

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Supreme Court has rejected the petition filed for appointments under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Sacked Employees Act, 2012. Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial asked the lawyer of the petitioner that you have approached the court with a delay of 14 days. The petitioner's lawyer replied that they came to know about the decision late.

KARACHI (TLTP): A two-member bench of the Sindh High Court has sent a petition of the MQM-P seeking larger bench to the Chief Justice. MQM-P had sought the court's order over legality of the steps of the ECP. The TLTP learnt that the bench issued notices to parties for January 09, over a petition for immediate hearing of the case. MQM counsel has said that the party has challenged the election rules and the notification.

Pakistan demands access to missing war soldiers in India

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan demanded Indian to grant it access to its soldiers went missing during 1965 and 1971 wars, diplomatic sources said on Monday. According to the sources, Pakistan has enlisted its demand along with the list of prisoners it exchanges with India on the first day of every year.

Indian Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad has been informed of the Pakistani demand, the diplomatic sources said, adding Pakistan has also sought consular access to 56 Pakistani civilian prisoners. On Sunday, Pakistan and India had exchanged lists of nuclear installations and facilities in their countries and as well as lists of prisoners in each other's custody in pursuance of agreements signed between the two countries.

The Foreign Office statement issued a statement in Islamabad stating: "The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between

Pakistan and India was signed on 31st December 1988 and ratified on 27th January 1991. The Agreement, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year.

"Pursuant to the agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday. Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi."

The FO also stated that Pakistan and India exchanged the lists of prisoners in each other's custody through diplomatic channels. The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agree-

ment, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on 1st January and 1st July, every year.

The Government of Pakistan shared with the Indian High Commission in Islamabad a list of 705 Indian prisoners detained in Pakistan, including 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen. The Indian Government also shared with the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi a list of 434 Pakistani prisoners in India, including 339 civilian prisoners and 95 fishermen.

Separately, Pakistan has requested for early release and repatriation of its 51 civilian prisoners and 94 fishermen, who have completed their respective sentence and their national status stands confirmed. Furthermore, a request for grant of consular access to missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars, and special consular access to 56 civil prisoners has also been made, the FO concluded.

Assemblies to complete tenure: KP Governor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali on Monday said that the assemblies would complete tenure and there was no truth in dissolution of any assembly before time.

Talking to media outside Peshawar Press Club, he said that dissolution of assemblies was not a joke especially in the present situation when the country was passing through a challenging economic situation, adding that all the political parties of the country through the plate-form of PDM would steer the country on path of economic development.

To a question about dissolution of Punjab and KP assemblies as hinted by Imran Khan, the Governor said that Imran Khan was not a man of words, he had passed his time and should have to wait for the general elections. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali said that it was not only Pakistan which was confronting economic challenges rather the developed countries were also facing similar situation.

Another question the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali rejected chances of early elections and said that general elections would be held after completion of the term by the assemblies. The Governor also rejected differences with the provincial government on any issue and said that he was working under the constitutional ambit. Regarding joining of JUI-F candidates of PTI and other political parties, he said that it was the beauty of democracy and there was nothing new or astonishing about it.

Terrorism to be dealt with full force

NSC meeting reiterates 'zero tolerance' against terrorism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 40th meeting of National Security Committee (NSC) was concluded today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The meeting was attended by relevant Federal Cabinet members, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, all Services Chiefs, and heads of intelligence services.

The forum underscored that comprehensive 'National Security' revolves around economic security and that sovereignty or dignity comes under stress without self-sufficiency and economic independence. The forum undertook a comprehensive view of the ongoing economic situation vis-a-vis challenges being faced by the common people of Pakistan, particularly the lower and middle-income classes. The finance minister briefed the forum about the economic stability road map of the government including the status of discussions with international financial institutions, exploring other financial avenues based on mutual interests as well as relief measures for common people.

In order to strengthen the economy, the committee agreed on undertaking concrete steps including imports rationalization as well as preventing illegal currency outflows and hawala business. Emphasis will be especially made to improve agricultural output and manufacturing sector to ensure food security, imports substitution and employment. It was resolved that people centric economic policies with trickle down effects to common people will remain priority. It was also agreed to involve all stakeholders for consensus to realise effective and fast track economic

recovery and road map.

While taking into account the efforts for mitigating the challenges of 33 Million flood affectees, forum resolved to mobilize all resources for their rehabilitation and reconstruction in coordination with the Provincial Governments and multilateral financial institutions. Forum also appreciated the ongoing relief efforts led by the Prime Minister and federating units.

The committee was also apprised on the security situation of the country with particular focus on recent terrorist incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The Prime Minister emphasized that the war against terrorism will be led by federal and provincial governments as per National Action Plan in accordance with National Internal Security Policy with people centric socio-economic development as priority while Armed Forces will provide resolute deterrence and secure conducive and enabling environment. Provincial Apex Committees are being revived in full earnest and LEAs especially CTDs will be brought upon the required fighting standards with requisite capabilities. The forum concluded that no country will be allowed to provide sanctuaries and facilitation to terrorists and Pakistan reserves all rights in that respect to safeguard her people.

NSC reiterated its resolve to have zero tolerance for terrorism in Pakistan and reaffirmed its determination to take on any and all entities that resort to violence. This will be dealt with full force of the state. Pakistan's security is uncompromisable and the full writ of the state will be maintained on every inch of the Pakistan's territory.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing the 40th meeting of National Security Committee.

Islamabad LG polls likely in current week

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is likely to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls this week. It reported in media that election commission issued orders to the concerned returning officers (ROs) to start transportation of polling material on an emergency basis. New date of the Islamabad local government polls will be announced at the earliest.

On Saturday, the federal government filed an intra-court appeal in Islamabad High Court (IHC) against holding Islamabad local government polls. As per details, the intra-court appeal was filed by additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Duggal in Islamabad High Court (IHC). The appeal urged the court to suspend the IHC verdict to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls today (December 31). The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) also filed an intra-court appeal against the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls on December 31.

Polling on Senate seat vacated by Vawda on 25th

ISLAMABAD (APP): Polling on Senate seat that had fallen vacant due to the resignation of PTI Senator Faisal Vawda will be held on January 25 in the Sindh Assembly building, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced on Monday.

According to the ECP, the public notice for inviting nomination papers by the candidates to be issued on January 4. The nomination papers could be filed from January 5 to January 7, while names of nominated candidates would be published on January 9. Scrutiny of papers would be carried out on January 12, while appeals against acceptance or rejection of the nomination papers could be filed till January 14. The election tribunal would hear the appeals till January 18 while the revised list of the candidates would be published on January 19 and last date of withdrawal of the candidature was January 20, the ECP said.

LG polls case: IHC accepts ECP's appeal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday accepted intra-court appeals of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Federation with regard to the local government elections in Federal Capital.

A two-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the ICAs against the decision of a single-member bench of ordering the ECP to hold LG elections on December 31. The ECP's counsel Mian Abdul Rauf argued that the institution had postponed the elections due to increase in the number of union councils, and that its notification of December 28 (2022) was never challenged. The ECP's director general law said the

Commission announced its decision regarding the union councils on December 27 and the December 28 notification was based on it.

Mian Abdul Rauf said the two houses of the Parliament had approved the bill (regarding increase in the number of UCs). The additional attorney general said even the notification dated December 19 was also not challenged. The chief justice remarked that the two sides were not coming towards the constitutional questions, and asked them to take time until the day after tomorrow for preparation.

The court observed that the ECP was supposed to conduct elections on December 31 as the single-

member bench had only voided the Commission's decision regarding polls. It further observed that the ECP had to give a new election schedule under the new law as well. The ECP's lawyer said the department would issue a new schedule if the elections were held in 101 UCs.

The ECP's advocate prayed the court to suspend the decision of single member bench. The court asked the ECP's lawyer to tell an appropriate and practical way that whether the institution could conduct elections in 101 UCs or not. The ECP's DG said he update the court in that regard after taking the instructions. The court then adjourned the hearing till January 9.

Russia says 63 troops killed in Ukrainian attack on Makiivka

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia has said that 63 of its troops were killed during a Ukrainian New Year's Eve attack on a makeshift barracks in the partly-occupied Donetsk region. The ministry said in a statement on Monday that Ukraine's military had launched six projectiles at the "provisional base" in the eastern city of Makiivka using the HIMARS guided rocket system supplied by the United States. Two of the missiles were shot down by Russian air defences, it added, but four struck the building.

The ministry's statement came after the Strategic Communications Department of Ukraine's armed forces said late on Sunday that 400 Russian troops were killed in the attack and another 300 were wounded. Footage posted online appeared to show a building purported to be a vocational college in Russian-controlled Makiivka reduced to smouldering rubble. Al Jazeera could not independently verify the footage or the numbers provided by either side. If Ukraine's tally were confirmed, the toll would represent one of the single deadliest attacks on Russian forces since Moscow launched its invasion in late February.

Moscow-backed authorities in Donetsk also acknowledged casualties

from the attack. Daniil Bezsonov, a senior Russia-backed official in the region, said the vocational college had been hit by HIMARS rockets a minute after midnight on Saturday.

"There were dead and wounded," Bezsonov said late on Sunday in a post on the Telegram messaging app. "The exact number is still unknown. The building itself was badly damaged." Igor Girkin, a former Federal Security Service officer who helped Russia annex the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in 2014 and then organise pro-Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, said on Monday that "the number of dead and wounded runs into many hundreds."

Girkin, who has bitterly criticised Russia's military failures in Ukraine, said ammunition had been stored in the same building where the recruits had been accommodated. "This is not the only such [extremely dense] deployment of personnel and equipment in the destruction zone of HIMARS missiles," he said on Telegram.

The developments were reported against the backdrop of a recent wave of Russian bombardments of Ukrainian cities. Moscow has seen in the new year with nightly attacks on urban areas hundreds of kilometres from the war's front lines, including Kyiv.

After firing a barrage of missiles on Saturday, Russia launched dozens of Iranian-made Shahed attack drones on Sunday and Monday. Ukraine said on Monday that it had shot down all 39 drones in the latest wave of attacks, including 22 over the capital.

Ukrainian officials said the intensified bombardment was a sign of Russia's desperation as Ukraine's ability to defend its air space had improved with continued military support from its Western allies. "Now they are looking for routes and attempts to hit us somehow, but their terror tactics will not work," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andriy Yermak said on Telegram. "Our sky will turn into a shield."

Zelenskyy on Sunday praised Ukrainians for showing gratitude to their troops and one another and said Russia's efforts would prove useless. "Drones, missiles, everything else will not help them because we stand united," Zelenskyy said. "They are united only by fear." Russia says its attacks, which have knocked out heat and power to millions of Ukrainians in winter, aim to reduce Ukraine's ability to fight. The Ukrainian government says the attacks have no military purpose and are war crimes intended to harm civilians.

'50% of PTI MPs don't want to quit'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmaker Nasir Khan Musazai Monday revealed that Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi is not in favour of dissolving the provincial assembly and 50% of the party's National Assembly members do not want to resign.

"A few weeks ago it seemed like Elahi was coming back, but he went to Imran Khan," the PML-Q leader added. Meanwhile, Musazai said that PTI lawmakers want to join other political parties. "Imran Khan committed a 'suicide attack' on his facilitators. He build up our hopes in 2018," the parliamentarian claimed while speaking with private TV channel.

He added that the PTI chief, in his criticism spree, did not spare anyone including the establishment, judges and politicians. The member of the lower house of parliament went on to say that he supported the deposed prime minister for his Riyasat-e-Madinah rhetoric, but he wasn't able to deliver. "Only ulemas [religious clerics] could do such work," he stated.

Musazai further said that in their bid to stop him from quitting the party, the PTI leaders — including former NA speaker Asad Qaiser — contacted the lawmaker. He also claimed receiving a "threat alert" from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.

"KP CM Mahmood Khan informed me regarding a threat alert on WhatsApp two days ago. He told me to quit politics and save myself," he shared, adding that the chief minister advised him to make special safety arrangements for himself. "The chief minister may have sent me the threat alert with good intentions," Musazai added. It was also reported that Musazai announced joining the JUI-F after meeting its chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman recently.

PDM fails to gain public confidence: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that the component parties of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) have miserably failed in denting the popularity and public confidence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

The imported rulers have left no stone unturned to damage the political stature of PTI. However, the results of by-elections held in the country have proved that the masses have completely rejected the conglomerate of corrupt rulers imposed on the country. Citizens of Pakistan have given a clear message that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is the sole representative party of Pakistanis.

In a statement issued here from the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Chief Minister Mahmood Khan said that the government, that came into existence in April last year under the regime change conspiracy, has withheld budgeted funds of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa to undermine the development process. The incumbent federal government has withheld the share in net hydel profit and National Finance Commission award to create financial constraints for the provincial government and to sabotage the ongoing development process.

Similarly, the current and development funds for the newly merged districts and funds announced for rehabilitation of flood affectees are also pending since long.

Criticizing the federal government, he said that due to flawed financial policies, the federal cabinet has brought the country to the verge of default. Record inflation in the country has badly affected the common citizens. The Chief Minister said that the provincial government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has taken measures beyond its capacity for public welfare and development projects have been initiated in every sector as per public requirements. He mentioned that Sehat Card, Education Card, Kissan

card and similar other projects have been launched for public welfare.

The Chief Minister stated that the incumbent provincial government is also taking steps for the promotion of Islamic values, including introduction of Quranic teachings in the academic curriculum, solarization of Masajid, provision of honorariums to prayer leaders and increase in salaries of Khateebis etc.

Touching upon the steps taken for cultural preservation, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government has established Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority to preserve the culture and heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to promote it internationally. Mahmood Khan stated that owing to the performance of the provincial government and public trust, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will sweep the polls in the upcoming general elections not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the entire country.

IHC grants bail to Swati

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has approved the bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati in the controversial tweets case. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict reserved earlier and granted bail to the PTI leader in the case filed against him on November 2022.

The TLTP learnt that the Senator's bail has been approved against surety bonds of Rs200,000. Swati has been behind bars since November 27, when he was arrested for the second time for using abusive language against the top military brass, including former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Swati had filed a plea seeking release on bail in IHC in relation to the case filed against him on November 26. His earlier plea, filed on December 21, was dismissed by trial court judge Azam Khan, who said that the senator had committed the same offence twice.

In his application, the senator stated that he did not post derogatory remarks against any institutions. He added that the prosecution has no proof against him despite an investigation.

The application read that Swati is 75 years old and a heart patient and that jailing him would be a sentence without conviction as all evidence against him is documentary. During the hearing, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq conducted the hearing of the case without the presence of the special prosecutor. Swati's lawyer Babar Awan appeared in court on behalf of his client.

Awan said that Swati's son wants to put his viewpoint before the court. "My father had written a letter. I want to read it with the court's permission," said Swati's son. At this, Justice Farooq said that the letter is present before the court. The court said that a larger bench would be constituted to settle this matter once and for all. Swati's lawyer said that the

court should look into this matter today, to which the court said a larger bench cannot be formed today.

Meanwhile, Swati's son withdrew his letter of non-confidence against the IHC chief justice. The court then inquired about the position of the challan, to which, the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) replied that the challan was submitted on December 24, 2022, and the hearing will take place on January 3. The deputy attorney general said that the PTI senator has committed the crime again and a case has already been pending.

The FIA said that Swati did not surrender his Twitter account. At this, the court said that the investigating agency itself ended the physical remand. "Is there a chance of tampering?" the court questioned the FIA officials. To this, the FIA said that Swati did not deny the tweet. The court then reserved its verdict which was announced later granting bail Swati.



KTH Regulations under MTI Act: PHC stops from adverse actions

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) directed Advocate General (AG) and Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit reply in writ regarding changes in service structure of Class-IV employees of Khyber Teaching Hospital (KHT) and stopped from any adverse actions against petitioners, on Monday.

The single of PHC comprised of Justice Shahid Khan ordered AG and Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit

comments regarding changes in structure along with other affairs of more than 500 Class-IV employees at KTH.

The counsel Khalid Rehman Advocate informed that petitioners serving from 19 years at KTH and were recruited on regular basis but in 2018 amendments in Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Act has empowered the hospital's administration to decide the fate applicant's service.

The counsel argued that KTH has constituted Regulation under amend-

ments 2018 in MTI Act which has placed fate of petitioners' service at stake because they were recruited on regular seats.

The counsel further added that under Regulation KTH can take any adverse actions against petitioners without any remedy for defense while argued that it is unconstitutional because Article 264 states that rules cannot be changed once employee recruited under prescribed laws and regulations while the petitioners service structure cannot changeable

as they working for 19 years on regular basis.

Board of Governors KTH has changed regulation without having fundamental knowledge regarding procedure for changes while these changes should impact petitioners' pensions along with other affairs, the counsel argued. PHC's Justice Shahid Khan ordered AG and Government of KP to submit reply after initial arguments and stopped KTH from taking adverse actions against petitioners while adjourned further hearing.

Sania assumes charge as ADC

PESHAWAR (APP): Sania Safi (PAS BS-18) assumed charge as ADC (General) Peshawar here on Monday.

In the recent past, she has served as ADC (General) Charsadda, ADC (Revenue) Quetta, AC Nowshera, and Assistant Commissioner Quetta and also on an important post in the Planning and Development Department.

She vowed to continue efforts for the progress and development of Peshawar under the leadership of DC, Shafiqullah Khan and utilizing available resources for provision of all possible relief to the people.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi addresses during Toolkit & Certificates Awarding ceremony.

KP Chief Secretary for effective price control mechanism

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Shahzad Khan Bangash on Monday directed the concerned quarters to make the price control mechanism more effective and ensure availability of essential commodities in the markets.

He was presiding over a high-level meeting on price control at Civil Secretariat here. Administrative secretaries of Home, Food and Agriculture department,

Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Director General Livestock and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

In the meeting, prices of essential commodities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were compared with that of national level and other provinces. The forum acknowledged that the increase in prices of certain essential items was due to prevailing inflation across the country.

Secretary Food apprised the meeting that there was sufficient wheat stock available and uninterrupted supply of wheat flour was also ensured in the markets.

He added that five thousand metric tons of wheat was daily released to flour mills and subsidised wheat flour at Rs 1295 per 20 kg bag was available at registered dealers.

The meeting was told that the recent increase in price of chickens was due

to shortage of chicken feed at the national level. It was further informed that in the month of December, 84456 units were inspected under regulatory inspections regarding implementation of government ratelists. Upon violation of relevant laws, a fine of Rs.15.88 million was imposed, 93 persons were booked, 1084 units were sealed and warning notices were issued to 13900.

WAPDA issues water position

PESHAWAR (APP): Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA) issued the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoir levels and the barrages here on Monday morning.

According to a spokesperson, inflows and outflows in Indus River were recorded 16500 cusecs and 5000 cusecs while inflows and outflows in Kabul River were 8500

cusecs and 8500 cusecs. Similarly, inflows and outflows at Khairabad Bridge 16100 cusecs and 16100, Jhelum at Mangla (inflows 6300 cusecs and outflows 4000 cusecs) while inflows and outflows in Chenab at Marala were recorded 5400 cusecs and 5400 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 18400 cusecs and Outflows 14400 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 19700 cusecs and Outflows 12000

cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 16100 cusecs and Outflows 17600 cusecs and Outflows 12400 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 12900 cusecs and Outflows 500 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 2400 cusecs and Outflows 2400 cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 8700 cusecs and Outflow Nil cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 3600 cusecs and Outflows Nil cusecs.

Meanwhile, Tarbela Dam was operating at level

of 1491.71 feet against maximum conservation level of 1550 feet and minimum operating level 1398 feet respectively. Live storage on Monday morning was 2.814 million acre feet (MAF).

Mangla was operating at level of 1118.55 feet against minimum operating level 1050 feet and maximum conservation level 1242 feet. Live storage on Monday morning was 0.752 MAF.

Remembering our patrons sign of living nations: VC KMU



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The main academic block of Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar was named after the first vice-chancellor of the university Prof. Dr. Muhammad Daud Khan, while the multi-purpose hall was named after the second vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeezullah. In this regard, a simple but dignified ceremony was held in which Prof. Dr. Muhammad Daud Khan and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeezullah were the chief guests, while on this occasion vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Registrar Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem

Gandapur, heads from various institutes, faculty and administrative officers were also present.

It is worth mentioning that Prof. Dr. Muhammad Daud Khan is one of the prominent ophthalmologists of the country and he was the first vice-chancellor of KMU, as well as remained head of the two main tertiary care hospitals LRH and HMC Peshawar. He has also served as dean of PGMI. The establishment of the Pakistan Institute of Community Ophthalmology (PICO) and Khyber Eye Foundation was also his achievement. Even today, he is playing a practical and active role in completing many projects

related to eye diseases in the province.

Similarly, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeez Ullah is also one of the leading cardiologists in the country. As the second vice-chancellor, apart from the completion of the new building of KMU, he has also established IBMS, INS, IPMS, and IHPE&R. He has also had the honor of founding institutions like KIMS and KIDS Kohat. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeez Ullah has also been the dean of PGMI besides being the Chief Executive of LRH, while he has also played a key role from its conception to implementation of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology Peshawar.

Meanwhile, the vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq has paid rich tribute to the services of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Daud Khan and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeez Ullah as vice-chancellors of KMU and said that today KMU's tall standing amongst the medical universities across the country is because of these two great personalities who dedicated the institution day and night. He said that remembering our patrons is a sign of living nations and under this thought and feeling, we have decided to name the two buildings of the university after the names of these two pioneers and distinguished personalities in their fields. Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that the services of great people are usually remembered after their death, although there is a need to pay tribute to their achievements during their lifetime, so in this spirit, we have dedicated two blocks of the university with the names of these two great personalities of the medical profession. In the end, he congratulated Prof. Dr. Muhammad Daud Khan and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hafeez Ullah and also expressed good wishes for their good health and long life.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan along with provincial ministers offering dua after inauguration Institute of Criminology & Forensic Sciences at UOP.

Governor felicitate PPC cabinet

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan on Monday congratulate Peshawar Press Club newly elected President Arshad Aziz Malik, Vice President Rizwan Sheikh, General Secretary Irfan Musazai and other members of Governing Body.

They also felicitated newly elected cabinet of Mardan Press Club President Bakht Mohammad, Vice President Hidayat Rahman Hoti, General Secretary Shahab Akbar over their success in the press clubs' election.

They expressed best wishes and hoped that the newly elected cabinets of the two press clubs would work for the welfare of journalist community.

Traders Alliance head meet Governor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that the problems faced by the business community will be solved on priority basis.

