (APP): Petra Kvitova upset world number three Jessica Pegula Friday at the United Cup, but fellow top 10 players Maria Sakkari and Caroline Garcia both earned victories.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova clinched a thriller, saving seven set points in the first set before winning 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 at the Ken Rosewall Arena.

It was not enough to save the tie for the Czechs, though, as the United States took it 4-1. In Perth, the sixth-ranked Sakkari and WTA number four Garcia from France both came through with victories.

Sakkari gave Greece an unassailable 3-0 lead over Bulgaria when she beat Viktoriya Tomova 6-3, 6-2.

"I was a little nervous in the beginning, especially being 2-0 up in the tie, I knew my match was crucial in winning the tie," said Sakkari. "She was very solid, but I found my game and got better." Her teammates Stefanos Tsitsipas and Despina Papamichail won their matches on Thursday.

Garcia, winner of last month's year-end final in Texas, hammered Argentine Nadia Podoroska 6-2, 6-0, finishing with a leaping overhead smash after 64 minutes to give France a 3-0 success after two opening-day wins.

"Our team members all have the same goal," Garcia, who ranked 74th a year ago due to injury, said. "Let's see where it brings us. We want to get some more points, we want to go for it." After the Americans won the opening two rubbers on Thursday, Kvitova's victory gave her country hope in the inaugural tournament, which features two men's and two women's singles matches along with a mixed doubles.

But the US clinched the tie when Tomas Machac injured his ankle against 19th-ranked Francis Tiafoe and was forced to retire hurt while down 6-3, 2-4. Kvitova, ranked 16, looked back to her best against Pegula, who burst into the top 10 in 2022 by winning the WTA 1000 tournament in Guadalajara for the biggest title of her career.

After a topsy-turvy first set that could have gone either way, she got a double break at the start of the second set and while the American got one back, Kvitova was able to hold on and take the match in two hours.

"It was a high-level match for a solid two hours, it got kind of physical towards the end," said Pegula. "She can really step into the court, hits lots of winners and hits a big ball. It's not always easy playing someone like her first match of the season." Tiafoe, a US Open semifinalist this year, started brilliantly against Machac, racing through the first set with relative ease.

Machac fought back in the second and was a break up before rolling his ankle and retiring. The Czech Republic will face Alexander Zverev's Germany on Saturday while the US have two days off before they close out group play against the Germans.

Switzerland completed a 3-0 defeat of Kazakhstan in Brisbane, with captain Stan Wawrinka beating Alexander Bublik 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) a day after wins from Olympic champion Belinda Bencic and Marc-Andrea Huesler.

Aqeel, Shoaib advance to semi-finals of Serena Hotels Tennis Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top-ranked Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoaib cruised into the semi-finals of men's singles event of the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 after beating their respective opponents in the quarter-finals here at the PTF SDA Tennis Complex on Friday.

Aqeel Khan outclassed Barkatullah 6-2, 7-6(3), while Shoaib overpowered Heera Ashiq 6-4, 6-2.

In another quarterfinal, Muhammad Abid toppled Mudassir Murtaza 6-1, 3-

6-6-4. Earlier, Yousaf Khalil had moved to the semi-finals on Thursday after outshining Muzammil Murtaza 6-3, 1-6, 6-1 in the quarter-final. Contests in other categories were also held on Friday.

Results:- Men's Doubles Quarter-Finals: Mudassir Murtaza / M. Abid bt Abdullah Adnan/ Imran Bhatti 6-0, 6-4; Heera Ashiq / Yousaf Khalil bt Mahmood Khan/ Talha Waheed 6-4, 6-3 Ladies Singles Quarter-

Finals: Noor Malik bt Natalia Zaman 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-3

Boys Singles 18 & Under Quarter-Finals: Sami Zeb Khan bt Uzair Khan 6-2, 6-2; Hamid Israr bt Asad Zaman 6-0, 7-5; Bilal Asim bt Rahim Veqar 6-2, 6-2; Mahatir Muhammad bt Ahmed Nael Qureshi 4-6, 7-6(4), 6-0

Boys Singles 14 & Under Quarter-Finals: Amir Mazari bt Nabeel Ali Qayum 6-4, 6-0; M. Hamza Asim bt Sameer Zaman 6-4, 6-3; Abdul Basit bt Haziq Asim 6-3, 6-0.

SBP to extend supports to hold Kabaddi WC 2024

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan will host the next Kabaddi World Cup to be played here in year 2024.

This was disclosed by a 2-member delegation of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (PKF) during their meeting with Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi at National Hockey Stadium on Friday. The PKF delegation was comprised PKF Secretary Rana Sarwar and senior coach Tahir Waheed Jatt.

The promotion of kabaddi among the younger generation across the province was also discussed at length

during the meeting. Rana Sarwar said that the International Kabaddi League has also been allocated to Pakistan.

PKF Secretary Rana Sarwar also presented a souvenir to Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on this occasion.

Speaking on this occasion, Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said that Sports board Punjab has always taken all possible measures for the promotion of all sports disciplines including kabaddi in all parts of the province. "We also extended every kind

of cooperation and facilities to all participating teams during the previous Kabaddi World Cup in 2020 and will do the same in 2024," he added.

He said Pakistan has plenty of kabaddi talent and the next World Cup in Lahore will help a lot in further promotion of this game among the youth. "Organising Kabaddi World Cup and International Kabaddi League in Pakistan is definitely a big honour for the country and we will utilise all resources to make these events successful," he added.



SYDNEY: Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic competes against Jessica Pegula of the United States during day two of the 2023 United Cup.

Russian football remains with UEFA: union

MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian Football Union said Friday it wanted its teams to return to international competition after Russia said it could leave UEFA and seek membership with Asia's confederation.

European football's governing body, UEFA, banned Moscow from competition after President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine in February. A meeting of the Russian Football Union's executive committee, on Friday decided against the switch to Asia for now.

"We are indeed considering the option of returning to UEFA competitions as soon as possible," said Alexander Dyukov, president of the Russian Football Union. "It is important for us to take part in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers."

The Russian Football Union was proposing the establishment of a group to conduct consultations with UEFA in an effort to resume ties, said Dyukov. He did not rule out that Russia could seek membership with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) at a later stage.

