

FM to attend WEF's meeting
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto will attend the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland which will begin on Monday. The FM will be accompanied by Minister of State. The World Economic Forum annually brings together political and business leaders to identify pathways to overcome economic, social, and environmental challenges.



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Punjab Assembly stands dissolved

— governor decides ‘to not become part of’ process

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly has been dissolved after the governor, Baligh Ur Rehman, refused to sign on the summary sent for disbanding the legislature, sources said Saturday.

A notification from the governor, for the appointment of the caretaker chief minister was dispatched to Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi and Leader of the Opposition in the PA Hamza Shahbaz. It said the PA and provincial cabinet stood dissolved under Article 112(1) of the Constitution.

According to Article 112(1), the assembly stands automatically “dissolved at the expiration of forty-eight hours after the chief minister has so advised” if the governor does not do it. The notification said that the caretaker CM would be

appointed by the governor in consultation with the two leaders. The governor called on them to provide the names of their nominees for the position by 10:10pm on January 17 (Tuesday).

The governor said that he remained available for the discharge of his constitutional duties if the two desired to call on him or have a meeting between the three. Rehman earlier said after distancing himself from the dissolution process that he would “rather let the Constitution and law take its own course”.

“Doing so will not hamper any legal process as Constitution clearly provides a way forward,” he tweeted. Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi had forwarded the summary of dissolution on Thursday, and as per the constitution,

the assembly dissolves within 48 hours regardless of the governor's decision. Rehman — a leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) — refrained from the dissolution process and decided to let the constitution take its course.

“I have decided not to become part of the process leading to the dissolution of Punjab Assembly. I would rather let the Constitution and law take its own course.” “Doing so will not hamper any legal process as Constitution clearly provides a way forward,” the governor — who had earlier termed the assembly's a “hard one” — said. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan had announced the dissolution of the assemblies — Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab — in November last year.

DSP, two cops martyred in attack on police station

Ikram Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Badhbare, Sardar Hussain and two police constables embraced martyrdom as terrorists attacked Sarband Police Station in the suburbs of Peshawar during late hours of Friday night.

According to police, the terrorists attacked Sarband Police station from three sides by hurling hand grenades and opening indiscriminate firing. The attack was repulsed by the Police force who responded with commendable audacity to attackers by exchange of firing and counterattacks.

On receiving a report of the attack, DSP Badahare, Sardar Hussain forthwith reached on the spot along with two police constables and were hit by bullets while getting out of the vehicles by being targeted with sniper guns. “The security officials were targeted by sniper guns who were equipped with sophisticated weapons including night vision goggles,” Police claimed.

Talking to media SSP operation Kashif Abbasi said that DSP Sardar Hussain had reached the spot after the attack. He and his gunmen was hit by sniper rifle.

He said this is another feat of bravery by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as police foiled the terrorists' plan to attack Sarband police station. DSP Badhbare Sardar Hussain and the police personnel raised the high standard of martyrdom. Terrorists attacked from different sides. Grenades, sniper rifles, automatic weapons were used in the attack. He



PESHAWAR: Police officials saluting to martyred DSP and his gunmen after funeral prayer at Police Lines.

added more force was deployed in nearby areas. A search operation had been initiated against militants, still hiding in the dark.

IGP KP Moazzam Jah Ansari's told media that DSP Sardar Hussain and his gun men sacrificed their lives bravely. Here we all gathered which is an indication that we all are together in this war with great bravery as the police repulsed the attack of the terrorists. He said DSP Sardar Hussain parked his car at Shahbaz Khel and tried to reach the spot on foot. We had no way of seeing the terrorists.

The terrorists escaped from the site by taking advantage of pitch darkness while Police has started search operation for combing of the area within the vicinity of Police station. The two police constables who embraced martyrdom have been identified as Irshad and Jehanzeb.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Saturday attended funeral prayers of police personnel martyred in miscreants attack on Sarband Police Station and paid tribute to police force for their sacrifices in line of duty.

He also prayed to rest

departed souls of martyred policemen in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss with patience. He said we stands with bereaved families in this hour of distress and added that sacrifices offered by KP police for maintaining peace would not go vain and always be remembered.

Advisor to Prime Minister, Faisal Karim Kundi has strongly condemned hand grenade on the house of Parachinar-based senior journalist, Mohammad Ali Turi and said that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been asked to submit a report.

Talking to the Senior Vice President, Parachinar Press Club on phone on Saturday, he condemned the hand grenade attack on his house and said that the culprit will not go scot free and a report regarding the incident has been sought from the KP police chief.

He said that a transparent investigation into the incident would be made soon. He said that the government will take all possible steps for the protection of journalists.

Nawaz directs workers to do preparations for election

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had directed the party leaders and workers to do preparations for the election in Punjab.

PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif passed on the directives while presiding over a consultative meeting of the party leadership in London, the minister said in a series of tweets.

Marriyum said Quaid Nawaz Sharif had also directed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is also president of the PML-N, to set up a Parliamentary Board. She said the PML-N Quaid had asked the party leaders and workers to contest the election in Punjab with full passion, confidence, strength and preparations. The minister quoted Nawaz Sharif as saying that the PML-N would stand victorious in the election.

Sana flays KP govt for law, order situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Saturday said that the federal government was seriously concerned over the worsening law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The minister criticised the KP government for not learning a lesson from the terrorist attack on Counter Terrorism Department Centre in Bannu last month, where law enforcers were held hostage by militants. In a statement, he lambasted KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan and said that all energies of the chief minister were focused on dissolving the assembly.

“The KP police are not safe from terrorist attacks, then what will be the state of people's protection?”, the minister posted on his twitter handle. He paid tribute to the martyred police officials and saluted their sacrifices.

Bilawal urges MQM-P to contest polls

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Foreign Minister and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) to contest the local government (LG) elections, scheduled to take place today.

In a statement, the foreign minister reiterated PPP's desire to hold local government elections, saying that attempts were being made to remove the reservations of allied parties. Responding to one of the MQM-P reservations, Bilawal Bhutto noted that it was not possible to change the delimitations of constituencies after the election schedule. He stressed the need of a local government system, saying that it could have helped the flood victims in a better way. The foreign minister urged MQM-P to contest the local government polls, pointing out that the PPP suffered ‘a lot of damage’ when they boycotted the election in the past.

He also urged the people of Sindh to exercise their right to vote, reiterating that the local government system can work for the improvement of the cities. “We are in contact with MQM-P to call out their voters to cast votes,” he added. Bilawal further said that he wants next mayor of Karachi from Pakistan People's Party, adding that the successful ones should work for the development of the country. “We will work together with all parties for the development of Karachi after the election,” he added. It is pertinent to mention here that after MQM-P's demand, the Sindh government announced postponing the Karachi and Hyderabad LG polls.

PM pins hope on civil servants to steer country out of challenges

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday urged the civil servants to serve the country and nation with their utmost capacities and expressed the hope that they were capable of steering the country out of the current challenges.

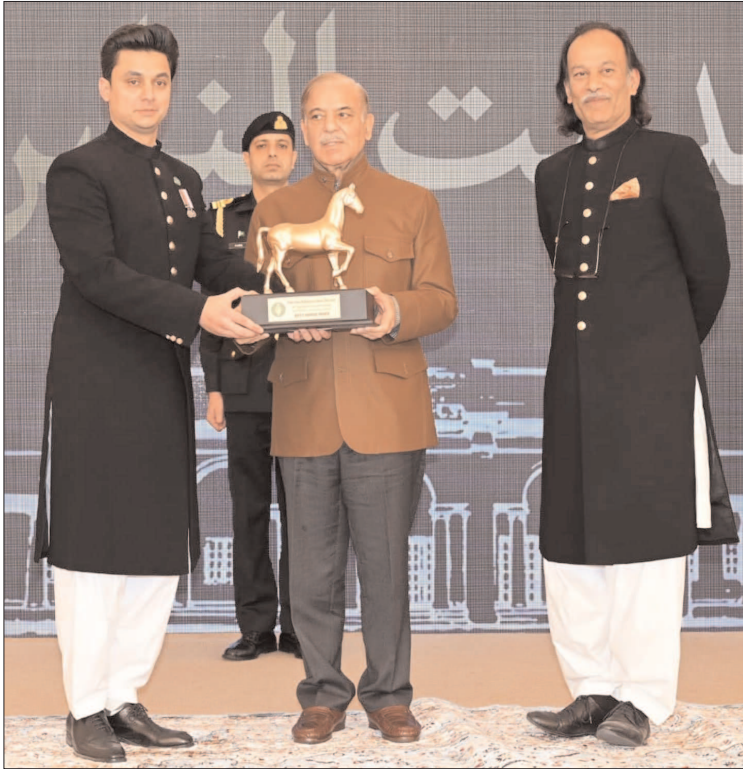
Addressing the passing out ceremony of probationary officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), the prime minister reminded them that after assuming their basic responsibilities in the practical life, they would be confronted with issues like unemployment, poverty, disease, lack of education and delayed response to public problems. Appreciating the civil bureaucracy, the prime minister said that he personally knew a number of good officers who had strived to serve the country by shedding their sweat and blood.

In a veiled reference to the previous government, the prime minister said baseless allegations were leveled against certain officers which caused embarrassment for their families. He said due to such a situation, the civil bureaucrats, thought twice before taking any step in the performance of their duties which was a real stumbling block.

The prime minister stressed that it should be a collective agenda of them all and the political hierarchy to provide an enabling environment to the civil bureaucracy to serve the masses with dedication. If an amicable environment was provided to the civil servants, they could excel with their full potential, he added. He observed that in the world, there was not a difficulty that could be surmounted.

Referring to the performance of the bureaucracy, the prime minister cited that he had set a two-month target for the civil administration for the establishment of education facilities in one of the flood-affected areas of Balochistan and during his recent visit to the province, he admired them for establishing a smart school within the stipulated timeframe. Terming them as ‘Future of Pakistan’, the prime minister expressed the optimism that they would perform with dedication and honesty as the nation had attached expectations to them.

“Let's move to transform Pakistan into Quaid's and strive to turn it



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif giving away completion certificate to a probationary officer of 45th Specialized Training Program.

stronger. The people will remember you for your yeoman's service,” he said. The ceremony was attended by Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman, retired judge, officers and a number of families. The prime minister elaborating his viewpoint over the economic challenges faced by the country also regretted that during the past 75 years, different governments whether headed by the political leadership or military dictators could not address the economic issues.

In the past, time was wasted with the creation of chaos and protests, he added. The prime minister said that sustainable development goals (SDGs) could be achieved if their bus could have moved at fast pace and on the right track and they could not have sought foreign loans.

The prime minister said during his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates, the UAE president had very graciously and affectionally announced to grant a further \$1 billion loan to Pakistan. He apprised him that Pakistan was passing

through economic issues and meeting the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) conditionalities.

The prime minister said that it really embarrassed him to ask for further loans and also lauded the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the financial support. He opined that it was a not a right solution to their economic challenges as the loans would be returned back. The prime minister also congratulated the officers of PAS on the completion of their courses and said that they were the brightening stars of the nation, holding keys of country's future in their hands.

He also commended them for serving the flood-affected people and visiting different areas of the country. Earlier, Director General Civil Services Academy, Lahore Omer Rasul highlighted the role and contributions of the academy in training the future bureaucrats to serve the county and masses with their capabilities and dedication. The prime minister also gave away certificates to the outstanding officers.

LG polls in Sindh will take place today: ECP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rejected the latest request from the Sindh government to defer local body elections in the province, declaring the vote will definitely take place tomorrow Sunday.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the ECP which was held in Islamabad on Saturday afternoon. Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired the meeting virtually from Lahore. An official handout signed by the ECP spokesperson stated the ECP's decision while directing the Sindh government to ensure “foolproof preparations for peaceful elections”.

Earlier, the ECP called the meeting after intelligence agencies sensitized the election commission about the terror threat during the polls in the province. In the wake of fresh information, the ECP has summoned a meeting today (Saturday) under the chair of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja in Islamabad. The Sindh government has also written a letter to the election commission requesting it to postpone the local government elections keeping in view the security threats. It requested the commission to delay the polls till it arranges

security at the polling stations.

The government said that the deployment of Army troops and civil armed forces at polling stations is urgently needed. An important meeting was held under the chair of Sindh Chief Secretary Sohail Rajpoot where a briefing was given on the security arrangements during LG polls in the province. The meeting was attended by Secretary Election Commission Umar Hameed, IG police and other government officials.

During the meeting, the police authorities told the participants that they are ready to deploy policemen at polling stations but there is security risk involved. They have threats from proscribed organizations including BLA and TTP. They said that 63,000 police officials are required to provide security at Karachi and Hyderabad divisions. “If these police officials were deployed there, then cities may face law and order situation,” they maintained.

Sindh IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon said that not even a single polling station could be declared normal in the province and ‘that's why we are facing a shortage of police officials for their deployment at polling stations’. He informed that only in Karachi, 1,340 polling stations have been

declared ‘most sensitive’ while 3,655 have been confirmed as ‘sensitive’.

In Hyderabad, 1,005 polling stations have been declared ‘most sensitive’ and 2,874 confirmed as ‘sensitive. If combine together, the number of most sensitive polling stations in Karachi and Hyderabad is 2,345 and number of ‘sensitive’ polling stations is 6,532.

The IG police said that as per the SOPs defined by the ECP, eight security officials would be deployed at the most sensitive polling station while 4 will be deployed at a sensitive polling station. “Using this criterion, we have to deploy 25,340 security officials in Karachi and 19,536 in Hyderabad. The total deployment will be 44,876,” the IGP added. He said besides this static deployment, thousands of other security personnel would be needed for patrolling and other duties during the polls.

He said that the total strength of police officials in Sindh is 119,000 and it is not possible to spare 70,000 out of them for poll duties. He said that the election commission needs these officials for at least for 3-4 days. He said that during last 1.5 months, the sensitive agencies have issued 17 security alerts for Karachi and other areas of the province.

Zardari summons party session

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday summoned the session of PPP's parliamentary party in Punjab Assembly at Bilawal House. The session will discuss political situation of the province.

Sources said that PPP parliamentary party's leader Syed Hassan Murtaza, MPAs Ali Haider Gillani, Makhdoom Usman, among others reached the house. Earlier, Mr Zardari flew to Lahore to discuss political affairs with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. His visit comes in the wake of the political volatility caused due to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) decision to ask the PM to obtain the vote of confidence in the National Assembly (NA) after Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Parvez Elahi succeeded in obtaining the trust vote in the Punjab Assembly. Sources told that Mr Zardari would put forward his recommendations on the future strategy to the PM.

PM flays attack on police station

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the police station Sarband in Peshawar. He expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of a Deputy Superintendent of police and two police personnel in the attack.

In his message of condolence, he said the sympathies of the nation were with the families of the martyrs. He said the sacrifices of police and law enforcement agencies were unforgettable. He said the condemnable conspiracies of the terrorists to weaken the morale of the nation would not succeed.



CM Elahi says he fulfilled all promises with Imran Khan

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi says he has fulfilled all promises made with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

CM Elahi chaired a consultative meeting to review legal and constitutional aspects after sending an advice of dissolution of the Punjab Assembly to the governor. He further said the interim government would be formed after consultations.

On Friday, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry, while offering the federal government to sit down to discuss the election framework, said the elections should be held simultaneously in the entire country. He said that for how long the federal government would run away from the elections. "There is still time; sit with us on the framework of the election," he said.

The former federal minister said the governor had received the summary for the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly, adding that instead of waiting for

another 24 hours, the governor should order dissolution of the assembly so that the process for interim set-up could begin.

Unlike the rules in many countries, the caretaker government must be formed in Pakistan until a new government comes to power after the elections and this process of the interim set-up is discussed in detail in the Article 224 of the constitution.

Chaudhry Parvez Elahi will continue to work as the chief minister unless a caretaker set-up is formed and only Punjab Assembly Speaker Sibain Khan will continue to perform his constitutional role under the interim set-up. For the caretaker government, within 48 hours of the assembly's dissolution, the CM will write to the opposition leader in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shahbaz and they will suggest three names each for caretaker chief minister.

In case of deadlock between them, the speaker has the authority to form a

committee of six members with equal representation from the treasury and opposition. The CM and opposition leader will send two nominees each to the committee. Again in case of no success by the committee, the matter of nominees will come to the Election Commission of Pakistan for a final decision.

The selected nominee has the power to appoint his own cabinet and perform his role as the interim CM until a new government. Following the placement of a caretaker chief minister, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is bound to carry out the election in the province within 90 days. The electoral body can hold polls within 22 to 45 days because constitutionally it requires at least 22 days to scrutinize the nomination papers of the candidates.

The candidates will be given 29 to 30 days to run the election campaign. Considering such a timeline, it is possible that the ECP may conduct the polls between March 1-April 10.



KARACHI: A delegation of Young Nurses Association called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Governor House.

Anti polio dive kicks off in city

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali formally inaugurated anti-polio drive by administering polio vaccine to children at the Mian Mir Hospital here on Saturday.

During the seven-day drive starting from January 16, around two million children under five years of age would be administered polio vaccine and for this purpose, 6,360 teams had been formed.

Talking on the occasion, DC Muhammad Ali said that union council monitoring officers and area incharges would perform duties in the field to make polio drive a success. He maintained that all district officers and assistant commissioners would monitor the drive in their respective tehsils.

He urged the parents to get their children administered anti-polio drops to protect them from crippling disease. The DC warned that no one would be allowed to show careless attitude towards the campaign. He said that immunisation of every child below five years of age would be ensured.

987 injured in 973 RTCs

LAHORE (APP): At least six persons were killed and 987 injured in 973 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of this, 494 people were seriously injured who were shifted to different hospitals. Whereas, 493 minor injured victims were treated at the incident site by the rescue teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

The statistics showed that 454 drivers, 29 underage drivers, 129 pedestrians, and 410 passengers were among the victims of these road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 200 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 209 persons placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 86 in Multan, Faisalabad third with 57 RTCs.

The details further reveal that 987 victims were affected by road traffic crashes including 829 males and 164 females, while the age group of the victims shows that 169 were under 18 years of age, 536 were between 18 and 40 years and rest of the 288 victims were reported above 40 years of age.

According to the data 845 motorbikes, 64 autorickshaws, 107 motorcars, 26 vans, 4 passenger buses, 25 trucks and 92 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts caused these road traffic accidents.

PHA board meeting held

RAWALPINDI (APP): The meeting of the Board of Directors of Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi was held here on Saturday.

The meeting was chaired by Chairman PHA, Rawalpindi Asif Mehmood and attended by Vice Chairman PHA Malik Abid, Director General, Xenia Humayun and other members of the Board of Directors.

The DG PHA briefed the board members about the overall performance of the authority. The meeting decided on digitization of the marketing department of PHA besides enhancing commercial activities of the authority to bring it out from financial problems.