The federal government has been contacted on the issues of taxes on residential houses in Cantt. Work has started on the project to solve the gas problem at a cost of one and a half billion rupees. Concerns of traders regarding load shedding of electricity in Peshawar Cantt will be removed, assured governor after meeting with traders community led by Ghulam Bilal Javed, head of Traders Alliance Federation.

On this occasion, businessmen Amin Hussain

Babar, well-known industrialist Abdul Haseeb Chaghatai, Sanaullah, Shahidullah were also present. The traders of Peshawar Cantt informed the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa about the problems faced by them Governor Haji Ghulam Ali while appreciating the performance of Trade Alliance Federation Chief Ghulam Bilal Javed said that Ghulam Bilal Javed is always ahead for the rights of traders.

The business community considers Governor House as their home. The problem of law and order lies with the provincial government, but as a Governor, I will take full measures to improve law and order. We are political people and this

position is temporary. The problems faced by the business community will be resolved.

He stated that the doors of the governor's house are open till 9:00 pm, it doesn't matter if the elections are two months earlier or two months later, I stand with the business community I have contacted the federal government regarding tax issues and God willing, there will be good effects. For the development of Peshawar, all schools of thought, including the business community, have to play their role electricity problems will be solved very soon. Peshawar is a historical city but there is no planning, lack of vision. The problem of parking lots will also be solved.

Govt imparts skilled training to empower women: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Manpower Sajid Hussain Turi on Monday said the government was empowering women through imparting skilled and vocation training to provide them better employment opportunities within the country and abroad.

He was addressing a toolkit and certificate awarding ceremony here among

female participants of "Programme Migration for Development (PME)" a joint initiative of GIZ-Support for TVET Sector of Pakistan (STVSP), KP-TEVTA GIZ- global and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistan and Human Resource Development.

The Minister said that in order to enable unemployed people to get better and profitable employment

opportunities, it was necessary to make them skilled as per the demand of the local and international markets.

He said that his ministry was introducing various programs to provide maximum opportunities to the people to become skilled, which have yielded encouraging results, adding that it was part of PPP manifesto and vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto to empower women.

He said that PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and chairman Bilawal Bhutto were also playing their imperative role in this regard, adding that practical steps are being taken to employ skilled Pakistanis abroad and for the purpose special attention was being paid to skill development of youth and women of tribal districts.

Turi said that tribal districts were far behind in the development process and tribal women have

immense potential which needed to be tapped to provide them better employment opportunities to support their families.

Sajid Hussain Turi, thanked the German Government for the support provided and urged the pass-outs for the utmost utilization of the skills for income generating activities and socio-economic development of the region.

He further stressed upon the similar demand-oriented skills building interventions for the deprived youth of the province with special focus on women participation.

He said his ministry was finalizing agreements with Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan and many other countries for supply of skilled manpower.

Later the minister awarded certificates to 55 females from district Kurram over completing training in dress making and cooking.

Fatimid Foundation congratulates PPC cabinet

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fatimid Foundation congratulated newly elected cabinet of Peshawar Press Club and hopeful for their role for public awareness, on Monday.

Fatimid Foundation congratulated newly elected president of Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik and his all cabinet, members from the core of our hearts.

May Allah give you all the strength to serve the Journalist community in a better way and also support the noble cause of Hamza Foundation regarding Thalassaemia awareness and its prevention. May Allah bless you and your cabinet members.

Very cold, dry weather to prevail

PESHAWAR (APP): The Met Office on Monday forecast very cold and dry weather for most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during next 24 to 48 hours with minus temperature in hilly and upper areas.

It said that shallow fog would occur over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi and DI Khan districts as well as over Peshawar to Swabi motorway during night hours. Travelers on motorways and national highways were advised to take precautionary measures during traveling.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association led by Haji Mahmood Khan presenting a bouquet to newly elected president of PPC.

PBF calls for signing of a Charter of Economy

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has called for the signing of a Charter of Economy for a period of at least 20 years. It should be a consensus document of all stakeholders including political and military.

The proposal was flouted by the PBF's Senior Vice President Muhammad Riaz Khattak while talking to a delegation of DI Khan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said a press release issued here on Monday.

He rejected the notion of Chairman PTI Imran Khan that the IMF is the only option to save us economically. He said we have to

think of out of box solutions and say goodbye to the IMF after completion of the ongoing program. The political parties of Pakistan now have a huge responsibility on their shoulders.

Khattak said that political polarization in Pakistan is one of the major reasons for the country's economic debacle, saying when politicians and dictators came into power, they focused more on perpetuating their political careers rather than promoting national interests. The country's initial economic models lacked consistency and continue to do so.

He identified the short term economic models of

the previous PTI government as the biggest reason behind the fragile economic growth in the country.

He stressed the need for adopting a proper and sustainable economic model in consultations with all stakeholders for a period of at least 10 to 20 years. He further stressed for an effective fiscal and monetary policy for bringing economic stability in the country through following the mechanisms of economic prosperity and stability of politics and good governance.

The first requirement is to stabilize the economy through debt reduction, expansion of taxable

income, organizing national resources, reducing losses of the state-owned enterprises, cutting on unnecessary development expenditures, removing shortfalls in energy and infrastructure sectors, controlling inflation, and keeping the currency stable.

The second requires structural reforms, human resource management, uniform tax policy, exclusion of microeconomic biasness, and enhancement of competition in the market.

PBF officials further urged the provincial governments to issue notification for the closure of shops at 8:00 P.M. in order to overcome the circular debt.



In brief

Abducted minor boy found dead

OKARA (INP): Police found slaughtered body of a five-year-old boy who had been abducted in Okara. A minor boy named Hassan had been abducted from the Garden Town area in the vicinity of the B Division police station in Okara. Police said that the abductors brutally slaughtered the minor boy and threw his body. The body was shifted to the hospital for post-mortem by police, whereas, two suspects were arrested for interrogation. DPO Furqan Bilal formed a probe committee headed by DSP City Chaudhry Ashraf to investigate the incident. DPO Bilal said that the murderers will be given exemplary punishment and the family of the slain boy will be served justice.

Medical camp arranged E.P. Report

HARIPUR: Turkish Welfare Association Pakistan arranged free medical camp. According to the details, a free medical camp was organized in Phirhari, a suburb of Haripur, under the leadership of Dr. Atiq Afridi, on Monday. The medical team of Lady Dr. Reshaman, Dr. Hamza and other expert doctors checked up more than 300 Zahid men, women and children from Phirhari, Nadtopa, Jabr, Nagar, Pind Hashim Khan and other surrounding areas. They were given free medicines on this occasion. Officials of Turk Welfare Association Pakistan Central President Turkwa Pakistan Raja Aslam Khan Turk, President Haripur Turk Welfare Association Rizwan Khan Turk, Central and District Advisor Raja Ansar Khan Turk, Chairman VC then, Raja Zubair Khan Turk, Raja Amir Khan Turk and other members participated in large numbers and expressed their commitment that they will play their role for the welfare of the suffering humanity and from time to time to various departments for the treatment of the poor.

Test for police recruitment

FAISALABAD (INP): Written test for recruitment of police constables, lady constables and traffic assistants will be held at Iqbal Stadium here on January 05, 2023. Police said here on Monday that lists of eligible candidates had been displayed outside Police Lines in addition to issuing roll number slips. The candidates should reach at the test venue 15 minutes before time to avoid any difficulty. They should also bring their original CNICs, roll number slips, pencils and scales along with them, he advised.

100% target achieved

MULTAN (APP): Newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) Shakeel Ahmed Bhatti said that 100 percent target of door-to-door cleanliness would be achieved at any cost. Assuming charge of the office here on Monday, he said that it was a great honour to serve the city of Saints and added that the cleanliness of the city was a big challenge but he would achieve it. He said that the cleanliness of the city was a top priority and no negligence would be tolerated in this context. He said that the company would adopt modern sanitation requirements and improve infrastructure to meet the challenges. He expressed his regret for not increasing manpower and the number of machinery for the last nine years.



CHARSADDA: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali giving away medals to students during convocation of Bacha Khan University.

7 killed in Darra Adam Khel mishap

E.P. Report

KOHAT: Seven people, including women and children, were killed and five others injured in a head-on collision between a dumper-truck and a carry van on Indus Highway in Darra Adamkhel town of Khyber district on Monday. Rescue 1122 medical team rushed to the accident site after ordered by District Emergency Officer Syed Shoaib Mansoor. They responded briskly and provided first-aid treatment to the injured.

The personnel of the Kohat's Rescue 1122 shifted the bodies and the injured to a nearby hospital. Condition of some of the injured was stated to be serious. They were referred to Hayatabad Medical Complex in Peshawar.

Five arrested over digging grave in search of valuables: District police on Monday arrested five persons over digging a

grave in search of valuables in the jurisdiction of Muhammad Riaz police station district Kohat.

The police on a tip off reached Khattak colony graveyard and arrested five persons on the spot who were busy in digging a grave. The arrested persons were identified as Muhammad Rasool, Abdul Qayoom, Riaz, Salim Muhammad and Hamidullah. The police registered the case and further investigation is underway.

Khyber Rescue 1122 tackles 6284 emergencies

E.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Rescue 1122 has claimed to deal 6284 different types of emergencies across the district Khyber in the last three years report, released here on Monday. In a report shared by the emergency officer of the Rescue department of Khyber, Syed Shoaib Mansoor said that as many as 0.563 million calls had been received by the control room in which 0.556 were unnecessary and fake calls.

As per report the department dealt 3823 medical emergencies including timely provision of medical assistance to the patients of heart attack, blood pressure, paralysis etc. and transported them to nearest health center for proper treatment. Throughout the district 991 traffic mishaps had been reported in which Rescue 1122, Khyber helped the wounded and

shifted them to hospitals.

In the same way the Rescue 1122 workers responded to 241 different fire eruption incidents and provided needed relief. Medical help and other assistance were supplied during 229 of quarrels and firing happens. Similarly the rescuers facilitated 389 patients of covid 19 patients in addition with dealing of affectees of 14 explosion incidents.

They responded to 33 of drowning incidents and provided relief in 25 of miscellaneous occurrences in the district. In the last three years 6111 patients were given first aid among those 173 were declared dead and the rest were shifted to various health centers. After launching a referral service in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2021, out of 3713 emergencies, the Khyber Rescue 1122 shifted 3786 patients to different downtown hospitals.

Beside the rescue and relief facility, Rescue 1122, Khyber training wing imparted knowledge of first aid, fire rescuing and other emergencies to hundreds of thousands government officials, volunteers of welfare organizations, students etc. District emergency officer said that they could further increase competency of the department and urged the masses to avoid fake phone calls to the Rescue center as it could affect efficiency of the rapidly responding workers of the Rescue 1122, Khyber.

He also stressed upon the motorists to grant way to ambulances to save precious life. Locals appreciated the services of Rescue 1122, Khyber and said since the first day of its establishment; unmatched services are being rendered by trained Rescue workers, Khyber that has earned a good name for the department.

Larkana cops smashed 75 gangs

LARKANA (PPI): Police on Monday claimed to have eradicated 75 gangs, arrested 55 suspects in injured condition in 58 police encounters, killed three criminals and recovered a large number of drugs and weapons during calendar year 2022.

The district spokesperson of Larkana Police revealed in an annual performance report that 1750 criminals involved in crimes, including street crimes, were arrested and cases were filed against them. The report said that two hand grenades and

seven Kalashnikovs were recovered from the arrested criminals along with three rifles, 179 pistols, 52 revolvers, 51 guns and a large number of bullets while 262 drug dealers were also arrested and 3.378kg heroin, 470kg hashish and 500 grams of ice were seized from their possession. The actions were also taken against illegal liquor sellers and drug dealers, from whom 50 liters of raw liquor and 130 bottles of liquor, were seized.

The report further

claimed that as a result of operations against the perpetrators and criminals, 216 vehicles were seized, including six cars and 210 motorcycles, while intoxicating betel nuts and Indian gutka containing 1055 kg were also confiscated. It further said that in a crackdown against gamblers, 261 people were arrested and cases were filed against them, from whom money and cards were also seized. Rs76,40,700 stolen and 10 tola gold ornaments were also recovered.



HYDERABAD: Vendors selling roasters at bypass.

15 couples married in mass marriage ceremony

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: As many as 15 couples tied the knot in mass marriage ceremony held under auspices of Saifullah Tarar Memorial Trust Kolo Tarar. Chairperson, Trust Bagum Alia Usman Tarar arranged the function while AC Hafizabad Rab Nawaz Chadhar and Mamoon Jaffar Tarar MPA were chief guest on this occasion.

All marriage parties were accorded rousing welcome and participants of marriages parties were reached venue of mass marriages ceremony with dancing on beat of drums and band while bridegrooms were garlanded. The special gifts were given to bridegrooms while dowry was also given to brides

consisting of daily used domestic articles.

Manager Bunyad Arfanul Haq, Moulana Shabbir Qadri, Abdul Jabbar Ansari, Principal Al-Falaha Dastkari School Madam Zahida, ex-member district council Madam Nighat Khan and National Flagship holder Chacha T-20 and a large number of other people attended that ceremony. Participants appreciated the noble and poor friendly steps of Bagum Alia Usman Tarar for arranging mass marriages of daughters of poor and less-resources people.

No mishap happened on new year night: No untoward incident reported in the district on New Year night due to affective security measures taken by the District Police Officer Hafizabad Rai Mazahar

Iqbal despite shortage of police officers and police personnel in the district. This was stated by the President Awami Mehez Hafizabad Rana Khalid Mehmood while addressing a meeting of the society.

He lauded the performance of police to contain incidents of one wheeling, aerial fringing, and hula gula. He said that after appointment of present DPO, sense of security among people was promoted in great extent and holding of open courts on daily basis was also a revolutionary and relief-oriented steps of the DPO. The meeting was demanded the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, to accord approval of 2000 posts Cops in view of population the district for ensuring law and order.

Three of a family killed in mishap

MATIARI (PPI): Three labourers of a same family were killed due to a sudden mudfall during the digging of a well for the installation of a motor in Saeed Khan Leghari village near Matiari on Monday.

The locals rushed to the scene after hearing the loud sound and after much effort retrieved bodies of 18-year-old Asad Laghari and 22-year-old Ijaz Leghari. The villagers later shifted the bodies to a local hospital. Efforts were still underway to pull out the body of 50-year-old Rasool Bakhsh Leghari.

Bannu Press Club elects new cabinet

E.P. Report

BANNU: Bannu Press Club (BPC) elected new cabinet as M Alam Khan and Umer Diaz Khan as president and general secretary respectively in annual election 2023, on Monday.

According to details, Haji Abdul Manan Adil is the patron & chief, Muhammad Alam Khan is the president, Omar Diaz Khan is the general secretary, while Pir Niaz Ali Shah has been elected as the senior vice president. In which Muhammad Alam Khan won with a commanding majority of 20 votes, while his opponent Muhammad Sohail Khan got 8 votes, after which the cabinet was formed for the new year 2023 after consultation, according to Patron-in-Chief Haji Abdul Manan Adil, President Muhammad Alam Khan.

Senior Vice President Pir Niaz Ali Shah, Vice President Haji Muhammad Riaz Khan, Vice President Manzooruddin, General Secretary Omar Diaz Khan, Deputy General Secretary Abdul Salam Bitab, Finance Secretary Muhammad Khattab Khan, Secretary Administration Karimullah Khan, Press Secretary Iqbal Hasrat, Information Secretary Rahman Chairman, Majlis Amaila Chairman Nasrullah Khan and members of the Amaila Khan Zameer Khan, Zahid Muhammad, Jamal Qamar, Muhammad Akmal Khan, Farnas Khan Wazir, Bahram Shahzada included.

Awareness seminar on health held: An awareness seminar on the Health of Bannu program organized by MTI hospital at Press Club Bannu in which large number of public including journalists participated in the awareness session, on Monday.

Muhammad Nauman Khattab said that most of the diseases are spreading in this region because of our lifestyle as medical experts say prevention is better than cure if we take even a little precaution in our life then we can live a healthy life. He said that patient education is an important component for the prevention of diseases.

The journalist community should spread awareness about diseases among the people of this area through their pens so that they can be provided with information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of diseases. Coins and health by revising their lifestyle.

NPC elects Syed Waliullah as general secretary

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Nowshera Press Club (NPC) elected president and general secretary as Haji Jahan Zeb and Syed Waliullah Shah unopposed.

The new cabinet including Vice president Syed Qasem Shah, Joint Secretary Fida Muhammad Sawl Advocate, finance secretary Haji Zahoore Ahmad and governing bodies comprising of Nasir Khan, Peer Taj Mir Shah and Muhammad Shahid as members.



It is worthy to mention that NPC cabinet was elected unopposed while Hafiz Tafheem-ur-Rehman, Shenshah, Batkh

Bisar, Wajid Ali, Khalid Nazir and Nisar Ahmad Khan were present following announced of new cabinet.

Flour shortage in Balochistan continue

QUETTA (INP): Flour shortage continues in Balochistan, as the 20kg price of flour reached Rs 2,600 on Monday. As per details, the prices of flour have skyrocketed in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan while the commodity was not available in most shops across the province. The 20kg flour bag is being sold for Rs 2,600 now, which was Rs 2,300 three days back in the province.

Flour shortage has also hit the Quetta utility stores despite the government's subsidized flour scheme. The flour mills association said that 25 thousand bags are required for 18 flour mills daily in Quetta. They urged the government to arrange 9 to 10 lac four bags on daily basis.

Earlier, a massive flour shortage hit the Quetta utility stores despite the government's subsidized flour scheme. 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.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for Transport and Information Sharjeel Inam Memon talking to media persons.

Rescue 1122 annual performance meeting held

Saqib Mustaq

BAHAWALPUR: Secretary Emergency Services Dr. Rizwan Naseer said that Rescue 1122 rescued over 1748255 emergency victims while responding to 1536638 emergencies during the year 2022, while maintaining its average response time of seven minutes and standard in all districts of Punjab. The data showed 21.7 percent increase in the number of emergencies as compared to previous year 2021.

He was presiding over an Annual Performance-2022 review meeting, which was held at Emergency Services Headquarters here on Saturday. The meeting was attended by all Head of Wings of Emergency Services Headquarters & Academy. The Secretary was briefed about all Punjab rescue operations i.e. road traffic crashes, medical, fire, Structural collapse, crime, drowning, fall from height/slip, snake emergencies, delivery and others miscellaneous emergencies.

At this occasion, Provincial Monitoring Cell briefed Secretary Emergency Services that 369564 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) took place across the Punjab in 2022, whereas 364030 RTCs were reported in 2021 with an increase of 1.5%. Similarly, 26477 fire incidents were reported in all 36 districts of Punjab in 2022 whereas 20810 cases of fires were reported in 2021 with increase of 27 percent. Rescue 1122 managed 940591 medical emergencies in 2022, whereas the

Service responded to 715191 medical emergencies in 2021 with increase of 31.5 percent. Furthermore, the Punjab Emergency Service responded to 37036 crime emergencies in 2022, as compared to 34314 in 2021 with increase of 8 percent cases. The Service also responded to 1324 cases of drowning, 36545 fall from height/slip, 972 Structural collapses, 3491 Snake Search Emergencies, 1105 Scorpion Bite, 1056 Snake Bite and 26567 miscellaneous incidents.

Provincial Monitoring Officer further briefed that during last year 174123 victims were provided Patients Transfer Services free of cost from primary healthcare facility to specialized advance healthcare facility. Besides that Motorbike Rescue Service responded 346981 emergencies with average response time of 4 minutes in all districts of Punjab in 2022.

While speaking the occasion, Dr. Rizwan Naseer said that during the last 18 years, Rescue Service has emerged as a successful model of emergency services delivery for South Asian countries. He said that the team of Emergency Services Academy has become the first United Nations INSARAG classified team in South Asia. Dr. Rizwan appreciated the District Emergency Officers for maintaining the standards of Emergency Services in all Districts of Punjab and successful flood rescue operations in South Punjab in 2022 by rescuing over 80,000 flood affectees and provision of transportation to over 1,25,000 people to safe areas.



Floods in Philippines leave 51 dead, over a dozen missing

MANILA (AP): The death toll in the massive floods that devastated parts of the Philippines over the Christmas weekend has climbed to 51, with 19 others missing, the national disaster response agency said Monday, as affected residents struggle to get back on their feet.

Photos on social media showed residents in Misamis Occidental province in Northern Mindanao sweeping away thick mud from the floors of their homes. In the seaside village of Cabol-anonan, coconut trees were uprooted and huts made of light material were nearly flattened. The Northern Mindanao region in the south bore the brunt of the disaster, reporting 25 deaths, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. Most of the deaths were from drowning and landslides, and among the missing were fishermen whose boats capsized.

Floods have subsided in most of the areas hit by bad weather that disrupted Christmas celebrations in the eastern, central and southern Philippines. But over 8,600 of the nearly 600,000 affected people remain in emergency shelters. Over 4,500 houses were damaged by the floods, along with roads and bridges, and some areas still have disrupted power and water supply, the disaster management agency said. The government sent food and other essentials to flood-hit residents, deployed heavy equipment for clearing operations, and provided iron sheets and shelter repair kits, officials said. Teams from the capital Manila were sent to assist communities with limited clean water in setting up water filtration systems.

At least 22 cities and municipalities have declared a state of calamity, the disaster management council said. The move will allow the release of emergency funds and hasten rehabilitation efforts. A sheer line — the point where warm and cold air meet — triggered heavy rains in parts of the country last week, causing the



floods, the state weather bureau said. Meanwhile, Philippine authorities halted flights in and out of Manila on New Year's Day due to a malfunction of air traffic control, which also prevented airlines bound to other destinations from using the country's airspace. A total of 282 flights were either delayed, cancelled or diverted to other regional airports, affecting around 56,000 passengers at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), the airport operator said.

It was unclear how many overflights were affected. Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista apologized for the inconvenience to passengers as he blamed a power outage for the breakdown of the central air traffic control system that also affected operations at other airports in the country. He said the outdated existing facility should be upgraded immediately and that a back-up system was also needed.

"This is air traffic management system issue," he said in a media briefing. "If you will compare us with Singapore, for one, there is a big difference, they are at least 10 years

ahead of us." As of 0800 GMT, "the system has been partially restored thereby allowing limited flight operations", the Manila International Airport Authority said in a statement. By late evening, eight flight arrivals and eight departures had been allowed, according to the airport operator.

