

Chinese envoy calls on FM
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong paid a farewell call on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Views were exchanged on bilateral relations and to enhance cooperation in various sectors including CPEC. The Foreign Minister commended the services of the outgoing Chinese Ambassador and extended best wishes for his future endeavors.

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UAE agrees to rollover \$2b loan, give \$1b

ABU DHABI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met the UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan wherein the latter agreed to roll over the existing loan of US\$ 2 billion and provide US\$ 1 billion additional loan.

In the meeting took place in Abu Dhabi during prime minister's two-day visit, both sides agreed to deepen the investment cooperation, stimulate partnerships and enable investment integration opportunities between the two countries. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed welcomed Prime Minister Sharif to Abu Dhabi and wished progress and prosperity for Pakistan.

He praised the historical relations between the two nations and the valuable contributions made by the Pakistani community in the UAE. The prime minister thanked the UAE president for inviting him to the brotherly country. The two leaders discussed the fraternal relations existing between Pakistan and the UAE; and explored ways and means to further strengthen these ties, especially in the fields of trade, investment and energy.

The two leaders also had an exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. They also expressed satisfaction over the pace of steady progress in bilateral relations. They agreed on the importance of enhanced bilateral exchanges and regular dialogue at all levels to further solidify and provide momentum to the relationship. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif invited Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed for a state visit to Pakistan to which he agreed. The dates will be decided through diplomatic channels.

UAE businessmen show readiness to explore

Saudi Arabia announces \$1 billion for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in difficult times. "Pakistan is grateful for the announcement of \$1 billion made by Saudi Arabia's Prime Minister and Crown Prince of Mohammed bin Salman for the rehabilitation of Pakistan's flood victims," the prime minister said.

Shehbaz Sharif expressed these views in a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Saudi Fund Sultan Al Murshid, who led a four-member delegation. The prime minister said Pakistan highly values Saudi Arabia's assistance in the rehabilitation of flood victims. During the meeting, various development projects of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan were also reviewed. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Law Minister Nazir Tarar, Adviser to Prime Minister Ahad Cheema and senior officers.

investment potential of Pakistan:

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan had great investment opportunities, and the government was taking all necessary steps to facilitate investors. The Prime Minister was talking to a delegation of investors and businessmen of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which called on him here.

The delegation comprised Mohamed Hassan Al-Suwaidi, Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company (ADQ), Syed Basar Shueb, Managing Director of International Holdings Company (IHC) and others. During the meeting, the delegation was briefed with regard to geo-economic potential of Pakistan in the areas of food and agriculture, aviation, power, alternate energy including solar energy, financial services, healthcare, industry, logistics, real estate, tourism and hospitality.

Mohammed Hassan Al-Suwaidi showed interest in expanding the ADQ's global presence and readiness to explore business and

investment potential of Pakistan. ADQ is one of the largest holding companies in the Middle East region with a diverse portfolio of large enterprises covering key sectors of the non-oil economy of Abu Dhabi.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif, Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Investment Board Saalik Hussain and senior government officers.

PM thanks Japan:

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday thanked the government of Japan for pledging US \$ 88 million at the Geneva conference for the recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas of Pakistan.

"We acknowledge with a sense of gratitude Japan's pledge of \$ 88 million for recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood affected areas of Pakistan," the Prime Minister said in a twitter post. "The task is no doubt challenging but with the support of friends & partners, we will accomplish it for our people," he added.

Pakistan, UAE agree to boost ties Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has met President of United Arab Emirates Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Dubai, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said in a tweet. The minister said that during the meeting the President of the UAE agreed to rollover the existing loan of \$ 2 billion and provide \$ 1 billion additional loan.

She said that the two leaders expressed their satisfaction on the continuous progress in bilateral relations. The minister said that the two leaders agreed on the importance of bilateral exchanges and regular discussions at all levels to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also invited UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed for an official visit to Pakistan, to which he agreed. The minister said that the dates of the visit would be decided through diplomatic channels.

Pak, S Arabia ink pact to finance oil derivatives

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia inked an agreement on Thursday to finance oil derivatives worth \$1 billion, Economic Affairs Ministry confirmed. The development comes amid news reports that Saudi Arabia is augmenting plans to increase the amount of investment and deposit in cash-strapped Pakistan which is struggling with a worsening currency crisis.

According to an official statement, the agreement was inked by Economic Affairs Secretary Dr Kazem Niaz, and Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sultan bin Abdulrahman Al-Murshed. Dr Niaz, speaking on the occasion, revealed that the pact was an extension of previously signed agreements in 2019 and 2021 valued at \$4.44 billion to finance oil derivatives in Pakistan. Since its establishment, he said, the SFD had supported more than 40 projects and programmes in different development sectors valued at approximately \$1.4 billion.

All the programmes were aimed at helping the country achieve its sustainable development goals and build a prosperous future," he added. For his part, SFD CEO said that the agreement emphasised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to continue supporting the brotherly Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Islamabad's efforts to shore up the country's forex reserves with the help of Saudi Arabia — amid a worsening currency crisis — have started paying off as Riyadh is considering 'beefing up' its deposit in the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) from \$3 billion to \$5 billion. According to Saudi media, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman earlier this week directed his financial officials to study increasing the Pakistan deposit by \$2 billion.



ABU DHABI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

CM Parvez Elahi signs summary for dissolving Punjab Assembly

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi signed the summary for the dissolution of the provincial assembly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry announced Thursday, calling on the centre to hold snap polls across the country.

"Elahi has signed the summary and the advice has been sent to Punjab Governor [Baligh-Ur-Rehman] and if he does not sign on it in the next 48 hours, then in line with the Constitution, then the assembly will stand dissolved in the next 48 hours," the PTI leader told journalists in Lahore. The decision to dissolve the assembly was taken during a meeting

between the chief minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan at the latter's Zaman Park residence, with senior party leaders in presence.

The assembly wasn't dissolved earlier apparently due to a restriction from the Lahore High Court (LHC), but since Elahi won the legislative's confidence once again, the bar was removed as the case was withdrawn. The PTI leader also announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly would also be dissolved in line with the party's 'promise' to the people of leaving the legislative.

"The KP Assembly will also be dissolved on a similar format a day after tomorrow and we have fulfilled our

promise of going back to the people [for seeking support]," he said. Fawad said the PTI and its allies have proven that despite all the pressure, they were not "afraid" of going back to the people for seeking votes as they had proven it by stepping down from government in both provinces.

He also announced that a letter would be written to the Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Hamza Shahbaz for the formation of a caretaker government. After the completion of all the legal requirements, elections will take place in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the next 90 days, the former federal minister added.

PML-N given two months' time to hold intra-party polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday granted reprieve for two months to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for holding intra-party elections.

A five-member Commission, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, resumed the hearing of the case regarding the intra-party elections of the political parties and directed the PML-N leadership to hold intra party elections by March 14 after hearing arguments from the lawyer of the political party. The ECP then adjourned the hearing of the case until March 14.

The PML-N counsel said the intra-party polls were delayed due to some unavoidable circumstances as elections could not be held as the PML-N President and Secretary General had gone abroad. PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal would return to Pakistan from Geneva by Jan 14, adding that the Party was planning to hold elections on January 31. ECP

Punjab Member Babar Bharwana remarked the electoral symbol of the Party would be withdrawn if elections were not held by Jan 31.

The CEC remarked that the electoral body could grant more time, if valid reasons were submitted. He also remarked that PML-N should hold intra-party polls. The ECP on January 5, had given the PML-N a week to hold intra-party elections with the warning that the election symbol allotted to the Party would be withdrawn. As per the record, the intra-party election in the PML-N was due by March 22 last year.

The Section 209 of the Elections Act, 2017 says, "Certification by the political party; (1) A political party shall, within seven days from completion of the intra-party elections, submit a certificate signed by an office-bearer authorized by the Party head, to the commission to the effect that the elections were held in accordance with the constitution of the political party and this act to elect the office-bearers at the federal,

provincial and local levels, wherever applicable."

Whereas, Sections 215 (4) of the Act state, "Where a political party or combination of political parties, severally or collectively, fails to comply with the provision of Section 209 or Section 210, the commission shall issue to such political party or parties a notice to show cause as to why it or they may not be declared ineligible to obtain an election symbol."

Moreover, Section 215 (5) of the act reads, "If a political party or parties to whom show cause notice has been issued under Sub-section 4 fails to comply with the provision of Section 209 or Section 210, the Commission may after affording it or them an opportunity of being heard, declare it or them ineligible to obtain an election symbol for election to the Parliament, provincial assembly or a local government, and the Commission shall not allocate an election symbol to such political party or combination of political parties in subsequent election."

Tough times demand dialogue among political parties: President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi expressing strong concern over the state of the national economy has stressed that the political parties need to hold talks by rising above their differences. In an exclusive interview with BBC, the president termed it crucial to 'lower the political heat' to avoid further deterioration of the economic situation in the country.

President Alvi urged negotiations among "all stakeholders", including the ruling coalition government and PTI. He said differences were part of democracy, however, it was crucial for all to

make united efforts to save the country from economic collapse. "I am not insisting about [holding talks with] PTI chief Imran, but at least the political parties should hold discussions, and after that, the leaders can also meet," he said.

He mentioned that in an earlier consultation, Imran Khan had expressed satisfaction over the nomination of General Asim Munir as army chief. He, however, said that he was not 'brokering any dialogue' between Imran Khan and the current army leadership. Calling 2023 an election year, the president said the political parties should also negotiate about it whether to hold the polls sooner or later, plus or minus a few

months.

The president said that he had been personally making efforts to reduce tension among stakeholders and termed social media "a major reason" behind the differences between Imran Khan and former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. He said undue importance paid to social media resulted in misunderstandings and pointed out that "decision-making elements" in the country failed to effectively handle social media. "I have been trying to bring people together to help them end their mistrust, and I will continue to do so. It is my constitutional responsibility to keep the federation united," he said.

Father throws 2 kids into sea

KARACHI (INP): A man threw his two children into Karachi sea near Manora after a quarrel with his wife. According to police, the incident occurred in the wee hours of Thursday when a man threw his two children into sea near Manora. Police have arrested the accused while search for two drowning children was underway. In a statement, the accused said that he threw his children into sea over a quarrel with his wife.



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Federal Ombudsman Office addressed over 160000 complaints

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Federal Ombudsman Office has enhanced its capacity to address over 160,000 cases in 2022. The Ombudsman office resolved these cases by consuming innovative measures and adopting simple procedures, resultantly 50% more complaints were handled during the year without taking additional budget or employing human resources. This was stated by the Hon'ble Federal Ombudsman Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi while talking to the heads of different agencies and media in a press conference held at WMS regional office, Peshawar.

He said that there was 100% increase recorded in online disposal of cases. Hearings of complaints were also conducted online when requested by the complainants with the vision to provide justice at doorstep, he added. He further said that performance targets for the Investigating Officers and Advisors have been enhanced to more than 100% during 2022. He said that speedy and inexpensive justice was ensured through frequent inspections of public service organizations and conducting Khuli Katchehries through the 17 Regional Offices around the country.

He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib evinced special focus to Overseas Pakistanis and 133% increase was recorded



ed in disposal of their cases during 2022 through improvement in service delivery. He said that to approaching the far flung areas, four more regional offices and two Complaint Collection Centres have been opened at Mirpurkhas, Khuzdar, Swat, Kharan, Satta District Kurram and Wana (South Waziristan).

He further stated that people's trust has immensely increased resulting in a dramatic increase in the registration of complaints and complaints worth over Rs.3 billion were addressed by this office during the last year, otherwise these cases would have added burden to the civil courts. He said that Government expenditure per complainant in disposing of complaint through Wafaqi Mohtasib construes negligible amount, thus it the most cost-effective way of providing relief to the common man.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali presiding over 32th BOG meeting of IM Sciences at Governor's House.

Govt decides provision of 200 bags flour to each NC&VC

PESHAWAR (APP): The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to provide 200 bags of flour to every Neighbourhoods and Village Councils of the district on a daily basis.

It was announced during a meeting regarding judicious distribution of the official flour held here with Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsum in the chair.

The meeting was held on the special directives of the Chief Minister Mahmood Khan. Besides, MNAs, MPAs and their representa-

tives, the administrative officers of the district administration and Food Department also attended.

The participants of the meeting were told that 67000 bags of 10-kilogram are being supplied to 704 dealers on daily basis and on public complaints the quota of 84 atta dealers has been cancelled and stern legal action against them is in process.

For bringing an end to irregularities and unnecessary dealers, the meeting decided simplification and judicious distribution of the official flour.

Under the new policy all Neighbourhood and Village Councils of the district would be supplied 200 bags of the commodity on a daily basis. For each Neighbourhood and Village Councils, the MPA concerned will nominate a dealer for the distribution of the official subsidized flour and instead of 50 to 60 bags they will be provided 200 bags on a daily basis.

The officers of district administration and food department will ensure the provision of official flour on official rate to all 346

DR Jatindar meet Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): The president of minority section of Young Pharmacists Community, Dr Jatindar Singh called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House and discussed with him matters pertaining to the pharmacists.

A press release said on Thursday that the Governor assured Dr Jatindar that issues faced by the young pharmacists will be addressed on a priority basis.

He further said that he would soon meet with the delegation of Young Pharmacists Community and a detailed discussion would be made on issues faced by the pharmacists' community. The Governor assured that all efforts would be made to address the issues of the community.

Police foil smuggling bid

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Police have foiled smuggling of 36 stolen mobile phones and 1400 STC tablets to Afghanistan and arrested an accused, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

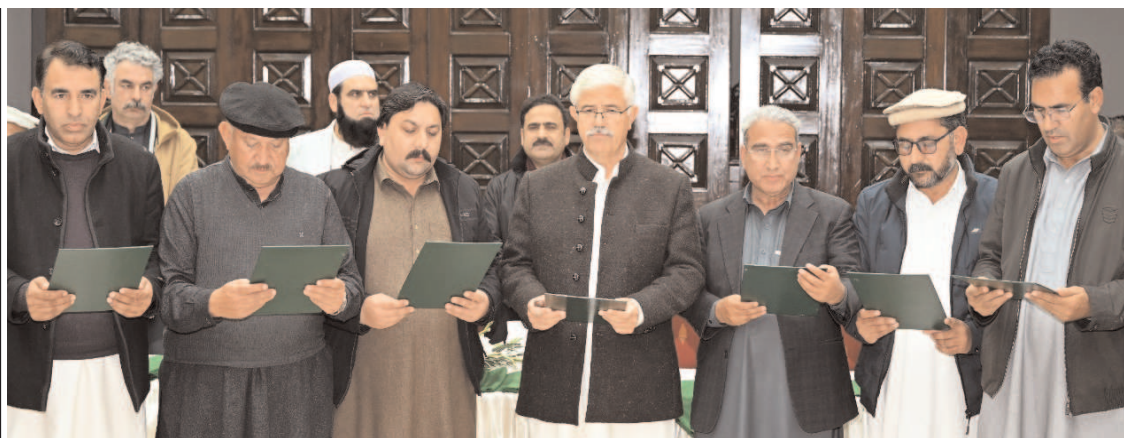
On a tip, Khyber Police carried out checking at Machni Check Post on Pak-Afghan Highway and intercepted a truck of Afghan-Transit Truck bearing registration No.Z 7843 and during search recovered 36 different varieties of mobile phone sets, 1400 STC tablets and various items of medicines.

The accused/driver, Rafiullah was arrested from the spot and the mobile phone sets, STC tablets and medicines were taken into official possession.

Neighbourhood and Village Councils of the district.

The officers of district administration and Food Department will monitor the operation of flour distribution and dealers and take stern action against the violators of the official rate.

Addressing the meeting, Commission Peshawar Riaz Khan Mehsum expressed satisfaction over decline in the prices of flour and beside the abolition of artificial flour crisis also directed for judicious distribution and stern action against hoarders and profiteers.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan administering oath to newly elected cabinet of Swat Press Club and Union of Journalists.

Botanical Garden case: PHC orders to rehabilitate

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered district administration, tehsil municipal administration, public health engineering and Peshawar electricity supply company to address problems regarding provision of electricity and water to Botanical Garden Azakhail, on Thursday.

During hearing Additional Advocate General Syed Sikandar Shah University of Peshawar (UOP) lawyer Wasim-u-Din Advocate, law officer Riaz Ali Khan, Director Botanical Garden Dr. Asad and Additional Deputy Commissioner Quarat-ul-Ain Wazir appeared before court.

Deputy Secretary Higher Education Department (HED) informed that a summary of Rs54.44 million is concluded by Secretary HED which will be utilized for rehabilitation of Botanical Garden Azakhel of UOP. He added that the summary is ready and it should be finalized within one month.

In the meantime, Chief Justice observed whatever the circumstances and situation but restore Botanical

Garden immediately because it is necessary. Additional Advocate General Syed Sikandar Shah informed that district administration and TMA is working for provision of water to the garden but requested court to order public health engineering and PESCO provision of electricity and availability of tube well respectively.

The divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered all concerned authority to cooperate with Botanical garden's administration and adjourned further hearing.

QWP begins organization

PESHAWAR (APP): Quami Watan Party (QWP) started work on organizing a party at gross-root level in district Peshawar.

In this connection, a meeting of the party was held with Shakeel Waheedullah Khan in the chair, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Besides, Central Joint

Secretary, Hasham Raza Advocate and provincial vice chairman, Syed Fayyaz Ali Shah, Qazi Asad, Bilal Mohammadzai, Abid Afridi, Hameedullah, Mohibullah and Yadur Yousafzai, other workers of the youth wing also attended.

The participants of the meeting held consultation on matters relating to the youth wing of the party in provincial assembly constituency PK-81 and tasked youth to complete organization.

The participants also decided to begin organization making from the gross-root level and also reviewed the acceleration of making organizational setup for women and non-Muslim communities in the city.

CTP arrests over 1000 in crackdown, says CTO

PESHAWAR (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Peshawar have arrested 1012 people in an anti-encroachment crackdown during the period of last one month, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

It said that on the directives of the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Peshawar, Shehzada Omar Abbas Babar, the personnel of traffic police carried out an awareness campaign for voluntary removal of encroachments, but they failed to remove them.

So, the personnel of traffic police launched a crackdown against those erecting encroachments in Board Bazaar, Cantonment, Bacha Khan Chowk, City, Kohat Road, Dalzak Road, Sabzi Mandi and G.T. Road and arrested 1012 persons and also imposed cash penalty on them.

Similarly, 199 Suzuki vans were also fined for uploading and downloading commuters on road sides while 240 motorcyclists were also fined for parking their vehicles in no-parking zone.

Support to Drug Free Campaign extended

PESHAWAR (APP): Central Peace Committee Peshawar announced full cooperation to the ongoing 'Drug Free Peshawar' campaign on Thursday.

In a statement issued here, chairman of CPC, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman commended the efforts of the Chief Secretary, Commission Peshawar and other institutions for eradication of the menace of narcotics.

He said that in a very short period, Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Khan Mehsum has made big achievements in the eradication of narcotics through creating awareness amongst the youth about the menace.

He urged the residents and all civil society to join hands with the government agencies in this holy war against narcotics to protect our coming generation from it.



PESHAWAR: Director General Press Information Department Peshawar Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil presenting certificate to SD PBC Iffat Jabbar.

PDF announces cabinets for five KP districts

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directives of the provincial president, PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Najmuddin Khan, the provincial president People's Doctor Forum (PDF), Dr Nisar Khan has announced cabinets for five districts.

According to a press release issued here on Thursday, Dr Hussain has been nominated as president for district Kohat while Nigar, Dr Farid, Dr Murtaza Ali, Dr Muhsib Afridi and Dr Ijaz Ali as Senior Vice President, Vice President, General Secretary, Information and Finance Secretaries respectively.

Bannu: Dr Safdar Zaman (President), Dr Ahmad Faraz (Senior Vice President), Dr Naveed Pervaz (Vice president), Dr Mohammad Zubair (General

Secretary), Dr Zeeshan (Press & Information Secretary), Dr Fawad Khattak (Coordination Secretary) and Dr Azmat Wazir as Joint Secretary.

Similarly, Dr Bar and Dr Safdar have been nominated as president and general secretary for district Karak while Zuhairullah, Dr Mashkatullah and Dr Faisal Masroor have been nominated as vice president, deputy general secretary and Press & Information Secretary for the district.

For tribal District Khyber, Dr Fahimullah and Dr Rehman Shah have been nominated as president and general secretary while Dr Noor Faraz, Dr Naveed Afridi, Dr Mirwais, Dr Imran Afridi and Awais Wali as vice president, deputy general, finance and

Coordination secretaries respectively.

For district D.I. Khan, Dr Faridullah and Dr Mohammad Rehan have been nominated as president and general secretary while Dr Jamaluddin, Dr Badshah Noor and Dr Ansar Ahmad as vice president, deputy general secretary and Information Secretary respectively.



Engineer Arif named as new PESCO CEO
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Engineer Arif Mahmood Saduzai has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of Peshawar Electric Supply Company.

He took charge of his post on Thursday. His appointment has been approved by the federal government.

‘Art for All’ Competition at Paraplegic Center inaugurated



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Directorate of Youth Affairs and Friends of Paraplegics jointly organized an art competition titled "Art For All" at Paraplegic Center Peshawar for the artists of the entire province, including the merged districts. It was formally inaugurated by Director Youth Affairs Irfan Ali and Chief Executive Paraplegic Center Peshawar Dr. Ilyas Syed.

On this occasion, Director Youth Affairs said that his department has always been trying to give the

youth of the province an opportunity to highlight their potentials through various positive activities and at the same time take full care of the disabled youth too. He said that through sports and other events, disabled youth are encouraged to move forward in life and society.

Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Syed appreciated the efforts of the organizers for such a successful program to develop the creative capabilities of the youth, especially the disabled.

He said that Friends of Paraplegics has always tried to provide ample

opportunities to the youth to develop their hidden abilities especially those with physical disabilities.

He said that Friends of Paraplegics is not only fighting for the rights of disabled people across the province but their efforts have brought a lot of changes and awareness across Pakistan and now they have also taken up the responsibility of promoting the neglected sector of arts.

Over 26 artists from across the province participated in the competition while a large number of students and people from different fields participated in the event and appreciated this wonderful effort.