The meeting gave a green light for setting up state-of-the-art nurseries in different city parks.

Ishaq Dar calls on Punjab Governor

LAHORE (APP): Federal Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman here at Governor House on Saturday. Various issues including the overall economic situation of the country were discussed in the meeting.

Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman said that the entire economic team under the leadership of Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is making all out efforts to bring improvement and stability in the economy.

Governor said that the rate of inflation had been better and Pakistan had been emerging as a strong country economically in the previous tenures of Pakistan Muslim League (N).

He said that PML-N was committed to bring economic stability in the country despite multiple challenges faced by the country. Governor also congratulated Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on his recent successful foreign visits and said that the way the whole world had announced the relief package for the people of Pakistan in recent foreign visits was an expression of confidence in the transparency of the present

low, GDP growth had been better and Pakistan had been emerging as a strong country economically in the previous tenures of Pakistan Muslim League (N).

He said that PML-N was committed to bring economic stability in the country despite multiple challenges faced by the country.

Governor also congratulated Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on his recent successful foreign visits and said that the way the whole world had announced the relief package for the people of Pakistan in recent foreign visits was an expression of confidence in the transparency of the present

governor.

Governor appreciated the efforts of Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for making sincere and strenuous efforts for stabilizing country's economy.

On this occasion, Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that there would be further improvement in the economy in the coming days. He said that such economic challenges had never been witnessed before in the history of the country, but despite this, the coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was using all its abilities to bring economic stability in the country.

CTD arrests five terrorists from three Punjab cities

LAHORE (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department Punjab has caused a major dent to the terrorists network by arresting five militants from three cities on Saturday.

According to CTD officials, five terrorists belonging to a banned organization were arrested from Lahore, Multan and Gujranwala.

Four of the arrested militants were identified as

Abdul Samad, Sohail, Ali Rahman and Noor Abbas.

The CTD officials further said that they had also seized explosive material, weapons and hand-grenades from terrorists' possession. The CTD officials lodged four cases against the detained terrorists, who were shifted to an unknown place for further interrogation.

Also Read: DSP, two

gunmen martyred as TTP terrorists hit Peshawar police station

The CTD officials informed the media that during the current week security agencies had carried out 452 combing operations during which 208 suspects were taken into custody and 138 cases were registered. They also quizzed 22,800 suspects during these operations.

Pakistan reports 16 Covid-19 cases

LAHORE (PPD): Pakistan has reported one death in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of confirmed positive cases has surged to 1,576,054. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 30,640 on Saturday.

According to the latest figures by the National Institute of Health (NIH), at least 16 persons were tested positive for COVID-19 across the country in the past 24 hours.

Pakistan has conducted 4,267 tests in the past 24 hours out of which 16 persons were tested positive for the disease.

The COVID Positivity Ratio was recorded at 0.37 percent.

ANF recovers over 116 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting six counter-narcotics operations seized over 116 kg narcotics and arrested six accused including a woman.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF conducted a raid near Gadap Town Karachi and recovered 102 kg charras, 400 kg Betel Nut and 68 kg 'Pan Masala' besides netting three accused.

In another operation, ANF and FC recovered 10 kg charras from a Khyber area. In third operation, ANF managed to recover 3.2 kg Ice drug from a car and rounded up an accused, resident of Okara.

In fourth operation, ANF recovered 450 grams heroin from the possession of a female drug pusher resident of Jhelum nabbed from Dina. ANF recovered 300 grams Ice drug from the possession of an accused arrested from Multan.

In sixth operation, ANF Lahore recovered 530 grams Ketamine from a parcel containing pillows being sent to Australia through a private courier company. The spokesman said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

JI files contempt of court petition against delay in LG polls

KARACHI (PPI) Jamaat-i-Islami Saturday submitted a contempt of court petition in the Sindh High Court against the provincial government for writing a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan expressing its inability to hold the local government elections in Sindh by citing inefficient security.

JI lawyer Usman Farooq Advocate said that despite court order, the Sindh government wrote a letter to the ECP requesting it to delay the LG polls. He said that it was Sindh government's

responsibility to make security arrangements for the local elections.

The lawyer said that the court had given clear instructions in this regard. The Sindh chief minister and chief secretary were made respondents in the petition.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday rejected a letter of the Sindh government seeking postponement of second phase of the local government elections in the province and ordered to conduct the polls on Jan 15.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired an emergency meeting held to discuss the provincial government's request and decided that there would be no change in the schedule of local bodies polls.

The Sindh government had again asked the ECP to postpone the local body elections in Karachi district and Hyderabad district, citing delimitation issue and unavailability of army troops for deployment at the polling stations.

Ready for elections but Imran will face trouble in polls, says Kaira

GUJRAT (NNI): Adviser to Prime Minister on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira said on Saturday the coalition government was ready for the elections, while claiming Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan would face great difficulties in the electoral process.

Speaking to media in Gujrat, the adviser to the prime minister said Imran Khan used to call the

chiefs of army "traitor" by calling them "Mir Jaffar and Mir Sadiq".

He said the country was in quagmire and the Punjab government had acted illegally by dissolving the assembly and the country was in dire need of stability.

The PPP stalwart claimed that Saudi Arabia was happy after Bilawal Bhutto became the foreign minister and the Kingdom had agreed to give oil worth \$1 billion. Mr Kaira

added they wanted to appeal to Imran Khan to avoid playing with the country's future because the economy was in tatters and the country needed stability.

The PM's aide challenged the PTI chief to tell about any one project which started during his tenure, with laying a claim that the PTI's government took the biggest loan in the country's history due to which inflation skyrocketed.

Youth Exchange Program held to get art experience

LAHORE (PPI): Thirty-two-member youth delegation of Balochistan left for Quetta on Saturday after participating in the "Youth Exchange Program", Youth Affairs and Sports Department, Government of the Punjab held from 10-14 January, 2023 to experience art, life style, culture, tradition, educational facilities and technological advancement of Punjab province and to act as young ambassador for

inter-provincial harmony.

During stay in Punjab, 32 member youth contingent of Balochistan paid a visit to walled city, Badshahi Masjid, Lahore Fort, Greater Iqbal Park, Lahore, tombs of Jahangir and Nur Jahan Shahdara, trip to Wagah border to witness flag hoisting ceremony, Governor House, Lahore, Punjab Assembly, interaction with the authorities of Punjab Safe City, visit to Lahore Museum and interactive session with

Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Punjab.

Ejaz Ali, Director, Youth Affairs, Balochistan, Muhammad Mustafa Achakzai, Assistant Director, Youth Affairs, Balochistan/ Focal Person, Youth Exchange Program", Youth Affairs and Sports Department, Government of the Punjab, Syed Muhammad Mehdi Kazmi, Syed Bilal Ahmed, Saima Tareen and others accompanied delegation of Balochistan contingent.



KARACHI: Policemen waiting for moving to their destination, who have come from interior Sindh to perform their duties in the Local Government elections, scheduled to be held on 15th January. —APP Photo

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
NATIONAL DATABASE & REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
Regional Head Office Peshawar (KP)
EOBI Building, Plot#31, Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar

Invitation for Auction
Auction of NADRA Used / Unserviceable & Scrap Items
No. RHO/Pesh/Proc/Auction/2022-23

1. Open Auction of the following 61 x used/unserviceable & Scrap items on the basis of "as and where it is" will be held at NADRA Store/Plot at Ring Road, Near Achinee Chowk, towards Wadan CNG, Peshawar. The detail of actionable scrap items are as under:-

S.NO	Items/Make	Qty	S.NO	Items/Make	Qty
1	Generator (Honda) 5KVA	22	32	Pigeon Hole	28
2	Generator (Lister peter & Youth model) 4.5 & 5KVA	22	33	Table	53
3	Generator Diesel Lister Petter 8.2 KVA	2	34	Waiting Bench Executive Steel	3
4	Generator Diesel Lister Petter 12.4 KVA	8	35	Plastic Waiting Bench	150
5	Generator Diesel Lister Petter 15 KVA	1	36	Officer chairs	70
6	Stabilizers upto 7000 watt	4	37	Visitor chairs iron	13
7	stabilizers 10000 upto 12000 watt	5	38	Visitor chairs wooden	4
8	stabilizers 15000 upto 16000 watt	3	39	Stools	30
9	Visitor chairs steel	42	40	Computer Chairs	353
10	Dispenser	18	41	Sofa Single	29
11	Electric Water Cooler	12	42	Wheel chairs	4
12	Pedestal Fans	6	43	Steel Almirah	12
13	Plastic air cooler	5	44	Counter Tables	2
14	Pedestal Fans 12 Volt	3	45	Wooden Partition Large	2
15	Electric main boards	8	46	Wooden Partition Small	7
16	Air Cooler	9	47	Safe Locker	2
17	Split AC indoor Mix	34	48	Tyres	188
18	Split AC Outdoor 1ton & unknown	20	49	Mt Parts	scrape
19	Split AC Outdoor 1.5 Ton	8	50	Wooden scrap lot	scrape
20	Split AC Outdoor 2 Ton	8	51	Generator Canopy	scrape
21	Split AC Outdoor 3 Ton	1	52	Glass scrape	Scrape
22	Mest Fan Parts(M)	1	53	Iron scrap	Scrape
23	Telephone set	12	54	Aluminum scrap	Scrape
24	Check Meters	6	55	Computer System (without Hard Disk)	226
25	water basin	1	56	Printer	48
26	Token Led	22	57	LCD	184
27	Exast Fan	6	58	keyboard	lot
28	Breaket Fan	11	59	Q-matic Led	24
29	Celling Fan	7	60	Toner scrape	Scrape
30	Gas Heater	4	61	ups Batteries	200
31	Window AC	1			

2. Registration fee of Tender documents having terms & conditions @ Rs. 1000 (Non Refundable) along with CDR of Rs. 100,000 (Rupees One Hundred Thousand Only) must be submitted to Procurement section on or before 30th Jan, 2023 at 1100 HRS. Open auction activity will be held on 30th Jan, 2023 at 1130 HRS at NADRA store/plot. Only registered and active tax payers bidders will be allowed to participate.

3. Items can be checked/inspected on working days during office hours from 16th Jan, 2023 to 27th Jan, 2023.

4. The successful bidder will be responsible to clear all expenses within 03 days, Otherwise CDR will be confiscated.

5. The contractor will be responsible to bear all expenses of labor, carriage, weightage and applicable Government taxes.

6. Tender is also available on PPRA Website: - WWW.PPRA.ORG.PK

7. Competent Authority reserves the right to accept/reject, any/all offers as per the clause 33 of PPRA Rules.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR (Procurement & Store)
NADRA REGIONAL HEAD OFFICE, PESHAWAR
EOBI BUILDING PHASE 5, HAYATABAD PESHAWAR PHONE # 091-9217840-41



CS, IGP KP jointly presided meeting at CPO

F.P Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Shahzad Bangash and Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Moazzam Jah Ansari Jointly presided over a video link conference at CPO Peshawar on Saturday.

Home Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Additional IGP Operations, all Regional and District Police Officers participated in the conference via video link.

In the conference the confronting challenges to the law and order were threaderily discussed and necessary instructions were issued to the participants.

Addressing the participants the Chief Secretary informed that KP Police under the dynamic leadership of IGP Moazzam Jah Ansari was performing its duty with professional zeal and spirit.

He further informed that KP police in the same time are fighting against crime, terrorism as well as providing security to the Chinese working on different projects and polio teams in the province in an effective manner.

The Chief Secretary informed the participants that security of the Chinese was of paramount importance. The Chief Secretary directed the participants of the conference to strictly adhere to the Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) of the Chinese and other foreigners and further improve their preparedness and meet any eventualities with iron hands.

The Chief Secretary held in high esteems the sacrifices rendered by the KP police in the war against terror.

He reminded that KP police had proved

its mettle in the war against terror and hoped that they will again give crushing defeat to the state enemies.

The Chief Secretary assured that the provincial government will provide all possible assistance in the capacity building and equipping KP police that all required gadgets and equipment.

Addressing the police officers in the conference the IGP Moazzam Jah Ansari informed that fully fledged war had been started against the state and directed them to enhance their level of preparedness, send the Jawans to the duty points with all protection gears and check it through concerned SDPOs on daily basis and get report from them about the safety measures of the Jawans.

The IGP informed that police preparedness and alertness shall be far better than the anti-State elements in every respect and shall come victorious without any human loss. The IGP also directed the participants to ensure fool-proof security to the Chinese working on different projects in the province.

The IGP asserted that all available resources are being used to enhance the capabilities of the police so as to flush out unscrupulous elements.

The IGP revealed that the process of provision of thermal sights and cameras are going on with breakneck speed which will be completed very soon.

The IGP hoped that the valiant officers and Jawans of the police force will come out victorious in the ongoing war against terror and vowed that every sacrifices would be offered for eliminating terrorism and maintain durable peace in the province.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan administering oath to newly elected cabinet and governing body of Peshawar Press Club.

Governor pays tribute to police force

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Saturday attended funeral prayers of police personnel martyred in miscreants attack on Sarband Police Station and paid tribute to police force for their sacrifices in line of duty.

He also prayed to rest departed souls of martyred policemen in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss with patience.

He said we stands with bereaved families in this hour of distress and added that sacrifices offered by KP police for maintaining peace would not go vain and always be remembered.

COC files against Secretary, DG Energy for violation PHC's order

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Contempt of Court (COC) has been filed against Secretary Energy, Director General to the Minister for Energy, Section Officer and Engineer Arif Mehmood Sadozai against appointment of Chief Executive Officer at Peshawar Electricity Supply Company, on Saturday.

The COC filed by Chief Engineer Gul Nabi Syed while serving as CEO PESCO stating that respondents DG to Minister Ghulam Rasool Dumki and Secretary Energy Rashid Mehmood Langrial have

willfully, intentionally, dishonestly and madafidely to accommodate Engineer Arif Mehmood at the cost of honor, prestige and carrier of the petitioner, disobeying and disregarding orders, directions and process of Peshawar High Court (PHC).

The petition added that PHC has impugn appointment and posting order of Engineer Arif Mehmood belong to another Islamabad based Company, which act and action amounts to willful breach of order of High Court intend to bring the authority of the court and adminis-

tration of law into disrespect, disrepute and prejudice the process of law, falling within the category of Contempt of Court.

It is admitted fact that the order was announced and written by PHC in the presence of Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan but still respondents on learning about the court order, swiftly, hurriedly in a post haste manner issued the impugned notification of engineer Arif Mehmood after late office hours, which calculated to commit contempt and lower the authority of honorable high court, the COC stated.

The COC added that it is act of respondents manifestly amount to disobey and disregard the orders and directions of PHC. It is for ends of justice that the injures and inconvenience caused to the petitioner may be remedied by restoring him to his previous position as he was on 12 January 2023 the date of issuing of status quo order.

The petitioner argued for contempt of court proceeding may be initiated against the respondents/ contemptors and they be awarded exemplary punishment so that it may be a lesson for like-minded persons.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Dr. Shahzad Bangash and IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Moazzam Jah Ansari jointly presiding over a video link conference at CPO Peshawar.

Schedule of power suspension announced

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) here on Saturday announced schedule of power suspension for various areas under its network due to necessary maintenance works.

According to the spokesman, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar University Grid Station on January 16, 19, 23, 26 and 30 from 9.00 a.m to 3.00 pm, resultantly the consumers of 11 KV Danish Abad, Rahat Abad 1, 2, Ghareeb Abad feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Shahibaug Grid Station on January 16, 19, 23, 26 and 31 from 9.00 am to 2.00, resultantly the consumers of 11 KV Charsadda Road and Nishat

feeder will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Wapda House Grid Station on January 16, 23, 25 and 30 from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm, resultantly the consumers of 11 KV Hassan Ghari feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Pubbi Grid Station on January 17, 24 and 31 from 9.00 am to 3.00, resultantly the consumers of 11 KV Aman Kot, Pubbi City, Ajab Bagh, Dagai, SS Baba, New Jalozai, Pana Kot, Spin Khak feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Taru Jabba Grid Station on January 16, 23 and 30 from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm, resultantly the consumers

of 11 KV Wazir Ghari, Scarp 1, PSO, Wapda Colony, Akbar Pura and Taru Jabba feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Kholian Bala, Havelian-Abbottabad Transmission Line on January 16 from 9.00 to 5.00 pm, as result the consumers of 132 KV 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 Dera Ismail Khan - Band Kurai Transmission Line on January 16 from 9.00 am to 4.00, as result the consumers of 66 KV Band Kurai grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

PHCBA hold Reference in memory of late lawyers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Condolence References in memory of late Raza Ullah Khan, Fazal E Rabi Dard, Ashab Ali Bangash, Ibrahim Shah, Perveen Akhtar, Faisal Irshad Advocates and all other respected martyrs and departed souls of legal fraternity.

The reference arranged by Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) in Safer Ullah Khan Bar Room at Peshawar High Court Peshawar. All the Seniors and juniors Advocates participated and Dua was offered for their Maghfirat and Jannah.

The President PHCBA welcomed all the participants. The Senior members Khushdil Khan, Akhtar Ali Shah, Fida Gul, Akhtar Ali Khan Nahqy, Muazzam Butt, Mian Rehman Ullah Shah and Muhammad Farooq Afridi Secretary General PHCBA addressed in the reference.

After dua, a lunch was organized by Malgaray Wa-

keelan in the honour of participants. PHCBA thanks to all Lawyers Fraternity who participated in the event.

Kundi condemns attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Prime Minister, Faisal Karim Kundi has strongly condemned hand grenade on the house of Parachinar-based senior journalist, Mohammad Ali Turi and said that the Inspector General of Police KP has been asked to submit a report.

Talking to the Senior Vice President, Parachinar Press Club on phone on Saturday, he condemned the hand grenade attack on his house and said that the culprit will not go scot free and a report regarding the incident has been sought from the KP police chief.

He said that a transparent investigation into the incident would be made soon. He said that the government will take all possible steps for the protection of journalists.

ANP welcomes likely dissolution of KP assembly

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial president ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Aimal Wali Khan has welcomed the likely dissolution of KP Assembly and said that the people of the province will be got rid of the champions of change.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he said that the people of the province will get rid of the PTI government, which had spent the whole last day on begging before opposition for moving a non-confidence motion. But, we have made it clear on them that we will not tolerate the thieves of the public mandate anymore and today is day of liberation from them.

He said that after losing power, the PTI leaders will be got aware of their real position, saying vacation of stay order in BRT case, Malam Jabba, Billion Tree Tsunami and other scams are sufficient for taking them to their logical end.

Aimal Wali Khan alleged that for the last two decades PTI has used the resources of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in favour of Imran Khan.

He said that during the period from 2008-13, they have had cleared all circular debts of the province

while loans were restricted at Rs.97 billion. He said that during the PTI governments foreign debts have crossed the figure of 987 billion rupees and after next two months, the province will even not having the resources to pay the salaries to employees.

