

Nepra hikes K-Electric tariff

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The NEPRA has allowed to raise the K-Electric tariff from Rs1.49 to Rs4.49 in different categories to bring it at par with electricity rates being charged by other electricity distribution companies in the country. The Nepra said that the federal government had submitted a petition seeking a uniformity of the electricity tariff of the K-Electric with other Discos operating across the country.

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JIT to leave for UAE today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The special JIT formed to probe the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif will leave for UAE today (Saturday). The probe team will stay in UAE for a week to collect details of Arshad Sharif's meetings and contacts he made in his last days. The special JIT will then visit Nairobi on January 15 to collect evidence regarding the murder of the renowned journalist.

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ABU DHABI: Chief Executive of Air Arabia, Mr. Adel Al Ali called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

LG polls across Sindh to be held on 15th: ECP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday rejected the Sindh government's request to postpone local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions, and ruled that the polls will be held on Jan 15 as decided earlier.

The decision was taken by the ECP members during a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja at its headquarters in Islamabad. In the wee hours of Friday, the provincial government announced that the long awaited local government elections would not be held in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions.

Addressing a hurriedly-called press conference, Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said the polls in seven districts — Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal and Jamshoro — would go ahead as planned on Jan 15. Memon had also announced that the notification to hold the polls on the basis of the existing delimitation had also been withdrawn on the demand of their 'coalition partner', the MQM-P, which had serious reservations with it.

The MQM-P had rejected the delimitation of local government constituencies and, terming them "unjustified", demanded the withdrawal of the notification issued in this regard. The electoral watchdog, in its meeting today, reviewed the request sent by the Sindh government but unanimously rejected it and reiterated that the local body polls will go ahead as planned. The ECP also decided that the Ministry of Interior will be communicated to ensure the presence of Army and Rangers personnel at most sensitive polling stations across the province.

Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (Pildat) President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob said that it was highly unlikely that the courts would allow the polls to be postponed. Speaking to media, Mehboob concluded that at this point, "even the court will not allow the election election to be post-

poned".

Provincial governments everywhere try to defer local government elections. They find various pretexts to sabotage it — this is exactly what the Sindh government has done." "I think the election commission was right to reject the notification of Sindh government because it was issued after the polling schedule was already announced," he said. He added that the electoral watchdog had the authority to reject the notification if the Sindh government was issuing it a mere two days before polling day.

Prior to the ECP's decision, JJ's Karachi chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman said his party will hold a protest outside the ECP's Sindh office in Karachi against the Sindh government's decision. Rehman demanded that the ECP reject the letter issued by the Sindh government as "legally, there was no room for the elections to be postponed on its (the letter's) basis". He also demanded that the CEC take suo motu notice of the announcement, adding: "I warn the election commission that the elections shouldn't be delayed; the decision is in their hands. If he does this (allows the postponement), then we will fight the legal battle but this struggle will also take place on the streets."

He warned that the party's sit-in could be at different parts of the city and could be prolonged as well, adding that the "government should not come to us then and ask us to move aside and [expect that] we will follow it". Regarding the MQM-P's demand of delimitation, Rehman argued, "According to the law, once the elections have been announced, the delimitations cannot be changed. [...] The high court has given the verdict thrice, the Supreme Court has given the verdict once [and] the election commission itself has also given the verdict."

Prior to announcing the protest, the JJ chief castigated both the PPP and MQM-P for "depriving the people of Karachi of their rights". Rehman claimed that the MQM-P had "colluded" with the PPP, who he said was "lying and cheating". "Both of them are one [...] they are scared of the people and do not want elections."

Punjab now stands purged of 'plunderers': Marriyum

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said Punjab had finally been purged of the "looters" who had "plundered the largest province ruthlessly to fill their own pockets". The minister, in a news statement, accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi of robbing the resources of both Punjab and the Federation through their front-persons like Farah Gogi during the last four years.

The residents of Punjab had now fully realised the persons who had purchased diamond rings with the government funds and did nothing for public good. "We will now kick the foreign agents, looters and front-persons out of Punjab with the power of vote," she added.

Marriyum said the sane and wise people of Punjab would never vote for those who had pushed the country into the economic quagmire, and reversed the process of progress and development in the province. Rather they would elect those who had a record of serving the masses since they were in a dire need of free education and healthcare facilities, besides quality road infrastructure. An era of prosperity would usher in Punjab with restart of the development process in the entire province, she added.

Pakistan, UAE agree to strengthen strategic partnership

ABU DHABI (APP): Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to intensify consultation and coordination geared to strengthening strategic partnership with a view to developing tangible and meaningful bilateral cooperation in key areas.

The bilateral ties were discussed during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's interaction with the UAE leadership as the former paid an official visit to the Emirates at the invitation of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on January 12-13. This was the prime minister's third visit after assuming office, according to a joint statement issued on Friday.

During the interaction, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation, particularly in the field of information and communication technologies and work together for bridging the digital divide. The prime minister held a bilateral meeting with the UAE president wherein the prime minister was presented with a guard of honor at the Presidential Palace.

In the "most warm and cordial" meeting, the two leaders held detailed discussions on concrete measures to strengthen the bilateral relationship while also exchanging views on regional political and security matters. They also discussed specific initiative to enhance cooperation in

political, defense, economic, commercial and cultural areas, developing joint ventures, and strengthening collaboration in the human resource sector.

The prime minister thanked Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for UAE's generous assistance during the recent floods in Pakistan, particularly through an air bridge established for this purpose. Pakistan and the UAE reaffirmed their historical and brotherly ties, rooted in shared religion, culture, values, and pursuit of regional and global peace and security. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the convergence of views on a host of regional and global issues. Based on their decades-old fraternal ties, both countries expressed solidarity with each other in efforts to preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

With a view to developing tangible and meaningful bilateral cooperation in key areas, the two countries agreed to intensify consultations and coordination in order to strengthen their strategic partnership. The two sides signed Memoranda of Understanding in the field of combating human trafficking, information exchange, and between the diplomatic academies of both countries. Prime Minister Sharif invited Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to visit Pakistan at a later

date, and the invitation was accepted by the UAE leadership.

PM confident his UAE visit to turn bilateral ties into strategic partnership: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said his visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would help turn the bilateral relations between the two countries into a strategic partnership.

Talking to a delegation of the Pakistan Business Council in UAE, the prime minister termed as successful his meetings with the UAE leadership. Shehbaz Sharif expressed satisfaction that the Pakistani businessmen in UAE, through their hard work and dedication, were bringing a positive name to their homeland.

He encouraged the delegation to carry out an investment in Pakistan in areas including energy, real estate, information technology, alternative energy, food processing, tourism, etc. He also invited them to visit Pakistan with proposals for investment and business. The members of the delegation expressed their confidence in the economic policies of the government and showed interest in doing business in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and government officials.

FO condemns new land lease rules in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Friday said that the new land lease rules introduced in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir allowing non-Kashmiris to purchase agricultural land for commercial and other non-agricultural purposes was another manifestation of India's colonial-settler mindset.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in her weekly press briefing, told the media that last month, the occupying authorities introduced new land lease rules, depriving the local farmers, hoteliers, and businessmen of their long-held lands on lease. She said the local authorities had also intensified their campaign to seal or attach the properties of activists and resistance leaders.

She said under the amended Land Revenue Act non-Kashmiris can purchase agricultural land for commercial and other non-agricultural purposes. "The Indian Army has been given sweeping powers to take possession of agricultural land and residential areas in any part of IIOJK, after declaring them as "strategic". Reportedly over 430,000 Kanals of land are already under illegal possession of the Indian military and paramilitary forces," she said.

She said such developments were yet another manifestation of India's colonial-settler mindset and its designs to expand

control over Kashmiri lands, which was a clear violation of international law and the obligations of the occupying power towards occupied lands. The spokesperson also reiterated Pakistan's resolve to keep extending unstinted moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their quest for self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. She said following the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, the government would work with an "International Partners Support Group to Pakistan's Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction" to develop detailed plans for specific recovery interventions and building Pakistan's climate resilience and adaptation.

"Our immediate focus would be in preventing health crisis; mitigating the impact of this winter and the rains in the next monsoon; and restoring livelihoods... Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will ensure transparency in funding allocation and spending." She told the newsmen that during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to the UAE, the two sides agreed to deepen bilateral investment cooperation, stimulate partnerships and enable investment integration opportunities.

Zero chance of default: Ahsan Iqbal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said despite economic challenges Pakistan was not defaulting in any case. "Although we are facing economic challenges, there is zero percent chance of defaulting", Ahsan Iqbal said while talking to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The minister said Pakistan's economy had strong footings therefore, it would come out of crisis very soon. Speaking about the flood damages in Pakistan, Ahsan Iqbal said over 1700 people were died across the country during the torrential rains and floods last year. More than 9 million people slipped under poverty line while over 8 million people were facing mal-nutrition due to the devastating floods and rains, he added.

Imported govt using donation money for publicity: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has stressed the need for judicious and useful utilization of available resources to steer the country out of the current economic crisis adding that the imported federal government is using donation money for its publicity purposes. He stated that the rulers should have to shun publicity stunts and prioritize national interests over personal interests adding that testing times can be faced resiliently if there is sincerity and firm determination.

In the past, Pakistanis especially the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bravely faced difficult situations and have the ability to deal with every situation in the future. He expressed these views while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Solarization Project, GP Fund Automation System and Online Payment System in the Accountant General Complex, Peshawar.

The Chief Minister formally inaugurated the GP Fund Automation System for government employees at Accountant General Complex due to which employees will be able to check their GP Fund balance on a single click. He also launched a pilot project for online payments system whereby Project authorities will not have to visit the account general office and

cheques will be released and received through online system.

Addressing the ceremony, the Chief Minister said that Accountant General office is playing an important role in providing services. PTT's provincial government has provided all possible support to the AG office to resolve their problems adding that our ultimate goal is to improve the overall services delivery by introducing innovative approaches in the system. Mahmood Khan maintained that with the support of the provincial government, the solarization of 9 district account offices in the province, including the merged districts, has been completed while a project worth Rs 860 million has been approved for the reconstruction and repairing of 11 district account offices.

Similarly, a project worth 580 million rupees also been approved for 8 district account offices in the merged districts. The chief minister stated that Solarization of offices in remote districts has significantly improved service delivery. The provincial government is spending huge resources on conversion of other social services institutions to solar energy. Some 8000 schools, 4440 Masajid, and 187 primary health care centers have also been shifted to solar energy.



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WARNING

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Search & sweep operations conducted in city areas

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Police on Friday conducted search and sweep operations around religious places, sensitive installations and important areas of the city. Heavy contingents of Dolphin Squad, PRU, Elite force, security agencies and Lahore Police participated in the search operations.

Police personnel checked all the suspicious persons in various parts of the city with the help of biometric and latest android devices.

CCPO Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mahmood Dogar had issued directions to the senior police officers including all the divisional SPs to ensure foolproof security arrangements in wake of the present country situation. According to the police, search operations were meant to create a sense of security among the citizens and maintain law and order situation in the provincial capital. General holdup was also held by Lahore Police in different areas of the city to eradicate criminals and anti peace elements. Temporary police pickets were set up on major roads, markets, financial institutions, public places and crime hotspots.

The purpose of the general holdup was to make security more effective and curb criminals and anti peace elements, said police.

CCPO awards Shadman SHO

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mahmood Dogar awarded the commendation certificate (CC-1) and cash award to SHO Shadman Sub-Inspector Aslam Shafi over his action against gangsters and land grabbers, here on Friday.

The SHO had arrested three accused in a firing-and-stabbing incident, taking place at a market in the city, within an hour of the incident. The allege criminals had resorted to indiscriminate firing in Toltin Market a few days ago, which caused fear among citizens. The accused had stabbed one Abdul Rehman and injured him with a knife, whereas two other citizens -- Hamza and Sameer -- were injured in firing. Later, the accused had fled the crime scene. A case was registered against the accused and investigation was in progress.

10 dead, 943 injured in 921 RTCs

LAHORE (APP): At least ten people were killed while 943 others sustained injuries in 921 road traffic crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of this 503 people were seriously injured who were shifted to different hospitals. Whereas, 425 minor injured victims were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams said a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 on Friday. Further, the analysis showed that 456 drivers, 29 underage drivers, 116 pedestrians and 366 passengers were among the victims of these road traffic accident.

LDA holds public hearing on development project

LAHORE (APP): A public hearing was held at Lahore Development Authority (LDA) Sports Complex, Johar Town, regarding the construction of Gulshan-e-Ravi T-Junction Underpass and restoration of Bund Road from Babu Sabu Interchange to Ring Road. A detailed briefing was given to citizens and other stakeholders regarding the project. The Environment Protection Department and the LDA officers also answered the questions asked by citizens.

LDA Chief Engineer Mazhar Hussain Khan said that the project was being started for solving traffic problems, being faced by citizens and in view of the future needs. The project would save valuable time and fuel of citizens, he added. LDA Director Engineering Bilal Chughtai, Project Director Shabir Hussain, Deputy Director Zahid Sattar, Environment Department officials and others participated in the public hearing.

JI determinant to defeat feudal mindset: Naeem

KARACHI (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Engr Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has welcomed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)'s decision to reject the unconstitutional, illegal demand by the Pakistan People Party government in Sindh, here on Friday, to further delay the local government elections in Karachi.

Earlier in the morning, the JI leader held a press conference to announce a sit-in protest outside the ECP, Sindh office against the fascist measures by the PPP government and the continuous delay in the polls. However, later in the day, the JI leader called off the protest after the ECP rejected the plea made by the PPP government through a letter to the commission.

The JI leader expressed his resolve to defeat the feudal mindset, as depicts by the PPP, and her urban facilitator — Muttahida Qaumi Movement. He directed the party workers to maximize their efforts in order to get the city rid of the political parasites. Engr Naeemur Rehman also urged Karachiites to play their due role and come forward on January 15 to vote for scale in order to commence a new era in the history of the mega city — home to more than 30 million individuals.

Addressing the MQM, he asked the

party leadership why they didn't get the notification of delimitations withdrawn at the time of regime change in Pakistan when each and every political party was visiting Bahadurabad and the MQM had the opportunity to get rights for Karachiites.

He recalled that Karachi and Karachiites were deprived of their civic and democratic rights in 2013 when the MQM was a part of the government but the party enjoyed the coalition government, perks, and ministries and continued to facilitate the PPP government.

Engr Naeemur Rehman said that Karachiites have rejected both the PPP and the MQM and the two parties were trying their level best not to face the masses in elections. He raised the point that according to the law and the relevant rules and regulations, delimitations can't be made after announcement of elections. He said that the ECP and the judiciary had already announced decision in this regard. Karachiites will not accept any such illegal notification or ordinance, he said.

The JI leader during the presser also demanded of the army's top brass to take strict action against the elements in the establishment, trying to sabotage and destroy the apolitical image of the army.

MQM-P delegation calls on Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): A delegation of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) led by Dr. Farooq Sattar called on Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House here Friday.

The delegation was comprised of Faisal Sabzwari, Mustafa Kamal, Waseem

Akhtar and Javed Hanif.

The MQM-P delegation thanked for decision of Sindh Cabinet about the Local Government (LG) delimitations.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Sharjeel Inam Memon, Murtaza Wahab, Qasim Naveed, Mukesh Chawla and Taimor Talpur were also present on the occasion.

Police arrest 127 professional beggars during Jan

LAHORE (APP):DIG Operations Afzal Ahmed Kausar has ordered a crackdown on professional beggars. He directed the divisional SPs to intensify operations against organized gangs of beggars and asked them to conduct intelligence-based operations against drug peddlers and those involved in other crimes. The DIG Operations said that Lahore Police arrested 127 professional beggars and registered 124 cases under Gadagni Act this month. Police are also taking action against the facilitators of this disgraceful business, he added. Those who involve children and women in anti-social activities deserve severe punishment, he said and added that maintaining law and order is the first priority of Lahore Police.



**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PESHAWAR CANALS DIVISION,
IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT PESHAWAR.**

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NOTICE FOR INVITING E-BIDDING

(SINGLE STAGE ONE ENVELOP PROCEDURE)

Peshawar Canals Division Peshawar, Irrigation Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, invites electronic Bids from the eligible firms / contractors in accordance with KPPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage one envelop procedure for the following works:

#	Name of Work/ Sub Works	Estimated Cost in (M)	2% Earnest Money in the Rs.	PEC Relevant Code
A	220764 - CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS ALONG CANALS / DRAINS KHWARS & RESTORATION OF DAMAGES INFRASTRUCTURE OF KABUL RIVER CANAL SYSTEM, CLEARANCE OF DRAIN IN TEHSIL PABBI / NOWSHERA AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR IRRIGATION TUBE WELLS AND LIFT IRRIGATION SCHEMES AT VARIOUS PLACES IN DISTRICT NOWSHERA. (ADP No. 2237, DURING 2022-23).			
1	Construction of Flood Protection structures to protect agricultural lands and village abadies in UC Azakhel Bala	4.98	99,600/-	CE-04 CE-10
2	Construction of Flood Protection structures i/c VR Culvert in Barani Nullah/ Khwar Near Madina Colony Nowshera City.	4.99	99,800/-	CE-04 CE-10
3	Construction of Food Protection Structures in Village Suryakhel	4.99	99,800/-	CE-04 CE-10
4	Construction of Flood Protection structures i/c VR Culvert in Barani Nullah/ Khwar in UC Dheri Katikhel	4.99	99,800/-	CE-04 CE-10
5	Construction of Flood protection wall and clearance of local nullah in UC Aman Garh	4.98	99,600/-	CE-04 CE-10
6	Construction of Food Protection Structures to protect agricultural lands and village abadies in UC Shah kot, Dag Ismail Khel, Jalozi & U.C Spin Khak	3.06	61,200/-	CE-04 CE-10
7	Construction & Improvement of Side walls / Culverts on Banda Mohib Minor from RD. 0+000 to RD. 5+000 in Reaches.	5.80	116,000/-	CE-04 CE-10

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Bid Solicitation Documents containing all the terms and conditions and other relevant instructions for the work can be downloaded from the Department and or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority websites (www.rrigation.gkp.pk) (www.kppra.gov.pk)
- Electronic bidding shall be done on "Above/ Below System" on BOQ / Engineer's estimate.
- The bidder shall submit their bids on the following address "Executive Engineer, Peshawar Canals Division, Peshawar, Irrigation Department, Warsak Road, Peshawar" bid security sealed in envelop of the estimated cost in the shape of deposit at call (Original) before closing date and time.
- All bidders are required to have valid registration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority.
- The bidder shall submit 02% bid security of the estimated cost as mentioned above, in the shape of deposit at call (Original) enclosed along with their bid before closing date and time.
- Notifications issued by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority pertaining to procurement process issued from time to time shall be applicable.
- If the evaluated electronic bid costs of two or more bidders are equal, then the successful bidder will be declared through draw/toss.
- Pre-Bid meeting will be held on **31-01-2023** at **11.00 A.M** in the Office of the undersigned.
- The last date & time for Submission of the Bid along with relevant documents is **07-02-2023** upto **2:00 P.M** which will be opened on the same day at 02:30 P.M in the office of the undersigned in presence of Contractors and their representatives who wishes to attend.
- Bid security of 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest bidders will be retained till the approval of bids by the competent authority.
- All Govt. Notifications/Rules/Taxes updated from time to time shall be applicable.

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Executive Engineer



KARACHI: Banking Mohtasib of Pakistan, Mr Muhammad Kamran Shehzad, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi and presents the Annual Report 2022, at Governor House.

CM announces 21,000MT wheat for Balochistan

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Friday announced giving 21,000 metric tons of wheat to Balochistan to help meet its food needs.

While chairing a meeting of the provincial cabinet committee on wheat at his office here, he said that Balochistan had requested the Punjab government to provide 10,000MT wheat and the government decided to give it 21,000 metric tons of wheat, which was more than what was asked for, he said. Punjab would go all out to meet the food needs of other provinces, he said and added that zero-tolerance policy would be implemented against the wheat hoarding mafia. To stop smuggling of wheat, additional police force would be deployed at all exit routes, he said and directed the IG police and ACS (Home) to implement the integrated plan for strict monitoring of the exit points of the province.

The meeting also deliberated on a proposal of supplying wheat to the 'chakki' owners at the government level, while the food secretary briefed the meeting about wheat reserves and flour prices. It was noted that 1541 cases were registered and Rs 39 million fine was imposed on the accused on the charges of wheat smuggling. The number of flour sale points had also been increased from 1,059 to supply subsidized flour, he added.

Provincial Ministers Sardar Hasnain Bahadur Dreshak, Syed Hussain Jahanian Gardezi, Chief Secretary Abdullah Sumbal, Principal Secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti, former principal secretary GM Sikandar, former BoP president Hamesh Khan, economist Muhammad Sajid, Secretary Agriculture Ahmad Aziz Tarar, Director Food Shozeb Saeed and others attended the meeting.


CM grieved at loss of lives in road accident: Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the loss of human lives in a road accident near Faisalabad and extended sympathies to the

bereaved families.

He sought a report from the administration and directed that the best treatment facilities should be provided to the injured.

CM gives Rs 100m grant cheque to SCBA delegation: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Friday presented a

Rs100 million cheque to Abid Zuberi, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), at his office. The CM said that welfare of the legal fraternity had always been a priority of his government. The role of lawyer community was important in provision of justice, he added.



SPACE AVAILABLE FOR RENT AT SWAT MOTORWAY

Restaurant and Shops are available for Rent at Swat Motorway Service area Katlang. Interested parties can visit the site and submit proposal by mail at following address.

Address: SEPCO (Pvt) Ltd, House No.122, Street No.3, Race Course Road, Westridge, Rawalpindi

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

INVITATION OF BIDS

(SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPES)

Sealed tender / bids on the basis of "Single Stage Two envelopes Procedure" are hereby invited for executive of the following works from eligible contractors / firms duly enlisted / register with Pakistan Engineering council (PEC) in relevant specialization technical category and financial limit Category C-5 & above in required on percentage rate basis on Pak. PWD Schedule of Rate 2022, who process valid renewal with PEC having renewal upto 30/06/2023.