Video clips and photos posted on social media showed long queues at the airport and airline personnel distributing food packs and drinks to stranded passengers. "We're told radar and navigation facilities at NAIA down. I was on my way home fm Tokyo - 3 hours into the flight, but had to return to Haneda," tweeted one passenger - Manuel Pangilinan, chairman of Philippine telecommunications conglomerate PLDT Inc. "6 hours of useless flying but inconvenience to travellers and losses to tourism and business are horrendous. Only in the PH. Sigh." Budget carrier Cebu Pacific and Philippine Airlines said they were offering passengers due to fly free rebooking or the option to convert tickets to vouchers.

14 dead in armed attack on prison in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexican authorities said at least 14 people died in an armed attack at a prison in the northern border city Juarez and two more died during a later armed aggression elsewhere in the city. The Chihuahua state prosecutor said in a statement that among those who died in the prison attack were 10 security personnel and four inmates, while another 13 were hurt and at least 24 escaped. It was not immediately clear who carried out the attack.

The prosecutor said initial investigations found the attackers arrived at around 7 a.m. local time at the prison in armored vehicles and opened fire. Minutes earlier, authorities had reported a nearby attack against municipal police. After a chase, four men were captured and a truck seized.

In a different part of the city, two more drivers died later in the day following what authorities called an armed aggression. The state prosecutor did not specify whether the three incidents were related. In August, hundreds of Mexican soldiers were sent to Juarez after a prison face-off between members of two rival cartels caused a riot and shootouts that killed 11 people, most of them civilians.

Germany flays New Year's attacks

BERLIN (AP): The German government on Monday condemned incidents on New Year's Eve in which police officers and firefighters were attacked, mostly with fireworks. People across Germany resumed their tradition of setting off large numbers of fireworks in public places to see in the new year. That followed two years in which sales of fireworks were banned as part of efforts to avoid overloading hospitals and discourage large public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The celebrations were accompanied by a large number of cases in which emergency officials were assaulted with fireworks. In Berlin, the fire service counted at least 38 such attacks and said 15 officers were injured. Police said they had 18 injured officers, German news agency dpa reported. Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey said that "this scale of readiness to use violence and destruction ... damages our city." She tweeted that her administration will discuss expanding the number of areas in which fireworks are banned.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, who thanked police for intervening with more than 100 arrests in Berlin alone, said that "the perpetrators must now feel the legal consequences clearly." Government spokeswoman Christiane Hoffmann said Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his administration "of course condemn in the strongest terms these, in some cases, massive assaults."

Record migrants arrive in Panama

PANAMA CITY (Reuters): Migrants arrived at record numbers in Panama in 2022, the Central American nation said, with most of them leaving Venezuela and crossing the dangerous Darien Gap region in an attempt to reach the United States.

With 248,283 migrants from different countries recorded by Panamanian authorities, the number for last year is equivalent to the total for more than a decade. The data showed 150,392 of the migrants were from Venezuela, by far the largest share, followed by 29,413 from Ecuador and 22,454 from Haiti.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants often face difficulty accessing food, basic services and formal employment in other countries, but have nevertheless left their homeland to seek a better life. A stretch of dense, mountainous rainforest without roads, the Darien Gap straddling Colombia and Panama has long been considered the most dangerous migrant route in Latin America.

Lula sworn in as Brazil president as predecessor Bolsonaro flies to US

BRASILIA (BBC): Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has been sworn in as the new president of Brazil - the third time he has held the country's highest office. The veteran left-wing politician, known widely as Lula, also led the country between 2003 and 2010 - and defeated Jair Bolsonaro in October's poll. In his first speech, Lula vowed to rebuild a country in "terrible ruins".

He decried the policies of his predecessor, who went to the US to avoid the handover ceremony. A sea of Lula supporters gathered in front of Congress since early in the morning - decked out in the red colour of his Workers' Party. They travelled to see their leader sworn in - but also for a celebration. More than 60 artists - including Samba legend Martinho da Vila - were booked to perform on two giant stages decorated in the national flag as part of a music festival dubbed "Lulapalooza". "Love has won over hate," read one banner carried by a man dressed as Lula - complete with a presidential sash.

"Brazil needed this change, this transformation," said another backer of the incoming leader as she queued for festivities. Juliana Barreto - who is from Lula's home state Pernambuco - told the BBC that her country was "a disaster" previously. Lula and incoming Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin paraded through the city on an open-top convertible before proceeding to the Congress building - where the swearing-in occurred at the start of the formal inauguration ceremony.

The men have spent the past days selecting their cabinet and appointing supporters to key state-owned businesses. Shortly after being sworn in, Lula sought to instil a sense of hope in the people of Brazil and promised to "rebuild the nation and make a Brazil of all, for all". There were several instances when he got out his hanky. His most emotional moment came when speaking to the Brazilian people after the swearing-in ceremony - he started sobbing when talking about those who beg at traffic lights, desperate for food.

Probably not even Lula thought this day would ever come - a return to the top job after two decades, despite a spell in prison after being convicted of corruption. The convictions were subsequently annulled in 2021. Much of his speech to Congress was about unity and reconstruction. The two words are crucial in such a deeply divided country, hit hard by the pandemic and hugely polarised politically.

Lula knows that his ultimate challenge will be to convince those who feel he is a corrupt politician who belongs in jail that he does now belong in the presidential palace again and can be their leader too. He pledged to undo the legacy of his pre-

decessor's government, which he said involved depleting funding for education, health and the conservation of the Amazon rainforest. To huge cheers from those watching in Congress, he also promised to revoke Mr Bolsonaro's controversial gun laws immediately.

Lula went on to state that his government would not be motivated by "a spirit of revenge", but that those who had made mistakes would answer for their errors. In particular, he singled out Mr Bolsonaro's Covid-19 policies, accusing him of causing a "genocide" of deaths in Brazil during the pandemic, which would need to be fully investigated. In another noted change of policy from the Bolsonaro administration, Marina Silva - one of Brazil's best known climate activists - was re-appointed to head the environment and climate ministry. She will be expected to achieve Lula's pledge - which was repeated during his speech - to reach "zero deforestation" in the Amazon by 2030.

The atmosphere in Brasilia couldn't be more different than when Mr Bolsonaro was in power. Lots of people were waving banners or wearing T-shirts with the words "Love conquers hate," a reference to the narrative many felt came from Mr Bolsonaro. But diversity and inclusion too was a big part of today's inauguration. With Mr Bolsonaro abandoning his final official duty of passing on the presidential sash, it was left to Eni Souza, a rubbish picker, to do the honours. And standing next to Lula was an indigenous leader, a black boy and a disabled influencer. In this country where racism is all too common, it was an important image that will endure.

The state of Brasilia deployed "100%" of its police force - around 8,000 officers - to the city amid fears that some supporters of Mr Bolsonaro could seek to disrupt proceedings. One man was arrested trying to enter the area of the inauguration carrying a knife and fireworks earlier, Brazil's military police said.

Last week, authorities arrested a supporter of Mr Bolsonaro who had allegedly placed explosives on a fuel truck near an airport in the capital on Christmas Eve. The man said he hoped to "sow chaos" ahead of Lula's inauguration. And other supporters of the former leader have remained camped outside army headquarters, where they have been urging the army to launch a coup. Police attempted to remove the demonstrators, but withdrew after they reacted violently. However, Mr Bolsonaro has condemned the protests against his defeat, urging his supporters to "show we are different from the other side, that we respect the norms and the Constitution".

Mass grave with 18 bodies found in Libya

CAIRO (AP): Libyan authorities said they have found 18 bodies buried in a mass grave in a former stronghold of the Islamic State group along the conflict-stricken North African nation's coast. The Missing Persons Authority said in a statement the bodies were unearthed in the Sabaa area of Sirte, a city in central Libya. The bodies were taken to a local hospital, it added.

Sirte, the birthplace of former longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi, fell under the control of Islamic State militants between 2015 and 2016. The militants, along with al-Qaida, gained a foothold in oil-rich Libya amid the chaos that engulfed the country after

the 2011 uprising and a NATO intervention in the conflict. The militants were eventually driven out of the city in December 2016 by Libyan forces supported by the US and allied with the UN-backed government in the capital Tripoli. Hundreds of alleged former Islamic State fighters remain incarcerated in Libyan prisons, many of whom are awaiting trial. Since Ghadafi's overthrow and killing, Libya has been split between rival authorities. Sirte is now controlled by forces loyal to military leader Khalifa Hifter based in the country's east.

In its statement, the Missing Persons Authority said they collected samples of the dead bones in an

effort to identify the bodies. Further details on the cause of death for those found were not provided. Several mass graves have been uncovered across Libya recently. In October, officials said they found 42 bodies in a mass grave in a school site in Sirte. In December 2018, the bodies of more than thirty men were discovered near Sirte, believed to be the corpses of a group of Ethiopian Christians whom Islamic State fighters executed in a video the group published years earlier. In the western town of Tarhuna, hundreds of corpses have been uncovered across several graves after militia fighters loyal to Hifter retreated from the area in June 2020.

Stray bullets hit 2 jets at Beirut airport, no casualties

BEIRUT (AP): Stray bullets from gunfire celebrations for the new year hit two Middle East Airlines jets parked at Beirut's international airport causing minor damage to the planes without hurting anyone, an airline official said. Intense shooting in the air occurred in Beirut and other parts of Lebanon to celebrate the new year despite repeated warnings by officials for residents not to do so.

The two jets are now being fixed at the Rafik Hariri International Airport, according to the official who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. The official said the bullets hit the jets.

On Nov. 10, a stray bullet hit an MEA jet while landing in Beirut, causing some material damage. No one among the passengers or crew was hurt, the head of the Lebanese airline company said at the time.

MEA chief said Mohamed El-Hout told reporters earlier this year that the airport often faces such incidents, in addition to birds that fly in the area, endangering avia-

tion. Shooting in the air is common in Lebanon, where people often open fire to celebrate passing school or university exams, as well as during weddings and funerals. left over from the country's 1975-90 civil war.

also tends to follow when the country's political leaders give speeches. Many Lebanese have pistols and automatic rifles at home, many of them left over from the country's 1975-90 civil war.

Venezuela and Colombia fully reopen shared border

CARACAS (Reuters): Venezuela and Colombia will fully reopen their shared border on January 1 to allow passage of cargo and passenger transport via the cross-border Tienditas bridge. Colombia Migration said in a statement. The South American countries already reopened in September their border crossing in the Tachira state, in western Venezuela, after political ties strengthened under Colombia's new president, Gustavo Petro.

Petro and his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, appointed ambassadors in Caracas and Bogota, respectively. Colombian authorities have said since September that the reopening of the shared 2,200 kilometers (1,367 miles) border between the two countries would be progressive. Last week, Venezuelan government officials were supervising the infrastructure of the Tienditas bridge.

"We completely reopen the border between our countries in order to guarantee the movement of cargo and passengers, and to promote trade and tourism in Colombia and Venezuela, not only by land but also by air and river", said Colombia's Minister of Transport Guillermo Reyes Gonzalez. Elsewhere, people and cargo can already cross the border via two bridges in Tachira as well as the western Zulia state. Flights between the capitals Caracas and Bogota resumed in November. The commercial exchange between the two countries is worth around \$580 million, according to official data from Colombia.

Macao eases COVID rules, but tourism, casinos yet to rebound

MACAO (AP): Only a few tourists crisscrossed the way black and white paving of Macao's historic Senado Square on a recent weekday and many of the shops were shuttered. The gaming hub on China's south coast near Hong Kong has endured some of the world's strictest anti-virus controls for nearly three years, and a loosening of border restrictions after China rolled back its "zero-COVID" strategy in early December is widely expected to boost its tourism-driven economy.

But for now, China's worst wave of infections so far is keeping away the hoards of high rollers who usually fill its casinos. From Dec. 23-27, the city saw a daily average of only 8,300 arrivals, according to police data. That's just 68% of November's level. The scene improved on New Year's Eve with 28,100 visitors entering the city that day, but that's only 66% of the level a year ago. The daily average was 108,000 in 2019, before the pandemic. Last week, China announced it would resume issuing passports for tourism, potentially setting up a flood of Chinese going abroad, but also spicing up competition for Macao.

Businesses are hoping the Lunar New Year holidays in late January will bring better luck for the territory of 672,000 people, a former Portuguese colony and the only place in China where casinos are legal. "Tourists just come here to have a walk instead of shopping," said Antony Chau, who sells roasted chestnuts on the square known for the European-style buildings that recall its history as a former Portuguese colony. "They're just wandering."

When the coronavirus hit in 2020, the city's gambling revenue collapsed 80% to just \$7.5 billion from a year earlier. In 2021, the figure recovered to \$10.8 billion, but that's still down 75% from a peak of \$45 billion in 2013. Gambling revenues last year was halved to \$5.3 billion. A rebound could not come a moment too soon for souvenir shop owner Lee Hong-soi.

He said his business has been even quieter recently than before entry rules were relaxed. Since entry into Macao requires a negative PCR test result before departure, many in mainland China could not visit because they were infected, he said. And now Macao and other parts of China are

battling outbreaks. "I am running out of strength after enduring for three years," he said. Several hundred meters away, visitors were enjoying an unusual degree of tranquility at the Ruins of St. Paul's, originally the 17th century Church of Mater Dei. Rain Lee, 29, visiting from Hong Kong with her husband, said she was happy not to deal with crowds, but disappointed so many businesses were shuttered.

"Many shops are gone," said Lee, a property manager. "I wish it could be like the pre-pandemic days when all stores were open, with many people walking in the streets. It was more vibrant back then." Beijing visitor Xylia Zhang, 36, taking her first trip outside the mainland since the pandemic began, was looking forward to trying her luck in the casinos. "It's quite exciting because I may lose the several hundred dollars (in Chinese yuan) that I budgeted," she said. "I have been to casinos in Seoul and Las Vegas. But I haven't experienced that in Chinese-speaking places."

The surge of cases in China has prompted some people to go to Macao to get shots of the mRNA-based Pfizer-BioNTech

vaccine, which is not available in the mainland, the Chinese business news website Caixin reported last month. Macao's University Hospital, which provides the service, did not reply to an emailed request for comment and its phone rang unanswered. But there has been no sign of a rush of customers, especially not in the casinos.

Gambling floors at two major casinos were half empty, with just a few small groups of Chinese visitors sitting around slot machines and craps tables, dealers visibly bored with the lack of activity. It will take a while for Macao to regain its pre-pandemic pizzazz, said Glenn McCartney, associate professor in integrated resort and tourism management at the University of Macao. "(For) tourism, you can't sort of snap your fingers, and things start to move," McCartney said.

But he said Macao's tourism officials have staged road shows in China during the pandemic, leveraging the scenic city's location just across the border. The Lunar New Year will bring a sense of the potential for a longer term rebound in tourism, he said. "That could be the cue."

Taiwan president offers China help to deal with COVID surge

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen offered to provide China with "necessary assistance" to help it deal with a surge in COVID-19 cases, but said Chinese military activities near the island were not beneficial to peace and stability. In an abrupt change of policy, China last month began dismantling the world's strictest pandemic regime of lockdowns and extensive testing, meaning COVID-19 is spreading largely unchecked and likely infecting millions of people a day, according to some international health experts.

Tsai, in her traditional new year message, delivered at the presidential office, said everyone had seen the rise in cases in China, which views Taiwan as its own territory and has ramped up military pressure to assert those claims. "As long as there is a need, based on the position of humanitarian care, we are willing to provide the necessary assistance to help more people get out of the pandemic and have a healthy and safe new year,"

she said, without elaborating.

Taiwan and China have repeatedly sparred over their respective measures to control the spread of COVID. China had criticised Taiwan for ineffective management of the pandemic after soaring domestic infections last year, while Taiwan has accused China of a lack of transparency and trying to interfere with vaccine supplies to Taiwan, which Beijing has denied. Tsai reiterated a call for dialogue with China, saying war was not an option to resolve problems.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his New Year address, made only brief reference of Taiwan, saying people on either side of the Taiwan Strait "are members of one and the same family", and made no mention of seeking to bring the island under Chinese control. Tsai, taking questions from reporters, said she had noted Xi's "gentler" remarks.

"But I want to remind people - the military activities of the People's

Liberation Army near Taiwan are not at all conducive to cross-strait relations nor regional peace and stability," she added. Shortly after Tsai spoke, Taiwan's Defence Ministry said 12 Chinese military aircraft had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which had previously served as an unofficial buffer between the two sides, in the past 24 hours.

China staged war games near the island in August after then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taipei, and those military activities have continued. Tsai has repeatedly said she wants talks and peace with China but that Taiwan will defend itself if attacked and that only its 23 million people can decide their future. China views Tsai as a separatist and has refused to talk to her.

Meanwhile, some people in China's key cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan braved the cold and a spike in COVID-19 infections to return to regular activity on Monday, confident of a boost to the economy as more recover from

infections. Among those who gathered to sled or ice skate on a frozen lake in the capital's Shichahai Lake Park were some upbeat about the opening-up, after China dropped stringent "zero-COVID" measures on Dec. 7 to adopt a strategy of living with the virus. However, a wave of infections has since erupted nationwide, after borders had been kept all but shut for three years amid a strict regime of lockdowns and relentless testing. "After the end of this lockdown, we don't have to scan the health code any more, nor do we have to check the travel code," said one of those in the park, Yang, who gave only one name. "So we are free now."

Also at the lake was Zhong, a 22-year-old college student, who said he had stayed home for two or three weeks after getting infected. "Now I can go out and it's good timing for the New Year's Day holiday," he added. "I want to go around in Beijing, have a look and feel the festive mood."

The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

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New Year message from Hermit Kingdom

ACCORDING to the media, North Korea's Kim Jong Un has called for a major increase in the country's nuclear arsenal, including mass production of tactical nuclear weapons and the development of new missiles for nuclear counterstrikes. As said, during a major end-of-the-year party meeting in Pyongyang, North Korean leadership outlined its broad policy goals for 2023 in key areas including diplomacy, security, and the economy.

On new year's eve, nations around the globe welcomed the new year, held special prayer sessions for peace and progress for the entire world and their countries, and set future goals for their nations in various fields. Ironically, the Kim regime typically used North Korea's end-of-year plenary meetings to unveil the country's jingoism and aggressive ideologies during the year ahead. After spending the past decade in warmongering, recurrent nuclear fusions, and sending barrages of multi-range missiles in adjoining territories, the North Korean jingoist announced to continue its poisonous business during the coming twelve months with an additional focus on building tactical nukes, more dangerous intercontinental ballistic missiles, and other deadliest weapons.

Military tensions on the Korean peninsula had risen sharply in 2022 as the North regime conducted sanctions-busting weapons tests nearly every month, while South Korea and its ally US military responded with a high state of readiness, air scrambles, and symbolic flights of gigantic fighter bombers and issuance of verbal ultimatums. The reports suggest that the Pyongyang regime intends to collect heaps of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) that the United States and its allies give up efforts to denuclearize the heavily armed East Asian state and accept Pyongyang as a legitimate nuclear power. The current trajectory of events depicts a tragic picture of the future, as North's provocations had prompted Seoul to double its defense spending, while Japan also allocated \$320 billion in its next year's defense expenses, the ever-biggest military allocation since after the World War II, which not only aims at deterring North Korean threat but also be used to counter Chinese aggressive behavior in Indo-Pacific region.

The North Korean leader has turned his country into a Hermit Kingdom due to continuous preaching of a beligerent ideology and war hysteria against other nations in the region. The young fierce dictator revealed his dangerous intentions in his New Year message, while Pyongyang is likely to conduct its seventh nuclear test in the coming months. The Seoul-Washington alliance also announced to mark its 70th anniversary by carrying over one and a half dozen joint military drills that would signify the strength of their alliance against their common adversary. Interestingly, both sides are equally fueling the conflict and endangering peace and stability in the region, amid appeals for restoring peace to other nations including China.

The prevailing tense economic situation and global energy crisis had shattered the entire world, and people across the globe are battling the worst inflation in history. North Korea is one of the most isolated nations in the world and its population and businesses face the utmost difficulties in foreign trade due to sanctions against the country. In fact, the Hermit Kingdom has nothing to sell except fear and jingoism, as the monarch has no other tact to unite his masses and rule the nation calmly. The fortune-tellers have forecasted a global war in the current year, while the selfish policies of global leaders are sharply pushing the world toward D-Day. After all, lust has no limit but consciousness prevails after the opportunity is lost.

Old tact by the new rulers

The Pakistan Railway is the nation's sole and old countrywide mass transportation system that was constructed by the British government more than two hundred years ago. Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders could not maintain the existing setup of Pakistan railways, and the department and its services gradually downgraded over the past seven decades. Once, a prosperous Pakistan Railway in the 1960s and 1970s became prey to the corruption of its leaders and Railway staff while a gigantic cargo fleet comprising thousands of wagons became useless after private transport and NLC grabbed the cargo market from the Railway due to the complicity of government officials. Multiple Ministers showcased old passenger trains with new colours and codes and several auctions of Railway assets are arranged but Railway could not become a lucrative department over the past three decades. Currently, Khawaja is chasing the footprints of Shaikh, who launched, buy a compartment, own a boggy, or share a train receipt whereas Khawaja extends this list to seats, toilets, and pathways.

In fact, Pakistani leaders walk on bureaucratic crutches, while government servants had always faced a lack of creativity and genius ideas. Their tasks are usually accomplished through nepotism and corruption while hard work is poisonous for their statesmanship. Therefore, such rash ideas are repeatedly being implemented by every new Minister and Railway is rapidly sinking under the heavy operational losses and malpractices of its high-ups. The Railway minister is requested to use some newest and productive ideas instead of flashy and fruitless measures so a real change can be brought in this magnificent department.



'Inheriting the bomb'

Daniel Larison

THE nuclear disarmament of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine was one of the great success stories of the end of the Cold War, and it was one of the most significant victories for the cause of nonproliferation.

When the Soviet Union ceased to exist, these newly independent states had to manage the problem of the Soviet nuclear legacy left behind in their lands. Their disarmament was bound up with their status as independent, sovereign countries as they sought and needed to be integrated with the rest of the world.

The commitment of the non-Russian republics to disarm saved the original Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and upheld the principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and their eventual disarmament is one of the underappreciated achievements of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era.

While all three states were always willing to get rid of the nuclear weapons they had inherited from the Soviet Union, the paths that they took to disarmament were somewhat different with respect to the terms and timing of removing these weapons and their delivery systems from their territories. The Ukrainian case is the most involved of the three, and because of the war in Ukraine it is also the most salient today in current debates about disarmament and nonproliferation.

It is therefore fortunate that there is a new book that can expertly guide us through this complicated and important history.