As part of the UEFA ban, Russia has been excluded from the qualifying draw for Euro 2024 and will not take part in upcoming qualifying matches starting next March. Russia has also been banned from international football competitions by FIFA, barring it from the 2022 World Cup in Qatar that ended with a victory for Argentina.

The Switzerland-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has turned down Russia's appeals to overturn

the FIFA and UEFA bans. The decision to leave UEFA and join AFC would have a share of consequences -- primarily financial ones -- for Russian clubs, especially those previously involved in top-division European competitions, such as the Champions League.

Yevgeny Giner, the president of CSKA Moscow, warned in a recent interview with the daily Sport-Express that "we need to take into account the enormous difference in the financial component" and the "status of potential international matches" as part of the Asian leagues.

"We will literally have to start from zero," he said.

"Therefore, perhaps we should wait for a return to big European football," Giner added.



In brief

IRSA releases 30,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 30,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 40,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1490.46 feet and was 92.46 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow as 10,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.90 feet, which was 67.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,900 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 13,000, 13,800, 14,900 and 500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seize 25 kg heroin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 40 kg of heroin from a pick-up near Peshawar Hayatabad and arrested one drug peddler. According to a spokesperson of ANF, the force in another operation at Islamabad International Airport recovered 100 capsules filled with heroin from the stomach of the accused who was travelling to Sharjah on Flight No. PK 209. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

4 vehicles impounded

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA) on Wednesday impounded four public transport vehicles and issued challans to the other twenty-nine over fitness issues. Secretary ITA during the inspection at various bus and wagon stations found four vehicles unsafe to run on the road, the vehicles were impounded and tickets were issued to the drivers, said a press release issued. During the inspection, 38 vehicles were inspected and Rs. 8,000 were fined to various vehicles over substandard conditions and not having a fitness certificate. ITA officials also fined smoke-emitting vehicles, warned public transport drivers of stern action, and said that vehicles without fitness certificates would not be allowed in Islamabad.

AIOU commences MS, PhD Exams

ISLAMABAD (APP): The final examinations of MS/M.Phil and PhD programs offered in autumn semester 2022 by the faculty of social sciences and humanities, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will begin on January 6. According to the Controller Exams, the exams of the program offered by the faculty of sciences, education, Arabic & Islamic studies would also commence at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). These exams would be held at the AIOU's main campus in Islamabad. The date sheet and roll number slips are being dispatched to all students at their postal addresses, also uploaded on the students' CMS portal and website (www.aiou.edu.pk).



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar and Minister for State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar are also present.

Law minister says no room for technocrat setup in constitution

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar has termed the technocrat setup unconstitutional saying there is no room for such a thing in the constitution.

The minister said that the constitution is very lucid about it that if assemblies are dissolved before their terms, then the elections would be held within 90 days and if assemblies go after completing their tenures, then the polls would be held within 60 days. He said if assemblies are dissolved, then a caretaker setup would replace the government. Law Minister Nazeer Tarar was talking to media on Friday.

Replying to a question,

Tarar said that there was talk of a technocrat government, but the Constitution of Pakistan does not allow it. The technocrat government can be a whimsical idea of somebody but practically it cannot happen, he clarified. The law minister also rubbished rumours regarding long-term caretaker setup and economic emergency in the country. He suggested that measures to improve the economy be made while remaining within the limits of the constitution. He hoped that the current elected government could deal with all challenges being faced by the country.

To a query whether the PDM government has contacted with the PTI over the

technocrat setup, Nazeer Tarar said that he does not have any knowledge about it. PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday termed the "serious considerations of installing a technocrat government" in Pakistan a "joke", saying that such a setup would not be able to solve the country's current issues.

He made these remarks in response to an interview given by a senior economist to a TV channel in which he claimed that discussions were underway regarding a "caretaker government" — comprising experts — that could replace the present government given the current economic crises.

Rain showers boost sales of winter delights

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sales of winter delights have increased after rain and people were seen with umbrellas rushing to grocery stores and shops to purchase their favorite cuisines. The roads leading to the market were dotted with colorful umbrellas where people showed keen interest in different food items including soups, fish, galebi, kashmiri chai, gajar ka halwa and hot coffee.

Talking to APP here on Friday, a customer Anjum Khalid said that "I thoroughly enjoy the rainy season, when it rains the whole day, I do prepare 'gajar ka halwa' and relish it by the window." A tea stall owner at the local market, Bashir said people come in large numbers whenever there is a forecast of rain. "People love having a good time and tea during the rain".

He said Kashmiri tea (chai) becomes a favorite delight after rain in the winter season due to its little thick consistency and along with buttery and creamy taste. "Fish is again another winter delight that is traditional for Pakistanis and incredibly healthy. 'I love fish, let it be fried, grilled, or steamed", said Ahmad while talking to this APP scribe.

Tourists advised to follow traffic advisory in Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) here on Friday issued a traffic advisory for tourists travelling to Murree and other hill stations to enjoy the snowfall of winter amid the weather forecast of snowfall. The tourists rushing to mountain resorts to enjoy snowfall used to get stuck in traffic jams due to heavy snowfalls and road blockades.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Taimoor Khan urged the tourists to avoid wrong parking, double lines, and taking selfies in the middle of the road. He said that additional traffic wardens had been deployed to facilitate tourists and advised the visitors to obey traffic rules and avoid over-speeding. He also suggested the tourists to keep their vehicles fit before traveling to hill stations. The CTP had devised a proper traffic plan to ensure a smooth flow of traffic and also requested the masses to cooperate with the police.

Senate body briefed over relief granted to flood affectees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Standing Committee on poverty alleviation and social safety on Friday was briefed on financial relief granted to the flood affectees by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

The committee presided over by Senator Naseebullah Bazai expressed displeasure over the absence of the Federal Minister, Secretary of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, and the NDMA Chairman. The NDMA official informed the committee that 19 districts were declared as "Calamity Hit" districts across the country during the recent flood, where 1,739 persons lost their lives and 12,867 individuals suffered injuries.

The committee was further informed that some 768,598 houses were fully

damaged and 1,280,191 houses were partially damaged in these districts according to the survey data conducted by PDMAs and verified by Pakistan Army and NDMA.

Senator Kamran Murtaza inquired NDMA officials about the compensation provided to flood-affected districts. He reiterated that six months had passed but nothing in the name of relief or compensation was provided to victims of flood-affected districts.