S#	Title of Work	NIT Amount	Earnest Money	Tender Cost
DISTRICT SWAT				
1.	Construction of Water Tank, Water Supply, at Malam, Kot, Spin Oba, Manger Kot, Barogan Ganajeer, Seral, Kishawara Balakot at UC Kishawara District Swat	Rs. 47,637,692/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
2.	Construction of PCC Road, Retaining Wall, Protection wall at Charbagh-I, 2&3 VC Ganajeer Malam Kishawara District Swat.	Rs. 43,972,488/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
3.	Construction of Drain Retaining wall and tuff tiles of street at charbagh-I District Swat	Rs. 43,989,483/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
4.	Construction of Drain, Retaining wall and Tuff tiles of street at Charbagh-II District Swat	Rs. 43,989,483/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
5.	Construction of Arch Bridges and PCC Road at Mangloar Araq Kishawar Pull Gata District Swat	Rs. 42,899,175/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
6.	Construction of Drain Retaining wall and Tuff tiles of street at Dakorak, Gulibagh Alamganj District Swat	Rs. 43,989,483/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
7.	Construction & Rehabilitation of Additional Rooms Mosque, Janazagah at Government Dar ul Ulum Islamiya at Charbagh District Swat	Rs. 25,293,279/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-

Terms and Condition for Bidding

- The constructors/firms/companies who will receive bidding documents are required to submit their bid in two separate sealed envelopes, i.e., one envelop containing technical information/data and documents of the contractor/firm required for post qualification, clearly marked as "Technical Bid" while the second envelop containing bid price clearly marked as "Financial Bid"
- The application must be accompanied with bid security in shape of CDR/deposit at call from any Scheduled Bank of Pakistan, in favour of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD, Peshawar, clearly mentioning the name of firm, whereas the difference of the tendered amount must be accompanied with Financial Bid with its sealed envelop.
- Bidders may purchase the Bidding Documents from the office of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II. Pak. PWD Peshawar at cost of Rs. 5,000/- (Non refundable upto 30/01/2023 during office hours).
- Envelopes of Technical Bid & Financial Bid shall be submitted in the office of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II. Pak. PWD Shami Road Peshawar on 31/01/2023 by 12.30 PM. The envelope containing Technical Bid shall be opened on same day at 01.00 P.M in the presence of Bidders representatives who opt to be present, Bids received after the prescribed date and time shall not be accepted.
- Bidders will be Technically Qualified on the basis of information provided with the Bids as per the criteria prescribed in the Bidding Documents. Once a Technical Bid received and opened in this office, no addition/subtraction/alteration of any sort of document will be acceptable.
- Pay Order/Demand draft will not be acceptable.
- All CDR once received will be credit into the Government Account and will be re-funded through Government Cheque.
- No tender will be entertained without bid security @ 4% of the bid amount if not found will be declared as non responsive.
- Every firm/contractor must provide the affidavit on stamp paper regarding the non litigation with the department.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules 2004, the under signed reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids/proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal.
- The documents provided by the bidders will be verified and in case found ambiguous/fake one. The firm will face immediate/appropriate penal action as per rules and law
- METHOD OF PROCUREMENT**

As per PPRA rule 36(6). Open competitive Bidding with "Single Stage Two Envelop" Procedure. One envelop containing Technical Proposal and the other Financial Proposal and both sealed in separate envelopes. After conducting evaluation of Technical Bids qualified firms shall be informed accordingly for opening of their Financial Bids whereas bids of unqualified firms shall be returned unopened.

Non-compliance of Instructions to bidders in the Tender Documents will lead to disqualification/non-responsiveness of the bid/firm

Nazir Ahmad

**Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division No.II
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PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan inaugurating online payment system at Accountant General Complex.

Power suspension notified

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) on Friday notified that due to maintenance work, power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Hayatabad Phase 7 Grid Station on 14th, 17th, 21st, 24th, 28th and 31st January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Hayatabad 1,9,10,13 and Khyber 2 feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar Industrial Grid Station on 14th, 17th, 21st, 24th, 28th and 31st January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. due to which consumers of 11 KV Afridi Abad, Kohat Road and Ameen Colony feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar Fort Grid Station on 14th, 17th, 21st, 24th, 28th and 31st January from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Qisha Khwani, Kohati Gate and People Mandi feeder will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Sakhi Chashma Grid Station on 14th, 17th, 21st, 24th, 28th and 31st January from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Madina Colony feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Kohat Grid Station on 14th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 24th, 26th, 28th and 31st January from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Cadet College, Kharmatoo, Ghumbat, College Town feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Haripur Transmission Line on 15th January from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of 132 KV Hattar 1,2, Haripur, Kholian Bala, Havelian and 66 KV Haripur and Havelian grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Besham-T h a k o t - P a t t a n Transmission Line on 15th January from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of 33 KV Thakot and Pattan grid connected with 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

AT: Rising inflation is eye-opener for everyone

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Aman Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faiq Shah stated World Bank analysis report is an eye opener for incumbent and former rulers, in which stated that inflation in Pakistan has touched at a new peak aftermath of 70 years while economy is also in a great trouble.

Nevertheless, he said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar is again repeating mantra of all is well, pinning high hopes to improve the country's forex exchange reserves near future after \$10 billion pledges made in Climate Resilient Pakistan conference in Geneva. "We need to practically work on 'Do more for foreign investment and trade instead of Aid.'"

He said that Pakistan's economic future is dependent on trade with regional

and African countries so we should be focused on it. How the nation will expect better and welfare initiatives from them when legislators exchange verbal onslaught and hurled derogatory remarks and calling each other 'Lota', says Shah while mentioning about late night mayhem in Punjab Assembly.

The ATP chief while talking to a group of reporters here on Friday noted following weeks of turbulence in Punjab, Chief Minister Punjab proved his majority during a chaotic session of provincial assembly of Punjab. 'Enough is enough': Time is spinning out and much has been done to tarnish Pakistan's reputation in the rest of the world.

The further vandalism in the name of so-called politics and democracy is unaffordable and should work together to improve the

economy and overcome the crisis, Shah remarked. ATP chairman once again made demands of the setting up a joint board, wherein representations of all institutions to be ensured so that concrete and viable policies would be framed through this board, which could have long-lasting impacts on the national economy and politics.

Shah stressed that comprehensive reforms should be brought to eliminate the growing tendency of 'horse-trading' and ensure conduct of electoral exercise in a transparent, fair and impartial manner. The party chief while talking about the persistent flour crisis in different cities of the country, demanded to take stern action against wheat, flour hoarders and profiteers and ensure improved supply chain of wheat/flour to end the prevalent crisis forthwith.

JI flays PTI for flour crisis, price-hike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ameer Jam- aat-e-Islami NA-32 Peshawar, Sirajuddin Qureshi has criticized the PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the flour crisis and price-hike in the province.

He was addressing a protest demo against the

flour crisis and price hike here at Kohati Chowk on Friday. President, Al-Khidmat Tajirran, Khalid Gul Mohmand and ameer JI PK-81, Shehzad Ahmad also addressed the protestors.

The JI office bearers attributed the prevailing flour crisis in the province to incompetence and corruption in the Food

Department of the province.

They alleged that some officials of the department are bent upon to deteriorate the flour distribution system. They warned the provincial government to resolve the flour crisis with immediate effect otherwise they will besiege the Chief Minister's House.



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

Child convicts two smugglers

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Child Protection Court Judge Hina Mehwish convicted two culprits for 21 years imprisonment and imposed Rs1 million fine on involvement in smuggling of drugs in huge quantity, on Friday. Special Prosecutor Anti-Narcotics Force Irfan-ur-Rehman argued the case before court. He added that informed on 18th May 2021 ANF recovered 7,200 kilograms hashish from their residence and registered case against them.

Child protection court Judge Hina Mehwish convicted Fahim Khan for 14 years imprisonment along with Rs5 lac fine and Adil was convicted for seven years of imprisonment and imposed Rs5 lac fine after conclusion of trial.

RTPSC summons Xen

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC) has summoned to Xen Highway-I and Xen Highway-II to appear before while also heard complaint of citizen living France online in civil dispute at Chitral, on Friday.

Chief Commissioner RTPSC Muhammad Salim Khan along with Commissioner Muhammad Asim Imam heard complaints including application of senior citizen against scrap material on roadsides after telephone and gas infrastructure works which had created problems for residents of Danishabad, Peshawar. The commission has summoned Xen-I&II highways to appear on next hearing.

RTPSC also heard complaint of Chitrali Muhammad Kashif living in France and ordered him to approach civil court for resolution of dispute. The commission provided one more day on request of Additional Station House Officer (SHO) in registration of First Information Report.

Moreover, the commission directed applicant Asad-ur-Rehman to submit power of attorney on next hearing on behalf of father in property division case. Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar and concerned Patwari from Buner appeared before RTPSC on application of Waleed Khan while informed that on the neither applicant nor his father appeared on date fix for redressal of their grievances. RTPSC ordered Tehsildar from Buner to conclude transfer of property among the heirs immediately and turnaround complaint of Miraj due to continues absence.

Cold weather predicted

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Regional Meteorological Center Peshawar on Friday predicted that cold to very cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the province.

It said that moderate to dense fog in isolated pockets is likely to occur over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera as well as Peshawar to Swabi motorway in morning/night.

CM KP inaugurates different projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan here Friday inaugurated several projects including GP fund automation and online payment system at Accountant General Complex, Peshawar.

The Chief Minister while speaking on the

occasion said the employees would help get information about their GP fund's balance through a single click through an online automation system. He said a pilot project for online payment has been launched, enabling the project's authorities to issue cheques and collect it online.

Mahmood Khan said,

"our aim was bringing improvement and ease in the lives of people through speedy and effective service delivery." The provincial departments have prepared a paperless governance system that would soon be implemented. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the solarization project of AG Complex Peshawar.

KPBC observes strike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) observed strike against attacks on lawyers in which one was killed while two others were injured, on Friday.

KPBC vice chairman Muhammad Ali Khan Jadoon, chairman Executive Committee Muhammad Ilyas along

with Syed Mubashir Shah and Nauman Kakakhel condemned the attacks on lawyers while demanded legislation for protection of legal fraternity.

According to details, the culprits attacked Dil Nawaz Kundi and Mustafa Kundi at Tank while Muhammad Usman Advocate was targeted at Peshawar.

The lawyers observed strikes at Peshawar High

Court principal bench, Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Kohat, Hangu, Khyber, Orakzai, Mohmand and Kurram and didn't appear before courts. Vice chairman KPBC argued Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to arrest alleged culprits involved in the attacks on lawyers across the province.



PESHAWAR: Members of Traders Association led by Haji Abdul Naseer meeting with KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

Good vs evil

Mustajab Nazir

PAKISTAN is an independent Islamic state. It was named Islamic Republic by ZA Bhutto. Being an Islamic country does not mean you've to implement your rules on every individual. Being an Islamic State means freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to vote and all.

Imran Niazi was dismissed previous year. He claimed he's like ZA Bhutto. For real? How can he claim that? There's no comparison between these two. Shaheed Bhutto was a light meanwhile Niazi he is a darkness. Shaheed Bhutto had a style. It has been almost 44 years when he was murdered. Still world is praising him. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was an angel. He was a messiah to the people of Pakistan who were facing brutality of Gen Zia. ZA Bhutto had a dream. A dream of independent and safe Pakistan. He did a huge effort to make this country a proud country.

Every generation of the Bhutto family has faced an evil ruler. ZA Bhutto vs Dictator Zia, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto vs Dictator Musharraf, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari vs Imran Niazi. It was 1970s when The Zulfikar Ali Bhutto stood for Pakistan against the strict and sense-

less rules of Gen Zia. Zia made a general rule for rape victims that they have to bring 3 witnesses. This one rule says everything about his mentality. Man, ZA Bhutto was a class. He was a sensible person. He struggled for this country.

He introduced a language in the world of politics. A language of love, sense, respect, manner, and care. He was different among all. His dress sense, his style, the way he walked, the way he talked. He never used any abusive words in his speech. He even respected his enemies. He never interfered in anyone's personal life. Like who doesn't know about the affairs of Dictators and Niazi? But that's there personal life. We are no one to talk about these issues. Our main agenda is politics. Gen Zia tried his best to remove ZA Bhutto from the history. Now we can see who is a history? Bhutto is still alive.

After the murder of ZA Bhutto his daughter Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto took the responsibility of his political party and followed his footsteps. A lady in the world of men and many people in opposition tried to drag her character down. Like Nawaz Sharif, Gen Musharraf etc. But she had a grace in her character. All of those accusations were fake. They even tried to drag down the character of

Beghum Nusrat Bhutto. There's a huge difference between Pakistan People's Party and other political parties. PPP never talk about someone's character even if they are characterless. But opposition? Now the battle is between Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Imran Niazi. We can see the upbringing of these two. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari he is a gentleman. He knows how to respect a woman. What to say in public. We can see the grace of President Asif Ali Zardari and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's reflection in his acts.

Niazi always character defame the others. He always disrespect the most senior political members of other parties. He does not even respect a woman. Is this what a political figure should do? This may happen in your cricket but not in politics. You've to respect the other political members even if they are your worst enemies. We can see within a few months what Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari did for this country. He's bringing the brilliant image of Pakistan to the world. What Imran did? Everyone was making fun of us. A politician should be a well-mannered and honourable person just like ZA Bhutto, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Overpopulation exerting pressure on socioeconomic resources

PESHAWAR (APP): Alongside poverty and climate change, the developing countries including Pakistan were faced with the monster challenge of overpopulation that was exerting an extraordinary pressure on its socioeconomic resources.

According to the UN population report 2022, the world population had crossed the psychological barrier of eight billion population mark in November last year and is expected to reach 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100 courtesy to modern innovations and research in medical and pharmaceutical sciences that significantly reduced mortality rate.

The experts believed that if the population bomb was not wisely defused, then millions of people especially children and women mostly in SAARC, CARs and underdeveloped states would be exposed to hunger, starvation and malnutrition every year in the wake of global economic recessions and international conflicts including USSR-Ukraine, Kashmir and Palestine that has already put peace of these regions at jeopardy.

The first national population census 1951 had revealed that Pakistan's total population was only 75 million

and 93 million in 1961 (Incl East Pakistan), 65.3 million in 1972 (Excl East Pakistan), 80.68 million in 1981, 134.8 million in 1998 and it further jumped to a record 207.9 million in 2017, thus showing a massive increase of 132.9 million during 65 years with a substantial 1.91 percent annual growth rate recorded in 2021.

Being the fifth most populous country and the second largest population in Muslim world after Indonesia, Pakistan's increasing population has already started exerting tremendous pressure on hospitals, educational institutions, agricultural production, forestry, roads, employment and socioeconomic resources.

Experts opined that food security challenges would be increased in the next few years after the recent devastating floods that caused whopping \$40 billion economic and agriculture losses to Pakistan for which an inclusive recovery plan was necessary. The prices of 80KG and 20KG per flour bag in the open market have swelled to Rs12,000 and Rs2600 respectively while around 300 to 500 hundred patients were regularly being examined in major hospitals of KP having over 30 million population with over 2pc growth rate.

"Overpopulation was the mother of all socio economic ills as it leads to poverty, hunger, socio economic imbalances, encourages corruption, destroys merit, delay justice and even brings down nations under heavy foreign loans' burdens," said Prof Dr. Zilakat Malik, former Chairman, Department of Economics, University of Peshawar while talking to APP. Citing a World Bank's report, he said about six to nine million Pakistanis were likely to be dragged into poverty as a result of last year's flooding that killed over 1,700 people including women and children, destroyed over two million houses and displaced eight million people besides inflicting around USD 40 billion economic losses to the government kitty. He said the poverty rate was expected to rise between 2.5 and four percentage points as a direct consequence of floods, which caused loss of jobs, livestock, agriculture harvests, houses and an increase in food cost in Pakistan.

He said about 20pc Pakistanis i.e 55 million were reportedly living below the poverty line mostly in underdeveloped districts including merged areas of Pakistan and in the prevailing shabby economic situation

and high food requirements in post-flood era, there was a need to make a cut on unnecessary expenditures, development budget, imports bill on luxury goods and ensuring strict implementation of an energy conservation plan.

Dr. Malik said Pakistan produces about 20 percent edible production of its total requirement and was spending approximately US\$ 4 billion annually on its imports which was very high for an agricultural country. "I have lost my mother in her sixth pregnancy due to my family's wish for a son," Nargus Bibi, a resident of Pabbi, Nowshera told the scribe after tears rolled down her face. "The desire for a baby boy had deprived my entire family and four sisters from a loving mother, who had worked day and night for our happiness and made us orphans forever," she said.

Dr. Riaz Khan, Head of the Children Department, Government Hospital Pabbi Nowshera said the chances of mortality of mothers and newborns increase due to lack of spacing among children, inadequate medical checkups and poor nutrition. He said stunting and malnutrition in children mainly occur in the first three to six months of birth due to an

unbalanced diet of lactating mothers.

"The nutritional status of newborns and infants was directly linked with the health and diet of the mother before, during and after pregnancy. I can tell you that about 30 to 40 percent of children were impacted by stunting that could be avoided by adopting contraceptives and reproductive healthcare services in the country including KP," Director, the Population Welfare Department, Imran Shah said the KP's first population welfare policy 2015 had been approved under which the contraceptive prevalence rate would be raised from 28pc in 2013 to 55pc in 2032 while efforts would be made to decrease the fertility rate from 3.9pc to 3.3pc birth per woman and attain replacement level fertility 2.1 births per woman during the said period through the cooperation of relevant stakeholders.

Besides KP reproductive healthcare rights act 2020, he said work on four ongoing development projects worth Rs721.348 million and two new schemes costing Rs54 million was underway focusing on strengthening of social welfare programs. Rs390.698 million was being spent on the promotion of social welfare

and family planning programs. Rs93.550 million on establishment of adolescents and reproductive healthcare centres, Rs19.041 million on the mobile service unit at Upper Kohistan and Palas Kolai and Rs1161.34 million for the establishment of 260 family welfare centres.

Under the new projects, the regional training Institute at Bannu would be established at a cost Rs 362.782 million while Rs127.767 million to be spent on franchising family planning programs under public-private partnership. He said social-cultural and religious barriers, lack of education, poverty, early child marriages and a desire for baby boys were one of the major constraints making negative effects on family planning programs in KP.

Imran Shah informed that 120 family planning centers were approved for merged areas and mobile services were being extended to all those areas where family planning centers were not available. He said the population bomb was a serious social issue and a collective effort was required especially by the media, political leaders, religious scholars and civil society to defuse it before it made our lives miserable.



In brief

4 die due to gas accumulation F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: At least four people of the same family including two minor children were killed due to gas accumulation in their room in the suburb Qalandar Abad area of Abbottabad district on Friday. According to police, the incident occurred in the vicinity of Maangal police station where a man, his wife and two girl children were killed due to gas accumulation in their room. The dead included Zeeshan (22), his wife Bushra (20), Fajar Bibi (2) and Jannat Bibi (1). Police said the bodies were shifted to Ayub Medical Complex from where they were handed over to the heirs after medico legal procedure.

Protest in S Waziristan ends F.P. Report

WANA: A protest, continued for the last seven days in the capital of South Waziristan, Wana ended on Friday after the protestors' successful dialogue with the administration and police. The protest with the name "Aman Olasi Pastoon" was held against frequent incidents of target killing, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, terror incidents, robberies and poor law and order in merged districts including South Waziristan. After successful dialogue with the district administration, the participants announced to end their strike and reopened roads for vehicular traffic. The Deputy Commissioner said the demands of the protestors were legitimate and work has been started to fulfill the same. Showing satisfaction over the assurance of the district administration, the protestors announced to end the strike and dispersed. The protestors hoped that their just demands would be fulfilled by the government and solid steps would be taken to ensure security to the property and life of the people.

US urged to stop rights abuses

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on Friday urged the United States to play its role in stopping the human rights violations in the illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and resolve the Kashmir issue peacefully in line with the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The unresolved Kashmir problem was the main cause and consequence of the worsening political and human rights situation in the IIOJK, he added. He expressed these views while talking to Bradley Parker, Political Counselor of the American Embassy, who called on him here at his office. The AJK president said the rights situation in the held territory had further exacerbated after the Indian government stripped the territory of its special status by abrogating Article 370 and 35A (of the Indian constitution).

Gwadar's role hailed

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan government's Spokesperson Farah Azeem Shah on Friday said that protection of the rights of fishermen was the responsibility of the government and necessary steps have been taken saying that the future of Balochistan was linked with development of Gwadar. The first right on Gwadar belongs to the locals here, she added. The spokesman of the provincial government said that for any economic development and acceleration of economic activities, the establishment of law and order and the enforcement of rule of law were very important.



ABBOTTABAD: Teachers of government schools holding a protest in favour of their demands.

Trauma center becomes white elephant

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Trauma Centre Hafizabad has become a white-elephant due to inattention of Administration District Health Authority Hafizabad. People demanded the Chief Minister of the Punjab to take effective measure to make the Trauma Centre Hafizabad patient and traumatize people friendly entity.

The patients and other people facing different accidents alleged that when they were carried them to Trauma Centre Hafizabad for emergency treatment than neither doctors nor any proper treatment facility was available as well as other treatment facilities. Patient Muhammad Aslam told to this scribe that he

was admitted in the Trauma Centre five days before but he was not given any attention by the doctors and other staff.

It was told that by the virtue of political interference in posting of doctors and other staff in the Trauma Centre converted white-elephant entity while government is releasing hefty budget for providing healthcare facilities to patients. The people demanded the Chief Minister of the Punjab Ch. Pervaz Elahi to focus on Trauma Centre Hafizabad to make this entity a patient's friendly facility.

Wheat shortage overcomes with increase in supply: There is no shortage of wheat flour after increasing supply of government wheat to flour

mills by the order of Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaz Elahi and district administration has increased number of sales points in the district Hafizabad.

This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner Touqeer Ilyas Cheema while talking to journalists at Hafizabad. He said that quota of wheat supply to six flour mills of the district was enhanced from 1239 sacks of 100 kg to 1596 while sales points were also increased from 7 to 9 for ensuring provision of flour to people in abundance. He said that 4 sales points were setup in city Hafizabad, two in Jalalpur Bhattian, each at Pindi Bhattian, Sukheke Mandi and Kaleke where 11172 bags of 10 kg were being supplied on daily basis.

Winter tourism gets boom in Swat

MALAM JABBA (APP): Winter tourism got a high boom in Swat district after rains and snowfall in Malam Jabba and Kalam valleys, attracting a substantial number of tourists from across the country to enjoy snowball games and skiing.