On this occasion, cash prizes were given to the winning artists, in which one category was for people with disabilities and one for physically healthy people.

Director FIA Abdul Rahman Khan, Assistant Commissioner Peshawar Rao Muhammad Hashim, Deputy Director Youth

Affairs Hamidullah Khan, District Youth Officer Sajid Afridi, Social Media Activist Yousef Jan Uthmanzai, Deputy Director Afghan Commissionerate Kifayatullah and various People belonging to NGOs and welfare organizations also participated in large number. Sidra Saeed Qazi, also participated who is paralyzed from the neck down and disabled on both hands, is an excellent artist.

The participants of the competition thanked the Friends of Paraplegics and the Department of Youth Affairs for organizing the "Art for All" festival at the Paraplegic Center Peshawar, wherein spinal cord injury victims were taught how to start life in a new way despite their disability.

The artists who came first in two different categories were awarded prize of 25/25 thousand rupees each, while the second and third position artists were awarded Rs15, 15 and 10, 10 thousands rupees respectively.

In the event, the book launching of some disabled writers were also performed, including Captain Asifullah Khan's motivational book "Flying High with Broken Wings" written on a smart phone by the paralyzed finger of Captain Asifullah Khan and poet Khasim Umar's Pashto poetry book "Sata Da Khamisi Tarjuman koma".

Engr Irfan, the spirit of the program, thanked the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa saying that the entire society should take steps for the promotion of art like other fields for the benefit of people with disabilities.

SMC participants visit SEZ

PESHAWAR (APP): As part of the study tour the participants of 32nd Senior Management Course (SMC) visited Rashakai Special Economic Zone, the other day, said a press release issued here on Thursday. The delegation was received by the Chief Commercial Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Adil Salahuddin and team of the Special Economic Zones and China Pakistan Economic Corridor Projects team.



In brief

Tribesman seeks justice F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Resident of Mirdad Khel village of Landi Kotal has alleged the police officials of favoring his opponent in a land dispute case and demanded of the authorities to take departmental action against them. Addressing to a press conference held here in Landi Kotal press club on Thursday Fazal Karim said that since long they had land dispute with his co-tribesmen namely Honar Wali, Daraz Ali and presently the case was under process in the civil court of Landi Kotal and it issued stay order on the construction work in the disputed land. However his opponent who was rich and an influential person started building work in the undecided territory. When he approached the local police station to materialize the stay order, they for one reason or another refused to make the court order effective. He accused them of contempt of court and said the police collected illicit money from his opponent and let him continue the construction work. He demanded of the police hignup to provide him justice by stopping work at the disputed piece of land as he could not bear influence of the powerful person. When Additional Station House Officer (SHO) Landi Kotal police station Azmat wali Shinwari was contacted on the matter he said that they strictly followed the order of the court and never thought of contempt of court. Regarding the case he said that last day on the direction of the court he sent police persons accompanied by belief at the spot for necessary process and after it no one approached him for any legal action.

Anit-polio drive launched F.P. Report

BUNER: The Deputy Commissioner Shahid Ali Khan on Thursday administered polio drops and vitamin A to kids and formally launched polio drive in Buner district. The DC shared that total 19700 kids under 5 years of age would be vaccinated through 722 teams of trained polio workers t during this campaign. On the occasion DPO Salahuden Kundi.ADC Akhtar Nawaz,ADC Latiefur Rehman,DHO Dr.Qazi Afsar,WHO representative Dr Farmanullah,EPI Coordinator Dr.Lal Bacha,DHQ hospital Daggar DMS Dr.Farooq Khan,DSP Roshan Zada and other member of the DPEC. DC told media persons that polio cases in the merged districts were posed threats to kids. The DC appealed Public for supporting polio workers to achieve the task successfully.

Campaign launched F.P. Report

SWABI: Local police, district administration and social welfare department here Thursday launched a campaign to provide assistance to drug addicts and shift them to rehabilitation center for treatment. Teams of police, administration and social welfare department visited various areas of the district and rounded up thirty two drug addicts. They were later sent to rehabilitation center under the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer, Zafar Khan. It is worth mentioning that joint campaign has launched to rehabilitate drug addicts, provide them treatment and enable them to become a useful part of society.

Snowfall in hilly areas of Dir continues

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: It continued to rain for the third consecutive day in the plains of Lower Dir and Upper Dir here on Thursday while the hills in parts of both the districts received more snowfall, residents said. They said the snowfall continued at Lowari Top, Kumrat, Doog Dara, Ganshal, Barawal Top in Upper Dir and Shahi, Laram Top, Kalpani, Sheen Ghar and Asman Banda in Lower Dir. Around two feet snowfall was reported in the Qulandai area near the Lowari Tunnel.

The district administration has directed the motorists to use snow chains while passing through the tunnel. The residents remained confined to their houses in the hilly areas due to heavy snowfall and severe cold. The power supply remained disrupted in most of the upper parts of Lower and Upper Dir. Several link roads leading to Doog Dara, Gulдай village and Ganshal remained blocked either to heavy snowfall or land sliding. The Upper Dir administration cleared the roads for vehicular traffic but the residents complained the

roads were again closed.

The snowfall also continued at the Laram Top and Shahi Top in Lower Dir on Thursday attracting a large number of local visitors to enjoy the scene.

The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi meanwhile directed the assistant commissioner Samarbagh Suhail Khan and KPHA engineer Aurang Zeb to clear the Shahi Top road for vehicular traffic by removing the snow from the road. The road leading to the top remained closed due to heavy snow for the last two days.

Local farmers expressed pleasure over the recent spell of rain and said it would have good effects on the growing wheat crops in the area. The Meteorological department forecast more rain and snowfall in Dir on Thursday night and Friday (today).

Talking to this reporter the farmers said the wheat and other standing crops needed rain as there had been no rains for the last one month. They said the recent snowfall would also add to the underground water tab in wells in the plain areas.

‘Elahi behavior with Hafizabad like step-mother’

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: The Chief Minister of Punjab is treating Hafizabad district like a step mother after inducting the district Hafizabad in newly created Gujrat Division and rights of the people of the district Hafizabad are being denied. This was stated by the President Awami Mahaz Hafizabad, (a social organisation working for protection of people rights) Rana Khalid Mehmood while addressing a meeting of the organisation.

He said that the Punjab government was started recruitment of police cops in Gujrat Division and only 20 posts were given to district Hafizabad which was facing shortage of cops already while 500 posts were given to district Mandi Bahauddin and 182 to district Gujrat where existing posts of cops were much more than the district Hafizabad which is showing obvious discrimination with the distinct Hafizabad.

He said that this injustice of the Punjab government was prevailed unrest among

people of the district whereas the meeting was declared that spending of Rs. 500 billion in Gujrat and Mandi Bahauddin districts was also a open injustice with other districts of the Punjab province including Hafizabad which would be caused prevailing seance of deprivation among the masses. The meeting demanded the Chief Minister of the Punjab Chaudhary Pervez Elahi to review his decision and distributed posts of cops and development funds equally among all districts of the Gujrat Division and other districts.

Wheat quota increased: In order to ensure provision of wheat flour to people in abundance, the quota of wheat for flour mills has been enhanced on the special directions of the Chief Minister Punjab while now numbers of 10 kg flour bags have also increased from 8673 to 9640 on daily basis in the district. This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner Touqeer Ilyas Cheema while reviewing demand and supply of flour wheat in the district.

Political and economic instability isolate country: JI

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan has said the political and economic instability has isolated the country in the comity of nations. He was addressing a function at Jamia Hayatul Muslimeen, a local religious seminary in Koto Hajiabad as chief guest here on Thursday. The function was also addressed by the JI former MNA Maulana Attaur Rehman, former district nazim Ihsanul Haq and others. A total of 30 female and 10 male graduates were awarded with certificates on completion of their courses on the occasion.

Mushtaq Khan said that students of the religious seminaries fought side by side with the security forces when the country frontiers were at risk. Lauding the role of seminaries, he said that a total of 3.3 million students enrolled in those seminaries across the country got free education, food and course books. He said that about 80 million children in the country were illiterate due to lack of interest on the government part. He said that over 90 million people in the country lived beneath the poverty line. The JI lawmaker said the interest-based banking and economic system had ruined the very foundation of Islamic justice system. The JI former MNA Maulana Attaur Rehman said the religious seminaries were the strong forts of Islam. He said the students of religious seminaries played a vital role in preaching the true principles of Islamic system. He said the religious institutions were the custodians and protectors of Islamic values and norms and every conspiracy against them would be foiled with the help of people.

Budget making: Expert at a consultative workshop held at Timergara here on Thursday said that the participation of citizens in budget making should be ensured through legislation in order to make it people-friendly. The Citizens Network for Budget Accountability (CNBA) in collaboration with the Pro-Growth organization arranged the workshop for citizens' awareness. The CNBA district coordinator Zubairullah, Imranullah and other experts spoke on the occasion. The speakers said the governments should upload its quarter, biannual and annual reports along with annual audit reports on the auditor general website for more transparency. They said the Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) had issued its third report regarding the budget transparency suggesting an effective role of the parliament and active participation of common citizens in the budget making process.



LOWER DIR: Police officials help an ambulance driver to pass on snow covered road near Lowari Tunnel on Thursday. — F.P. photo

PPP activists flays office-holders

F.P. Report

PABBI: The performance of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa does not satisfactory while activists argued central leadership pave way for new cabinet to mobilize public for general election 2023.

According to sources, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto has shortlisted former provincial president Humayun Khan, general secretary Liaqat Shabab and one other to lead the party at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Because organizational activities have been stopped since which will impact party badly in upcoming general election 2023.

Thar Ji Lok Daahap book review

Tolaram Suthar

MR. Bharu Mal Amrani, who is the writer of this book, is a renowned researcher and historian. He has written on the people, their traditions and folk wisdom of Tharparkar in his unique way. He used to write continuously regarding Thar. His many books on Tharparkar have been published. This book “The Folk Wisdom of Thar” is a unique scientific and research effort, in which the folk wisdom of Thar has been highlighted in detail. This book is consisting of eleven chapters, preface is written by Dr. Abdul Aziz Rahmani, who himself is a famous researcher of Umarnkot.

The book is published by Civil Society Support Program, a famous NGO having its head office in Hyderabad. The Chief Executive Officer CSSP Mr. Noor Muhammad Bajear on behalf of organization writes in Publisher's Note, that CSSP has worked on compilation of history of the region alongwith other its other social activities. The organization wants to connect the society with the high values of its past through activities that highlight civilization, culture and folk wisdom. He writes that the high values and traditions of the past guarantee tolerance in the society. One of the reasons for the current chaos and anxiety in our society is that we have been become cut-off from the glorious traditions and values of the past.

The author of the book, Mr. Bharu mal Amrani writes that he belongs to an artist tribe Thar “Suthar tribe”. The folk wisdom has been left behind from the generation to generation. The topic of first chapter is “The Folklore of Thar and its Importance”, in this chapter many points of folk wisdom, which are related to natural calamities, are discussed briefly. These points emphasize the management and protection of community people in modern times, these all points are present in Thar's folklore. For example: participatory society, Better guidance, accurate assessments of natural disasters, livestock management, sustainable agricultural practices, construction of disaster resilience houses, public awareness system, relief and rehabilitation activities. Thus, on the one hand, the traditions of purity of relationships are strong in Thar, while birds and animals are being loved and cared. All Hindu festivals in Thar are associated with the seasons. During the season, fairs are held at the shrines of saints and sadhus, who promote tolerance, brotherhood, cultural diversity in Thar.

In the chapter of Signs, predictions

of forecast and Natural Disasters in Thar, it is described that how people of Thar live close to nature, who understand what is happening in nature and what is going to happen in near future. The signs like sudden changes in sounds, movements and body color of wildlife and livestock let them know what is going to happen in nature. Such folk wisdom is called omen. There are good and bad omens. During the time of sunset a star appears in the west. If in the month of Sawan the star does not rise then such omen is considered as sign of famine. They say that if your palm gets itchy you will get money. Itchy feet are considered as an omen of travel. Dozens of such beautiful couplets mention finding omens and relics in the folklore of Thar.

In next chapter of Cattle's care and treatment of animal disease in Thar, he has described that Thar is originally the land of Gauchar (the grazing land), the rich man is called Bhagyo (lucky person). The people of Thar mark their cattle according to their communities in order to know the cattle having any mark belongs to which community. There are many folk cerebral people of Thar, who easily recognize the feet of their thousands of cattle. If any person drinks milk, he understands that that is cow, buffalo, goat or camel's milk. In the end of this chapter the writer has written about famous cerebral people of Thar including Abdul Rauf Halepoti, who treats cattle with folk wisdom in Thar, Ama Salimat, Mehran, Gul Muhammad, Allah Warayo, Asghar Nohrio, Kanji Suthar, Fazil Soomro, Bhamro Joshi, and Ama Maan Bai.

The next chapter is on Agriculture, trees, plants, wildlife, and preparedness and mitigation of droughts in Thar. It is stated that Thar is basically a pasture land. After passing time people started ploughing lands. In British period the survey was conducted in 1885-86 and later on in 1935. The people who were ploughing lands, they were provided survey lands, while other grazing land was seized by Government. Nowadays people have started occupying Government lands and started to plough with tractors. He suggests that the land grant policy should be adopted in Thar on the principles of folk wisdom and revenue. If the problems are solved timely then the agriculture can be developed in Thar and for pastures lands can also be protected.

The author laments that we tend to forget folk wisdom while using of natural resources. Due to hunting of wildlife including harvesting, cutting of valuable plants and herbs a void is created that will never be filled, therefore the livelihood of large population

dependent on natural resources has come under threat. In the chapter of Folk Art and Skilled People, it is stated that there were two or four houses of skilled families were living in every main village of Thar. A good and powerful village in Thar was considered that one, in which skilled people of 18 professions were living. The villagers did not have to go out for any work. Later, when the ruling class started to consider the skilled people lower and inferior, then those artists came to the towns, they brought their skill and craftsmanship to the markets. The author reached to the art of blacksmiths in the ancient ruins of oldest city of Pari Nagar, where the signs of large iron factories also described by many historians. In the chapter of “The Art of Joining Bones”, the writer describes the entire process of joining the broken bones and its famous artisans. He has expressed the wisdom of Latif Sain's poetry while describing. Same time Thari artisans also fix broken bones of cattle.

In the chapter of Local Hakeems, the writer has explained that these Hakeems get the knowledge of the disease from the patients and calculate its prescriptions from pulse. There are many specialist hakeems, who put hand on the patient's pulse and treat the disease by understanding it. He has described the famous hakeems i.e. Maulana Abdul Haq Chandio, Maulana Abdul Hadi Chandio, Fakir Sobhu Khan Wasaipoto, Faqir Muhammad Bachal Wasaipoto, Faqir Sulaiman Memon and Motidan Charan. The herbs of Karunjhar mountain are also not forgotten in the chapter.

Many other aspects of life and folklore of Thar including knowledge, literature, patience, endurance, education, Thari music, and its composers are described at brief. The chapter of “Jury system in Thar and famous Decision Makers” describes that the Patels of the community have the care and improvement of their people. During the decision making, he listens to everyone to understand the issues. He listens attentively but assesses in the manner of talking like a psychologist. However such decision making is happening in all over the province. In this chapter of Inventors of Local Technics, the writer writes about inventor of modern technique of making wells with inverted masonry and famous hakeem Maulana Abdul Haq Chandio, the big name of folk wisdom Keso Dan Charan, leather craftsman Chetan Meghwar, the expert in the art of horse riding Mr. Khabar khan Chandio and many other names of folk wisdom.

Wildfire, an alarming threat to Biodiversity

Murad Khan

GHALANAI: A 35 years old Basharat Khan, who is working as Public Relation Relation officer in Rescue 1122 in District head quarter Ghallani of Mohmand Tribal district said that it was mid of Jun, when a phone call was received that wildfire had been taken place in Salala area near Pak-Afghan border, when the Rescue 1122 team reached the site, it was very much far-away from the main road and the intensity of fire blaze were so hot that no one can go near to the fire site, really this was the most dangerous firefighting operation of my five years career in Rescue 1122, as the firefighting vehicle could not reach the fire site, so we have to connect 3-5 pipes.

Mr. Basharat said that during operation when I sat on a rock for a while, my friend cried that a blaze is coming towards you, so we can hardly escape from that big blaze of fire and the intensity of the fire was so fast that it blew 2 pipe of firefighting vehicle.

He added that this was a beautiful area, filled from the precious trees and forest, but after the wildfire, all the area was looking barren and ugly. According to an official report submitted to Peshawar High Court, the wildfires affected an area of about 17,095 acres including trees on 488 hectares planted under the billion tree tsunami project in the province including in the Hazara region.

Report states that more than 454 incidents of forest fires were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year. However, the K-P Department

of Forests, Environment and Wildlife has officially confirmed only 283 fire incidents. The report submitted to the court, the wildfire damaged 36 hectares of the Hazara region and 140 hectares of the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project in the province.

According to a report compiled by the provincial forestry, environment and wildlife department, of the 210 wildfire incidents between May 23 and June 9, some 55 blazes have been started intentionally by local people and 12 due to dry weather conditions while the cause of another 143 blazes was unknown. According to sources, about 454 fires were reported in K-P till the end of June and of them, 48 were reported in Abbottabad, 50 in Mansehra, 58 in Haripur, 11 in Shangla, nine in Swabi, six in Battagram, 40 in Kohistan, two in Chitral Lower and one in Tharoh.

Gul Bashar Sheraz, deputy range officer in wildlife department of Mohmand district said that the number of fire incidents have been increased very much and more than 10 wildfire incidents have been reported in a single month. The Deputy Range officer of wildlife department said that the areas which were badly effects due to wildfire includes Khwaazi, Safi, Baizai, Halki Gandaw, Qalagai, Baizi boarder, Prang ghar, Nahji Tunnel, Bar sagighari, Dawezi kandaow Pandialai, Mulyanokalay (Kamaly Haleemzai), Shadaddera, Marina Khwaizi, Ambar Targhawo side, Shermakhano Gate, Angurkor Mechanai, Daniskul, Manzari china Baizai, Shamshabedmanai, Alligaar, Anargi, Mazarichina, Shamsha

Bedmanai, Jorragha (Ambar),Salala and Jarobidara Elazai.

Arsalan Tariq Awan, who is serving as Divisional Forest officer in Mohmand Tribal District said that nine incidents of wildfire have been reported in a single year. He said that the intensity of wildfire has been increased in the recent 2-3 years and one reason is the excessive use of Media (Electronic, Print and social media). In olden days these incidents were not reported due to lack of communication tools, but now if any kind of wildfire occurs, it is reported in minutes and the Forest and other departments responds on time.

Awan said that when a wildfire occurs in an area, anyone can call to came to Forest department, Rescue 1122 or they even can inform local district administration, after conformation of the news, we inform local administration, rescues 1122 and other line departments like civil defense and PRCS etc. by deploying our teams, we start a proper operation trying to involve district administration, all line departments and the local community by announcement in local mosques. Reaching on the site, our teams first identify the areas of wildfire, then draw a line 2-3 feet to safeguarded the remaining area. At the same time we are trying to establish a good communication with all the departments and stockholders taking part in this operation.”

Meanwhile Arsalan expressed his sorrow over the lack of interest by the local community in one of wildfire operation and said that we didn't get full support from local community, although the Assistant commis-

sioner along with local religious elder informed the local people through proper announcement in nearby mosques, but no one came to help us. They can help us in firefighting operation, because they know the escape routes very well, besides this they can guide us and help us physically. This fire was on the rage soil, which was very much important for the local community, as all the resources were used by them.

Tariq said that in case of Mohmand Tribal District more than 70% area are range soil, so it is very much difficult to overcome the wildfire in these areas, beside this the high intensity of wind and dry grasses makes the wildfire more aggressive. About the reasons of wildfire Mr. Arsalan said that there are five basic reasons of wildfire, when shepherds and tourists visits a forest, they do cooking in these areas, after cooking, they keep fire in open air and the wind spreads this open fire into a divesting wildfire. Sometime the visitors throw cigarette in the dry grass which causes wildfire. The third reason is related to the residents of that area, as they deliberately took fire on dry grasses for new and good quality of grass for their goats, sheep, cows and other animals.

The official documents provided by DFO Mohmand, shows the fourth reason of wildfire is the local people, when they goes for collecting honey and local berry (Called Gurgure in Pashto), so, for honey collection they blow fire on grasses to create smoke in order to run away bees and they can collect honey easily. They collect honey, but leave the fire in open air and

through the speedy wind, it covers the whole forest. The fifth and last reason of wildfire have been shown by Forest Department is the dispute amongst pashtun tribes on the boundary of Mohmand and Malakand.

About the misinformation and wrong speculations by some people that wildfire is deliberately blown by its department's officials he said that all the recorded incidents of wildfire have been occurred in range soil, which has neither any relation with Forest or other Govt. department, nor these trees or area were owned by forest department. He added that there is another conspiracy about wildfire that the govt. want to miss-interpret or hide the number of trees planted in Billion Tree Tsunami project, but this is totally wrong and misleading information, as according to the data of wildfire incidents there is no a single tree planted in those areas, where wildfire incidents occurred in Mohmand Tribal District.

The DFO upper Mohmand appealed the general public that don't leave fire and cigarette in open air, as a small flam of fire can destroy hundred miles of green and beautiful forest. He also requested the local community and shepherds to not blow their herb and shrubs in summer season, as it can engulf the whole forests and even their village and their homes also.

The official documents provided by District Forest office Mohmand, which shows that nine incidents of wildfire have been occurred in 2022 wildfire season, which has effected 330

Ha area. So far 4211 trees have been badly effected due to this wildfire.

Under the UN auspices, chaired by China, and hosted by Canada, the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030. In Landmark UN Biodiversity Agreement By 2030: Protect 30% of Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, inland waters; Reduce by \$500 billion annual harmful government subsidies; Cut food waste in half.