Mariana Budjeryn's *Inheriting the Bomb: The Collapse of the USSR and the Nuclear Disarmament of Ukraine* is an excellent study of how the process of disarmament unfolded. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including some Ukrainian sources not tapped before, Budjeryn details in great depth the internal deliberations of the Ukrainian government and the intensive rounds of negotiations among the U.S., Russia and the three non-Russian republics.

The book should become a standard reference for anyone working on this issue and on nonproliferation more broadly, and I expect that it will.

Budjeryn shows how the Ukrainian government realized that they had no practical alternative to disarmament if they were going to be a full-fledged member of the international community, but they also believed that their country should not give up the weapons without receiving something in return. The Ukrainian government took a nuanced position on the question of disarmament, as they were committed to denuclearization but wanted, for reasons of sovereignty and leverage, to emphasize that they

"owned" the weapons on their territory even if they couldn't and wouldn't use them.

This insistence on ownership created some tensions in relations with both the U.S. and Russia, and opened Ukraine up to untrue charges of "backsliding" on its commitments. But in the end, Ukraine was never in a position to keep the weapons and did not want to keep them.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the story is how the three non-Russian republics leveraged the U.S. desire to ratify and implement START into securing themselves places at the negotiating table. Russia would have preferred to keep all arms control discussions bilateral, but since START could not be implemented without the cooperation of the other states it became necessary to include them.

This created some interesting contradictions in Washington's dealings with these states. On the one hand, Washington accepted that the three non-Russian republics were successors to the Soviet Union for the purposes of arms control under START, but it would not accept that they were successors to the Soviet Union's status as a nuclear weapons state.

The U.S. bottom line was that there should be no additional nuclear weapons

states emerging from the collapsed Soviet Union. The NPT was clear that there could only be five nuclear weapons states, and the U.S. was not going to compromise on this point. This meant that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine had to commit to joining the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states while simultaneously assisting the U.S. in eliminating part of the Soviet nuclear arsenal that they had in their countries.

It took some time to get all three across the finish line with the ratification of both treaties, but it is a credit to their governments and to the Bush and Clinton administrations that they kept this process moving forward to a successful conclusion.

If Ukraine's disarmament is discussed today, it is often mentioned as a supposed cautionary tale of what other states shouldn't do. Shortly after the 2022 Russian invasion began, John Ulyot and Thomas Grant declared Ukraine's disarmament to have been a mistake: "If you abandon your nuclear program and entrust your security to formal guarantees and conventional deterrence, you gamble with your future. If you give up your nukes, you give up your national security ace-in-the-hole."

Bill McGum of The Wall Street Journal asked rhetor-

ically, "If Ukraine hadn't given up its nukes after the collapse of the Soviet Union, would Vladimir Putin have dared invade?" This line of thinking is misguided for several reasons.

As Budjeryn shows, there really was no serious option of keeping the inherited nuclear weapons without exposing Ukraine to international opprobrium and isolation, and the cost of building up an indigenous nuclear weapons program to maintain their own arsenal was prohibitive. She sums up the Ukrainian foreign ministry's view at the time: "The negative repercussions of the nuclear option would far outweigh the positive."

It is a mistake for people today to indulge the fantasy that Ukraine could have kept these weapons without suffering severe negative political and economic consequences, and it gives encouragement to would-be proliferators that our collective commitment to nonproliferation is waning.

Another problem with the counterfactual is that there is no guarantee that Ukraine would have been made more secure if it had paid the high price to retain these weapons. If anything, possession of what would have been the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal probably would have made Ukraine more of a target for interference and intervention, and the resources it would have had to pour into

its nuclear weapons program would have come at the expense of its other defenses.

Budjeryn quotes Boris Tarasyuk, Ukraine's then-foreign minister, as saying, "For Ukraine to keep nuclear weapons would have been to go against the entire world order." When critics of disarmament argue that Ukraine should have somehow kept this arsenal, they are ignoring the enormous, immediate costs that Ukraine would have faced for doing so. Ukraine would not only have been putting its good relations with the U.S. and its allies at risk by keeping these weapons, but counter-intuitively it would have also risked its own survival.

Budjeryn concludes: "If Ukraine had refused to join the NPT and kept a part of its nuclear inheritance, it would not be the same country it is today but with nuclear weapons. Indeed, it is doubtful whether it would be a country at all." "Inheriting the Bomb" is essential reading for anyone interested in issues of disarmament and nonproliferation. It is exceptionally well-researched and well-written, and it deepens the reader's understanding of the complex problems that were created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. It also reminds us of the importance of careful, patient diplomacy in managing multiple potential crises peacefully.

Turn to center

Mikhail Katkov

THROUGHOUT the past year, the West threatened Moscow with complete isolation, economic collapse and oblivion. However, state relations with neighbors either did not undergo drastic changes or improved. About what awaits the post-Soviet space in 2023.

Union state

In 2022, Belarus was Russia's most consistent ally. Firstly, Alexander Lukashenko provided the territory for launching an offensive by Russian troops on Kyiv and launching missile strikes. Secondly, international sanctions did not freeze the integration process between Moscow and Minsk, but, on the contrary, spurred it on.

In mid-October, Lukashenko said that Vladimir Zelensky was preparing an attack on Belarus. For this reason, within the framework of the Union State, a regional 9,000-strong group of troops was created to protect the Belarusian borders. "Tell the president of Ukraine and other insane people that the Crimean bridge will seem like flowers to them if they touch at least one meter of our territory with their dirty hands," the head of the republic said. However, the country's Ministry of Defense emphasized that the regional grouping is an exclusively defensive project.

As for the economy, in November the Belarusians promised to supply Russia with up to 100,000 tons of diesel and up to 50,000 tons of gasoline every month. In addition, according to State Secretary of the Union State Dmitry Mezentsev, the parties have done a lot of work on the convergence of national legislation for economic integration.

28 joint programs have been developed. According to the Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, half has already been implemented. He stressed that over the past year there have been no dairy, gas, meat or any trade wars between Moscow and Minsk. Instead, Belarusians increased their share of the Russian market by about 30 percent. As Golovchenko clarified, Minsk redirected to the ally those goods that used to go to Europe, but now fell under sanctions.

In addition, the authorities of the Vitebsk region are negotiating economic cooperation with the majority of those mobilized belong to national minorities. And now their dissatisfaction will fall on the mythical separatism on the ground and, thus, everything will detonate. Russian regions will demand independence from Moscow. The country will be "fragmented". This is where the States will need to quickly rush in and manage the process of the collapse of Russia. Instantly help with self-determination of the subjects seceding from the Russian Federation, recognize and support their independence. Engage NATO and all other military blocs to surround the former Russian Federation along the perimeter. Tear off Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Crimea from Russia, oust it from Syria and Africa, take control of Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The US and the EU "should take advantage of Moscow's weakness and <...> carry out the expansion of NATO in the style of" big bang", admitting as many new members as possible at once. First of all, of course, these will be Georgia and Ukraine.

Inside our country, American strategists fantasize, an incessant civil war will boil - something like Yugoslavia at maximum speed. Conflicts will also arise in many border regions - the Russian-Estonian border, islands in the Caspian Sea, the Kuriles, and the Caucasus are called as sore points.

The main task of the States at this stage will be to take international (read: under their own) control of the Russian nuclear arsenal. In general, this will be the cherished goal that they

in Kazakhstan by a third, to \$938 million.

In turn, Putin proposed to Tokayev to create a gas union, which, in addition to Russia and Kazakhstan, could include Uzbekistan. Since Western countries decided to abandon Russian energy resources, Moscow began to reorient itself to other regions. Both republics of Central Asia are experiencing a shortage of gas and are likely to be interested in deliveries of Russian fuel. In the future, gas can be brought from Uzbekistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. Turkmenistan has been trying to implement a similar project worth ten billion dollars for seven years.

In addition, Russia is ready to build nuclear power plants in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Rosatom will not only build the facilities, but will also increase the competence of local specialists so that they independently provide for the entire work cycle. Nuclear power plants should fully compensate for the lack of electricity in Central Asia. For example, in Tashkent they hope to receive nuclear

energy in 2028 - the terms of reference have already been signed with Rosatom. Astana is still choosing between Russia, France and South Korea, but admits that the offer of an ally in the EEU and the CSTO is more profitable, since Moscow agrees to remove and dispose of nuclear waste.

Eurasian project

The heart of the Eurasian integration with the participation of Russia is the EAEU, so it is not surprising that in 2022 Moscow showed an increased interest in this organization. In particular, we decided to launch a five-year pilot project for the financial support of industrial cooperation, in which at least three countries of the union will participate. From 20 to 30 million dollars can be allocated to subsidize interest rates on loans.

Support for cooperation within the EAEU should help its members to establish their own technological development. First of all, Russia will benefit from this, because within the union there is no alternative to its technologies.

One of the first projects may be the development of an interstate program for the development of the

semiconductor industry. The main problem is that there are almost no enterprises in the EAEU countries that are ready to produce the necessary products. The Ministry of Industry and Trade of Russia notes the 15-year lag of the domestic industry from world leaders.

However, Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Mikhail Myasnikov is confident that in the future semiconductors will become a symbol of the success of Eurasian integration.

In addition to this, the EEC proposes to create a universal payment system. Moreover, both EAEU members and the BRICS countries will be able to participate in it, primarily India and China, which, with the right approach, can replace all of Moscow's former partners in the West. But even if this fails, by 2025 the leaders of the EAEU promise to form a common financial market.

By that time, the single gas market should be operational. As Lukashenko said, Belarus wants everyone within the union to pay the same price for fuel, even if it equals European indicators.

from being as simple as Kahn's. Contrary to his cheerful statements that thirty million dead Americans was a perfectly acceptable payment for the victory over the Soviets, the US leadership tried to prevent a nuclear war after all.

The whole story so struck the imagination of contemporaries that Stanley Kubrick, who was well acquainted with Kahn, made him the prototype of Dr. Strangelove from his film of the same name - a Nazi maniac who dreams of destroying all mankind and built a doomsday machine. It was Kahn who came up with this hypothetical doomsday machine in his book *On Thermo-nuclear War*.

However, Kahn remained in favor with the authorities, his books continued to be published, he warned readers that he was writing them mainly to intimidate the Soviets. And the Hudson Institute continued the work they had begun after Kahn's death.

Actually, their latest report is a new variation on an old theme. This is a thinly disguised threat of a nuclear attack on Russia. Kahn also dreamed of how such an attack would trigger disintegration processes in the Soviet Union. All this, of course, is delusional and absolutely unrealistic fabrications of American fanatics. They do not withstand a collision with reality, which was well shown even by the Caribbean crisis.

However, in the bottom line, we see Washington's carefully planned strategy to "contain" Russia. They will stick to it anyway. As they put it, "we have a unique chance to drive Russia back into its geopolitical box, and we should

(Continued on Page 7)

So how does Washington live with it?

Victoria Nikiforova

WHILE we were cutting Oliver here in Russia and decorating the Christmas tree, sadness came over our strategic partners on New Year's Eve. The Americans remembered the anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union and suffered that they did not completely destroy it.

According to many local experts, the US overlooked the recovery and rise of Russia. Its economy is self-sufficient and stable, the army is mobile and modern. And most importantly, a nuclear stock equal to the American one was not only preserved by Russia, but also modernized with the latest technology. So how does Washington live with it?

But there was a glimmer of hope. "Whatever the end of Russia's war in Ukraine, it will be <...> the final point of the collapse of the Soviet Union," experts at the Hudson Institute reflect thoughtfully. "And it will mark the fragmentation of the Russian Federation as the legitimate successor to the USSR."

Well, here it is, finally. And then they were already waiting. The report in an abbreviated form was immediately reprinted by the most influential The Wall Street Journal. The topic, as we see, is extremely relevant for our opponents. This is not boring Ukraine, whose leader is begging for money all the time. This is the goal that, using Ukraine as a battering ram, Washington is actually striving for. How do the analysts of the Hudson Institute, which has served the Pentagon for many years, see our future "collapse" and what do they advise the Washington regime to do in this regard?

For starters, they prefer not to think about what will happen to Russia and the world after our victory in Ukraine. This option is simply not considered. This whole post-apocalyptic report is based on the fact that Moscow "can't cope" in Ukraine. In this case, the authors believe, Russia will face a full range of turbulences - from revolution to civil war. The picture of the defeat of our country is written in broad strokes: "If Russia loses in Ukraine, but is not destroyed, an atmosphere of suspicion and vindictiveness will reign there, reminiscent of Weimar Germany."

The authors believe that the source of turbulence is Russian PMCs, as well as national battalions. Returning after the SVO, the mobilized citizens will not find a job (no, the authors do not explain why this will happen) and will be filled with discontent. The report notes that there are 83 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, which raises further questions for the professionalism of the authors, since there are 89 regions in the country. Even if we assume that the document deliberately ignores four new regions (DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions), then to pretend that the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol are also not part of Russia, it is necessary to have outstanding tunnel vision and no less impressive incompetence. Without citing any sources, in their favorite style highly likely experts report that in some subjects there is a "low-level desire for independence" (low-level independence movement).

Contrary to reality, the Hudson Institute is somehow convinced that the vast

majority of those mobilized belong to national minorities. And now their dissatisfaction will fall on the mythical separatism on the ground and, thus, everything will detonate. Russian regions will demand independence from Moscow. The country will be "fragmented". This is where the States will need to quickly rush in and manage the process of the collapse of Russia. Instantly help with self-determination of the subjects seceding from the Russian Federation, recognize and support their independence. Engage NATO and all other military blocs to surround the former Russian Federation along the perimeter. Tear off Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Crimea from Russia, oust it from Syria and Africa, take control of Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The US and the EU "should take advantage of Moscow's weakness and <...> carry out the expansion of NATO in the style of" big bang", admitting as many new members as possible at once. First of all, of course, these will be Georgia and Ukraine.

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The main task of the States at this stage will be to take international (read: under their own) control of the Russian nuclear arsenal. In general, this will be the cherished goal that they

could not achieve before.

The United States should also take advantage of the collapse of Russia to capture those representatives of the Russian elite and the leadership of the country, whom they consider responsible for the crisis in Ukraine, and subject them to an international court.

The Hudson Institute offers Washington to help its allies tear off pieces from Russian territories, but not to interfere in civil strife within Russia. Here follows an excellent, very characteristic of our partners clause.

"The 1990s showed that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not lead to the automatic transformation of Russian society, as many hoped it would," they lament. "It would be better for the United States not to waste resources on transforming Russia's society, economy, and government into a Western-style democracy. Such attempts have failed before, and they will fail now."

Simply put, it was not possible to make Germans or Japanese out of Russians, living peacefully under American occupation and strictly following all orders from Washington. Here you can not argue with the authors. This is indeed true. Russia, as it was a sovereign player on a global scale, has remained so, our people have retained their independence. On the whole, the report is surprising in the unmotivatedness of its conclusions. It does not answer the most important question: what kind of existential collapse must occur in Russia in order for its collapse to really begin?

Our economy is quite stable despite all packages with sanctions. This winter

will show that we actually live better than in Europe. The approval ratings of the president of the country were not even dreamed of by his foreign colleagues. The implementation of the NWO led to the annexation of four new regions to Russia - these are millions of people, vast territories, developed industry, and an excellent agricultural industry. And it's "we haven't really started anything yet." At the same time, the hatred of strategic partners towards us has become so obvious that it unites us in itself.

Well, where are the possibilities for a civil war, for all these bloody conflicts that the Americans describe with the painful voluptuousness? Some warring kingdoms, warlords, a complete post-apocalypse in the style of "Mad Max"...

But all this is understandable if you look at what kind of organization this is - the Hudson Institute. One of its creators was the legendary futurist Herman Kahn, author of the theory of deterrence, assured retaliation, the "escalation ladder" of nuclear conflict, and the theory of escalation control. In the States, they are still trying to "restrain" Russia according to his manuals. Kahn's most famous book is called "On Thermo-nuclear War" (in parallel with Clausewitz's legendary work "On War"). In it, he wrote that, in fact, the United States could well survive a full-scale nuclear war with the USSR. And on the territory of the Soviet Union, as a result of this war, chaos will arise - and the country will collapse, falling apart.

The book was published in 1960, and already in 1962 the Cuban Missile Crisis broke out, during which the Americans felt that everything was far

from being as simple as Kahn's. Contrary to his cheerful statements that thirty million dead Americans was a perfectly acceptable payment for the victory over the Soviets, the US leadership tried to prevent a nuclear war after all.

The whole story so struck the imagination of contemporaries that Stanley Kubrick, who was well acquainted with Kahn, made him the prototype of Dr. Strangelove from his film of the same name - a Nazi maniac who dreams of destroying all mankind and built a doomsday machine. It was Kahn who came up with this hypothetical doomsday machine in his book *On Thermo-nuclear War*.

However, Kahn remained in favor with the authorities, his books continued to be published, he warned readers that he was writing them mainly to intimidate the Soviets. And the Hudson Institute continued the work they had begun after Kahn's death.

Actually, their latest report is a new variation on an old theme. This is a thinly disguised threat of a nuclear attack on Russia. Kahn also dreamed of how such an attack would trigger disintegration processes in the Soviet Union. All this, of course, is delusional and absolutely unrealistic fabrications of American fanatics. They do not withstand a collision with reality, which was well shown even by the Caribbean crisis.

However, in the bottom line, we see Washington's carefully planned strategy to "contain" Russia. They will stick to it anyway. As they put it, "we have a unique chance to drive Russia back into its geopolitical box, and we should

'The eighth wonder of the world'

IN *The Price of Time*, Edward Chancellor has given us a colorful and provocative review of the history, theory, and profound effects of interest rates, the price that links the present and the future, which he argues is "the most important price of all."

The history runs from Hammurabi's Code, which in 1750 BC was "largely concerned with the regulation of interest," and from the first debt cancellation (which was proclaimed by a ruler in ancient Mesopotamia) all the way to our world of pure fiat currencies, the recent Everything Bubble (now deflating), cryptocurrencies (now crashing), and the effective cancellation of government debt by inflation and negative interest rates.

The intellectual and political debates run from the Old Testament to Aristotle to John Locke and John Law, to Friedrich Hayek and John Maynard Keynes, to Xi Jinping and Ben Bernanke, and many others.

As for the vast effects of interest rates, a central theme of the book is that in recent years interest rates were held too low for too long, being kept "negative in real terms for years on end," with resulting massive financial distortions for which central banks are culpable.

The Effects of Low Interest Rates

Chancellor chronicles how over the centuries, many writers and politicians have favored low interest rates. They have in mind an image of the Scrooge-like lender, always a usurer lending at excessive interest, grinding down the impoverished and desperate borrower—not unlike contemporary discussions of payday lending. For example, Chancellor quotes A Discourse Upon Usury, written by an Elizabethan judge in 1572, which describes the usurer as "hel unsaciable, the sea raging, a cur dog, a blind moul, a venomous spider, and a bottomless sacke...most abominable in the sight of God and man." Presumably, the members of the American Bankers Association and of the Independent Community Bankers of America would object to this description.

In fact, the roles of lender and borrower have often been and are in large measure today the opposite of the traditional image. This was already clear to John Locke, as Chancellor shows us. The great philosopher turned his mind in 1691 to "Some

Considerations of the Lowering of Interest Rates" and "saw many disadvantages arising from a forced reduction in borrowing costs" and lower interest rates paid to lenders. For who are these lenders? Wrote Locke: "It will be a loss to Widows, Orphans, and all those who have their Estates in Money"—just as it was a loss in 2022 to the British pension funds when these funds got themselves in trouble by trying to cope with excessively low interest rates. Moreover, who would benefit from lower interest rates? Locke considered that low interest rates "will mightily increase the advantages of bankers and scriveners, and other such expert brokers... It will be a gain to the borrowing merchant." Lower interest rates, Chancellor adds, would also benefit "an indebted aristocracy."

In Chancellor's summary, "Locke was the first writer to consider at length the potential damage produced by taking interest rates below their natural level." Locke's position in modern language includes these points:

a. Financiers would benefit at the expense of "widows and orphans"

b. Wealth would be redistributed from savers to borrowers

c. Too much borrowing would take place

d. Asset price inflation would make the rich richer

Just so, over our recent years of too-low interest rates, ordinary people have had the purchasing power of their savings expropriated by central bank policy and leveraged speculators of various stripes made large profits from overly cheap borrowing, while debt boomed and asset prices inflated into the Everything Bubble.

The central bankers knew what they were doing with respect to asset prices. Chancellor quotes a remarkably candid statement in a Federal Open Market Committee meeting in 2004, in which, as a Federal Reserve Governor clearly put it:

[Our] policy accommodation—and the expectation that it will persist—is distorting asset prices. Most of the distortion is deliberate and a desirable effect if the stance of policy. We have attempted to lower interest rates below long-term equilibrium rates and to boost asset prices in order to stimulate demand.

That boosting asset prices was "deliberate" is correct; that it was "desirable" seems mistaken to Chancellor and to me. "The records

Alex J. Pollock

show that the Fed had used its considerable powers to boost the housing market," he writes (I prefer the phrase, "stoke the housing bubble"). What is worse, the Fed did it twice, and we had two housing bubbles in the brief 23 years of this century. In 2021, the Fed was inexcusably buying mortgage securities and suppressing mortgage rates while the country was experiencing a runaway house price inflation (now deflating).

In general, "Wealth bubbles occur when the interest rate is held below its natural level," Chancellor concludes.

Bad Press

On a different note, he mentions that suppression of interest rates could lead to "Keynes' long-held ambition for the euthanasia of the rentier," using Keynes' own memorable, if unpleasant, phrase. The recent long period of nearly zero interest rates, however, led to huge market gains on the investments of the rentiers, and caused instead the euthanasia of the savers—or at least the robbing of the savers.

Our recent experience has shown again how borrowers may be made richer by low interest rates, as were speculators, private equity firms, and corporations that levered up with cheap debt. "It is clear that unconventional monetary policies...had a profound impact on inequality," Chancellor writes, "the greatest beneficiaries from the Fed's policies [of low interest rates] were the financial elite, who got to enhance their fortunes with cheap leverage at a time when asset values were driven higher by easy money."

Historically there was a question of whether there should be interest charged at all. "Moneylenders have always received a bad press," Chancellor reflects, "Over the centuries...the greatest minds have been aligned against them"—Aristotle, for example, thought charging interest was "of all modes of making money...the most unnatural." The Old Testament restricted charging interest, but as Chancellor points out, the Book of Deuteronomy makes this important distinction: "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on victuals, interest on anything," but "To a foreigner you may lend upon interest." This raises the question of who is my brother and who is a foreigner, but does seem to be an early acceptance of international

banking. It also makes me think that anyone who has made loans from the Bank of Dad and Mom at the family interest rate of zero, will recognize the intuitive distinction expressed in Deuteronomy.