He suggested that the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives should be made part of the discussion to expedite the relief process.

The Committee invited the Planning Ministry and deferred the deliberation on the matter till next meeting.

ICT police call 1000 FC personnel for security

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police has decided to beef up security of the federal capital and called 1,000 Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel to assist the police at the checkpoints. The decision has been taken following the suicide car bomb blast in the federal capital

that left one policeman martyred and 10 injured. ICT Police wrote a letter to interior ministry, demanding 1,000 FC personnel for enhancing security. Residents are requested to report any suspicious activity on Police Helpline Number 15.

The FC officials will be

deployed at the checkpoints created at 25 locations in Islamabad, to aid the police in enhancing their security and checking procedures. ICT police tweeted that residents are being checked at different locations, so people are advised to leave from home a bit earlier to reach the destination on time.

Pakistan Railways resumes Malkwal-Pind Dadan Khan shuttle train

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Railways on Friday resumed shuttle train service between Malakwal and Pind Dadan Khan to facilitate the passengers.

According to the officials of Pakistan Railways Rawalpindi Division, the decision was taken on the directions of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique who had directed the Divisional Superintendent, Pakistan Railways Rawalpindi Division to finalize arrangements to start the shuttle train service.

The officials said that Pakistan Railways were taking solid steps to provide safe travelling facilities to the passengers, adding that Malakwal and Pind Dadan Khan railway track, which was closed due to lockdowns imposed during the coronavirus pandemic, could not be restored.

Thousands of passengers from three districts of Rawalpindi Division were facing difficulties and demanding restart of the shuttle train service. The shuttle train service was inaugurated here by a passenger who purchased first ticket of the train.

On this occasion, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Railways, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, Divisional Superintendent, Pakistan Railways Rawalpindi, Inamullah Khan, and Divisional Officers were present.

The shuttle train service consists of four economy class coaches and a brake van for the delivery of goods, which would run three times between Malkwal to Pind Dadan Khan daily.

The passengers expressing their pleasures appreciated the step taken to facilitate them on the directives of Federal Minister for Railways and the Chairman Pakistan Railways.

The fare from Malkwal to Pind Dadan Khan has been fixed Rs 180 and Rs 140 for Haranpur.

The officials also requested the public not to travel without tickets and take special care of cleanliness in the train so that this shuttle service could be continued.

Seven CTP teams to control one-wheeling on New Year's night

RAWALPINDI (APP):

City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have finalized arrangements to control one-wheeling and car stunts by youngsters on eve of New Year's night and seven special squads have been formed. According to a CTP spokesman, CTP had decided to take strict action against traffic rules violators.

CTP on the directives of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan would take action in accordance with the law against the violators. 320 Traffic Wardens would be deployed on city roads to ensure a smooth flow of

traffic and control one-wheeling.

The CTO had instructed the Traffic Wardens to net those involved in the one-wheeling and car-racing.

He said that the CTP, in this regard, had formed seven special squads to arrest the violators and impound their vehicles.

He informed that several arrangements were made to curb the activity aimed at protecting the youngsters as one-wheeling is one of the causes of death and severe injuries for the riders.

He said that they would conduct night operations on Benazir Bhutto Road

near Nawaz Sharif Park and the Committee Chowk underpass to apprehend one-wheelers. The cases would be filed against one-wheelers. "Efforts are being made to curb the activity (one-wheeling) as it had claimed several precious lives and a number of youngsters had sustained serious injuries due to it," he added.

He said, one-wheelers were not only endangering their own lives but were also a threat to other road users.

The spokesman urged the parents to come forward and play their role in curbing the activity.

Estate Office to launch operation against encroachment in govt residences

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has decided to take action against encroachments and illegally constructed structures in government residences in the federal capital.

"The final notices will be issued to the residents of the government residences otherwise the Estate office is going to cancel their allotment," an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. The official said that the ministry has also decided to vacate government quarters from retired and relatives of late employees, who continue to occupy residences. "The purpose of the operation is to clear the government residences of encroachments," he added.

He said the ministry has also sought help from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the government residences fall under the administrative control of the Estate Office.

The official said the ministry has decided to take action against the construction of extra rooms by the employees and their

kin and kin that are living in government-allotted houses.

He said that at present over 17,000 government houses in Islamabad were under the management of the Estate Office and additional rooms had illegally been constructed by the allottees in over 2,400 residences. According to the sources, over 25,000 government employees were currently on the general waiting list to get accommodation but they could not be provided with the same as retired employees, their relatives, and relatives of even late government employees who continue to live in government quarters.

The sources said they have constructed either an extra room or an entire floor on a government house. It has been decided to remove these encroachments from government residences, and soon a major operation will be launched against these illegal structures, the sources said. The Estate Office will also take action against the illegal use of land for commercial purposes and other types of encroachments.

96% complaints were solved through Complaints Management System

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Islamabad Capital Police Complaint Management System is fully operational and working effectively, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad

capital police complaint management system (CMS) is working effectively and solving public complaints on transparency and merit.

During the current year, 137,776 complaints were received on the complaint management system, out of which 133,232 complaints were resolved on merit

which is 96% of the total applications. Citizens can file a complaint related to FIR registration, complaints about traffic, complaints against any police official, and regarding any investigation. The citizens will be able to get an e-tag number through their mobile phones without visiting the police station.



ISLAMABAD: Senior Advisor Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan, Dr. Arslan Subuctageen along with other addresses press conference at FTO HQs, regarding "Annual Performance of FTO".

Serbia arrests Afghan general

SARAJEVO (Reuters): Serbian police have arrested an Afghan army general and a sniper wanted by France on terrorism charges during a raid on an migrant camp in the north of the Balkan country, Tanjug news agency reported. France had issued an international warrant for the two men, police told Tanjug. In a statement, police said the arrests were made at the makeshift camp near the northern town of Subotica, where 109 illegal migrants were found, 29 of whom were "interesting security-wise".

Kabul witnesses first snowfall

KABUL (Tolo News): The city of Kabul was blanketed with snow, something that was widely celebrated by the residents amid severe economic challenges that have affected millions of Afghans across the country. Many Kabul residents expressed their happiness about the snowfall but vulnerable families said they are unable to afford the expenses of heating their houses. "The snowfall happened in Kabul. Kabul can be without gold but not without snow," said Sayed Ghafar, a resident of Kabul.