Following torrential rains and snowfall in Malam Jabba, Kalam, Bahrain and other upper areas of Swat district, the tourists along with families from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces thronged to these scenic valleys to enjoy pleasant change in the weather amid great fun and excitement. Dressed in overcoats with umbrella in hand, lecturer Ehtisham Khan, a resident of Wapda Town Peshawar along with friends was seen enjoying snowfall at Malam Jabba by throwing snowballs on each other amid fun and laughter.

"Today my dream came true after seeing my first snowfall in my favorite tourists' destination of Malam Jabba where the snow-covered valleys and mountain peaks attract visitors in droves these days," said Ehtisham Khan with a big smile on his face. Enjoying the delectable bites of trout fish with friends, the Peshawari's born tourist said Malam Jabba's lush green mountainous beauty and snowfall features take tourists to a new level of adventure, fun and excitement. "After Malam Jabba, Kalam is our next destination where snowfall comes relatively in higher speed than Malam Jabba due to its height besides enjoying serenity of Gabral and Mahudhand lakes.

The 150-kilometer-long freshwater of the River Swat originating from different glaciers and lakes including Mahodand and Gabral mountains offers unique opportunities for adventure sports enthusiasts to explore in a single day trip along with loved ones especially during summer. Despite poor roads conditions due to last year's devastating floods in Upper Swat, he said the view of snowfall in Malam Jabba was worth seeing as many tourists with families were seen enjoying skiing, snowballs and other games inspite of stumbling on snow covered mountain terrains.

The domestic tourists were arriving in substantial numbers from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Jehlum, Mianwali, Sheikhupura, Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, Bannu, Karak, Kohat, D I Khan and others districts to Swat following MET office report about moderate to heavy snowfall in Kalam, Malam Jabba and others scenic areas of Northern KP during next three days. "Swat is my favorite tourist destination. Its seven distinctive features are hard to find together in any tourist destination of Pakistan. The snowfall of high intensity has added beauty and charm to the Switzerland of Pakistan," said Riazul Haq, a tourist from Nowshera while talking to APP.

He said Swat was going to become a hub of winter tourism due to its seven unique features including snowfall, Ghandhara civilization, water rafting, mountaineering, trout fish, eco-tourism and Swat motorway. Fazagut, Fatehpur, Barikot, and Chakdara were most suitable for water rafting in river Swat and if developed on modern lines could attract a large number of tourists during winter. "I came from Pabbi to enjoy snowfall and trout fish together at Kalam and Malam Jabba with my family," said Misal Khan, a retired civil servant while talking to APP.

Besides its famous Deodar trees and precious wildlife, he said Swat's snow-clad tall mountain ranges of Falakser, Mankial

and Elum peaks offer great challenges to mountaineers and trekkers while its unique orange orchards carried a comparative advantage for farmers. "Buddhists, monks and archaeologists prefer to visit Swat due to its archaeological primitive treasures of Ghandhara civilizations besides ancient artifacts housed at Saidu Sharif Museum. "On the request of my son, I have arrived along with family for third time to watch Ghandara artifacts, trout fish and snowfall in Kalam and Malam Jabba in a sing day trip despite tourists were being charged heavily by hoteliers here," he said.

He said one room in a quality hotel per day was being charged at Rs10,000 to Rs15,000 at Kalam while Rs8000 to Rs12000 in Malam Jabba, adding prices of hotels needed to be regulated to avoid Murree like snowfall tragedy in future. According to Met Office, Kalam and Malam Jabba valleys had received three inch and two inch snowfall respectively. The Met Office predicted heavy to moderate rains with snowfall over the hills of Swat, Chitral, Dir, Malakand, Buner, Batagram, Manshera, Abbottabad, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber and Kurram districts after the westerly wave gripped the upper parts of the country including KP since Tuesday.

As result of which moderate to isolated heavy snowfall is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Malakand, Kohistan, Mansehra and Abbottabad from January 11-13. The heavy snowfall may disrupt and cause clouser of roads in Galiyat, Naran, Kaghan, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad and Shangla during next three days besides possibility of land-sliding in Upper KP. The spokesman of KP tourism department told APP that a mega project costing Rs238 million was prepared for organizing different winter sports and tourism events in Swat and others districts of KP.

Kalam's winter gala and tour-de-cycle race would be organized in January-February in Swat besides first-ever sports rafting at River Swat and an international paragliding event at Saidu Sharif. Alike, a youth leadership conference and skiing event at Malam Jabba were also planned. To reduce tourists' load at Kalam, Malam Jabba and Bahrian, new tourists spots would be developed at Sola Tanar, Puchar and Jargo valleys while walking tracks to be developed in new tourists zones to promote ecotourism in Swat.

He said Rs4.8 billion were being spent on development and construction of new roads to link it with swat motorway while tourism police was made operational at Malakand and Hazara divisions to facilitate tourists there. The construction of 15 jeepable tracks was also proposed in Malakand and Hazara divisions, he said, adding six new tourist facilitation centers were established and work on seven other started.

A mega project worth Rs365 million for identification of new tourist spots was planned and a road to Sheikh Badin tourist resort in DI Khan would be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs3 billion while a tourist wing for merged areas was being established in order to promote winter tourism in KP. Hayat Ali Shah, General Manager, KP Culture and Tourism Authority has urged tourists to adopt all precautionary measures while going to Malakand and Hazara divisions keeping in view the MET office forecast for heavy rains and snowfall to avoid untoward incidents.

SAPM pays visit to tobacco manufacturing units F.P. Report

SWABI: Special Advisor to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance, Tariq Pasha visited tobacco manufacturing units in district Swabi, on Friday.

These units are signatories of the track and trace system and the visit pertained to the implementation of automated sticker application on cigarette packs, said in a press release issued here on Friday. The press release said currently these factories apply these stickers manually.

The SAPM was accompanied by DG TTS Wahid Uqually, director TTS North Ifritkhar, Chief Commissioner RTO Peshawar Aqeel Ahmad Siddique, Assistant Commissioner Tobacco Unit Waqas Khan. It added track and trace team members from Authentics Private Limited apprised the visiting team that the old machines could also be modified for implementation of the track and trace system.

53 transformers provided to PK-114 F.P. Report

WANA: As many as 53 transformers and 106 poles were distributed on the basis of needs and referred to the people of the concerned villages in Lower South Waziristan keeping in view the needs of the people in his constituency.

The transformers were provided from the funds of MPA PK 114 Naseer Ullah Wazir. On this occasion, local leaders of PTI, former Finance Secretary Bakht Nawaz and former Labour Wing President Haroon Wazir thanked the MPA and told the media that these transformers and poles were distributed to the people from the personal funds of MPA Naseerullah Wazir Distributed. They said that we have distributed transformers and poles keeping in mind the requirements and transparency.

They said that this time the people of the area who have been given transformers and poles include many other villages including Shakai, Dabkot, Azam Warsak and Karikot. However, the areas that remain, including Toi Khullha, Zermelan, Spin and Tanai, will be given their share of transformers and poles for the next time.

Training concluded F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Additional Deputy Commissioner Lakki Marwat Dr. Tariq Ullah has said that the digital census is being conducted for the first time in the history of the country, therefore the enumerators and other relevant officials should perform the national duty with utmost zeal.

This he said while addressing participants of a training session at Government High School No. 2, in Lakki Marwat city on Thursday. Betanni sub-division assistant commissioner Najam Dawar also accompanied him. Dr. Tariq Ullah said that it was the prime duty and responsibility of enumerators to ensure a transparent and error-free census in their assigned areas.

Chaos is result of bad governance: JI

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has said that the political chaos, constitutional and economic crisis in the country is the result of the bad governance, incompetence and corruption of both the PDM and PTI governments. Speaking at a news conference at Dir Khas and addressing a protest rally at Wari against price hike here on Friday the JI chief said the troika had lost its right to rule.

The JI parliamentary leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inayatullah, former MNA Tariqullah and JI district chief Sahibzada Faseehullah were also present. He said that the coalition of eleven parties was in power, but the country still faced crises. He alleged that by creating an artificial wheat crisis, people were being forced to stand in long queues from Karachi to Chitral district and the people were desperate for a bag of flour. He said the hoarders and the mafia were

making billions of rupees as profit.

"Mafias are present in all the three major parties like PML-N, PPP and PTI", he said, adding all these had created artificial crises of sugar, medicine and petrol in the past. He said the rulers had held the judiciary hostage, destroyed institutions and ignored the 220 million populations on the mercy of Allah. He said the court and accountability institutions could not hold accountable the corrupt rulers, so now the people should hold accountable these cruel landlords and corrupt capitalists with the power of their vote in the coming election.

The JI chief strongly criticized the Sindh government's decision to postpone the local body elections in Karachi, Hyderabad and said that the PPP and MQM were afraid of their defeat. "People of Karachi will never vote for extortionists and make the JI successful", he said, adding that the PPP repeatedly postponed the local body elections due to the fear of the

masses' revenge. He praised the Election Commission's decision to support the constitution and democracy and hold elections on January 15 and paid tribute to it in strong words.

While discussing the situation of Balochistan, Siraj said that despite having vast mineral reserves and coastline, the governments had kept the people of the province marginalized and cheated them. He said the sit-in for the rights of Gawadar was going on for the last 65 days but instead of negotiating with the protesters, the government adopted the path of violence and stubbornness. He said that the residents of Gawadar were protesting peacefully for their legitimate right which is their constitutional and democratic right. "We strongly condemn the cases and arrests against the protesters of 'Gwadar Ko Haq Du Tehreek'", he said and demanded the government to immediately release all the arrested protesters.

Political instability isolates Pakistan: Ex-MNA

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Former Member National Assembly (MNA) Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman said worsening political and economic situation has isolated the country globally, the interest system is the biggest obstacle in the country's development.

This he said as the chief guest at the annual Dastarbandi held at Hayat Al-Muslimeen in Kot Haj Abad. Former MNA and chief of Jamia Taffhim -al-Qur'an Mardan, along with director of the institution, Haji Ihsan-ul-Haq and others also spoke.

These are the centers of the soul, which thousands of Madrasas are providing free facilities like education, accommodation and food to 33 lakh students

across the country without any government assistance.

The students of Madrasas have played the role of the first force for the sake of protection. The tests will be failed. He said that currently 8 crore people are illiterate and 9 crore are forced to live below the poverty line. The only solution to the country's problems is the end of the usury system and the Islamic justice system lies in the implementation

DFO claims availability in abundance: District Food Officer (DFO) Shahab-ud-Din claimed that there is no crisis of flour and wheat in Lower Dir, there is sufficient quantity of wheat and flour, while 8820 bags of flour are being supplied to the entire district on a daily basis at

discounted rates.

This he claimed that while talking to journalists in his office. He said that all the nine flour mills of Dir Lower are open, wheat is being supplied to all the flour mills according to the government quota, there is no crisis of flour and wheat in Dir Lower and abundant flour is available in every corner of the district. The quota of flour has been increased and 8820 bags of flour are being provided at discounted rates in Lower Lower and the discounted flour is being distributed in a very clear and transparent manner through 265 dealers appointed by the district administration. He said that flour hoarding and smuggling will not be allowed in Lower Lower.



HYDERABAD: Rangers patrolling in the city to ensure law and order situation.

Over 2.1m families to get quarterly installment

MULTAN (APP): The second quarterly installment of Fiscal Year 2022-23 under BISP Kifalat program has been released as over 2.1 million poor families enrolled with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) of South Zone Punjab would avail the facility.

Zonal Director BISP South Zone Punjab, Sheikh Muhammad Ameen, expressed these views while talking to APP here on Friday. He said that the families who had received message from 8171 and didn't received their amount so far could contact nearby HBL Connects and

BISP Tehsil offices for getting their installment.

Ameen said that the funds for BISP education scholarship program have also been released with this tranche and beneficiaries could get it. He informed that quarterly stipend was being offered from primary to higher secondary level to both girls and boys. BISP Zonal Director said that Rs Rs 1500 scholarship fixed for male students and Rs 2000 for female students at primary level. Likewise, Rs 2500 for male students and Rs 3000 for female students at secondary. Rs 3500 for male students and Rs 4000

for female students at higher secondary school level were being offered. He said that Rs 500 extra fixed for female students at each level to encourage them to get education.

The cash could be withdrawn from Habib Bank designated payment centers or biometric ATMs. Deserving women were asked to receive their full amount and never forget to get the receipt. The beneficiaries could report to their concerned BISP Tehsil offices or BISP toll free helpline 080026477 in case of any complaint, he concluded.

CPO directs community policing

F.P. Report

MULTAN: City Police (CPO) Multan Shakir Hussain Dawar organized held 'Kuli Katcheri' in the mosque after offering Friday prayers in Jama Masjid Dar Bani Hashim area of Gulgasht police station. During the 'Kuli Katcheri' sub-divisional Police Officer Gulgasht Ghulam Farid, SHO Gulgasht Rao Ziaur Rehman and other officers accompanied CPO. The citizens present in the mosque informed CPO Multan about their problems.

CPO Multan heard the problems of the citizens during the open court and issued orders

to redress their grievances. Talking to the citizens present in the mosque, the CPO said that a series of open courts have been started to deliver justice and the problems of the citizens have come out to be solved at their doorsteps. This will reduce the distance between the police and the public and ensure justice to the citizens. He said that all forces including Dolphin Force, Guard Squad are fulfilling their responsibilities to maintain law and order and control crime in the city. You should also cooperate with the police in this regard. Identify criminals and report crime wherever you see it to the police.



US kindergarten vaccination rate dropped again, data shows

NEW YORK (AP): Vaccination rates for US kindergarteners dropped again last year, and federal officials are starting a new campaign to try to bring them up. Usually, 94% to 95% of kindergarteners are vaccinated against measles, tetanus and certain other diseases. The vaccination rates dropped below 94% in the 2020-2021 school year, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released found rates dropped again in the 2021-2022 school year, to about 93%. The pandemic disrupted vaccinations and other routine health care for children, and also taxed the ability of school administrators and nurses to track which children weren't up-to-date on shots. CDC officials said decreased confidence in vaccines is another likely contributor.

"I think it's a combination of all those things," said Dr. Georgina Peacock, director of CDC's immunization division. Health officials focus on kindergarten because it's when most children enter school systems. Public schools typically require vaccinations as a condition of attendance, though some exemptions are allowed. Such exemptions were up slightly last school year, but the CDC's Shannon Stokley said they are not the main driver of the decrease. Rather, more schools relaxed their policies to allow enrollment while giving families a grace period to get shots, she said.

The new numbers suggest that as many as 275,000 kindergartners lack full vaccine protection. Falling vaccination rates open the door to outbreaks of diseases once thought to be in the rearview mirror, experts say. They point to a case of paralytic polio reported last year in New York, and to recent measles surges in Minnesota and Ohio. Those outbreaks coincide with anecdotal and survey informa-



tion suggesting more parents are questioning bedrock childhood vaccines long celebrated as public health success stories.

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll last month found less support among parents for school vaccine requirements vs. a 2019 survey. "It's crazy. There's so much work to be done," said Dr. Jason Newland, a pediatric infectious diseases doctor at St. Louis Children's Hospital and vice chair for community health at Washington University. Other physicians have told him that more parents are being selective about which vaccines to give their kids. CDC data reflected that: The chickenpox vaccination rate fell more sharply than the rate for shots against measles, mumps and rubella.

This week, the CDC launched a campaign called "Let's RISE" — an acronym for Routine Immunizations on Schedule for Everyone. It includes new educational materials to help doctors talk to families about vaccinations, as well as information for families who have questions about the shots. Building trust in vaccinations "is something that has to happen

at the local and community level," Peacock said.

CDC study was based on public school kindergarten vaccination reports from 49 states, and reporting on private schools from 48 states. Montana did not report data. Rates vary across the country. CDC officials noted significant increases in a few states, including Hawaii, Maine, Maryland and Wyoming. But most states saw declines, with the largest drops in Mississippi, Georgia and Wisconsin.

A second CDC report found overall vaccination rates among younger children remained high and stable, although there were declines among kids who were poor and lived in rural areas. The report was based on a 2021 national telephone survey of parents of children who were about 2 years old. Why the difference? CDC officials said it appears doctors and parents made sure younger and more vulnerable children got initial vaccine protection during the pandemic, but there may have been a drop-off in getting booster doses and additional shots as kids got older.

Turkey summons Swedish envoy

ANKARA (AP): Turkey has summoned the Swedish ambassador to convey Ankara's displeasure after a mannequin depicting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was hung outside the city hall in Stockholm, state broadcaster TRT reported. Turkish officials described the incident as "terrorist propaganda" by supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and other Kurdish militant groups.

TRT said the ambassador was informed that Turkey strongly condemns the "heinous act." Turkish officials also said the act was contrary to an agreement that Turkey has reached with Sweden and Finland under which the two promised to crack down on Kurdish militants as they seek Turkish approval for their NATO membership bids. Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström condemned the act.

"The government is committed to an open debate on political choices but strongly rejects threats and hatred against political representatives. Portraying an elected president as executed outside City Hall is abhorrent," Billström wrote on Twitter. Fahrettin Altun, the communications director for Erdogan's office, responded to Billström's tweet by condemning the incident and urging Swedish authorities "to take necessary steps against terrorist groups" without delay.

"That PKK terrorist can challenge the Swedish government at the heart of Stockholm is proof that the Swedish authorities have not taken necessary steps against terrorism — as they have been claiming in recent days," Altun tweeted in English. In November, the ambassador was similarly summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry after images that allegedly insulted Erdogan were projected on the Turkish Embassy building in Stockholm.

Sweden and Finland abandoned their longstanding policies of military nonalignment and applied for membership in the military alliance after Russian forces launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. NATO-member Turkey hasn't yet endorsed their accession, which requires unanimous approval from all existing alliance members.

Japan says Fukushima water release to start

TOKYO (Agencies): The Japanese government has said it will start releasing contaminated water from Fukushima, the nuclear power plant devastated by a tsunami in 2011, into the ocean sometime "around this spring or summer". Spring usually starts in Japan in March and summer in June. Japan approved the release of more than 1 million tonnes of water used to cool the reactors since the meltdown in April 2021.

The water, currently stored in tanks at the site of the ruined plant in Japan's northeast, would be treated before release but the plan has been condemned by neighbouring countries, Pacific nations and local fishing communities who fear it will affect their livelihoods.

California storms erase extreme drought from nearly all of state

BERKELEY (Agencies): There is a silver lining to the relentless California storms that have so far killed at least 18 people and racked up an estimated \$1 billion in damages: In a single week, extreme drought conditions that had gripped almost one-third of the state have been downgraded nearly everywhere. The US Drought Monitor released an updated map that accounts for the series of atmospheric river storms that have doused the state in recent weeks with more than 24 trillion gallons of water. It shows that "extreme drought," the second-highest classification used by the agency, has been all but erased from the interior or sections of the state.

In a single week, the portions of the state classified as experiencing extreme drought in California fell from 27.1% to 0.32%, according to the US Drought Monitor. Still, 46% of the state remains classified in "severe drought," though that figure fell from 71% a week ago. Extreme drought conditions are still widespread

in Nevada and Utah, and the California storms have not affected the Colorado River Basin, including the badly depleted reservoirs Lake Mead and Lake Powell, where the federal government has been forced to implement water restrictions. In order to completely eliminate drought conditions across the American West, several consecutive seasons of precipitation at 120% to 200% of normal would need to occur, ABC News reported. A 2022 study published in the journal Nature found that the past 22 years have been the driest period in the Southwest in the last 1,200 years.

As temperatures continue to rise thanks to humankind's burning of fossil fuels, one effect, called the Clausius-Clapeyron relationship, is that there is 7% more moisture in the atmosphere per every degree Celsius of warming. That means extreme downpours, like those in California in recent days, can become more likely when conditions are right. By the same token, how-

ever, that relationship can also spur what UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain has called "flash droughts," in which extremely dry conditions can arise quickly, even in a year of above-average precipitation. "The Clausius-Clapeyron relationship also increases what is known as the vapor pressure deficit," Swain told Yahoo News in November. That means "the atmosphere's potential to act as a giant sponge and extract more water out of the landscape has increased, even if the relative humidity has stayed the same. This Clausius-Clapeyron relationship is actually what drives the atmosphere's capacity to dry out the landscape faster."

For now, however, the precipitation picture is much brighter than it was even a week ago. Water levels in depleted state reservoirs have been rising, and California's snowpack as measured 226% of normal. While the risks of flash flooding remain high, more rain and snow is in the forecast for the coming week.

'I didn't steal funds', says Bankman-Fried

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): Sam Bankman-Fried has said he did not steal money and blamed the collapse of his now-bankrupt FTX exchange on a broad crash in cryptocurrency markets, in a highly unusual blog post, a month after his arrest on US fraud charges. Federal prosecutors in Manhattan in December said Bankman-Fried stole billions of dollars from FTX customers to pay debts for his cryptocurrency-focused hedge fund, Alameda Research, buy lavish real estate, and donate to US political campaigns.

He has pleaded not guilty. The Substack blog post — a rare public statement by a US criminal defendant — amounts to a preview of the defence case Bankman-Fried may present when his trial begins on October 2. "I didn't steal funds, and I certainly didn't stash billions away," Bankman-Fried wrote.

Defence lawyers typically advise clients to stay silent before trial because prosecutors may use their comments against them in court. A spokesman for Bankman-Fried declined to comment. A spokesman for the US Attorney's Office in Manhattan declined to comment.

In the post, Bankman-

Fried did not directly address many of the other charges brought against him by federal prosecutors in Manhattan last month, namely that he misled investors and lenders about the financial conditions of FTX and Alameda. He wrote that he had "a lot more to say". The 30-year-old onetime billionaire wrote that Alameda failed to hedge against an "extreme" crash in the cryptocurrency markets, which ultimately came to pass last year.

"As Alameda became illiquid, FTX International did as well, because Alameda had a margin position open on FTX," Bankman-Fried wrote. Last month, two of his closest associates pleaded guilty to defrauding the trading platform's customers and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors' investigation.

Caroline Ellison, Alameda's former chief executive, said in her plea hearing that Bankman-Fried and other FTX executives received billions of dollars in secret loans from Alameda. Bankman-Fried was released on a \$250m bond in December and put under house arrest at his parents' Palo Alto, California home, which was pledged as collateral for his return to court.