As Biodiversity is related directly on the herbs, shrubs, fruits, crops, forest, trees, insects, genetic species and animals. In short each and every organism in this universe has some special benefit. The environmental scientist believes that all these organisms directly or indirectly depends upon our food, lives and environment, so to minimize climate changes and to live in hormone with nature, it is very much important to safeguard our forests and trees from any kind of wildfire, as when wildfire occurs, it badly damages all the living organism and their habitats which directly depends upon our environment, climate and food. For the security of our food and livelihood, the govt. and all the related departments should take concrete steps to minimize the wildfire incidents and make sure the security of biodiversity.

The Writer is Radio Producer and freelance Environmental Journalist, who tweets on @Muradonline123



‘Total mess’ in China’s rural east as Covid wave hits hard

BEIJING (AFP): Exhausted doctors working overtime, tests and treatments nowhere to be found, and under-resourced clinics inundated with patients -- in Anhui, one of east China's poorest provinces, Covid hit hard. Since China reversed its zero-Covid policy last month, a whirlwind of cases has crammed hospitals with elderly patients and sparked a free-for-all over limited supplies of medicine.

And the country's wide wealth gap has fuelled healthcare disparities between cities and rural areas, with underdeveloped regions seeing a chronic lack of doctors, equipment and expertise. When the Covid wave hit in the second half of December, doctors in Anhui rapidly ran out of diagnostic kits and treatments. "Nobody tested for it, so we didn't know if we were positive or not," said Shao from a village near Bengbu, a city of 3.3 million people.

"It's been a total mess," he told AFP as he pulled on a cigarette. "Things were better when the government kept us all locked down." One doctor told AFP he was forced to work 14-hour days in December, when his two-room village clinic was inundated with up to 10 times more patients than usual.

The sick, he said, "had to line up outside" the building as the tiny waiting room was full. And in a nearby town, the head of a small health centre said medicine supplies became "so badly depleted that we had to suspend prescriptions". Overloaded clinics were ordered to send elderly patients with severe symptoms to larger city hospitals for better care, he said. In a back room of the health centre, a handful of patients on drips huddled at the end of a damp and dimly lit walkway, the empty seats between them signalling that the pressure had eased -- for now at least.

The crisis was more acute in the county town of Fengyang, where AFP saw dozens of patients in an observation room. "Don't leave things to chance. Protect yourself

properly against (the virus)," a red-and-white banner on one wall proclaimed. Several countryside interviewees said older people were dying in higher numbers than usual after showing symptoms. Sun, in his 30s, said "many of the elderly in this village weren't able to make it through" the disease, but declined to specify how many.

China has narrowed the definition of a Covid death, and just a few dozen fatalities have been officially recorded since the start of December. One village doctor said they knew of "around 50" who had died since the start of December, many of whom had underlying conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or high blood pressure. It was a much higher number than in previous winters, he added. But public discussion around the number of cases and deaths is taboo.

Several rural medical workers declined AFP interview requests, with one refusing to speak without official permission in case he "ended up saying something I shouldn't". Public health authorities in Bengbu, the city that administers the villages, did not respond to questions from AFP about the number of deaths, the size of the outbreak or preparations for reopening. Further north, in a dust-blown village in Shandong, locals herded goats and played Chinese chess -- masks few and far between in a part of the country not often visited by Western journalists.

But like everywhere in China, the virus was never too far away, with a street sign urging locals to "scientifically strengthen the prevention and control of the spread of the epidemic in accordance with the law". In the village of Xishan, a woman in her 50s said she was simply looking forward to "all the youngsters coming back" for the Lunar New Year, despite fears the holiday will bring a fresh Covid wave. Back in Anhui, a resident of similar age was not so sure. "We're really scared about it at the moment," she said.

5 dead after man drives into crowd in Guangzhou

BEIJING (BBC): Chinese police have arrested a man who drove a car into pedestrians in Guangzhou, killing five people and injuring 13 others. The incident has sparked widespread public outrage, with many accusing the man of deliberately targeting people. Videos posted online show the driver getting out of the car and throwing banknotes into the air, shortly after the crash.

Police have detained the 22-year-old man and launched an investigation. The crash took place during the evening rush hour at a busy junction in the southern city of 19 million. "He deliberately drove into the people who were waiting for the traffic light. He rammed the car into them maliciously. After that, he made a U-turn and hit people again," an eyewitness told local outlet Hongxin News.

"He wasn't driving too quickly, but some people couldn't run away in time because they wouldn't have known he was hitting peo-

ple deliberately." The man also reportedly drove into a traffic police officer and his motorcycle, but the officer managed to escape. One widely circulated clip shows a young girl lying on the ground at the scene of the incident, while a woman said to be her mother is seen by her side weeping.

Another eyewitness described the chaos of the aftermath on Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. The person said that an hour after the incident, the site was still filled with ambulances and traffic police "and they had not moved all the injured and the bodies from the scene". "The scene was too tragic and I couldn't bear seeing it. I felt so sad that I wanted to throw up whenever I heard the siren of the ambulance," the person said. The incident has sparked public anger, with many expressing sorrow that it happened in the lead-up to Chinese New Year, a time for family reunions.

"The victims could be a

girl who dressed up meticulously to go on a date... It could be a food deliveryman who earned five yuan after rushing an order. It could be a father who wanted to go home and have dinner with children. It could be a child who was happily shopping," one Weibo user wrote. Many noted that the man drove a luxury car and had thrown money into the air, and asked if he came from a rich and powerful family. The incident quickly became a trending topic on Weibo, but it later disappeared from the "hot searches" list, leading users to accuse the platform of censorship. There have been similar recent incidents. In February 2022, a driver ploughed a mini truck into people in the southern province of Fujian, killing three and injuring nine. Earlier this week, a hotel guest in Shanghai deliberately drove his car into the lobby following an argument with staff. Nobody was injured in that incident.

Taiwan officer reveals details of interaction with NATO

HSINCHU (Reuters): A Taiwan air force officer revealed details of a rare interaction between the island's military and NATO, describing how he had attended a six-month academic programme with senior officials in Italy. Taiwan, claimed by China as its own territory, has no formal diplomatic relations with any NATO members, but has close defence ties with the United States, the island's main international source of arms and NATO's largest member state.

Speaking to reporters on a trip to the Hsinchu air base in northern Taiwan, air force Lieutenant Colonel Wu Bong-yeng said he had attended a six-month course at the NATO Defence College in Rome in 2021, returning to Taiwan in January last year. "This was an academic exchange, not a military exchange," he said. "Of course they were very curious about Taiwan." "They need to understand our country's situation, and our abilities," he said. NATO, in response to questions on Wu's attendance, said it had no formal partnership with Taiwan.

"Over the years, NATO's educational institutions, such as the NATO Defense College and the NATO School Oberammergau, have engaged with actors from across the region, including from Taipei," a NATO official said, adding

these institutions are not part of NATO's command structure. The college said in a separate emailed statement that non-NATO entities personnel may also attend courses, with candidates "proposed to the NATO HQ that can approve or not the final participation". Taiwan's defence ministry told Reuters that Wu was not the first officer it had sent to the defence college. It did not elaborate.

While the Taiwanese and US militaries do cooperate, including some Taiwanese fighter pilots training in the United States, the island has only limited interactions with other foreign militaries. In its new strategic concept agreed in June, NATO described China as a challenge to the alliance's "interests, security and values", as an economic and military power that remains "opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up". China has increased its military, political and economic pressure on the island over the past three years to assert its sovereignty claims, which are strongly rejected by Taiwan. Taiwan has vowed to defend itself if attacked and says only the Taiwanese people can decide their future.

China again carried out combat exercises near Taiwan, the second time it has done so in less than a

month. In August, China staged large-scale war games around Taiwan to express anger at then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visiting Taipei. Hsinchu, better known internationally as a semiconductor production hub, is also home to one of the island's most important air bases with responsibility for the defence of Taiwan's north.

US military tanks at Dutch port

AMSTERDAM (Reuters): A large number of US army tanks and military vehicles began arriving at the Dutch port of Vlissingen, before heading to Poland and Lithuania as part of efforts to strengthen NATO's eastern flank. "There's about 1,250 pieces of military equipment coming into this port," said Col. Robert Kellam, overseeing the operation on the US side.

The equipment includes M-1 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, of Fort Hood, Texas. Dutch armed forces are helping with marine security and guarding the port area where the vehicles will be housed before they continue east.

Mexican students held, jailed

MEXICO CITY (AP): Students and civic groups in Mexico have expressed outrage over the arrest and jailing of three students who tried to plant trees on formerly government-owned land that was sold to a private developer. The three were jailed this week in the western city of Guadalajara on charges of illegal land seizure and carrying weapons. The weapons charge apparently refers to the picks and shovels they used to dig holes for the trees at the site during a weeks-long protest in 2021.

The students and local residents want a park on the large tract of land, not the high-rise luxury apartment building planned by developers. Many in Guadalajara were angered by the harshness of the charges against Iván Cisneros, Javier Armenta and José Rojas. "The excessive abuse of power against three young people who held a peaceful protest ... has reached a dangerous level that shows a lack of limits, and principles," wrote Cesar Barba, the director of higher education at the University of Guadalajara. "Anyone who seeks justice is at risk of being put in jail."

The topic is touchy because the large plot in question used to be owned by the city and had been earmarked for a public park. But in a murky transaction in 2008, it was ceded to developers in exchange for public works that local media reported were never completed. Mexico's cash-strapped municipal governments sometimes sign off on such land-for-building deals, but they are seldom transparent. And real estate developers can wield outsized influence and act unchecked in Mexico.

Calls and messages to the developers' offices for comment went unanswered. But the focus quickly shifted to Enrique Alfaro, the governor of Jalisco state, where Guadalajara is located, given the prosecutors' zeal. Alfaro posted a statement saying the charges were justified, but that he would try to get the students out on a form of bail pending trial.

"Nobody has been arrested for protesting," Alfaro said, noting "the land that these young people say is a park, is not a park, it is private property." The civic group Hagamos Jalisco said in a statement that the 2021 protest was peaceful.

"The demonstration involved reforesting the area, passing out information to neighbors, and camping out in the area," the group said. "Later, they were kicked out with excessive force and violence." Keeping the students jailed until their court dates later this week "is a disproportionate measure, based on the lie that they had weapons," the group said. Ricardo Villanueva, the rector of the University, wrote on his social media pages that the three had been released pending trial, apparently on a form of personal recognizance.

Canada sends armored vehicles to Haiti

OTTAWA (Reuters): Canada delivered armored vehicles to Haiti to help combat criminal gangs as the Caribbean nation faces a humanitarian crisis, the Canadian foreign ministry said. Canadian military aircraft made the delivery to the Haitian National Police in the capital Port-au-Prince, it added.

Haitian gangs have seized control of much of the country since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, leading to routine gun battles with police. Hundreds died in turf battles last year, and in September, Haitian gangs blocked a fuel terminal for nearly six weeks, halting most economic activity. Canada and the United States provided tactical and armored vehicles and other supplies in October after Haiti urged the international community to send in a "specialized armed force." Ottawa has also sanctioned Haitians accused of gang ties, including a former president, two ex-prime ministers and three high-profile entrepreneurs. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters in Mexico City the sanctions and aid were "making a difference" in Haiti.

Russia blames Armenia for breakdown in Azerbaijan talks



TBILISI (Reuters): Russia blamed Armenia on Thursday for a breakdown in peace talks with Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, in the latest sign of friction between allies Moscow and Yerevan over the conflict. Armenia and Azerbaijan have for months been in talks to broker a peace deal over Nagorno-Karabakh - a breakaway enclave internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but home to a mainly Armenian population.

For the past month, Azeris claiming to be environmental activists have blocked transport along the only road linking Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia in what Yerevan has called a government-endorsed blockade. Baku says the protesters have legitimate concerns over illegal Armenian mining, and have denied that the region is under blockade. In a statement on Thursday, Russia blamed Armenia for cancelling peace talks between the two sides and called on Yerevan to come back to the negotiating table.

"It is difficult to assess Yerevan's position when their official statements differ so significantly," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. She

said Yerevan's decision to pull out of peace talks set for last month in Moscow "prevented us from discussing the peace treaty", adding: "If our Armenian partners are really interested in solving these problems ... then instead of engaging in scholasticism, it is necessary to continue working together."

Officials in Yerevan have grown increasingly angry at Russia - formally an ally through a mutual self defence treaty - for not doing more to end the blockade. Nagorno-Karabakh won de facto independence from Baku after a lengthy war in the early 1990s. After a second war in 2020, Azerbaijan retook territory in and around the enclave. A Moscow-bro-

kered ceasefire saw Russian peacekeepers deployed in the Lachin corridor linking Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia says Azerbaijan is not abiding by the ceasefire's provision for free movement along the Lachin corridor and wants Russian peacekeepers to do more to dislodge the protesters. Moscow has said it is doing everything it can to help. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said last month that Russian peacekeepers were not fulfilling their obligations under the 2020 ceasefire, and that, if they were unable to do so, they should make way for a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

At a news conference on Thursday marking a month since the start of the blockade, senior Nagorno-Karabakh separatist official Ruben Vardanyan distanced himself from Pashinyan's comments, saying that "futile" criticism of Moscow's peacekeepers only helped Azerbaijan. "The situation would obviously have been much harder if the Russian peacekeepers were not here," Vardanyan said, adding that he wanted the peacekeepers to remain in the area for "decades" and that their numbers should be increased.

Philippine court voids oil exploration pact involving China

MANILA (AP): The Philippine Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a 2005 pact by China, the Philippines and Vietnam to jointly explore for oil in the disputed South China Sea, a decision that also brings other proposed agreements into doubt.

The decision by 12 of the court's 15 justices voided the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking agreement by state-owned companies in the three nations, which are among Asian countries locked in decades-long territorial disputes in the busy waterway. Two justices dissented and one was on leave and did not vote. The court did not immediately make public the full decision and only released highlights in a statement.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in June last year, expressed willingness to revive failed negotiations for joint oil exploration with China in a meeting with his

Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, in Beijing last week. The court ruled that the 2005 agreement violated the constitution by allowing the state-owned oil companies of China and Vietnam to undertake joint oil exploration in Philippine waters. The charter specifies that "the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the state."

The petitioners argued that oil exploration in Philippine waters should be undertaken by Filipino citizens or corporations and groups that are at least 60% owned by Filipinos, according to the court. Proponents argued that the agreement only involved pre-exploration activities which were not covered by the constitutional prohibition. But the court said the accord's intent "is to discover petroleum which is tantamount to 'exploration.'"

The agreement led to a joint oil search in 142,886 square kilometers

(55,168 square miles) of sea, including waters claimed by the Philippines as part of its territory and other areas it contests with China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. Under President Rodrigo Duterte, Marcos's predecessor, the Philippines signed a 2018 agreement with China aimed at agreeing on terms for a possible joint oil and gas exploration in the disputed waters. But years of negotiations failed, mainly due to disagreement over which side has sovereign rights over the stretch of sea to be covered by the joint search. Duterte's administration terminated the agreement shortly before his six-year term ended last year. A 2016 ruling by a United Nations-backed arbitration tribunal invalidated China's extensive territorial claims based on historical grounds in the South China Sea. Beijing did not participate in the arbitration, rejected the decision and continues to defy it.

Police start clearing German village condemned for coal mine

LUETZERATH (AP): Police in riot gear began evicting climate activists from a condemned village in western Germany that is due to be demolished for the expansion of a coal mine. Some stones and fireworks were thrown as officers entered the tiny hamlet of Luetzerath, which has become a flashpoint of debate over the country's climate efforts.

Police spokesman Andreas Mueller said the attacks on officers were "not nice" but noted that most of the protest so far had been peaceful. He said police would stick to their tactic of trying to avoid any escalation by offering to let any activists who leave on their own accord to do so without facing further police measures or prosecution.

Still, some protesters complained of undue force by police and others said the scale of the police response — with officers brought in from across the country and water cannons on standby — was itself a form of escalation not justified by the peaceful protest. At least one woman screamed in apparent pain as officers used force to remove her from a road-block outside the village.

Dozens of activists remained camped out in Luetzerath, some in elaborate tree houses, as police slowly moved through the village clearing barricades and a communal soup kitchen. Some activists read books or played accordion while perched atop 10-foot (3-meter) tripods. A few sat or stood on the roofs of Luetzerath's remaining buildings despite the chilly wind.

"I'm really afraid today," Petra Schumann, a 53-year-old local who had been at the site for several days, said from a top-floor window of one

of the few remaining houses. Schumann said she still held out hope of preserving what's left of Luetzerath "until nothing is left standing; hope dies last." Environmentalists say bulldozing the village to expand the nearby Garzweiler coal mine would result in huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. The government and utility company RWE argue the coal is needed to ensure Germany's energy security.

However, a study by the German Institute for Economic Research calls into question the government's stance. Its authors found other existing coal fields could be used instead, though the cost to RWE would be greater. Another alternative would be for Germany to increase production of renewable power, cut demand through energy efficiency measures, or import more coal or gas from abroad, the study found.

Citing the study and the urgent need to curb global carbon emissions, protesters refused to heed a court ruling that effectively banned them from the area. Some activists expressed particular anger at the environmentalist Green party, which is part of both the regional and national governments that reached a deal with RWE last year allowing it to destroy the village in return for ending coal use by 2030, rather than 2038.

Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck, a Green who is Germany's economy and climate minister, defended the agreement as "a good decision for climate protection" that fulfills many of the environmentalists' demands and saves five other villages from demolition. "I think climate protection and

protests need symbols but the empty hamlet of Luetzerath, where no one lives any more, is the wrong symbol from my point of view," Habeck told reporters in Berlin.

Climate campaigners counter that expanding a massive open-cast coal mine goes against Germany's international commitments to reduce emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases. The country is expected to miss its ambitious targets for the second year in a row. Luetzerath "is now the European place of crystallization for the climate movement," said Lakshmi Thevasagayam, a spokeswoman for the Luetzerath Lives activist group. "We know that the coal under Luetzerath isn't needed for energy security — it must remain in the ground so that we can achieve climate justice."

"Now we can do something against the climate catastrophe, but at some point we won't be able to any more," Thevasagayam said. She accused that police of engaging in "a complete escalation" by moving ahead with the eviction. RWE said in a statement that a 1.5-kilometer (nearly one-mile) fence will be built around the site. It appealed to activists to peacefully "end the illegal occupation" of the site it legally owns. Andreas Mueller, the police spokesman, said authorities were prepared for the eviction operation to last weeks, if necessary.

The heads of several environmental organizations planned to visit Luetzerath on Thursday to express solidarity with the activists there. A large protest was also scheduled near the site Saturday, attended by prominent Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg.

Britain criticises erosion of freedoms in Hong Kong

LONDON (Reuters): Britain criticised on Thursday what it said was the systematic erosion of freedoms in Hong Kong by the Chinese government and a crackdown on free speech by authorities in the former British colony. The criticism, contained in the government's latest six-monthly report on Hong Kong, accused China of diminishing the way of life promised to the people of Hong Kong and repeated its view that Beijing had broken the terms of its 1997 handover.

"Freedoms are being systematically eroded by Beijing on multiple fronts, tightening the restrictions on the lives of ordinary Hong Kongers," British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said in the foreword of the report, which covered the first half of 2022. "The authorities con-

tinue to crack down on free speech, the free press, and free assembly. Individuals and civil society groups are censoring themselves, and most independent news outlets have been forced to close." The Chinese embassy in London did not immediately respond to a request for comment. China has in the past responded to similar criticism by accusing Britain of acting with a colonial mindset.

Hong Kong returned from British to Chinese rule more than 25 years ago with a deal guaranteeing a high degree of autonomy, including freedom of speech, under a "one country, two systems" formula. "There is no doubt that China is failing to comply with the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Hong Kong's rights and freedoms have been sacrificed to

facilitate greater control by Beijing, undermining Hong Kong's autonomy," Cleverly said. "China is diminishing the way of life promised to Hong Kong 25 years ago."

In June 2020, Beijing imposed a national security law to punish terrorism, collusion with foreign forces, subversion and secession with possible life imprisonment. That legislation has been repeatedly condemned by British authorities. Critics say authorities are using it to stifle dissent, a charge officials in Hong Kong and Beijing reject. Earlier this week Hong Kong and Chinese authorities expressed strong opposition after a British minister met the legal team of Jimmy Lai, a jailed pro-democracy Hong Kong tycoon and founder of the now shut pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily.

The Frontier Post

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Public issues, administrators’ business

OIL and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has approved a 74 percent increase in the prescribed prices of natural gas for the fiscal year 2022-23. According to the details, the regulator allowed Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) to increase prices by up to 74.42 percent, while it also allowed Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) to increase gas prices by 67.75 percent for the current year.

The unhindered provision of utilities has always been an important priority for pro-public governments around the world. Most nations handed over these businesses to the private sector and keep an efficient oversight over the smooth provision of essential needs of the masses. However, the governments in third-world countries including Pakistan had made these public services lucrative businesses for them and often used these needs as an effective tool to exploit general problems for political gains and point scoring. Pakistan has massive infrastructures for the provision of essential utilities including electricity, gas, water, sewerage as well as communication services while hundreds of thousands of men and women are employed with hefty payments and colossal incentives but no single department is neither generating profit for the country nor it provides satisfactory services to the public. WAPDA, OGDCL, NEPRA, OGRA, and many other entities failed to overcome the shortage and management issues of their provisions, neither those departments slashed gigantic emoluments of their employees nor they had been able to reduce the departmental deficit. However, those public departments are relentlessly adding to the public woes through their myopic and ill-designed tariff and taxation policies on regular basis.

Currently, bureaucrats had planned to raise the prices of natural gas by almost three-fourths of the current rates without considering the miserable conditions of the masses. In fact, Pakistan's public service has stopped recruiting and producing talented and faithful minds, thus politicized and self-serving executives roam everywhere and the public is crying out their fortune. Realistically, the service departments should first overhaul themselves by overcoming their line losses, pilferages, and misuse of resources so these issues neither create hurdles in their operation nor put an unjust burden on customers and people used to pay charges for utilities instead of suffering incompetence and misconduct of government institutions.

Armenia, a new NATO’s confederate

RECENTLY, the Armenian Prime Minister has refused to host military drills planned by a Russia-led Defense Alliance, scheduled to be held later this year. Armenian leader also criticized the Russian peacekeepers for their failure to secure free transit along the Lachin corridor which connects mainland Armerina with the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Reports suggest that the Armenian government is upset with the CSTO arrangement to defend its member nations thus Yerevan seriously considering altering its relationship with Moscow vis-a-vis Europe.