OCHA highlights Afghanistan’s humanitarian, economic situation

KABUL (Tolo News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in a report highlighted the economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan for the coming year. The report says that 20 million people will 20 million people face acute hunger by the end of March 2023 and that malnutrition rates will remain extremely high, with four million children and women facing acute malnutrition.

"The deteriorating economy has caused sharp declines in income, rising debt, and high unemployment. Due to a severe increase in commodity prices, people now spend 71 percent of their income on food," the report reads. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that millions of people around the world were literally swept out of ashes in 2022.

"From Ukraine to Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond, people left the ruins of their homes and lives in search of something better," Guterres said. "Around the world, one hundred million people were on the move, fleeing wars, wildfires, droughts, poverty and hunger." Kabul residents expressed their concerns over their deteriorated situation amid severe winter.

Zakia and her husband have become drug addicts for the past six



years. The couple has seven children. Two of their sons are working as vendors to afford the needs of their families. "They are saying mother find us something to eat. They are children and they cannot fight with hunger," Zakia said.

"We are selling plastic bags every day. Sometimes I make money and sometimes I cannot. Usually, I make 40 to 50 Afs," said Firoz, son of Zakia. Analysts said humanitarian organizations should focus on investment in Afghanistan. "We demand the current government and organizations to help us in the field of investment that can create jobs for our people," said Shabir Bashiri, an

analyst in economic affairs.

UN Secretary-General emphasized the need for a better life for people worldwide. "In 2023, we need peace, now more than ever. Peace with one another, through dialogue to end conflict. Peace with nature and our climate, to build a more sustainable world. Peace in the home, so women and girls can live in dignity and safety," Guterres said. Earlier, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies expressed their concerns over the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, saying that many families are unable to afford food and heating materials.

UN to hold meeting on intra-Afghan dialogue

KABUL (Tolo News): Chargé d'Affaires of the Afghanistan Permanent Mission to the UN, Naseer Ahmad Faiq, said that a meeting would be held by the United Nations to discuss an intra-Afghan dialogue. He said the meeting will include representatives from all aspects of Afghanistan and that the planning of the meeting is underway.

"Holding a national and international dialogue under the leadership of the UN in which actual representatives of Afghanistan will gather and will make decision about the future of Afghanistan," he said. But the Islamic Emirate denied Faiq's remarks, saying it doesn't recognize him as Afghanistan's ambassador to the UN.

"Faiq is an individual. We don't accept him as a representative or a party. He is an individual and whatever he says is his personal view," said Zabiullah Mujahid, Islamic Emirate's spokesman. Analysts said that intra-Afghan negotiations are the best way to address the ongoing problems in the country. "The national dialogue is a good step. If it is conducted, it can rescue the country from the crisis," said Shir Agha Rohani, a political analyst. "The Islamic Emirate has control over all territory. The time for it (dialogue) has passed," said Abdul Jamil Shirani, a political analyst. Former President Hamid Karzai in an interview with the Washington Post this week said an intra-Afghan dialogue would be "good" for the caretaker government and for Afghanistan.

NRC chief urges West to engage with IEA

KABUL (Tolo News): Jan Egeland, head of Norwegian Refugee Council, NRC, urged the West to engage with the Islamic Emirate. Egeland made the remarks in a special interview with TOLONews. He pointed out to the recent decision of the Islamic Emirate regarding the ban on women from going to schools, universities and work, saying that such decision would affect Kabul relations with the international community. "I am sure we will find a solution. We found the solution in the past. We never left Afghanistan. The western forces did, the western diplomats did. I am also asking the western diplomats to engage more with the Taliban but again I don't think it is gonna be in Doha then because what is said in Doha, is not what decided in Kabul and Kandahar," Egeland said. But the Islamic Emirate Spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said that the international community should first recognize the caretaker government of Afghanistan.

"As the international organizations conduct their operations for humanitarian purposes, they should continue their assistance and link it to rules and laws because the people of Afghanistan need assistance," Mujahid said. Political analysts said that ban on women will affect the Islamic Emirate's relations with the world. "The people of Afghanistan even those who are working in government and non-government organizations are facing restrictions, which has concerned aid organizations," said Jannat Fahim Chakari, a political analyst.

"Both sides should seek political engagement considering the deteriorated economic, political and social conditions of our people," said Ahmad Khan Andar, a political analyst. The international community has set formation of inclusive government, human rights including rights of women and girls, as well as preventing Afghan soil from being used against other countries, as preconditions for the recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

‘All or None’ drive launched against girls’ education ban

KABUL (Pajhwok): Afghan women's groups and networks and some social media activists have launched social media campaign All or none to voice their concern against the ban on girls education in Afghanistan.

Shafiq Khapalwak, an Afghan social media activist on her twitter handle wrote that tomorrow a grand campaign to protect Afghan women's Sharia and human rights would be launched.

She said: "Afghan girls hope that all their countrymen will listen to this voice of truth and justice. For all those sons and daughters of the country who face death but still dare to raise their voice."

Habiba Ashna Marhon, another Afghan social

media activist, published the picture of a young girls which carried caption of 'All or none'

She said: "This sister wrote to me, she did not have much money to buy pens and write this slogan and then she sews it on a large piece of cloth." She asked all Afghans to participate in this drive. Former Kabul University Lecturer Mahboob Shah Mahboob on his Twitter wrote let's all join sisters in this drive, raise this voice and protect women from ignorance. Gulali Safi wrote that women did not have the right to study and work but could beg alongside their brothers.

Mohammad Afzal Zarghoni wrote after this a large number of families

would migrate to Iran and Pakistan for the sake of their children education. Shams Iklas wrote it was education and knowledge that provided human being with the ability that reach highest point of creation which is worship. Rahim Jami wrote it was proven that education is compulsory on men and women. Every individual preventing people from this compulsory act are committing big sine.

The development comes as university education and school education above class sixth is banned for girls in Afghanistan. Acting Afghan government has recently banned women higher education nationwide that sparked national and international criticism.

‘Women central to humanitarian, basic need operations’

KABUL (Pajhwok): None-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) will be unable to reach the most vulnerable people in Afghanistan to provide food, medicine, winterization and other materials and services without women workforce, according to a statement from the US State Department on Friday.