In the post, Bankman-Fried also said FTX's US wing is "fully solvent" and that its international unit has many billions of dollars in assets. "If it were to reboot I believe there is a real chance that customers could be made substantially whole," he wrote.

The comments came after a lawyer for FTX told a federal bankruptcy court in Delaware that the exchange had located more than \$5bn in liquid assets, and that the company plans to sell non-strategic investments that had a book value of \$4.6bn. That did not include assets seized by the Securities Commission of the Bahamas, where FTX was based and where Bankman-Fried lived before he was extradited to the United States. Bahamian authorities said they have seized \$3.5bn, but FTX says those funds are worth as little as \$170m.

Bankman-Fried replied on Twitter to a user named @wassielawyer who said a sale of the FTX exchange was viable. "yup my sense is that is and always has been the best recovery scenario for customers," wrote Bankman-Fried. FTX declared bankruptcy on November 11, the same day Bankman-Fried stepped down as chief executive officer.

China urges British govt to stop Hong Kong report

BEIJING (Reuters): China's foreign ministry in Hong Kong urged the British government to stop its "so-called half-yearly report on Hong Kong", state media reported. A spokesperson at the ministry branch said Britain's report "grossly interfered with Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs, and seriously trampled on international law".

Britain criticised 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 its latest report on the former British colony, announced in a written statement to parliament. The reports are issued every six months. In a separate statement, the Hong Kong government said that it

refuted the "slandering remarks and ill-intentioned political attacks" made in Britain's report. "The Hong Kong special administrative region is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China," the statement said, adding that the government urged Britain to "respect the basic norms governing international relations and stop interfering" in the city's affairs.

Mexico deploys National Guard to city subway amid sabotage fears

MEXICO CITY (Agencies): The mayor of Mexico's capital has announced that 6,060 National Guard officers will be posted in the city's subway system after a series of mechanical problems and accidents that officials suggested could be due to sabotage. Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said, in recent months, "incidents have been occurring that we categorize as not normal." She appeared to suggest, but did not say, that it could involve some form of sabotage.

Sheinbaum added that she had asked President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to dispatch the quasi-military National Guard and he agreed. The officers would be posted at subway stations "and some other facilities" in the system and would be there "for some months". She did not explain how the National Guard officers, mostly drawn from the army and assigned to law enforcement, could help control a situation that appears to be caused by maintenance, design or operational flaws.

The Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez

human rights centre said the announcement "is concerning, because it is obvious that this agency reproduces the military's problems with a lack of transparency and excessive use of force." Accidents on the subway have been a recurrent embarrassment for Sheinbaum, who is considered the most likely candidate in Lopez Obrador's left-wing Morena party to succeed him in the 2024 elections. Like the president, Sheinbaum has often ascribed setbacks to a conservative conspiracy against her.

Lopez Obrador was somewhat more specific, saying the National Guard would be there to prevent "provoked" or intentional accidents. "What we want is for there not to be psychosis, for people not to have to worry about some accident in the subway, and that it could have been provoked," the president said. "If they call that militarisation or whatever, then we will take responsibility for that," he said.

The latest accident came, when two subway trains collided while between stations, killing one person

and injuring dozens. Local media reported there had previously been signalling problems on that stretch of track. In May 2021, an elevated section of the subway system collapsed, causing 26 deaths and injuring nearly 100 people. An investigation blamed deficiencies in construction, and 10 former officials have been charged with a form of manslaughter, injury and damage to property, but none has been jailed. Poor welding, a lack of maintenance, antiquated electronic systems and the city's frequent earthquakes and soft soil conditions have all been blamed in the past for problems on the subway, but sabotage has never before been seen as a cause.

But in the last several days, Sheinbaum said, there had been three "not normal" problems found on subway cars or tracks, including the failure of a tire "that had just been inspected". The city's subway cars run on both tires and rails. Subway riders were sceptical about sending the National Guard into the largely underground metro system.

Truck driver involved in train derailment charged

COLLEGE DALE, Tenn. (AP): The driver of a semi-truck involved in a Tennessee train derailment that left two train workers injured has been charged. College Dale Police arrested the driver and charged him with failure to yield, a registration violation and felony reckless endangerment, news outlets reported.

The train hit the truck, which was carrying a 134-foot (41-meter) concrete truss bridge beam, last month as it sat on the tracks waiting for a traffic light to change. The collision pushed three locomotives and 10 railroad cars off the tracks, creating what the Hamilton County Office of Emergency Management called "a disastrous mess" in College Dale, a suburb of Chattanooga. The driver did not make sure the tractor-trailer could completely clear the tracks before driving over them and did not contact Norfolk Southern Railroad about his delivery route, a police investigation found.

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Facts, and fiction

THE Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has recently informed the media that his institution has performed well in recent years by offering various international scholarship schemes to make education accessible for students, particularly those from far-flung and less privileged areas. According to the Senior Educationist, a total of 508 scholars had preceded foreign countries on scholarships under HEC's foreign scholarship schemes, from different levels of Higher education including Ph.D., MS/BS, and multiple Doctorate courses. The bureaucrat appreciated the talent of Pakistani students, who secured the highest number of seats under the Erasmus Mundus scholarship program in the past year.

The government of Pakistan originated Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) out of University Grant Commission (UGC), as an independent and financially autonomous body in 2002. The Commission's sole purpose was the promotion of higher education through effective funding, overseeing, regulating, and accrediting higher education in the country. The Top national educational forum also vested responsibility to elevate the educational standards of Pakistani Higher Education Institutions through the introduction of global scales and standards in the country, by ensuring quality teaching and learning techniques, the rule of merit, and transparency in the education system in the country.

Remarkable reforms and legislation had been introduced in the field of higher education from 2002 to 2008 and several Pakistani Universities gained a position among the most reputed first 300-300 top Universities in the world. Several new initiatives were launched and new standards were set for degree attestation, curriculum revision, testing and evaluation, and faculty development along with increasing Industry-university research collaboration and development of technology parks in the country. However, several issues remained unresolved so far including the issue of Al-Khair University and the ban on Education in various systems/ institutions which had been declared illegal by the Commission, but no future course had been outlined for the victim students after the closure of the institutions. Similarly, the HEC failed to completely settle down the issue of illegal educational institutions as various spongy organizations are still making business in the name of education in the country. Unfortunately, this national endeavor fell prey to politics within its ranks which badly marred its growth and operations.

Interestingly, the successive administration in the HEC gradually abandoned the primary role and task of the regulator and assumed administrative duties by authorizing and inaugurating new constructions, allocating funds, and exercising control over the functioning of the educational institutions. The education and research quality have again nose downed in our education and research laboratories in recent years while Pakistani Universities could neither maintain their status nor could attract students from other nations except a few third-world countries in the world. However, the Commission has now started flagging foreign-funded scholarship programs as achievements that are world-wide adorable initiatives of the developed nations while most of the foreign governments/ universities directly hold testing and selection of the candidates.

The newly throned bureaucrat has initiated a vigorous publicity campaign for the promotion of its institution, however, the nation demands genuine research and quality education in national universities by improving the standard of teaching, and learning practices including field experiments, online research, and publication of inspiring thesis backed by practical knowledge application by the students. Such endeavors will earn real prestige for the faculty and the HEC instead of paid advertisement and arranged media interactions.

Global rivalry and poor Hongkongers

THE UK government criticized 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. Rishi government broadcasted its criticism in the UK's latest six-monthly report on Hong Kong, which said that freedoms are being systematically eroded by Beijing on multiple fronts, tightening the restrictions on the lives of ordinary Hong Kongers. The Chinese Embassy in the UK expressed anger over Britain's allegation and termed it distorted facts.

Hong Kong and Hong Kongers had been a matter of contention between Great Britain and the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) over the past decades before and after the cessation of British colonialism on the Island. Once having enjoyed the liberties of democracy and the freedoms of western civilization, a significant number of young Hong Kongers still did not adjust themselves to the Mandarin language and typical Huaren living style therefore many took refuge in the UK. Earlier, hundreds of pro-democracy Hong Kongers held protests against the Chinese government's National Security Law (NSL) in the past years which attracted unprecedented support from Europe and America while the British government relaxed its visa, Asylum, and citizenry laws for its former colony. China handled the protests by force and controversial laws are still in place but the pro-democracy movement gradually cooled down in the city. Despite the fact, that Beijing's installed Hong Kong government continues its regulations regarding, publication and freedom of assembly, censorship, and strict implementation of the law.

Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Xingxing are the confrontational issues between China and the west that are most frequently used by western nations to snub Beijing at international forums and in the media. Currently, the UK authorities are backing a detained pro-democracy leader while Beijing blocked those efforts vehemently. A covert war and both-way propaganda campaign are going on between the superpowers while agent provocateurs are playing on behalf of foreign nations and no one knows about the end. After all, the outcome of this rivalry would be the destruction and misery of the common man, while influential will celebrate their triumph.

Quote of the day

A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.
— Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964, American general.

‘The military is required to carry out even those orders, the wisdom of which they doubt’

Victoria Nikiforova

RECENTLY, political publications in the United States have been filled with disturbing articles about the inadmissibility of the politicization of the army and its participation in showdowns within the country. Journalists write, experts speak, analysts frown.

It is interesting that earlier this topic was strictly taboo. In the American information field, there could not even be a hint that the military would suddenly want to shake up the regime and put their candidate in the White House. But today the game went into the open.

The first topic was raised by the military themselves. In September, eight former US defense secretaries, along with five former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the public at once. In their open letter, they noted an unprecedented level of tension in relations between the army and society, urged the military to stay above the political fray, not interfere in elections, follow orders given by civilian authorities, and generally not rock the boat.

In total there are 16 points in the letter. Some of them are very curious. For example, the tenth point: "Elected (and appointed) civil officials have the right to be wrong, <...> that is, to give orders that later turn out to be wrong." It is followed by paragraph 11: "The military is required to carry out even those orders, the wisdom of which they doubt."

It is noticeable that this directive was composed on the eve of the midterm elections, and the representatives of the Democratic

Party (elected and appointed) were seriously afraid that they might be hit by the military for their pranks with the vote count.

However, when the elections were over, the topic of unrest in the ranks of the American army did not die out at all. Calls to the military not to succumb to the propaganda of politicians and to carry out orders, "the wisdom of which they doubt," are heard today from every flat iron. Here, for example, is a fresh revelation from Foreign Affairs: "Guardians of the Republic. Only a non-partisan army can defend American democracy."

For many decades, while the United States was developing extensively, including through military interventions, the American army was indeed excluded from politics. Today, when the logic of capitalist development has led to the fact that the local oligarchy began to devour their own country, everything has become more complicated.

The most obvious example of the fact that the leadership of the army does not give a penny to the Supreme Commander was given by Mark Milley, the current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In January 2021, on the eve of Trump 's departure from the White House, the general ordered the officers in charge of launching nuclear missiles: if they receive an order from the president, first resort to him, and he himself will decide what to do next. At the same time, Milli had no right to vote in the decision to launch missiles. This is the sole prerogative of Supreme Commander Donald Trump.

Moreover, Milli then called his Chinese col-

league - the Chief of the Joint Staff of the Central Military Council Li Zuocheng - and said that if he received an order to launch missiles, he would first dial him and warn him. This is despite the fact that China is officially designated as the main strategic adversary of the United States.

The Republicans then shouted a lot that this was pure treason, but achieved nothing. Trump was forced to leave, and Mark Milley is still thriving in office.

However, it cannot be said that the American army is playing completely on the side of the Democratic Party. Yes, the generals and the entire elite for the most part intertwined with the Democrats in a mutually beneficial embrace. However, the ambitious colonels, who have no way up, listen with interest to the Republicans. Senior retirees publicly support Trump and his candidates.

We must also take into account the objective crisis in the US Army. The recruitment plan for last year was only half completed. There have not been such bad indicators in the country for more than half a century. There are big complaints about recruits for health reasons - only 23 percent of them meet army standards.

There is an interesting explanation as to why wokism, with its concern for the rights of minorities, the disabled, the mentally ill, has become so widespread in the US Army. The fact is that this is exactly what most recruits look like today - they are representatives of the most disadvantaged segments of the colored population, people with

excess weight, diabetes, mental problems, including a tendency to homosexuality and transvestism. They go to the army for free medicine and the possibility of further free education at the university.

The Democrats pretend that this is the way it should be - and issue new rules to support minorities in the army. The Republicans would like to change this - and thereby attract the hearts of many caring officers.

Republican politicians scold American generals for nothing, hinting to the lower ranks that career opportunities will open for them only if a representative of the Democratic Party is taken out of the White House. Then they will be able not only to rise in the service, but also to create an "army of a healthy person" - without one-legged black lesbians.

These campaigns are especially aggravated immediately after some epic defeat. The flight from Afghanistan was, in this sense, an invaluable gift for the Republicans. "Overestimated losers", "a pack of stupid babies" - Donald Trump then honored American generals.

The patriots in the army agreed with him completely. The defeat in Afghanistan was marked by widespread speeches by retired military against Joe Biden and demands for the commander-in-chief to resign and not be dishonored.

Even the active military allowed themselves to publicly criticize the command - this is something unprecedented for the United States. Lieutenant Colonel of the Marine Corps Stuart Scheller was sued for a

series of tweets about a mediocre flight from Kabul, was fired, but immediately became the idol of angry patriots.

Today Republicans are not just campaigning for the military. Iconic Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis took over and organized the "Florida State Guard" - a voluntary association of firearm-wielding state residents with combat experience. Here there is no "wokism", no lisp with minorities. Volunteers are willing to join the guard.

In the republican states they organize their own militias, attract paramilitary organizations to cooperation. The Democrats are ready to fight their armed groups - antifa, BLM.

Let's not forget about private military companies. The creator of the legendary Blackwater and Academi PMCs, Erik Prince, for example, is close friends and collaborators with Donald Trump.

Plus, there are armed units that guard the American oligarchs. According to legend, billionaires hire retired military men to sit in a bunker and prepare for the end of the world. However, the end of the world does not come, and well-trained guys with combat experience, here they are - ready.

When can all this explosive mixture explode? Senior military officials believe that the 2024 presidential election could be the ideal moment for a coup and subsequent armed uprising. Given the scale of fraud, this is quite real. People are really tired of passively watching the machinations of the Democrats, who manage to win elections every time against the will of the

majority of the people.

The traitorous generals narrative finds widespread support among the American populace. Angry patriots are calling for an end to the Pentagon's epic theft, deliberately idiotic policies to encourage minorities, and "make the army great again." Natural horror is also caused by the prospect that the decrepit and deranged Joe Biden will again be the Supreme Commander.

Therefore, the Americans are waiting for the putsch and are preparing for it. Forty percent of the country's inhabitants are ready to support a military coup. More than half of these people are Republicans.

At this point, readers usually ask: what is Hecuba to us? What difference does it make if there will be a military coup in the States? And it has been clear for so long that there is no democracy there, it is an ordinary banana republic at maximum speed.

However, the question of the putsch in the United States has a very direct bearing on us. The fact is that the elections there may well not wait. Painful and humiliating defeats on the battlefield have traditionally been a cause for unrest among the US military. Here calls immediately begin to overthrow, judge and imprison everyone. Local patriots thoughtfully stroke their trunks.

This explains why Washington has such a stranglehold on Ukraine today. Yes, for Russia this conflict is unambiguously existential. But for the United States, the stakes are also extremely high. A second Afghanistan may not be sustained there.

This coal - who needs coal

Sergey Savchuk

WHILE analysts have been keeping a close eye on fluctuations in the cost and speed of pumping natural gas from UGS facilities in Europe, one of the largest countries in Africa has literally plunged into darkness , which is fraught not only with domestic inconveniences, but also with much more far-reaching consequences. Few wrote, but in South Africa at this moment there is a most natural collapse of the energy sector, reflecting a systemic crisis in governance, as well as the extreme interest of some external players.

But let's go on order. Eskom, South Africa's largest state-owned energy company, announced on Wednesday that it has introduced another regime of restrictions on the supply of electricity to residential and industrial consumers. To be precise, this is already the sixth restrictive stage, which means that most of the country sits without electricity for up to eight hours a day.

It is worth adding that the population of the Republic of South Africa is growing very rapidly: a hundred years ago, only seven million lived here, and by the end of 2022, the net increase was 650 thousand people and crossed the line of 60 million citizens. Of course, South Africa is a southern and very warm country, but just to understand the scale of the problem, imagine that Moscow, the entire Moscow region and a couple of regions like

Tula and Kaluga are left without electricity for eight hours every day.

Eskom management issued a completely unencouraging statement saying that half of all generating capacity is currently out of service due to breakdowns or complete depletion of fuel. The state monopoly's production fleet (and Eskom generates 95 percent of all electricity in the country) has a combined capacity of 46 gigawatts, and as of Wednesday evening, 23 of them were actually off the grid. Again, to visualize the scale of the collapse, let's say that the loss of such a volume of generation is comparable to the simultaneous failure of four Zaporozhye nuclear power plants , which, we recall, with its six power units is the largest and most powerful in Europe.

The results of last year for South Africa in terms of restoring their own energy were disappointing. Rolling blackouts have reportedly been occurring for more than 200 days. We must pay tribute to the President of the country Cyril Ramaphosa , who, like a fairy-tale baron, literally tried to pull Eskom out of the crisis and the debt hole by the hair, but failed to radically turn the tide. At least, this is how the situation is presented by the foreign press, citing the words of Finance Minister Inok Godongwana, who believes that total corruption prevents Eskom from getting out, cutting off all efforts to find and attract investors.

But then oddities and inconsistencies begin,

which, upon closer examination of the issue, appear outward, like an elephant through a tulle on a window.

Various foreign experts unanimously say that the South African energy industry is stagnating because it is old, dirty and inefficient. However, even the most superficial check raises doubts about the professionalism or impartiality of the aforementioned experts.

Eskom's generation is based on a fleet of coal-fired power plants, of which there are currently 16. The oldest of these, the Arnot station, was commissioned in 1975 and has a solid capacity of 2.3 gigawatts. The age seems to be respectable, but only if you do not remember that the United States and a number of European countries right now, by sheer force of will, are extending the operational life of their own nuclear power plants to 80 years, and their average age is confidently approaching 60 years. The main part of South African power plants was built in the late 80s and mid-90s of the last century, that is, according to all the canons, they do not pull on the "oldies" in any way. The same list also includes completely unique objects, for example, coal-fired power plants Matimba and Medupi. Located in the province of Limpopo known to any Russian child, they have a colossal power of 3.7 and 4.7 gigawatts, respectively, and they are powered from

adjacent cuts, from where coal is transferred directly to storage bins along conveyor belts. How fuel can run out under such conditions remains a mystery.

Also in service are four gas turbines and even one nuclear power plant - they are covered by seven hydroelectric power plants of medium and low power in working hardships.

There is another very important point.

Johannesburg, following the aggressive paradigm of Western ideology, according to which local natives (whether Russians, Ukrainians or South Africans) a priori cannot be effective managers, has been recruiting all kinds of Varangians to the board of directors for many years. But this did not bring happiness: suffice it to say that 11 general directors were replaced in ten years, and a terrible scandal happened to the last one. André de Ruyter (although he is a native South African) said in mid-December that the situation around Eskom was critical, internal problems were preventing the company from getting out of the crisis and the debt hole, and resigned. Nothing out of the ordinary, if a couple of days later he did not go to the police with a statement that they tried to poison him with cyanide added to a cup of coffee served to him at work.

Separately, it is impressive that the corporation - in fact the only seller of electricity in South Africa - is deeply unprofitable.

Official data says that in 2021 the company showed revenue of 13.8 billion, while its losses amounted to 1.3 billion. It is unpleasant, but the amount is not prohibitive at all, and any world bank would easily give a loan to a key state-owned company.

And at this moment, as in a bad detective story, Western environmentalists jump on the stage with bundles of banknotes in their hands received from various funds fighting global warming. The energy system, for a number of reasons brought into a crisis impasse, has already lost half of its capacity, but the government of South Africa is offered not to save it, no. Investors, casually mentioning corruption, roll out a key demand - to completely abandon coal generation and switch to renewable and carbon neutral sources. You heard right: in order to solve the problem of power supply to the state, it is proposed to destroy the basis that provides more than 80 percent of all generation.

At the same time, the idea is gently introduced that public administration is inefficient, because Eskom urgently needs to be privatized, that is, all the country's energy should be transferred into private hands. Otherwise, no investment should be expected - such is the fork of conditions.

If at this moment someone thought that we were facing another destructive demarche of the so-called greens, we will hasten to reassure you. Everything is much simpler, because all

these environmental funds and organizations are not independent players, but just tools in much more sophisticated hands.

The shadow puppeteers who can afford to run errands for various analytical agencies and environmental activists do not have the task of destroying the energy of South Africa and sending it to the stone age. The goal is much more prosaic. Taken to the extreme, Eskom is supposed to become private, which will literally hold the throat not only of the government, but of the entire population of a country incredibly rich in natural resources. Directly dictate terms to her, otherwise, as they joked in one Soviet film, we will turn off the light. You can bet that in the event of a successful change of ownership, all environmentalists will immediately evaporate, and coal-fired power plants, with minimal technical fine-tuning, will begin to work with triple strength, bringing a steady income into someone's pocket.

We send all doubters to get acquainted with the data on the extraction and consumption of coal in Asia , where China and India set new historical records, as well as on the return to operation of the most environmentally friendly power plants in Britain. For dessert, you can watch how yesterday the German police provocatively kneaded eco-activists with batons, who built barricades and prevented the expansion of the Harzweiler mine.

As they say, this coal - who needs coal.

Democracy in reverse

Mikhail Katkov

THE coming year has added problems for the President of Ukraine. On the one hand, the US Republican Party demands to launch an audit of Kyiv's funding, on the other hand, it is increasingly difficult for local elites to hide their dissatisfaction with the central government. How this can turn out - in the material of RIA Novosti. Accountant instead of a friend

Having gained control of the House of Representatives, the Republicans immediately began to look for corruption schemes in financing Ukraine. According to the American media, Kevin McCarthy was elected speaker on the condition that he carefully monitors this. The politician himself publicly promised to stop the practice of "open

checks" - when tens of billions are allocated without any accountability.

According to the US budget for 2023, Ukraine will receive about \$9 billion for the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Another 13 billion to support the economy. The more weapons and money sent to Kyiv, the more closely the Americans will monitor how they dispose of this help. Oleg Soskin, a former adviser to former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, warned that if the US Congress convicts Zelensky of embezzlement, his political career will end.