ANP condemned attack of miscreants on Police Station

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali Khan has condemned attack of miscreants on Sarband Police Station and expressed grief over the killing of police personnel in the incident.

In a statement issued from Bacha Khan Markaz here Saturday, ANP provincial president praised the sacrifices of police in maintaining peace and said that we stands with police force which never desisted from offering sacrifices in line of duty.

He also expressed grief and sorrow over the death of Deputy Superintendent Police, Sardar Khan and two police personnel in the incident.

Aimal Wali also highlighted the need to further equip police force and said that increase of insurgency is a matter of grave concern for all of us and added that attempts to make KP province a battleground would be foiled.

QWP chief condemns attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior politician and chairman, Quami Watan Party (QWP) Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao has strongly condemned terrorists' attack on Sarband Police Station and expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of DSP Sardar Hussain and other police personnel.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao said that KP Police have rendered unforgettable sacrifices in the war against terror and maintenance of peace, which would be remembered forever.

Paying tributes to the sacrifices, bravery and courage of KP Police, he said that their sympathies are with the families of martyred DSP and other police personnel.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls of all martyred police personnel and demanded the provision of complete financial assistance to their families.



PESHAWAR: Student delegation of Abdul Wali Khan University meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

Pak Steel hosts reception for CEO KP-EZDMC

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Pak Steel/Farid Steel, Muhammad Aslam Farid hosted a reception in the honour of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal for extension in his service for another term of

three years, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Chairman Pak Steel/Farid Steel appreciated the positive role played by the CEO KP-EZDMC for development of infrastructure in economic zones and attracting of investment to the province.

The policies introduced by KP-EZDMC during the tenure of Javed Iqbal Khattak, he said that reflect back at their journey that started in 60s and appreciated the role played by the company since joining of the present top leadership.

Members of the Board of Directors (BOD) KP-EZDMC Hassan Farid, Zahid Shinwari, Tayyab Swati, Inam Mughal and Sahibzada Salim ur Rehman also attended the reception.

The CEO KP-EZDMC and members Board of Directors (BoD) also visited 438 acres of Hattar Special Economic to review progress on development work in the zone.

PML-N welcoming dissolution of KP assembly

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial spokesman PMLN and MPA Ikhtiar wali Khan on Saturday said they welcome the dissolution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

In a statement issued here he said that in a ten-year government the PTI has bankrupted and indebted the province for one thousand billion rupees.

He said that the PTI has left Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a flour crisis. He said that the 10-year tenure of PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the worst example of corruption.

Ikhtiar Wali said that the ruling party will not win even ten seats in the next general elections.

If there is accountability before the election, PTI will not even get a candidate, he said.

He said Chief Minister Mahmood Khan took government flour, wheat, drug and health card medals with him.

The preparation of PML-N is complete and it will carry out a clean sweep under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, said Ikhtiar Wali.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif addressing a gathering.



In brief

Free medical camp held F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Association for Community Development arranged free medical camp for chest patients at Takhtbhai, on Saturday. The free medical was held at Haji Alamzeb Hujra while as many as medical facilities were provided to 84 patients. Dr. Sartaj claimed that the association is committed for welfare of public while X-ray van facility was also provided in the camp. The public appreciated efforts of Association for Community Development and hopeful for further such activities in future.

Cop among two killed, one hurt

MULTAN (INP): A head constable and a pedestrian were killed while another police official was injured by the firing of some unknown assailants at Jhangi picket in the precincts of Vehoa Police Station, Taunsa Sharif district on Friday. Additional Inspector General Police (AIGP) South Punjab Sahabzada Shahzad Sultan, taking notice of the incident, asked the RPO DG Khan to reach the site while taking precautionary measures and supervise the search operation being underway to arrest the criminals, South Punjab police spokesman said in a statement. The spokesman said some unknown assailants opened fire at the Jhangi picket, causing the death of Head Constable Mazhar Hussain and a pedestrian namely Abdul Basit while injuring another policeman, Muhammad Ramzan. The AIGP South Punjab expressed optimism that the police were continuing the search operation and the criminals would be arrested soon.

Parachinar in grip of cold F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Due to snowfall severe cold gripped Parachinar and other parts of the upper parts of tribal district Kurram on Saturday and residents have restricted their movement to their houses. The mercury in Parachinar has dropped to minus 10C and standing water has frozen, resulting in the closure of bazaars in Parachinar as shopkeepers belonging to far-flung localities did not arrive to open their businesses. The residents of Upper Kurram are using Angeethi (fire) to warm and protect themselves against severe cold.

16 prisoners of petty cases freed F.P. Report

TANK: District and Session Judge Wali Muhammad Khan and Senior Civil Judge Hafiz Aurenzeb visited the Sub-Jail Tank and disposed of 16 prisoners' petty cases. The Judges also inspected various chambers of the jail and expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements in the premises of jail. They also inspected food distribution procedures among prisoners and directed concerned staff to provide healthy food to inmates. They also directed to treat the prisoners appropriately. Superintendent of the jail Sarfaraz Ahmad Khan Marwat and Chief Muhammad Zaman briefed them about the different steps taken for the well being of prisoners.

Anti-polio drive starts in Vehari

BUREWALA (INP): Deputy Commissioner Safdar Hussain Wirk inaugurated the anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to kids.

Govts do nothing to control hike in prices: JI chief

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has said the country does not need any other enemy in the existence of the Pakistan Democratic Movement and Pakistan Tehreek Insaf as they both were destroying the country with their ugly politics. He was addressing the party workers at Samarbagh as chief guest here on Saturday. The JI chief announced that his party would make no alliance with any party in the next general elections and would contest it with the party's own symbol and agenda.

Sirajul Haq said that the troika (PML-N, PPP and PTI) had destroyed everything including the culture, civilization, social norms, politics and economy in the country. He said the nation no longer trusted them and were eyeing on other political parties.

Referring to inflation and flour shortage the JI chief said that people from Karachi to Chitral stood in long queues for hours just to get a 20 kg of flour bags. He said the international establishment had shortlisted the political parties to rule Pakistan. "These parties can-

not form a government without the establishment in Pakistan and they always play in its hands", he said, adding the voters were now aware of the situation and they would elect honest, sincere and Pakistan-made politicians.

About the Geneva pledges he said the rulers were expressing pleasure on getting loans for running the state affairs but it was a shame for the nation. "The prime minister shall tell us where the Rs 70 billion announced for the flood victims was spent", he asked. The JI chief while speaking at a news conference at Dir Khas here the other day said that bad governance, incompetence and corruption of the rulers was the cause of political chaos, constitutional and economic crises in the country. He said the hoarders and the mafias were making billions of rupees as profit. "Mafias are present in all the three major parties PML-N, PPP and PTI", he said, adding all these had created artificial crises of sugar, medicine and petrol in the past.

The JI chief strongly criticized the Sindh government's decision to postpone the local body elections in Karachi and 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 the elections on January 15.

About the Gawadar situation, 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 was their constitutional and democratic right. "We strongly condemn the cases and arrests against the protesters of 'Gwadar Ko Haq Du Tehreek' and its leader, he said and demanded the government to immediately release all the arrested protesters.

Police hold flag march in Wana Bazaar

F.P. Report

WANA: A heavy contingent of police led by District Officer DPO South Waziristan hold flag march in Wana Bazaar along with SP Investigation and DSP, on Saturday. DPO reviewed the police personnel posted at the new entry and exit road blockades at Wana Bypass Road and other places and also boosted their morale.

DPO Shabir Hussain won the hearts of the people who were afraid of terrorism by raising slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad and Allahu Akbar" along with the policemen deployed at the fresh internal

and external blockades in Wana Bazaar. He ordered the personnel posted at the entrances and exits of Wana Bazaar said that display of weapons and black glass vehicles is completely prohibited in Wana Bazaar.

People should fully cooperate with the police to establish peace in Wana Bazaar and all areas of Lower Waziristan. He said that the police will use their limited resources to end the scourge of crime, kidnapping, terrorism and drugs in Lower South Waziristan. It should be noted that yesterday the dharna that has been going

on for 7 days in Wana has been ended by the people on the conditions that the police must be ensured to maintain peace in the area.

QAP demands accurate census: The founding leader of Qabail Awami Party (QAP) Azam Khan Mehsum demanded that to ensure transparent and fair census to assure equal distribution of resources among different regions, on Saturday. QAP leader added that unfortunately, instead of paying attention to the problems of the erstwhile Fata, special attention was paid to looting the resources of former FATA.



HYDERABAD: Polling staffer carrying boxes and other items for today's local bodies election.

Quota of flour dealer cancelled F.P. Report

KOHAT: Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC) Nisar Ahmed here on Saturday inspected different flour mills and canceled flour quota for a dealer after finding irregularities in the distribution process.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Furqan Ashraf, district administration teams led by the AAC visited Al-Mansoor Flour Mills, Aman Flour Mills and Zahid Flour Mills. The AAC checked stock registers, dealer registers and gate passes, and also visited wheat godowns.

Later, flour prices and sacks registers of different subsidized flour dealers in the local market were also checked. The flour quota of one dealer was canceled over irregularities in flour distribution, and all the flour dealers were directed to ensure transparency during the distribution of subsidized flour among area people.

Steps reviewed for drug-free Malakand

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand hold review meeting for drug-free region in which Deputy Commissioners along with Social Welfare's officers were present and briefed regarding measurements made for rehabilitation of drug-addicts at his office.

A meeting was held at the Commissioner's Office Saidu Sharif to review measures for the rehabilitation of drug abusers and making Malakand a drug free division of the country. Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai presided over the meeting in which Deputy Commissioners, Additional Deputy Commissioners, and officers of the Social Welfare Department from the districts of Malakand

Division participated. Social welfare officers from the districts gave a detailed briefing on the available resources for detox and the steps taken so far under Drug-Free Malakand Initiative.

In the meeting, the details and resources available in the government and non-government rehabilitation centers in the districts were reviewed. While presiding over the meeting, Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai directed Deputy Commissioner Swat Junaid Khan to devise a referral mechanism and formulate a strategy for the rehabilitation of the drug abusers in Swat. Commissioner Malakand said that the Swat strategy will be applied to all districts of the Malakand division. Commissioner Malakand

Division issued orders to the Deputy Commissioners to take actions against the drug mafia and adopt measures to stop drug trafficking.

Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai said that a new and advanced trend of drug abuse is on the rise among the youth, in which ice is the leading new trend, and therefore strict measures are needed. Commissioner Malakand Division said that the role of private rehab centers and individuals in rehabilitating drug addicts is commendable and the capacity of government rehab centers as well as non-government rehab centers will be increased. He said that the addicts will be rehabilitated and equipped with skills so that they can play a positive role in society.

Lawyers boycott Balochistan courts

QUETTA (PPI): Lawyers on Saturday boycotted courts in Balochistan in protest against the arrest of Haq Do Tehreek (HDT) leader Maulana Hidayatur Rehman in Gwadar. The Balochistan Bar Council strongly condemned Maulana's arrest and termed it as an act tantamount to contempt of court.

The Bar urged Balochistan chief secretary and inspector-general of police to take immediate notice of the incident. It said that the HDT leader was in court with his lawyers to seek interim bail. It is the fundamental right of every citizen to appear before a court to seek interim bail, the Bar added. The Bar said the Gwadar police have completely failed to protect the lives and properties of the citizens.

Rehman was arrested on

Friday after he showed up at a local court over the charges of killing a policeman. A heavy police contingent was present outside the local court to arrest three others along with the HDT leader. Police had registered FIR against the Maulana and other leaders of the movement for causing damages to public and private properties. However, the charges were vehemently denied by the Maulana.

Health dept being devolved to local level: Secretary, Health Department, Saleh Muhammad Nasar, said on Saturday that empowering Incharge of Healthcare Centres was being processed in Health Department to devolve powers to local level. These views were expressed by him while talking to a delegation of Federal Ministry of Health

Services, Islamabad, National Institute of Health, Islamabad and United Kingdom Health Security Agency who called on him under the leadership of Dr. Baseer Khan Achakzai here on Saturday.

Nasar said that Surveillance Officers would be posted in all the districts of the province, adding that the establishment of Public Health Laboratories in Balochistan would help further strengthen the surveillance network in the province. He said that IHR Committee was operationalised in order to achieve the target of "One Health system". He added that empowering Incharge of Healthcare Centres was being processed in Health Department to devolve powers to local level.

15 suspects arrested

SIALKOT (INP): Police claimed to have arrested 15 suspects during a combing operation in Daska city on Friday late night. On the direction of District Police Officer Muhammad Faisal Kamran, the police under the supervision of SP Investigation Salman Liaquat conducted a crackdown and arrested the suspects.

The police from Daska Sadr and City, Bombanwala, Motra, Satrah, Police lines and elite force teams took part in the combing operation. Talking to the media, SP Investigation said that Sialkot district would be purged of the scourge of drugs and the police would deal with law breakers with iron hands.

Human nature and property

Nisar Kayani

A ZAD Kashmir, in the neighboring village of Rawalakot, allegedly for the sake of property, the brothers followed Cain's brutality and killed his brother and dismembered his body. The dog found the leg of the dead body. He picked up and left near the house of the victim. After the human leg and other organs, except for the second leg, other parts of the human body were cut off from the body of local youth Azhar Misri.

Two brothers of Qazi Azhar Misri were arrested. Azhar Misri was missing for a few days. The accused was arrested. The police reached the spot and recovered thirteen pieces of the victim's body and detained the brothers of the victim, Qamar Misri and Tahir Misri.

Talking to the media, sister Uzma Misri said that the main suspect in the incident is the third brother Shaukat Misri who has escaped. The brothers killed the brother with a sharp instrument to grab the property, Qamar took responsibility for the murder as part of a plan. It has been taken so that tomorrow the mother will forgive by giving a statement and the real accused is part of the investigation Uzmi Misri demanded that

the incident should be investigated at a high level and the real accused Shaukat Misri should be arrested and brought to justice. According to the police, more than 13 pieces of the body have been cut. Police say that the accused has committed Iqbal crime and further investigation is going on.

The first worst incident of violence in the world was the killing of his brother Abel by Habeel (Cain). This was the age of ignorance. But even in the modern era, tolerance and tolerance are lacking in the society and the quality is that man has become thirsty for blood relations. Islam says that man is the best of creation. But millions of people in the world have been forced to live worse than animals. Christianity says: If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek to be slapped. But it has happened in the world that millions of people slap other people on one cheek and regret that they were not given the opportunity to slap the other cheek.

Hinduism exaggerates the veneration of man to the point of polytheism, even teaching bowing to men. But millions of people in the world are united day and night to bow the heads of others in front of them. If we look at the scenario of the world, there are military wars in the

world, economic wars have engulfed the world, media wars have destroyed the world. The revolutionary thinker Leon Trotsky, the main figure of the Russian Revolution, wrote about the social chaos that "life and politics do not accept any kindness or gratitude." If this small thing is understood, people's mental, spiritual and domestic problems. Can be solved to some extent. But few people admit the bitter truth and most of the conversation is based on suspicion, complaint and backbiting.

Everyone seems to be crying about their kindness and forgetfulness of others. They themselves suffer unnecessary pain and they also put others to it. The story of the other is also heard to tell his own story. The warmth of blood relations has also become cold. Friendships have turned from extreme nudity to meanness. The standards of mutual communication have been reduced to meaning and 'purpose'. Economic status has not only become a measure of social rank, but has become embedded in every relationship, paralyzing emotions and subordinating them to material interests.

Saving one's life is equal to saving the life of the whole humanity, and killing one person is the same as saving the whole

humanity. is equivalent to murder. When this high concept of human being is established in the society, not only big sins, but also small sins, even minor slips start feeling shame in the real sense. But in our era, such a concept of man has become prevalent and established in the minds of people, in which man cannot rise above the level of animals. For example, someone says that man is a social animal, someone thinks that man is nothing but an economic animal.

In modern political science, man is also called a political animal. Modern biology says that man is only a biological being. Modern psychology says that the role of instincts is central in determining human reality and there is no difference between man and animal at the level of biology and instincts. It is obvious that in this concept of man, the possibility of true respect for man and true love for him is negligible. Therefore, coercion and violence at every level in human relations is certain. One of the problems of the present era is that there is no example of a perfect person in front of man. In the contemporary world, power has become central in every sphere from individual life to collective life and from collective life to international life.

So, our relationship is a power relationship. Our argu-

ments are arguments of power. Our system is a system of power. In this situation, violence will not increase, so what else will happen! The principle is that as the action takes place, so does the reaction take place. Therefore, even in response to power, power can always come out. Relationships do not require need, but want respect and attention. The greatness of parents lies in the fact that they should ignore many mistakes of their children. If something goes wrong between brothers, they should forgive them. The inner peace of a person is also related to pain. This is the message of all major religions. Love, pain, affection. We should find a secular way to promote mercy and compassion. The tragic tragedy of Tarnotikot Rawalkot is a reminder of this that intolerance is extinct due to economic and social inequality, due to which our society has become a slave to money.

This greed for money is embedded in every relationship, paralyzing emotions and subordinating them to material interests. Has been victimized. According to Karl Popper's research, in order to maintain its tolerance, any society must end its acceptance of intolerant behavior. When a society begins to accept intolerant behavior, over time that society tolerance

ends. How can we expect that aggression will not arise in people like Qamar Misri and Tahir Misri, Shaukat Misri. While the brother who was killed by them was forced to put out the fire of his stomach by selling his household goods, the most basic necessities like flour and bread were provided by the rulers for Qamar, Tahir, Shaukat and their murdered brother. Their lives have been tormented by making them inaccessible. If the deceased Azhar Misri was addicted to drugs, then he could have been treated, but where it becomes difficult for the body and soul to maintain the relationship, then treatment becomes a dream. This process of decline cannot continue indefinitely. Struggle is the basic element of human instinct.

History is a witness that the norm of poverty is always broken and the extraordinary circumstances that break it are called revolutions. It cannot be reformed now by revolution. Just as a patient suffering from fever can be temporarily reduced by applying ice packs to his fever, in the same way the present outdated and rotten system can provide temporary relief by reforms but This is not a permanent and lasting solution. The establishment of a non-exploitative and class-free society is the cure for such diseases.



Russian Wagner Group’s activities intolerable: US

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP): A senior US envoy expressed strong concern about the activities of the Russian private military contractor Wagner Group and its alleged attempts to recruit soldiers in Serbia and elsewhere in the world. US State Department Counselor Derek Chollet said he voiced these concerns during talks in Belgrade with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

“We have seen that the Wagner Group is seeking to recruit soldiers from Serbia and elsewhere and that’s something we think cannot stand,” he told reporters after the meeting. “I don’t know if there are concerns (in Serbia), we talked about our concerns and we are looking forward to working with the government here in Belgrade and elsewhere where Wagner is active to put an end to their activities,” he added.