Needless to say, loans and investments bearing interest prevail around the globe in the tens of trillions of dollars, the moneylenders' bad press notwithstanding. This is, at the most fundamental level, because interest rates reflect the reality of time, as Chancellor nicely explains. One thousand dollars ten years from now and one thousand dollars today are naturally and inescapably different, and the interest rate is the price of that difference, which gives us a precise measure of how different they are.

A perpetually intriguing part of that price is how interest compounds over long periods of time. "The problem of debt compounding at a geometrical rate has never lost its fascination," Chancellor observes, and that is certainly true. "A penny put out to 5 percent compound interest at our Savior's birth," he quotes an 18th-century philosopher as calculating, "would by this time [in 1773]... have increased to more money than would be contained in 150 millions of globes, each equal to the earth in magnitude, all solid gold."

The quip that compound interest is "the eighth wonder of the world" is often attributed to Albert Einstein, but Chancellor traces it to a more humble origin: "an advertisement for The Equity Savings and Loan Company published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer" in 1925. "Compound interest... does things to money," the advertisement continued, "At the Equity it doubles your money every 14 years." This meant the savings and loan's deposits were paying 5% interest—the same interest rate used in the preceding 1773-year calculation, but that case represented 123 doublings.

The mirror image of sums remarkably increasing with compound interest is the present value calculation, which reduces the value of future sums by compound interest running backward to the present, a classic tool of finance. Just as we are fascinated, as the Equity Savings and Loan knew, by how much future sums can increase, depending on the interest rate that is compounding, so we are also fascinated by how much today's market value of future sums can shrink, depending on the interest rate.

If the interest rate goes from 1% to 4%, about what the yield on the 10-year Treasury note did in 2021-2022, the value of \$1,000 ten years from now drops from \$905 to \$676, or by 25%. You still expect exactly the same \$1,000 at exactly the same time, but you find yourself 25% poorer in market value.

Central Distortions

In old British novels, wealth is measured by annual income, as in "He has two thousand pounds a year." One role of changing interest rates is to make the exact same investment income represent very different amounts of wealth. If interest rates are suppressed by the central banks, it makes you wealthier with the same investment income; if they are pushed up, it makes you poorer. If they change a lot in either direction, the change in wealth is a lot. The math is elementary, but it helps demonstrate why interest rates are, as Chancellor says, the most important price.

In the 21st century, "The Federal Reserve lowered interest rates to zero and sprayed money around Wall Street." But if the interest rate is zero, \$1,000 ten years in the future is worth the same as \$1,000 today, a ridiculous conclusion, and why zero interest rates are only possible in a financial world ruled by central banks.

More egregious yet is the notion of negative interest rates, which were actually experienced on trillions of dollars of debt during the last decade. "The shift to negative interest rates comprised the central bankers' most audacious move," Chancellor writes. "What is a negative interest rate but a tax on capital—taxation without representation." With negative interest rates, \$1,000 ten years in the future is worth more than \$1,000 today, an absurd conclusion, likewise proof that negative interest rates can only exist under the rule of central banks.

"The setting of interest rates [by central banks] is just one aspect of central planning," Chancellor observes. In his ideal world, expressed on the book's last page, "central banks would no longer be able to pursue an active monetary policy," and "guided by the market's invisible hand, the rate of interest would find its natural level." Given all the mistakes central banks have made, with the accompanying distortions, this is an attractive vision, but unlikely, needless to say.

'Don't be surprised at anything'

Petr Akopov

FORECASTS for the coming year range from "don't be surprised at anything" to "everything will change." But it makes no sense to wait for the end of the world or hope for a miracle - 2023 will become a logical continuation of 2022, and to a much greater extent than the past year, continued the trends of the previous one. It is practically guaranteed that the main event of the new year will remain the hostilities in Ukraine and everything connected with them. And almost everything is connected - from the prices of raw materials to the process of dismantling the Atlantic world order. But this does not mean that everything depends only on the Ukrainian front and the rest does not matter. On the contrary, as in any extreme situation, everything is intertwined and goes to the overall standings.

Although Europe, which has suddenly become the hottest spot in the world because it decided to expand eastward at the expense of Russian land and considers what is happening in Ukraine to be its own, not Russian business, and will be in an excited state throughout 2023, there are no guarantees that traditionally the most dangerous region of the world, the Middle East, will not regain the attention of the world community. Not instead of Europe, but together with it.

Of course, the most dangerous development of events will not happen - the attack on Iran, which some Israeli politicians (including Netanyahu, who returned to power) and part of the American elites, crave, will not happen. But the very fact that the Americans finally buried the nuclear deal will have a negative impact on the situation in the region, giving provocateurs a reason to hope that they will be able to pit the Arabs and Persians. The recent unrest in Iran gave them additional hope for destabilizing the situation in the Islamic Republic, but one should not count on serious unrest in the ancient state. Despite all the internal problems, Iran is in the forefront of countries working to change the world order that is beneficial to the West, and Tehran's role will only grow.

Including thanks to rapprochement with Russia, last year was a truly breakthrough year in Russian-Iranian relations, removing the obstacles that had previously held back their development. First of all, by removing the Russian side, forcing both our business, cut off from Europe, and our state corporations and officials, often also European-oriented, to take as seriously as possible the plans for strategic cooperation with a neighboring state that have long existed: the North-South transport corridor, trade and infrastructure projects, not to mention military-technical cooperation.

At the same time, Russia maintains close relations with Iran's neighbors, both Arabs and Turks. Moreover, interaction with Arab countries (primarily Saudi Arabia and the Emirates) is intensifying, and with Turkey it completely acquires the character of a strategically important one. And this despite the fact that the growth of Turkish influence in the post-Soviet space cannot but disturb Moscow - Turkey's excessive strengthening in the Transcaucasus and its persistent attempts to expand its presence in Central Asia do not meet Russian interests. However, Putin manages to find a balance of interests with Erdogan, so the upcoming presidential elections in Turkey in June will be extremely important. Erdogan will almost cer-

tainly be re-elected - which is beneficial for Russia and disadvantageous for the West. But even in the event of his defeat, one should not expect a change in the Turkish foreign policy strategy: over the two Erdogan decades, the country has become more than a serious player on a supra-regional scale (even if we mean the Greater Middle East by its region) and is not going to abandon offensive foreign policy. And offensiveness is inextricably linked with independence - careful distancing from the West and maintaining close and diverse ties with Russia that are beneficial to Turkey.

There are enough pressure points in the Greater Middle East that can explode. In addition to the main one, the Palestinian one, there is also a sluggish war in Yemen, and Libya, which is teetering on the verge of resuming a civil war, and a Kurdish problem for at least three states. And long-suffering Syria, which, however, may soon return to the League of Arab States, which will mean a rejection of the demands for the departure of Assad, who will meet with Erdogan in the new year, it is important for both of them not only to bury the hatchet, but also to try to agree on what to do with the rebellious Kurds on the Turkish-Syrian border. The American military presence in Syria is preventing this problem from being solved - and the States are not going to leave yet.

However, in general, American influence in the region is falling: the Arabs are increasingly diversifying their ties, moving closer to China and Russia. The common problem for the entire large region - Afghanistan - has so far been sort of forgotten. After the departure of the Americans, the Afghans are left to themselves - and in the most difficult economic situation, the Taliban leaders are trying to build some kind of state power, while not wanting to share it with yesterday's collaborators, that is, those who worked for the Americans. None of its neighbors need impoverished and explosive Afghanistan, but so far neither China, nor Russia, nor Iran, nor the Arab countries have been able to establish serious trade and economic ties with Kabul. The fourth most important country for Afghanistan, Pakistan, is itself in a state of internal discord - removed (to the pleasure of the West) last spring from power. Imran Khan will do everything this year to return to the premier's chair.

Although the shift of the geopolitical center of gravity from Europe and the Mediterranean to the Pacific region will continue, most of the most heated pain points remain in Asia and Europe (here, not only Kosovo, but also Bosnia may detonate in the new year). The Taiwan issue, which was so heavily combed last year, will almost certainly subside this year - neither Washington, nor even Beijing needs to provoke a new round of the crisis, which will inevitably take place at a tougher level and worsen the already degrading US-China relations. Confrontation between China and the USA, of course, will continue, the verbal and sanctions confrontation will intensify, but the parties will not play with Taiwanese fire in 2023. The crisis here - as in many other regions of the world - may be next, 2024, when the island will hold presidential elections (during which the theme of declaring independence, that is, renouncing the status of the long-defunct "Republic of China"), will be played up.

For three years now, the world has been living in an emergency situation - and the fourth year will definitely not be peaceful and calm. By the end of 2023, the world will not be much different from what it is now, because the most serious changes accumulated during the global transformation are not perceived by us from a close distance. However, that doesn't mean they don't happen. On the contrary, their scale is too great to immediately realize it. In the new year, we will understand a little better what happened in 2022, but we will appreciate the full significance of what happened in the early 2020s only years later.

So how does Washington live with it?

(Continued from Page 6)

First, they say, after Putin, "it will not be Thomas Jefferson who will come to power in Russia. <...> He will be the same nationalist and authoritarian leader as Putin." Secondly, the authors warn, "Russia will definitely return. Even if the restoration of its defense industry and economy takes several decades, Moscow will never abandon its imperial plans for Eastern Europe and <...> will be a danger to its neighbors."

Therefore, we need to

continue pumping Europe with American weapons and sending more and more of our military there. In essence, there is nothing new in the new report of the Hudson Institute - this is a long-known plan for American aggression on the European continent and the encirclement of Russia along the perimeter. Well, and indispensable dreams of our "collapse", which have long been impotently indulged in Washington.

Important Notice

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

The canonization of military essence

A recent New York Times commentary by conservative columnist Bret Stephens asks this question: "Are We Sleepwalking Through a 'Decisive Decade'?" To which he answers resoundingly, in so many words, yes.

"We" is all of us: American society as a whole — but, more precisely, the policy officials and military leaders who purport to guide us through the thickets of international relations. Sleepwalking is a euphemism, of course, for our collective cluelessness, ignorance, and indifference in matters of present-day national security. It's an apt but imperfect metaphor.

Zombification would be more to the point, since we're talking about the community of national security practitioners, observers, and commentators — the so-called "Blob" — whose establishmentarian ideas never completely die. Stephens is singularly representative of them and speaks to them in their language from his august journalistic perch.

In the interest of parsimony, let's forgo the temptation to question the validity of the claim that we inhabit a uniquely "decisive decade." These are words President Biden has used repeatedly, most recently in the preface to his new National Security Strategy document. It's a highly debatable proposition that we'll save for a later discussion. Instead, let's focus on some of the received truths that Stephens lays claim to, explicitly and implicitly, on behalf of his Blob brethren.

The Fetishization of .mil-ism. For starters, most of the community accepts uncritically as an article of faith that the military is the centerpiece of national security, in its narrowest conception.

Despite incessant rhetorical blather about soft power, smart power, and the simplistic, doctrinally sanctioned instruments of power

— axiomatically referred to as DIME (diplomatic, informational, military, economic) — most true believers remain wedded to the centrality of the M (read "providing for the common defense"), thereby ignoring the other precepts in America's Security Credo, the Preamble to the Constitution: achieving national unity (a more perfect union), establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for the generations. According to the military (a more perfect union), establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for the generations. According to the military (a more perfect union), establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for the generations. According to the military (a more perfect union), establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for the generations.

The Enduring Gluttony of Defense Spending. The traditionalist fellow travelers of the national security community almost without exception consider defense spending to be at the very heart of our national security posture: the obvious pathway to restoring the deserved strategic advantage the United States supposedly has forsaken in recent years to others more focused and resolute than we.

It is widely recognized that we spend more on defense than the next nine nations combined; less well noted that our baseline defense budget exceeds the GDPs of all but some 18 countries. And that doesn't count other defense-related spending (like off-budget emergency contingency funding, veterans affairs, and nuclear stockpiles). Yet, we continue to thirst for more. Washington rarely acknowledges the other strategic priorities that must be sacrificed to accommodate such defense gluttony, or the distortions of the political process caused by politicians scared of being labeled weak on defense for favoring spending cutbacks.

Meanwhile, inexorable advances in weapon system sophistication, lethality, de-

Gregory Foster

structiveness, and cost continue unabated year after year.

The Canonization of Military Essence. To be accepted as a legitimate player in national security affairs, one must accept that militaries are what they always have been and, inarguably, always will be: warring machines whose primordial purpose is to wage organized violence — as massively, lethally, and destructively as possible — for political purposes against like-minded, comparably organized and equipped foes. (This, despite the fact that not all foes cooperate, as when they engage in the strategic jiu-jitsu of asymmetric, hybrid, gray zone, 4th-generation warfare.)

To Stephens, "The Pentagon is broken," but not just for the reasons he cites: waste, procurement failings, weapon system cost overruns. The real identity of the Pentagon's brokenness are institutional parochialism, rearview-mirror thinking, a persistent inability to any longer win wars (that, by the way, are inherently unwinnable), and unimaginative generals and admirals who are more bureaucrats and administrators than they are commanders and strategists.

Never do the alleged authorities among us give serious thought to the possibility that we could completely transform the rules of the game and alter the contours of the "global battle field" by deploying a reoriented military whose primary missions are non-warring (humanitarian assistance and disaster response, for example).

The Delusion of Military Autarky. Yet another persistent, near-universal tendency among traditionalists is to assume that our military must be self-contained and self-sufficient in all respects across the full range of circumstances it

conceivably could face.

The cardinal imperative for us, rhetoric to the contrary, has always been to prepare for unilateralism — going it alone — whenever possible; multilateralism — acting in concert with others — only when necessary.

Any thought that institutionalized multilateralism could ever be an essential end in itself, rather than a convenient, expedient means to national ends, has always been anathema. The result is that we and all the other countries we would normally align ourselves with maintain largely redundant militaries that cost appreciably more than if we seriously pursued a more fully integrated, non-duplicative posture.

The blinkered thinking behind this is that it's too risky to depend unreservedly on the unreliability of self-interested allies.

The Capabilities-Commitments Conundrum. Since historian Paul Kennedy sensitized us 35 years ago to the obligations and impacts of imperial overstretch, we and others have harbored lasting primal angst over so-called capabilities-commitments mismatches.

Obviously, we can either reduce our commitments to match our capabilities — and live with what Stephens considers the presumably catastrophic consequences — or expand our capabilities to match our commitments.

To the establishmentarians in our midst, there is only one possibility: expanding our capabilities, with all that implies about vastly increased spending, reengineered procurement processes, and unimpeded supply chains for the continued fielding of the most advanced weaponry.

Such thinking perpetuates the idealization that commitments and associated "requirements" dictate the capabilities we field.

The reality, as anyone with enough experience to be healthily jaded can



SCCI, Sarhad varsity ink MoU to develop academic and industrial linkages

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and the Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar, aiming to develop academic, industrial and social cooperation and linkages and carry out a joint research program.

The MoU was signed by SCCI president Muhammad Ishaq and Vice Chancellor of the Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar Prof Dr Saleem ur Rehman during a ceremony held here at the

chamber's house on Monday.

The chamber senior vice president Shahid Hussain, the university officials/senior faculty members Dr Wisal Khan, Engr Muzamil, secretary general of the chamber Sajjad Aziz and university media coordinator Bilal Akbar were present during the signing ceremony.

Terming the signing of MoU as a milestone initiative, Mr Ishaq disclosed that SCCI is going to launch a 2.0 program.

The SCCI chief claimed the 2.0 program is the first ever step in Pakistan which has been taken by this chamber, whose prime purpose is to enhance

capacity building of the business community while keeping in view modern requirements, provision of relief and incentives, initiatives for business/trade and industries improvement, etc.

Ishaq stressed the need for enhancement of capabilities and skills of the business community on mode lines, adding that the SCCI has undertaken pragmatic steps in this regard.

He viewed signing of MoU with Sarhad University as part of the efforts of SCCI under 2.0 vision/plan, hoping to reap the benefits of this mega program and provide its benefits to the business community.

Ishaq earlier explained

the main objectives of SCCI, its importance, role, and initiatives that had been taken for relief and welfare of the business community.

Saleem ur Rehman, VC of the university also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the purpose and objectives of the MoU.

Shahid Hussain called the MoU an important step toward enhancing industrial and academia linkages and expressed the hope that collaboration would be further strengthened with the university after this agreement.



KARACHI: Stockbroker monitoring latest share prices during a trading session at Pakistan Stock Exchange.

NCCPL introduces Whatsapp services

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In order to expand customer interaction channels/platforms and improve the overall user experience, National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL) has added another channel to communicate with customers that is user friendly and convenient. NCCPL WhatsApp Service has been deployed which will allow the customers to communicate with our Customer Services team interactively.

NCCPL, with WhatsApp service, hopes to facilitate customers by addressing their queries in a simplified manner and at their own convenience.

This will also allow customers to communicate with NCCPL from anywhere without any restrictions and have easy accessibility.

We hope that NCCPL's WhatsApp Service will improve the overall user experience with greater mobility and convenience.

Meher appointed as Chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Veteran industrialist Meher Kashif Younis, who is also the Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman, has been appointed as Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House to promote bilateral trade between the two Muslim states.

He is also the former senior Vice President LCCI, Vice President of Gold Ring Economic Forum, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The Kyrgyzstan Trade House was inaugurated by Ambassador Kyrgyzstan, Ulanbek Totuaev in the last week and was attended by top businessmen and leading industrialists representing different sectors.

Meher Kashif Younis said all-out efforts would be made to increase the volume of bilateral trade between the two countries and importers and exporters of either side will be fully encouraged to avail all possible opportunities and explore untapped potential with frequent exchange of visits of business communities.

He said various products of Kyrgyzstan will be displayed at the KTH to attract the business community and brief them on the scope of expanding the volume of trade. He said Ulanbek Totuaev, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan, had assured availability of KTH and the Kyrgyzstan embassy for facilitating the Pakistani traders to visit Kyrgyzstan.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 395 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 395.45 points, with a positive change of 0.98 percent, closing at 40,815.90 against 40,420.45 points on the previous day.

A total of 242,173,251 shares were traded during the day as compared to 284,512,885 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs7.278 billion against Rs7.960 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 334 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 211 of them recorded gains and 107 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 16 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Petroleum with 14,956,006 shares at Rs71.37 per share, Pak Refinery with 12,733,241 shares at Rs13.56 per share, and Hascol Petrol with 12,226,500 shares at Rs6.61 per share.

Safofi-Aventis witnessed a maximum increase of Rs42.00 per share price, closing at Rs1000, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum with a Rs20.12 rise in its per share price to Rs1567.08.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs1000 per share closing at Rs24,000.00, followed by Bata (Pak) with Rs157.29 decline to close at Rs2006.00.

Gold price up by Rs3,300 to Rs187,200 per

tola: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs3,300 on Monday and was sold all time high at Rs187,200 against its sale at Rs183,900, the last trading day.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat also increased by Rs2829 and was sold at Rs160,494 against Rs157,665; whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs147,119 against its sale at Rs144,526, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola increased by Rs30 to Rs2,100 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs25.71 to Rs1800.41.

The price of gold in the international market remained unchanged at \$1824, the association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activities reported at the Port on Sunday, where three ships namely, APL Barcelona, Leni and Al-Salam II carrying Containers, Wheat and Gas oil, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Grain & Fertilizer Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile five more ships, MSC Rania, Levantes, Mild Bloom, SC Falcon and Ocean Pioneer carrying Containers, Wheat

and Palm oil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hour.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, APL Barcelona and Orhan Gas left the Port on Monday morning, while two more ships, Josco Changzhou and Ardmore Chippewa are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

Cargo volume of 117,941 tonnes, comprising 73,668 tonnes imports

and 44,273 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,365 Containers (996 TEUs imports and 2,369 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 19 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 02 ships, High Sea and MSC Rania & another ship 'Maersk Boston' carrying Palm oil and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT and QICT on Monday.

Stocks edge higher as darker forecasts loom

NEW YORK (Reuters): World stocks inched higher, European bond yields dropped and the dollar held firm in light trading on Monday following warnings from the International Monetary Fund's managing director that a third of the world will fall into recession in 2023.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.04%, just short of an index of global shares, which climbed 0.21%.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index climbed 0.9%, retracing some of the nearly 12% it lost in 2022, bludgeoned by central banks' aggressive monetary policy tightening.

Traders were reluctant to trust early-year starts in stock and bond moves with many markets closed for a holiday and ahead of a host of economic numbers due this week.

Inflation data from Europe, minutes from the December US Federal Reserve meeting and US labour market numbers were some of the highlights that Danske Bank chief analyst Piet Haines Christiansen said would be worth watching.

"I would be cautious over interpreting any moves this morning," said Christiansen.

Markets in Australia, Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Singapore and the United States, were shut.

Christiansen expected the new year to kick off with a renewed focus on central banks and inflation. Traders would be vigilant for any signs of an approaching recession, he said.

Buoyant stock prices in Europe might be due, he said, to survey results published on Monday, which pointed towards a rebound in optimism among euro zone factory managers.

S&P Global's final manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) bounced to 47.8 in December from November's 47.1, matching a preliminary reading but below the 50 mark separating growth from contraction.

"Europe is taking the latest round of PMIs well enough, as the final readings help to confirm the view (hope?) that the worst may be over for the EU bloc's manufacturers, especially as energy prices recede to the levels of last February," Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, wrote in emailed comment.

Elsewhere, the dollar edged almost 0.1% higher against a basket of major currencies, while the pound and euro fell 0.4% and 0.3% respectively.

"There is an attempt by the dollar index to pull higher today but we do see that it is losing a good part of the strength it gained last year," said Ulrich Leuchtmann, head of forex research at Commerzbank.

"After the last Fed meeting, the market was not convinced that the Fed won't cut rates later in 2023. It's going to be an interesting year."

US Treasuries will resume trading on Tuesday after a public holiday on Monday.

German government bond yields on Monday tumbled from their highest levels in more than a decade amid more hawkish signals from the European Central Bank (ECB).

ECB President Christine Lagarde said euro zone wages were growing quicker than earlier thought, and the central bank must prevent this from adding to already-high inflation.

Germany's 10-year bond yield fell 13 bps to 2.43%, after hitting its highest since 2011 at 2.57% on Friday.

Oil markets were closed but prices in 2023 are set for small gains, as a darkening economic backdrop and COVID-19 flare-ups in China threaten demand growth and offset the impact of supply shortfalls caused by sanctions on Russia, a Reuters poll showed on Friday.