According to Western human rights organizations, the situation with corruption in Ukraine has improved since 2014. In particular, special institutions have appeared to combat it. However, for exam-

ple, Transparency International believes that the situation cannot be called stable. And Freedom House notes that the problem remains acute because the Zelensky team does not have the political will to continue active anti-corruption actions. Even serious pressure from the West does not help.

In 2022, the United States allocated \$21 million to Ukraine for justice-related programs. The Pentagon said that they did not see convincing evidence of the resale by Ukrainians of the weapons transferred to them. Nevertheless, Washington admits that oversight has faced such difficulties as a shortage of personnel and non-compliance with security measures in the war zone.

Republicans want to increase spending on surveillance, and some are proposing to cut aid to Ukraine.

Bag of snakes

But in 2023, Zelensky will have problems not only with the Americans. The Turkish edition dikGAZETE predicted a war with the oligarchs for the Ukrainian leader. Since the end of February last year, the country has entered a period of political uncertainty, the newspaper writes, and the president still has too little experience in the struggle for power. This opinion is based primarily on the fact that big business has already lost billions of dollars due to hostilities, and now it will be shaken up by Zelensky, who needs funds to pay off debts to the West.

According to Forbes, in 2022, the loss of the 20 richest Ukrainians amounted to \$20 billion. The leader of the rating is still Rinat Akhmetov, whose fortune has decreased from 13.7 to 4.4 billion. Maxim Lytvyn and Alexei Shevchenko are next (2.3 billion each), then Viktor Pinchuk (2.2 billion). Former President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has dropped out of the ranks of billionaires: his fortune has more than halved and is now estimated at \$730 million.

Akhmetov, who suffered the most, has been tipped as Zelensky's opponents since 2021, when the president suspected the oligarch of being involved in preparing a coup d'état. The accusations were forgotten, among other things, because of the outbreak of hostilities. At the same time, the business-

man lost his main enterprises in Mariupol.

In an interview with The Washington Post, Akhmetov said that he was treated unfairly at home. In particular, he considers the law on the fight against oligarchs to be wrong, because there is nothing of the kind either in the US or in the EU. He calls himself "the largest private investor, employer and taxpayer."

Another candidate for Zelensky's opponents is Petro Poroshenko. Like Akhmetov, he has lost a lot and falls under the law on oligarchs. But, in addition, he does not hide political ambitions. The so-called gunners (bloggers loyal to Poroshenko) have been actively criticizing the President of Ukraine throughout the past year.

(Continued on Page 7)

‘A mature power’

WA L T E R Lippmann (1889-1974) was perhaps the most influential American journalist of the 20th century. He was also among its wisest strategists. Am-ong the many things that the Ukraine war has exp-osed is the conspicuous la-ck of media voices like Lippmann’s, as well as the paucity of strategic thinking at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

The core ideas underlying both neoconservatism and liberal internationalism remain deeply embedded in the rhetoric, practice, and failures of American foreign policy over the last two decades. They have led in part to the fractured U.S.-Russia relationship, and in many ways the conflict rolling Eastern Europe today. In order to successfully challenge and eventually break the stranglehold these ideas have on policy-makers and the Fourth Estate, we might benefit by a re-appreciation of Lippmann’s work. It might even help us to move beyond the prevailing wisdom of the bipartisan Washington war party, while at the same time reorienting the foreign policy of restraint back to first principles.

Lippmann’s Cold War It wasn’t obvious in the early days of Lippmann’s brilliant career that he would come to be considered a — if not the — leading proponent of foreign policy restraint in the 20th century. His was a journey from committed Wilsonian to cold-eyed realist and outspoken opponent of the Vietnam war.

A co-founder of both the New Republic and the Council on Foreign Relations, he served as an adviser to President Woodrow Wilson during World War I. Later, he came to regret the enthusiastic interventionism of his early years. He was a Wilsonian mugged by reality, and, by the time the Cold War (a term Lippmann is often credited for popularizing in 1947) had entered its initial stages the late 1940s, he was criticizing Wilson’s interventionist ideology as “an

impossible foundation for the foreign policy of a nation... Our people are coming to realize that in this country one crusade has led to another.”

Even before the onset of the Cold War, Lippmann was urging a *modus vivendi* between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In the view of his biographer, Ronald Steele, Lippmann’s position was that “security is based on power, not on abstract principles. Alliances and spheres of influence, not majority votes in an international assembly, would govern a nation’s behavior.” For Lippmann, it was “eminently proper” that great powers such as the U.S. and Soviet Union had their own spheres of influence and responsibility.

During the early years of the Cold War, Lippmann became a leading critic of George F. Kennan’s policy of containment. Lippmann protested the militarization of the Cold War which is where he believed Kennan’s policy would lead. Among other things, Lippmann feared that, “by forcing us to expend our energies and our substance upon these dubious and unnatural allies on the perimeter of the Soviet Union, the effect of the policy is to neglect our natural allies in the Atlantic community, and to alienate them.”

In Lippmann’s view, the mistake Kennan made in outlining his initial strategy of containment was in simultaneously overestimating the role ideology played, while underestimating the role traditional national security interests played in the calculations of the Soviet leadership. [To his credit, Kennan, who admired Lippmann, eventually came to regret how containment had quickly led to U.S. militarization in practice].

Lippmann’s criticism of Kennan’s famous 1947 Foreign Affairs article, “Self-delusion” was the main driver of the belief that “if therefore we are agreed among ourselves, none can withstand us because none should withstand us, and we shall and must prevail.”

James Carden

cy, which recommended that Washington counter Soviet pressure through “the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points” as a “strategic monstrosity.”

Lippmann also went on to attack the author head-on. “For a diplomat to think that rival and unfriendly powers cannot be brought to a settlement is to forget what diplomacy is all about,” wrote Lippmann. “There would be little for diplomats to do,” he continued, “if the world (only) consisted of partners, enjoying political intimacy, and responding to common appeals.” Lippmann’s concerns over containment remain relevant. Then as now, Washington-led efforts, beginning in April 2014, that sought to turn Russia into (in the words of New York Times’ reporter Peter Baker) a “pariah state,” have led exactly to where Lippmann feared like no one ever has since. He was the foreign correspondent, really, for every newspaper in America.”

Yet for all that, Lippmann paid a personal price for his opposition to the war. As Lippmann once said, “You can’t decide these questions of life and death for the world by epiphanies like appeasement.” As Steele recounts, throughout the 1960s, Lippmann’s “sense of isolation increased” and “the snide remarks about his age and judgment” all “took a toll.” And while history has vindicated Lippmann, the gung-ho militarism of those such as rival columnist Joseph Alsop remains entrenched more than half a century later.

Which Way Forward? The war in Ukraine has brought to the fore divisions over what a proper foreign policy of restraint might look like. Some argue for what I would describe as a policy of ‘Restraint Plus’ which urges restrainers to abandon the more traditional concepts of restraint as laid out by Lippmann, in favor of those that are “forward

looking.” Some have come out as vocal advocates for U.S. military and financial aid to Ukraine.

Others, such as historian Michael Brenes, believe that restrainers should “build an alternative strategy to liberal internationalism that is codified around principles of universal equity; freedom from foreign interference, coercion, and invasion; global collaboration across wealthy and poor nations; and international institutions that provide checks and balances on military spending.” Yet some would say basing a foreign policy of restraint on “principles of universal equity” seems about as realistic as basing a foreign policy on the elimination of “terror,” as U.S. president George W. Bush once attempted. The goals which the Restraint Plus camp seek are perhaps laudable, but the problem is that they are far too broad — and broadly defined goals too easily lend themselves to interventionism and mission creep.

Restrainers should, as Lippmann urged, resist the temptation to re-shape the world in the self-image of Washington’s governing elite. “A mature power,” Lippmann wrote, “will make measured and limited use of its power. It will eschew the theory of global and universal duty which not only commits it to unending wars of intervention but intoxicated its thinking with the illusion that it is a crusader for righteousness.” It will leave behind, as today’s restrainers should, “the totally vain notion that if we do not set the world in order, no matter what the price, we cannot live in the world safely.”

Those words, by a man who was arguably the country’s most powerful media figure, in opposition to a ruinous American military adventure half a world away, were written in April 1965. It is sobering to think just how far in the wrong direction the American media — now so wedded to the prerogatives of the national security state on matters of war and peace — has traveled in the days since Lippmann.

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‘Runs through every human heart without exception’

Alex Taylor

THE likeness of poetry to painting has been noted by such a wide variety of thinkers and artists, from Plato to Ezra Pound, that it seems there must be something essentially true about the analogy. The literary task of description and the pictorial task of composition, share the fundamental aim of revealing something to the viewer. Flannery O’Connor once said that she knew many fiction writers who also painted, “not because they’re any good at painting, but because it helps their writing. It forces them to look at things. Fiction writing is very seldom a matter of saying things; it is a matter of showing things.”

In this respect, Katy Carl, whose first novel As Earth Without Water (2021) has recently surfaced, is quite the painter herself—and not just because her novel focuses on two painters, but on account of the novel’s fine rendering of wounded liberty and healing freedom.

It’s been suggested by Caroline Gordon, an acclaimed mid-century novelist and literary critic, that there is no such thing as a novel of ideas, because novels are about action, about life. As Earth Without Water presents a vivid painting of lives in which ideas matter, not as abstract propositions, but as reality-shaping forms. The journey of two friends, former lovers, and one-time artistic rivals Angele and Dylan can help us see how the extent of our self-knowledge shapes our lives. The novel does not aim at a linear plot, but rather contains a series of Angele’s narrations about her past experiences as a marketing executive in Chicago, as a budding artist in New York and Rome, and as a friend in far-flung Kentucky, where Dylan has entered Our Lady of the Pines monastery, becoming Brother Thomas Augustine.

Though her episodic structure is more characteristically modern, Carl takes a great deal of inspiration in characterization from the medieval Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri (another artist concerned with, in the words of a reviewer of the novel, “freedom, choice, and the creative life”). She imaginatively casts Dylan as a Dante misled by his own Beatrice (another fellow art student who becomes his public relations guru, then lover, and finally his jilted fiancée). After opening the novel with a nod to Dante’s Inferno (“Halfway up the rise of a dark steel forest”), Angele recounts her recent past, taking readers through a cinematic journey flush with flashbacks of those varied years, in which Carl deftly plies the mot juste as might an impressionist.

Indeed, her narrator might justly be called an impressionist of the interior life. Angele brings her introspective vision to reveal to us memories as distinct as mornings from her Mississippi childhood reading with her childhood friend Richard (remembered only briefly so as to sketch her path out of the South to the shining lights of the city that never sleeps) to golden afternoons with Dylan during their study abroad, that time when she felt most at home. The novel’s plot follows Angele’s recollections of the artistic and spiritual journey she shared with Dylan, but it is no straightforward *künstlerroman*; rather than provide us with a rendering of the maturation of her own vision, Angele tends to focus on Dylan, seeking not, as a Romantic artist might, to reveal herself, but rather to reveal her subject. Though Dylan tends to eclipse Angele’s character, the light of her countenance slips around the edges, such that

we become acquainted with the daughter of an often-away alcoholic father, a sister to many sisters (Amanda, Alexis, and Anna), whose Aunt Rachel, a professor in New Orleans, rescued her and brought her to a place where her artistic gifts could flourish in the freedom opportunity provides.

Such freedom Dylan has had also, as his parents have provided him with a great deal of what might be called ‘privilege,’ in the form of extensive art schooling from a young age. Their lack of careful attention to their son, however, allowed the sexual abuse he suffered at seventeen at the hands of his psychiatrist. The way in which abuse hinders the freedom of its victims recurs thematically throughout the novel, and we come to understand Dylan’s relational irony as a struggle to give himself fully to another, that is, to give without calculation. His entrance into the monastery—as well as his eventual departure, and Angele’s eventual entrance into a convent implied in the novel’s conclusion—stems from the deeply-rooted desire to be free for a gift-of-self. “All this time, neither of us has been able to give the other any permanent gift, so much too concerned with what we lacked,” Angele muses before leaving Our Lady of the Pines, contemplating a crucifix as she writes. Both she and Dylan have found this the only solution to the problem of pain.

It is not without reason that we use the phrase ‘artistic license’ to castigate the director who strays too far from her source text in a book-to-film adaptation, but Carl’s imaginative use of analogy and allusion reveals rather the freedom of the Christian artist who beholds what nineteenth-century poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called “the dearest freshness deep down things.” Indeed, the beauty of Carl’s analogies provoke the reader to sensation. Early on in the novel, we hear the sound of canvas ripping as Angele describes her employ of a razor on her own art: “the blade snapped rows of taut crossed threads with a sound like a zipper.” Analogies like this one bring us into the physical, everyday realities being described, providing a counterweight to the loftiness of Carl’s elaborate allusions, subtle and overt—whether to Catholic saints like Thomas Aquinas and Thérèse of Lisieux or to visual artists from Fra Angelico to Ruskin.

Even the more obscure of her allusions, however, do not present themselves as puzzles, confounding the reader, but rather as pieces of the multiform texture of Angele’s search for beauty, truth, and goodness. In this, Carl’s artistry is unlike the pastiche of high modernist works like T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land, which seeks to unsettle readers with the weight of the Western intellectual tradition. Rather, it is through the dialogue of her characters that Carl’s novel should unsettle us, showing us the distinction between contemporary liberty and true freedom.

A brief survey of the distinction between liberty and license helps us to see how the concern plays out in Carl’s novel, for the meaning of freedom is embedded in our American political tradition. The distinction between liberty and license (or licentiousness) was of fundamental importance to the American founders, and crucial if we are to understand how they might uphold the First Amendment on the one hand, and the prudence of obscenity laws on the other. Consider Noah Webster, who was a student during the War for Independence, now known

primarily for the dictionaries which bear his name. In An American Dictionary of the English Language, Webster offers definitions of liberty and license which clearly set the two at odds. While liberty is “the state of a freeman; ability to do as one pleases; freedom from restraint,” or even simply “the power of choice,” license Webster names as “excess of liberty; exorbitant freedom; freedom abused, or used in contempt of law or decorum,” citing for authority John Milton: “License they mean when they cry liberty.”

In our time, unfortunately, the word ‘liberty’ has in many minds lost the orientation towards goodness that had been understood as a necessary part of its virtue. Its name has been abused to support evils that Washington, Adams, and Hamilton would have understood as opposed to true freedom, such as abortion (“reproductive liberty”), pornography (“liberty of expression”), and even the promotion of Satanism (“religious liberty”). Taking this linguistic state of affairs into account in her novel, Carl suggests through her characters that ‘liberty’ without orientation can only be a condition for a more robust freedom. Liberty as mere choice is a condition wherein, as Dylan notes in a final confession to Angele, we can enslave ourselves to vice and make ourselves “not free to do the best things [we are] capable of.” Freedom in Angele’s eyes is not to allow oneself to be used in order to feel a sense of belonging, but the ability to sacrifice oneself in a noble project, almost effortlessly. This understanding of freedom should remind the student of the history of America’s political founding. Such a desire for nobility and acceptance of the self-sacrifice required in such a task was jotted out at the founding of the United States, when the Founders “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,” “mutually pledged [d] to each other [their] Lives, [their] Fortunes, and [their] sacred Honor.”

Like the first canticle of Dante’s Comedy, Carl’s novel begins with a descent into a world whose liberty is wounded, here, contemporary America—its inhabitants, by and large, do not realize that their souls should be confirmed in self-control, their liberty finding its purpose in the pursuit of the natural law which points the way towards happiness. We witness this universal woundedness in the lives of her characters, which show unique contests playing out between good and evil. “The front line” of these battles, as Dylan notes, citing Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in her Author’s Note, “runs through every human heart without exception.”

There is no easy paradise in America today. The best public policy will not heal a wounded humanity, nor will any political campaign, necessary though they may be for righting the ship of the republic. However, Carl’s novel, in its presentation of Angele and Dylan’s aspiration for a healing brought about by freedom, should lead us to hope in the true light that even now shines amid the cultural darkness in the West. By presenting the longing of souls for the beauty of a freedom fulfilled, paradoxically, only by embracing the limits inherent in human life, such art helps to portray what, as Pope John Paul II said, the words of Christ for our age contained: “the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world.”

Italy delays its latest package of weapons and financial assistance to Kyiv

Anumber of European countries are reportedly planning to increase their material support for Ukraine, though the exact timeline of the aid and the actual impact it will have on the battlefield are not immediately clear.

French President Emmanuel Macron last week pledged to assist Ukraine with “light tanks.” Germany and the United States followed suit with similar pledges to provide armored fighting vehicles.

Poland is also planning to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine, according to President Andrzej Duda, who was speaking during his visit to Western Ukraine on Wednesday. Duda said that he hoped that this would be a part of a larger international shipment, a sentiment Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky echoed after meeting with his Polish counterpart. Warsaw alone “cannot help us with ‘Leopards,’ because we are fighting against thousands of tanks of the Russian Federation,” he said in a statement. Kyiv continues to ask its Western supporters to send more modern, heavy tanks.

The Council on Foreign Relations ran an article on Wednesday on the potential battlefield implications of the armored vehicles and the importance of the signal these developments send to the Kremlin. As the CFR report puts it, “They could be seen as crossing a red

line, leading to increased saber-rattling and threats of the use of nuclear weapons.”

Meanwhile, Italian media reports that the country’s government will delay a decision on whether to send a sixth arms package to Ukraine until next month due to domestic political tensions, concerns about the cost, and what another aid package could mean for the state of the Italian military, since two of its five missile batteries are already committed to other foreign theaters.

The first five tranches of aid were sent to Kyiv during the tenure of Prime Minister Mario Draghi, who was replaced by Giorgia Meloni in late October. There were originally concerns that the right-wing coalition government that Meloni represents would not maintain her country’s staunch support for Ukraine, but she pledged “strong commitment” to NATO and its efforts aiding Ukraine in November — support she confirmed again in a call with Zelensky in late December. Meloni has downplayed the delay in sending more military aid to Ukraine, but Reuters notes that the Italian daily newspaper la Repubblica, citing unnamed sources, reported earlier this week that Meloni “is facing resistance on the approval of a decree to send arms to Ukraine from her right-wing allies Matteo Salvini

Blaise Malley

and Silvio Berlusconi.” Sources from each man’s respective political party denied the report.

A follow-up report from the same newspaper quoted the Italian foreign minister as maintaining that Italy would provide a missile defense system but was delayed due to technical issues.

In other diplomatic news related to the war in Ukraine:

— House Republicans finally got their house in order last weekend, electing Kevin McCarthy as speaker on the fifteenth round of voting. What does that mean for U.S. policy toward Ukraine? Reports suggest that the deal McCarthy struck with his GOP opponents included a Pentagon budget cut, likely fueled in part by Republican opposition to continued funding of Ukraine. But the subsequent selection of pro-defense committee chairs indicates that no dramatic change will be happening any time soon. Dan Caldwell and Sumantra Maitra argue in Newsweek that House Republicans must fix America’s Ukraine policy. “Republicans in the new House majority have an opportunity to fundamentally change America’s Ukraine policy in a way that prioritizes America,” they write. “Failure to take advantage will only maintain an untenable policy that is not making America

safer and that risks a larger war.”

— Human rights commissioners from Ukraine and Russia are set to meet this week in Turkey to discuss the possibility of further exchanges of prisoners of war.

— Sweden balked at some of the conditions placed by Turkey regarding Sweden’s application to join NATO, but Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson remains confident that Turkey will approve the request. “Turkey both confirms that we have done what we said we would do, but they also say that they want things that we cannot or do not want to give them,” Kristersson told a defense think-tank conference in Sweden, according to Reuters.

— The Orthodox Christmas ceasefire proposed by Vladimir Putin last week did not hold. According to the New York Times, “Moscow claimed it was defending itself against continuing Ukrainian strikes. Ukraine — which had not agreed to the ceasefire — reported continued Russian attacks, though it was unclear if they were before or after the pause was to begin.” Residents in Ukraine also said that sounds of fighting were also heard on Friday, despite Putin’s order. Ukrainian officials continued to dismiss the proposed ceasefire as a cynical ploy. “Everyone in the world knows how the Kremlin

(Continued from Page 6)

The reasons are different: they were not prepared for hostilities, they are slowing down with the supply of weapons, they infringe on freedom of speech, and the like. Some even suggest that the Russian authorities are deliberately helping Zelensky to stay at the head of the country.

By the way, at the end of October 2022, the Ukrainian anti-corruption authorities reported suspicions against 15 persons involved in the Rotterdam Plus formula, according to which Kyiv bought all coal (including mined in the republic) with a European margin. Akhmetov and Poroshenko are considered

the ultimate beneficiaries of the corruption scheme, although they have not yet been formally charged.

Democracy in reverse According to experts, 2023 will be a serious test for Zelensky’s domestic policy. “The processes that are taking place in Ukraine are not typical for a state with a liberal system. In fact, the president’s team is rebuilding the country for themselves. The changes have turned out to be a serious challenge for many businessmen and politicians, and they can resist,” says Denis, an expert at the Financial University under the Government of Russia Denisov.

In 2022, he recalls, many large enterprises were

nationalized. Among them are Ukrnafta and Ukratnafta, owned by oligarch Igor Kolomoisky, Motor Sich by Vyacheslav Boguslaev, previously arrested for allegedly cooperating with Russia, Zaporizhtransformator by Konstantin Grigorishin, and the AvtoKRAZ holding by Konstantin Zhevago. The list of authoritarian practices Denisov also includes the normalization of the practice of imposing sanctions against fellow citizens with the help of the decision of the National Security and Defense Council - that is, bypassing the court, government and parliament.

In addition, Kyiv has canceled public auctions for government purchases in

order to distribute the most attractive contracts to loyal entrepreneurs. In parallel, the Verkhovna Rada received the right to control the content of Ukrainian media and close them out of court. Also, the parliament can now form a “list of persons” who pose a threat to the national media space of Ukraine, information about which cannot be disclosed.

Political scientist Alexander Dudchak believes that Zelensky decided to concentrate power in his hands because he is not sure about the future. “Perhaps he regrets that he got into all this, but he can’t just leave like that. The ideal option for him would be to establish Russian control over the

entire territory of Ukraine. Then he would become president in exile, without obligations, but with honors. And while it remains a human function that curators can get rid of at any moment, and no one will feel the difference,” the expert explains.