Wagner Group, owned by Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, reportedly has been active in dozens of mostly African states, working with governments on pro-Russian propaganda and other military and political projects. The group has boasted about its presence in

Serbia, the only European state besides Belarus which has not joined international sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine. The group has reportedly announced the opening of its offices in Belgrade, something that was later denied. Moscow’s propaganda portal RT, which recently started its Serbian-language online news site in Serbia, has published Wagner’s recruitment advert seeking fighters in Ukraine, saying the group offers “more than attractive” incentives.

Chollet said Wagner Group is “in action in terrible ways throughout the world, whether it is in Libya, the Central African Republic or right now in Ukraine.” The group which reportedly includes a large contingent of convicts recruited in Russian prisons has spearheaded the attacks in eastern Ukraine, including the fierce battles in Soledad and Bakhmut. Prigozhin and his group have been under US sanctions for years and the US has recently taken additional steps to try to control Wagner’s access to weapons.

Wagner Group mercenaries have also been accused by Western countries and UN experts of

numerous human rights abuses throughout Africa, including in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali. Earlier this month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced he has designated the Wagner Group as an “entity of particular concern” for its activities in the Central African Republic. Chollet also urged Serbia to introduce sanctions against its traditional Slavic ally Russia. “We believe that countries should sign on to the sanctions, and the reason why we believe that is because Russia’s actions do not only have to be condemned, they have to be punished,” he said. “Russia every day is prosecuting a brutal, unjustified war against Ukraine. We need to stand together, to ensure that this behavior, it’s clear that this behavior is unacceptable.”

The US envoy this week launched a tour of several Balkan nations in a visit focused on international efforts to help normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia after weeks of heightened tension. The former Serbian province declared independence in 2008, something Serbia and Russia don’t recognize.

Sweden rejects four extradition requests from Turkey

STOCKHOLM (Reuters): The Swedish government will not extradite four people sought by Turkey, which says they are connected to a US-based cleric it accuses of being behind a coup attempt in 2016, news agency TT reported, without citing sources. The extradition requests were made in 2019 and 2020, before Sweden and Finland signed a three-way agreement with Turkey aimed at overcoming Ankara’s objections to the two Nordic countries joining the NATO military alliance.

Sweden’s High Court decided last summer the four could not be extradited, TT said, leaving the government no choice but to follow its decision. Sweden’s Foreign Ministry could not comment immediately on the report. Turkey called a separate decision by the High Court in December to block the extradition of Turkish journalist Bulent Kenes a “very negative” development.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has singled out Kenes as a person Ankara wanted extradited from Sweden as a condition for Ankara’s approval for Stockholm to join NATO. Finland and Sweden both asked to join NATO in May 2022 in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but their bids require the approval of all 30 NATO member states, including Turkey.

Salvadoran girls found border

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexican immigration agents found three unaccompanied Salvadoran children stranded on an islet on the Rio Grande, which straddles the US-Mexico border, Mexico’s immigration institute said. The three sisters are 9, 6 and 1 year old, the institute said in a statement. Members of Mexico’s National Guard first issued an alert for the children, according to the institute.

The eldest child was holding her infant sister in her arms when found by the agents, authorities said. Salvadoran consulate officials in Mexico were aware of the incident and in talks with local authorities, El Salvador’s foreign ministry said. Rio Grande crossing dividing the United States and Mexico is one of the last hurdles migrants face before reaching the United States, often after arduous journeys. The three children were placed in the care of Mexico’s System for the Integral Development of the Family (DIF), the immigration institute said.

Tanzania Opp leader to end exile

DODOMA (Agencies): Tanzania’s opposition leader and former presidential candidate Tundu Lissu has said he will return home this month from exile in Europe to “write a new chapter” after the government’s decision to lift a ban on political rallies. President Samia Suluhu Hassan lifted the six-and-a-half-year ban on political rallies last week, part of her reconciliation strategy after taking over the presidency in March 2021 following the death of her predecessor John Magufuli. The ban, imposed by Magufuli in 2016, allowed elected politicians to conduct rallies in their constituencies but barred other political rallies and protests.

“With the lifting of the illegal ban on political activity, it’s now time to return home and get back to work,” Lissu said on Twitter, saying he would arrive on January 25. In a speech streamed live on YouTube and carried on local channels in Tanzania, Lissu said “we cannot continue to endlessly live in exile”. “I am optimistic that we will write a new chapter this year ... 2023 is an important year in the history of our country,” he said. Lissu initially left the country in 2017 to seek treatment abroad after he was shot 16 times, mostly in the lower abdomen, in an attack by unknown attackers in the administrative capital Dodoma in September that year.

Peru president will not resign, apologises for protest death toll

LIMA (Agencies): Peruvian President Dina Boluarte has apologised for dozens of deaths in protests that have broken out across the country in recent weeks, but insisted that she will not step down. Speaking to the nation in a late night address, Boluarte lamented the violence that has killed more than 40 people since December – mostly protesters during clashes with security forces, but also a police officer burned alive in a vehicle – and injured hundreds more police and demonstrators.

“Some voices that have come from the violent and radical factions are asking for my resignation, provoking the population into chaos, disorder and destruction,” Boluarte said in the address. “I will not resign. My commitment is with Peru,” she said. “I cannot stop reiterating my regret for the deaths of Peruvians in these protests,” she said. “I apologise for this situation.”

Protests have gripped the South American nation since former President Pedro Castillo was removed from office in December and detained after he tried to illegally dissolve Congress. He was replaced in the president’s position by Boluarte, who was vice president. Boluarte also rejected the possibility of calling a constitutional assembly as demanded by protesters, pointing to the difficulties Peru’s neighbour Chile has had in drafting and approving a new constitution. “That cannot happen overnight,” she said.

Supporters of the former president have marched and barricaded streets around the country for weeks, demanding that new elections be held and for Boluarte to step down. Police



announced the arrest of Rocío Leandro, a union leader from the south-central Ayacucho region with supposed links to Maoist rebels, who is accused of financing the protests and recruiting demonstrators. Police spokesman Oscar Arriola claimed the arrest of Leandro proved that remnants of the Shining Path Maoist rebels were involved in the protests. Arriola claimed Leandro was a former Shining Path member known as “Comrade Cusi”.

Authorities reported that protesters continue to mount roadblocks in 10 of the country’s 25 departments. Authorities closed air and rail links to Peru’s famed Machu Picchu tourist site for the second day as protests flared up leading to clashes with police. Several regional governors and professional associations, including lawyers and teachers, have joined

the calls for Boluarte to resign. Opposition legislator Susel Paredes told local radio that time was running out for Boluarte and that the resignation of Labour Minister Eduardo García was “the beginning of the end” for the president.

Two other ministers resigned, with the head of the Ministry of the Interior, Victor Rojas, and the head of the Ministry of Women, Grecia Rojas, immediately replaced by retired general Vicente Romero and Nancy Tolentino, respectively, at a swearing-in ceremony with Boluarte. Peru has been riddled with political instability in recent years. Boluarte, 60, is the sixth person to hold the presidency in five years. Castillo, who was being investigated in several fraud cases during his tenure, has been remanded in custody for 18 months, charged with rebellion.

Colombia president asks to stop arrest of narco sought by US

BOGOTA (AP): Colombia’s president is seeking to suspend arrest orders against some of the country’s biggest criminal suspects, including at least one individual wanted in the US on narcotics charges, as part of an ambitious plan to dismantle armed groups that have long dominated the countryside.

The request to suspend the arrest orders against eight members of the so-called Gulf Clan was made by President Gustavo Petro’s peace commissioner in a letter dated Jan. 11 to Colombia’s chief prosecutor. Among those on the list are Jobanis Villadiego, also known by his alias “Bad Boy,” who was indicted in Brooklyn federal court in 2015 alongside Dairo Antonio Úsuga, then leader of the Gulf Clan and at the time Colombia’s most wanted fugitive. A copy of the letter was provided to The Associated Press by someone close to US law enforcement on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters at the heart of more than two decades of US-Colombia anti-narcotics cooperation.

Colombia’s top law enforcement authority said there was no legal basis for Petro’s request. In a seven-page rebuttal shared with the media, the chief prosecutor’s office said such requests could only be made against members of politically motivated armed groups whereas the Gulf Clan — which emerged from the ashes of Colombia’s right-wing paramilitary movement — was a purely criminal enterprise. The Gulf Clan is accused of being Colombia’s largest drug trafficking organization, responsible for sending as much as 20 metric tons of cocaine each month to the US and Europe.

Conservative former President Iván Duque last year extradited Úsuga to the US, calling him the “most dangerous drug trafficker in the world” and likening him to the feared Pablo Escobar who terrorized much of Colombia before his death in the 1990s. Úsuga pleaded not guilty upon his arrival to the US and is currently awaiting trial.

Petro has taken a different approach from his law and order predecessor. Since his historic election last year, the former leftist guerrilla has been pushing a plan for “total peace” that would include negotiating not only with that country’s last main rebel group, the National Liberation Army, but also armed gangs like the Gulf Clan that continue to dominate and hold back

development in Colombia’s long neglected countryside. He’s also proposed shielding from extradition those willing to lay down their weapons and renounce criminal activity, a move that is bound to test a long-standing law enforcement alliance with Washington. Under Duque, Colombia extradited more than 500 individuals to the US.

Villadiego is wanted in the US on multiple drug trafficking charges and in Colombia faces additional charges for homicide and forced recruitment of minors to commit criminal acts. Like his former boss Úsuga, he was a member of the right-wing United Self Defense Forces of Colombia who renounced violence as part of a 2004 peace deal. But he later returned to a life of crime as one of Úsuga’s top lieutenants in the Gulf Clan.

US stops hundreds fleeing Cuba, Haiti by sea, returns most

MIAMI (AP): The Coast Guard returned another 177 Cuban migrants who were caught at sea off Florida to the island, while a group of about two dozen Haitians swam ashore in Miami. The Cuban migrants were all intercepted separately off the coast earlier this month, according to a Coast Guard news release. They were repatriated by two Coast Guard cutters.

Twenty-five Haitians who had traveled by sailboat from Port-de-Paix, Haiti, swam ashore at Virginia Key, a small island just southeast of downtown Miami, and were taken into the custody of US Customs and Border Protection, agency spokesman Michael Selva said. Good Samaritans among island beachgoers helped some of the migrants ashore with small boats and jet skis, Selva said. Dozens of additional migrants still aboard the sailboat were being processed by federal officials at sea, which typically means they are returned to their home countries.

Increasing numbers of Cuban and Haitian migrants have attempted the risky Florida Straits crossing in recent months to illegally enter the Keys Island chain and other parts of the state as inflation soars and economic conditions deteriorate in their home countries. The spike among Cubans has been especially pronounced. Since Oct. 1, 2022, the Coast Guard has interdicted more than 4,900 Cuban migrants at sea, as compared with

more than 6,100 Cubans intercepted during all of fiscal 2022, which ended Sept. 30, according to the news release.

The latest returns and landings came just after President Joe Biden’s administration began a new policy to start turning back Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans at the Texas border, along with Venezuelans, who arrive illegally. The administration also is offering humanitarian parole for up to 30,000 people a month from those four countries if they apply online, pay their airfare and find a financial sponsor. Migrants who arrive illegally and don’t immediately return home will become ineligible for the new parole. US officials are hoping this will deter

sea arrivals by offering a safer alternative and a pathway to residency.

The US Embassy in Havana, Cuba recently resumed processing migrant visas, and said that some initial Cuban applicants already had been accepted under the new parole. In the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, would-be applicants have flocked an immigration office in recent days to apply for passports needed for the US program. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Mark Cobb said in a statement that with the new legal pathways available for migrants “we urge all people to use the safe and legal means available to travel to the United States. Don’t put your life at risk by taking to the sea when you don’t have to.”

Violence soars in Mali in the year after Russians arrive

DAKAR, Senegal (AP): Alou Diallo says he was drinking tea with his family one morning last month when groups of “white soldiers” invaded his village in central Mali, setting fire to houses and gunning down people suspected of being Islamic extremists. He scrambled to safety in the bush, but his son was shot and wounded while fleeing, then was finished off as he lay on the ground.

“I watched my 16-year-old son die,” Diallo told The Associated Press in Mali’s capital, Bamako, where he lives in a makeshift camp for displaced people. As he recounted that awful Saturday in his village of Banguel, the 47-year-old farmer cattle breeder made no attempt to hide the anger toward the troops, which he believed to be Russian mercenaries, who turned his world upside down. “I really want peace to return and things to go back to normal,” he said. “Here in Bamako, I live a life I didn’t choose.”

It’s been more than a year since hundreds of fighters from the Wagner Group, a shadowy Russian military contractor, began working alongside Mali’s armed forces to try to stem a decade-long insurgency by Islamic extremists in the West African country, Western officials say. But since the mercenaries arrived, diplomats, analysts and human rights groups say indiscriminate violence against civilians has grown, the extremists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have only gotten stronger, and there’s concern

the Russian presence will further destabilize the already-troubled region.

More than 2,000 civilians have been killed since December 2021, compared with about 500 in the previous 12 months, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, a nongovernmental organization. At least a third of those deaths recorded last year were from attacks involving the Wagner Group, according to the data compiled by ACLED. “They are killing civilians, and by their very presence, giving Malian security forces a green light to act on their worst inclinations,” said Michael Shurkin, senior fellow at Atlantic Council and director of global programs at the consultancy group 14 North

Strategies.

Military contractors from Wagner, which was founded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a millionaire businessman with ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, have been bolstering Moscow’s forces during its invasion of Ukraine. But experts say they also operate in a handful of African countries. Ever since Mali’s military seized power in two coups starting in 2020, a junta led by Col. Assimi Goita has had tense relations with the international community.

France sent troops to Mali in 2013 to help its former colony drive Islamic militants from northern areas of the country but withdrew them in August as relations frayed and anti-French sentiment grew in the population.

Covid cases in China touch 900 million

BEIJING (BBC): Some 900 million people in China have been infected with the coronavirus as of 11 January, according to a study by Peking University. The report estimates that 64% of the country’s population has the virus. It ranks Gansu province, where 91% of the people are reported to be infected, at the top, followed by Yunnan (84%) and Qinghai (80%).

A top Chinese epidemiologist has also warned that cases will surge in rural China over the lunar new year. The peak of China’s Covid wave is expected to last two to three months, added Zeng Guang, ex-head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control. Hundreds of millions of Chinese are travelling to their hometowns - many for the first time since the pandemic began - ahead of the lunar new year on 23 January. China has stopped providing daily Covid statistics since abandoning zero-Covid.

But hospitals in big cities - where healthcare facilities are better and more easily accessible -

have become crowded with Covid patients as the virus has spread through the country. Speaking at an event earlier this month, Mr Zeng said it was “time to focus on the rural areas”, in remarks reported in the Caixin news outlet. Many elderly, sick and disabled in the countryside were already being left behind in terms of Covid treatment, he added. China’s central Henan province is the only province to have given details of infection rates - earlier this month a health official there said nearly 90% of the population had had Covid, with similar rates seen in urban and rural areas.

However government officials say many provinces and cities have passed the peak of infections. The Lunar New Year holidays in China, which officially start from 21 January, involves the world’s largest annual migration of people. Some two billion trips are expected to be made in total and tens of millions of people have already travelled. Last month, China abruptly abandoned its zero Covid

policies. It also reopened its borders.

Official data shows five or fewer deaths a day over the past month, numbers which are inconsistent with the long queues seen at funeral homes and reports of deaths on social media. In December Chinese officials said they planned to issue monthly rather than daily updates on the Covid situation in the country. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said China, which stopped reporting Covid fatalities, was heavily under-reporting Covid deaths. In response, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin stressed again at a regular press briefing that Beijing has been sharing Covid data in “a timely, open and transparent manner in accordance with the law”, having held technical exchanges with the WHO over the past month. International health experts have predicted at least a million Covid-related deaths in China this year. Beijing has officially reported just over 5,000 deaths since the pandemic began, one of the lowest death rates in the world.

German village clearance continues

LUETZERATH (AP): German police continued the clearance of a village that is due to be demolished to accommodate the expansion of a coal mine, with activists still holed up in one building, in tree houses and a tunnel. Ahead of a demonstration to be held nearby on Saturday, Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg visited the tiny village of Luetzerath and took a look at the neighboring Garzweiler open coal mine. Joined by others, she held up a placard demanding: “Keep it in the ground.”

Luetzerath has become a flashpoint of debate over Germany’s climate efforts. The operation to evict climate activists holed up in the village kicked off, with

some stones, fireworks and other objects thrown at advancing officers but no major violence. Most of the protest was peaceful. Police started clearing the last occupied building, and police said that some other activists would then have to be taken down from tree houses, German news agency dpa reported.

There were also two activists in a tunnel. Regional police chief Dirk Weinspach took a look at the shaft and decried the risks they were taking, dpa reported, but he said he didn’t believe there was any acute danger to them. He said specialized rescuers would have to bring them out. Environmentalists say bulldozing the village to expand the Garzweiler

mine would result in huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. The government and utility company RWE argue the coal is needed to ensure Germany’s energy security. Some protesters have complained of undue force by police and others said the scale of the police response, with officers brought in from across the country and water cannons on standby, was itself a form of escalation not justified by the peaceful protest.

The regional and national governments, both of which include the environmentalist Green party, reached a deal with RWE last year allowing it to destroy the abandoned village in return for ending coal use by 2030, rather than 2038.

Full humanitarian access still lacking in Ethiopia’s Tigray: US

TIGRAY (AFP): Ethiopia needs to do more to restore full humanitarian access in the Tigray region, where millions still need assistance despite progress on a peace agreement, a US official said. Tigrayan rebels announced that they had started to hand in heavy weapons, a key part of a November 2 deal that has largely halted a brutal two-year war in which the region was largely cut off.

A senior US official said there has been “incremental but significant progress,” but that only 1.5 million people have been reached out of an estimated 5.2 million who need international assistance. “There are

still significant challenges. There are still bureaucratic delays,” the official said on condition of anonymity. “It just doesn’t approximate the unhindered humanitarian access that we need.”

Flights into Tigray resumed in late December after an 18-month halt. But the US official said there needed to be more progress on restoring commercial links, including banking services and fuel deliveries. The United States has also pressed for a pullout of forces from neighboring Eritrea, who have been accused of abuses after intervening in Tigray in partnership with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

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Modi's anti-Kashmir Machismo

PAKISTAN has termed the new land lease rules introduced in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by the Modi regime allowing non-Kashmiris to purchase agricultural land for commercial and other non-agricultural purposes as another manifestation of India's colonial-settler mindset. According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, the occupying authorities introduced new land lease rules, depriving the local farmers, hoteliers, and businessmen of their long-held lands on lease and handing them to the Indian army and non-state settlers to systematically bulldoze the current demography as well as the economy of the disputed territory.