"Women are absolutely central to humanitarian and basic needs operations. Unless they participate in aid delivery in Afghanistan, NGOs will be unable to reach the country's most vulnerable people to provide food, medicine, winterization, and other materials and services they need to live." This would also affect the humanitarian assistance provided by international organizations, as international organizations utilize NGOs to deliver such materials and services.

The Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malta, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States and the High Representative of the European Union are gravely concerned that the Taliban's reckless and dangerous order barring female employees of national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the workplace puts at risk millions of Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance for their survival. We call on the

Taliban to urgently reverse this decision. We support the Afghan people's calls for girls and women to return to work, school, and university, and for women to continue to play essential roles in humanitarian and basic needs assistance delivery, and we urge the Taliban to respect the political, economic, social, and cultural rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

To this end, we are in close contact with the United Nations, who are urging, also on behalf of all international donors, that the Taliban reverse this decision immediately. This would avoid any disruption and allow the continuation of all humanitarian operations of international and national NGOs.

Some programs halted over ban on women aid workers: UN

KABUL (Tolo News): The United Nations in a statement said that some agencies in Afghanistan have stopped their activities and warned that some other programs will also halt their operations because of the Islamic Emirate's decision to ban women from working in non-governmental organizations.

UN's Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Afghanistan in a statement said that banning women from working in humanitarian non-governmental organizations is a major blow to vulnerable communities, women, children, and the country. The committee added that women are teachers, nutrition experts, team leaders, community health workers, vaccinators, nurses, doctors, and heads of organizations, and have access to populations that male employees

cannot reach, their participation in aid delivery is not negotiable and must continue, some organizations for lack of female staff has to pause their activities.

"We foresee that many activities will need to be paused as we cannot deliver principled humanitarian assistance without female aid workers," the committee said. The UN committee urged the Islamic Emirate to reverse the ban on women's schools, universities and work.

Meanwhile, foreign ministries of 12 countries, including the US and the UK, in a statement expressed grave concern about the Islamic Emirate's decision to bar women from working in NGOs. They said that the decision puts at risk millions of Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

"NGOs will be unable to reach the country's most vulnerable people to provide food, medicine, winterization, and other materials and services they need to live, this would also affect the humanitarian assistance provided by international organizations, as international organizations utilize NGOs to deliver such materials and services," the statement said.

They called on the Islamic Emirate to reverse immediately their decision to ban women from working in NGOs. According to international organizations, over 28 million people in Afghanistan, including millions of women and children, require assistance to survive as the country grapples with the risk of famine conditions, economic decline, entrenched poverty and a brutal winter.

Built 5 years ago, Sabari hospital yet to be inaugurated

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of Yaqubi Sabari district of southeastern Khost demand the inauguration and functioning of a 30-bed hospital built five years ago. The 30-bed hospital building was constructed five years ago at a cost of 65 million afghanis in Khabisat township, but is yet to be inaugurated.

Mohammad Suliman, a resident of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that five years had passed, but the authorities were yet to open the hospital. He urged the authorities to inaugurate the hospital because local residents faced many problems due to lack of health services. He added: "If the hospital is not inaugurated, its building will destroy due to lack of attention. The clinic should be opened for people."

Gul Rasoul, another resident of the district, told Pajhwok that their district was far away from Khost city and they could not take their patients on time to the

civil hospital.

He said there were no adequate health services in the district and it was crucial to make the 30-bed hospital functional. Public Health Director Dr. Fazal Karim Mandozi told Pajhwok that they were trying

to make functional the hospital on the district level. He added: "This hospital will be activated at DH level and staff will be hired for it." He assured to provide standard and adequate health services to all people of Khost.

Traffic accidents increased

KABUL (Tolo News): Local officials in Faryab on Friday said that traffic accidents have increased in the province as at least 15 people have died and more than 50 others have been wounded in such incidents over the past two months. The officials said that women are also victims of the incidents.

"In the past two months, 15 people have been killed and 54 people were wounded," said Baryali Yarmand, head of the Faryab Traffic Police Office. "According to the recent order that the traffic department received, the department will evaluate each route under the supervision of the technical board," said Naqibullah Islami, head of revenue control regulation of the Faryab transportation department.

Officials said that damaged roads, carelessness of drivers, and lack of traffic rules are the reasons for traffic accidents. A number of Faryab residents expressed their concern over the increase in traffic accidents in the province and called on officials to take measures to prevent such incidents. "Men who are not 18 years old have a car and they drive, and it causes to increase in traffic accidents," said Nabil, a Faryab resident.

Disputes among Shindand residents almost resolved

HERAT (Pajhwok): The residents of Shindand district in western Harat province after experiencing two decades of insecurity and tribal disputes are now heading towards a peaceful life and reconciliation, tribal elders say. Shindand is a vast district situated 100 kilometers south of Herat city, the provincial capital.

Also called Sabzwar, Shindand had never been without wars and disputes even for a day during the past two decades. It residents lived a terrible life due to the wars and insecurity and tribal disputes contributed to their sufferings. Local residents say after the current government's coming to power and efforts of local officials, tribal disputes have been completely resolved.

Ghulam Hazrat, a resi-

dent of Chahar Mahal area of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News there had been usually differences among residents on ethnic lines which sometimes led to violent clashes. Such disputes had divided the residents into different sects and their differences sometimes led to bloody conflicts, but now such problems and disputes have been resolved to a great extent, he added.

Saadullah, a resident of Azizabad village of Shindand district, told Pajhwok the residents of the district had never enjoyed peace and security during the past two decades. The wars that happened in Shindand district had no example all over Afghanistan, Saadullah said.

Abdul Rahman, another resident of Shindand district, said he fought for four years with his neighbors over a land dispute. However, his dispute with his neighbors was finally resolved through mediation of tribal elders, he said. Abdul Rahman believed the role of local officials and tribal elders was critical in resolving tribal disputes. "Pardoning ends up in friendship while revenge adds fuel to the fire."

Shindand district chief Mawlawi SharfuddinMukhlis, told Pajhwok Afghan News they held monthly meetings with tribal elders to resolve such disputes. He said such disputes among the people had decreased to almost zero. MawlawiGhulamHaider, the district police chief,

said he had so far succeeded to solve ten disputes.