Armenia had been a close ally of the Russian Federation and a founding member of the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) over the past decades. Moscow and Yerevan are linked with multiple trade, economic, and security pacts, and both nations are active members of the Eurasian Economic Union. Armenia hosts a permanent Russian military base on its territory, while Russia resolutely backed Armenia's claim over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, and played a crucial role in reaching a peace deal with Azerbaijan in 2020. Currently, over 2000 Russian peacekeepers are deployed in the Lachin corridor to maintain peace and ensure the safe passage of travelers along a corridor linking Armenia and the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh that Azerbaijani activists have blocked since last month.

The recent statement of the Armenian government clearly reflects a growing tension between Yerevan and Moscow as the Russian government did not act sufficiently on repeated requests of Armenian authorities for removing the blockade and restoring normal transit through the Lachin corridor being the peacekeeper and guarantor of the 2020 treaty. But Moscow maintained a low profile by adopting a wait-and-see strategy amid the ongoing war in Ukraine, while the Azeri government also accused Russia of supporting Armenia and threatened to involve the United Nations and Western countries in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Currently, Putin had been caught between the two stones of a watermill, as his close ally expressed annoyance and sought assistance from the western nations to help restore peace in its highly contested region while at the same time, a displeased neighbour also has similar thoughts which can facilitate western alliance to land easily in Kremlin's backyard to create a worst nightmare for Putin.

Interestingly, Armenian moves come after the regional alliance held a moot in Yerevan about two weeks ago in a bid to satisfy an estranged member and restore its belief in the effectiveness and functionality of the politico-security mechanism of regional nations. The disagreements between the two sides are deeper than the mere issue of military drill, as earlier Armenian government declared a Russian politician and Deputy Chair of the Doma's Committee on Post-Soviet Affairs and Eurasian Integration as persona non grata due to his comments against Arminian Prime Minister and alleged interference in Armenia's domestic politics. Meanwhile, there had been growing anti-Russia sentiments in the Arminian public over Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a rising consensus among the Arminian government to quit the CSTO alliance and link the country's future with the west.

Apparently, another Ukraine is in making in the Caucasian nation which is purely in sight of the western bloc, as multiple high-level American and European delegations visited Yerevan in recent months that not only widening the gap between the two allies but also rapidly bridging gaps and strengthening ties between Armenia and Europe. Apparently, NATO has successfully broken away a CSTO's confederate and now sprawling in Moscow's backyard, however, Putin's response to the latest development is unclear so far.

Quote of the day

“A river cuts through rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence.”

— Jim Watkins

Right now it’s fashionable to talk about national interests and even restraint, but with these folks, how much of it is sincere?

IN justifying the Iraq War to the American people, George Bush in part invoked a grandiose framing centered around the liberation of the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

This Wilsonian impulse to spread freedom was a staple of Republican foreign policy rhetoric for years, central to the military adventurism that became commonly associated with the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

However, with the emergence of Donald Trump, this line of thinking experienced a formidable challenge, a GOP presidential candidate seemingly willing to question the assumptions and platitudes that had dictated his party's foreign policy for years. On the campaign trail in 2016, Trump distanced himself considerably from his fellow Republican candidates with his pronounced willingness to condemn the Iraq War, while promising a presidency that would end the endless wars.

Unfortunately, Trump did not exactly follow through on his campaign platform. While expressing skepticism towards continued military intervention in the Middle East — Syria and Afghanistan in particular — troops remained engaged in such conflicts throughout his time in office. Additionally, Trump sustained U.S. support for

Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen.

Despite this, Trump did achieve something more intangible: a shift in the conversation within the Republican foreign policy realm. In the aftermath of his presidency, establishment figures within the party have increasingly jet-tisoned Wilsonian idealism in selling their respective foreign policy stances to the American public, instead turning their attention more squarely towards self-interest.

One may first look at such a development as a harbinger towards a more restrained Republican foreign policy moving forward. In reality though, many of the figures and institutions increasingly employing such language have not in fact shifted their position towards restraint, but have instead simply co-opted “America First” realist language to sustain the hawkish status quo.

Take Mitch McConnell's stance towards Ukraine. In explaining his support for the most recent \$45 billion aid package, he stated quite bluntly that “the most basic reasons for continuing to help Ukraine degrade and defeat the Russian invaders are cold, hard, practical American interests.”

While one would be hard pressed to actually name these “cold, hard” interests, McConnell's line of reasoning is a marked divergence

from his past justifications for maintaining ground forces in the Middle East, which in part invoked America's “indispensable” role in the international system. But more significant is the lack of substantive change corresponding with this rhetorical shift. Ultimately, McConnell's view on American military hegemony has not changed; indeed, he still views it as inherently virtuous and necessary.

McConnell's turn is by no means an outlier. In a recent Wall Street Journal piece, Walter Russell Mead highlights Senator Tom Cotton's own purported embrace of realism. Mead details Cotton's rejection of two divergent strains of Democratic foreign policy-making, those being the “technocratic progressivism” geared towards transforming the world in the United States' liberal image, and the “frank, Anti-Americanism” that aims to disarm and weaken the United States.

To Mead, Cotton has wisely rejected both of these lenses, instead turning to a practical focus on self-interest. While those on the right may applaud this approach, it is unfortunately a facade. Though ostensibly pivoting to realism, Cotton's foreign policy views have not actually changed. For example, he remains adamant in his sup-

Andrew Earvolino

port for the Saudis in the ongoing Yemen War, opposes military withdrawals from Syria and Iraq, and has been lockstep with the Republican establishment in terms of support for Ukraine.

Perhaps Cotton aims to emulate former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a self-described disciple of “realism, restraint, and respect” who nonetheless operated in a decidedly bellicose fashion vis a vis Iran and China during his time in the Trump administration. Clearly, Pompeo recognized the expediency of co-opting realism and restraint, allowing him to perpetuate the long-standing zero-sum Republican approach towards Iran and ushering in the same sort of dynamic with China.

The positions of such figures stand consistent with developments at the organizational level, too, as seen quite clearly at the Hudson Institute. In the past, Hudson scholars fully embraced the quixotic ambitions of neoconservatism, seen in the writings of adjunct fellow Norman Podhoretz, and current senior fellow Douglas Feith, who as an undersecretary for policy in the Bush Pentagon (and protege of neoconservative icon Richard Perle) was one of the chief architects of the Iraq War.

Today, Hudson retains a hawkish approach to Russia and China, rejecting concerns over escalation in their continued support to Ukraine, and advancing extremely bellicose policies vis a vis China. Notably though, they now largely avoid both neoconservative bromides and the liberal invocation of international norms and principles in promulgating such views, instead framing their positions through an American self-interest prism.

To this point, Senior Fellow Nadia Schadlow, who spent the GWOT as a neoconservative funder at the Smith Richardson Foundation, recently wrote a piece entitled “Conservative U.S. Statecraft for the 21st Century.” While ostensibly presenting a fresh perspective on foreign policymaking, the piece in reality offers justifications rooted in “realistic” approaches and “conservative principles” to sustain U.S. military primacy abroad, stating that “military power is a necessary foundation for keeping the peace.” It also perpetuates the framing of adversaries through a zero-sum ideological lens, with Schadlow noting Iran's supposedly “messianic objectives” and China's determination to “displace the United States”.

Schadlow's analysis is consistent with other analysis from the Hudson

Institute, incorporating realist rhetoric to advance the status quo. Such can be seen in the works of fellow Senior Arthur Herman, who recently wrote that \$45 billion defense package to Ukraine is “money the U.S. can't afford not to spend,” and that a “revived defense manufacturing base supporting Ukraine will be critical for our own ability to defer antagonists and protect our interests elsewhere.”

It's obvious that the conservative establishment has put its collective finger up to the wind and judged that there is no more appetite for the Wilsonian idealism of the pre-Trump years. Co-opting “realism” and “America First” allows them to reach the base, while at the same time putting distance between themselves and the liberal internationalist left, using the language of “national interest” rather than what they dismiss as progressive universalism.

One should not be deceived though. This rhetorical shift has not changed the actual underlying belief sets of the Hudson Institute or the aforementioned political operators. In their minds, it appears, American military predominance is still necessary to defeat ideological foes; the same old, same old hawkish foreign policy thinking.

And what should the West do in this situation?

BOTH the capture of Soledar and the appointment of Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov as commander of the Joint Group of Forces draw additional attention to what is happening on the fronts, without canceling the understanding that the path to victory will be long and difficult. The fighting has long been drawn out, and there is no chance that Western support for Ukraine will weaken, let alone stop. And the point here is not the already promised deliveries of tanks, armored personnel carriers and other things - the point is that a bet has been made on a protracted war. Moreover (although this bet was made a long time ago) recently there has been a rethinking of this concept itself, that is, the forms in which it can proceed, and even its results.

Initially, the West chose mainly from two options. The longest possible war of attrition, in which all support for Ukraine is aimed at containing and exhausting Russia. So that in the end victory will be given to us at the highest possible price - human, economic, geopolitical. And ideally, the path to it was not passed by us to the end: because it would lead to confusion and the collapse of Russia (but this is already a completely advantageous option for the West, which by and large does not depend on it, because here the Russians must flog themselves).

The second option is to bet on the victory of Ukraine, for which it is necessary not only to wear down Russia, but also to inflict a serious military defeat on it, in particular, to take away the Donbass and Crimea. Although there are those among the Western establishment who sincerely believe in the possibility of defeating Russia at the hands of Ukraine and are not afraid of a nuclear war, this option was still much less popular than the first one.

But now the third option

is being discussed more and more actively - a protracted war in itself. That is, without leading to the defeat of any of the parties and at the same time allowing the West to maintain and even strengthen control over Ukraine. Moreover, at the same time and partially restore relations with Russia, having received guarantees from her that the conflict will not escalate beyond the borders of Ukraine.

Amazing naive? No, quite a serious text on Foreign Affairs " Long battle in Ukraine " with the subtitle "The West needs a plan for a protracted conflict with Russia." Signed by Ivo Daalder and James Goldgaier, the former not an ordinary analyst (now president of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs), and the latter a former US ambassador to NATO (during Obama's first term) and director of European affairs at the National Security Council (under Clinton).

The authors begin by criticizing the Western approach, which chooses from two options - not the ones we described above (because no one in the West recognizes the existence of a war strategy of attrition for Russia), but the options of "victory for Ukraine" and "achieving peace through negotiations." Daalder and Goldgaier call on unconvincing bets on both the military victory of Kiev, and on peace negotiations with Moscow, which is not going to give up on achieving its goals. And they consider a stalemate on the battlefield quite likely:

“Both sides will try to feel for weaknesses in the enemy's defenses, but if a more significant collapse does not befall either of them, the line of confrontation will most likely remain more or less where it is. The depletion of material resources and the lack of personnel can even lead to long pauses in hostilities, which can help achieve ceasefire agreements, even if they are temporary. Not all wars end. And not all of them end in peace. The Korean War ended in a

truce, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War led to "disengagement agreements", which in the case of Israel and Syria are still in force. And Russia is even more accustomed to living with frozen conflicts, including in Georgia and Moldova.

The examples cited with the Far and Middle East, of course, are completely incorrect: in the first case, it was a direct conflict between the United States and China (with mainly indirect participation of the USSR), and in the second, Arabs and Jews fought among themselves with the support of Moscow and Washington. Now hostilities are taking place on the territory of historical Russia, that is, the West is trying to solve the internal problem of this country by cutting off from it (not formal, as in 1991, but actual) the western part. But in this case, what is important is where the authors of Foreign Affairs are driving:

“If Ukrainians face such a bleak future — that is, a situation in which a state of military conflict with or without intense fighting persists — the West will need a multi-vector long-term strategy that does not imply indifference to the future of Ukraine or refusal to contact Russia on issues that represent mutual interest. While it is difficult for the West to imagine cooperating with Putin and his regime at the moment, in the long run it may not have much choice.<...>

There is an urgent need to look at the longer term of the conflict and develop policies towards both Russia and Ukraine based on the emerging reality that hostilities are likely to continue for quite some time. Instead of believing that the confrontation can be ended with victory or negotiations, the West needs to reflect on a situation in which the conflict continues, but neither victory nor peace is in sight.”

And what should the West do in this situation? Keep Ukraine in your

Petr Akopov

hands and make agreements with Russia! Yes, there are those who believe in such a possibility:

“Western states and their allies will need to continue to provide Ukraine with military support to defend against further Russian attacks and contain Russia's larger ambitions by maintaining economic sanctions and diplomatically isolating it. And they will need to ensure that the conflict does not escalate. At the same time, the West will need to lay a long-term foundation for security and stability in Europe. This will require the full integration of Kiev and the West in the development of a containment policy that emphasizes both preventing a Russian offensive and engaging Moscow in efforts to prevent the conflict from escalating into a larger military confrontation, which no one wants”.

That is, the war will go on in a sluggish mode for years, and in the meantime, the States will prepare Ukraine's entry into NATO and the EU:

“The United States and NATO countries need to make a security commitment to provide Ukraine with the weapons it needs to defend against Russia in the long term, just as the United States has done with Israel for decades. And Washington, together with its allies, must work to increasing the prospects for the EU membership promised to Kyiv, while simultaneously addressing the issue of possible entry into NATO.

Meanwhile, Russia will need to be contained and politically isolated by all means, maintaining all sanctions and convincing the countries of the South that Russia is to blame for their disasters. But at the same time to offer it to reach agreements on strategic stability:

“However, along with the containment of Russia and its political and economic isolation, the West will also need to maintain

channels of communication with the Kremlin in order to avoid a direct war between Russia and NATO and maintain strategic stability. With continued intense fighting in Ukraine between the West and Russia, it is unlikely that wide-ranging negotiations. But, as in the last Cold War, there may be scope for both sides to take confidence-building measures to avoid confrontation: neither wants one. New START Treaty, which expires in 2026, and which provides for intrusive verification and information sharing on nuclear weapons held by both Russia and the United States.

That is, with one hand we are fighting against Russia in Ukraine, and with the other we offer it negotiations on START - Moscow is also interested in an agreement? At the same time, the logic is ironclad, because we, the Americans, managed to combine the policy of containment and diplomacy in relations with Russia before, why not this time? The fundamental difference between situations - and historical time - is simply ignored.

Moreover, there is even confidence that the West and Russia will be able to agree on a new European security architecture:

“Eventually, both the West and Russia will have to accept some version of the agreements that the United States and its allies made with the Soviet Union between 1975 and 1990 in order to avert worse consequences and ensure greater stability in Europe. The Helsinki Final Act 1975 committed all parties to recognize existing borders and seek to change them only by peaceful means. The Vienna Document, signed in 1990 and periodically updated in subsequent years, was a set of confidence-building measures that limited hostilities, provided for the exchange of information on military stocks and demanded advance notice of significant troop movements.<...>

It is most likely impossible to reach such agree-

ments now. They may not be possible at all while Putin is in power, although the West should consider such options. However, they remain the only viable means of engagement with Russia in the long term.”

This text is very revealing in that its main pathos is aimed at convincing the American establishment that Russia has its own interests: “Even non-imperial Russia, focused on itself, will have its own security interests. All states have them. And if the West is admits - this will not mean its weakness. But if the American elite needs to be explained such primitive things that a great nuclear power has its own national interests, this speaks first of all of how inadequate its ideas about the world order are.

And the authors of the text in Foreign Affairs themselves - who certainly consider themselves realists and certainly not interventionists - are building their entire concept on a completely false premise. On the fact that Ukraine is just another point of conflict between Russia and the West, it means that sooner or later it will be possible to leave the conflict because of it in a semi-frozen form and agree on global problems - nuclear weapons and European security. But Ukraine is not just a conflict between the West and Russia: it is a conflict that takes place at the moment of the collapse of the Western world order and in itself accelerates it. And this conflict is taking place on the territory of historical Russia, that is, it has an absolutely existential character for us, which does not provide for freezing and refusing to fight until victory. Even if the West manages to impose a really protracted war on us, we will not back down and we will not yield, but the understanding of this is already practically inaccessible to the Atlantic strategists. What deprives them of the opportunity to adequately predict the future - not only ours, but also their own.

Waiting for the weather by the sea

Natalia Dembinskaya

sanctions, Russia used energy resources as an instrument of political pressure, Bloomberg assures. Now the West is saying that "Putin's plan" has failed.

“As far as we can judge, the collapse of European industry has been avoided,” said German Economy Minister Robert Habeck during a visit to Norway (for some time now the largest gas supplier to Germany).

“We are full of optimism, not like in autumn,” Klaus Müller, head of the German network regulator, admitted. “The more gas we have in storage, the less

shocks and costs await us by next winter.”

The current gas prices in the EU are almost five times lower than in August. But it is still much higher than the average values for the entire period of operation of gas hubs in Europe - since 1996.

LNG, which the EU is banking on, is still in short supply. Moreover, in the near future Europe may simply not have enough fuel - and not least because of price surges in the market.

So, for a month, liquefied gas in the EU has fallen in price by about 50 per-

cent. And sellers can send it to other regions, primarily to Asia.

American suppliers will be the first to react to changing market conditions. Last year, the United States sold 75 percent of its total exports to the Old World - an average of ten billion cubic meters per month. Now it is more profitable to trade with Asia.

“If supplies are redirected, the base volumes will disappear, forming a natural bottom for prices,” analysts at the Swiss trading company MET International say. “Europe will have to buy LNG somewhere to compensate for Russian imports.”

Trillion out of pocket

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the annual demand for gas in Europe has decreased by 50 billion cubic meters. However, in 2023, a deficit of 27 billion is predicted. And this is quite realistic - provided that imports from Russia stop, and Chinese imports recover to the level of 2021.

Analysts warned that it was becoming increasingly difficult to increase purchases of expensive LNG, as Asia was “coming out of hibernation”: covid restrictions were being lifted, fuel consumption was recovering.

(Continued on Page 7)

‘Rulers should have little, the people much’

SAM Adams is the forgotten man of the Revolution, now known more for giving his name to a beer than for his contributions to creating America. In her beautifully written new biography, *The Revolutionary*, Stacy Schiff shows why Adams was essential to beating the British and why he has been glossed over in the standard histories of our nation.

Adams contributed greatly to the success of the rebellion by becoming its information man. He set up a fundamental infrastructure for leaders in the different colonies to communicate with one another—the so-called committees of correspondence. He had a talent for painting any British misstep as a perfidious act in a grand conspiracy against virtue.

But his talents also made him the disinformation man of the revolution. The stories he created of important events like the Boston massacre were frequently full of half-truths and even outright lies. Ironically, our own story of the revolution has indulged his own tendency to distortion in slighting his importance. We like to remember the grand political principles that should animate us still rather than the sometimes-scurrilous propaganda that motivated many citizens to take action at the time. John Adams, his second cousin, thus crowds out Sam.

Schiff is superb on the background that made a high-born colonist into the rabble-rouser of Massachusetts. Adams's father was a prosperous merchant and deacon of the Congregationalist Church. Social standing counted for a lot in the still-hierarchical society of Boston: rank at Harvard College where Sam matriculated, Schiff tells us, was based more on how well you were born than how well you performed.

But Adams's family suffered a precipitous drop in wealth from which his fortunes never recovered. And the reasons were political ones related to the principles on which the Revolution would be fought. Adams's father, along with

some other moderately wealthy members of the Bay Colony, created a land bank. The idea behind this financial institution was that by backing its notes with land, it could expand credit to their less prosperous, but ambitious, fellow citizens. The bank flourished at first but soon attracted powerful enemies. Some of the richest merchants in the colony resented it because it allowed competitors to spring up and cut into their profits. (An economist would observe that easier access to capital reduces barriers to entry and thereby the monopoly profits of established firms.) The British governor, Jonathan Belcher, did not like the new bank either. It threatened to become a power center outside his control, and he feared its easy money could spark inflation.

Thus, Belcher succeeded in persuading the British Parliament to ban the bank. Worse still for the bank's backers, the legislation required that its backers pay back the bank's note in gold and silver—a ruinous requirement. Even after the death of his father, Sam was still saddled with debt. Thus, his entire life was upended by an action of the British Parliament that overrode self-government in the colonies. No revolutionary had greater personal experience of the need for self-government or a greater resentment of the distant manipulation of colonial affairs by Parliament than Sam Adams. Schiff's lucid description of the demise of the land bank (an event that deserves far more prominence in standard histories of America) alone makes the book worth reading.

Sam Adams never showed any talent for making or handling money. His malt business was marginally successful at the best of times. When he was elected a tax collector, he was so delinquent in collecting taxes that he risked being forced by the treasury to pay for the shortfall himself. At the time of the revolution, wealthy well-wishers needed to furnish him with the clothes suitable for a delegate to the continental con-

gress.

His neglect of business allowed him plenty of time for his main vocations—politicking and pamphleteering. In 1765 he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives where he soon ascended to the influential position of clerk. He used his power to attack British interference in American affairs, such as the Sugar Act and Stamp Act. Opposition to these Acts was widespread among Boston's merchant class. What distinguished Adams was his early radicalism. Likely influenced by his family's unhappy experience with the institution, he thought of challenging Parliament's sovereignty over the colonies on all matters, not only taxation.

But he also made politics intensely personal, feuding with Thomas Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor and then Governor of the colony. He complained that Hutchinson held too many offices and this salary was paid by Britain. He was suspected of being complicit in a mob that burned down Hutchinson's house.

But Adams was more than a radical agitator. His revolutionary work hinged on the key insight that American colonies no longer resembled the hierarchies of Europe, including Great Britain. Because people were less deferential, public opinion was far more important in determining the course of events. And Adams was determined to shape that opinion to inflame passions against the British.

As Schiff shows, it was Sam Adams who shaped the narrative about the Boston Massacre, probably being the first to dub it the "horrible massacre." It was already darkening that late afternoon of March 5, 1770, and more than four hundred angry citizens were on a narrow street, making it hard to hear or see exactly what happened. Some witnesses reported that Crispus Attucks had led "a roaring brigade" that pelted the British soldiers with stones and snowballs. Adams pub-

lished an account that "rinsed the evening of all crowd action and premeditations" and emphasized the innocence of those killed. This narrative was then taken up in sermons across the state and artistic engravings that circulated throughout the colonies until the incident became a source of solidarity against the British.