India has long been forcibly occupying Jammu and Kashmir over the past seven and a half decades and Kashmir is one of the longstanding unresolved disputes on the agenda of the UN Security Council (UNSC) so far. The Indian rulers themselves took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and categorically acknowledged the need for a peaceful settlement of the issue by holding a plebiscite in the Jammu and Kashmir region under the UN's supervision but later treacherously violated the UN resolutions on one or the other pretext. Ironically, the Modi-led BJP Hindutva regime has broken all records of its forerunners and resorted to entirely changing the dynamics of the Jammu and Kashmir issue by taking unilateral and unlawful actions on the ground as well as bringing changes in the Indian constitution and state charter. The Modi government revoked Article 370 and Section 35 of the Indian constitution in August 2019 to change the special status of Jammu and Kashmir which empowered the Modi government to allow Non-Kashmiris to get Kashmiri citizenry and property rights, change electoral constituencies and voters lists to ultimately change demography of the disputed territory through biased and pre-planned illegal actions.

Presently, India virtually has turned the strife-torn valley into a military garrison where all basic rights of the people have been usurped and the Modi government has intensified its atrocities, and human rights violations through ramped-up extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and unprecedented curbs on print, electronic and social media over the past years. Hindu occupier regime is blatantly using all available repressive measures to erase Kashmiri Muslims and turn them into minority on their own land to consolidate New Delhi colonial rule in illegally occupied region. The Kashmiri people had been waiting over the past decades that the United Nations and the global community will honor the UN resolutions by eventually holding free and fair plebiscite in the valley but their dream could not come true and hopes diminish with every passing day.

In fact, India needs Kashmiri land instead of Kashmiri people to implement its hegemonic designs therefore Indian government and its security forces are inhumanely grabbing Kashmiri soil by force under the shadow of guns. On the other hand, Indian government remained successful in deceiving the United Nations and the global community on the pretext of resolving Kashmir dispute with Pakistan bilaterally while quoting 1972 agreement but always resisted bilateral dialogue with Pakistan on baseless assertions. Thus, the government of Pakistan must increase its pressure on India at the global forums to fulfill its obligations under the UN charter regarding Kashmir issue until and unless New Delhi practically moves toward resolution of the dispute.

Road traffic and Warden's responsibility

ISLAMABAD capital police have expedited stern legal action against the traffic rules violators and issued 2332 fine tickets to road users during the last 24 hours. Capital Police Spokesman had told the media that Islamabad capital police initiated a campaign for the implementation of the traffic rules and to maintain the smooth flow of traffic in the federal city, while hundreds of challans had been issued over lane and red signal violations, for using a mobile phone during driving, and for amateur driving.

Road Traffic is an important segment of civic life while monitoring, designing, and management of vehicular traffic have become a science in developed nations whereas it has shaped a grave social and administrative problem in developing countries including Pakistan. Once a model city, Islamabad had been a role model for architects and administrators across the country due to its city planning, road layout, street plans and all-weather clean and professionally maintained greenbelts, properly ordained bazaars along with the rule of the law, have now become a pleasant dream for the citizens in the national capital.

Presently, Pakistani cities including Islamabad present a picture of ill organized and uncontrolled wild growth that lacks managers and wardens because of the no implementation of the law. Over the years, Pakistani society has experienced immense moral and social reductions as compliance with the law has been considered a weakness/cowardness while criminals and crooks had been treated as nobles by the society and law enforcers. The state institutions including Police, Judiciary and CDA law compliance and anti-encroachment cells turned a blind eye toward their responsibilities and promoted corruption and nepotism.

Most of the state institutions are sick and need a comprehensive overhauling of their institutional setup, mission and working methodology so they perform their duties mechanically without waiting for instructions from the top echelons. At the same time, the leaders must also inquire about the unproductiveness of their teams and an upsurge in street crimes and social evils. So, a sense of responsibility and citizens rights and obligations could be instilled in the public servants and common citizens and our nation could join the club of civilized and developed nations in the future.

Quote of the day

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt, American President [1936-1945].

The core ideology of RSS: ‘Hindus and Hindus alone, constitute the Indian Nation’

P J James

BJP with 180 million-membership (as claimed by it in 2019) and wielding India's state power today is the political tool of RSS, the longest-running and biggest fascist organization in the world. The RSS with Manusmriti as its ideological basis was founded in 1925 with Hedgewar as the first Sarsanghchalka almost at the same time when ‘classical’ fascism appeared in Europe. In the case of India, the decade of the 1920s when RSS originated was a turbulent one that challenged not only the colonial rule but also the feudal order and Brahminical caste system. Inspired by Mahatma Phule and then led by Dr Ambedkar, the ‘untouchable’ Dalits, had started entering into the political mainstream from inaccessible social peripheries. Including this, it was the challenges to the upper caste elite domination that prompted the Brahmin leadership to reassert its hegemony through the formation of RSS.

Before the formation of RSS in 1925, Savarkar had laid down Hindutva, or ‘political Hinduism’ (which is different from Hinduism) as its ideological background. In his manuscript, ‘Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?’, Savarkar had argued that ‘Hindus were a nation unto themselves’, excluding Muslims, Christians and all other minorities in India. After Hedgewar's death in 1940, Golwalkar who became the second Sarsanghchalka of RSS expanded it as a militant Hindutva organisation with its Manuvad approach to the untouchables together with its commitment towards stigmatization and elimination of Muslims as nation's principal enemies.

From the very beginning, RSS had its close association with European fascism (classical fascism) that originated in Italy and Germany during the biggest political-economic crisis during the interwar period, and the RSS leadership of that time had established direct contact with fascist Mussolini along with its adulation of Nazi Hitler. For instance, Moonje, the mentor and political guru of Hedgewar, who had visited the Italian fascist dictator Mussolini in 1931 and inspired by the Fascist Academy of Physical Education that trained paramilitary “storm troopers” and goons like Black Shirts, started the Bhonsala Military School in Nasik in 1937 for imparting military training to RSS cadres and Hindutva goons under the management of Central Hindu Military Education Society. Bhonsala School's links with terrorist actions by Hindutva extremist groups including the 2008 Malegaon blasts are a much discussed topic.

Golwalkar who had high regard for Hitler, upheld the latter's doctrine of racial purity. He praised the Nazi method of purging the Semitic races, the Jews by Hitler, and even suggested the same as a good lesson for India to resolve the Muslim question.

According to the core ideology of RSS or doctrine of Hindurashtra, “Hindus and Hindus alone, constitute the Indian Nation”, whereas for Golwalkar, casteism was synonymous with ‘Hindu Nation’, though India has been historically multi-religious, multilingual, multi-ethnic, multicultural and composed of many nationalities with the inhuman caste system cutting across all these identities. However, as a fascist organisation, RSS from its very inception has been Islamophobic, anti-Christian, anti-communist, anti-woman and anti-Dalit, and has been in the habit of using violence to achieve its objectives.

Under colonial oppression, nationalism and patriotism for the oppressed countries were invariably anti-colonial in essence. But the ‘cultural nationalism’ of RSS was a camouflage for its betrayal of the anti-imperialist struggle. Along with its genocidal hatred towards Muslims, extreme servility to British imperialism has been inherent in RSS from the very beginning. On account of this, it totally dissociated itself from the independence movement during the British period. Top RSS leadership even advised its cadres not to waste their energy fighting the British but save it for fighting ‘internal enemies’ such as Muslims, Christians and

Communists. As such, the organization continued to remain on the periphery of Indian politics.

When Constituent Assembly was drafting the Indian Constitution, RSS came forward vehemently opposing the adoption of that Constitution and suggested ‘Manusmriti’ (the sacred book of chaturvarnya or varna system that identified women and Dalits as subhuman) in its place on the ground that a Republican Constitution would give equality to all castes against the interest of the elite castes. In fact, much before its objection to the Constitution that was drafted under the leadership of Ambedkar, the RSS' mouthpiece, Organiser in August 1947 had opposed the tricolour National Flag also. Of course, following the assassination of Father of the Nation in 1948, the RSS was banned for a few months, and one of the conditions that Sardar Patel put forward for lifting the ban on RSS on July 11 1949 was “loyalty to the Constitution of India and the National Flag”. However, it took more than half-a-century for the RSS to hoist the National Flag during the time of the Vajpayee government which also unveiled Savarkar's portrait in the central hall of Parliament in 2003.

Obviously, as in the case of European fascism during the interwar period, it is the sharpening of the inherent contradictions and crisis of the ruling system that create the opportune moment for the ascendance of fascists who are the most reactionary sections of corporate capital. In other words, when the crisis cannot be resolved through normal methods of loot and exploitation and when people's struggles become uncontrollable, the political-economic situation and social tension become favourable for the fascist forces to capture power. As far as India is concerned, it was the crisis of the 1970s and declaration of Emergency by the Indira Gandhi regime that enabled RSS which till then remained outside the mainstream to come to the political limelight.

As is obvious, it was the absence of a progressive-democratic alternative that enabled RSS to effectively utilise the situation to come to the forefront of the anti-Emergency movement. Within no time, replacing the Jan Sangh, RSS constituted BJP as its political tool and the rest is part of contemporary history. Leading hundreds of open, secret and militant organisations and outfits, and widening and deepening its clout across space and time and with its far-right economic philosophy and unwavering allegiance to the US-led imperialist camp, today RSS still claiming itself as a cultural organisation, has grown into the biggest fascist organisation in the world with innumerable overseas saffron extensions and affiliates backed by immense corporate funding.

The sudden shut up of RSS during the recent period spanning half-a-century is to be seen in the broader context of the emergence of global neoliberalism. For, following the advent of the first major postwar crisis called ‘stagflation’, and taking advantage of the ideological-political setbacks of the international Left, the bourgeois state abandoned its welfare mask and resorted to a change in the capital accumulation process through what is called neoliberalism. As noted above, the political-economic crisis that confronted India in the 1970s leading to the proclamation of Emergency by Indira regime in 1975 was integrally linked up with this international context.

Though Emergency was lifted in 1977, the post-Emergency period saw Indian state's abject surrender to neoliberal diktats and intensified neocolonial plunder by imperialist-corporate capital.

It has been in the context of this extremely crisis-ridden period of India resulting in its further integration with global corporate capital and consequent abandoning of the Nehruvian ‘state-led model of development’ and consequent embrace of neoliberal policies that RSS designed its well-thought-out strategy of eventually transforming India into a Hindurashtra, i.e., a Hindutva fascist state by floating BJP as its polit-

ical party. And, effectively taking advantage of the facilitating role of the soft-Hindutva pursued by the Congress and with immense corporate-backing, it has been easy for RSS to transform BJP as India's biggest ruling class party within a relatively short span of time, leading to fascist usurpation of state power with its multidimensional repercussions at micro and macro levels integrally linked up with the ascendance of neofascism at the global level.

It is not intended here to draw out the whole trajectory of the process that facilitated RSS to establish its fascist tentacles in the entire political, economic and cultural spheres. Unlike Mussolini-Hitler fascism that suddenly shot up from the political-economic crisis of the 1920s, Indian fascism led by RSS is rooted in a systematic, steady and long drawn out process spanning almost a century with deep-rooted and multi-dimensional penetration into the entire civilian and military apparatuses of the Indian state. And unlike classical fascism which had sharp contradictions with other imperialist forces, Hindutva fascism from the very beginning has been subservient to international finance capital during the colonial and postwar neocolonial period. However, in the neoliberal period, this process has started with the Ram Janmabhoomi movement since the 1980s, demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 in the context of Rao government's abandoning of Nehruvian model and embrace of far-right neoliberal policies, the ‘second generation of globalisation’ under Vajpayee government in the late 1990s and early 21st century, Gujarat Pogrom in 2002, the ascendancy Modi regime in 2014 and its reiteration as Modi.2 in 2019, which are some of the important milestones towards this neo-fascist transformation.

As is obvious, under Modi.2, in the background of all round privatisation-corporatisation of the economy and saffronisation of both civilian-including constitutional and administrative and institutional spheres and military structures (ranging from RSS initiative to start Military Schools to the Agnipath scheme), RSS is now moving towards its ultimate goal of establishing the Hindurashtra, which is an intolerant theocratic state unequivocally defined by Golwalkar in 1939 in his magnum opus, ‘We, Our Nationhood Defined’ and in conformity with the principles of Manusmriti. All specificities of Hindutva such as anti-Muslimness as manifested in the multi-dimensional discrimination towards Muslim migrants through CAA, Uniform Civil Code, etc., (culminating in, for instance, depicting the Rohingyas whom the UN characterised as “the most persecuted” minority on earth today as “infiltrators”), pan-Indian homogenizing drive of deconstruction and subjugation of the oppressed caste organisations aimed at integrating them into Hindutva, rejection of all values of modernity such as rational-scientific thinking, fostering the cult of tradition and occultism, treating dissent and disagreement as treason, worship of heroism and elitism, anti-communism together with uncompromising integration with corporate finance capital are manifestations of RSS neofascism.

Neofascism or Fascism Under Neoliberalism At this critical juncture, concrete understanding of neofascism – i.e., fascism under neoliberalism where old terms and practices connected with fascism have become irrelevant — is indispensable for building up the anti-fascist movement and defeating fascism.

No doubt, fascism's inseparable integration with the hegemony of most reactionary corporate-finance capital is its universal character. However, ascribing a static form or pattern to the emergence of fascism for all situations is erroneous, and it will impede the building up of anti-fascist struggles too. For instance, in the context of building up the wide Anti-Fascist People's Front, the 7th Congress of Comintern (1935) that defined fascism in relation to its firm foundations in finance capital, had also underlined differ-

ent course of development of fascism in colonial and semi-colonial countries where “there can be no question of the kind of fascism that we are accustomed to see in Germany, Italy and other capitalist countries”. That is, depending on the specific political, economic and historical conditions of countries, fascism may assume different forms.

There is a macro dimension to this crucial question today. No doubt, fascism is the government of the most reactionary and terrorist elements of corporate-finance capital directed against the entire progressive-democratic sections, working class, peasantry, oppressed peoples and intelligentsia of the country. However, when ‘classical fascism’ emerged during the interwar years of the 20th century, finance capital or imperialism was in its colonial phase. On the other hand, today in the postwar neocolonial phase, and especially in the neoliberal period today, wealth accumulation is taking place through globalisation or internationalisation of capital as manifested in the limitless and uncontrollable cross-border movement of corporate capital. With the aggravation in the crisis of accumulation since the dawn of the 21st century, and especially since the 2008 “sub-crime crisis”, using the advancements in frontier technologies such as digitisation, global capital is engaged in further shifting of its burden to the shoulders of world people. In this context neofascism is intensified to enforce the tyranny of corporate capital at a global level effectively utilising reactionary, racial, chauvinistic, revivalist, religious fundamentalist, xenophobic and obscurantist ideologies as its political basis, according to the concrete conditions of countries.

Thus, neoliberal fascism or neofascism needs to be analysed with respect to the logic of corporate accumulation today. Of course, globalisation has resulted in a restructure of the erstwhile ‘nation-centred production’ by superimposing a new international division of labour and unleash a worldwide super-exploitation of the working people, thereby temporarily overcoming its crisis of accumulation. On the other, taking advantage of the ideological setbacks of the Left and by utilising the heterogeneity and diversity among working and oppressed people of different countries and through the effective use of a whole set of postmodern ideologies such as “identity politics”, “multiculturalism”, etc., finance capital has also succeeded in creating division among working class and oppressed by diverting attention from corporate plunder thereby disorganising and fragmenting resistance to capital.

Thus, given the internationalisation of capital along with its terribly destructive reactionary essence and decadence, fascism has become transnational in character today. To be specific, unlike ‘classical fascism’ which was specific to capitalist-imperialist countries, neofascism, i.e., fascism under neoliberalism has become global in character cutting across national borders. For instance, a concrete evaluation of the international situation today amply makes it clear that majoritarian religion everywhere is amenable to be used by finance capital as the ideological basis of neofascism (for instance, Evangelism in the Americas, Political Islam in West Asia, Hindutva in India, Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar). Another example is the manner in which the financial oligarchs of Europe have initiated a pan-European neofascist alliance against workers, migrants and refugees.

Today, neofascists everywhere are working overtime to take advantage of the mass psychology of social and economic insecurity created by the loss of livelihood, employment, habitat and environment arising from corporate plunder as well as people's loss of faith in mainstream traditional parties including ‘social democrats’ who have no alternative to neoliberal policies. Making use of the specificities of countries, neofascists in general pursue an exclusivist and majoritarian line

by propping up the so called ‘homogeneous’ part of the population pitting it against the ‘heterogeneous’ sections often composed of religious, ethnic/racial and linguistic minorities, migrants, refugees, dalits, tribals and other marginalized and oppressed sections of society. Using them an all round depoliticising and social engineering is resorted to prepare a fertile ground for the flourishing of neofascism. In this context, with its own specificities, the BJP regime in India is a typical example of neofascism (corporate-saffron fascism) today. Basing itself in unbribed neoliberal-corporatisation, the Indian regime today is engaged in establishing a Hindu theocratic state or Hindurashtra in accordance with the RSS ideology of aggressive ‘Hindu nationalism’ or Hindutva.

On Building Up the Anti-Fascist Movement

Viewed in this perspective, the antifascist offensive is to be initiated based on the lessons from past experiences but also on the basis of a concrete evaluation of 21st century laws of motion of finance capital in relation to country specificities. Obviously, as already noted, neofascism is the regime of the most reactionary sections of corporate-finance capital under neoliberalism. Therefore, though ruling class/bourgeois parties are basically neoliberal in orientation, all of them are not fascist and, of course, there are sections who stand for rule of law, bourgeois-democratic rights, freedom of expression and press, free and fair election, etc. However, their class character with roots in neoliberalism and links with corporate capital along with electoral politics as the only sphere of action, make these parties incapable to take initiative in the struggle against fascists who have usurped the entire micro and macro spaces of social life.

Hence, an electoral victory alone is not sufficient as the threat of fascist come-back (as is evident for the recent neofascist coup attempt in Brazil) will be there until and unless fascist tentacles are wiped out from their already occupied strategic positions. This is so because, along with the control over the organs of the state, the saffron fascists through their vast and unparalleled organisational structure also have established spectacular control over ‘street power’ through lumpen and paramilitary goons. Even when electoral option of challenging fascists through the parliamentary route is theoretically there today, free and fair elections are also becoming increasingly difficult too. Hence mere preoccupation with parliamentary work, devoid of a nation-wide and broad-based anti-fascist people's movement, cannot confront the fascists, an aspect that the non-fascist ruling class parties often ignore.

Coming to the case of the broad ‘left spectrum’, it ranges from the ‘social democrats’ (e.g., CPI and CPM) to adventurists (e.g., Maoists). The latter section that does not make a distinction between pro-fascist and non-fascist sections of the ruling classes (fascism for them is a mere change of regime among the ruling classes) fails to put forward an ideological-political position towards the most reactionary and terrorist class essence of neofascism. For the CPM, on the other hand, fascism is yet to come to India, and according to its ideologues, Modi regime is “on the verge of turning fascist” and only “symptoms of fascism” are there.