Anything can become a reason for “dismissal”, including the revealed facts of embezzlement of money allocated to Ukraine. Zelensky wants to insure himself against unforeseen changes, so he hopes to strengthen his position by subordinating the oligarchs. Whether they will agree to the role of henchmen or offer Western curators an alternative to the incumbent president, time will tell.

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Country importing wheat worth \$2 billion annually: Tariq Cheema

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema on Friday said that now Pakistan is importing wheat worth \$2 billion annually, at one time, Pakistan used to export wheat. Addressing a press conference here, he said that this time "we have to import 2.6 million tons of wheat from Russia, out of which we have received 1.3 million tons."

The minister said that after the decision of the review committee, the government has decided to import 2.6 million tons of wheat this year. He said that the government had stored 1.8 tons of wheat in the Strategic Reserve last year, which will contain 1.5 million this year.

The minister said that there is no shortage of wheat/flour anywhere in the country, "we have wheat in abundance and the provinces have also been asked to tell how much

wheat they want." He said that provinces including Punjab are not releasing wheat; they are getting wheat as per requirement.

Tariq Cheema said that the shortage of wheat in the country and noise about prices is unnecessary and the government is ready to face all kinds of challenges.

He said that after the 18th amendment, agricultural commodities including wheat are the issue of provincial governments.

He said that all the provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are getting quota wheat and there is no shortage of wheat anywhere in the country. The minister said that when provincial governments released wheat from the provinces, the prices of flour in the country decreased.

He said that Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation Ltd (PASSCO) does the procurement of wheat and all the provinces also deal with

it in terms of wheat.

Replying to a question, he said that efforts were being made to reduce the reliance on imported food commodities, and enhance the local output of food commodities, including that of wheat and oil seeds as edible oil imports swelled to \$ 4.5 billion during last year and wheat imports to \$ 2 billion.

He said that a strategy was being devised for stabilizing flour prices to ensure the provision of flour at affordable rates.

"The shortfall is being fulfilled by purchasing the commodity from the open market, due to which we faced price fluctuation", he said adding "the government has also established about 38 sale points to provide wheat flour to the lower income groups."

The government was also inspecting the grinding capacity of flour mills in order to operate them to their optimal capacity to produce sufficient quantities

ties of flour to meet local needs, he added.

The minister further said that out of the total procurements, the government was procuring about 20 to 21 percent of the total wheat produced, whereas the remaining 80 percent was procured by the private sector. He said that it was needed to streamline the price differential to maintain prices.

He said that last year wheat support price was fixed at Rs 2,200 and this year it was proposed to be fixed at Rs 3,000 per 40 kg, adding that the governments of Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa suggested fixing the support price at Rs 3,000 per 40 kg. However, Sindh has fixed the support price at Rs 4,000. In response to a question, he said that only certified soybeans have been released and no genetically modified organisms (GMOs) soybeans have been released.



ISLAMABAD: Tariq Bashir Cheema, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research addressing an important press conference at PID media center.

PSX loses 480 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 480.44 points, a negative change of 1.18 percent, closing at 40,323.45 against 40,803.89 points the previous day.

A total of 173,264,646 shares were traded during the day as compared to 175,412,767 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 4.628 billion against Rs

5.891 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 324 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 81 of them recorded gains and 218 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 25,154,500 shares at Rs 6.62 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 21,409,944 shares at Rs 1.14 per share, and Pak

Petroleum with 12,902,307 shares at Rs 76.11 per share. Thal Ind. Corp witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 16.66 per share price, closing at Rs 238.91, whereas the runner-up was Suraj Cotton with a Rs 10.71 rise in its per share price to Rs 153.90.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 511.03 per share closing at Rs 8,410.00, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs 200.00 decline to close at Rs 5650.00.

Pakistan to start local manufacturing of SIMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan is planning to start local manufacturing of SIMs and smart cards for protecting the country from the threat of cyber-attacks, creating employment opportunities and saving precious foreign exchange.

"Pakistan is planning to start local manufacturing of SIMs and smart cards to shield the country from the threat of cyber-attacks amid a brewing cyber war," said an annual report of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority.

Digital transformation and the creation of an enabling ecosystem are one of the key objectives of the government, and in the era of digital services, SIMs and smart cards assume pivotal importance. The local manufacturing of SIMs will massively benefit the economy as millions of SIMs are currently imported. PTA fully supported the requisite role of performing authorization, compliance, and adoption of SIM card manufacturing, etc., in the telecom sector. The local SIM and smart card manufacturing industry has already become the principal sector in many national economies and is playing an important role in creating sustainable economic growth. The role of the said industry will not be restricted to the domestic engineering perspective or transfer of technology. Analyzed from a business perspective, it will boost the economy by creating employment opportunities, generating tax income, and saving precious Forex. Moreover, it will add another practical dimension for academia vis-a-vis research and development.

Workers' remittances down 11% in H1 FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overseas workers' remittances posted a decline of 11.1 percent during first half (Jul-Dec) of fiscal year 2022-23 as the remittances fell from \$15.8 billion in first half of FY22 to \$14.02 billion in the period under review.

On year-on-year basis, the overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.04 billion in December 2022, posting a decrease of 19 percent as compared with the previous month's inflow of \$2.5 billion.

On month-on-month basis, the remittances in December 2022 also witnessed a decline of 3.2 percent when compared with the inflow of \$2.1 billion recorded in

November 2022. According to a recent data released by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday, remittances' inflows during December, 2022 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$516.3 million), United Arab Emirates (\$328.7 million), United Kingdom (\$314.2 million) and United States of America (\$230.5 million).

During the corresponding month, the overseas Pakistanis living in Bahrain sent \$32.6 million, from Kuwait \$60.4 million, from Qatar \$72.2 million whereas \$73.2 million were dispatched from Oman.

Similarly the inflows from Germany, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Greece, Sweden,

Denmark, Belgium, and Ireland were recorded at \$37.6 million, \$33.9 million, \$3.9 million, \$36.7 million, \$64.8 million, \$28.3 million, \$5.9 million, \$6.1 million, \$7.2 million and \$8.9 million respectively.

Likewise, from Malaysia, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and Japan, the workers dispatched \$7.3 million, \$7.9 million, \$3.6 million, \$46.6 million, \$35.7 million, and \$21.1 million respectively. Remittances from South Africa during the month under review stood at \$17 million while that from South Korea stood at \$7.9 million.

Similarly \$47.7 million were received from other countries.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activities reported at the Port on Thursday, where three ships namely, Athenian, Sti Onyx and MH Langoe carrying Containers, Palm oil and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively. Meanwhile three more ships, Maha Laxmi, Sea Crystal and Seapeak Galicia carrying Palm oil and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hour.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship 'Athenian' left the Port on Friday morning, while 03 more ships, Serenity Gas, MH Langoe and Ladon are expected to sail on today in the afternoon. A Cargo volume of 93,666 tonnes, comprising 74,673 tonnes imports cargo and 18,993 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,461 Containers (865 TEUs Imports and 596 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 20 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 04 ships, RDO Fortune, Seapeak Galicia, FSM and Sanmar Songbird carrying Containers, LNG, LPG and Gas oil are expected to take berths at QICF.

Rupee sheds 01 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs 228.15 against the previous day's closing of Rs 228.14.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in

the open market were recorded at Rs 236.25 and Rs 238.25 respectively.

The price of the euro increased by Rs 1.88 and closed at Rs 247.24 against the previous day's closing of Rs 245.36, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen gained 4 paisa to close at Rs 1.77, whereas an

increase of Rs 1.18 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound, which was traded at Rs 278.32 as compared to its last closing of Rs 277.14.

The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal remained unchanged to close at Rs 62.11 and Rs 60.74 respectively.

Motorbike, three-wheeler sales decline by 33% during 1st half

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers witnessed a decrease of 33.09 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

During the period under review, as many as 627,835 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold in July-December (2022-23) against the sale of 938,355 units in July-December (2021-22), showing a decline of 33.09 per cent, according

to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

The sale of Honda motorcycles went down 22.96 per cent from 678,655 units in last year to 522,770 units during the current year.

However, the sale of Suzuki motorcycles witnessed an increase of 15.15 per cent from 18,030 units to 20,762 units.

Similarly, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes decreased from 12,193

units to 6,823 decreasing by 44.04 per cent while the sale of Ravi motorbikes witnessed a sharp decline of 75.48 per cent from 1,966 units to 482 units during the period under review. The sales of United Auto motorcycles decreased to 50,384 units from 150,267 units while the sales of Road Prince motorcycles also decreased by 70.17 per cent from 58,119 units to 17,336 units.

Meanwhile, the sale of Road Prince three-wheelers witnessed a decrease

of 75.99 per cent from 4,616 units last year to 1,108 units in the same month's current year, whereas the sale of Sazgar three-wheeler also decreased to 3,868 units from 5,567 units.

The sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also showed a decrease of 51.56 per cent, by going down from 7,187 units to 3,481 units whereas the sale of United three-wheelers decreased to 770 units from the sale of 1,624 units, the data revealed.



LAHORE: Vendors are cleaning and cutting fishes at their workplace.

Most markets rise as US inflation boosts Fed slowdown hopes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly rose again on Friday and the dollar remained under pressure after data showing another slowdown in US inflation fuelled bets the Federal Reserve will take a softer approach to its monetary tightening campaign.

The reading added to the positive energy flowing through trading floors at the start of the year as investors put a painful 2022 behind them and focus on a recovery in the global economy, helped greatly by China's reopening.

All three main indexes on Wall Street extended

gains after the much-anticipated consumer price index (CPI) came in at its lowest level since October 2021 as months of Fed interest rate hikes begin to kick in.

The report also showed the first month-on-month dip in the CPI for about two years.

The news boosted bets on the central bank lifting rates by just 25 basis points next month, easing worries about a possible recession in the world's top economy.

Policymakers have been hiking borrowing costs since March, including four bumper 75-point increases, as they struggled to get a

grip on inflation as it hit four-decade highs.

Most Asian markets tracked the New York rally. Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Mumbai, Singapore, Jakarta, Taipei, Wellington and Manila were all in the green.

Hong Kong extended its winning streak despite a report saying the Chinese government was considering taking "golden shares" in giants Alibaba and Tencent, giving it a tighter grip on the tech sector.

Traders shook off data showing a bigger-than-expected drop in Chinese imports and exports last

month.

Tokyo dropped more than one percent as an increasingly stronger yen took its toll on exporters, while Bangkok also dipped.

London opened on the front foot as data showed the UK economy unexpectedly grew in November. Paris also rose while Frankfurt was flat.

The dollar was unable to bounce back from hefty losses suffered in the wake of the inflation figures, with the Japanese unit at its strongest level since June, while the euro is at an eight-month high.

However, while there are hopes that inflation has peaked, the head of the International Monetary Fund warned that the full impact of monetary tightening had yet to be felt and central banks still had more work to do.

Kristalina Georgieva said while sectors such as housing were beginning to hurt in the United States, the jobs market remained strong with low unemployment.

"As long as people are employed, even if prices are high, consumers spend... But we all know that the impact of tighten-

ing financial conditions is yet to bite, in terms of unemployment," she said in a briefing on the world economy.

"Inflation remains stubborn, and in that sense, the job of central banks is not yet done," she said.

And analysts warned there were still plenty of bumps in the road ahead, with concern now turning to the effect of higher rates on corporate earnings.

"The Fed will go down this path of tightening, no pivots of any kind. Maybe a pause at best," Adam Coons at Winthrop Capital told

Bloomberg Television.

"It could mean a lot of pressure for equity markets" when an earnings recession is also likely in the first half of the year.

Oil prices dipped but were well on course for a weekly gain thanks to rising demand expectations as China emerges from zero-Covid and the US inflation figures soothed concerns about interest rate rises.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 1.3 percent at 26,119.52 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: UP 1.0 percent at 21,738.66 (close)

Shanghai - Composite:

UP 1.0 percent at 3,195.31 (close)

London - FTSE 100: UP 0.2 percent at 7,811.23

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 128.51 yen from 129.27 yen on Thursday

Euro/dollar: DOWN at \$1.0843 from \$1.0854

Pound/dollar: DOWN at \$1.2205 from \$1.2214

Euro/pound: UP at 88.84 pence from 88.84 pence

West Texas Intermediate: UP 0.3 percent at \$78.59 a barrel

Brent North Sea crude: UP 0.1 percent at \$84.11 a barrel

New York - Dow: UP 0.6 percent at 34,189.97 (close)



In brief

HEC Women Basketball

LAHORE (APP): The final of All Pakistan HEC Women Basketball Championship will be played here on Saturday, Jan 14, under the auspices of Kinnaird College University, at the college courts. Lahore College for Women University will take on the Punjab University in the final, said Ammara Rubab, head of sports and Physical education, KCU, on Friday. She said Kinnaird College would play the University of Lahore in a classification match for the third place. "The best arrangements have been made for smooth conduct of the event, and we look forward to thrilling final," she added. Secretary Pakistan Olympic Association Muhammad Khalid Mahmood would be the chief guest on the occasion and will distribute prizes among the winning teams.

Sania's another post

LAHORE (Web Desk): Indian tennis star and wife of Shoaib Malik, Sania Mirza, has updated a jaw-dropping selfie on Instagram once again and with another meaningful caption. The star shared her picture with her location tagged in Australia, leaving fans reeling. In the picture, Sania can be seen reclining casually on a grey couch in a simple white T-shirt. Her silver-framed sunglasses are tucked in the collar of her shirt. True to her rather minimalist style, the tennis star has paired her outfit with only a gold necklace and a no-makeup look. In the picture, she has also donned a cap that she wore in her post from New Year's Eve. The cap, from John Hatters & Co., has the phrase "you can't handle the truth" written across it in bold. In the background, one can see a lovely sunny afternoon view, with greenery and trees, against which Sania looks stunning as she gazes straight into the camera. Her caption for the post is yet again in line with her habit of short and often reflective descriptions and reads "Layers. We all have them. Grateful." Her previous posts from this year were very much in the same vein with simple clicks and to-the-point captions. This post comes days after Sania's cryptic stories regarding setting boundaries, which had fans talking.

Axelsen sails into badminton semis

LONDON (Agencies): World number one Viktor Axelsen cruised into the Malaysia Open badminton semi-finals on Friday, easily crushing Japan's Kenta Nishimoto 21-6, 21-12. The Danish defending champion attributed his quick 38-minute win to an extra rest day, which he gained when his opponent in the previous round pulled out injured. "I have had two days' rest. Physically I felt fresh, and Kenta played an extra match at a high pace. So maybe physically he was a little tired," Axelsen told reporters after the match. Nishimoto did not do himself any favours by starting with a flurry of errors. When he regained some momentum, Axelsen had already raced to a seven-point lead in the first game. Top-seeded Axelsen left his opponent little margin for error as he dominated with precise smashes that left Nishimoto largely defenceless. Nishimoto improved in the second game where he tried to engage Axelsen in sustained rallies, but the Dane was superior in both attack and defence to seal a comfortable victory.

Wasim Akram could make ball talk, says Tendulkar

NEW DELHI (INP): Legendary Indian batter Sachin Tendulkar has stated that Pakistan's 'Sultan of Swing' Wasim Akram could make the ball talk. The Indian cricket great said in his publication that cricket was a team game but truly it's a war between bat and ball. Wasim Akram used to be the biggest challenge for the opposite team's batters, he said.

"Batters learn and polish

their skills while facing a bowler of such calibre and this experience always stays with you," he said. He said Akram was a master and could make the ball talk. "His run-up was natural unlike other bowlers. He was never bound to count his steps," Tendulkar added.

"Wasim Akram used to do effective bowling with any start; when I faced him for the first time, it was a completely new and unique

experience. I remember every match played against him," he said.

In his Test career, Akram took 414 wickets in 104 matches, a Pakistani record, at an average of 23.62 and scored 2,898 runs, at an average of 22.64. In One-Day Internationals (ODIs), Akram took 502 wickets in 356 appearances, at an average of 23.52 and scored 3,717 runs, at an average of 16.52.



MELBOURNE: Nick Kyrgios, left, and Novak Djokovic embrace following an exhibition match on Rod Laver Arena ahead of the Australian Open tennis c'ship.

Novak Djokovic receives warm welcome in Melbourne return

MELBOURNE (AP): Novak Djokovic received a warm and enthusiastic welcome in his return to Melbourne during an exhibition match against Nick Kyrgios on Friday.

Djokovic was deported ahead of last year's Australian Open because of a visa issue relating to his refusal to say whether he had been vaccinated for COVID-19. But the nine-time Australian Open champion was allowed to return for this year's tournament beginning Monday because vaccination requirements have been dropped by the Australian government.

After enjoying what he said was a "fantastic" response from fans in Adelaide during a tournament last week, Djokovic admitted he was unsure how he would be received in Melbourne a year after

he was deported.

But an emotional Djokovic walked into a sold-out Rod Laver Arena to loud cheers from the crowd of 15,000.

"It just feels great to be back in Australia, back in Melbourne," Djokovic said. "This is the court and the stadium where I created the best memories of my professional tennis career."

"Back in 2008 was the first time I won a Grand Slam, it was here, and 15 years later I'm here again and I'm competing at the high level. I must be very grateful for this opportunity to be here so thank you guys for welcoming me in a good way tonight."

Djokovic showed no signs of the hamstring issue that has troubled him this month and repeatedly played up to the crowd during the lighthearted exhibition

for charity.

Kyrgios pulled out of the recent United Cup and Adelaide International tournaments with knee and ankle complaints and has not played a serious match since late last year. But Australia's top-ranked player moved well against Djokovic, who beat him in the Wimbledon final last year. The two could meet in the quarterfinals at Melbourne Park.

Kyrgios takes on Roman Safiullin in the first round while Djokovic opens his bid for a 10th Australian Open title against Roberto Carballes Baena. During the exhibition match, Djokovic and Kyrgios delivered trick shots, fake outbursts and mid-match TV interviews. They took a set each under Fast4 conditions before teaming up with wheelchair players and juniors for a third-set tiebreak.

Hockey World Cup England defeat Wales 5-0 in opening group game

NEW DELHI (Agencies): England got their World Cup campaign off to a winning start with a comfortable 5-0 win over debutants Wales in India.

Liam Ansell scored two penalty corners and there were also goals for Nice Park, Phil Roper and Nick Bandurak. The full-time, experienced English side showed its strength against the part-time opposition.

Wales are playing in a men's World Cup for the first time in their 128-year history. At one point Wales were down to nine men as they struggled to make an impact until a more spirited final quarter performance.

Wales have not beaten England since the 1970s and a famous win in Rourkela's new 20,000-

seater hockey stadium already looked a tall order when Park put England ahead after just 35 seconds.

The first half was one of few clear chances, but English pressure grew steadily and a string of penalty corners just before the break proved too much for Wales as Liam Ansell eventually converted one to double England's lead.

The third quarter was England's strongest and the game was effectively wrapped up with brilliant strikes by Ansell and Roper. Ansell delightfully lifted the ball over Great Britain team-mate Rupert Shipperley's stick from a penalty corner before firing past Toby Reynolds-Cotterill. Roper then produced the goal of the game

with an unstoppable reverse stick effort from the very edge of the circle, judged to be just inside by the video umpire. The only blot on England's copybook was Zach Wallace's penalty stroke miss. But Nick Bandurak sealed the win with a late fifth.

Wales produced their best hockey - and best chances - in the final quarter. But England kept their penalty corners out and Jack Pritchard narrowly failed to connect with Ben Francis' flick towards the back post.

This was a comfortable win for England, who next take on hosts India in Pool D on Sunday. Wales' showing in the final quarter will give them some confidence before another tough match against Spain on the same day.



Crystal Palace boss Vieira issues Chelsea warning

LONDON (Agencies): Crystal Palace manager Patrick Vieira has urged his side to focus on their own game rather than read too much into Chelsea's problems ahead of Sunday's clash at Stamford Bridge.

The Blues were beaten 2-1 by Fulham on Thursday in another all-London clash and now lead Palace by just three points in the Premier League table, having played one game more than the Eagles.

Chelsea are 10th, an unusually low position in recent seasons, with a dismal run of just one win from their past eight games in all competitions piling the pressure on manager Graham Potter.

Palace have problems of their own following successive defeats, their latest loss coming in the FA Cup at the hands of top-flight rivals Southampton.

"The mood has been challenging, of course, because of the results that we have had, but I have seen a group who have been working well this week and waiting for the game to perform the best that we can," Vieira said on Friday.

"We are looking at the squad that they (Chelsea) have and we are looking at the quality of the players that they have, we are looking at the quality of the manager that they have."



The former Arsenal and France star added: "At the moment, yes, they (Chelsea) may be in a difficult period, because things are going against them, but that doesn't take away the quality that they have."

"We, again, have to perform well, and not think at all about the run of games they are having at the moment."

"We want to focus on ourselves. We want to improve regarding the last games that we played. We want to be more competitive, and more consistent in our performances, to allow ourselves to win games."



KARACHI: Fakhar Zaman celebrates his 8th ODI hundred.

Australia defend scrapping Afghanistan cricket series



SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia on Friday defended their hotly contested decision to pull out of a cricket series against Afghanistan following a Taliban crackdown on women's "basic human rights".

"Basic human rights is not politics," Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said in a statement sent to AFP after Afghanistan's cricket board lashed the cancellation as "pathetic".

The Australian men's team had been due to face their Afghan counterparts for three one-day internationals in the United Arab Emirates in March, following a tour of India.

"It is clearly a very challenging and sad situation. We did not take this decision lightly," Hockley said.

Cricket Australia had been hopeful of playing Afghanistan and was in regular contact with the Afghanistan Cricket Board, he added.

"However announcements by the Taliban in late November and late December signalling the deterioration of basic human rights for women in Afghanistan led to our decision to withdraw from these games," he said.

Hockley said the Australian cricket authority consulted with the Australian government and others before scrapping the games.

He also responded to Afghanistan's best-known international cricketer and leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who had criticised the cancellation and warned he would be "strongly considering" his future in Australia's Big Bash League.

"We acknowledge and applaud Rashid Khan's and other Afghanistan cricketers' comments at the time condemning the Taliban's decision to ban women from universities. Rashid will always be welcome in the BBL," Hockley said.

Australia was committed to growing the game for women and men, the cricket chief said, adding that he hoped better conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan would allow cricket between the countries to resume "in the not too distant future".