ICCI invites Pakistani diaspora to explore JVs and investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) are major trading partners of Pakistan and the country wants to further strengthen its trade and economic ties with these countries to achieve beneficial outcomes for its economy.

This was said by Acting President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Faad Waheed while addressing a delegation of Pakistani-origin politicians and the business community from the UK and USA that visited ICCI under the leadership of Imran Hussain, Member UK Parliament and Shadow Minister Employments.

Faad Waheed said that Pakistan-UK bilateral trade

is currently around £ 2.9 billion and Pakistan-USA bilateral trade is around US\$ 10.5 billion, which is still below its actual potential. More serious efforts are needed to further improve Pakistan's trade with UK and USA, he added.

He said that the Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA should play a more effective role in further enhancing the trade and investment relations of Pakistan with these important markets. He said that Pakistan is a huge market of over 220 million consumers with tremendous potential for joint ventures and investment in various sectors of its economy.

He invited the Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA to explore JVs and investment

in Pakistan and assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation to them in such efforts.

Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that Pakistan has good potential to export more products to UK and USA. He stressed upon regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation of Pakistan with the UK and USA.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that the Pakistani diaspora should consider investing in housing & construction, oil & gas exploration, infrastructure development, tourism, and other sectors in Pakistan.

He said that ICCI would provide its full cooperation

to connect them with the right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking at the occasion, Imran Hussain said that they all are friends of Pakistan and want to act as a bridge between Pakistan and UK.

He thanked ICCI for giving a warm reception to the delegation, and invited the ICCI delegation to visit the UK.

Lord Wajid Khan and Lord Qurban Hussain, Members of House of Lords UK, Yasmin Dar Deputy Mayor of Manchester, and others also spoke on the occasion and stressed that Pakistan should create a conducive environment for young Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA for investing in Pakistan.

CPI inflation recorded at 24.5 per cent in December

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was recorded at 24.5% on a year-on-year (YoY) basis in December 2022 as compared to the corresponding month of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Monday.

On a month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.5% in December 2022 as compared to an increase of 0.8% in the previous month (November).

The food commodities that witnessed an increase in prices on YoY basis included onions (463.5%), gram whole (61.24%), wheat (58.62%), tea (58.09%), eggs (57.78%), pulse gram (54.34%), besan (54.08%), rice (48.86%), pulse mash (44.33%), pulse moong (43.27%), chicken (41.35%), mustard oil (41.19%), dry fruits (39.84%), cooking oil (35.22%), cigarettes (34.96%), vegetable ghee (33.89%), milk fresh (29.75%), tomatoes (21.73%), meat (21.61%), fish (18.47%), potatoes

(15.34%), sugar (3.84%) and gur (0.33%).

The non-food commodities that witnessed an increase on a YoY basis included motor fuels (51.66%), transport services (51.17%), washing soaps, detergents and matchbox (37.90%), stationery (37.8%), solid fuel (37.66%), drugs and medicines (33.64%), construction input items (33.05%), motor vehicles accessories (29.60%), woolen ready-made garments (18.63%) and construction wage rates (11.85%).

The non-food commodities that witnessed a decrease in prices included electricity charges which went down by 2.69%.

Meanwhile, CPI inflation Urban increased to 21.6% on a year-on-year basis in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 21.6% in the previous month and 12.7% in Dec 2021. On a month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.3% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 0.4% in the previous month and an increase of 0.3% in Dec 2021.

Dec 2021.

CPI inflation Rural, increased to 28.8% on a year-on-year basis in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 27.2% in the previous month and 11.6% in Dec 2021. On a month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.7% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 1.3% in the previous month and a decrease of 0.5% in Dec 2021.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 27.8% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 27.1% a month earlier and an increase of 20.9% in Dec 2021. On a MoM basis, it increased by 0.2% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 6.1% a month earlier and a decrease of 0.4% in Dec 2021.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on a YoY basis increased to 27.1% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 27.7% a month earlier and an increase of 26.2% in Dec 2021. On MoM basis, it decreased by 0.7% in Dec 2022 with no change a

month earlier and a decrease of 0.2% in the corresponding month i.e. Dec 2021.

The core inflation, measured by non-food non-energy for urban areas increased to 14.7% on (YoY) basis in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 14.6% in the previous month and 8.3% in Dec 2021. On a (MoM) basis, it increased by 1.2% in Dec 2022 as compared to an increase of 0.8% in the previous month, and an increase of 1.1% in the corresponding month of last year i.e. December 2021.

The core inflation, measured by non-food non-energy for rural areas increased to 19.0% on a (YoY) basis in December 2022 as compared to an increase of 18.5% in the previous month and 8.9% in December 2021.

On (MoM) basis, it increased by 1.5% in December 2022 as compared to an increase of 2.1% in the previous month, and an increase of 1.1% in the corresponding month of last year i.e. Dec, 2021.

Govt disburses Rs224.5 billion under PSDP 2022-23 in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 224.5 billion out of a total allocation of Rs727 billion for various ongoing and new social sector uplift projects of the federal ministries and division in the first five months (July-November) of the fiscal year 2022-23 under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Out of the total authorized/dispensed amount, the total amount spent so far on the development projects during the corresponding period stood at Rs130.6 billion.

According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20% in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30% each in the second and third quarters, and the remaining 20% in the last quarter (April-June) of a

fiscal year.

The government also authorized/dispensed Rs100 billion for the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) out of which Rs 96.33 billion have been spent, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reform.

The detail shows that Rs 64.8 billion out of a total allocated amount of Rs 160.2 billion have been disbursed to corporations while Rs 159.6 billion have been disbursed to the federal ministries out of a total allocation of Rs 563.3 billion.

For National Highway Authority (NHA), the government has disbursed Rs 30.2 billion out of a total allocation of Rs 117.2 billion, whereas for NTDC/PEPCO, the government has disbursed Rs 34.69 billion.

The federal government has also disbursed/authorized Rs 87 billion out of a

total allocation of Rs 87 billion for various development projects of the cabinet division, however, only Rs 11 billion have been spent on the development projects of the cabinet division so far.

Similarly, the data shows that Rs 495 million has been disbursed to Aviation Division, and Rs 161.5 million have been disbursed to the Board of the Investment.

The government also authorized the utilization of Rs 1.9 billion for Climate Change Division out of which only Rs 58 million have been spent during the period under review.

For Higher Education Commission (HEC), the government has authorized the release of Rs 7.78 billion, Rs 25.2 billion for provinces and special areas, Rs 435 million for Commerce Division, Rs 36 million for Communication Division (other than NHA), and Rs 445 million for Defense Division.

Likewise, the government also disbursed Rs 286 million to Finance Division, Rs 355.85 million to Establishment Division, Rs 1.4 billion to Federal Education and Professional Training Division, and Rs 4.3 billion to Housing and Works Division.

UBG demands impartial election of FPCCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Business Group (UBG) in the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Monday urged to hold free, fair and transparent election of FPCCI for the year 2023-24.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Hafeez Baig, UBG Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik, said the all office bearers of FPCCI including President Irfan Iqbal She-

kh, Senior Vice President and Vice Presidents ceased to hold office on Jan 1, 2023 as their term expires on December 31 last.

He said according to the amendment bill passed by National Assembly last month, the two years tenure of the FPCCI will commence from 2023 and not from 2022.

He said now FPCCI is without any lawful elected body and demanded in the larger interests of the busi-

ness community for holding transparent elections strictly in accordance with the law.

He said UBG leadership always firmly believed in rule of law, supremacy of the constitution and promotion of democratic norms.

He said UBG will never allow someone to usurp the rights of the industrialists and traders at any cost and will safeguard their interests at the power of corridors.



In brief

200 to participate in cycle race on Jan 8

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar has said that the message of healthy living trends will be spread by promoting sports activities among youth. In this regard, a cycle race will be organized from Dera Bukha to Farid Gate on January 8, in which 200 professional cyclists will participate. He said that promoting bicycle riding in normal life will reduce environmental pollution, save fuel, reduce inflation and promote healthy trends. These views were expressed by Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar along with Deputy Commissioner Zahid Parvez Waraich while talking to media representatives in the committee room of his office today. Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar said that students should prefer cycling. "This will also reduce accidents and less use of motor vehicles will not only save fuel but also increase national foreign exchange", he added. He said that the participants of the cycle race will also be given prizes.

Update on Afridi and Haris Rauf

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi will resume his rehabilitation under the national men's team's medical staff in Karachi from today. While providing Shaheen top-notch care, this move will allow the medical staff to track his progression and pave way for his smooth return to action. Meanwhile, the interim selection committee and team management have invited right-arm fast bowler Haris Rauf to be assessed by the team's medical staff so a decision on his availability for the three One-Day Internationals against New Zealand - to be played next week - can be made.

Djokovic welcomed back to Australia

ADELAIDE (Agencies): Novak Djokovic received a positive welcome back to Australia as he made a rare doubles appearance at the Adelaide International. The Serbian was deported prior to the 2022 Australian Open because of his Covid-19 vaccination status. Djokovic's three-year visa ban was overturned in November, allowing him to enter the country. He and Canada's Vasek Pospisil were beaten 4-6 6-3 10-5 by Tomislav Brkic and Gonzalo Escobar on his return. The 21-time Grand Slam champion enjoyed overwhelming support from the crowd throughout the match, greeted by cheers and chants of "Novak, Novak" as he made his way on to court. The 35-year-old, currently ranked world number five, stayed behind after the defeat to sign autographs and take photographs with fans. He is top seed in the singles in Adelaide and will face Frenchman Constant Lestienne in the first round on Tuesday as he continues his build-up to the Australian Open, the first major of the season, which starts on 16 January. Djokovic is a nine-time champion in Melbourne and is just one Grand Slam title shy of Rafael Nadal's men's record of 22. Elsewhere in the Adelaide men's singles on Monday, British number three Jack Draper beat South Korea's Kwon Soonwoo 6-2 6-1 to progress to the second round. Australian qualifier Alexei Popyrin stunned Canada's second seed and world number six Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4 7-6 (7-5) while world number 11 Holger Rune, of Denmark, also suffered an early exit at the hands of Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka, who won 2-6 6-4 6-4.



KARACHI: New Zealand's Devon Conway, center, celebrates after scoring 100 runs during the first day of the second test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand.

Pakistan bounces back after Conway hits century in 2nd test

KARACHI (AP): New Zealand slipped against Pakistan allrounder Agha Salman's offspin in the final session after Devon Conway hit his fourth test hundred on the opening day of the second test on Monday. New Zealand was cruising along at 234-1 on the back of Conway's 122 off 191 balls before Salman picked up 3-55 and the Black Caps finished the day at 309-6. Tom Blundell was not out on 30 while Ish Sodhi, who made a career-best 65 in the drawn first test, was unbeaten on 11. Conway put on two solid century stands with Tom Latham (71) and Kane Williamson (36) in a dominating first two sessions for the Black Caps after Tim Southee won the toss and elected to bat before losing five wickets for 45 runs after tea. "The surface (pitch) certainly got a little bit drier which offered a little bit more spin for the turners," Conway said. "The game is certainly evenly poised, we did win those first two sessions, but the way Pakistan have bounced back in that last session certainly brought them back in the game." Salman pegged back New Zealand with the old ball on a wicket that had some grass and tempted Pakistan to go with three fast bowlers — Mir Hamza, recalled Hasan Ali and fit-again Naseem Shah — and just one specialist spinner Abrar Ahmed. "I knew there could be a responsibility on me as a second spinner for which I was ready," Salman said. "The wicket had a bite (for spinners) after tea as it got dried up and it troubled them." Salman ignited the collapse when he found the outside edge of Conway's

bat that ended his 100-run stand with Williamson. The offspinner, who bowled 12-over spell after tea, hit back the off stump of Daryl Mitchell (3) with his turning delivery before successfully overturning a caught behind decision through TV referral against Henry Nicholls (26). Earlier, Conway and Latham contributed a second successive century opening stand in the two-match series before Naseem Shah (2-44) brought the lone success in the first two sessions when he had Latham trapped leg before wicket of a full delivery after lunch but New Zealand added further 107 runs in the post-lunch session. Naseem was rewarded for his reverse swing when he also found the outside edge of Williamson's bat and was brilliantly snapped by diving Sarfaraz Ahmed in front of first slip soon after Salman had dismissed Conway. Both lefthanders Conway and Latham dominated the pace and spin in the first session to produce 119 runs and even showed aggression against Abrar's mystery spin after captain Babar Azam turned to his ace spinner as early as in the ninth over. Left-arm fast bowler Hamza twice came close to gaining a breakthrough in his return spell before lunch, but first Latham successfully overturned onfield umpire Alex Wharf's lbw ruling and then Pakistan went for an unsuccessful leg before wicket TV referral against Conway before he also completed a half century. Hasan Ali, playing his first test since July, twice found the edges of Conway's bat in successive overs after lunch only to

see the ball fall short of Abdullah Shafique in the slips and then Saud Shakeel couldn't hold onto a sharp chance in gully while diving full length to his right when the lefthander was 11 shy of his hundred. Conway completed his century off 156 balls with 13 fours and a six with a flick of Hamza to midwicket and ran three while Williamson also kept the bowlers at bay with his determined batting before Salman struck after tea. "Personally, it's been a good ride so far when you have played a handful of test games," Conway said after completing his fourth hundred in only his 12th test match. "It's just nice to get an opportunity to play and contribute for the team." Both Conway and Latham batters motored New Zealand to 63 inside the first hour and batted aggressively against fast bowlers Naseem Shah and Hasan Ali, who made comebacks to test cricket. Conway raised New Zealand's half century with a six against the mystery spinner Ahmed over wide mid-on as Pakistan struggled to get through the defenses. New Zealand, on its first test tour to Pakistan since 2002, had made a strong bid to chase down 138 in the last hour of the first test of the two-match series last Friday after Pakistan captain Babar Azam made a daring declaration. Poor visibility halted the Black Caps at 61-1 in the eighth over to draw the game. The Pakistan Cricket Board was forced to organize both test matches in Karachi due to weather concerns in Multan, where winter smog and fog have delayed flights and may have disrupted hours of play.

DIG Amanullah Memorial KP Tennis C'ship begins

PESHAWAR (APP): The 9th DIG Amanullah Memorial KP Tennis Championship got underway at the Synthetic Tennis Courts of the Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar with Senior Vice President and known cardiac surgeon Dr. Farhat Abbas formally inaugurated. Secretary KP Tennis Association Umar Ayaz Khalil, Pakistan No.1 Aqeel Khan, Tennis Coaches Shehryar Khan, Roman Gul, Nauman Khan, Zakirullah were present. In the Tennis Championship, boys U10, U14, U18, Men's single and doubles competitions will be held for which Rs. 200,000 cash prize has been allocated. Pakistan Police, Pakistan Air Force, SNGPL and other players of the province are participating. In the opening day matches, Abdullah Khan of KP defeated Uzair Khan, seeded number 8, by 6-2, 6-3 in the Men singles. In the second match, Hussam Khan defeated Muaz Khan by 6-2 6-1. Hayat defeated Shaun Mehmood by 6-1 and 6-1. SNGPL's Saqib Hayat defeated KP's Gibran Ullah 6-2 and 6-2 to reach the next round. Speaking to the media on this occasion, Senior Vice President Prof. Dr. Farhat Abbas said that the entry of the players has been made subject to Form B so that there is no room for unfair means rather should follow merit only. Pakistan's top-seeded players including Pakistan No. 1 Aqeel Khan, Pakistan No. 2 Shoaib Khan and Pakistan No. 5 Yousaf Khalil, top national ranking player Barkatullah and Pakistan No. 10 Saqib Umar, Hamza Roman, Hamid Israr, Muhammad Shayyan, Faizan, Salar Khan and Ryan Umar are taking part.

Nadal loses again at United Cup in Sydney

SYDNEY (AP): Rafael Nadal lost again at the United Cup mixed teams tournament, chalking up Monday's defeat to Alex De Minaur to rustiness. The second-ranked Nadal lost to the Australian 3-6 6-1 7-5 after having been beaten by Britain's Cameron Norrie in three sets. The record 22-time Grand Slam champion said he needs more matches like Monday's to be ready for his Australian Open title defense. "I need hours on court. I need battles like this. I didn't play much official matches the last six months, almost seven," said the 36-year-old Spaniard, who battled foot, rib and abdomen injuries last year. "I have two weeks before the Australian Open starts. I can't say that the situation is ideal but, at the same time, I can't say that it's very negative, because for moments I was playing good." Both teams went into



the match knowing they couldn't advance after losing to Britain, which will face the United States in the knockout stage on Wednesday for a spot in the semifinals. The US ensured it will top Group C by opening up a 2-0 lead over Germany, with Madison Keys beating Jule Niemeier after Taylor Fritz defeated Alexander Zverev. Taylor Fritz took advantage of a dominant serve to beat Zverev 6-1, 6-4. Keys extended the United States' lead to 2-0 with a 6-2, 6-3 win over

Niemeier. Keys' power and pinpoint serving proved too much for the 23-year-old German. "I just tried to make as many first serves as possible to make things as easy as a tennis match could be," Keys said. In Brisbane, top-ranked Iga Swiatek beat Belinda Bencic 6-3 7-6 (3) to give Poland an early advantage against Switzerland in a winner-take-all tie. Stefanos Tsitsipas beat David Goffin 6-3 6-2 to pull Greece level at 1-1 against Belgium while Italy leads Norway 2-0.

PM Youth Talent Women Hockey Training Camp begins in Charsadda

PESHAWAR (APP): The two-day Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Program Girls' Hockey training and coaching camp started here at Astro-Turf of the Abdul Wali sports Complex, Charsadda. A total of 125 selected female athletes from Hazara, Malakand, Mardan, Bannu and Peshawar divisions turned up for the camp inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner Charsadda Hamza Zahoor. Adviser to the Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif on Sports, Youth, Culture and Political Affairs for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engr. Amir Muqam, Directorate General Sports Higher Education Commission (HEC), Directorate Sports Shaheed Khyber Bhutto, Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU)

Professor Dr Shafia Ahmad, Deputy Director Sports SBBWU Mariyyah Samin, DSO Tahseenullah Khan, Assistant Nouseen, Salma Faiz, hockey coaches and trainers, and other personalities were also present at the event. Qualified coaches are training the hockey players, who were selected in the first phase under the programme at the regional level from Bannu, Peshawar, Swat, Mardan, Hazara and Charsadda. The 125 selected players would represent their respective regions first at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the Hockey League and later out of 125, the best 36 would advance to the National League to be played at National Hockey Stadium Karachi this month. Talking to the media, Coordinator for Women Hockey, Mariyyah Samin

said that all arrangements had been made and the women hockey players were accommodated in Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex Hostel. She said after the camp, League Hockey would be organised among all five teams, from which the best players would be selected for the National Hockey League. The two national selectors from Karachi and Lahore were also coming to select 36 for the 18-member teams who would represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National Hockey League, she added. Mariyyah highlighted that the best teams from different zones were participating in the National League with the aim to prepare the best hockey teams of Pakistan who will represent the country not only at the national but also at the international level in the future.

Messi, Neymar less PSG suffer first loss of season

PARIS (INP): Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), without World Cup winner Lionel Messi and Neymar, lost for the first time in any competition since March 20 last year when they were defeated 3-1 at Lens. "Lens deserved their win," said PSG coach Christophe Galtier. Lois Openda scored one and set up another as Lens, who have only lost once in Ligue 1 this season, closed the gap on PSG at the top to four points after 17 rounds. "We are happy to be four points behind," said Lens coach Franck Haise. "This victory proves that we can beat anyone in this championship." PSG's last loss was more than nine months ago when they fell 3-0 at Monaco in Ligue 1, although that still left them 12 points clear at the top of the table. On Sunday at Lens, PSG were without Messi and suspended Brazilian Neymar, but Kylian Mbappe, the Golden Boot winner in Qatar, received a rousing welcome from the Lens fans as he warmed up. Galtier said he hoped French fans would give Messi a similar reception. "He's going to join us on January 3, in 48 hours," said Galtier. "I hope Leo will be well received. He won the most beautiful trophy by being very good. We know he's a great and decisive player so we hope he'll be well received obviously." "Kylian worked hard," said Galtier. "He showed a very good attitude." "Leo and



"Ney' were not there but that is no excuse," said Lens coach Franck Haise. "This victory proves that we can beat anyone in this championship." PSG's last loss was more than nine months ago when they fell 3-0 at Monaco in Ligue 1, although that still left them 12 points clear at the top of the table. On Sunday at Lens, PSG were without Messi and suspended Brazilian Neymar, but Kylian Mbappe, the Golden Boot winner in Qatar, received a rousing welcome from the Lens fans as he warmed up. Galtier said he hoped French fans would give Messi a similar reception. "He's going to join us on January 3, in 48 hours," said Galtier. "I hope Leo will be well received. He won the most beautiful trophy by being very good. We know he's a great and decisive player so we hope he'll be well received obviously." "Kylian worked hard," said Galtier. "He showed a very good attitude." "Leo and

mally takes the holiday season off but with matches to make up following the World Cup, it played one round immediately after Christmas and another on Sunday and Monday. They have dubbed the games 'Celebration Week', in English, as a nod to the English tradition of Boxing Day games, but many fans are suspicious or hostile. Among protest banners unfurled by fans in an almost empty stand at Nantes, where the home team beat Auxerre 1-0, was one that complained that the league and broadcasters were "killing" them. In Monaco, Aleksandr Golovin smashed in the only goal from outside the penalty area as the home team did just enough to beat Brest 1-0 and tighten their grip on fourth place. Angers remain anchored to the bottom after suffering a ninth straight loss, falling 2-1 to visiting Lorient who broke their own run of six games without a victory.