Here it is to be stated that this evaluation arises from a stereotyped approach to fascism, a way of looking at fascism as a textbook copy of the ‘classical fascism’ of the interwar period. This mechanistic approach to neofascism is contrary to the scientific analysis that any social phenomenon when transforms and develops further in a new historical context and in a different social formation will inevitably adapt itself to the particularities and specificities of that concrete situation. Even under the veil of parliamentary democracy, fascism today has become capable to use terrorist methods of ethnic and racial cleansing, oppression and extermination of minorities, immigrants, refugees, and women, elim-

ination of hard-earned democratic rights, super-exploitation of the workers through new technologies, plunder of nature leading to climate catastrophe and all round militarisation. No doubt, the mechanical approach to fascism by ‘social democrats’ is related to their own position as implementer of far-right neoliberal policies wherever and whenever they are in power.

These varying perceptions on fascism, however, should not be a justification for refraining from the immediate and indispensable task of building up the broad anti-fascist movement for resisting and defeating RSS neofascism. No doubt, an ideologically equipped, politically and organisationally strong Left movement is the need of the hour. At the same time, we cannot wait till such an all India movement is ready, since it will be suicidal. Hence taking care to avoid both sectarian and opportunist deviations, efforts are needed on the part of left-democratic forces to ally with non-fascist sections of the ruling classes in fighting the most reactionary corporate crony capital and the neofascist state propped up by them.

However, in doing so, the genuine left, progressive and democratic forces must be aware of the overlapping, interpenetrating and complex neoliberal inter-linkages and interests among different sections of ruling class parties today. That's while joining with nonfascist ruling class parties and even with social democratic parties untiring ideological struggle should be carried forward upholding the long-term and strategic interests of the working and toiling people and all oppressed. Any laxity on the part of progressive democratic forces in this issue will lead to surrender of the interests of the working and oppressed people in the interests of “anti-fascist unity”. To avoid such a possible mistake, it is high time to build up a coordination of the country-wide people's struggles against corporate-saffron fascism and its manifestations. Many peoples movements have been there that combine struggles against both Hindutva fascism and far-right neoliberal policies.

The Anti-CAA Movement or the people's movement against denying citizenship to Muslim migrants, and the historic Farmers' Movement against the corporatisation of agriculture were two examples in this regard. Along with them, many struggles of workers, especially the vast unorganised sections, peasantry, oppressed peoples including women, Dalits, adivasis, minorities, especially the persecuted Muslims, youth and students are emerging throughout the length and breadth of the country against corporate onslaughts, displacement from habitat, environmental destruction, caste atrocities, communal oppression, violation of democratic rights and so on. While engaging in these struggles through appropriate organisational forms, progressive and democratic forces have to take conscious efforts to initiate debates and discussions on a political alternative against neoliberal policies and RSS neofascism. Such initiatives at the level of states can lead to a national coordination based on a common minimum program against corporate-saffron fascism. If proper interventions are made, this move can be extended to tactical alliance with non-fascist fascist parties in the coming elections for isolating and defeating the most reactionary neofascists, also utilising the contradictions among ruling class parties in the process.

Here a specific note is also required on the particular relevance in building up effective resistance against Manuvad and growing inhuman Brahminical caste practices against Dalits.

Hence appropriate ideological, political and cultural interventions joining with all progressive intellectuals and like-minded people against Manuvadi-Hindutva, the ideological basis of Indian fascism. This is essential since, it is based on the the Hindutva ideology that RSS is engaged in the maddening pace towards transforming India into a full-fledged theocratic state with the material backing of corporate capital.

‘Good chocolate, a quiet life, delicious waffles and juicy mussels’

THE specter of the third world war for Europeans the further, the more it becomes a reality. Let the townsfolk, who today have enough small and large daily problems, not think about it, but the politicians who staged the man-made geopolitical crisis have lost, apparently, the elementary instinct of self-preservation and decided to shove on our country, as it was and is usual, a pig. They most likely believe that heavy weapons (even if someone calls one of the modifications of the tank "light") can turn the tide of the special operation in favor of Ukraine.

In fact, the supply of new equipment and weapons of this type expands the scope of the crisis, accelerating its speed to (much faster than it seems to Paris, London or Warsaw) uncontrollable values. Are those who make statements about increasing the pace of aid and about changing the range of supplies aware of this development of the situation?

The answer can only be in the affirmative.

War for European politicians of the highest echelon in all ages (under any state structure) was primarily an opportunity to solve their own domestic political problems.

The first of which is to stay in power with the proper rating of trust (in other words, the devotion of society to those whom they have elected to the highest post, as they proudly say, "within the framework of freedom and democracy"), the second is the ability to rule in conditions when an emergency is developing, situation.

Volumes will someday be written about how and how many times over the past few years the presi-

dents and prime ministers of the EU member states have repeated the word "war" in order to put it into common use as much as possible. And even if it was a coronavirus infection, Macron was the first to say three years ago: "We are at war." These three words gave him unprecedented powers and control levers (not without reason that in France the constitution is drawn up in such a way that the elected head of the country is actually a king with absolute power), which Macron used to the fullest.

Almost the same thing could be seen in Germany, no less proud of democracy and everything else progressive, in Rome, Madrid - and so on throughout the EU.

Any other idea, opposed to the domineering and mainstream, was suppressed. Ways at the authorities wagon. And a small cart. The most stubborn in their views, which did not coincide with those of power, were deprived of their jobs and titles, and in order not to stick out, various checks were sent to them. And they weren't buzzers. It was a professorship, the luminaries of medicine, the largest specialists in viruses, including even a Nobel laureate.

Having tested all the mechanisms of suppression and realizing that all media channels off- and online broadcast the point of view required by the top, today, at the moment of truth, when Russia alone is fighting the globalists in all positions and articles, the European establishment demonstrates a surprising indifference to the point of view of society because he knows how quickly and easily a layman living in the European Union can be propagandized.

Any pointed question gets one answer: "It's

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Putin's fault." And the origins of any purely internal problem today are sought (and are) in the decisions made and being made by Russia.

This is a reality that it is better for our own interests to see in all its ugliness than to be obscured by the words that "the Europeans are too practical and too selfish" to seriously consider a war with Russia.

Europe, undoubtedly, considers war with Russia - a direct clash with our country - no longer as one of the options, but as the most likely scenario. Not because European politicians are all warriors and warriors (conscript armies have been canceled here for many years, because there is always "America in case of emergency"), but because the European establishment and business elites will be able to solve all problems with the help of direct military confrontation.

The first and foremost is the rapid impoverishment of the population. During a military conflict, all inflations and all price increases will cease to matter at all.

The second is that the government, which is interested in governing in the way it seems right to it, will close all the possibilities for expressing dissatisfaction. The workers will definitely not be up to predatory reforms (for example, pensions, which Macron is trying to push so far unsuccessfully), not to protests and not to strikes with threats to completely paralyze the country.

The economy will be militarized to run around the clock with no regard for workers' rights.

The war will provide an opportunity to justify and explain both any shortage, including essential medicines, and the inability to be

treated, as it was before. And waiting for help for many hours on a stretcher in hospital departments and the arrival of an ambulance at home.

The list of benefits from the fact that Western decision-makers are getting closer and closer to the fatal (for society, of course, and not for politicians) line outweighs - and significantly - the hell they intend to plunge their fellow citizens into. Those who voted for them, it must be emphasized, in the much-lauded democratic elections.

Whenever a united Europe felt that its economy was beginning to storm, it immediately provoked military conflicts. Including on the territory of the continent itself.

It is worth remembering that similar events took place with Yugoslavia. Just then, the actual instigator was just a united Germany. She had to spend, the federal budget could not stand it, and the internecine confrontation in the Balkans was very helpful. And if we add that the FRG got the opportunity of partial control over Croatia, for example, ports, then the benefit of the German authorities and German industry outweighed - easily and quickly - the suffering of the same Croats and Serbs.

And even earlier, Europeans fought very willingly in Africa, which was divided into colonies. Belgium, which is thought to have "good chocolate, a quiet life, delicious waffles and juicy mussels," enslaved millions. And as soon as the inhabitants of the Belgian Congo expressed their active dissatisfaction, Brussels started a war there. According to the most conservative estimates, one hundred thousand civilians were destroyed. The kingdom was a member of the

European Union, if you're interested. And no "common European values" became an obstacle to bloodshed.

There are countless such skeletons in the wardrobes of pan-Europeans, those who accuse Russia of all sins, including, by the way, neo-colonialism, if we are talking about a special operation.

Those who say that Europe is afraid of a direct clash with Russia and will never agree to it have already forgotten that almost a year ago, in response to the start of an operation in Ukraine, the EU completely rejected the possibility of supplying heavy weapons, imposing only economic restrictions on Moscow.

Today, Paris, in cooperation with Warsaw, is pressing on Berlin so that the Germans begin to drive their "leopards" to fight the Russians. That is, France and Poland are pushing the Bundeswehr (it doesn't matter what passports the crew has) to take part in hostilities against Russia.

Exactly the same can be said about the valiant (actually, of course, not) French warriors - what difference does it make who is sitting in the AMX-10 RC tank if Russian soldiers are fired from the cannon of an armored vehicle.

What we called a proxy war, using a compound word to describe the confrontation, is rapidly losing the first part. And it becomes just a war. War of two civilizations.

Or a war between two worlds. The third in a row in the last hundred years. And again launched by Europe against Russia for the sake of correcting European affairs. In politics and economics. The sooner we understand and realize this, the stronger we will feel ourselves in this confrontation.



‘If Russia loses in Ukraine, it could hit Japan’

“If Russia loses in Ukraine, it could hit Japan.” This is not another nonsense of the Kyiv authorities, but the words of one of the Japanese security experts. Moreover, it was no coincidence that an article in Shukan Gendai with this quote appeared on the eve of the visit of the Japanese prime minister to the United States.

The meeting between Fumio Kishida and Joe Biden is not just another US-Japanese summit: during it, a fundamental strengthening of the military alliance between the two countries will be recorded with an emphasis on Japan's new role in the Indo-Pacific region, which directly affects Russia's interests. The island monarchy's national security strategy, adopted last month, essentially draws a line under Japan's post-war status as a country that relies entirely on the United States for its security: Tokyo now has more opportunities to strengthen its military, while not abandoning the American support and "nuclear umbrella".

The goals of the Americans are clear - they are building a global coalition against China, in which Japan, due to its geographical position and history, occupies a key place. American bases alone are not enough: what is needed is not just a strong Japanese army, but an army with offensive potential (formally still limited by the constitution) and a powerful military industry. Not all Japanese will do it themselves, but the Anglo-Saxons will help them. Together with Britain, a new generation fighter will be created, and ballistic missiles worth tens (if not hundreds) of billions of dollars will be purchased from the States.

Although Japan is not eager to be a pawn in the US-China confrontation, it does not have real freedom of maneuver, so the strengthening of its own armed forces is seen in Tokyo as a step towards strengthening its weight in a military alliance with the States. So far, Japan remains not only a junior partner in it (like Europewithin NATO), but also an extremely dependent client - and despite the fact that in recent years Tokyo has not hidden its desire to become more independent. Including because they are not too confident in the reliability of the United States in the long term: what will happen if, in 20 years, the States, having lost the confrontation with China in the region, begin to withdraw from it?

Relations with Moscow have always been one of the key directions for Tokyo to move towards greater independence: the full development of Japanese-Russian relations would allow the Japanese to get off the hook of territorial disputes - the issue of "northern territories" claimed by our neighbor. Washington, which blocked the settlement of this problem back in the 1950s,

skillfully kept the Japanese on claims against Russia for all subsequent decades, and all attempts by Tokyo to negotiate with Moscow ended in nothing - largely thanks to the Americans.

So it was the last time, when a few years ago, the then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resolutely took up the Kuril issue. At first, it even seemed that by agreeing to the terms of the Moscow Declaration of 1956 (two of the four smaller islands), Tokyo would really be able to take advantage of a historical chance, that is, the seriousness of Vladimir Putin. But in the end, Abe lacked determination — and, most importantly, Tokyo was unable to answer Moscow's questions about the non-inclusion of Habomai and Shikotan in the scope of the Japanese-American defense pact. After that, Moscow lost its desire to consider various options for their transfer (for actual use, without giving up Russian sovereignty, or for joint management).

Then Abe resigned, a special operation began in Ukraine... And last summer, Shinzo Abe was shot dead - and Japan lost even the theoretical possibility of resolving the issue of "northern territories." And although the new national security strategy talks about striving for a peace treaty with Russia, there is simply no chance of this in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the same strategy says that "Russia's actions cause serious concern" - and not only because of Ukraine, but also because of the strengthening of strategic cooperation with China. And Beijing's policy in Tokyo is called "the biggest strategic challenge" (in the field of regional and global security, that is, they repeat American formulations).

It turns out that Russia is no longer a partner (albeit with unresolved issues), but a friend of the potential main enemy (China is not yet called that, but this is what the Americans are pushing for). Does Tokyo understand that they have driven themselves into a strategic impasse? That no strengthening of the Japanese army will give Japan a sense of security in a situation where most of its neighbors (China, Russia, North Korea - all nuclear powers) are viewed as threats and challenges, while the main guarantor of Japanese security, the United States, has taken a clear course of confrontation with them?

Of course, they understand that this is why the pro-American forces in the Japanese elite demonize Russia in every possible way. So that fellow citizens do not ask unnecessary questions about the correctness of the course, they need to be reminded of the Russian threat. As they did in Shukan Gendai in the article "Can Japan become a target? Putin's last trump card is too dangerous - a diabolical nuclear weapon "Sarmat". It is there that the words of Emeritus Professor of the University

of Tsukuba Itsuro Nakamura are quoted:

"The new Sarmat ICBM, which has been researched and developed since 2018, has finally been deployed in Eastern Siberia. The Russian authorities have long said that island Japan can be destroyed with a single shot. They would not say so if it were just a threat. It is assumed that this weapon can be used against Japan.<...> It is quite possible that Putin, driven into a corner as a result of an unsuccessful operation in Ukraine, without fear of US retaliation, will strike Japan with "Sarmat" in order to demonstrate at least some achievement".

Another professor is very afraid of an attack on Kiev, because it is after him that a blow to Japan may follow:

"The Japanese people should not act as if this problem does not concern them. Another attempt to take the Ukrainian capital is the last and biggest operation. Russia's prestige is at stake. If the Kremlin fails again, President Putin's anger could be directed at Japan".

If you doubt the professor's sanity, then here's the most damning argument for you:

"In fact, a source in the FSB said that Moscow really planned an attack on Japan six months before the start of a special operation in Ukraine. The information disclosed by this person is that Russia was preparing quite seriously for a local military conflict with Japan.<...> The head of the Bellingcat publication Khristo Grozev recognized these data as reliable.<...>

If the situation in Ukraine worsens significantly, there is a real risk that the scenario of an attack on Japan will resurface in President Putin's mind."

Well, now everything is clear: Russia was initially preparing to attack Japan, and Khristo Grozev himself confirms this! And if nothing happens with Ukraine now, then Putin will again remember the postponed scenario of a strike on the Japanese.

Yes, that's right: Putin wanted to make war with Japan, but he simply did not know how to make it so that everything was limited to a "local conflict" (given the US-Japanese treaty), so next time he will simply hit with a nuclear "Sarmat" so that no Japan was no more.

All this nonsense is beneficial only to those who have already used nuclear weapons - and just against Japan. And he is still sure that he controls both the Japanese elites and the Japanese mass consciousness, feeding him scary tales about Putin's nuclear threat to the island monarchy. To keep Japan in line against China and Russia, not only as a shield, but also to make a spear out of it. And these weapons will not be controlled in Tokyo - no matter how much they indulge themselves with illusions about greater autonomy, they play geopolitics without them and at their expense.

Washington will probably quit multilateral climate agreements and escalate conflicts with China

THE alarm bells of the climate crisis have been ringing for years. There is an increasing consensus among climate scientists that it is indispensable to hold the increase in the global average temperature within 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. But as the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, the United States and China have not cooperated to commit themselves to sufficiently meeting this climate goal.

China's climate policy is consistent with a global warming of 3 degrees Celsius and the US nationally determined contribution is consistent with a 2 degrees Celsius tempera-

technologies will not save us from climate change — technological breakthroughs are needed. Policymakers in the United States and China understand this challenge. As rational players, they have little incentive to substantially reduce emissions and stabilise the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Domestic political factors also impede bilateral cooperation. Powerful companies in the United States have continued to exercise substantial influence and effectively work against any binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially.

Beijing also faces domestic political obstacles. Sustaining Kuznetsov economic development is

Yuhan Zhang

the US government to tighten its export control policy for fear that high-tech products might reach military end users. Since 2018, the United States has waged a trade war against China, and tariffs on Chinese clean tech products remain during the Biden administration. Washington has also passed legislation known as the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernisation Act to expand the oversight procedures of the existing Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

China, too, has imposed various strict regulations that obstruct cleantech cooperation with the United States. For example, in

it remains unlikely that the United States and China will take climate actions to achieve the 1.5 degree Celsius goal for three reasons.

First, from a more dynamic perspective, technologies may evolve over time. But the incremental success we have witnessed is far from enough to drive policymakers to cooperate. It may take a long time — perhaps decades — to achieve transformative technologies.

Second, domestic political barriers are likely to persist. Some interest groups in the United States may not firmly oppose stringent climate actions. But many will impede substantial policies that threaten their survival or harm

In December 2020, China issued the Measures on National Security Review of Foreign Investment, strengthening government oversight and the ability to restrict or deny foreign investment. Some advanced clean technologies are on the list of technologies prohibited or restricted for export or investment. In the foreseeable future, it remains unlikely that the United States and China will take climate actions to achieve the 1.5 degree Celsius goal for three reasons. First, from a more dynamic perspective, technologies may evolve over time. But the incremental success we have witnessed is far from enough to drive policymakers to cooperate. It may take a long time — perhaps decades — to achieve transformative technologies. Second, domestic political barriers are likely to persist. Some interest groups in the United States may not firmly oppose stringent climate actions. But many will impede substantial policies that threaten their survival or harm their balance sheets. With President Xi Jinping securing his third term as China's paramount leader, it is expected that Chinese climate policies will be consistent: Beijing will continue to prioritise economic growth and depend heavily on traditional energy-intensive industries.

ture target. Yet at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, both countries pointed fingers at each other for not acting fast enough.

Owing to technological, domestic political and systemic factors, great power cooperation to attain the 1.5 degrees Celsius target is dead.