Adams performed the same service after the Battle of Lexington four years later, establishing a narrative of "British atrocities, which squared little with the truth and which—buzzing up and down the Eastern Seaboard—electrified readers." The revolution was ultimately made in the minds of men and it was Adams who largely stocked their minds with images of British treachery. As Schiff eloquently observes: "He knew that we are governed more by our feelings than by reason."

As well as being the colonists' preeminent propagandist, Adams was its chief networker. The Committees of Correspondence—for which he was largely responsible—were composed of men in the several colonies who wrote to one another to keep each colony abreast of what was going on elsewhere. This network was not only crucial to coordinating the rebellion, but it also established the connections between the leading colonists that later became necessary to forge a nation.

Adams, however, was better at making a rebellion than he was at contributing to the nation's governing framework. While he signed the Declaration of Independence and was part of the Continental Congress that drew up the Articles of Confederation, he did not contribute much to either document. As Schiff writes, "The grievance sharpening and loophole-locating were better suited to rebellion than statesmanship." The uncompromising attitude that sparked a revolution did not allow for the flexibility required for governance.

He was not part of the Philadelphia Convention that wrote the Constitution,

but was elected to the Massachusetts ratifying convention. He was with difficulty persuaded to vote for ratification, though he objected to the failure to include a Bill of Rights in the document.

Adams was naturally suspicious of governmental power and he became allied with the movement that opposed the Federalists, among whom was his cousin John. Late in life, he was elected Lieutenant Governor and then Governor of Massachusetts. Schiff's treatment of his time in office is extremely brief and the weakest part of what otherwise will be the definitive biography for many years to come. She does not savor the irony of his ascending successively to the offices that the man he tormented, Thomas Hutchinson, once held.

And she tells us nothing of what he did there. As Walter Stahr reminds us in his own excellent biography of another Founder who became a governor, John Jay of New York, governors were important, given that the reach of the federal government was so limited. It would have been illuminating to know what Adams's views and actions were on the important state issues of the day. Schiff notes that many of Adams's letters have not survived and that he wrote no memoir. But governors' actions are attested in state papers. It would be particularly instructive to know how a politician whose philosophy of governance was summarized as "Rulers should have little, the people much" put his ideals into practice.

Nevertheless, this biography is brilliant on what matters most about Adams—his contribution to our revolution. His cousin John declared that "Without the character of Samuel Adams, the true history of the American Revolution can never be written." Schiff has helped ensure that Adams takes his rightful place as a founder of a republic often still bubbling with the uncompromising attitudes and sometimes dubious narratives that gave it birth.



‘Almost every man is a teacher’

IN 1912, Frederick Winslow Taylor, “the father of scientific management,” whom management guru Peter Drucker dubbed “the first man in recorded history who deemed work deserving of systematic observation and study,” was testifying before a US Congressional Committee formed to “Investigate Taylor and Other Systems of Shop Management.” Taylor was explaining to the committee how he had arrived at 21.5 pounds as the optimal shovel load—that is, why a worker could move the largest pile of coal if his shovel held neither more nor less than this weight. To which one of the committee members responded: “You have told us the effect on the pile. What about the effect on the man?”

Herein lies a telling blind spot in Taylor's perspective on “scientific management.” Taylor argued against the venerable notion that each worker can best determine his own way of working, claiming instead that this responsibility lies with the white collars. So long as workers themselves set the standard, Taylor held, variation and the inefficiency it entails would inevitably rule the day. To organize work scientifically, by contrast, requires enforcement of a standard or best way of doing it, including not only the size of the shovel but each of the motions involved in shoveling:

It is only through enforced standardization of methods, enforced adoption of the best implements and working conditions, and enforced cooperation that this faster work can be assured. And the duty of enforcing the adoption of standards and enforcing this cooperation rests with the management alone.

Taylor, who operated with clipboards and stopwatches, focused on reducing as much as possible the amount of time necessary to complete a task to maximize efficiency. In other words, he focused on the work, not the worker, often speaking of the latter as little more than a tool necessary to complete the task. His low regard for the intelligence and intrinsic motivation of laborers could lead him to adopt unflattering, disrespectful, and even dehumanizing terms.

Consider, for example, his description of a man fit for the regular work of a pig iron handler, who must be: so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type. The man who is mentally alert and intelligent is for this very reason entirely unsuited to what would, for him, be the grinding monotony of work of this character.

Enter Lillian Gilbreth, who with her husband Frank rivaled Taylor as a systematic investigator of work and its enhancement. Gilbreth and Taylor could hardly have represented a starker contrast. Taylor, who was born in 1856 in Philadelphia, eschewed admission to Harvard College and instead went to work as a machinist, working his way up his firm's ranks to chief engineer. After studying many workers in action, he reached the conclusion that they were producing at far less than full capacity and thereby driving up labor costs. He soon developed his principles of scientific management and became one of the world's first management consultants, building a fortune before his death at 59 in 1915.

Lillian Gilbreth was born to a large family in Oakland, California in 1878. Despite a brilliant high school career, her father opposed higher education for his daughters but eventually agreed to allow her to attend the University of California, Berkeley,

Richard Gunderman

where she performed so well that she became the first woman to deliver the commencement address. She began doctoral studies there, but then met construction company owner Frank Gilbreth, moving to New York after they married in 1904. She completed the doctoral requirements at Berkeley but was denied the degree because she was not living in California. Instead, she entered a doctoral program at Brown, earning her PhD in psychology in 1915.

Meanwhile, Lillian and Frank were producing children at a rate of about one every 15 months. One was stillborn after an accident and another died at age 5, but the remaining 11 survived and all graduated from college. Two of their children later wrote the 1948 book, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, which was turned into a Hollywood film in 1950. As their family burgeoned, Frank and Lillian operated a business consulting firm, producing numerous books and journal articles and lecturing throughout the United States and Europe. They pioneered the use of photographic equipment in time-motion studies, establishing the forerunner of contemporary ergonomics. Frank died suddenly in 1924, leaving Lillian to carry on alone.

Lillian soon found that many formerly loyal consulting clients did not want to do business with a company run by a woman, so she reinvented herself as a consultant to firms whose employees or customers were predominantly women. She became an early expert in the field of home economics, applying scientific principles to household tasks. Her many innovations in this sphere included the so-called triangle kitchen, the foot-pedal operated trash can, wall-mounted light switches, and the inclusion of shelving in refrigerator doors. She also researched menstrual products, surveying over 1,000 women to aid a client in developing a better sanitary napkin.

Where Taylor treated work and workers as machine-like mechanical processes, Gilbreth regarded workers as human beings. She focused less on efficiency and more on fatigue, seeking to enable workers—whether in the factory or in the kitchen—to complete tasks with as little exhaustion as possible. This would make work less taxing, free up more time for leisure, and enable workers to approach recreation with more energy. Where Taylor wanted to boost profits, Gilbreth sought to reduce what she called “humanity's greatest unnecessary waste,” the expenditure of needless time and energy on a task that could be completed with less mental and physical strain.

This focus on the experience of work from the worker's perspective earned Gilbreth the title of the first industrial psychologist. And she applied this approach not only to manual labor but to education, where she sought to enable both teachers and students to impart and receive knowledge with as little unnecessary expenditure of energy as possible. She wrote, “It is well recognized that the teacher must understand the working of the mind in order best to impart information in a way that will enable the student to grasp it most readily.” And she recognized that, far from being confined to the academy, this educational mission applied to all spheres of life, since “almost every man is a teacher.”

In many respects, Taylor's version of scientific management might have

applied just as well to robots as to people. But Gilbreth focused on the psychology of the worker, an interest even more natural to her than her husband, whom she describes in this passage:

The things which concerned him more than anything else were the what and the why—the what because he felt it was necessary to know absolutely what you were questioning and what you were doing or what concerned you, and then the why, the depth type of thinking which showed you the reason for doing the thing and would perhaps indicate clearly whether you should maintain what was being done or should change what was being done.

Thanks to Gilbreth, workers would be treated not as cogs in a machine, but as people. So great was her compassion for workers that she devoted much of her career to improving the work and home life of persons with disabilities, a population that had exploded as a result of World War I injuries. This required, for example, studying special challenges faced by the blind in performing routine tasks, developing curriculum for teachers of the blind, teaching the blind themselves, and finding opportunities for the employment of the blind in industry. Taylor might have branded such workers inherently inferior, but Gilbreth concentrated on enhancing their capabilities to contribute.

This concern for the worker as a human being instead of an economic tool expressed itself in many practical forms. With Frank, she improved lighting conditions for workers, thus reducing eye strain, and introduced regular breaks throughout the workday. She installed suggestion boxes in the workplace, so the voices of workers would be heard. She required employment contracts to be signed by representatives of both management and organized labor. And when she became the first woman engineering professor (1935) and later the first woman to be promoted to full professor at Purdue University (1940), she focused her considerable energy on opening up careers for women.

In 1966, Gilbreth became the only woman to receive the annual Hoover Medal, awarded jointly by five engineering societies for “outstanding extra-career services by engineers to humanity.” She was lauded for her “recognition of the principle that management engineering and human relations are intertwined,” and “her unselfish application of energy and creative efforts in modifying industrial and home environments for the handicapped,” resulting in “full employment of their capabilities and elevation of their self-esteem.” For Taylor, a laborer was defined by strong limbs, but Gilbreth peered more deeply into the lives of amputees, recognizing the deep connection between work and life fulfillment.

As even a cursory familiarity with Gilbreth's story makes abundantly clear, she was no stranger to or adversary of hard work. Although Taylor talked more about efficiency, productivity, and profit, Gilbreth also well understood their importance. What made her approach different and more enduring was her focus on workers. To get people to do better work, she recognized, it is necessary to give them good work to do and treat them well as they do it. Taylor's purely behaviorist approach rendered the worker a mere tool, where Gilbreth saw a collaborator, a neighbor, and potentially even a friend.

War is an extremely expensive business

ON Wednesday, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced the importance of strengthening military assistance to Ukraine.

This statement is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it was made at the time of the liberation of Soledar by Russian troops, and Stoltenberg emphasized the importance of Western support for Ukraine against the backdrop of these events. And secondly, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Alliance said these words before the start of the joint meeting with the European Commission.

It is worth recalling that the day before, on Tuesday, the leadership of NATO and the EU signed a declaration on cooperation. On behalf of Europe, European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen put their signatures. In the light of the Ukrainian events, which are highlighted in the document, the process of corraling Europe into the stall of American military plans is in full swing.

However, when taking into account the events at the front, a number of questions arise both for tactics and for the strategy of the West.

Opinions of experts and officials regarding the military significance of Soledar and Artemovsk (Kyiv uses the old name of the city - Bakhmut) differ. Some argue that the liberation of Soledar hacked into the most important line of defense of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - and this significantly changes the situation in the liberation of the territory of the DPR.

Others believe that the significance of this event should not be exaggerated - this is a fairly local victory. Still others even try to pretend that these settlements have no special significance. For example, Vladimir Zelensky called the Russian assault on Soledar “madness”, implying that there is nothing there for which it would be worth doing: “And that Russiawanted to get there? Everything is completely destroyed, there is almost no life left.”

True, the question immediately arises: why did the Armed Forces of Ukraine put so many lives in Soledar then? Because if observers agree on one thing, it is in the assessment of Ukrainian losses, which are unanimously characterized as catastrophic. And the Kiev command was transferring everything and transferring reserves there, which were simply crushed by Russian units, despite the fact that the hopelessness of the situation for the Ukrainian troops had already become obvious for several weeks. Military experts have long unanimously said that from a military point of view, it would be expedient for the Armed Forces of Ukraine to withdraw troops from the city to new defensive lines. But, of course, political expediency for Kyiv - and even more so for the West - is much more important than military one, so Ukrainians continue to be thrown into the meat grinder without pity or hesitation.

However, there is a suspicion that the point here is not only in the indifference on the part of decision-makers to the fate of the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. An even more

Irina Alksnis

important and large-scale factor seems to be the general attitude of the West to resources, both in the current geopolitical confrontation and in general.

War is an extremely expensive business. For its maintenance, various and extensive resources are needed - financial, human, industrial, energy, and so on.

Over the past decades, the West has become accustomed to the fact that in military campaigns its superiority over any opponent is not just many times over, but in principle is incompatible. And this, in turn, gave him a feeling of limitlessness of possibilities.

Hence, in fact, the chosen line of action against Russia is the most direct and brutal pressure. This is how the West is accustomed to acting against the countries it appoints as its main enemy. But this method is effective only if the enemy breaks quickly. If he continues to take a hit and the operation is delayed, then such extravagance in spending resources becomes unreasonably costly, and the side effects become too costly.

This is what we have been seeing for almost a year now. On the one hand, a rain of money, weapons and all kinds of other support is pouring on Ukraine. And the process is gaining and gaining momentum. This, by the way, in itself is capable of producing a demoralizing effect on the enemy.

But on the other hand, voices (including from influential Western sources) are increasingly and louder that the resources at the disposal of the West are in fact not bottomless at all - and

this became clear already in the first months after February 24. The armories are rapidly emptying, and their replenishment, like the restoration of production, is not a quick matter, sometimes taking years. Ukraine needs more and more sophisticated and costly weapons systems, which are also scarce and require highly skilled crews. The printing press, of course, makes it easier for the States and Europe to allocate another billion to Kyiv, but only in 2022, for the first time in many years, the West was forced to recall the unpleasant feeling of being unable to curb domestic inflation. And there are no signs that things will get easier in the new year.

But if these topics still sound in the Western information field as a kind of warning that one should be more careful with the expenditure of valuable resources, then there does not seem to be even a glimmer of understanding regarding the shortage of human resources looming on the horizon.

The West does not at all hide its intention to fight to the last Ukrainian. However, after all, this can be done in different ways - and the battle for Soledar once again demonstrated that the human resource is being wasted by that side in the most mediocre way.

In principle, one can understand where this attitude comes from. Ukraine is a huge country with a large population. According to the World Bank estimate, in 2021, almost 44 million people were its inhabitants. And according to classical military methods, the mobilization potential of the country during full-scale

military operations is estimated at 10-20 percent of the population. That is, if we take the very, very top bar, someone is able to admit that almost nine million people can be put under arms in Ukraine. A very impressive number.

But Russian military experts believe that, taking into account the long-term unfavorable demographic processes in Ukraine (well, 40 million people have not been there for a long time, besides, people in the fallen territories, as well as citizens who successfully left the mobilization abroad), the real mobilization potential of the country is unlikely Li exceeds two million people - and is already close to exhaustion. Even if this estimate underestimates the actual figures, it is still closer to reality than fantasies about millions and millions of Ukrainians that the West can throw against Russia. Steady growth in the number of foreign mercenaries fighting in Ukraine can also serve as an indirect confirmation of this: their own human resources are beginning to be scarce there.

In such a situation, the hopeless defense of Soledar at the cost of huge losses of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is not only a cynical sending people to certain death, but also simply a stupid waste of a valuable and soon scarce human resource.

But this still reflects the same approach that the West takes in the fight against Russia - as if it has access to an inexhaustible source of any resources.

Only last year proved that this is nothing more than a delusion. But Russia still did not seriously start anything.

European capitals are "too afraid of displeasing Washington or being blackmailed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky." But this is not for long.

The realities of geography and markets are capable of canceling out the statements of even the most radical supporters of "energy independence". And in order not to lose fuel, trade with Russia will have to be restored.

According to him,

Waiting for the weather by the sea

(Continued from Page 6)

According to China National Offshore Oil, imports of liquefied natural gas to China will increase by seven percent in 2023. The same dynamics in Japan, Pakistan and India.

To compete with Asia, the EU will have to pay even more - both for energy resources and for transportation. In 2022, according to Bloomberg estimates, "gas substitution"

has already cost Europeans a trillion dollars.

And the main question: is there enough gas in principle? According to a number of forecasts, in 2023-2025, the global LNG market may undermine a record deficit. Many are trying to stock up on fuel, competition is intensifying, and the risks of interruptions in supplies are increasing.

There is no excess capacity in the world. Europe and Asia are in a

tug-of-war for available reserves. S&P Global Commodity Insights stated.

A new jump in quotes cannot be ruled out. VYGON Consulting emphasizes.

So you have to be careful with optimism. The European Parliament allows the resumption of negotiations on gas with Russia.

French MP Thierry Mariani pointed out that the winter is mild and the pop-

ulation has not been particularly affected by power outages. But energy subsidies are not cheap and cannot last forever.

“European states understand that their strategy of breaking with Russia is unrealistic in the long term. Liquefied natural gas is expensive, the alternatives found are inefficient, and collective purchases do not seem to work,” Mariani said.

According to him,

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Private sector invited to invest in ITZs to boost up tourism sector in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Experts have invited the private sector to invest in integrated tourism zones (ITZs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to boost up tourism and strengthen the provincial economy.

Immense investment prospects are available in the integrated Tourism Zones (ITZs) that have been approved by the provincial government, says a senior official of KP Tourism and Culture Authority (KPT & CA) during speaking at an awareness seminar held in a hall of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Thursday.

The sensitization seminar, which was organized by SCCI in joint collabora-

tion with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and Planning and Development Department (P&D), Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Shahid Hussain, senior vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry who chaired the session said in his opening remarks that the role of the tourism sector in economic development is vital across the world.

Senior office bearers said incalculable investment opportunities in the tourism sector, generally in the country and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa available, which needed to be tapped efficiently to boost up the provincial economy.

Mr Hussain emphasized the need for pragmatic steps for infrastructure improvement at tourists' attraction sites, besides provision of better facilities to tourists and arrangements to attract more investors and tourists toward the tourism sector. He assured the officials that SCCI will play its due role to attract private investment in ITZs.

Apart from participation of Director General KPT&CA Bakhtiyar Khan, General Manager Umer Khan Khattak, Public Private Partnership Analyst, P&D Deptt Shehryar Khan, the SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former president Faiz Muhammad, former vice presidents Abidullah Yousafzai, Faiz Rasool, executive members Haji Ghulam Hussain, Laal Badshah, Ms Qurtul Ain, Naeem Qasmi, Zahoor Khan, Fazl e Wahid, Malik Tariq Awan, a large number of traders, investors and representatives of relevant department were present in the seminar.

DG KPC&TA Bakhtiyar Khan during the session enlightened the participants about initiatives taken by his department for uplift of the tourism sector, especially Integrated Tourism Zones and urged the SCCI members and private investors to make investment in the ITZs.

He also invited the business community to ensure their participation in the upcoming roadshow organized by KPCTA in Islamabad, which is scheduled to be held on Jan19.

On the occasion, Umer Khattak, a senior official briefed the participants about ITZs in detail through his multimedia presentation and stated that initiatives have been taken for promotion of ecotourism in KP where vast opportunities were available to promote digital tourism in the country.

Tourism sector contributes 3 percent to Pakistan's GDP, which is growing gradually, the senior official said, adding that the sector has generated 3.6million jobs.

Essentially, he said the KP government has prioritized the tourism sector and made an increase by 600 per cent in the budget for uplift of the sector.

He said the country's future highly dependent on public private partnerships (PPP), saying that KP portfolio in PPP is the second number with a ratio of 100 per cent after Sindh portfolio at first with 102 per cent followed by Punjab with 86 per cent.

On the occasion, the senior officials responded to various queries of the participants.



PESHAWAR: Senior Vice President SCCI Shahid Hussain presenting a shield to DG KPT&CA Bakhtiar Khan.

Govt urged to pursue long term strategy to ensure double digit growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman United Business Group of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Shahzad Ali Malik Thursday said Pakistan needs a sustainable double digit annual growth rate for sound economy and a long term result oriented strategy that can propel into such a high trajectory of growth.

Chairing a high level meeting of top leaders of business community across the country here on Thursday, he said that the on going Russia-Ukraine conflict had badly affected our fragile economy with spiraling inflation, high costs of raw materials and disruption in global supply chain that led to poor growth and less demand.

He said that in the prevailing scenario, unless WAPDA, Railways, PIA, Pakistan Steel Mills and all

other loss incurring entities were restructured on modern scientific lines and managed strictly on merit and sound business principles, the fiscal imbalances would persist. He said that major investments in the energy sector were needed to add affordable supplies of electricity and gas to all industrial and commercial consumers and reduce electricity line losses in its transmission.

He said that reducing the cost of doing business was also an important pre-requisite and there were number of areas where Pakistan had to intensify efforts and modify policies and institutions. He said although these pre-requisites may

appear formidable and somewhat unrealistic, but many other countries have shown that with determined and visionary leadership, such ambitious goals, vital for the future of the country, can be achieved in a short period of time.

Shahzad Ali Malik said that the process of globalization had changed the structure of production and trade in the world economy. Pakistan has a well developed agriculture sector which could become the engine of growth and also become a significant source of foreign exchange, provided we undertake master plan of diversifying into value added agriculture.

He said that there was

considerable potential for attracting foreign investment from the Middle East in agriculture and in agro processing of products. He said this in turn will require stronger links between agricultural research and industry and investments in post harvest transport, storage and marketing in cold chains.

He said the second major opportunity for accelerated growth in the short run is in the small scale industrial and commercial sectors. Pakistan has 3.3 million economic establishments of which over 90 per cent are small enterprises employing less than 5 workers and another 4 per cent are medium sized enterprises employing between 6 and 50 workers.

Chinese border reopening will boost recovery: Kashif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Thursday welcomed China's decision to ease the restrictions on cross-border travel for the global resumption of people-to-people exchanges including Pak-China investment corridors and internationally rebuild foreign investors' confidence.

Chairing a board of directors meeting in Lahore on Thursday, he said provisional measures announced a week ago are based on a comprehensive assessment of the mutation of the virus, the pandemic situation, and ongoing response efforts

which he added will facilitate the recovery of international exchanges and cooperation and help economic and social activities get back to normal more quickly.

He said the policy changes, which are in line with the pandemic prevention and control policy, will make cross-border travel safe, orderly, and efficient, and give a timely boost to economic development. He said China's reopening its borders is viewed as a boon for the global economy. He said it has indeed been three years and China and the rest of the world have missed each other.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq, a regular visitor to China

who has explored markets for the export of world-class handmade Pak furniture, said it's a good omen that China is refining the arrangements in line with the evolving COVID situation and is ready to work with all parties to strengthen international anti-epidemic cooperation, maintain the security and stability of the global industry and supply chains and promote the recovery of world economic growth.