Central Punjab win Pakistan Cup

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Central Punjab defeated Balochistan by 50 runs to win the Pakistan Cup 2022-23 title at the State Bank Sports Complex on Monday. Defending 255, Central Punjab fought back to claim the last five Balochistan wickets for 55 runs to dismiss the defending champions for 204 in 42.3 overs. Fast bowler Ali Shafique destroyed Balochistan's middle-order by dismissing Abdul Wahid Bangalzai (4), Asad Shafiq (0) and Haris Sohail (8) to finish with impressive figures of 7-2-17-3. Ali was well supported by fellow fast bowler Mohammad Ali, who came back strongly in his final spell to claim the wickets of Bismillah Khan and Yasir Shah to end with figures of two for 31. Left-arm spinner Zafar Gohar snapped up the wickets of Imran Butt (30) and Amad Butt (seven) to end with two for 32. Bismillah Khan fought a lone battle for Balochistan and finished as the top-scorer with 70 from 77 balls. His innings was studied with eight fours. Together with Mohammad Junaid (27), Bismillah put on 65 runs for the sixth wicket after Balochistan had slipped from 60 for no loss to 84 for five. Earlier, batting first after



winning the toss, Central Punjab failed to fully capitalise on a 61-run first wicket partnership between Ahmed Shehzad and Mohammad Faizan to be dismissed for 254 in 48.2 overs, including losing their last eight wickets for 109 runs. Left-arm spinner Mohammad Junaid was the wrecker-in-chief of Central Punjab's batting when he picked up the wickets of Ahmed Shehzad, Qasim Akram, Zafar Gohar, Usama Mir and Mohammad Ali to finish with impressive figures of 10-0-56-5. Faizan scored 37 runs from 33 balls with three fours and two sixes before falling to Kashif Bhatti, who added the scalp of Junaid Ali (one) to finish with figures of two for 36. At 65 for two in 13.1 overs, Ahmed Shehzad was joined by top-scorer Tayyab Tahir and put on 80 runs for the third wicket before Junaid dismissed Ahmed

Sindh won the National T20 and Northern won the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, while Central Punjab swept the CA T20, CA C'ship and CA Challenge tournament. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won the National U19 Cup, while Sindh won the National U19 Championship. **Scores in brief:** Central Punjab beat Balochistan by 50 runs, State Bank Sports Complex. Central Punjab 254 all-out, 48.2 overs (Tayyab Tahir 71, Ahmed Shehzad 61, Mohammad Faizan 37, Aamer Yamin 34, Zafar Gohar 30; Mohammad Junaid 5-56; Kashif Bhatti 2-36). Balochistan 204 all-out, 42.3 overs (Bismillah Khan 70, Imran Butt 30, Haseebullah 27, Mohammad Junaid 27; Ali Shafique 3-17, Mohammad Ali 2-31, Zafar Gohar 2-32). Player of the final - Tayyab Tahir (Central Punjab) Player of the Pakistan Cup: Amad Butt (Balochistan); 365 runs and 19 wickets. Best Batter of the Pakistan Cup: Tayyab Tahir (Central Punjab); 573 Runs. Best Bowler of the Pakistan Cup: Usama Mir (Central Punjab); 28 wickets. Best Wicketkeeper of the Pakistan Cup: Haseebullah (Balochistan); 551 Runs, 10 dismissals (eight catches and 2 stumps).



In brief

HEC halts admissions in Isra University

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has warned the students across the country not to take admissions in Isra University. "In order to protect the future of students, admissions in all disciplines in Isra University have been stopped from Fall 2022" the HEC official warned the students across the country. This will include all admissions including medical colleges, in the principal seat in Hyderabad as well as Karachi and Islamabad till the resolution of the ongoing crisis.

IRSA releases 22,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 22,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 36,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1491.71 feet and was 93.71 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 16,500 cusecs while outflow as 5,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jehlum at Mangla Dam was 1118.55 feet, which was 68.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,300 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 11,100, 16,100, 12,400 and 500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 5,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to the IESCO spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Islamabad Circle G-6/3, Supermarket, Iqbal Town, Chara, CDA Office, Sharifabad, Khanna East, F-8 Markaz, G-9 Express, I-8/2, I-10/2, Golra-2, Kalingar, Bhara Kahu, Company Bagh, Barian, Patriari, Upper Topa, Peer Sohawah, Rehara, A.Q.Khan, NIH, Mahfouz Shaheed, Club-1 Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle E-Block, Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Kuri Road, Al Noor Colony, Farooq Azam, Dhok Hekmad, City, Major Masood, Jama Masjid, Gwalmandi, Industrial, Gulzar Shaheed, Bani, Azizabad, Radio Pak, Golra, MFM, Chakra, Lakho Road, Mohanpura, Charing Cross, Misrial Road Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Kashmir Road, Adam ji Road, Chaklala, Jail Park-1, Humak, Gulistan Colony, Lalazar, Kalyal, Gulshan Fatima, Shah Jeevan, Cantt, Chowk Pandori, Lahtrar 1, SEP Abrar, Ghazan Khan, Mandra-2, Bisali, Bhangali, Nishan-e-Haider, Chack Baily Khan-2 Feeders, Attock Circle, Nawaz Shaheed, Ghori, Haru, Beirut, Bin Bholi, Shahullah Dutta, Sarai Kharboza, Shaiya, Munirabad, AWC Housing, Rashid Minhas, Burhan, Ghor Ghishti, Shamsabad, Bolani, Kamra Rural, Bagh Nelap, Darya Shar F, Muslim Town, Malho Wali, Mianwala, Qutbal, Chhab, Kamdial, Ahmedal, Gul Muhammad, Khanda Feeders, Jehlum Circle, F-7 Kachhari.



ISLAMABAD: A young boy and girl on the way while carrying wheat flour bags on their head after purchasing on subsidized rate at Lehrtar Road.

Govt distributes Rs 250m in flood-affected polio workers: Patel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Health Services, Abdul Qadir Patel on Monday said that an amount of Rs 250 million has been given to frontline polio workers affected by the floods across the country. During a meeting at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), the minister handed over cheques for polio workers affected by the floods. He gave cheques to the Coordinators of the Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) in Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. In Sindh, the process has been completed by supporting frontline workers with financial assistance in 22 affected districts of the province. "On this first working day of the year, I want to thank polio workers across the country for their services to the chil-

dren of Pakistan and reiterate the government's commitment to ending transmission of polio in 2023," the minister said in his briefing to EOC staff. The Pakistan Polio Programme conducted a comprehensive assessment of the damages that polio workers suffered this summer when unprecedented rains and flooding affected 33 million people. The financial support is for workers whose homes were either washed away in the floods or partially damaged. Nearly 12,500 polio health workers were affected by the floods, according to the programme's assessment. "Polio workers, as always, have served Pakistan above and beyond their call of duty and we must ensure that affected families receive this assistance as soon as possible. The winters are upon

us, and it is crucial to support them in rebuilding their homes," Minister for National Health Services, Abdul Qadir Patel said. "Our first priority are always frontline workers. Despite suffering through the climate catastrophe, polio staff were at the forefront delivering essential healthcare through health camps. This reflects their exceptional commitment," NEOC Coordinator Dr. Shahzad Baig said. Minister for National Health Services, Abdul Qadir Patel added that polio workers being prioritized by the government as part of rehabilitation activities is very important to the programme and also for the motivation of workers on the frontline. In total, Rs250 million will be given to frontline polio workers affected by the floods around the country.

CDA to solarise buildings and civic facilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to install solar systems at all of its buildings and offices as a part of energy conservation efforts. The Capital Development Authority Chairman Captain (r) Muhammad Usman Younis has chaired a meeting to finalize the plan to convert all the

building housing offices of the civic body. It was also decided all streetlights of all the roads being constructed based on the government-to-government formula would also be converted to solar energy as a part of the pilot project. The meeting also decided to operationalize the solar project in Sector F-9 and follow the same formula in other parks

and recreational facilities. The solarisation of all the Capital Development Authority buildings and other civic facilities along with a saving budget would also help in energy conservation. The meeting was attended by Capital Development Authority Members of Planning, Engineering and Environment and other senior officials.

Gender equality is a central component to development: Turi

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi has said that the preamble of the constitution of Pakistan supports democratic principles and guarantees equal rights of all citizens as gender equality is a central component to development. He said empowering women and providing them with equal rights and opportunities is the manifesto of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) which we are implementing under the visionary leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He said this while addressing the toolkit and certificate awarding ceremony to women graduates in Peshawar on Monday, in which he distributed certificates and toolkits to women who successfully completed vocational training. According to a press release, the 45-day training was organized in collaboration with Overseas Pakistanis Foundation and GIZ. Senator Rubina Khalid and other political and social personalities also participated in the certificate distribution ceremony and addressed the ceremony. The Minister appreciated the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and GIZ for conducting employable skill training for women. Addressing the event, Sajid Hussain Turi said that he was happy to see that in less than two months, dozens of women were trained and provided with toolkits to lead a professional life and economically independent. He said Pakistan People's Party firmly believes in gender equality which can only be achieved if women and men are given equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all spheres of life. Sajid Turi said that Shaheed Ms Benazir

Bhutto is the first woman Prime Minister of the world of Islam who is a role model for all women of Pakistan. He said the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development will extend the training sessions and programs to all provinces and districts of Pakistan with the support of GIZ, Provincial TEVTA and NAVTTC. The Minister said the government has set a target of manpower export of one million for the current year, adding that to tap new markets for manpower export, he had visited many countries including Romania, Portugal and Greece who had shown interest in importing manpower from Pakistan. He said this month he will be visiting Middle East, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to explore employment opportunities for Pakistani youth. He said Malta, Poland, Hungary, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq had shown great interest to import manpower from Pakistan and MoUs were being signed with many of these countries in this regard. The Minister said Pakistani youth should avoid illegal immigration as such activity are not only dangerous but also bringing bad name to the country. The Minister, meanwhile, paid a surprise visit to Protectorate of Emigrants Peshawar where he met the leading Overseas Employment Promoters and heard their problems. He said all their problems shall be resolved and in case of any complaint they should directly contact him. He directed the officials that all those seeking immigration shall be fully facilitated and zero tolerance be shown for those involved in corrupt practices.

ANF seizes over 46 kg drugs; arrests two

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan during four counter-narcotics operations seized over 46 kg of illicit drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He said in an operation at Lahore International Airport Cargo, ANF recovered 7.8 kg of heroin from a parcel booked for England. In another operation at Faisalabad Airport, ANF recovered 60 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger, a resident of Sargodha, going on flight no G-9563. In a joint operation conducted in Khyber, ANF and FC recovered over 37 kg charras while two kg charras was confiscated in Sukkur and arrested the accused who is a resident of Sukkur. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations and further investigations are underway.

NHMP intensifying safety measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) have been active to enhance the safety of two-wheelers and sensitizing stakeholders about the proper use of rear mirrors and helmets. Talking to APP here on Monday, spokesman of NHMP Asad Shabbir said that two-wheelers were violating the rules on highways causing loss of property and lives. To address this issue a letter was written to the engineering board for sensitizing the motorcycle manufacturers regarding the adoption of security measurements as per law, he informed. He said NHMP gave safety briefings to the motorcyclists about the importance of helmets and gave away complimentary helmets. Asad said a vigorous campaign #nomore was launched as per the directions of the Inspector General of NHMP Khalid Mahmood, in order to create awareness among two-wheeler riders about the traffic rules. He informed that all officials were directed to ensure the implementation of traffic rules and regulations irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience and politeness while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users.

President expresses condolences with families of Shuhada

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday phoned the bereaved families of Shaheed personnel of Pakistan army who embraced shahadat in different incidents. The president, during his conversation, said that sacrifices of Shuhada to eliminate terrorism from the motherland would be remembered forever. He paid tribute to Shuhada, expressed sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for them to bear the losses with fortitude. The president contacted father of Shaheed Sepoy Muhammad Wasim who embraced martyrdom in Janikhel area of Bannu on December 31. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. His father expressed the resolve

that he had three sons who were ready to sacrifice themselves for the motherland. The president lauded the sacrifice of Shaheed sepoy and the patriotism of his father. The president also contacted Muhammad Ashraf, brother of Shaheed Sobedar Shujja Hussain, who laid down his life in Kurram district on December 29. Muhammad Ashraf apprised the president that his mother was proud of his son's sacrifice. Separately, the president also phoned Gohar Yaseen, brother of Shaheed Abdur Rehman who told him that they were ready to sacrifice their lives for Pakistan. The president also expressed his condolence with the uncle of Shaheed Naik Muhammad Ramzan.

Religious affairs minister's statement being twisted for point-scoring: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday said the statement of Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufi Abdul Shakoor on minorities fund was being twisted for point-scoring by a segment of the society which was totally unfair. He, in an exclusive talk with APP, endorsed the statement of Mufi Abdul Shakoor and said there was a fund established in the ministry by the previous governments to help the minority communities particularly at the time of their religious festivals.

"There is no bar at helping the minority communities as they are bona fide citizens of the state and their rights are equally enshrined in the Constitution," said Ashrafi who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council. He said the Constitution was made by great religious leaders and scholars including Shah Ahmed Noorani, Maulana Mufi Mehmood, Maulana Ghulam Ghous Hazarvi, Maulana Abdul Haq and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed and so on. He said as per law and the Constitution, the minority communities must be given their due rights and that was why; they were getting so under the vision-

ary and dynamic leadership of incumbent government. Ashrafi said the question should be to provide funds to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for the construction and other affairs of mosques adding that the ministry also organized the International Seerat-un-Nabi Conference on 11th and 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal and bore its huge expenses annually. On the controversy of wishing the birthday of Prophet Hazrat Isa Alahai Salam, he made it clear that Hazrat Isa Alahai Salam was also our prophet and his prestige and dignity was equally significant as rest of the 'Messengers of God' as per Islamic faith.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health officials on Monday said that 12 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last 24 hours across the country. As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio is 0.39 percent while 11 patients were in critical condition. No death was reported from the Coronavirus in the last 24 hours while 3,062 Covid-19 tests were conducted. Around 195 tests were conducted in Islamabad with four confirmed cases at ratio of 2.05% while 771 cases reported in Lahore with six confirmed cases at ratio of 0.78%. Meanwhile, Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said that the government has strengthened the role

of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19. The minister said that there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. He said that there will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports. He said that the situation was completely under control and asked the general public to avoid listening to rumors. He added that the Corona case passivity ratio was just 0.3 to 0.5 in the country while 90 percent of the country's population already got the COVID-19 vaccine. "An efficient system with a proper management team is fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and is ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19," the minister added.

NUST honours its top-performing researchers, innovators

ISLAMABAD (PPI) National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) honoured its top-performing researchers and innovators at the Research and Innovation Excellence Awards ceremony held here. The ceremony was held in recognition of the commitment of faculty members excelling in research and innovation, Rector NUST Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari conferred cash prizes and certificates to as many as 53 awardees for the years 2020 and 2021 for winning Best

Researcher, Best Innovator and Top Performer awards. In his address, Rector NUST emphasized that the faculty members are an integral part of the university, and who are continuously contributing towards achieving research and academic excellence, which is reflected in international rankings and increased national and international collaborations. He urged the faculty members to keep up with the fast-changing requirements of academia as well as inculcate civic and moral

values in the students. Earlier in his welcome remarks, Pro-Rector RIC-NUST Dr Rizwan Riaz appreciated the contributions of NUST researchers in uplifting NUST to its current standing. He maintained that NUST takes pride in its high achievers and acknowledges their meritorious accomplishments. He further said that our faculty has helped us grow the NUST ecosystem to heights unparalleled in Pakistan; an ecosystem that is now internationally recognised.



ISLAMABAD: Teachers giving training to blind students "how to use white stick" during a two-week training classes at National Mobility and Independence Training Centre in which blind people from different cities participated on the eve of Braille World Day.

145 criminals arrested

NANGARHAR (Agencies): Police officers arrested 145 people in connection to various criminal cases in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, officials said. The Ministry of Interior in a statement said that these people were arrested in the last one month in Nangarhar. Local security officials said, that 135 people were arrested in connection to criminal offenses and a number of others were arrested in connection with other crimes.

24 people suffered casualties

LAGHMAN (Agencies): Traffic officials on Monday said that 24 people were killed or injured in multiple car accidents in Laghman province of Afghanistan. Mawlawi Habibullah Mubariz, Traffic Department head of Laghman province of Afghanistan said that the three people were killed and 21 injured in four car accidents in different parts of the province. The injured were taken to hospitals for treatment, he added.

Kabir: IEA invites all Afghans living abroad to return home



KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with head of National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan (NSMA) said that the Islamic Emirate invites all Afghans living abroad to return to the country. According to the Arg's statement, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, met with Habibullah Khalid Ghafari, an Afghan doctor living in London and the head of National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan (NSMA). Ghafari said that they are working abroad with the help and cooperation of other Afghan experts to improve the human condition of Afghans and address their health concerns. He said that a large number of Afghans living outside the United States have demanded that the bank funds of Afghans be freed, humanitarian aid should be increased with Afghans, and efforts should be made for positive interaction with the Islamic Emirate. "We want a major hospital to reduce the health problems of Afghans and build a standard in Kabul, Ghafari added. For his part, Kabir said that helping Afghans, reducing their problems and bringing the voice of Afghans to the world is the common responsibility of Afghans living abroad. The IEA invites all Afghans living abroad to return to the country, to help their compatriots and serve their nation, Kabir added in the end.

18 tons of outdated foods disposed

HERAT (Agencies): Public Health officials of Herat Department says that they have collected and torched 18 tons of outdated food. These materials have been collected from companies and some shops in the city for a year, and burned Monday in that province, says Herat Public Health officials. These materials were collected by health staff from the stores since the beginning of the year, which includes fifty types of food that do not have the expiration date or production standards, said Dr. Mohammad Asif Kabir a public health official of the province. According to Dr. Kabir, the department of Public Health is committed to monitoring all food products and if there is a violation in the sale of food or expired medicine, legal action will be taken against the violators. He asks citizens to cooperate in collecting the materials of outdated with the department of Public Health. Medics say that the use of materials from the past can cause diseases such as stomach, digestive problems, liver, kidney problems, damage to the digestive system and blood in the body.

Agreement signed to extend import of power



KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Energy and Water has signed an agreement with Uzbekistan to extend the import of electricity to Afghanistan for another year, hoping to end power cuts in the capital city, Kabul. Abdul Latif Mansour, the acting minister of energy and water, who traveled to Uzbekistan this week, said the lack of electricity in Kabul and some other provinces is due to technical issues in power plants in Uzbekistan. "We signed and extended the agreement for the import of electricity in 2023," said Mansour said. He called on people to pay attention to saving electricity. "Turning on additional lights and using heaters can put pressure on electricity. It is better if there are energy conservation measures," said the acting minister of Water and Energy. Residents of Kabul and other provinces said they are facing major power blackouts in the last two months, adding that the problem needs to be solved. "Power outages are at the level that electricity is supplied for us for two hours a day," said Hamid Qasim, a Kabul resident. "Power is necessary for the people and for factories. Factories will stop if there is no electricity for them," said Mujtaba, a Kabul resident. Uzbekistan will provide 450 megawatts of electricity to Afghanistan during winter. According to the country's power distributor, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, the pact for Uzbekistan's imported electricity signed in 2022 included the import of 2 billion kilowatts of power for \$100 million.

Islamic University's land partially usurped in Nangarhar

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): The yet-to-be built International Islamic University's land has been partially usurped by local residents who have constructed houses on it in the Rodat district of eastern Nangarhar province. Local officials also admit some part of the university's land has been occupied by residents, but say they have started efforts to reclaim the land. In 2012, leaders of the

Organization of Islamic Cooperation decided at their 12th meeting in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, to build an international Islamic university in Kabul with financial support of the Islamic Development Bank. At that time, the government allocated land for the university in Chahar Asyab district of Kabul province, but later a person claimed ownership of the land. A delegation led by the then

ministers of education and agriculture also failed to resolve the issue. Then in 2013, the Afghan cabinet under the leadership of Hamid Karzai decided that the proposed international university should be built in Nangarhar province. Although construction of the university started at the same time, it was not completed due to security problems. Taking advantage of the

responsibility of everything. What we can do now, we are helpless, the government should find the sellers to return our money or give us land somewhere else." Another resident of the area, Gul Jan, said he purchased the land from local people a few years ago when the construction work of the university had not started. Rodat district officials also confirmed a portion of the university's land

has been grabbed by local people and have built houses on it. Maulvi Sadiqullah Mansoor, the Rodat district chief, said: "On the instructions of our leaders, we formed a special commission to look into the matter. The commission was comprised of representatives of the district administration, police and the intelligence department. We visited the area. The houses there have

been constructed during the past government, we have now shared our report with the center, we will implement any decision they make." He said no one was allowed to construct new houses on the university's land since the new government's coming into power. The Department of Information and Culture says the process of recovering usurped state land has

been ongoing in the province and the issue of the International Islamic University is also being followed. Qureshi Badlon, media coordination head of the department, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the commissioned concerned had started its work to wrest back all usurped government lands, including the land of the International Islamic University.

Daikundi woman: Life has turned into hell for me



NEILI CITY (Pajhwok): In a cold corner of Neili, an elderly woman is busy spinning strings inside her shop to eke out a living for her family. The bitter experiences of past conflict have forced the woman to toil and sweat to supporting a six-member family. Benazir Hussaini told Pajhwok Afghan News; she lost her son to war five years ago. She has since been feeling like living in hell, the woman says. Since her son's death, she has been hoping for peace, believing no other mother would mourn the loss of her child. "Since my son was martyred, I've been slipping into poverty, misery

The war in Afghanistan has left Hussaini working from dawn to dusk for her children on the one hand and sharing sorrows of her others' sons on the other. "I have been working hard to provide my children with stationery and books and send them to school. I don't let them feel the need for anything," she continued. Being a war victim, she has not yet received any assistance from the authorities. She complains of leading a hard life and meeting needs of her family through making handicrafts. The war has affected most of Afghan mothers. After learning of her son's death, Hussaini's life plunged into sorrows. Her pain has refused to go away. However, Hussaini is happy over the war in her homeland coming to an end. She hopes mothers will no longer be anguished by their children's deaths. While yearning for peace all her entire life, she had suffered a lot during the prolonged war, she said. She wants all people to honestly work together for peace and an equitable settlement in the country. She hoped like the strings going through the sewing machine in an organized way, the Afghans would also see harmony and prosperity if peace returned to their country.

DAB auction 15 million USD today

KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank will auction 15 million USA dollars today (Tuesday) to keep the local currency rate stable in the market. ADB in a statement asked all eligible commercial banks, and money exchangers to participate in the auction. It is mentioned in the statement that partial transaction is not allowed and the winner of the auction is obligated to deliver the amount in cash at a specific time to DAB. DAB last week also auctioned off over \$16 million for strengthening the Afghani currency.

Govt starts distributing electronic permits in Herat

KABUL (Agencies): The distribution process of electronic permits in Herat started officially, while several ministerial officials were present at the beginning of the round, says local authorities of the province. Ministerial and other organs officials, on the occasions of the process, say, that the problems of the landowners will be fundamentally addressed by receiving an electronic permit. The Governor of Herat, Mawlawi Noor Ahmad Islamjar, said that the discussion of land and land ownership is one of the



most important issues, fortunately, this program was opened in Herat today, and many problems of the people will be addressed from the area of usurpation and lack of permits. The provincial head of

permits of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, says that there is no scope for fraud in these permits process and the usurpation of people's lands will be prevented.