While necessary, existing clean technologies alone cannot limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Even clean tech investors like Bill Gates pessimistically note that the 'miracles' of solar and wind

the primary goal for China, whose rapid growth has relied heavily on burning fossil fuels. Since the late 1990s, coal consumption in China has increased approximately threefold. Path dependence casts a long shadow and has expansionary effects over time on the country's climate policies. Despite investing enormously in renewable development, it refuses to reduce the use of fossil fuels and takes insufficient action to achieve the 1.5 degree Celsius goal.

Great power rivalry also prohibits bilateral cooperation. For example, a focus on national security has led

October 2020, the country introduced the Export Control Law of the People's Republic of China, providing it with justification to restrict foreign commercial transactions based on national security. In December 2020, China issued the Measures on National Security Review of Foreign Investment, strengthening government oversight and the ability to restrict or deny foreign investment. Some advanced clean technologies are on the list of technologies prohibited or restricted for export or investment.

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their balance sheets. With President Xi Jinping securing his third term as China's paramount leader, it is expected that Chinese climate policies will be consistent: Beijing will continue to prioritise economic growth and depend heavily on traditional energy-intensive industries.

Third, great power competition will likely intensify. Although the United States and China may cooperate in certain fields — for instance, when Tesla operates plants in China or when US firms purchase Chinese solar panels — neither will sacrifice their national interests to sub-

stantially reduce emissions and control global warming.

Years of failure to cooperate is a tragedy for the entire humankind. They blocked the world from getting on a carbon emissions reduction pathway capable of preventing severe climate change. Until we breakthroughs in clean technologies, the insulation of climate cooperation from domestic politics and the de-escalation of great power strategic competition, cooperation in substantial emissions reduction — and with it, the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal — is not feasible.

Important Notice

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



Govt's economic team making tireless efforts to improve economy: Dar

LAHORE (APP): Federal Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman here at Governor House on Saturday. Various issues including the overall economic situation of the country were discussed in the meeting.

Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman said that the entire economic team under the leadership of Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is

making all out efforts to bring improvement and stability in the economy.

Governor said that the rate of inflation had been low, GDP growth had been better and Pakistan had been emerging as a strong country economically in the previous tenures of Pakistan Muslim League (N).

He said that PML-N was committed to bring economic stability in the country despite multiple challenges faced by the country. Governor also congratu-

lated Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on his recent successful foreign visits and said that the way the whole world had announced the relief package for the people of Pakistan in recent foreign visits was an expression of confidence in the transparency of the present government.

Governor appreciated the efforts of Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for making sincere and strenuous efforts for stab-

lizing country's economy.

On this occasion, Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that there would be further improvement in the economy in the coming days. He said that such economic challenges had never been witnessed before in the history of the country, but despite this, the coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was using all its abilities to bring economic stability in the country.



LAHORE: Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman at Governor's House.

Gold prices up by Rs1,200 to Rs187,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs1,200 on Saturday, jumping to Rs187,300 from Rs186,100 of the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,029 to Rs160,580 against Rs159,551, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat went up to Rs147,198 from Rs 146,255, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The prices of one tola and 10 gram silver witnessed no change and stood at Rs2,100 and Rs1,800.41 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by US\$ 20 to US\$ 1,920 against previous price of US\$ 1,900, the association reported.

PMEX partners with Telenor Pakistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Mercantile Exchange (PMEX), the country's only multi-commodity futures exchange, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Telenor Pakistan to create awareness of futures trading through the My Telenor App.

Through this partnership, the two companies aim to explore and develop digital linkages in areas of mutual interest. Enabling futures trading in My Telenor App will facilitate millions of customers to benefit from investment opportunities through futures trading.

Ejaz Ali Shah, Managing Director, PMEX, commenting on the occasion stated,

"PMEX endeavors to explore innovative ways of doing business and is relentlessly striving to create opportunities for retail investors across Pakistan to trade futures digitally. Our collaborative strategic partnership with Telenor Pakistan is a step forward toward achieving this objective. Through Telenor Pakistan's digital touch points including the My Telenor App, PMEX plans to offer an opportunity to Telenor Pakistan customers to open their accounts digitally and trade commodity futures at its regulated platform easily and conveniently. We are confident that this collaboration will expand our outreach to all nooks and corners of the country, giving an opportu-

nity to more people to trade futures at PMEX."

Umair Mohsin, Chief Marketing Officer, Telenor Pakistan, said, "While Pakistan has made great progress in recent years in terms of financial inclusion, there is still a lot of room for improvement and most importantly, positive guidance. Our partnership with PMEX aims to provide awareness and information to the hardworking, everyday Pakistani in their journey towards prosperity. At Telenor Pakistan, we are more committed than ever to empower people across the country to take better control of their finances through convenient digital means, and this collaboration is a key step in this regard."

Qatar, UAE energy ministers say gas will be needed for long time

ABU DHABI (Agencies): The world will need natural gas for a long time and more investment is required to ensure supply security and affordable prices during the global energy transition, the energy ministers of the UAE and Qatar said on Saturday.

UAE Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei, speaking at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, said that "for a very long time, gas will be there" and that while more renewable energy would be installed, more investment was needed in gas as a base load.

"The whole world needs to think of resources and how to enable companies to produce more gas to make it available and affordable," Mazrouei said.

Saad al-Kaabi, Qatari

state minister for energy, said that a mild winter in Europe had seen prices come down, but that volatility would remain "for some time to come" given there was not much gas coming into the market until 2025. "The issue is what's going to happen when they (Europe) want to replenish their storages this coming year and the next year," he said.

Al Kaabi later told reporters that Qatar, which is working to expand its gas output, has limited volumes going to Europe that it would not divert away, "but there is a limit to what we can do".

Qatar is one of the world's top producers of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The UAE is an Opec oil producer that is sharpening its focus on the

gas market as Europe seeks to replace Russian energy imports after supply cuts since Western sanctions were imposed on Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine. The Qatari minister said he believed that Russian gas would eventually return to Europe.

Al Kaabi said it was unfair for some in the West as part of its green energy push to say African countries should not be drilling for oil and gas when it was important for their economies and the world needed more supply.

Al Mazrouei said the "unclear" strategy of many countries made it difficult for them to commit to long-term gas contracts which in turn made it hard for energy companies to secure financing to invest in developing production capacity.

As competition for LNG heated up, Germany last year struck a 15-year supply deal for Qatar LNG from 2026, the first of its kind to Europe from Qatar's North Field expansion project. QatarEnergy had signed a 27-year deal to supply China's Sinopec.

Al Kaabi, who is also CEO of QatarEnergy, said negotiations were taking place with many players around the world.

"There are a lot of European and Asian buyers, and there is a potential that by the end of the year, the entire Qatar expansion will be sold out," he said.

Qatar's two-phase North Field expansion plan includes six LNG trains that will ramp up its liquefaction capacity from 77 million tonnes per annum to 126 million tonnes by 2027.

BGP Int'l participated 28th ATC on Oil



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The BGP (Pakistan) International-a world reputed Chinese Multinational actively participated in the 2-day 28th Annual Technical Conference (ATC) on Oil Sector with carefully prepared technical publicity and informative material to showcase BGP Group. The two days 28th ATC successfully attracted the participation of leading Petroleum related enterprises from across Pakistan. The participants included petroleum equipment manufacturing and leasing, software development services, UAV application, and other related materials.

BGP, being one of the world's leading Chinese multinationals having completely integrated geophysical companies, delivers a full spectrum of geophysical

products and services while its state-of-the-art R&D facility is staffed with outstanding personnel that is unrivaled in the industry. BGP has served more than 300 energy companies during the last few decades with a remarkable footprint in over 70 countries, enabling BGP to become one of the leading geophysical contractors in the world today.

BGP carries out publicity work in seismic acquisition, data processing and interpretation, equipment manufacturing, optical fiber intelligence reservoir geophysics, Non-seismic surveys, Klsis and Geocast software, new energy business, and other fields, attracting strong attention from the oil industry.

28th ATC Annual Meeting came to a successful conclusion. The annual meeting is a stage to fully demonstrate the company's

technical strength, a platform to communicate with many major management and technical personnel of oil companies, a stage to gather with old friends of oil companies, and a feast to make new friends. We look forward to further cooperation with oil companies in the geophysical exploration field in the New Year and continue the brilliant success of BGP in the geophysical exploration market in Pakistan.

This very important 28th ATC on Oil was attended by BGP (Pakistan) International's Country General Manager for Pakistan Mr. Zheng Zhenqiang, Party Chief Mr. Ma Huiming, Chief Geophysicist Mr. Zheng Jie, Party Chief Mr. Liu Hui and Operation Manager Mr. Muhammad Rizwan apart from a dedicated team from BGP (Pakistan) International.

Pak-US Chamber of Commerce president visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): President Pak-US (California) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Muhammad Shehbaz visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

President (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed him on his arrival at SCCI. During the meeting, they discussed in details the matters of mutual interests.

In the meeting, the need to facilitate the business community and take steps to promote trade was emphasized.

They reiterated that the efforts will be continued from the both sides for the stability of the Pakistani economy. SCCI SVP Wahub Jahangir was also present in the meeting.

ABU DHABI (Agencies): In line with its endeavour to support national initiatives that promote the UAE's sustainability efforts, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (Dewa) will participate in the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) as the opening ceremony associate partner.

ADSW is hosted by Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar) from January 14 to 19 under the theme 'United on Climate Action Toward Cop28' at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (Adnec).

Saeed Mohammed Al Tayar, MD & CEO of Dewa will deliver a keynote speech on the second day of ADSW titled 'Sustainability, a key pillar and a success story in the UAE.' He will highlight the innovative strategies, initiatives and projects that aim to promote the sustainable development to ensure a brighter future for all.

Al Tayar emphasised

Dewa's commitment to supporting pioneering national events that promote sustainability. He noted that Dewa's sponsorship of ADSW is part of the strategic partnership and cooperation between Dewa and Masdar. He noted that both ADSW, which is organised by Masdar, and the Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition (Wetex), which is organised by Dewa play a major role in supporting the UAE's sustainability efforts.

"The vision and directives of the wise leadership of the President, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, have made the UAE one of the pioneering countries in launching ambitious initiatives and strategies that will help reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate

change. These contribute to achieving economic prosperity in parallel with environmental sustainability. We are pleased to be partners of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, which, this year, supports the UAE's preparations to host the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28) at Expo City Dubai next November. We are also pleased to share our experiences and expertise in supporting the UAE's efforts to accelerate progress in climate action by diversifying energy sources and increasing the share of clean energy in Dubai. The production capacity of clean energy in Dubai is around 14 per cent of Dubai's total power production capacity. This supports the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050 and Dubai Net Zero Carbon Emissions Strategy 2050 to provide 100 per cent of Dubai's total power production capacity from

clean energy sources by 2050," said Al Tayar.

"ADSW and Wetex are both major international events in the global sustainability calendar, and I am pleased that Dewa will support this year's ADSW as a strategic partner. Masdar and Dewa are prime examples of the UAE's leadership in driving forward climate action and the global sustainability agenda. We are pleased to enter into this partnership that will help advance our shared goals for global collaboration on sustainability and climate action," said Mohamed Jameel Al Ramahi, chief executive officer of Masdar.

Dewa will highlight its most prominent projects and initiatives in sustainability, renewable and clean energy, and innovation at its stand at the World Future Energy Summit from 16-18 January 2023 in Hall No. 5 (Energy Hall) at Adnec.

Big US banks report mixed earnings and gird for 'mild recession'

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Major US banks reported mixed fourth-quarter results Friday as executives pointed to the rising odds of a "mild recession," with inflation and interest rate hikes challenging households and businesses.

The biggest US bank, JPMorgan Chase, set aside \$1.4 billion in fresh reserves in case of loan defaults, noting that its "central" scenario is "a mild recession" with somewhat higher unemployment.

Bank of America accounted for \$403 million in possible bad loans as Chief Executive Brian Moynihan alluded to an "increasingly slowing economic environment," while Citigroup reserved \$640 million and Wells Fargo \$397 million for similar purposes.

Citigroup Chief Financial Officer Mark Mason described the outlook as "a rolling country-level recession rather than a simultaneous global downturn."

But Mason cited the moderate winter thus far in Europe as an ameliorating factor in the outlook, while noting that credit card delinquencies are still coming in at exceptionally low levels, a sign of consumer resilience.

"Our base case is still a mild recession in the latter part of 2023," he said in a briefing with reporters,

calling the outlook "very manageable."

Bank shares initially tumbled on the reports, but reversed course in the middle of the session. All four banks finished solidly higher. Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare noted that JPMorgan Chief Executive Jamie Dimon has warned last year of a potential economic "hurricane."

"The banks are bracing for at least a mild recession, but it's not a hard landing," O'Hare told AFP.

The addition of reserves in the fourth quarter reflects a shift from the year-ago period when many of the banks released reserves, boosting profits.

At JPMorgan, profits came in at \$11.0 billion, up six percent from a year ago, while revenues rose 18 percent to \$34.5 billion.

The biggest lift to earnings came from a whopping 48 percent rise in net interest income, offsetting the drag from lower investment banking results and elevated expenses.

Dimon praised the company's performance, saying the "US economy currently remains strong with consumers still spending excess cash and businesses healthy."

But he pointed to war in Ukraine, persistent inflation and tightening Federal Reserve policy as headwinds, adding that "we

remain vigilant and are prepared for whatever happens," according to a JPMorgan press release.

While charge-offs for loan losses were abnormally low in 2022, JPMorgan forecast a return to historic levels by mid-2023.

Dimon, who has warned for months about major macroeconomic obstacles that could lead to a mild or severe recession, said his views had not changed.

"We don't know the future," Dimon told reporters. "I'm simply pointing out that there are geopolitical uncertainties, which are real and we just

have our eyes focused on it." "We hope they go away. They may not," he added at a briefing.

At Bank of America, profits came in at \$6.9 billion, up two percent from a year ago on an 11 percent jump in revenues to \$24.5 billion.

The results included a 33 percent rise in charge-offs to \$689 million compared with the prior quarter.

Chief Financial Officer Alastair Borthwick described overall asset quality as "strong with loss rates increasing modestly off recent historic lows."

For Citigroup, fourth-

quarter profits fell 21 percent to \$2.5 billion, while revenues climbed 6.0 percent to \$18 billion.

Wells Fargo reported a 50 percent drop in fourth-quarter earnings to \$2.9 billion, due largely to a \$3.3 billion hit related to regulatory problems.

The bank in December agreed to pay \$2 billion to compensate customers and \$1.7 billion in civil fines, under a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau settlement.

Wells Fargo reported revenues of \$19.7 billion, down 5.7 percent from the year-ago period.

Tesla cuts vehicle prices in bid to boost flagging demand

BERLIN (Agencies): With its sales slowing and its stock price tumbling, Tesla Inc. slashed prices dramatically on several versions of its electric vehicles, making some of its models eligible for a new federal tax credit that could help spur buyer interest.

The company dropped prices nearly 20% in the United States on some versions of the Model Y SUV, its top seller. That cut will make more versions of the Model Y eligible for a \$7,500 electric-vehicle tax credit that will be available through March. It also

reduced the base price of the Model 3, its least expensive model, by about 6%.

Far from pleasing investors, the sharp price cuts sent Tesla shares down nearly 4% in midday trading. Since the start of the year, the stock has plummeted more than 65%. Many investors fear that Tesla's sales slowdown will persist and have grown concerned about the erratic behaviour of CEO Elon Musk and the distractions caused by his \$44 billion purchase of Twitter.

"I think the real driver for all of this is falling

demand for Teslas," said Guidehouse Research e-Mobility analyst Sam Abuelsamid.

Itay Michaeli, an industry analyst at Citi, wrote in a note to investors that Tesla appears to be prioritizing sales volume over price — a strategy that could affect its profit margins, at least in the near term.

Messages were left Friday seeking comment from Tesla.

The Model Y Performance version, formerly priced at nearly \$70,000, now starts at just under \$57,000.



ISLAMABAD: Shopkeeper sells dry fruits at Karachi Company market.



In brief

Ireland beat Zimbabwe

HARARE (Agencies): Ross Adair top-scored with 65 as Ireland beat Zimbabwe by six wickets to level the T20 series between the sides in Harare with one to play. Captain Craig Ervine scored 42 as Zimbabwe made 144 off their 20 overs, Graham Hume with 3-17 and Harry Tector 26 put on a third-wicket partnership of 59. Former Ulster rugby player Adair was playing only his second match for Ireland, having made his debut in the five-wicket defeat by Zimbabwe on Thursday. He smashed his 65 off just 47 balls, including four sixes and two fours. The final match in the three-match series will take place on Monday, followed by a three-match series of one-day internationals.

Bencic defeats Kasatkina

ADELAIDE (AP): Belinda Bencic beat Daria Kasatkina 6-0, 6-2 on Saturday to win the Adelaide International women's title, her sixth on the WTA Tour. The 13th-ranked Swiss player took barely an hour to beat the eighth-ranked Kasatkina. Bencic converted five of her seven break points and won almost double the amount of points than the Russian, who had been impressive in reaching the semifinals before both women had walkovers to advance to the final. It was the first tournament win for the reigning Olympic champion with new coach Dmitry Tursunov. "It's our first title together, sure it's not the last one, I feel like we're just starting so thanks a lot," Bencic said. In the men's title match, Soonwook Kwon, who lost in qualifying but was a late call-up to the main draw due to an injury withdrawal, beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (4). The South Korean player was down 2-0 in the final set and had two break points against him before he recovered for the victory. "So many people are watching in TV in Korea, thanks to the fans in here, supporting me," Kwon said.

Benzema focused on future matches

RIYADH (AFP): Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema says he has put his World Cup disappointment behind him and is focused on the future, starting with Sunday's Spanish Super Cup final. The 35-year-old forward dropped out of the France squad injured shortly before their first match, and retired from international duty in December. Ballon d'Or winner Benzema had been excited to feature after missing France's victory in 2018 because of his involvement in a blackmail scandal over a sex-type involving his former teammate Mathieu Valbuena. The forward returned from his thigh problem for Madrid at the end of December and has been finding his best form ahead of the final against rivals Barcelona. "What happened is over now, the important thing is tomorrow's game," Benzema told a news conference on Saturday. "I am feeling well in my head and my body, the rest is in the past. It was complicated but it's over." Some accused Benzema of reserving himself for the World Cup as he missed several games for Madrid in the run up to the tournament in Qatar.



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes scores his side's first goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Manchester City.

Sidra Amin confident of good show in Australia tour

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan women's ODI and T20I squads brace up for a challenge against a formidable Australia unit in their backyard in the white-ball series consisting of three ODIs and as many T20Is.

The three ODIs slated to begin on 16 January are part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25.

The first two ODIs will be played at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane on 16 and 18 January, where Pakistan are currently practicing over the past four days. For the final match of the series, the two teams will travel to Sydney to play on 21 January.

Pakistan enter the ODI series in good form, having acquired five wins from their six outings in the ICC Women's Championship. They clinched a 2-1 win over Sri Lanka in Karachi in June last year and later achieved a 3-0 sweep over Ireland in Lahore in November.