Shindand once considered the center of all fights and wars in the western zone of the country was now the most peaceful district, Haider added. MawlawiNaemul Haq, the Information and Culture department head, also said after the takeover by Islamic Emirate, the graph of local disputes in Shindand had dropped to zero. He added their regime treated all people equally and without distinction.

He said the government was trying to resolve disputes among people in cooperation with tribal elders. Tribal disputes are common in Afghanistan, but the incumbent government is trying to resolve them one after another with the help of tribal elders.

About 20,000 children of Mir Khan area out of school

GHAZNI (Pajhwok): About 20,000 children of Mir Khan area in Qarabagh district of central Ghazni province are deprived of education as there is no school for them. There are 35 villages in Mir Khan area where 3500 families reside, but there is not a single school for their children. Neither the previous governments nor the incumbent government paid any attention to the lack of schools in Mir Khan area, while local residents could not afford to build schools on their own for their children to avoid a dark future, the residents said.

Mohammad Hashim, a tribal elder in Mir Khan area, told Pajhwok Afghan News there were 35 villages where 3,500 families resided and they had no

school for their 20,000 children. "We tried our best to have school in our area during the past two decades, but due to the wars and insecurity, we failed to do so," Hashim said. He said during the past two decades thousands of children grew up illiterate and thousands of other children faced the same fate right now.

"Education is the right of children, officials and elders must fulfill their responsibility towards the boys and girls of this area," Hashim added. Abdul Habib, another tribal elder, told Pajhwok that local people had purchased some land for a school but they were not economically sound to build it. "We want the government and other relevant institutions to help us build a school",

Abdul Habib said.

"In the past, the people did not want to educate their children, but now they have realized the importance of education so the officials must fulfill their responsibility in this regard," he added. Mullah Shafiq, imam of a mosque, said the entire Qarabagh district had been ignored especially Mir Khan area with regard to education. Mullah Shafiq told Pajhwok Afghan News it was responsibly of the government to build schools for children and to provide other facilities.

Even children of this area are united in their demand for education. They say if they are provided the opportunity to get education, they could become doctors, engineers and other professionals in

the future. Government officials, on the other hand, say half of the schools across the country face shortage of textbooks and professional teachers.

MawlawiMunirMansoor, Ghazni education director, told Pajhwok: "It is right that Qarabagh district is the most neglected area with regard to education, the main reason is negligence of the past government and wars in this area". "We will share the demands of Mir Khan residents with the officials concerned to provide them all facilities for education of their children," Mansoor promised. It is worth mentioning that residents of many other areas of Ghazni province have no access to even to basic services including education.

Sitaragan Academy offers students free tuition

SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): A private education centre has been established in Shiberghan, the capital of northern Jawzjan province, to provide leaning opportunity for less fortunate children, a move highly appreciated by experts who demanded other well-off individuals to the same.

Ustad Folad Baig Qoyash, head of the Sitaragan Education Centre, during an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News said that due to economic problems some students from financial unsound families were unable to continue their education. "Therefore we wanted to arrange learning opportunity for girls and boys who did not have the ability to pay their fee." The facility provided

free of cost English language, math and physics learning opportunity for 100 girls and 50 boys. Qoyash said this programme was underway from the past two months.

He said: "We train these students at different times; If the number of students from poor families increases, we also have professors and other suitable places to teach them for free." Roina, one of the students of this centre, said due to financial problems she was unable to continue her education. "We are very happy and we thank the head of this academy for offering this opportunity," she said.

Romila, another girl studying in this centre, said only her father is working and it was far from hid financial strength to provide fee for the learning for his

children. Zarif, another student, said: "We thank the leadership of our course. We have no money to pay fee but now we study freely."

Mohammad Arif Anwari, a lecturer at Jawzjan journalism faculty, said the future of the country belonged to the young generation, the more youth are educated the more the future of Afghanistan is bright. "At our university level, we had the experience of holding short-term English, speech and computer training courses for boys and girls in different courses, which was very effective and all male and female students were very satisfied with the courses," he said.

He said other education centres should take similar steps and their focus should be girls. Religious Scholar

Mawlawi Samaruddin said that education was compulsory on men and women, adding that women and girls also had the right to education and a state government should work hard to education its people.

Referring to the free education system, he said such initiatives had huge reward. Jawzjan Education Director Mawlawi Mohammad Tahir Jawad said the existence of tuitions and courses along side schools and universities were of vital importance. He added: "We support these tuitions in line with the education laws of the Islamic Emirate," he added. Jawad said currently a large number of courses were open in Shiberghan and Jawzjan districts in which a large number of girls and boys getting education.

Alvi for enhanced Pakistan, Norway engagement on trade, green energy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need for accelerated engagements and cooperation with Norway in diverse sectors, including trade, business, investment, and green energy. The president, talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Norway Sadia Altaf Qazi, who called on him here, also called for bilateral cooperation in the fields of education, skill development, defence and exports of Pakistan's cost-effective but highly prized fruit and vegetables.

He said that there was a need to substantially enhance bilateral trade from its existing volume of US\$ 128.404 million, which did not represent the true potential, by promoting exports of traditional and non-traditions products and services to the rich and affluent market of Norway.

The president advised the ambassador-designate to proactively engage and interact with Pakistani expatriates, provide them proactive counsellor services and, through their platforms, not only promote bilateral trade and investment but also take meaningful steps for increasing people-to-people contacts and promotion of Pakistan's rich, diverse, social and cultural values and tourism opportunities.

He advised the ambassador to explore meaningful and doable opportunities and venues for bilateral cooperation in the

field of academia, scientific, industrial research and development, and collaboration between the counterpart universities and institutes of the two countries.

President Alvi said efforts should also be made for including Pakistan in Norway's list of prioritized countries for enhancing education cooperation under its Panorama Strategy 2021-2027.

He said that the ambassador should work to secure Norway's support in expediting the conclusion of Pakistan's Free Trade Agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). He also emphasized creating linkages between the chambers of commerce and industries of the two countries for possible joint ventures, technology transfer, holding social, cultural and business events, exchange of trade delegations, and reciprocal ease and facilitation of trade and investment.