NDC says it will alter Qosh Tepa Canal's path

BALKH (TOLOnews): The National Development Corporation (NDC) said that it will change the route of the Qosh Tepa Canal in northern Balkh province. The goal of the move is to protect ancient structures and ponds, which are situated between the Kaldar and Dawlat Abad

districts in Balkh, from destruction. The National Development Corporation estimated that changing the canal's path would cost three million Afghans. The preservation of historical relics is clearly part of our culture and identity, and we will try our best to

prevent any damage to our ancient areas," said Farid Azim, in charge of the Qosh Tepa Canal project in Balkh. NDC officials added that the first phase of the Qosh Tepa Canal will be finished in the next six months. The National Development Corporation said

that the construction work of the Qosh Tepa Canal is underway in 120 locations and that nearly 5,900 people are working in the project. "First, we will build the watershed and second, we will build two bridges on the Hairatan-Balkh highway," said Azim.

Tanazur debaters agree women have right to education

KABUL (Pajhwok): This week's Tanazur debate from Pajhwok Afghan News Twitter Space platform discussed ban on women education in which experts shared interesting views on the topic. Some participants believed that the teaching of Islam were against the losses that would be incurred due to the ban on women education till further notice while others believed that acting government was not against women education but it was against co-education, tight uniform, violation of Hijab and other related problems. Acting government recently banned women higher education till further notice and barred women from working in the International

Governmental Organisation (INGOs). On Saturday evening Tanazur debate discussed ban on women education in which four panelists took part. The Twitter Space was viewed by 2,097 persons live. **Zahid's views:** Religious scholar Dr. Rahmatullah Zahid said: "Nobody could stop a human being from getting education. Decision to ban someone from getting education is against the teaching of Islam and as well as the violation of basic human rights." He said even till further notice ban on women education will have unaffordable consequences and that will not be acceptable to Islam as well. "If ban on education is for a short time, it is not

acceptable for me. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is responsible to reopen schools and universities for women as soon as possible," he said. "The western world have clear goals regarding women education and their right to work. The fact that there were foreigners for more than 20 years in Afghanistan it may have left some impact but it never meant that the entire system should be challenged, if there are some problems that need to be corrected," said Zahid. "If there is problem in the curriculum so this is not the right thinking because if a curriculum could mislead the ideology of a girl it could leave some impact on boys mentality as well." He stressed the eradication of Taliban was not a

solution because they are currently in power and Afghanistan could no more afford regime changes. **Shabnam's views:** Former Human Rights Commission Member Shabnam Salih said: "The Taliban recent decision was a clear violation of human rights and their commitment made in Doha Pact. With this they showed that they are unchanged." She said in Afghanistan, 25 percent families are looked after by women financially and banning women from education faced these families with economic issues. "The issue of delaying women's education and work is linked to culture, so the protests of people in Nangarhar, Kandahar and other provinces have shown that this is not a cul-

tural issue, but rather the Taliban's own desire. It is neither related to religion nor to the culture of Afghanistan," she said. Salehi added in current circumstances getting education was as vital and necessary as eating food and getting oxygen, adding that people have no need to seek religious permission for eating and breathing. "Why should the whole society sink because of one person's crime, and if excuses are made, then this is not a solution; In the past (during the first period of the Islamic Emirate), the issue of the second order was not resolved, and today, the ban on secondary education has been 18 months, but the conditions have not been provided," she said.

She termed recent acting government decision as politically motivated and added, the acting government wanted to enter recognition deal. She said resolution to all issues was linked with an eligible government which should be established. He said current officials could not destroy the lives of Afghans and if things move this way people would revolt. Oslu added acting government should introduce a law on the bases of consensus because law was vital for the continuity of a government so that people have proper understanding of the situation. "There is need to recognize the Taliban because they are the reality of this society and the Taliban should also recognize us

and others, there is need for a middle way to take Afghanistan out of current crisis," he added. **Waseel's views:** Writer Sibghatullah Waseel, said that there was different views regarding religious and modern education in Islam, adding that there was need for some modern education that is based on human wisdom and experience in order to accomplish human needs. He said unfriendly circumstances forced ban on women education and work, there was opposition existed with women education. "Officials views showed that government was against Hijab violation; make up, tight cladding and other issues. The fact that Afghanistan was under occupation so

there is the impact of feminism existed." According to Waseel the issue was about women equality which against wisdom. Islam views that women work should be based on necessity but west viewed it as principle. He said there was need for a practical solution, adding that nobody was against education but IEA held huge responsibility to ensure the provision of condition for education. Writer and Poet Shafiq Khapalwak said: "If today Afghan girls deprived from education the survival of Afghanistan would be difficult in the future." She added there was need for active participation of women in the distribution of humanitarian aid because men could not address women problems.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and Begum Samina Arif Alvi paid a condolence visit at the residence of Senator Dr. Muhammad Hamayun Mohmand, on the sad demise of his father.

Govt disburses Rs224.5b under PSDP 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 224.5 billion out of a total allocation of Rs727 billion for various ongoing and new social sector uplift projects of the federal ministries and division in the first five months (July-November) of the fiscal year 2022-23 under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Out of the total authorized/dispensed amount, the total amount spent so far on the development projects during the corresponding period stood at Rs130.6 billion. According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20% in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30% each in the second and third quarters, and the remaining 20% in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year.

The government also authorized/dispensed Rs100 billion for the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) out of which Rs 96.33 billion have been spent, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reform. The detail shows that Rs 64.8 billion out of a total allocated amount of Rs 160.2 billion have been disbursed to corporations while Rs 159.6 billion have been disbursed to the federal ministries out of a total allocation of Rs 563.3 billion.

For National Highway Authority (NHA), the government has disbursed Rs 30.2 billion out of a total allocation of Rs 117.2 billion, whereas for NTDC/PEPCO, the government has disbursed Rs 34.69 billion. The federal government has also disbursed/authorized Rs 87 billion out of a total allocation of Rs 87 billion for various development projects of the cabinet division, however, only Rs 11 billion have been spent on the development projects of the cabinet division so far.

SHC stops police from arresting Gill

KARACHI (TLTP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has stopped police from arresting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill in seditious case. The court's directives were issued during a hearing on the plea filed by the PTI leader which sought to quash the cases registered against him in Karachi.

The TLTP learnt that during the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer pleaded with the court to stop the police from arresting Gill in seditious case till the final decision on the ongoing case in SHC. Gill submitted in the petition that police had registered three cases against him at the Brigade, Surjani Town and Rizvia police stations. The petitioner pleaded with the court to quash all cases registered against him in Karachi.

At which, the SHC bench stopped police from arresting Shahbaz Gill and adjourned the hearing. The PTI leader also urged the court for an immediate hearing of the plea, which was turned down by the SHC bench. It may be noted that on December 22, a district and sessions court in Islamabad issued a bailable arrest warrant for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill in the seditious case. The court issued a bailable arrest warrant upon PTI leader's absence and rejected his petition for exemption from personal appearance in the case.

No stability in Imran's stance: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday alleged that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan consistently changed his narratives which were nothing but packs of lies to mislead the people. "Imran Khan has been changing his narratives like weather (since his ouster from power)," she said in a news statement while responding to the PTI chief's remarks in the media. The minister said Imran Khan claimed that it came to his knowledge last summer that Shehbaz Sharif would become prime minister which was contrary to his earlier statements. He (Imran) used to say that he even could think Shehbaz Sharif becoming the country's chief executive. Imran Khan had already failed to materialize his plan to default the country, and he should better introspect on his four-year government's performance from 2018 to April 2022. Ironically, "for-

eign agent Imran Khan", who had robbed Toshakhana and traded off national interests for diamonds, had the audacity to question what wrong he had committed, she remarked. Marriyum said Imran Khan acted like a dictator and took autocratic steps against his opponents on false allegations, however, not a single allegation was proved. Now the time had come that Imran Khan would have to answer for his wrongdoings, she added. The minister said astonishingly Imran Khan had all of a sudden started commenting on the actions taken by former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa from 2021 to April 2022. "Why had he offered a life-time extension to the former army chief while the latter had hatched a plot against him?" she questioned. It was Imran Khan who had conferred the best commander award on him, she added. Marriyum said it was beyond comprehension

why did Imran Khan not keep the people informed when the former army chief was resisting the accountability process. At the same time, he had surprisingly kept Tayba Gul hostage at the Prime Minister's House for blackmailing the former National Accountability Bureau chairman. She dared Imran Khan to tell the truth that why did he seek the support of the head of an institution to win the Senate election and also prevent his disqualification (as a member of the National Assembly), and why did he not take action when the votes of parliamentarians were bought in both the houses of the Parliament. The evidence of horse-trading had come forth which proved that Imran Khan had set up a "political market" during the Senate's election in 2018, she added. His (Imran's) leaked audios were clear evidence of his involvement in political engineering and horse-trading.

No development of country sans rule of law: Imran

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan has claimed that the former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General (Ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa assured the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Muhammad Asif of victory during the no-confidence motion.

In an interview on Monday, he claimed that the plan to assign PM office to Shehbaz Sharif and remove his federal government was finalized earlier. Imran Khan alleged that former envoy to United States Hussain Haqqani was also hired to portray him anti-American and a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official was also working with Haqqani in this regard. He further said that he used to trust former COAS

Gen Bajwa, adding that his last meeting with former army chief was held in August 2022. "Gen Bajwa assured [PML-N leader] Khawaja Asif of victory at time of no-confidence motion. Recalling the assassination attempt in Wazirabad, the former prime minister said that three bullets were taken from his right leg from the shooting. "I could not file my first information report (FIR)," he said, adding that the justice system was exposed in this whole scenario.

Imran Khan pointed out that a country cannot develop until there is rule of law, regretting that during Gen Bajwa's tenure, the rule of law was destroyed in the country. He reiterated that Gen Bajwa was against accountability and did not consider corruption 'bad'.

"The former army chief gave NRO-II to the incumbent leaders as I was against to make a deal," he added.

Imran Khan maintained that 'immediate and transparent' elections were the only solution to country's current situation, adding that new elections would bring political and economic stability to the country. It should be mentioned here that Imran Khan was ousted as prime minister (PM) after success of the no-confidence motion against him moved by opposition parties.

As many as 174 votes were cast in the favour of a no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan. This was the first time in the country's history that an elected prime minister has been removed through no-confidence motion against him.

Inflation edges up to 24.5% in December

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In line with the market expectations, consumer prices increased rather slowly to 24.5% in December amid persistent inflationary pressures, indicating no letup for the people, whose purchasing power has already hit rock bottom.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), the inflation monitor, rose to 24.5% in December from 12.3% in the same period last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Monday. Despite a slight increase of 0.7% in the index movement, the majority of the consumer goods remained out of the people's reach.

The inflation rate, however, was not in line with the Ministry of Finance's expectations, which ranged from 21% to 23%. Data further showed that the month-on-month inflation rate slowed down to 0.5% in December. The reason behind a slight increase in the inflation rate was an uptick in the rate of increase in perishable food items.

Food inflation surged by 32.7% in cities and 37.9% in villages/towns last month, respectively, showed the PBS data. Prices of both perishable and nonperishable food products went up significantly compared to the same period last year. The food group prices surged by over one-fourth in

December compared to the same month a year ago. But prices of perishable food items soared by 55.93%, which still shows a significant demand and supply gap.

Prices of onions increased by 415% compared to a year ago followed by a 64% increase in rates of tea and a 58% rise in that of wheat. Vegetable ghee and cooking oil prices surged up to 32%, milk fresh 26% and rice 47%, according to the PBS. Prices of the alcoholic beverages and tobacco group soared by 35% while those of the clothing and footwear group surged by 17.22%.

Core inflation, which is calculated after excluding the volatile energy and food prices, increased in December to 14.7% in urban areas and 19% in rural areas. The core inflation is still higher, indicating the underlying inflationary pressures. The non-food inflation rate was 14.8% in cities and 20.7% in villages. Prices of housing, water, electricity and gas fuels were higher by nearly 7%. The transport group saw a price hike of 42%, according to PBS. Petroleum prices witnessed a record-high increase in 2022, going up almost 60%, which was the highest increase in a year.

For the July-December period of the current fiscal year, average inflation

came in at 25.02%, which was nearly three-fold compared to 9.81% in the same period of the last fiscal year 2021-22. Economist Sana Tawfiq, while speaking to media, cited an increase in the prices of perishable goods — fresh vegetables, poultry, etc — and an uptick in the recreation and culture index — which is related to winter break in schools and colleges — as major contributors.

"Overall, there was no major change that was in line with the expectations," she said, adding that the number was expected to remain elevated because of base difference. However, the economist said that continuous increase in core inflation was a "major concern". Keeping all these in view, Tawfiq said it was expected that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will further hike monetary policy interest rates in its next policy announcement due on January 23.

Regarding the inflation outlook, she predicted that "the CPI inflation will remain elevated till May as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is to be revived; however, it is expected to decline gradually as base-effect kicks". But in the second half of the ongoing fiscal year season factors, including Ramazan and Eid, will have an impact on the number, she added.

SC issues notices in Balochistan govt's appeal

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has issued notices in the provincial government of Balochistan's appeal against the Balochistan High Court (BHC) verdict on appointment of special assistants to the provincial chief minister.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan conducted hearing of the Balochistan provincial government appeal. The TLTP learnt that during the hearing, Justice Mazhar Ali said that the case has become infructuous as the Balochistan government which had filed the appeal is no more in power. The additional advocate general contended that though the case pertains to the previous government, but in this case the high court had set aside the law.

The AAG said that the apex court has already passed a judgment in a similar case of the Sindh government. The AAG Balochistan informed that the BHC did not issue notice to the advocate general under Rule XXVII, which is must. He requested the Court to suspend the high court verdict. At this, Justice Ijaz questioned that when the BHC had declared the law null and void then what they suspended. However, the bench after hearing the arguments issued notices.

In April 2020, the BHC had declared the Appointments of Special Assistants to the Chief Minister Balochistan Act, 2018, null and void and the appointments of six special assistants to the Balochistan chief minister unconstitutional. The high court had also ordered the special assistants to the chief minister to return all incentives they received from the government except their salaries. In the petition, Advocate Kakar argued in the court that the act was contradictory to the law of the land and, therefore, it should be set aside.

It said that under Article 130, Subsection 11 of the Constitution of Pakistan, a chief minister can't appoint more than five advisors. Therefore, the appointment of special assistants to CM is unconstitutional, maintained the high court. The act was passed in Nov 2018 immediately after which the provincial Chief Minister Jam Kamal appointed his close aides as special assistants.

Arshad's murder: SC fixes hearing

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Supreme Court (SC) has fixed the hearing of the suo moto notice of the killing of senior journalist Arshad Sharif.

A five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court (SC) headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will hear the suo moto notice of the killing of Arshad Sharif on January 5. The TLTP learnt that the hearing will begin at 1:00 pm. After taking suo moto notice on December 6, the top court had ordered the special joint investigation team (JIT) to submit the probe report.

A five-member larger bench including CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard the case. On December 6, CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial had ordered to register the murder case of senior journalist and former anchorperson Arshad Sharif, who was killed in Kenya in the month of September.

Arshad was shot dead in Kenya by the local police along the Nairobi-Magadi highway in a "mistaken identity case" on October 23. The official police statement later expressed "regrets on the unfortunate incident." Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed, the secretary of the interior, the secretary of information and broadcasting and the PFUJ president had appeared before the court after being summoned. Notices had been served to the secretary of the interior, foreign secretary, secretary of information and broadcasting, the DG FIA and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) president.

Sacrifices of our security personnel will not go in vain

President urges Overseas Pakistanis to highlight HR violations in IIOJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said the sacrifices rendered by the security personnel to purge the country of the menace of terrorism will not go in vain. He made the remarks during his telephonic conversation with the bereaved families of security personnel martyred in recent acts of terrorism in the country.

According to a Radio Pakistan's report, the President paid glowing tributes to the valiance of martyrs and condoled with the bereaved families. Dr Arif Alvi was also appreciative of the spirit of the bereaved families who stated that they and their other sons and brothers are also ready to render lives for the sake of the country.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the Overseas Pakistanis to highlight the human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and the persecution of minorities in India in their host countries.

Talking to a delegation of eminent UK and US-based Pakistani expatriates here in Islamabad on Monday, he said the issue of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is one of the oldest but unresolved agendas still waiting for implementation of several UN Security Council resolutions, which is unfortunate.

The President said the Overseas Pakistanis has a duty to highlight the atrocities being committed by the Indian Security Forces against the innocent Kashmiris to muffle their demand for the right to self-determination which was

promised to them under various UN Security Council resolutions. He said images of the innocent Kashmiris brutalized by the heartless Indian Security Forces should be widely circulated in the international media to build pressure on India to resolve the long-outstanding dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions.

The President said religious extremism is on the rise in India and the majority Hindutva-inspired Hindu population is being pitched against all religious or ethnic minorities of the country. He said that minorities were being discriminated against, harassed, victimized, and intimidated across India on the basis of their religion.

He said minorities, especially Muslims, are even afraid to call their relatives elsewhere because of the fear of victimization by the Indian Security Forces. Arif Alvi said the overseas Pakistanis should maintain close and strong connections with the people of the areas of their origin and play their role to improve the country's image.

The President termed the Pakistani diaspora around the world a great asset. He said the overseas Pakistanis should invest their knowledge, intellect and expertise to create enabling conditions in Pakistan to retain its precious educated and high-quality human resource which are direly needed for Pakistan's socio-economic development. The President said although Pakistan is facing difficult economic and financial situation but they are surmountable.

PTI always done politics of lies, says Sharjeel

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that now a days there was a trend of fake news in the country and false news was spread in such a way that it seemed to be true. He said that in a recently published article, false news was spread against the former President of Pakistan Asif Zardari that he had been transferred from Rawalpindi to Karachi.

He was talking to media persons on the reception given by him to newly-elected office bearers and members of governing body of Press Club Hyderabad at Rawal House, Hyderabad on Monday. He said that they (PPP) did not make any

kind of deal and if there was a deal then cases of PPP leadership and its workers would have been closed.

He said that the PDM was formed by the People's Party and it was a good decision by not resigning at that time, otherwise Imran Niazi would still be the Prime Minister. He said that Fawad Chaudhry had accused him and Nasir Shah of horse trading. "I have not spoken to any member of PTI," he said. He said that PTI had always done the politics of lies, this was also a fake news and added that PTI's job was to blame people. He said that the audio leak had come in which Imran Khan was saying that five members were bought. He said that the rehabilitation work of the flood victims had been started and the construction of the houses of the victims would be started very soon.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the People's Party

was always ready for the local body elections. He said that for the first time in the country's history, two million families affected by the flood/ rains would be given money to build their own houses while farmers who cultivated wheat in the flood-affected areas were being given Rs 5,000 per acre.

He said that people's crops were destroyed and food and drinking items were all gone and the Sindh government immediately provided cooked food to affected people. He said that Sindh was the only province where flour was being sold on official price of Rs 65 per kg while the wheat imported by the Federal government and PASCO was Rs 9000/-. Press Club's newly-elected President Lala Rehman Samoon, General Secretary Hameedur Rahman, Ali Hassan, Muhammad Hussain Khan and other members of the governing body were also present on this occasion.

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians in West Bank

WEST BANK (Agencies):

The Israeli army has killed two Palestinian men during a raid on a village near the city of Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank. Mohammad Samer Hoshiyeh, 22, and Fouad Mohammad Abed, 25, were shot dead early on Monday in Kufr Dan, northwest of Jenin, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said. At least three others were injured during the raid, including one in critical condition, the ministry added.

Confrontations and armed clashes broke out with Israeli forces late on Sunday night after they raided Kufr Dan to demolish the homes of two Palestinians killed in a shootout at an Israeli military checkpoint in Jenin that led to the killing of an Israeli soldier, Bar Falah, several months ago. Ahmad Aymaan Abed and Abdulrahman Hani Abed were shot dead at the Jalameh checkpoint, the main entry point between the northern occupied West Bank and Israel, on September 14.

Israeli forces said in a statement on that they had been conducting operations in Kufr Dan to demolish the homes of the two men, and said that they had been attacked with gunfire, rocks and firebombs. Hamas, the Palestinian group that rules Gaza, claimed Foad Mohammed Abed as its member. Videos shared by local media showed one of the homes being blown up using explosives. Similar images showed the demolition of a second home in

the same way.

Such home demolitions are regarded as "collective punishment" by Palestinians and human rights organisations. The large-scale Israeli military raid, which included special forces, began on Sunday night and continued until Monday morning. The two men shot dead on Monday are the first Palestinians to be killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank this year, as a result of an ongoing Israeli military campaign of intensified raids and killings for almost a year.

The United Nations (UN) marked 2022 as the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank in 16 years. Israeli forces killed at least 171 Palestinians in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem in 2022, including more than 30 children. At least 9,000 others have been injured. Civilians confronting the Israeli army during raids and uninvolved bystanders have been killed, as well as Palestinian fighters in targeted assassinations and during armed clashes.

Following a string of individual attacks carried out by Palestinians in Israel that began in March, the Israeli army launched a campaign called "Break the Wave" that has included nearly-daily raids, mass arrests and killings in the West Bank, with a focus on Jenin and Nablus, where Palestinian armed resistance has grown more organised over the past year. Israeli forces conducted raids in several other cities in the occupied West Bank on

Monday morning including Nablus, Salfit and Ramallah, arresting at least 15 Palestinian men, according to prisoner groups.

In Ramallah, the army raided the al-Amari refugee camp and arrested the brother of Nasser Abu Hmaid, a Palestinian prisoner who died in Israeli custody last month after suffering from cancer for over a year. On Sunday night, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who recently became national security minister in the far-right Israeli government inaugurated late last week, said he intends to enter the al-Aqsa mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem in the coming days.

The move by Ben-Gvir, a controversial figure who openly incites violence against Palestinians, could spark protests and a crackdown by Israeli forces at the sensitive Muslim holy site, amid conditions that the UN warned have reached "a boiling point". The new Israeli government, which includes religious Zionist and ultra-Orthodox parties, and is led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is said to be the most right-wing in Israel's 74-year history.

His Likud party released the new coalition government's policy priorities on Wednesday, the first of which promises to "advance and develop settlement in all parts of the land of Israel — in the Galilee, Negev, Golan Heights, and Judea and Samaria" — the latter of which are the Biblical names for the occupied Palestinian West Bank.