Messi, Mbappe and Neymar set to join forces for first time since World Cup

PARIS (AFP/APP): Paris Saint-Germain's trip to Rennes on Sunday is set to be the first time their superstar front three of Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar have all played together since the World Cup.

Mbappe returned to training on Thursday having been given 10 days off after coming back from Qatar and playing in PSG's first two games following the tournament.

He jetted off to New York for a break and was nowhere to be seen as Messi made his comeback, and scored, in a 2-0 victory for the Ligue 1 leaders against Angers on Wednesday.

The World Cup was a clear motivating factor in the trio's outstanding form during the early months of the campaign, and how they play together will be crucial in determining how the remainder of the season goes for PSG.

They are six points clear of Lens before completing the first half of the season in Rennes, but the Champions League is their main objective. After failing to come top of their group, Christophe Galtier's side were drawn to play Bayern Munich in the last 16, with the first leg at home set for February 14.

Galtier described the 35-year-old Messi as "relaxed and in great shape physically" after his first match since captaining Argentina in an epic World Cup final last month. The question now is how much motivation the former Barcelona



star has after that career-defining triumph.

PSG are keen to extend his contract in a third season and Messi's biggest goal now will be to win the Champions League for the first time since 2015.

Fuelled by losing the World Cup final despite scoring a hat-trick, 2018 world champion Mbappe will be desperate to get his hands on the Champions League trophy for the first time.

Neymar, meanwhile, appears a little like the odd man out — he left the World Cup in tears as Brazil lost on penalties in the quarter-finals, aware his chance of winning that trophy may have gone forever.

He was then sent off in PSG's first game post-Qatar against Strasbourg, completing a miserable end to 2022. But for PSG it is not just about those three.

They look light in defence, where they appear overly reliant on an ageing Sergio Ramos, and short of muscle in midfield, an area

where a fragile Marco Verratti is their key player.

Galtier insists they still need time to get back up to speed. "We are all just getting used to playing together again and you could see at times that we lacked some of the connections between the players that we had more often before the World Cup," he said after the midweek game.

Player to watch: Ross Barkley

If the England midfielder was hoping to relaunch his career in France, the move was not working out for the 29-year-old former Everton prodigy as he struggled to make a serious impact in the first three months of the season. Things have improved for him at the start of 2023, however. Barkley scored a brilliant goal against Rennes on January 2 in a 2-1 defeat, and then came off the bench to score twice in Wednesday's 6-1 thrashing of Montpellier.

The latter game was also the first for Nice since coach Lucien Favre was sacked

Zaman's 101 propels Pakistan to 280-9 in third ODI against New Zealand

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Opener Fakhar Zaman cracked a brilliant hundred to lift Pakistan to 280-9 in the third and series-deciding day-night international against New Zealand in Karachi on Friday.

The left-hander scored a 122-ball 101 with 10 boundaries and a six after Pakistan won the toss and opted to bat at the National Stadium. Zaman lifted Pakistan from 21-2 during a third-wicket stand of 154 off 161 balls with Mohammad Rizwan, who made a polished 74-ball 77 with six boundaries.

Pakistan, seeking a series win after the teams shared the first two matches, were badly hit at the start when they lost Shan Masood without scoring and skipper Babar Azam for a rare failure on four.

Azam, who had two half-centuries in the first two matches, was stunned by Tom Latham off spinner Michael Bracewell in the seventh over. It was left to Zaman to build the innings and he took a sharp single to reach his eighth hundred, his first three-figure ODI score in Pakistan.

Leg-spinner Ish Sodhi broke the stand by bowling Rizwan, while Zaman was run out as he tried to steal a sharp single. Agha Salman hit out in the final overs, scoring a 43-ball 45 with a six and four boundaries.

Haris Sohail made 22 as Pakistan scored 49 in the last five overs, losing four wickets. New Zealand pacer Tim Southee finished with 3-56.



In brief

IRSA releases 24,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 24,700 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 1496.78 feet and was 98.78 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 18,300 cusecs while outflow was 8,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1121.15 feet, which was 71.15 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 17,400, 13,600, 4,000 and 4,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5,500 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued a power suspension programme for Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Shakarprian, Amir, Satara Market, Comst University, Koral, E-8 Navy, G-9/4, Chisnapp, Old Exchange, Golra-II, Capital Residency, NIH, AQ Khan, Pindi Point, Barin, Patriarti, Upper Topa, Mengyal Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, E-Block, Ghousia Colony, Sixth Road, National Market, Curry Road, Fazahia, Muslim Town, T a m a s a m a b a d , Liaquat, Bagh, Gulshanabad, Jami Masjid, Gwalmandi, Industrial, Sir Syed Street, Rajahabad, Westridge, Eidgah, Azizabad, Peshawar Road, Kamalabad, Jhangi, P&T Wini, EME Complex, Quaid-e-Azam, Sehamb, Shams Colony, Azharabad, CWO, Golla, Charing Cross, I-16/1, Ratta Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bank Road, II, Sir Syed Road, Jail Park, Doctor Town, Sarwar Shaheed, Scheme III, Lalkarti, Chonra, Rajar, Garja, I, Cantt, Chowk Pandori, Nad, Kaler City, Kamili Sadiq, Dubiran, Fazal Ahmed, New Chawah, Panjar, Mandra, II, Kalayam, Bengali, Raman, CB Khan, Defense Road, Askari 14, Humayun, Park View, Pindi Borar, FF Hospital, Morgah, Reliance Weaving Mill, Jarrar Camp, Jhata Hatial Feeders, Attock Circle, Taxila, Margalla, Mushtaq Hussain, Nisar Shaheed, Museum, Pandparan, Sangjani, Small Industrial State, Lal Zar, Khanabad, Lal Rukh, Brahma, Nad Topa, Visa, Air University, Qazi Abad, Tin Mela, Shah Dir, Malhwali, Chhaji Mar, Sajjad Shaheed, Fateh Jang City II, Dhaknir, Mahfouz Shaheed, Ahmedal, Gul Muhammad, Kanda Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Baharpur, Mulat Chowk, Jamalwal, Khairpur, Main Bazaar, Dera Muslim, Dhadiat City, Latifal, Durgi Rajgaon, Bhikri, Dandut, Jalap River, Lala Town, KS Maniz, Jalapur, Kursal, Kot Gullah, Kot Shera, Dharabi, Jatla, Pera Fatial, Tau Muharram Khan, Multan Khard, Taman Feeders.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Mr. Nong Rong called on Speaker National Assembly raja Pervaiz Ashraf at Parliament House in Federal Capital.

Chinese envoy makes farewell call on Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Friday highly commended the outgoing Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong for his significant contributions to strengthening Pakistan-China bilateral and parliamentary relations during a farewell courtesy call by him at the Parliament House.

The speaker said Pakistan highly valued the ironclad friendship with the People's Republic of China. The all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two states had gone from strength to strength due to the consistent, dedicated, and sincere efforts from both sides and the role of

the emissary in these efforts was very significant, he added. He also appreciated the Chinese envoy for his arduous work in promoting parliamentary cooperation between the two states as such interactions would help in learning from parliamentary experiences of each other and create mutual opportunities under the strategic partnership, particularly through China Pakistan Economic Corridor to work for the benefit of people on both sides of the border.

The ambassador expressed gratitude to the speaker for his kind remarks and said Pakistan was his second home as he had a very fruitful experience and fond memories

during his two-year stay in Pakistan. He said the Pakistan-China relationship had a very bright future and he would wish to see further growth in them emphasizing that China would continue to support Pakistan in pursuit of its national development and objectives.

The two sides also discussed the prevailing international and regional situation, expansion of bilateral cooperation, particularly with respect to trade and commerce; and regular people-to-people exchange between Pakistan and China. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere and at the end, the speaker wished the ambassador success and good luck in his future endeavors.

Police expedite action against traffic rules violators

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police has expedited stern legal action against the traffic rules violators and issued 1987 fine tickets to road users during the last 24 hours, a police public relations officer said.

Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad capital police expedited stern action against traffic rules violators to implement the traffic rules and maintain the smooth flow of traffic in federal city.

Various police teams issued 960 fine tickets to

road users over violation of traffic rules in which 113 challan were issued over lane violations, 43 for red signal violations, 66 for using mobile phone during driving, 13 for amateur driving, 03 over violation of one-way, 58 driving on the wrong side of the road, 08 for violation of zebra crossing, 101 for not fastening seat belts, 89 for having tinted glasses, 08 for emitting smoke, 188 for having fancy number plates, 256 bikers for riding without helmets and 299 motorists for violations of different traffic rules.

Strict action would be taken against traffic rules

violators. Islamabad capital police personnel have been directed to ensure implementation of traffic rules irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users.

Islamabad capital police is utilizing all available resources to facilitate the general public. He also appealed to the citizens to follow the traffic rules. The personnel of the force issue traffic violation tickets not as a punitive measure but the purpose is to ensure a safe road environment in the capital and secure lives of people, he maintained.

Federal Ombudsman Office has enhanced its capacity to address over 160,000 cases

F.P. Report

KARACHI: 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 jus-

tice 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 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, Sadda 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.

‘Mainly cold, dry weather likely in most parts country’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Friday forecast mainly cold and dry weather for most parts of the country.

However, very cold weather is likely in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, North Balochistan and Potohar region during next 24 hours. Dense foggy conditions are likely over plain

areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Upper Sindh. Frost is also expected at isolated places in Potohar region and Kashmir during the period.

According to the synoptic situation, a shallow westerly wave was still affecting Kashmir and adjoining areas.

During the last 24 hours, rain occurred in Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, upper/central

Punjab and Gilgit Baltistan. Snowfall was also recorded in Malam Jabba, Kalam, Gupis, Murree, Chitral, Drosh, Astore, Bagrote and Dir. While, dry weather prevailed in other parts of the country. Foggy conditions prevailed over plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh. The rainfall recorded was Kashmir: Rawalakot 23mm, Muzaffarabad (Airport 14, City)10, Garhi Dupatta 14, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

BISP's disbursements being made transparently

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Senate was informed today that a mechanism is in place to ensure disbursement of amounts to the beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Program in a transparent manner. The session held at parliament house in Islamabad on Friday with Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani in the chair.

Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan told the house during question hour that monitoring of payments at all levels is ensured to cater to the issues of illegal deductions.

He said spot checks and surprise visits at disbursement points are made by Benazir Income Support Program Head Office and regional teams.

The Minister of State for Law said the government has allocated a total budget of 364 billion rupees to Benazir Income

Support Program for the current financial year. Responding to a supplementary question, the Minister of State for Law said an expenditure of 434.43 million rupees was incurred on the use of a helicopter by the former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan laid before the house a motion expressing deep gratitude to the President for his address to both the houses of parliament on 6th October 2022.

The house will later hold discussion on the motion.

At the outset, the house offered fataha for the security personnel martyred in recent acts of terrorism.

The house will now meet on Monday at three pm.

PBM making all out efforts for social protection of marginalized segments of society: Shahadat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on Friday said Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) was making all out efforts for the social protection of marginalized segments of the society by utilizing all available resources.

Responding to a question raised by Senator Fawzia Arshad, the minister said Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) were making poor widows and orphan girls self-reliant, improving their living standards and providing them financial security. He said the WECs were inculcating traditional and non-traditional skills based on the market needs/demands through various training programs. The PBM had established 163 WECs so far throughout the country in a phased manner, he added.

Shahadat said the PBM initiative Schools For Rehabilitation of Child Labor (SRCLs) had been established to pull out the children from labor and to educate them, in line with the United Nations and other International Labor Organizations Conventions. 159 SRCLs were functional all over the country so far, he added.

He said the children involved in child labor were enrolled in these schools and free educa-

tion was being imparted up to the primary level. They were provided free of charge books, stationery, uniform/shoes, and Rs10 daily stipend/parents subsistence allowance of Rs 300 per month, he maintained. Shahadat informed that at present, 17,589 children were enrolled in these schools and 47,441 students had been passed out since the inception of this project. He said a person who has a monthly income of up to Rs 30,000 would be treated as poor and eligible for receiving financial assistance under Individual Financial Assistance Medical. The PBM also provided financial assistance to the individual destitute for the provision of Hearing Aids, Artificial Limbs, Education, General, Sewing machines, and Wheel Chairs, he added.

He said it had established 51 orphanages titled as 'Sweet Home' throughout the country since 2009. The objectives of its establishment were to develop a modern approach towards the welfare of orphans, to provide modern education, and impetus to participate in the mainstream of life with pride and dignity.

Special individual attention was given on the physical, mental, and psychological condition of each child, and a clean and hygienic environment

was provided to these sweet angels, he said adding the children were admitted to the renowned and well-reputed schools of the city for formal education from Class-1 to Class-10.

He said each center accommodated 100 orphan children and the age limit for enrolment was 4 to 6 years. The state minister said a 'Old Home' was established in Lahore in 2014 and serving senior citizens of Pakistan. At present, 29 residents were provided with well-furnished accommodation, food, clothing, and medical facilities in this center, he added. He said the main goal of this program was to provide care, love, hope, and security in the 3rd phase of life to the uncared senior citizens.

He said the PBM had established a state-of-the-art Pakistan Thalassemia Centre (PTC) here at F-9 Park, Islamabad. In this center, needy and deserving thalassemia patients were being provided free-of-charge blood transfusion services and medicines.

Shahadat said the federal government initiated the Panna Gah and "Roti Sab Kay Liye" program in the year 2020 to ameliorate the sufferings of the poor masses. During this period, 8,142,167 people benefited from the project, he maintained.

PTA blocks 6,418 URLs on spreading fake news; Senate told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque on Friday said that Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has blocked 6,418 Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) involved in spreading fake news.

In a written reply to the question of Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, he said the URLs had been blocked following the complaints lodged by stakeholders including organizations, general public and proactive search pertaining to spreading of fake news on Social Media.

He said PTA immediately received complaints, however, Social Media platforms usually do not entertain requests of regulators with reference to removal of defamatory content and encourage the users to directly report such issues.

Besides, they, prefer direct communication with the complainants in order to seek relevant clarification (if any) for the pur-

pose of effective resolution of the matter.

Moreover, Social Media platforms including Facebook and Twitter have been directed to put in place proper strict mechanism so that the users are not able to easily create accounts until certain verifications/requirements are fulfilled by the account creator.

In the same context, Social Media platforms offer verification of accounts owned and operated by public figures, so as prevent misuse of their credential by miscreants. Sharing details of blocked sites, he said 104 fake links of daily-motion were blocked from out of 107; 2,105 links of Facebook from out of 3,214; 113 links of Instagram from out of 140; 1,401 links of others from out of 2,663 links of which the complaints were received; 46 links of Tik Tok were blocked from out of 50; 2,227 links of Twitter from out of 8,413; 422 links of YouTube from out of 857 were blocked.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a Senate house business advisory committee meeting at Parliament House in Federal Capital.

6 criminal arrested by Police

TAKHAR (BNA) The security forces arrested 6 criminals in Takhar province, local security officials said. The Takhar police spokesman, Mubeen Safi, told BNA that these people were arrested in Darqad district and the capital of the city. Tje security forces arrested one person in charge of drug trafficking in the capital of the city, adding several others rarrsted in case of criminal offenses in the Darqad district of the province, Safi said.

33kg Opium discovered

NIMRUZ (BNA) Local Nimroz security personnel discovered 33kg of opium in the Kang district of Nimruz province. The provincial 3th brigade commander Mullah Mohammad Nabi Mullawror told BNA that the thier officers discovered and seized 33kg opium in kang district of the province. According to the source, one person arrested on charged with the discovered drugs. The detainee will be introduce to justices bodies after police investigation, source added.

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

Working to lift temporary ban on girls education: Mujahid to OIC



KABUL (Pajhwok): Responding to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)’s call to reverse bans on girls’ education and work, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid has said the acting government has taken a temporary step and is working to create condition to resolve the issue. “The concern of this organization regarding women’s education is understandable,” Mujahid tweeted late Thursday night after the 57-member bloc based in Saudi Arabia

convened an “extraordinary meeting” of its executive committee on Wednesday to discuss the Taliban curbs on women. Mujahid said work was underway to resolve “this temporary step.” A post-meeting OIC declaration described the bans as violations of Islamic law and “the methodology” of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), urging the Taliban to reconsider decisions banning women from education and work. The OIC “expresses its disap-

pointment over the suspension of female education in Afghanistan and the decision ordering all national and international nongovernmental organizations [NGOs] to suspend female employees until further notice,” the statement said.

Zabihullah Mujahid in his response said that his government welcomes the OIC meeting and its declaration. But in a statement issued to media, Mujahid urged the international community “not to interfere in internal affairs” of Afghanistan.

The OIC said on Wednesday it also had decided to send its special envoy for Afghanistan to Kabul to deliver the organization’s message to the Taliban leadership directly.

After returning to power in August 2021, the acting government banned teenage girls from secondary schools in March and recently ordered an indefinite ban on female higher education and forbade women from working for local and foreign NGOs.

The NGO has forced major international humanitarian groups to suspend their operations in Afghanistan, saying they cannot work without female staff.

UN agencies seek urgent action to protect children in 15 countries



KABUL (ToloNews): Five UN agencies called for urgent action to protect the most vulnerable children in the 15 countries hardest hit by an unprecedented food and nutrition crisis. A statement released by the World Health Organization (WHO) says that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are calling for accelerated progress on the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting. “Conflict, climate shocks, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and rising costs of living are leaving increasing numbers of children acutely malnourished while key health, nutrition and other life-saving services are becoming less accessible,” the statement reads. “Currently, more

than 30 million children in the 15 worst-affected countries suffer from wasting – or acute malnutrition – and 8 million of these children are severely wasted, the deadliest form of undernutrition.” “The Call to Action is released by the UN organization to ask for greater attention and greater investment to address the dramatic crisis of malnutrition, which we are seeing as a result of a combination of climate shocks, conflicts, economic downturns and COVID-19, which have increased the number of malnourished children,” said Francesco Branca, Director, OOWHO Department of Nutrition and Food Safety. According to the statement, the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting aims to prevent, detect and treat acute malnutrition among children in the worst-affected countries, which are Afghanistan, Burkina

Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen. Families of a number of children who face malnutrition said that they are faced with economic problems. Asadullah, the father of a child who faces malnutrition, said he has been unable to provide sufficient food for his children due to economic problems. “There is no good food. I am jobless. I earn 50 to 60 Afs per day,” said Asadullah. “There is no food and other materials. The challenges are very and the weather is also cold. There is nothing to give to the children,” said a relative of a child. According to the Ministry of Public Health, nearly 3 million children in Afghanistan were affected by malnutrition in 2022.

Former Afghan Minister’s house caught fire in Panjshir



PANJSHIR (Monitoring Desk): Local officials in Panjshir province reported that former Minister of Justice of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Fazal Ahmad Manavi’s house in the Rukha district of this province had caught fire earlier today. Mawlana Nasrullah Malikzada, head of the information and culture department of Panjshir province, told Khaama Press News Agency that a fire broke out at Fazl Ahmad Manavi’s house in “Piyawashi” vil-

lage in Rukha district of this province in the early hours of Friday. Malikzada stated that the fire was caused by an electric issue on the fifth floor of that house. He added that the fire had been contained after the firefighter team arrived on the scene. No casualties were reported, however, major financial damages were caused to the building. local sources in Panjshir say that a huge library accommodated some 5,000 books of different disciplines in the building was completely burnt

to ashes. Sources also added that Fazal Ahmad Manavi, the owner of this building held a reading and cultural programs at this library from time to time. Fazal Ahmad Manavi, the exiled former Afghan Minister and politician originally from Panjshir province immediately reacted to the incident and described it as “intentional” and a very cowardly move referencing the enemies of Afghanistan. “The enemy of humanity has burnt my library in Panjshir which accommodated thousands of books from different disciplines including, Islam, religion, history, academia, and literature –dating back centuries. Afghanistan is our shared homeland, and unfortunately, our intellectual and material gains are gradually burning in fire,” Manavi said on Twitter. The incident was accompanied by widespread condemnations in Afghanistan and beyond, calling the ac extremely cowardly and in contradiction with Islamic principles. However, the Islamic Emirate authorities have not yet commented in this regard.

UNSC to discuss Afghanistan’s situation in closed-door meeting



KABUL (ToloNews): The UN Security Council is holding a closed-door meeting on Friday about Afghanistan’s situation including the recent bans imposed by the caretaker government on women’s access to work and education. Chargé d’Affaires of the Afghanistan Permanent Mission to the UN, Naseer Ahmad Faiq, said that the meeting is due to be held on 13 January New York time. “The UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, Catherine Russell, UNICEF’s executive director, David Miliband, head of the International Rescue Committee will give speeches. The meeting will

provide an opportunity to discuss the negotiations and evaluation of the Taliban’s decision on humanitarian aid in Afghanistan,” Faiq said. The Islamic Emirate reacted to the meeting, saying that without the presence of its representative, the meeting will not bring any result. “We call on international organizations to respect the rules and values of the people of Afghanistan. All areas that they are concerned about are negotiable and they may come and talk with the Islamic Emirate closely so that they are convinced. Without the presence of the Islamic Emirate representing the people of Afghanistan, these deci-

sions will not be helpful,” said Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that “systemic attacks on women’s and girls’ rights and the flouting of international obligations are creating gender-based apartheid.” “This deliberately undermines the development of a country that desperately needs the contributions of all in order to return to sustainable peace,” he said. Amnesty International in a statement said that the UN Security Council (UNSC) closed-door meeting on Afghanistan “must focus on how to reverse the stifling ban by the Taliban

on women and girls from accessing work, education, sports and public spaces.” “The Security Council that assess the issue of the Afghan women’s rights should also consider the issue of Afghanistan. It can be done when major powers reach an agreement,” said Suraya Paikan, a human rights defender. “Women have never been banned from education or politics and whatever is ordered for men, women are also beside it,” said Sayed Abdullah Ihsani, a member of the Assembly of Scholars. This comes as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation also held an extraordinary meeting on Afghanistan this week.