The president said there was a need to highlight the atrocities being committed perpetually by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), and the increasing incidences of discrimination, intimidation, harassment, and marginalization of minorities and increasing trend of Islamophobia in India, which was putting the life and property of the entire Indian minorities, especially Muslims, in great danger.

Reshuffle in Sindh ahead of LG polls annoys SHC

KARACHI (TLTP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has expressed resentment over transfers and postings of officers by the provincial government days before the second phase of the local government elections.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Yousaf Ali Saeed and Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry heard a petition seeking court orders to nullify the recent transfers and postings made by the provincial government. The TLTP learnt that the bench summoned the chief secretary on next hearing scheduled for Jan 4 and also sought reply from the government in three days.

During the hearing, the bench inquired about the whereabouts of the secretary local government. The petitioner said he had also been transferred, leaving the court shocked. A counsel for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) informed the SHC that the provincial government made transfers and postings after the announcement of the election scheduled. He said several notifications were withdrawn by the government after the ECP took up the matter with it. Some of the notifications of transfer of officers were yet to be taken back, he said.

The petitioner argued that the government committed violation of election laws by making such transfers and postings. Later, the SHC directed the government lawyer to submit reply within three days and warned of strict action if orders were not complied with. In the second phase, LG polls are scheduled to be held in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions on Jan 15.

SBP increases export financing markup rates

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has raised the export financing markup rates by 200 basis points in line with the key policy rate.

In a circular issued on Friday, the central bank decided to reduce the gap between the policy rate and Export Finance Scheme (EFS) and the Long-term Financing Facility (LTFF) from the existing 5 to 3 percent. "Accordingly, markup rates for financing under EFS (Part-I & Part-II) and LTFF are increased from the existing 11 percent per annum to 13 percent per annum each with effect from December 30, 2022."

In the future with any change in the SBP policy rate, markup rates for EFS and LTFF would be revised automatically so that the gap between the policy rate and EFS and LTFF rates was maintained at 3 percent, the central bank added. With the fresh SBP move, the interest rates on working capital financing and plant machinery have been increased.

The rates on EFS and LTFF schemes were fixed at 3-5 percent until March 2022. On July 7, 2022, the SBP linked the rates of EFS and LTFF with its policy rate. The SBP hiked the policy rate by 100 basis points to 16 percent last month to prudently strike a balance between maintaining growth post-floods and managing inflation. The central bank is set to announce the upcoming interest rate decision on January 23.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Norway, Ms Sadia Altaf Qazi calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pakistan should learn from China for economic development: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said Pakistan should learn from China for economic and technological development.

To ensure economic development, the country should have a peaceful environment adding "we must first ensure political stability, continuity of policies, and social solidarity because economic development does not take place in an atmosphere of conflict and polarization.

The minister made these remarks while addressing the award ceremony held in recognition of outstanding Pakistani staff of the CPEC Projects 2022 at the Chinese Embassy here.

He said that everyone thought that CPEC is an impossible mission. But people on the ground made it possible, which is remarkable.

Highlighting the friendship bond between Pakistan and China, the minister said that the changes in world affairs have also brought changes in relationships. World orders bring countries together and the world order changes. The countries' friendships also drift apart.

He said that the Pakistan and China friendship has defied all rules of international affairs and diplomacy. There are no two countries that have phrases like iron brothers, he added. All these phrases describe the depth and strength of Pakistan-China friendship and brotherhood.

The minister said that Pakistan and China were historically very close in political relations, security cooperation, and other fields except for economic cooperation.

However, in 2013 when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited China after resuming office, the economic MoUs of \$46 billion were signed between China and Pakistan to start work on the CPEC project.

The minister said that as a result of CPEC Pakistan overcome an electricity shortfall and communication infrastructure was improved.

He said that the purpose of CPEC was not to advance China's business interests. The purpose of CPEC was to help Pakistan which was a close strategic partner, to improve its economy and bring Pakistan's economy from an agricultural structure into an industrial structure. Ambassador of China to Pakistan Nong Rong while addressing the award winners said that in 2022, against the challenge of global economic downturn and historical floods in Pakistan, the CPEC projects have made good progress.

During this year, the CPEC has always been the highlight of our bilateral relations. On 2nd November, President Xi Jinping met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his official visit to China. "Our two sides are committed to making full use of the JCC of the CPEC, advancing CPEC with greater efficiency, and making CPEC an exemplar of high-quality

Belt and Road cooperation", he added. The Ambassador further added that a series of good news are coming from different sectors under the CPEC umbrella. The China-aided Eastbay Expressway of Gwadar port has begun operation since June, enhancing connectivity of the port, which is now transporting two hundred thousand tons of fertilizer.

He said that Karot Hydropower started commercial operation in June as well, which provides cheap and clean electricity, and can reduce 3.5 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually. The Ambassador said that the TEL and Nova power plants in Thar also started operations with the local coal. The Shanghai Electric Thar coal-based power plant has been connected to the national grid. Six model farms under Pakistan-China Red Chilli Contract Farming Project are achieving a harvest in Punjab and Sindh Province, with an estimated yield of 700 tons of dried chilli.

This is just a portrayal of the great potential of agricultural cooperation between our two countries. Pakistan's trade surplus of agricultural products for the year 2021 enjoyed an increase of 13 times. This year is expected to exceed a record high of US\$ 1 billion. So far, CPEC has created 192,000 jobs, 6000MW of power supply, 510 km of highway, and 886 km of transmission line, which laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's socio-economic development.

Pakistan 5th most dangerous country for journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan is the fifth most dangerous country for journalists as nearly 1,700 newsmen have been killed worldwide over the past 20 years, an average of more than 80 a year, according to an analysis published by Reporters Without Borders. The two decades between 2003 and 2022 were "especially deadly decades for those in the service of the right to inform", said the Paris-based media rights campaigners.

"Behind the figures, there are the faces, personalities, talent and commitment of those who have paid with their lives for their information gathering, their search for the truth and their passion for journalism," RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. Iraq and Syria were the most dangerous coun-

tries to work as a journalist, accounting for "a combined total of 578 journalists killed in the past 20 years, or more than a third of the worldwide total", RSF said.

They are followed by Mexico (125 killed), the Philippines (107), Pakistan (93), Afghanistan (81) and Somalia (78). The "darkest years" were 2012 and 2013, "due in large measure to the war in Syria". There were 144 killings in 2012 and 142 the year after, the report said. This peak was "followed by a gradual fall and then historically low figures from 2019 onwards".