He said PFC is planning to take its high-level delegation to China for holding result-oriented parleys with their counterparts for joint ventures in the furniture sector.

SECP registers 2,374 new companies in December 2022

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,374 new companies in December 2022. The total number of registered companies now stands at 183,744.

The total capitalization (paid-up-capital) of these companies for the current month stands at Rs4.1 billion, said a press release issued here.

Foreign investment has been reported in 85 new companies. These companies have foreign investors from Afghanistan, Austria, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA and Vietnam. The major chunk of investment was received from China with 48 companies, Germ-

any with 5, Afghanistan, the UK and US with four each, Iran and South Africa with two each and 16 companies with other countries.

In the final month of the calendar year 2022, nearly 56 percent companies were registered as private limited companies, while 41 percent were registered as single member companies. The remaining three percent were registered as public unlisted companies, not-for-profit associations, foreign companies and limited liability partnership (LLP). Nearly 99.8 per cent of companies were registered online.

The real estate development & construction sector took the lead with the incorporation of 427, information technology with 329, trading with 292, services with 218, education with 107, tourism with 104, food & beverages with 89, ecommerce with 82, corpo-

rate agricultural farming with 63, textile and mining & quarrying with 55 each, pharmaceutical with 51, marketing & advertisement with 50, and 452 companies were registered in other sectors.

As a result of the integration of SECP with FBR and various provincial departments, 2,172 companies were registered with FBR for the generation of NTN, 60 companies with EOBI, 34 companies with PESSI/SESSI and 37 companies with the excise and taxation department.

The SECP has also started a dedicated WhatsApp facility for receiving queries. During December 2022, responses were sent to around 1,382 WhatsApp queries of local and foreign investors pertaining to name availability and incorporation; with 96 per cent satisfaction rate.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of trader union of Shafi Market meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activities reported at the Port on Wednesday, where four ships namely, EM Astoria, Wide Juliet, Ourania Luck and Ulls Water carrying Containers, Wheat and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Grain & Fertilizer Terminal and EngroVopak Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile four more ships, RDO Fortune, FSM, MH Langoey and Songa Kari carrying Containers, LPG, Chemicals and Palm oil also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hour.

A total of 11 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them 03 ships, EM Astoria, Wide Juliet and MSC Maria Elena left the Port on Thursday morning, while 02 more ships, Ladon and Ulls Water are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A Cargo volume of 93,995 tonnes, comprising 41,072 tonnes imports cargo and 52,923 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,534 Containers (1,152 TEUs Imports and 2,382 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, Sti Onyx and FSM & another containers ship 'Athenian' carrying Palm oil, LPG and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT, EVTL and QICT on Thursday, and RDO Fortune is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

Stocks up before key US inflation data

LONDON (AFP/APP): Global stock markets mostly rose on Thursday before data that is widely expected to show another softening of US consumer inflation, giving the Federal Reserve room to slow its interest rate hikes.

Equities also found support on growing optimism over China's economic reopening.

Wall Street had provided a strong lead, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq soaring Wednesday thanks to demand for recently beaten-down tech firms.

The US consumer price index (CPI) reading due Thursday is the key event for investors, though analysts warned that an above-forecast reading would deal a hefty blow to confidence on trading floors.

The data "could determine whether the relatively positive sentiment seen so far in 2023 can be maintained, given the influence this data point has on the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy", said Russ Mould, investment research director at British brokerage AJ Bell.

Stock market gains were also helped by comments from Fed official Susan Collins backing a quarter-point US rate hike at the bank's next policy decision on February 1.

Collins, who is head of the Boston Fed, told The New York Times that slowing the pace of increases would give policymakers a chance to see how their efforts to rein in decades-high inflation were working.

Investors are also keeping tabs on developments in China as it emerges from years of zero-Covid containment measures.

While the long-term outlook remains positive, soaring infections across the country are leading to worries about the effect on economic activity.

PSX turns around, gains 45 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 45.69 points, a positive change of 0.11 per cent, closing at 40,803.89 against 40,758.20 points the previous day.

A total of 175,412,767 shares were traded during the day as compared to 189,373,700 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.891 billion against Rs6.982 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 345 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 175 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Worldcall Telecom with 12,621,798 shares at Rs1.17 per share, Pak Refinery with 9,803,463 shares at Rs14.02 per share, and Al Shaheer (R) with 8,951,505 shares at Rs0.65 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs249.90 per share price, closing at Rs5850.00, whereas the runner-up was

Pak Services with a Rs140.00 rise in its per share price to Rs2045.00.

Pak Engineering witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs27.55 per share closing at Rs339.80, followed by Shield Crops with Rs20.42 decline to close at Rs257.00.

Rupee sheds 22 paise against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 22 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs228.14 against the previous day's closing of Rs227.92.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs235.6 and Rs237.9 respectively. The price of the euro increased by Rs44 paise and closed at Rs245.36 against the previous day's closing of Rs244.92, according to the SBP.

The Japanese yen gained one paise to close at Rs1.73, whereas an increase of 01 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound,

which was traded at Rs277.14 as compared to its last closing of Rs277.13.

The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal increased by 06 paise each to close at Rs62.11 and Rs60.74 respectively.

Gold prices increase by Rs1,100 to Rs181,100 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs1,100 on Thursday and was sold at Rs181,100 against its sale at Rs180,000 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs943 and was sold at Rs155,264 against Rs154,321, whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs142,325 against its sale at Rs141,461, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,070 and Rs1,774.69 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$ 01 to \$ 1878 against its sale at \$ 1877, the association reported.

Installation of Conical Baffle: SNGPL to initiate door to door survey

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In line with the Prime Minister of Pakistan's Energy Conservation Plan, OGRA has made installation of Conical Baffle in conventional gas geysers mandatory for domestic gas consumers.

In this regard, OGRA has approved gas utilities request to undertake mandatory installations of Conical Baffles. A public hearing in this respect was held at OGRA Head Office

in Islamabad.

The installation of Conical Baffles will result in 20 to 25 per cent saving in gas bills and will as such help in mitigating the ongoing natural gas crisis in the country.

SNGPL teams will shortly be initiating door to door survey of gas consumers premises to ensure that conical baffles are installed in the geysers.

SNGPL will install conical baffle if any consumer is found to be using gas geyser without conical

baffle. Cost against the same will be recovered through gas bill in 12 monthly installments.

Sui Northern Gas has requested the consumers to extend maximum cooperation for early installation of Conical Baffles which will result in substantial gas savings for the consumers.

This will lead to conservation of Natural Gas in line with the vision of the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan's plan on energy conservation.

Khokhar for action against LPG mafia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Liquefied Petroleum Gas Industries Association (LPGIA) Chairman Irfan Khokhar on Thursday underlined the need for strict action against the mafia, hoarding and black-marketing the LPG to make a quick buck.

He said it was unfortunate that some elements were busy selling the LPG at the exorbitant price against the Oil and Gas Regulator Authority (OGRA) fixed at Rs 204.32 per kilogram for domestic consumers in

December.

Talking to APP, he was of the view that the authority had reduced the LPG price by Rs 11.59 per kg for the current month to facilitate the common man in the peak winter season despite the financial crunch faced by the government.

But the mafia was cashing the opportunity and depriving consumers of the benefits of reduced rates, he added.

After the authority slashed the price, he said the 11.8-kg cylinder

should have been available at Rs 2,411.43 in January as the prescribed rate.

Contrary to it, he alleged that the mafia was charging Rs 600-800 extra per cylinder in different parts of the country.

Irfan Khokhar urged the district administration of all provinces and the quarters concerned to take action against the mafia, who were challenging the government writ and compelling consumers to buy LPG at an increased rate to meet their winter and kitchen needs.

Cars' sale decreases 39% in six months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of cars during the first six months of current fiscal year 2022-23, has dropped by 39.96 percent as compared to the same months of last year, a latest data released by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

According to the data, as many as 68,900 cars were sold during July-December 2022-23 as opposed to 114,774 units during July-December 2021-22.

The breakup figures showed that 8,906 units of Honda Civic and City were

sold during the corresponding period of the year 2022-23 as compared to the sale of 17,620 units last year, thus showing a dip of 49.45 percent.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars' sale also decreased by 58.57 percent as it went down to 12,065 units current year from 29,126 units in the same period of previous year.

However, Suzuki Swift's sale went up by 1335.81 percent as its sale increased to 7,136 units from 497 units last year.

Sale of Suzuki Cultus

decreased to 5,143 units during current year, whereas during same period last year, the sale was recorded at 14,516 units while the sale of Suzuki WagonR also decreased to 3,769 units from 11,629 units in same period of last year.

Suzuki Alto's sale also witnessed a sharp decline of 14.74 percent from 32,388 units to 27,614 units during the months under review, whereas the sale of Suzuki Bolan decreased to 2,436 units as opposed to sale of 6,241 units in same period of last year.



In brief

10-man Torino beat AC Milan

ANKARA (AA/APP): A 10-man Torino stunned AC Milan in an Italian Cup last 16 match Wednesday, beating them 1-0 to advance to the quarter-finals. Torino were down to 10 players after Koffi Djidji was sent off in the 70th minute at San Siro Stadium in Milan. The visitors broke the deadlock in extra time. On a quick counter attack, Torino's French midfielder Michel Adopo finished in the area in the 114th minute to score the winning goal for his team. The rest of the time, AC Milan took risks but Torino defended well to secure the away win. Torino will face either Sampdoria or Fiorentina in the next stage.

Hamza qualified semi-finals

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistani tennis star Hamza Roman has qualified for the singles final and the doubles semi-finals in the 'Asian Development Tournament' in Dhaka. According to detail, Pakistan's other player Abu Bakar Talha has also qualified for the final, which is a matter of honor for Pakistan and especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is being predicted that both the players will continue their best performance in the doubles as well and win the title. A close match is expected between the players in the final of the tournament.

National Sambo championship

LAHORE (APP): Sambo Federation of Pakistan is organising the 1st National Men & Women Sambo Championship here from 14-15 January. "Teams from Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, KP, Navy and Islamabad are participating in the two days event", said a spokesman of SFP on Thursday. He said Sambo is a Russian origin martial art sport which is being introduced and developed in the country. Following weight categories will contested : Men , Below 58kg, Below 64kg, Below 71kg, Below 79kg, Below 88kg Women, Below 54kg, Below 59kg, Below 65kg and Below 72kg. Women, Below 54kg, Below 59kg, Below 65kg and Below 72kg.

Girls Sports Festival

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Charsadda Dr Qasim Ali Khan on Thursday announced the DC Gold Cup Girls Sports Festival, being organized from January 18 to 20 at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex, Charsadda. He made this announcement while talking to the media here, where DSO Charsadda Tahsin Ullah Khan was also present. Deputy Commissioner Dr Qasim Ali Khan said that in these three-day competitions, a large number of female athletes will participate in various sports, including athletics, tug-of-war, badminton, hockey, and Chendero. DSO Charsadda said that in view of the efforts of DC Charsadda, the sports festival was being arranged with the aim of providing opportunities to athletes for showcasing their skills in various events. He said attention was also being paid to both male and female games and after that, games for players with disabilities, cultural games and other sports events would also continue. The DSO stressed that there was no lack of talent, "the players need opportunities, facilities and encouragement" for which they are striving hard.

Australia dump Afghan cricket series over Taliban crackdown on women

SYDNEY (AFP/APP): Australia pulled out of an upcoming series against Afghanistan in the United Arab Emirates on Thursday, citing Taliban moves to further restrict women's rights.

The men's team were due to face their Afghan counterparts in three ODI games in March following a tour to India.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) in Kabul described Australia's decision as "pathetic".

"The decision to withdraw... is unfair and unexpected and will have a negative impact," the ACB said in a statement, which did not mention the shrinking of women's rights in Afghanistan nor the Taliban's ban on female sport. The ACB said it would contact the International Cricket Council and was considering withdrawing its players from Australia's domestic Big Bash League in retaliation. Cricket Australia (CA) said their decision was taken after talks with concerned parties that included the Australian government.

"This decision follows the recent announcement by the Taliban of further restrictions on women's and girls' education and

Naveen quits BBL

KABUL (INP): Afghanistan's Naveem-ul-Haq decided to leave the Big Bash League in response to Cricket Australia's decision to withdraw from the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan, scheduled in UAE in March, citing increased restrictions on women's rights under Taliban rule.

Taking to Twitter, Naveen, who represents Sydney Sixers in BBL, said he would no longer be part of the league after the withdrawal announcement by the Australian board, terming it a 'childish decision'.

"Time to say won't be participating in big bash after this until they stop these childish decisions that's how they went about the one off test now ODI when a country is going through so much in place off being supportive you want to take the only reason of happiness from them" he tweeted soon after the Cricket Australia's (CA) pull-out decision.

employment opportunities and their ability to access parks and gyms," it said in a statement. "CA is committed to supporting growing the game for women and men around the world, including in Afghanistan.

"(We) will continue to engage with the Afghanistan Cricket Board in anticipation of improved conditions for women and girls in the country," it said. The games against Afghanistan were part of the ICC Super League.

Australia will forfeit 30 competition points for the series, which go towards World Cup qualification. However, they have

already secured automatic qualification for the 50-over tournament in India later this year. Pace bowler Naveen-ul-Haq has already suggested on Twitter he would pull out of the Big Bash League where he plays for the Sydney Sixers. "When a country is going through so much in place (of) being supportive you want to take the only reason of happiness from them," he tweeted. The Taliban regained control of Kabul in August 2021 and quickly began placing restrictions on women's participation in sport.

The headline Islamists initially promised a softer

approach than their first stint in power from 1996 to 2001, a period notorious for rights abuses that included public executions and floggings. They have gradually reintroduced an extreme interpretation of Islamic law, or sharia, and women have seen rights evaporate as they were squeezed out of public life.

The Taliban barred teenage girls from attending secondary schools and then last month banned women from attending universities, prompting global outrage and protests in some Afghan cities.

They then decreed at the end of last month that Afghan women could no longer work for NGOs, at a time when Afghanistan faces one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with its population of 38 million hungry and three million children at risk of malnutrition.

Most women government workers have lost their jobs. Women are also barred from travelling without a male relative and have been told they must cover up with a burqa or hijab when outside the home.

In November, women were also banned from entering parks, funfairs, gyms and public baths.

Rahul helps India beat Sri Lanka to clinch ODI series



KOLKATA (AFP/APP): KL Rahul's unbeaten 64 helped India down Sri Lanka by four wickets to clinch a series victory in the second one-day international in Kolkata on Thursday.

Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj earlier took three wickets each as India bowled out Sri Lanka for 215 in 39.4 overs at Eden Gardens. India were in trouble at 86-4, with skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli back in the pavilion, but Rahul anchored the chase as the hosts got home in 43.2 overs.

The hosts took an unsailable 2-0 series lead, with the third match to be played on Sunday in Thiruvananthapuram.

Debutant Nuwanidu Fernando stood out for Sri Lanka with his 50 but they lost wickets regularly after electing to bat first.

Siraj struck first as he bowled Avishka Fernando

for 20 with an in-swinging delivery that took the inside edge of the bat to crash against middle stump.

Nuwanidu put on 73 runs for the second wicket with Kusal Mendis before Kuldeep, replacing Yuzvendra Chahal as the only change in the team, broke through.

Kuldeep trapped Mendis lbw for 34 with the final delivery of his opening over and two balls later left-arm spinner Axar Patel bowled Dhananjaya de Silva for a duck.

Nuwanidu raised his 50 but was soon run out after his 63-ball knock. Kuldeep struck twice in two overs, including captain and previous match centurion Dasun Shanaka, bowled for two. Sri Lanka slipped to 152-7 when tearaway quick Umrin Malik cut short Wanindu Hasaranga's breezy knock on 21.

Number eight Dunith Wellalage made 32 and

resisted along with the other lower-order batters to take the total past 200 before Siraj struck twice in three balls to wrap up the innings. In reply, India lost Rohit for 17 off Chamika Karunaratne after a brisk start and fellow opener Shubman Gill, who hit 21 off 12 balls, soon followed his captain three balls later.

Fast bowler Lahiru Kumara bowled Kohli, who scored a match-winning 113 in the opening ODI, for four and the home side were wobbling when Shreyas Iyer departed on 28. Rahul, who hit just six boundaries in his 103-ball stay, put on 75 with Hardik Pandya to steady the innings in a watchful partnership. Karunaratne broke through with the wicket of Hardik, for 36, and Axar was dismissed for 21 to increase the tension. But Rahul stood firm with Kuldeep, 10 not out, for company to steer the team home.

City Gymkhana, Pak Lions, Shinning Club score wins in K-20 Cup 2023

LAHORE (APP): City Gymkhana, Pak Lions and Shinning Club scored contrasting wins in the K-20 Cup 2023 T20 Cricket Tournament matches, played here on Thursday.

Pak Lions thrashed P&T Gymkhana by 10 wickets in the 15th match of the tournament, here at Model Town Greens ground. P&T Gymkhana, batting first, gathered 131-8 in the allotted 20 overs. Karamat Ali (36) and Saad Najam (32) batted well. Niaz Khan, Umar Farooq and Afzal Tahiri captured two scalps each.

Helped by clinical performances of openers Hassan Nawaz (105 off 35 balls) and Afzal Tahiri (27 of 11 balls) guided Pak Lions to a thrashing 10-wicket triumph. For his outstanding batting performance, Hassan Nawaz was named player of the match.

Shinning Cricket Club defeated Yu Slim Cricket Club in the 16th match

of the tournament by 62 runs here at Model Town Club ground. Batting first, Shinning Club posted 169-10 in 20 overs. Rao Khayyam was top scorer with 56 runs while Ulfat Rasool struck 24 and Zain Bin Farooq hit 23. Mohsin Nadeem claimed 3-31, Awais Munir 2-20 and Haider Butt 2-28.

Yu Slim Club, in reply, could score 107-6 in 20 overs. Safer Azam (29), Majid Majeed (23) and Arslana Sajid (22) played well. Hammad Ali clinched 3-15 while Rao Khayyam, Ali Hamza and Zahir got one wicket each. City Gymkhana overpowered Township Whites Club in the 17th match of the tournament here at Pindi Gymkhana Cricket ground. Township Whites, batting first, posted a good total of 192-8 in 20 over with Shahrukh Ali scoring 61, M Faiq 41 and Rana Ayan Ali 40. Abdul Rehman and Usama Tariq

bagged 2 wickets each. City Gymkhana replied strongly and chased the required target losing just four wickets in 19.1 overs. Rizwan played the hero's knock of 90 runs of 39 balls to emerge as player of the match. He was ably assisted by Saad Athar (32*) and Jahangir Mirza (23*). For Township Whites, Ammar Yousaf took 2-4.

On Friday (January 13, 2023), two matches will be played. Cricket Center will vie against Shahkamal Cricket Club in the 18th match of the tournament at Cricket Center ground while Model Town Club will play against Lucky Star Club in the 19th match of the tournament at Model Town Greens ground. The event is organized on regular annual basis. The tournament is being played to pay homage to Col Fateh Sher Khan and is sponsored by a former American Pakistani, Nabeel Ahmad.

World number one Swiatek leads Australian Open charge

MELBOURNE (AFP/APP): World number one Iga Swiatek is the woman to beat when the Australian Open begins on Monday without retired great Serena Williams and last year's champion Ashleigh Barty.

With two-time Melbourne winner Naomi Osaka also missing, it is almost certain that there will be a new name on the Daphne Akhurst trophy.

The only former title-holders left in the draw are out-of-sorts Sofia Kenin, who won in 2020, and Victoria Azarenka, the Belarusian whose second Australian Open triumph was a decade ago.

Poland's Swiatek is clear favourite, having dominated women's tennis following the retirement in March last year of the Australian Barty.

Swiatek secured eight WTA titles in 2022 and became the first woman in six years to win two Grand Slams in the same season -- at Roland Garros and New York -- to cement her place at the top of the rankings. Now she has her sights on a maiden title at Melbourne Park, which would leave the 21-year-old needing only a Wimbledon championship to complete a career slam.

"I'm going to try to kind of cut off everything that happened last year and just focus on the future because I feel like I can take a lot of experience from these tournaments last year," she said earlier this month.

Swiatek has not had it all her own way though. A 6-2, 6-2 capitulation to American world number three Jessica Pegula in the recent semi-final of the United Cup in Sydney left the Pole in tears. She complained that she felt "helpless" and unable to show up "physically and mentally", but that was her only early season blip after three straight-sets wins.

Pegula was outclassed by Barty in the quarter-finals at Melbourne last year, but with the Australian out of the picture, the American will fancy her chances of a maiden Slam.

The 28-year-old played a central role for the victorious USA team at the United Cup to continue her red-hot form from the end of the 2022 season. That included lifting a second singles trophy at the WTA 1000 in Guadalajara.

Ons Jabeur, the world number two, also enjoyed a breakthrough season in 2022, reaching two Grand Slam finals, and her first major cannot be

Djokovic to play 75th-ranked Spaniard on Australian Open return

Melbourne (AFP/APP): Novak Djokovic was drawn Thursday to play Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena on his return to the Australian Open and could meet Nick Kyrgios in the last eight. The Serbian star, who was deported a year ago, will kickstart his bid for a 10th Melbourne title and a record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam crown against a player ranked 75th in the world. In the absence of injured world number one Carlos Alcaraz, defending champion Rafael Nadal takes the top seed and starts against Britain's promising Jack Draper.

On the women's side, top seed and world number one Iga Swiatek will meet Germany's Jule Niemeier as she targets a maiden Grand Slam title in Australia. There is an injury cloud hanging over Djokovic after he tweaked his hamstring on the way to winning the season-opening Adelaide International last week. He cut short a practice match on Wednesday to get more treatment.

The 35-year-old was ejected from Australia on the eve of the 2022 tournament over his Covid vaccination stance after a legal battle. He also missed the US Open for similar reasons. The move divided opinion in Melbourne, a city that endured some of the longest lockdowns in the world at the height of the pandemic. How he is received remains to be seen.