MoI Says Drug Trafficking Significantly Reduced

KABUL (ToloNews): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that drug trafficking from Afghanistan to abroad has significantly dropped. But Hasibullah Ahmadi, the head of the counter-narcotics department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that there is drug trafficking in some provinces. He said that at least 4,500 people have been detained on charges of drug trafficking since the Islamic Emirate swept into power. “After the Islamic

Emirate swept into power, there has been significant attention in this regard,” he said. “Drug trafficking has dropped compared to the past. As I shared the figures, there were 3,536 crackdowns in this regard,” he added. This comes as Indian officials said that 16 people including two Afghan nationals have been detained on charges of drug trafficking in the country. “During the investigation, we have heroin processing labs in Ludhiana that were burst which was

running by Afghan nationals and the Afghan nationals were arrested. Its linkage with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Dubai and many states of India,” said the Narcotics Control Bureau deputy director general Gyaneshwar Singh. Analysts believe that the caretaker government should improve its intelligence networks to prevent the smuggling of drugs out of the country. “There could be a systemic criminal organization of international mafia that could include

the Pakistanis, Indians and some Afghans,” said Mohammad Hanif Alokozai, a political analyst. “It is important to activate an intelligent network in this regard to detect and prevent these criminals and bring them to justice so that the issue would be resolved inside Afghanistan,” said Aziz Maarij, a political analyst. Based on the figures by the counter-narcotics department, 134 drug labs have been destroyed since the Islamic Emirate came to power.

Surge in firewood, coal prices irk Faryab residents

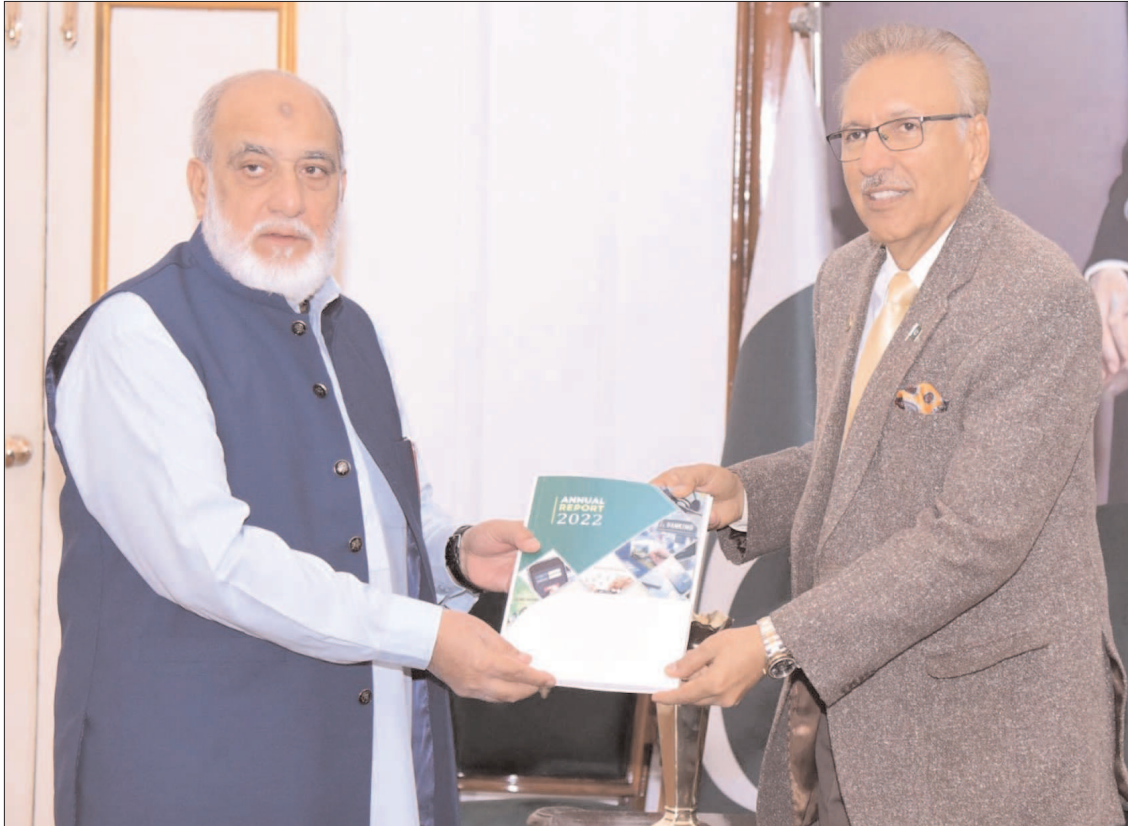
FARYAB (ToloNews): A number of Faryab residents on Friday expressed their concerns over the rise in firewood and coal prices and said they cannot afford to buy the materials for heating their homes in the cold winter. They called on the officials to control the prices in the markets. Zinatullah, a baker in the province, said the rising prices of firewood and coal have affected his business.

“It was initially good and the prices were low but now the prices of flour and heating materials, including firewood, coal and gas have increased,” he said. “The price of firewood is 80 Afs for every seven kilograms,” said Mohibullah, a resident of Kabul. Wood and coal sellers said there is a sharp reduction in the number of customers. “There is no customer because people cannot afford it. There

are the families who don’t have money to buy firewood,” said Mohammad Hassan, a seller. “No one has the capacity to purchase anything. Children are even collecting trash from the streets to burn it for heating,” said Nematullah, a resident of Faryab. Local officials said the prices of firewood and coal have not surged but unemployment and poverty led to the lack of

people’s ability to buy firewood. “There has not been any special change. The price for seven kilograms of firewood was 70 to 100 Afs provisory and it is the same now. Only the ability to afford it has dropped,” a local official said. Seven kilograms of firewood is sold for 100 to 110 Afs in local markets in Faryab while the price for seven kilograms of coal is 120 Afs in the province.





KARACHI: Banking Mohtasib of Pakistan, Muhammad Kamran Shehzad, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi and presented the Annual Report 2022, at Governor House.

Naqeebullah murder case moves towards final stage

KARACHI (Agencies): The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) is likely to reserve its judgment in the Naqeebullah murder case as the defence wrapped up its arguments on Friday, while the prosecution was directed to present its final arguments.

Naqeebullah Mehsud, a young aspiring fashion model from Waziristan area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, was killed on January 13, 2018 in Karachi during a fake encounter allegedly staged by then SSP Malir District Rao Anwar. Rao Anwar and others appeared before ATC No. 16 in Central Jail's Anti-Terrorism Complex. Aamir Mansoor Advocate, the counsel for Anwar said that he wanted to draw the court's attention to a very important matter.

The prosecution has not two but four eyewitnesses, named Muhammad Qasim, Hazrat Ali, Sharoo Khan, and Humayun, who have already recorded their statements. Naqeebullah, along with Qasim and Ali, were abducted from Agha Sher Hotel. The prosecution

claims that Naqeebullah was abducted on January 4, while one of the eyewitnesses, named Humayun, said that the incident took place on January 3. Humayun also did not mention presence of Rao Anwar in his statement. The defence counsel pleaded before the court that due to this discrepancy, the case made by the prosecution must be rejected.

Advocate Aamir claimed that Naqeebullah, whose real name was Naseemullah, was a terrorist. Naqeebullah's call data record shows he was present at Al-Asif Square, in Sohrah Goth, on January 4 till 4:30 am, while the prosecution claims that he was abducted on 2:30 am on January 4. "How is this even possible?" Some social workers said in their statements that local residents approached them to tell the whole story. The social activists told them that they would go the next day to secure their release.

"According to the statements of the two witnesses they were released on January 5, then whose release they would secure on January 6," the

defence lawyer said while raising a question. Anwar's counsel said that the CDR proves that his client was neither at Agha Sher Hotel nor at the place where the "encounter" had taken place. When the prosecution did not get Naqeebullah's CDR, how would they prove Anwar was present at the spot?

Advocate Aamir argued that as per the mobile phone locations his client entered Malir, Sector 3, at 2:41p.m. and Malir, Sector 2, at 3:24p.m. where the encounter had taken place, whereas as per the prosecution, the encounter happened between 3pm to 3:20pm. The exact location cannot be ascertained without a locator, he said. About another important prosecution witness, he submitted that Sharoo Khan said in his statement that he had become friends with Naqeebullah on Facebook. However, according to Sharoo's statement, he does not know how to use Facebook because he does not have a smartphone and does not even have a Facebook account.

Pakistan formally hands over chairmanship of G-77

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan formally handed over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China to Cuba after completing its one-year term during which the world grappled with triple crises of food, fuel and finance that especially hit hard the developing countries.

"It is my honour today to transfer the Chair of the Group of 77 and China to my dear friend, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parilla of Cuba," Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a video address from Islamabad to the 134-member group, the largest at the United Nations.

After FM Bilawal's address, Ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, handed over the gravel to the Cuban Foreign Minister Rodriguez Parilla to a resounding applause from the delegates to the meeting, held in the Trusteeship Council. Upon taking over as chairman, the Cuban foreign minister praised Pakistan's "laudable" leadership of the Group of 77 during the year 2022. A founding member of G-77, which promotes the developing countries' collective economic interests at the UN, Pakistan took over the chairmanship of G-77 from Guinea on January 14, 2022.

Under Pakistan's chairmanship, the Group has been instrumental in maintaining development at the heart of the United Nations and focus of development partners towards the crises faced by the developing coun-

tries due to the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, growing impacts of climate change, economic imbalances and rising debt distress, commodity price shocks and food insecurity, and persistent fragility and conflict — with the war in Ukraine currently exacerbating many deteriorating trends. In his address, Foreign Minister Bilawal said Pakistan has had the privilege to chair the Group of 77 and China three times in the past. However, he added, leading the Group in 2022, as "our nations collectively confronted the 'perfect storm' of the multiple external shocks of Covid, climate and conflict, was especially challenging and, yet, rewarding".

"Our Group responded to the 'poly-crises' of food, fuel and finance facing developing countries with a collective vision, determination and unity." He said the Group has led the way in formulating and securing agreement on the urgent and systemic responses required to overcome these multiple challenges: — At the Financing for Development Forum, in April, the Group secured an agreement on measures for financing recovery from the crises and achieving the SDGs; — At the High-Level Political Forum, last July, the Group collectively negotiated the means of implementation for achieving the SDGs in the current difficult "decade of action"; — At the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, the Group was able to

secure consensus for action on major economic, financial, development and environmental issues; — At CoP-27, through our mutual and collective endeavours, the Group was able to achieve a historic decision for the establishment of the "loss and damage" fund; and, — At the Ministerial Conference of our Group last month, an Outcome Document was agreed upon setting out our positions on the immediate and structural measures that are essential to alleviate the food, fuel and financial crises confronting our countries and to reform the global economic architecture in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement Agenda 2030 and the Paris and other environmental agreements.

"These demonstrations of the unity of the Group and its capacity for collective action are a clear signal that, acting together, we can achieve the decisions required to overcome the challenges to our development and prosperity which arise from external impacts and an unequal international economic system, FM Bilawal said. To this end, he added, the Group must maintain its unity, coordination and collective action. It must secure implementation of the positions the Group has set out in the Outcome Document adopted last month, including at the SDG Summit, at CoP28 and in several other processes and meetings scheduled in 2023.

NA will complete its term: Sana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan said on Friday that the National Assembly, as well as the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies, will remain intact until August this year. "With the CM's advice of dissolution, Imran's bandit rule has ended in Punjab," he claimed.

Talking to a private news channel, Rana Sanaullah said that after dissolution, elections for both the KP and Punjab assemblies would be held within 90 days. "We will contest the elections and win them". Opposing the option of general elections, the minister said how can we ask the governments of Sindh and Balochistan to dissolve the assembly? Rana further said that the coalition parties were not in favour of dissolving the assemblies as this was an undemocratic act.

Russia capture Ukraine's Soledar

KYIV (Agencies): Russia said on Friday that its forces had taken control of the town of Soledar in eastern Ukraine, claiming Moscow's first big battlefield gain in half a year, but Kyiv said its troops were still fighting in the town. Reuters could not immediately verify the situation in Soledar, a salt mining town that has been the focus of relentless Russian assault for days.

If confirmed, Russia's capture of the town would at last give Moscow a trophy for one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war, following major battlefield setbacks throughout the second half of 2022. Kyiv and the West have played down its significance, saying Moscow sacrificed wave upon wave of soldiers and mercenaries in a pointless fight for a bombed-out wasteland, unlikely to affect the wider war except insofar as the huge losses have sapped manpower on both sides. "The capture of Soledar was made possible by the constant bombardment of the enemy by assault and army aviation, missile forces and artillery of a grouping of Russian forces," Moscow's defence ministry said.

Seizing the town would make it possible to cut off Ukrainian supply routes to the larger nearby city of Bakhmut, and trap remaining Ukrainian forces there, it said. Moscow has been trying to seize Bakhmut for months. But Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command, told Reuters by telephone Soledar had not been captured: "Our units are there, the town is not under Russian control."

A Ukrainian officer in the area, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media, also told Reuters by telephone the Russians had not fully taken the town. "Last night artillery fire was like from hell, both sides. From what I know, our boys have managed to exit some parts (of Soledar) in an orderly manner and now (assault) groups are counter-attacking, but we still hold the town." Ukrainian officials said on Thursday more than 500 civilians were trapped inside Soledar, including 15 children.

Sexual harassment case

President rejects appeal of accused

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has rejected the appeal of a person accused of sexual harassment at workplace and referred the case back to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH) for final adjudication after appraisal of the evidence.

While deciding on an appeal filed by the accused, President Alvi held that the request to once again cross-examine the complainant after the engagement of a fresh counsel had no ground. The president endorsed Ombudsperson's observation that the appeal filing by the accused was an apparent attempt to prolong the impugned case indefinitely to enhance the anguish and agony of the

complainant.

It was further observed that the matter had already consumed sufficient time in the disposal due to the accused's miscellaneous applications and was tantamount to starting a new round of litigation which prima facie was against the spirit and scheme of the Act 2010. The president observed that the complainant who had filed a case of sexual harassment under section 8 of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 before the Ombudsperson on 27.05.2019 had yet not been adjudicated. The accused had filed a representation before the President against the order of 23.09.2021 for seeking permission to reexamine the complainant again by a fresh counsel which was

rejected.

Dr Alvi in his order observed that the complaint was filed under the Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 before the Ombudsman on 27.05.2019. The accused had earlier filed a representation before the president against interlocutory order dated 23.09.2021 for seeking permission for the cross-examination of the complainant which was rejected on 26.01.2022. The accused filed another representation despite the fact that the proceedings of the complaint were pending before the learned Ombudsman and a decision in this regard had yet to be made after appraisal of the evidence on the question of whether the element of harassment had been established or otherwise.

DRAP approves Chinese diabetes medicine

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The insulin glargine injecta BASAGINE developed by a Chinese pharmaceutical company received approval for registration by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), China Economic Net (CEN) reported it on Friday. According to the company, it is the first insulin glargine injection (prefilled injection pen) biosimilar drug in Pakistan.

Insulin glargine injection is an essential long-acting insulin analogue product in the treatment of diabetes for its efficacy and safety. In Pakistan, 33 million people aged 20-79 were living with diabetes in 2021, ranking third in the world after China and India. The prevalence of diabetes among adults aged 20-79 in Pakistan is 30.8%, the highest in the world, as per the latest data released by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Global Diabetes Overview 10th Edition (2021).

It is learned that the overall market for insulin in Pakistan is over \$50 million. Sanofi, Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly have taken the majority of the market share in the country, and the Chinese product will bring more quality options to Pakistani patients. "Since

2010, the pharmaceutical trade between China and Pakistan has maintained good momentum. As China eases its Covid restriction, we believe that this momentum will continue to strengthen", the company's public relation department told CEN in an interview. Meanwhile, according to CEN, Chinese patent medicine are listing in Pakistan promoting intensive collaboration Lianhua Qingwen capsules, a Chinese patent medicine owned by Shijiazhuang Yiling Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. (stock code 002603), has obtained permission to be listed in Pakistan recently. This is the third Chinese patent medicine to be marketed in Pakistan after Tai Ji Huoxiang Zhengqi oral liquid and Jian Zhi syrup were licensed for sale and use in Pakistan.

As a representative drug for the treatment of infectious diseases of respiratory system viruses, Lianhua Qingwen capsules have been included in the diagnosis and treatment protocols or guidelines for infectious public health events such as influenza A, influenza B and COVID-19 issued by China's National Health Commission and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine for more than 30

times, and has shown unique value in the prevention and control of the epidemic worldwide. The launch of Lianhua Qingwen in Pakistan is another overseas marketing license, following registration approval or import licenses in nearly 30 countries and regions including Canada, Thailand and Singapore.

Lianhua Qingwen capsules distributor, Pakistan Huazhulong International Trading Company and Tai He Tai Law Firm worked together for 31 months to apply for the listing approval number from the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan. The application process was a major success for the company team and the Chinese law firm.

Cao Wei, CEO of Huazhulong International, said in a recent interview with China Economic Net (CEN) that "listing in Pakistan is of great significance to the internationalization of Lianhua Qingwen and other Chinese patent medicine. Even the sale and use of Lianhua Qingwen in Pakistan has played a role in the country's fight against the pandemic. In the future, China-Pakistan medicine collaboration can be expanded to the treatment of common cold, various pathogens, hyperglycemia, hypertension, etc."



MURREE: A view of vehicles and trees covered with snow after heavy snowfall.

EV People's Bus Service formally kicks off in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon along with Provincial Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Labor Minister Saeed Ghani on Friday inaugurated Pakistan's first EV People's Bus Service in Karachi. Member Sindh Assembly Ghanwar Isran, Secretary Transport Abdul Haleem Shaikh, MD Sindh Mass Transit Authority Zubair Chana, Project Director NRTC Sohaib Shafiq and others were also present on this occasion.

The provincial ministers reviewed the facilities in the EV People's Bus Service and also traveled in the bus. Provincial Information Minister Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon while talking to the media said that Pakistan's first electric bus service is being started today from Karachi, these are environment friendly buses, which will run on electric charge. Capable of covering a distance of 240 km from a single charge, These European standard buses will not spread any kind of pollution. He said that along with the elimination of pollution in city, we are trying to provide the best travel facilities to the citizens at the minimum fare. He said that the bus service is being started from Tank Chowk Jinnah Avenue to Airport,

Shahrah-e- Faisal, FTC building, Korangi Road, Khayaban-i Ihtidat to Clock Tower Seaview.

He said that passengers traveling to airport had no such bus facility in Karachi. He said that citizens use private vehicles or cab services which charge them a fare of up to Rs.1500. But in the EV bus service, citizens can now travel to the airport for just Rs 50. He said that the Sindh government is grateful for the cooperation of the Civil Aviation Authority, which allowed the bus service to enter the airport premises. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that providing best public transport facility to citizens across the province is top priority of Sindh government of Pakistan People's Party.

He said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has given instructions to all the members of the Sindh Cabinet to provide maximum facilities to the people and former President Asif Ali Zardari also takes special interest in resolving the issues of public. He said that Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is the captain of our entire team. It is not possible to start any project without his support. Sindh Cabinet members enjoy the full support of Sindh Chief Minister who takes ownership of all development projects. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government is focusing to complete mega

development projects of Karachi on top priority, as it is the economic hub of Pakistan.

He said that work is underway in Karachi on projects worth billions of rupees under the Department of Local Government, Works and Services and other departments. The minister said that Sindh Solid Waste Management is successfully running its operations in 7 districts of the city. The infrastructure of the city is being improved rapidly. He said that health facilities in Karachi are the best among all provinces. He said that no government or party had given a single mega project to Karachi before this. It's credit goes to the Sindh government and leadership of Pakistan People's Party. He said that citizens should take care of the first electric bus service of Pakistan, it is the public property and Sindh government is bringing more such projects. He said that they have to work together to resolve the city's traffic, environmental pollution and other problems. He said that people think that Pakistan People's Party is a party that does rely on mere slogans but do practical work to facilitate the people. The provincial minister said that those who were in power in the federal government for three and a half years before this did not work in Sindh and did not give anything to Karachi. Those people who got the position of mayor twice

and, thrice, also did nothing to solve the problems of Karachi. The minister added that these people only sit on television shows and hurl baseless accusations and spread chaos in the name of politics and keep. People engaged in false propaganda.

He said that Pakistan People's Party has a long list of its performance and has worked in every sector. He said that we consider public service as our election because Pakistan People's Party has come to power with the people's vote. He said that in the past, the people were brought to power through manipulation of RTS.

Answering the questions of journalists on this occasion, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that they had full respect for all the constitutional institutions including the Election Commission of Pakistan. Sindh government is bound to implement the Orders of the constitutional institutions? But some powers are with the courts, some powers are with the Election Commission and some powers with the governments. He said that Sindh Cabinet has withdrawn the notification of 10 (1) using its constitutional and legal authority.

He said that the Sindh government has the power to issue and withdraw the 10 (1) notification? He said that some parties had concerns about it. We want all parties to be provided with a level playing field to partici-

pate in the elections. He said that 10 (1) notification was withdrawn on the demand of MQM Pakistan. He said that the Election Commission cannot reject the Sindh government's notification under the law. Neither the Sindh government can interfere in the authority of the Election Commission of Pakistan? He said that they had not received the written copy of decision of the Election Commission.

They have come to learn about it through the media reports. He said that they will hold consultation with their legal team after receiving it's written copy. He said that the authority to deploy the army at the polling stations in Karachi is at the discretion of the federal government, the Sindh government had written to the federal government on the matter.

On which the federal government had apologized by saying that the forces of Pakistan are engaged in operations against terrorists? He said that if the Election Commission thinks that the army is needed at sensitive polling stations, it should contact the federal government or provide an alternative to the Sindh government. He said that wheat and law and order were also discussed in the cabinet meeting yesterday, IG Sindh has told the cabinet in the briefing that there are terror threat alerts in Sindh. There have been incidents of terrorism in KPK and Balochistan

following the threat alert. IG Sindh has also expressed concerns about the incidents of terrorism in Sindh province? He said that IG Sindh said that 62,000 policemen are needed in local body elections.

If policemen are removed from mosques, imambargahs and other places and depolyed at the polling stations, then who will be responsible if any untoward incident happens. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that many areas of tehsil mehar and Khairpur Nathan Shah are affected by recent rains and floods still inundated. Keeping in view of situation, Sindh government had written a letter in advance to postponed local bodies elections but the reply has not been received yet. This letter was written before yesterday's Sindh Cabinet meeting? He said that how can people exercise their right to vote in these areas? He said that we have requested the Election Commission that apart from the two tehsils Mehar and Khairpur Nathan Shah, elections may be held in the rest of the tehsils of Johi, Dadu. On the question of threats by MQM Pakistan for blocking of Shahra-e Faisal, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Pakistan Peoples Party understands only one language and that is the language of love and no other language reaches to their ears and neither do they pay attention to it.