But deaths increased again in 2022, in part because of the war in Ukraine. So far this year, 58 journalists have been killed doing their jobs, up from 51 in 2021. Eight journalists have been killed

in Ukraine since Russia invaded in February. This compares to a total of 12 media deaths there over the preceding 19 years.

Ukraine is currently the most dangerous country in Europe for the media, after Russia itself, where 25 journalists have been killed over the past 20 years. "Since (President) Vladimir Putin took over, Russia has seen systematic attacks on press freedom — including deadly ones — as RSF has repeatedly reported." They include Anna Politkovskaya's high-profile murder on 7 October 2006," the rights group said. Elsewhere in Europe, Turkey was ranked third most dangerous, followed by France "as a result of the massacre at the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in Paris in 2015".

Turkish Navy Ship conducts naval drills with Pakistan Navy

KARACHI (APP): The Turkish Navy Ship TCG BURGAZADA on Friday visited Karachi Port and participated in bilateral naval Exercise TURGUTREIS – VII. The Turkish ship port was earlier called Karachi harbour and was welcomed by senior officers of the Pakistan Navy along with officials of the Turkish Consulate, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

During the stay at port, the Commanding Officer of the Turkish Ship called on Commander Pakistan Fleet and matters of mutual interest and bilateral collaboration were discussed. In port activities, joint professional interactions including the planning of bilateral exercises at sea, tabletop discussions on professional topics, sports & social events including a wreath laying at the Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam were conducted with an aim to strengthen mutual

cooperation and integration between the two navies.

On completion of the port visit, Pakistan Navy and Turkish Naval ship participated in bilateral Exercise TURGUTREIS-VII and conducted joint patrolling in the North Arabian Sea to further hone professional skills and enhance interoperability. The exercise comprised of various naval operations including defence against Asymmetric Attacks, Visit Board Search & Seizure (VBSS), Air Defence Exercises, and Joint Coordinated Patrol. The visit of the Turkish Navy Ship to Pakistan is a manifestation of strong bilateral ties between the two countries and the exercise is a testimony of PN's resolve toward regional peace and maintenance of order at sea.

Pakistan Navy seizes huge cache of drugs at sea: In a successful Intelligence Based Counter Narcotics Operations by Pakistan Navy

at sea, two boats carrying narcotics were apprehended and a huge cache of drugs was recovered by the Navy team. The narcotics including more than 1,500 kgs of Hashish and 143 kgs of Crystal ICE were recovered from the apprehended boats. The value of narcotics in International market was estimated to be approximately Rs 2 billion, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

The successful operation by Pakistan Navy resulting in seizure of narcotics was a testament to the facts that despite the prevailing situation the criminals were active for their nefarious design and Pakistan Navy was more vigilant to counter them and remained committed in preventing use of Pakistani maritime zones for any unlawful act and purpose. "Pakistan Navy will continue to shoulder its national obligations and responsibility to establish lawful order at sea," it said.

Chairman NDMA visits Lahore

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, held interactive sessions with various stakeholders to seek exploratory synergy for proactive remodelled national preparedness and response mechanism during his visit to Lahore.

During the day Chairman NDMA called upon Chaudhry Parvez Elahi Chief Minister Punjab in his office. Matters related to better disaster management/mitigation and coordination plan for global attention.

In earlier part of the day the Chairman as Chief Guest attended passing out parade of 234 Rescuers trained for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab held at the HQs 1122 and distributed trophies and shields



mainly incorporate technology driven early warning systems for sensing any calamity before it strikes. He also deliberated upon the need for building greater national plan for global attention.

He also directed the newly passed out rescuers to transfer the acquired skills in native communities to enhance the readiness capabilities down to grass root level. "Rescue 1122 has risen

amongst the best rescuers. During his address to the newly passed out rescuers, he emphasized upon the importance of learning latest rescue techniques and praised the standards of training achieved by the trainees.

He also directed the newly passed out rescuers to transfer the acquired skills in native communities to enhance the readiness capabilities down to grass root level. "Rescue 1122 has risen

exceptionally well and is now considered as base organization for high end response during time of need, it has emerged as a team which NDMA desires to build and demonstrate to the world when Pakistan leads global bodies", said the Chairman.

Chairman NDMA also paid a visit to Headquarters of Punjab Safe Cities Authority.

He praised and appreciated the efforts of the safe cities authority in ensuring security and safety of the people while vowing to replicate the same visual system in the remodelled NEOC at vulnerable places prone to calamities. Both departments exchanged ideas for futuristic transformation and potential exploitation in synergistic mode with other national emergencies responders.

وزیراعظم پاکستان کے خصوصی احکامات پر یکم جنوری 2023 سے یوٹیلیٹی سٹورز کارپوریشن اپنے صارفین کیلئے لارہا ہے

وزیراعظم ریلیف پیکیج

یوٹیلیٹی سٹورز کے دیگر صارفین کیلئے ریلیف پیکیج

آٹا	جینی	گھی
648	89	375
روپیہ 10 کو بیگ	روپیہ 1 کو	روپیہ 1 کو
ماہانہ درآمدی کی حد 20 کلو	ماہانہ درآمدی کی حد 5 کلو	ماہانہ درآمدی کی حد 3 کلو

سبڈیوڈ ایشیا، کے علاوہ دیگر ایشیا، کی خریداری کیلئے ون نام پاس ورڈ کی ضرورت نہیں ہوگی

داؤن اور چارول کی قیمتیں پر 15 سے 20 روپے تک کی بڑی رعایت

تمام صارفین سبڈی کے حصول کیلئے کسی بھی یوٹیلیٹی سٹور پر جانے سے پہلے اپنا شناختی کارڈ نمبر 5566 متیج کر کے ون نام پاس ورڈ حاصل کریں اور اطمینان سے خریداری کریں۔ سبڈی صرف آٹا، جینی، گھی، داؤن اور چارول پر دی جارہی ہے۔

کسی بھی شکایت کی صورت میں مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر کال کریں

0800-05590

یوٹیلیٹی سٹورز کارپوریشن

وزارت صنعت و پیداوار

حکومت پاکستان

معیاری اشیاء مناسب دام