The fourth seed is due to play a

charity match against Australian Kyrgios on Friday evening and could meet him in the quarter-finals if both get that far. Kyrgios would first potentially have to get past ninth seed Holger Rune and fifth seed Andrey Rublev. Second seed Casper Ruud, who suffered a shock loss in his first match at the Auckland Classic on Wednesday, was pitted first up against Czech player Tomas Machac.

Daniil Medvedev, the finalist at the last two Australian Opens, takes on American Marcos Giron. Third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas has a tough match against France's Quentin Halys. Former Grand Slam winner Andy Murray meets Italian Matteo Berrettini in a headline first-round clash while Rublev is up against former finalist Dominic Thiem.

On the women's side, second seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia faces Slovenia's Tamara Zidansek while American third seed Jessica Pegula takes on Romania's Jaqueline Cristian.

France's Caroline Garcia, seeded four, meets a qualifier or lucky loser while world number five Aryna Sabalenka, who won the Adelaide International last week, is against Tereza Martincova of the Czech Republic. In a bumper first-round clash, former champions Victoria Azarenka and Sofia Kenin will meet.

Open warning shots with warm-up tournament wins.

The powerful 24-year-old Sabalenka said she was ready for a "big fight" in Melbourne after winning her first title since 2021 at the Adelaide International.

The 18-year-old Gauff, who last year broke into the top 10 for the first time, kicked off her season by clinching the Auckland Classic title last week for a third WTA crown.

"This gives me a lot of confidence," Gauff, touted as the natural heir to Serena Williams, said. "I wanted a win but did not expect it in the first tournament of the year."

32-member delegation from Balochistan calls on Punjab Sports Minister

LAHORE (APP): The 32-member delegation from Balochistan Youth Affairs Department had an interactive meeting with Punjab Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Malik Taimoor Masood here at the National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Director General Muhammad Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan and other officials were also present on this occasion. It may be noted here that Balochistan delegation which also includes seven male and female national level karate, cricket and wushu players and 21 students from different colleges and universities is on a 4-day visit of provincial metropolis on the invitation of Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab under Youth Exchange Programme.

Speaking to guest delegation, Punjab Sports Minister welcomed the guest delegation and said that Balochistan youth are very talented. "The basic purpose of visit of Balochistan students under Youth Exchange

Programme is to bring youth of the country at one platform. Our country has been blessed with plenty of talent. We just need to polish this valuable potential," he added.

Malik Taimoor Masood informed that Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab is organizing a National Youth Summit in February to bring together the youth of the country. "The youth of the four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will participate in the 3-day National Youth Summit where they will share their valuable ideas and skills".

He further said that Punjab will continue to play a role of elder brother to all other provinces. "We want to extend every kind of cooperation and assistance to all provinces practically. We are formulating a concrete policy for youth so that their useful ideas could be given material shape".

Director General Sports Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on this occasion said that the guest delegation is being provide complete

awareness about history of Lahore and other achievements during their trip. "The visit of Balochistan students under Youth Exchange Programme will help a lot in promoting national solidarity and brotherhood among the people of both provinces".

He urged the guest delegation to prepare themselves fully for the participation in National Youth Summit. "Around 250 talented youth from across the country will participate in the National Youth Summit. It will be a useful platform for youth from all the country to exhibit their potential and skills".

All the male and female members of Balochistan delegation expressed their views and asked different questions in the meeting.

Later, Punjab Sports Minister distributed certificates among all the male and female members of Balochistan delegation. Director Youth Affairs Balochistan Ejaz Ali also presented traditional caps of Balochistan to Punjab Sports Minister and DG, SBP.



SKARDU: Player struggling to get hold on ball during the Balistan KGUN Festival 2023 Ice Hockey final match between Skardu Anchan and K2.



In brief

IRSA releases 24,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 24,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 42,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1496.36 feet and was 98.36 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 18,800 cusecs while outflow was 8,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1120.60 feet, which was 70.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 8,000 cusecs and 100 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded at 15,900, 13,600, 4,000 and 4,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5,500 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Friday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM to Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Shaigan, Adyala Jail, Shahpur, Khasala Feeders and surrounding areas.

Group art show concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group show of print making by various artists concluded here Thursday featuring works by national and international print makers. The show titled "Etched and Inked" carried work of artists Aqeel Solangi, Atif Khan, Fatima Saeed, Irum Wani, Kate Bassett, Laila Rahman, Sameera Khan and Sarah Hopkins at Khaas Art Gallery. Etched and Inked", was an exhibition of group of innovative and established printmakers from UK, Denmark and Pakistan. It was focused solely on the art of printmaking. It builds a positive context whereby artists are involved in the dissemination of their art works and share their ideas with the public through the mediators of a gallery, stimulating a greater sentence and knowledge of Original Prints to larger audiences. It deepens a mutual understanding and motivates a way of thinking, of and beyond political, pecuniary and social borders. The participants have their own distinct style on the medium. It was a collection of prints from the artists with a very diverse approach. "Etched and Inked", was also an allegory of the collaborative nature of printmaking that made it survive through the past to present, bringing forward both the traditional and contemporary, techniques and processes, said the organizers. Printmaking is multifaceted and what makes it further unique is that staying within the realm of art; one can produce an abundance of editions. Thus, giving an artist opportunity to produce and share more than one set of the same images. This makes the art accessible to everyone. It gives an ease of an ownership to a genuine art piece. "Place - Replace, Location - Relocation are the main conceptual concerns in my work."



ISLAMABAD: Massive traffic came from Murree jammed due to construction of Bhara Kaho Bypass.

HEC makes education accessible for students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Thursday said that HEC has performed in recent years in offering various international scholarship schemes to make education accessible for students, particularly those from far-flung and less privileged areas.

During 2023, a total of 508 scholars are preceding foreign countries on scholarships under HEC's foreign scholarship schemes, from different levels of Higher education including 246 Ph.D., 116 MS/BS, 102 IR SIP (6 Months), and 44 Post of Doctorate, he said while talking to APP.

"A total number of 2,812 scholars are studying at foreign universities under various scholarship schemes including 1760 students enrolled in Ph.D., 857 in MS/BS, 130 in IR SIP (6 Months) and 65 in Post Doctorate" he added.

"Our students are very talented and under the Erasmus Mundus scholarship program, which is very competitive, this year the

highest number of students securing these scholarships are from Pakistan," Dr. Mukhtar lauded.

Amidst the challenge of keeping up with international education standards, he told APP that the HEC has a gigantic task ahead to secure more scholarships for Pakistani students enabling them to pursue higher studies at the best universities in the world.

We have maintained the most transparent and cautious approach for the selection of students, he remarked. It is worth mentioning here most of the foreign scholarships are offered in seven disciplines including Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Biological and Medical Sciences, Business Education, Engineering and Technology, and Physical and Social Sciences.

Dr. Mukhtar further elaborated that on directives of the present government, the HEC has taken numerous steps to increase the number of foreign scholarships for Pakistani students. These

initiatives include the 75th National Top Talent Scholarship Program aimed at increasing the number of Pakistani scholars in the World's Top 20 Universities. The government of Hungary has also increased the number of scholarships for Pakistani students, he informed.

The Commission, Mukhtar said, HEC offers international scholarships through various scholarship projects and programs including Overseas Scholarships Phase-III, HRDI - UESTP Overseas Scholarships, US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, HEC-USAID Fulbright Scholarship Program Phase-III, Post-Doc Fellowship Program Phase-III, and Academic and Research Linkages with different countries and agencies under Bilateral Agreements. Scholarships are also being offered to the Nationals of OIC, Commonwealth, SIDS, and Hungary to Study at Different Pakistani Universities.

Ahmed Faraz remembered on his 92nd birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Dr Yousuf Khushk on Thursday visited the grave of the noted poet and first head of PAL, Ahmad Faraz on his 92nd birth anniversary, laid a floral wreath and also offered prayers.

The chairman was accompanied by the son of late Ahmed Faraz Saadi Faraz, Chairman literary and cultural organization, Zawiya Mehboob Zafar, senior officials of PAL and other prominent literary personalities of the twin cities. They all prayed for the departed soul in eternal peace and expressed their commitment to carry forward his legacy for the future generations.

Rich tribute was paid to the legendary poet who ruled the 'Urdu poetry' for decades and inspired the generations with his unique style and expressions.

Ahmed Faraz is the poet of all time who introduce new style in Urdu poetry which was widely appreciated by the people of all generations.

He is an asset of Urdu literature who not only adopt classic themes of poetry but also add colors through giving new dimensions to the ancient topics and expression with his unique style. Although he was famous for his romantic poetry but also composed inspiring resistance poetry which always impress the souls and hearts of the literature lovers. A lot of research work has been done on the life and work of Ahmed Faraz but still more work needed to be done to explore new areas of Ahmed Faraz's poetry.

Ahmed Faraz was born in Kohat on January 12, 1931, and was given the name of Syed Ahmad Shah. He received his education from Peshawar and earned Master's degree in Persian and Urdu from Edwards College.

KSA, UAE all-weather friends of Pakistan, says Tahir Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative (PMSR) for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Thursday termed Saudi Arabia (SA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) all-weather friends of Pakistan.

Expressing gratitude to UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Hafiz Ashrafi told APP that the UAE had helped Pakistan in the trying time by not only rolling over the existing loan of \$2 billion, but providing additional \$1 billion.

Ashrafi, who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said the generous support would further cement the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries. He said the recent visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the UAE would open new avenues of cooperation in the fields of trade, investment and energy.

He also lauded Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman for coming to Pakistan's help in the critical economic situation. Citing the statement of Saudi Crown Prince for increasing the Kingdom's assistance and investment in Pakistan, he said it was explicit evidence of exclusive diplomatic and religious affinity between Pakistan and the KSA.

The special assistant said as per reports the Saudi Fund for Development would conduct a study on increasing the deposit amount with State Bank of Pakistan to \$5 billion from \$3 billion and it would also assess the options to enhance its investments in Pakistan to \$10 billion. He also thanked the international donors, including the KSA and the UAE, for committing over \$9 billion to help Pakistan recover from the ravages of massive floods and exceeding its external financing goals at a Geneva meeting co-hosted by the United Nations and the Government of Pakistan.

BISP sets up control room for redressal of complaints regarding Kafaalat payments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has set up a special control room for the redressal of public complaints regarding disbursement of Benazir Kafaalat payments. The control room has set up on the special directives of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri to ensure transparency in distribution of the first quarterly installment of Rs 7000 among the beneficiaries for the year 2023.

The disbursement process of the first quarterly installment of Benazir Kafaalat was started from Monday.

Shazia Marri has expressed her commitment to ensure transparency in the disbursement of funds at any cost and stressed that the beneficiaries should receive their amount of Rs 7000 and not to forget to get their payment receipt.

She reiterated that no deduction could be made through this amount and there was no payment fee.

If a person demands any kind of deduction or fee for payment, beneficiaries should immediately report to BISP's toll-free helpline 080026477 and

contact the nearest BISP Tehsil Office.

She warned that the message sent by BISP would come from 8171 only and no message from any other number or code should be trusted, as it is faked and fraudulent. The beneficiaries facing problems regarding receiving the payments could register their complaint on Whatsapp numbers for Punjab: 03255365520, Sindh: 03449118336 and Balochistan: 03255365469 while the complainants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan could contact at: 03255365476.

According to the BISP, around 7.7 million families would receive over Rs. 55 billion in the first tranche.

The beneficiary women and trans-genders of Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan have started receiving this money from Payment Centers or Biometric ATMs designated by Habib Bank; while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, the amount is being disbursed through Payment Centers or Biometric ATMs of Bank Al-Falah.

19,716 criminals held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police arrested 19,716 outlaws during the last year and recovered looted valuables worth more than Rs.1.38 billion from them while a significant action against criminal elements was witnessed during this period.

According to police, the Islamabad police obtained great achievements during the tenure of incumbent Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and took effective action against the criminal elements. Police spokesman said that the force achieved great success which is appreciable. He said that policemen from Operational Wing worked hard to ensure protection to the lives and property of the citizens and achieved success in the

assigned tasks.

According to details, the Operations Division of the Islamabad Capital Police arrested a total of 19,716 persons culprits involved in various crimes cases while several gangsters including a notorious gangster Bilal Sabit along with accomplices were arrested.

As per the performance report, the operation division police arrested 1,450 accused including 656 members of 234 criminal gangs involved in dacoity as well as robbery cases and recovered valuables worth Rs. 219 million from their possession including 34 vehicles and 73 motorcycles. Likewise, 1610 culprits including 437 members of 167 gangs involved in theft and street crimes were also arrested besides recovery of Rs 298.94 mil-

lion from their possession.

Similarly, the police teams also registered 1,016 cases against vehicle and bike lifters and arrested 814 accused including 276 members of 113 gangs and recovered 281 vehicles and 646 bikes worth Rs 402.2 million from their possession. Police teams arrested 172 accused and recovered 165 tempered vehicles and nine bikes worth Rs 459.8 million from their possession. Moreover, the capital police also traced 43 blind murder cases and arrested 78 accused involved in it. Police also registered 1158 cases against drug peddlers and arrested 1209 accused involved in drug peddling and recovered 652.9 kilogram hashish, 333.6 kilogram heroin, 11.5 kilogram Ice, 85 gram cocaine, 5.16 kilogram opium and 12,316 liquor bottles from their possession.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to UAE very Important for the Pakistan economic situation

S M Rizwan

Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is visiting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 12 to 13 at the invitation of the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This will be the third visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif to UAE after assuming the post of Prime Minister. The prime minister will be accompanied by a high-level delegation including important members of the cabinet. Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates enjoy excellent brotherly bilateral relations based on common heritage and multilateral cooperation. Pakistan is ready to connect the Middle East with Afghanistan and Central Asia. Pakistan and UAE have excellent brotherly relations based on common heritage and multilateral cooperation.

The exemplary development that the United Arab Emirates has set would not have been possible without the visionary leadership of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the United Arab Emirates.

This great leader was very fond of Pakistan. He took a personal interest in many socio-economic projects in Pakistan and provided opportunities for Pakistani workers to work in the

UAE - serving as a strong bridge between Pakistani workers, Pakistan and the UAE.

His successors in the UAE are following the high standards set by Sheikh Zayed and are striving to further strengthen and stabilize relations with Pakistan. The Prime Minister's visits have further expanded our bilateral relations, our trade and economic ties have also strengthened and we continue to cooperate at international forums.

Economic and trade relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates are an important part of our bilateral relations and are continuously growing.

With mutual trade of over \$8 billion, the UAE is Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East and North Africa region. It is one of the largest foreign investors in Pakistan.

With the continuous progress of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and the operationalization of the Gwadar port, Pakistan is poised to connect the Middle East with Afghanistan and beyond with Central Asia. Better connectivity between our regions will be very beneficial for our people.

During Prime Minister Mohammad Shahbaz Sharif's visit, the Prime Minister will also meet the Prime Minister and Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al

Maktoum. During the visit, the Prime Minister will meet Emirati businessmen and investors to discuss ways to increase bilateral trade and investment.

The UAE is home to around 1.7 million Pakistanis who have been contributing to the success of the UAE for the past five decades, as well as the development, prosperity and economic growth of the two brotherly countries. Pakistan and the UAE are bound by close and brotherly ties based on common faith and traditions, common history and heritage. Regular high-level exchanges and visits by the leaders of the two countries are an important feature of the bilateral relationship.

It should be noted that Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates are enjoying deep, strong and religious relations with strong values. Pakistan is committed to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations with the UAE, particularly in the areas of trade, economy and investment.

Pakistan is committed to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations with the UAE, particularly in the areas of trade, economy and investment. During the visit, the Prime Minister will meet the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to promote econom-

ic, trade and investment relations between the two brotherly countries and create opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in the UAE. The two leaders will also discuss several regional and global issues of mutual interest.

It should be noted that since Mian Shahbaz Sharif assumed the position of Prime Minister of the coalition government, he has worked day and night for the restoration of the country's economy. A clear example of this is the recent Geneva conference in which more than expected funds have been pledged for flood relief. Apart from this, a positive discussion has also been held with the representatives of the IMF and now the danger of Pakistan defaulting has been avoided, but still more tough decisions have to be made. Pakistan's stock exchange has also improved.

In this context, the spokesman of the Foreign Office says that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is visiting on the invitation of the head of the UAE. Pakistan is committed to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations with the UAE, particularly in the areas of trade, economy and investment.

It should be noted that ever since Mian Shahbaz Sharif assumed the position of Prime Minister of the coalition government, he has worked day and

night to revive the country's economy. During the visit, the Prime Minister will meet the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and will discuss bilateral relations and trade issues in meetings with the UAE leadership. The meeting will also discuss progress in investment agreements in Pakistan.

It should be noted that these days the Chief of Pakistan Army, General Asim Munir, is also in the United Arab Emirates on an official visit, where the President of the UAE, Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, warmly welcomed General Asim Munir. In the meeting, Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan congratulated General Asim Muneer on becoming the Chief of the Pakistan Army and expressed his best wishes for his new responsibilities. Defense and military cooperation between Pakistan and UAE was discussed.

Relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates began in 1971 after the settlement of Abu Dhabi.

After independence from Britain in December 1971, seven states including Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain became one country.

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al

Nahyan was elected President and Sheikh Maktoub bin Rashid was elected Vice President and Prime Minister then Pakistan was the first country to officially recognize the United Arab Emirates. If decided, Pakistani experts, engineers, tradesmen and laborers played an active role and contributed to the development of education, health, police and armed forces.

Even today, more than 1.8 million Pakistanis are associated with various sectors there. Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have very close trade relations, which is reflected in the fact that the UAE is the fourth largest investor in Pakistan.

Apart from this, UAE is working in the field of education, health, water resources and infrastructure under the Pakistan Assistants Program.

In 2009, after the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore, the doors of international cricket were closed to Pakistan and foreign teams stopped coming to Pakistan. During this difficult time, UAE supported Pakistan and Pakistan used the sports grounds of UAE as their home ground.

The relationship of friendship between UAE and Pakistan is 51 years old. It is hoped that the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will further strengthen the relationship.

FM meets injured in attack

KABUL (Agencies): Acing Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, visited the injured of explosion in Emergency Hospital. During his visit, Mr. Muttaqi directed health personnel of the hospital to pay special attention to the treatment of the injured. He also provided cash assistance for those wounded in the incident. Five civilians were killed and several others were injured in the explosion that took place on the road passing in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Jamadi-us-Sani 20, 1444 — Friday, January 13, 2023

Iranian engineers rescued

KABUL (Agencies): Four Iranian engineers and five soldiers of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, who were trapped in snowstorms, were rescued by the air forces of the Ministry of National Defense of Afghanistan. These Iranian engineers arrived in Herat from Iran for the technical evaluation of the Khaf-Herat railway, where they were trapped in snowstorms in the deserts of Herat while returning to Iran due to cold weather and lack of food.

Bombing in Kabul triggers widespread reactions

KABUL (TOLNews): The bombing near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul on Wednesday triggered widespread reactions at national and international levels.

Kabul security department said the attack left five people dead and many others wounded.

Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack, according to a website affiliated to the group.

Former president Hamid Karzai in a tweet “strongly” condemned the attack and called it a terrorist act and said it is against human and Islamic values.

Former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, in a tweet condemned the attack called it against all human and Islamic principles.

The UN Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also condemned the attack.

“Violence is not part of any solution to bring lasting peace to Afghanistan,” UNAMA said. “Our condolences to the families affected.”

UK Chargé d’Affaires Hugo Shorter in a tweet condemned the attack and said “the UK rejects such senseless and indiscriminate acts of violence.”

Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement “strongly condemned” the bombing and expressed the condolences of the State of Qatar “to the families of the victims, the government, and the people of Afghanistan.”

A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in a regular daily

briefing on Thursday strongly condemned the attack and said they hope that Islamic Emirate can protect citizens from all countries, including Chinese nationals.

Iran’s Embassy in Kabul in a tweet condemned the attack and expressed deep condolences to the families of victims of the blast.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation also in a statement condemned the suicide attack outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The OIC General Secretariat extended its condolences to the families of the victims and wished the wounded a quick recovery.

Pakistan Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Islamabad “strongly condemns the brazen terrorist attack that resulted in the loss of precious lives.”

Chinese interested investing in Afghanistan



GHAZNI (Agencies): Local officials of the Ghazni Mines and Petroleum Department say that two Chinese firms have brought with them samples of lithium mines of the Zarkashan and Nawur districts of the Murq district of the province.

The Chinese want to invest in these two mines, local officials of the province said.

The provincial head of Ghazni Mines and Petroleum, Mawlawi Hazrat Yusuf Sohaib, said that these two mines need millions of US dollars of investment and the extraction of these two mines can address the economic problems of the country.

According to him, 25 mines of Ghazni are still being mined and 18 new mines have been discovered in this province this year alone. The newly discovered 18 mines are marble, coal, and other precious materials, from which the extraction will begin next year.

Water supply projects underway

JAWZJAN (Agencies): With the construction of 6 water supply networks in Jawzjan, drinkable water is presumed to be supplied to hundreds of families. The work of 6 water supply networks worth two hundred and fifty thousand US dollars has started in Fazyabad district of Jawzjan.

The officials of the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development of Jawzjan say that these water supply networks are funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UMDP) and in cooperation with the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

This projects are carried under the title “Joint Action for Community Empowerment” in Fayzabad District, Jawzjan.

Meanwhile, Mawlawi Assadullah Hamza, the head of Jawzjan Rural Rehabilitation and Development, said that with the completion of these projects, more than 730 families will benefit from safe drinkable water.

Trapped passengers rescued

JAWZJAN (Agencies): The Forces of the Ministry of National Defense rescued the lives of dozens of passengers who were trapped in snowstorms in Salang and other places in the north of the country due to heavy snowfall.

On Wednesday, five vehicles, along with their inside passengers were trapped in a snowstorm, and were rescued by the forces National Defense Ministry, said the Ministry in a statement.

14 residents of the Fayzabad district of Jawzjan were rescued by helicopters of Balkh Air Brigade and transferred to a safe place, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the security officials of Jawzjan say that 7 passengers of a car where, trapped in a snowstorm last Wednesday night on the road of Eshak Kotal in the Aqche district were rescued.

Qari Hafizullah Pahlwan, the security commander of Jawzjan, says that the passengers who were trapped in a snowstorm were found and rescued after several hours of searching and were taken to the center of this province by helicopter.

The passengers include a woman and a child who was taken to the Afghan-Turkish hospital for treatment, he added.

Minister share suggestions with Deputy PM to promote higher education sector

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, in a meeting with Sheikh Nada Mohammad Nadeem, Acting Minister of Higher Education, heard the suggestions on the promotions of the educational situation in the country.

According to a statement, the meeting also discussed incomplete projects of the Ministry of Higher Education and their placement in the budget of the fiscal year 1402, the increase in the future academic and administrative formation of that ministry, support for the increase in the salaries of professors and some other issues.

The issue of providing better topics to professors



with doctoral degrees, the purpose of forming specialized departments in the universities of the zones, the exemption of professors from paying master’s and

doctoral program fees, and the salary plan for master’s and doctoral programs was discussed.

The meeting also discussed the job creation for

new graduates and dedicating the budget for research programs, inventions, and innovations of the universities in 1402, added to the statement.

16 months later, Islamic Emirate yet to have official cabinet

KABUL (TOLNews): More than 16 months have passed since the Islamic Emirate was established in Afghanistan, but “an official cabinet” is yet to be announced and the government is still administered by acting ministers.

The Islamic Emirate’s deputy spokesperson, Bilal Karimi, said that current operations in governmental institutions are proceeding normally and that efforts are also made to establish an official cabinet.

“Whenever we see a shortage anywhere, efforts

will be made to fill it,” Karimi said.

Analysts said that one of the reasons that the caretaking trend has not been ended is that the international community does not recognize the Islamic Emirate government.

“The most important principle is that we have not yet been able to have a wider political dialogue with the international community so that they recognize the current government of Afghanistan. The second issue is that it is related to the political inco-

herence of the geographical management of Afghanistan,” said Mohammad Zalmai Afghanyar, a political analyst.

“As soon as possible, the Islamic Emirate should announce the official cabinet and the permanent cabinet, in which all Afghans have a share,” said Abdul Qader Qani, another political analyst.

Twenty-five of the country’s ministries are now run by acting ministers.

According to a number of experts, the formal cabinet’s formation promotes

effective governance.

“The sooner the Islamic Emirate acts on this matter, the issue of their recognition will be essential for them and it will be recognized faster,” said Parwiz Stanikzai, a university lecturer.

The Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, previously noted that more time was needed for the formation of the formal cabinet. The most major reasons for not establishing an official cabinet, in Mujahid’s view, were the lack of a council and the constitution.

Herat held emergency meeting as cold temperature upsurge

KABUL (Agencies): An emergency meeting was held in Herat with the presence of the governor of Herat, the head of information and culture, media officials and journalists.

The Governor of Herat, hailing the cooperation of the media for their coverage and action in this emergency, underscored that the people have an urgent need to inform the media at this time.

Mawlana Noor Ahmad Islam Jar Governor of Herat says that the local administration has taken all the preparations in case of emergency and no unfortunate cases have happened so far.

The emergency committee will continue its day and night actions and will take care of people’s problems, he added.

Governor Islam Jar says that this committee also monitors the price of food items.

The head of Information and Culture of Herat,



Naeem ul Haq Haqqani,

two days back. He says that there is no shortage in Turkmenistan’s electricity sector, but Iran’s electricity has increased from 100 megabytes to 40 megabytes, and we are addressing this problem.

Local Herat officials say

that all roads leading to Herat are blocked due to the cold weather, but now that the weather is suitable, they have been temporarily opened and rescue teams are dispatched on the road, as the possible second wave of cold weather measured.

Salang highway reopens for traffic after heavy snowfall

SALANG (Khaama Press): Officials of the Ministry of Public Works of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan say that the Salang highway was reopened after the heavy snowfall and a strong storm.

The Public Work ministry tweeted that Salang highway has been opened for traffic as a result of the efforts of the personnel of Salang Preservation Department.

Due to heavy snowfall on Wednesday, highways in certain provinces including Kabul, Bamyan, Baghlan, Badghis, and Saripul provinces were temporarily blocked.

Taliban officials of Salang highway have said that some passengers who were stuck on the road have been transferred to safe places after the rescue team reached the area.

Officials of the Ministry of Public Works in a message to Khaama Press said that so far five passenger

cars that were stuck on the highway were rescued by rescue personnel.

Salang highway connects at least ten northern and northeastern provinces of Afghanistan to the center and other provinces. Since the beginning of this year’s snowfall, the high has been temporarily blocked several times.

The blockage of Salang

highway for Traffic is not something new. During the winter season, the massive amount of snowfall the mountainous train gets makes it extremely difficult to move people and goods from the capital to northern provinces and vice versa. Meanwhile, the highway is in a poor condition with cracks and holes everywhere, needing

immediate attention for its maintenance.

On December 18, an oil tanker overturned and caught fire in Salang Tunnel, killing 19 people and injuring dozens. Similar incidents and avalanches have taken place in Salang Tunnel and the only major highway linking the capital to the north of the country.



Charity starts treatment of drug addicts



JALALABAD (Pajhwok): For the first time in eastern Nangarhar province, a charity has started free treatment of drug addicts and has so far treated 25 people.

Another 40 people are under treatment with the private Ikhlas Charity Foundation being run with cooperation and assistance of Afghans living abroad.

Local authorities in Nangarhar appreciate the initiative and assure to increase services at the government hospital for treatment of drug addicts.

Ikhlas Charity Foundation head Mohammad Ibrahim Bawri told Pajhwok Afghan News on Thursday that their foundation was being supported by Afghan expatriates.

Their foundation started working five months ago and has so far treated 25 addicts and about 40 people are still under treatment.

“We provide five types of services that include full

examination of the patient, medication, accommodation, 24-hour doctor services and food.”

He said they also provided monthly assistance to families of some addicts along with their treatment in the first category. In the second category, only free treatment is provided and in the third category, patients are treated against a small fee, he added.

Bawri said addicts often returned to their habit of using drugs after treatment because they had no job or business.

In order to solve this problem, he said, they were planning to provide work opportunities to the addicts after treatment in future so that they could avoid a relapse.

Ajmal, one of the under treatment addicts, a resident of Khost province, said he first got addicted to snuff in company of his friends, then turned to cigarettes, hashish and heroin.

“Initially I used drugs

secretly, but then my father came to know about it. He advised me to quit other drugs and only smoke hashish with him, now we both are receiving treatment in this center.”

Ajmal’s father Jamal said after knowing about the treatment center, he came to it with his son and now they were under treatment.

Nangarhar provincial officials appreciated the initiative. Nangarhar Public Health Department spokesman Naqibullah Rahimi said privately no one had previously taken such an action in Nangarhar and therefore his department and security organs were fully cooperating with the charity.

He said a 100-bed government hospital for treatment of drug addicts existed in Nangarhar, where 1,100 addicts received treatment last year. He said they were trying to increase facilities at the hospital in the future.

National economy is on verge of default: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that due to the incompetence of the incumbent federal setup, the national economy is on the verge of default and now, in a failed attempt to resuscitate the economy, the federal cabinet is looking towards charities. The indifferent attitude of the imported cabinet towards Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is unethical and highly condemnable.

Despite the stoppage of funds by the federal government, the provincial government has not compromised on its development agenda and is investing in human capital. Every possible effort has been made to this effect", he said, and added that during the last four years, the provincial government has spent significant resources on the welfare of the journalist's community, especially on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of press clubs, provision of grants in aid, medical reimbursements, unemployment allowances, marriage grants, establishment of media colonies and other activities related to the community.

He was addressing the oath taking ceremonies of the Swat and Nowshera Press Clubs held here at the Chief Minister's house on Thursday. Provincial Minister Dr Amjad, Advisor to Chief Minister Mian Khaliq Ur Rehman, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, MPAs Mian Sharafat Ali and Fazal Hakim, Secretary Information Arshad Khan and Director General Information Imdadullah also attended the ceremonies.

The Chief Minister formally administered an oath to the newly elected cabinets of Swat and Nowshera Press Clubs. He extended his heartfelt felicitation to the newly elected president of Nowshera

Press club Jahanzeb Khattak, president of Swat Press club Shereen Zada, president of Swat Union of Journalists Hazara Ali and their cabinet members.

He hoped that newly elected cabinets would play a proactive role in promoting positive journalism and resolving issues of their community. Chief Minister Mahmood Khan also talked about the achievements of his government and said that PTI provincial government has gone beyond its capacity and resources for the establishment of transparent governance, improvement of public sector institutions and public welfare in accordance with Imran Khan's vision and party manifesto. He said that under the uniform development strategy of the provincial government, every possible effort has been made to ensure the welfare of all sectors of society; the ultimate goal is to serve humanity without discrimination for which all possible measures have been taken.

He maintained that establishing a welfare society requires coordinated efforts and teamwork, for which all the stakeholders will have to play their respective roles. Media has a key role in promoting democratic practices, due to which it is considered as the fourth pillar of the state. Mahmood Khan made it clear that merit, transparency and rule of law have been the top priorities of his government since day one. The self-centered politicians who have built their properties abroad by looting the national exchequer have been exposed.

The Chief Minister on the occasion, also assured that the issues of the Swat and Nowshera Press Clubs would be resolved on priority, adding that the provincial government has always extended every possible support to the journalist's community and will continue to resolve their genuine issues in future.

Tribesmen end sit-in after acceptance of demands

F.P. Report

WANA: The tribesmen end sit-in continued for seven days after successful negotiation with district administration by approving all 10 demands of Qaumi Aman Pason, on Thursday.

The negotiation was concluded with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lower Waziristan Nasir Khan, District Police Officer South Waziristan Shabir Hussain and Assistant Commissioner Wana Salman Kundi in the presence thousands of tribesmen and peace activists.

During negotiation, Ulema, tribesmen, social, political & rights' activists and members of civil society participated in large number. The ending of sit-in was announced after conclusion of negotiation with administrative officers by accepting all ten demands of Qaumi Aman Pason. DC claimed that all 10 demands shall be fulfilled on priority basis and added that police writ should be established in the area by setting up check points in Wana bazaar. He added that indiscriminate actions should be taken against painted glasses and absent police personnel immediately across the board.

He claimed that militant groups should be eliminated to ensure sustainable peace in the region and facilities to Ahmadzai Wazir at Angoor Ada border crossing with Afghanistan. DC Nasir Khan, while expressing his views, congratulated the people participating in the sit-in and said that all the demands of your people are constitutional and legal, we will start implementing all these demands very soon.

Some demands take time to process and most requests will be processed many times. At which the people involved in the sit-in expressed their satisfaction, the sit-in was declared over, and all the closed roads were opened.

It should be remembered that local leaders of all political parties, PPP, ANP, JUI, JI, PTI, NDM, PKMAP, lawyers, businessmen, PTM and a large number of tribal elders and youth participated. Waziristan Aman Olsi Pason (Waziristan peace public movement) gave their demands to the district administration in the form of a letter.

IHC expresses anger over PTI

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has expressed anger over the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) for challenging the same case in two courts. The IHC chief justice Aamer Farooq held hearing on a petition filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan, challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) verdict in the Toshakhana reference.

During the hearing, Barrister Gohar said that Imran Khan's lawyer for the case, Ali Zafar, is currently arguing the case before the Lahore High Court (LHC), where he has challenged the ECP's notification of Dec 7. Gohar asked the court to set a date for the next week. "One case cannot be challenged in two courts," IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq said. "So withdraw this application if that is the case," he added.

The court made the observation, "It is not a good thing when one notice is challenged in multiple courts, as we also wrote in the Azam Swati case." The application that is currently pending with the LHC infuriated the IHC CJ who also noted that a notice was frequently challenged in multiple courts. The case hearing was postponed till Jan 25 by court.

Previously, Khan's counsel Barrister Ali Zafar made the submission before that it is bizarre that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified him for the assets that he legally purchased and lawfully sold.

Court seeks MQM-P documents in Altaf's CNIC case: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has sought documents regarding the Convener of MQM Pakistan in case seeking issuance of CNIC to founder leader Altaf Hussain. Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani heard the case filed by MQM regarding the matter.

The court noted that the petition was filed by a person named Tariq Javed from London.



WEST BANK: Relatives weeping at hospital after killing of a Palestinian man Ahmed Junaid.

Posting in PESCO: PHC grants status quo

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Abdul Shakoor has granted status quo on appointment of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) and ordered federal government to reply till 26th January, on Thursday.

The appointment is challenged by Chief Executive Officer PESCO Engineer Gul Nabi while counsel Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Malik Advocate informed that petitioner was appointed on 6th September 2022 for three years and several tasks were granted to him which was fulfilled successfully by the CEO.

CEO has increased recovery to 95% which was every low at the time of his appointment while line-losses were decreased from 42% to 36% and several reforms were introduced in various sections of PESCO, the counsel argued. The counsel informed that the petitioner was directed to improve his services within three months to pave way for political engineering to de-seat the CEO and added that due to recent flood PESCO has diverted attention towards rehabilitation rather than recovery.

The counsel Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Advocate argued that the trap has set to appoint Engineer Arif Mehmood Sadozai posted at Islamabad because he is brother of former PESCO's chief and belonging to constituency of powerful politicians from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The counsel added that appointment of irrelevant officer on para-

Flour price-hike: Court to issue orders to Chief Secretary for DCs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered Secretary Food to submit comprehensive report on price hike and availability of flour till 19th January, on Thursday.

During hearing counsel for petitioner Danyal Chamkani Advocate, Additional Advocate General Syed Sikandar Shah, Secretary Food Mushtaq Hussain, Director Food Yasir Hussain, Additional Attorney General Amir Javeed and Additional Deputy Commissioner Sania Safi along with appeared before court. Secretary Food informed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is producing 13 lac matric ton wheat while annual consumption stands at 51 lac matric ton that is why the government is obtaining wheat from open through PASCO and especially from Punjab. He added that there is no shortage of wheat but the problems emerged due to price-hike in Punjab's market. In the meantime, Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid observed that people are deprive already from electricity and gas and now public is roaming on road for flour neither for luxurious items. Additional Attorney General Amir Javeed argued that federation doesn't suspending wheat supply to province because recently six lac matric tons wheat were provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while further supply is in pipeline and Additional Secretary National Food Secretary along with Commissioner Food appeared before court.

Ali Gohar Advocate informed that PHC that the prices declared by Secretary Food is right but in independent inquiry it is found that Punjab Police and Food Department personnel receiving bribe openly from trucks carrying vehicles in bright daylight. However, Secretary food claimed wheat quota of several mills were cancelled and fines were imposed against them. He claimed that prices should be decreased in upcoming days and requested for sometime for submission of comprehensive report. The divisional comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar declared that court will issue orders to Chief Secretary for forwarding to all Deputy Commissioner while ordered Secretary Food to submit detail report in this regard till 19th January.

chute in PESCO will created agita-

tion among employees and added that a summary is concluded in this regard which will be placed before federal cabinet for approval then Engineer Arif Mahmood Sadozai will be posted as CEO which is illegal and

unconstitutional.

The divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Abdul Shakoor granted status quo on appointment of CEO while ordered federation and PESCO to submit reply till 26th January.

Governor withdraws Elahi's de-notification order

LAHORE (Agencies): The

Lahore High Court (LHC) has been informed that Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman has taken back his order to de-notify Pervaiz Elahi as the chief minister after he managed to secure the confidence of 186 members in the Punjab Assembly.

A five-member bench comprising Justice Abid Aziz Shaikh, Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, Justice Asim Hafeez and Justice Musamill Akhtar Shabir heard the case. During hearing, Elahi's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar informed the bench that his client had taken the vote of confidence from the Punjab Assembly.

The Punjab governor's counsel also confirmed to the bench that the chief minister had taken the vote of confidence. At this, Justice Abid inquired whether the Punjab governor was satisfied with the

vote of confidence? The governor's lawyer urged the bench to make the assembly proceedings part of the court's record.

At this, Justice Asim Hafeez also inquired what the situation would be if the governor issued another notification. "Governor's notification was not legal," insisted Zafar. To that, Justice Abid remarked that the issue regarding the vote of confidence had been settled. "The floor test has been completed [...] does this means that the matter has been resolved now," Justice Shaikh inquired.

At one point during the hearing, Justice Shaikh inquired how many days would be ideal to carry out a no-confidence vote. To this, Elahi's lawyer said that the governor should provide an ideal period of 14 days or seven-day notice at the least. At that, Justice Hafeez observed that a session could be called on a holiday as well.

At that, Justice Shaikh maintained that the court only had to see whether the time given by the governor to hold a confidence vote was correct or not. Subsequently, the hearing was adjourned for a break. Once the hearing resumed, the Punjab governor's lawyer informed the LHC bench that his client has confirmed the CM Elahi's vote of confidence and withdrawn his de-notification order.

"Governor has taken back the de-notification order," the lawyer told LHC bench. "The issue has been resolved in the assembly which is a good thing. Everything has happened according to the law and constitution," remarked Justice Abid after hearing the governor's lawyer. Meanwhile, Justice Hafeez remarked that he would be giving an additional note in the verdict. The bench then disposed of CM Elahi's petition.

PM visits Martyrs Monument

ABU DHABI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday visited national and cultural landmark of Wahat Al Karama in Abu Dhabi. The prime minister was welcomed by Khalifa Bin Tahnoun, Executive Director Martyrs' Families' Affairs Office in Crown Prince's Court.

PM Shehbaz attended the solemn Guard of Honour ceremony. Afterwards, he laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Monument, which comprises 31 panels leaning on one another to symbolise the unity and solidarity between the UAE's leadership, people and heroic soldiers. The prime minister also toured Wahat Al Karama, where he was briefed about the memorial, which embodies the sacrifices of valiant Emirati soldiers. At the end of the tour, he wrote a note on the memorial's guest book, expressing his appreciation for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) brave martyrs. Wahat Al Karama is a national and cultural landmark in Abu Dhabi, which was established to commemorate the heroic actions of the UAE's martyrs and their sacrifices in defence of the motherland.

SHC rejects MQM's plea

KARACHI (Agencies): The Sindh High Court (SHC) has rejected the plea of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) for stay orders against the local bodies' elections in Karachi and Hyderabad. The lawyer for the MQM-P could not satisfy the court with his arguments.

During the hearing, the court questioned "How did three members of the ECP issue the schedule instead of five members?". "The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will answer this question," said the Advocate General of Sindh.

SC adjourns NAB amendment case till 17th

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday adjourned the hearing of a case with regard to the amendments in National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws till January 17. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial heard the petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

At the outset of hearing,

the Federal Government's counsel Makhdoom Ali Khan argued that it was the prerogative of Parliament to legislate. He cited the references of articles of Islamic scholars and American magazines, and said the court had to view the matter in the limits of law as everything was clear in Schedule-4. He said things could not be settled on the basis of likes and dislikes of anyone. The court would also have

to view whether anyone had crossed the red line, he added.

Justice Ijazul Ahsan remarked that the court could interfere if there was an illegal act. The lawyer said that then the petitioner had to prove the illegality of NAB law amendments. The CJP remarked that the court had to view the constitutional limits. The case was then adjourned till January 17.



KARACHI: Chief of MQM Bahali Committee Dr Farooq Sattar addressing a press conference along with Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Amir Khan and others.

Amount in dam funds risen to Rs16.53b, SC told

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has been informed that the amount in Dam Funds have increased to Rs16.53 billion, which in next quarter will become Rs16.98 billion. A five-judge special bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, on Thursday heard the implementation of its directives regarding construction of Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dams.

During the hearing, WAPDA lawyer Saad Rasul informed that the government in terms of Mohammad Dam had committed Rs25 billion in PSDP, but disbursed Rs2.5 billion in the first quarter, while gave nothing in the second quarter. He further informed that for Diamer Dam Rs27 billion were allocated but disbursed Rs5.4 billion in the first quarter, while no funds were released in the second quarter.

Saad also said that the Power Division has to pay Rs 240 billion to the WAPDA. The Secretary Power Division informed the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) after receiving money from the DISCOs transfer money in their account. But there was an annual gap of Rs400 billion last year, which will further increase, adding the gap is due to line loss and the power theft. He told that circular debt at present is Rs2.6 trillion.

The chief justice remarked when the public sector is facing such a problem then why the government privatizes it, but then said they would not go into this matter. Former Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar on

July 10, 2018 had set up the Supreme Court of Pakistan Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund to raise money for the construction of Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams. When Prime Minister Imran Khan announced to join efforts with the Chief Justice for the construction of dams then the Fund name was changed as Supreme Court and Prime Minister Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dams Fund.

The representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan and the National Bank of Pakistan, through video-link, informed the bench that the Dam Fund's amount has been invested in the government securities, which is managed by the SBP. All the banks collect the funds and deposit in the Dam Fund account maintained at the SBP, told the NBP official, and added every three months the interest on the Fund is re-invested.

Secretary Power Division informed that the incumbent Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has given priority to the construction of Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dams. Justice Ijaz noted that Shehbaz Sharif after taking oath as the PM had visited the site of Diamer Dam. He said the federal government had given undertaking to the Supreme Court bench that funds for the Dams will not be withheld.

The chief justice said they (judges) also have concern about the financial difficulty, which the government and the security are facing. He asked the Secretary Finance to take measures to reduce expens-

es and increase the resources. "Good nations face the challenges bravely and overcome them."

The chief justice remarked that the SBP is the credible institution to manage the Dam Fund. He said Dam Fund status is available on SC website and now anyone who had donated in the Dam Fund can trace on the SC website how much he/she has contributed. The CJP said the Dam Funds will be used only for purchasing the machinery of the power houses of these dams, adding it can't be used for the damage caused by the floods. The case is adjourned for an indefinite period.

Railways to submit 5-year business plan in Apex court: In light of the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan decision, Federal Minister of Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has directed the authorities to submit a five-year long-term business plan to apex court.

According to details, the directives were issued during a high-level meeting — chaired by Railways Minister Saad Rafique. The meeting was attended by Secretary Railway, Additional Secretary, Secretary Railway Board, and others. During the meeting, the federal minister said that the Supreme Court's order will surely improve the overall performance of Pakistan Railways. "The ministry has started working on a long-term and comprehensive business plan for land management, which will be based on the principle of transparency and merit," he added.