One of the star performers for Pakistan in both series was opening batter Sidra Amin. The right-handed batter is placed at the top of the batting charts in the ICC Women's Championship with a whopping tally of 495 runs in six games, 155 runs clear of second-placed Harmanpreet Kaur who has 340 runs to her name. Sidra's runs have come at an average of 123.75, and an impressive strike-rate of 88.55, demonstrating her attacking stroke-play.

She has scored 653 runs in her last 10 innings with three hundreds and two half-centuries. The hallmark of Sidra's batting dominance was her unbeaten 176 against Ireland in the ODI series opener in her hometown Lahore, recording the fifth-highest individual score in Women's ODIs.

All geared up to continue the momentum in 2023 and take up the challenge of scoring runs in the for-



eign conditions of Australia, the 30-year-old told PCB Digital on Saturday: "I am here in Australia for the first time, the conditions here are different to Pakistan as the ball rises a bit and I am trying to acclimatise as quickly as possible."

"We had our preparation camps in Lahore and Karachi where we played some practice games before coming to Australia."

When asked to reflect on her supreme run last year, Sidra deemed the past 12 months as special. She claimed the string of quality knocks against different oppositions would give her a lot of confidence heading into the forthcoming series and she will be able to make the most of it.

On her role in the team and how important it is for an opener to give a good start from the front, Sidra said, "As an opener it is a challenging job to face two new balls in ODI cricket, you have to see off the new ball and at the same time score runs and give a good start to the innings. Muneeba and I will look to give a good start to the innings so the batters coming after us should have the momentum to take it forward."

"When you perform individually it helps your team, I will try to score runs which will ultimately benefit my

team. The message from coach and captain is very simple, go out and play positive cricket, score runs for the team and help the team do well."

The Lahore-born batter also opened up about the importance of facing a top-tier side like Australia, in terms of the advanced level of cricket on display and a shot at earning their first-ever win against the hosts.

"Everyone knows that Australia is a great side, playing against them is a good omen. It will help us to learn a lot," said Sidra.

Pakistan ODI squad for Australia series:

Bismah Maroof (c), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Naseem, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Kainat Imtiaz, Muneeba Ali (wk), Nashra Sandhu, Nida Dar, Omaima Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz (wk) and Tuba Hassan.

Traveling Reserves: Aimen Anwar and Javeria Khan

Player Support staff: Ayesha Ashhar (team manager), Saleem Jaffer (bowling coach and interim head coach), Taufiq Umar (batting coach), Mauhtashim Rashid (fielding coach), Yasir Malik (strength and conditioning coach), Muhammad Zubair Ahmad (analyst), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media and digital content manager) and Rifat Gill (physiotherapist).

Australia series Itinerary

16 January – First ODI at Allan Border Field, Brisbane

18 January – Second ODI at Allan Border Field, Brisbane

21 January – Third ODI at North Sydney Oval No.1, North Sydney

24 January – First T20I at North Sydney Oval No.1, North Sydney

26 January – Second T20I at Blundstone Arena, Hobart

29 January – Third T20I at Manuka Oval, Canberra.

Rizwan reaches Chittagong in helicopter for BPL

CHITTAGONG (INP): Pakistan's wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan reached here via helicopter mere hours after reaching Dhaka and was named in the Playing XI for Comilla Victorians against Fortune Barishal.

Rizwan, who was busy on national duty amid the three-match ODI series against New Zealand till Friday has reached here today to play his first Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2023 fixture for the Victorians. The right-handed batter enjoyed a successful series with the bat as he accumulated 182 runs in three matches and remained the top-scorer.

His brilliance, however, could not fire Pakistan to seal the series as Glenn Phillips' brisk 66-run knock led New Zealand to a historic ODI series victory. According to the details, briefly, after the conclusion of the home ODI series, Rizwan immediately left for the airport from the stadium and took a flight to Bangladesh's capital Dhaka.

The wicketkeeper batter was poised to represent the Victorians in the ongoing edition of the BPL and the side made a desperate effort to get back on the winning track after two successive defeats by boarding him in a helicopter.

According to Bangladeshi media, Rizwan's flight landed in Dhaka at 10:20 am (BST) and he then boarded a helicopter which landed at Women's Sports Complex ground beside the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram at 12:45 pm (BST).

Rashford earns Man Utd derby triumph over Man City

MANCHESTER (Agencies): Marcus Rashford scored the winner as Manchester United came from behind to beat Manchester City 2-1 and go third in the Premier League in a thrilling finale at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Both United goals came in the final 12 minutes as Erik ten Hag's side moved to within one point of their local rivals in the table after inflicting a damaging blow to City's hopes of retaining the title.

Pep Guardiola's men looked to be heading to victory when Jack Grealish came off the bench to head the visitors into the lead.

But Bruno Fernandes' controversial equaliser turned the game and four minutes later Rashford netted for the ninth consecutive match at Old Trafford.

City could now fall eight points off the top of the table should Arsenal beat Tottenham in the north London derby on Sunday.

The victory for United was sweet revenge after being destroyed 6-3 when the sides met in October.

The scoreline even flattered United at the Etihad thanks to two late goals from Anthony Martial.

However, Ten Hag's men have now lost just once in

19 games since in a stunning turnaround in the Dutch coach's first season in charge. The introduction of Casemiro has transformed United's midfield since the last Manchester derby and Ten Hag's decision to play Fred alongside his Brazilian international teammate cut City's supply line to Erling Haaland.

United's turnaround is reflected in Rashford's revival. The England international has now scored 16 times this season.

- Rashford threatens -

Rashford's pace in behind was the biggest threat posed by either side in the first half and he should have done better after rounding Ederson than allowing Kyle Walker to comfortably clear off the line.

Another Rashford burst then took him beyond Rodri,

but again the finish was lacking as Ederson hurried off his line to smother. United's new loan signing Wout Weghorst was watching on from the stands and Martial's lacklustre performance before being replaced at half-time by Antony underlined Ten Hag's need for more forward options.

By contrast, City are blessed with an abundance of talent in the final third and Guardiola's ability to

make game-changing substitutions looked to have swung the game in their favour. Grealish had only been on the field three minutes before netting the biggest goal of his City career to date as he nodded in Kevin De Bruyne's cross on the hour mark.

But City have struggled this season to match the consistency that has won them four Premier League titles in the past five years and were undone by a hugely controversial equaliser.

Rashford was clearly offside as he raced towards Casemiro's pass, but crucially did not touch the ball and left it for Fernandes to sweep home. The assistant referee initially flagged for offside and City were livid at the decision to allow the goal to stand.

City were still rocking when they conceded again as Alejandro Garnacho sprinted down the left and crossed for Rashford to prod home from close range. There was still time for City to feel further aggrieved at referee Stuart Attwell as Haaland saw a penalty appeal waved away. But the champions now have a huge job on their hands if they are to maintain their dominance of English football in the Guardiola era.

Kohli, Rohit out of India squad for New Zealand T20s

NEW DELHI (AFP/APP): Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have been left out of India's T20 squad for the home series against New Zealand as selectors ponder major long-term changes.

November's World Cup semi-final drubbing to England prompted soul-searching in India and talk among the cricket board of easing out senior players.

Both men remain in the one-day squad for the visit of the Black Caps. Kohli hammered 113 off 87 balls to drive a big win over Sri Lanka in an ODI at Guwahati on Tuesday. Skipper Rohit made 83.

Batsman KL Rahul and all-rounder Axar Patel will sit out the ODI and T20 matches against New Zealand because of family commitments, the Board of Control for Cricket in India

said. It did not give reasons however for the T20 omissions of Kohli and regular all-format captain Rohit.

Hardik Pandya will continue to skipper the T20 side, having done so against Sri Lanka earlier this month. The three-match ODI series against New Zealand begins on Wednesday in Hyderabad while the first of three T20 matches takes place at Ranchi on January 27.

India will then go into a home Test series against Australia on February 9.

ODI squad: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shubman Gill, Ishan Kishan (wk), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, KS Bharat (wk), Hardik Pandya, Washington Sundar, Shabbaz Ahmed, Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed

Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umrani Malik.

T20 squad: Hardik Pandya (capt), Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan (wk), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Umrani Malik, Shivam Mavi, Prithvi Shaw, Mukesh Kumar.

Test squad against Australia: Rohit Sharma (capt), KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KS Bharat (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Shami Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Suryakumar Yadav.

Nadal in rut, Djokovic on roll as Australian Open approaches

MELBOURNE (AP): Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic own the two largest collections of Grand Slam trophies in the history of men's tennis. They are their sport's two most prominent active figures; no one else is even close. Both are in their mid-30s; no one knows how much longer they'll be at the top of the game.

For all that the long-time rivals have in common, Nadal and Djokovic could hardly be entering this Australian Open, which begins Monday (Sunday EST), under more contrasting circumstances.

Nadal, of course, is the defending champion at Melbourne Park — thanks to a comeback from two sets down in last year's final, which he called "one of the most emotional victories of my tennis career" — but he also is mired in about as bad a stretch as he's ever experienced: 0-2 so far in 2023 and having won just one of his past seven matches dating to the end of last season.

Djokovic, of course, is making his return to Australia after being banished a year ago because he wasn't vaccinated against COVID-19, but he also began this trip with a tune-up title in Adelaide and has won 30 of his past 31 tournament contests dating to the end of last season.

"He's still got it," said Stefanos Tsitsipas, the runner-up to Djokovic at the 2021 French Open and seeded No. 3 in Melbourne. "He can still play." Asked at a pre-tournament news conference Saturday whether he feels vulnerable, Nadal did not try to



hide a thing.

"Yeah. Without a doubt," replied the 36-year-old from Spain, whose 2022 was littered with health concerns that included chronic pain in his left foot, damaged rib cartilage and a torn abdominal muscle. "I have been losing more than usual. ... I need to live with it and just fight for the victories."

Looking ahead to his upcoming encounter in Rod Laver Arena against Jack Draper, a fellow left-hander who is a 21-year-old from England ranked 40th, Nadal said: "I think I'm prepared to play well. We'll see Monday if I'm prepared to win." As for his assessment of Djokovic's form, Nadal offered this: "He ended last year well, and he started this year well."

Sure did. None of which matters to Djokovic as much as another Grand Slam title would. Win what would be a 10th Australian Open championship in two weeks' time, and the 35-year-old from Serbia would increase his haul to 22 majors and pull even with Nadal (both surpassed the 20 for the now-retired Roger Federer).

"I mean, that's why I keep on playing professional tennis, (competitive) tennis, because I want to be the best. I want to win the biggest tournaments in the world. There is no secret about it,"

Djokovic said three days before he'll open with a matchup in Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday night against the 75th-ranked Roberto Carballes Baena, whose resume contains exactly one match win in Melbourne.

"It doesn't get bigger than this. You have four Slams that historically have been the biggest events in our sport," Djokovic said. "It's also one of the biggest reasons why I was really looking forward to come back to Australia: because of my record here."

He's been pleased by the greetings he's received from spectators in Adelaide and Melbourne, where he played an exhibition match at Rod Laver Arena on Friday with Nick Kyrgios — the man Djokovic beat in the Wimbledon final last July.

"I didn't know how that's going to go like, after the events of last year," Djokovic said. "I'm very grateful for the kind of energy and reception, love and support I got last night."

As for the way other players have greeted him, Djokovic said: "Well, I have not really been asking around: 'What do you guys think of me coming back here?' The ones I spoke to have been really supportive. No one has yet been negative on my return."

Since arriving in Australia, Djokovic has frequently mentioned that he doesn't hold a grudge over being kicked out of the country in 2022 for failing to follow its coronavirus rules — which have since been relaxed — and said Saturday: "Probably, if I'm not able to move on, I wouldn't be here."



BENONI: Players of Bangladesh celebrate following the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023 match between Australia and Bangladesh.

Spurs set NBA attendance record of 68,323 against Warriors

SAN ANTONIO (AP): The San Antonio Spurs have announced an attendance of 68,323 for their return to the Alamodome, a record for an NBA regular-season game.

The Spurs, celebrating their 50th anniversary season, returned to their former home to face the Golden State Warriors on Friday night. Spurs Hall of Famer David Robinson announced the official attendance at the close of the third quarter. Robinson said, "Spurs fans have again set the standard for the league."

Fans began chanting "Go Spurs Go! Go Spurs Go!" after the announcement. It shattered the previous record of 62,046 who gathered to watch Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls play the Atlanta Hawks at the Georgia Dome on March 27, 1998. "Yeah, that's pretty different," San Antonio

coach Gregg Popovich said of the record crowd. "It's a situation where you know... are they selling alcohol? I think that people will be pretty fired up. It is just an exciting moment for everybody. It is nostalgic for everybody. To have that many people in one building, to be able to play in front of them, is pretty damn exciting, actually. We hope it is a good game."

San Antonio now plays its home games at the AT&T Center but returned to the Alamodome as part of the franchise's 50th anniversary celebration. While the Spurs (13-29) are having one of the worst seasons in franchise history, the chance to play at the Alamodome gave fans a chance to relive a former era for the team.

"Having my son here with me sharing a past and present memory will be cherished by both of us for

years," said Spurs fan Eric Hernandez, who previously attended games at the Alamodome. The franchise started at the HemisFair Arena in 1973, but the Alamodome is where the franchise took its first steps to becoming one of the most respected NBA franchises.

The Spurs played in the Alamodome from 1993 to 2002 before moving 3.1 miles south to the AT&T Center. San Antonio won its first NBA championship in 1999 while playing in the Alamodome and held its championship celebration in the downtown facility.

The Alamodome also hosted the 1996 NBA All-Star Game, where Michael Jordan was booed for winning MVP over former San Antonio resident Shaquille O'Neal. "It's crazy," said Taro Kotani, a Spurs fan visiting from Japan.



In brief

Free Medical camp organized

RAWALPINDI (APP): To provide better healthcare facilities to the people, a free health screening camp was conducted at Police Line headquarters here on Saturday. According to a Police spokesman, a free medical camp was organized at Rawalpindi Police Lines headquarters under the direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari. In the medical camp, tests for blood pressure, sugar, cancer, hepatitis and other diseases of Police personnel and their family were carried out. The CPO said the welfare of the force was the top priority for which all measures were being taken, adding steps were being taken to provide quality medical facilities to police officers and workers. At the end of the medical camp, SP Headquarters Faisal Saleem also distributed certificates of appreciation among the doctors and their teams.

Social media influencers banned

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Due to the rise of misconduct by social media journalists with the members of parliament, the National Assembly Secretariat on had decided to stop the entry of social media anchors within the limits of parliament. Henceforth, YouTubers, Tiktokers and influencers on other social media sites would not be allowed to cover the parliamentary proceedings. As per the notification, an unauthorized "social media influencer misbehaved with lawmakers at Gate No 1 of Parliament House on Dec 23 last year." After that incident, the issue was raised with Press Reporters Association (PRA) which said it was not responsible for the actions of social media anchors. However, PRA secretary general Asif Bashir Chaudhry went against the ban and said, "we believe not only journalists but every citizen of Pakistan enjoy equal freedom of expression."

IESCO issues power suspension schedule

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has issued a power suspension schedule for Sunday for various areas of its region, due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO spokesman, the power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 a.m. to 02:00 p.m. for different feeders and grid stations, including Rawalpindi Cantonment Circle, Rawalpindi.III, Fuji Foundation Hospital, VIP, Zaraj, Dhok Awan, IST, Mora Negyal, New Rawat Feeders and GSO Circle. From 09:00 a.m. to 04:00 p.m., Foreign Office, NTC, ETBP, G-5, Pindorian, Mahfuz Shaheed, Scheme II, Pak Chahna Centre, Rest House, Hospital, CDA, G-6, ISI, HFF-1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, HCM-1 & 2 feeders will be without power supply. From 09:00 a.m. to 03:00 p.m., electricity supply will remain suspended for Anjara, Maqsood Shaheed, Chhab, Mira Sharif, Dhaknir, Jandst. 1 & 2, Bhandar, Pind Soltani, Pari, Nad, Bitot, Chhaji Mar, Kasran, Mianwala, Muthial, Azeem Shaheed feeders and surrounding areas.

Two fraudsters held during crackdown

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police here on Saturday have arrested two accused and recovered cash amount of Rs 2 million, fake documents, laptop and printer from their possession. According to the police spokesman, Rawat police took action against two accused Bilal and Khizar.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon visiting books stalls during 3-day book fair 2023 is being organized under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad at Art and Craft Village. —INP Photo

Imran will join dictators' list by dissolving assemblies: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman said on Saturday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan will get his name registered among autocrats after the dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies. Taking to twitter, she said PTI was using the people's mandate and parliamentary majority

for its personal benefit and dissolving of assemblies prior to their constitutional time showed the authoritarian mindset of Imran Khan.

She added PTI chief wanted to create a situation of political instability by spreading uncertainty, and the country could not withstand that extraordinary condition of chaos.

The minister said the

coalition government had saved the country from the default, while highlighting the policies of the previous government created unbearable challenges for the economy.

Ms Rehman added the people had not forgotten the worst four years of the PTI government and due to Imran Khan's intransigence that party cannot represent the will of the people.

PTI holds protest outside MPA Momina Waheed residence

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Workers of Insaf Student Federation (ISF) Saturday protested and sloganeered outside of defected Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) of Punjab from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Momina Waheed in Rawalpindi.

The angry protestors

placed "Lotus" (ewers) outside her residence while raising slogans against her referring to her Turncoat acts. Her photos were also burnt in the protest.

Three days back, Vice President PTI Fawad Chaudhry announced that a reference will be filed for the removal of the alleged traitor MPA Momina

Waheed.

Fawad raised a question asking how Momina knew about Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi. He allegedly stated that she was telling lies and that she was in contact with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and also received money from the ruling coalition.

Govt announces fees for issuance of e-passports

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The federal government has announced the schedule for depositing fee following granting its consent to issuance of e-passports in the country.

The fee schedule was unveiled for diplomatic, official and ordinary categories. Common citizens will be issued e-passports on the expiry of their existing ones.

In the first phase, the e-passports will be issued only from Islamabad. The date for launching of the service from other cities of the country will be announced later.

The normal fee for a 36-page five-year e-passport is fixed at Rs9,000 and urgent fee at Rs15,000. The normal fee for a 36-page 10-year e-passport is fixed at

Rs13,500 and urgent fee at Rs22,500.

The normal fee for a 72-page five-year e-passport is Rs16,500 and urgent fee is Rs27,500. The normal fee for 72-page 10-year e-passport is Rs24,750 and urgent fee is Rs40,500.

The fee payment can be made through National Bank of Pakistan, mobile app, MobiCash and Easy Paisa.

Capital Police committed to eradicate crime from city

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Eagle Squad of Islamabad Capital Police is playing a vital role in crime prevention from the city, during the last 24 hours Eagle squad checked a total of 11,105 suspicious persons, motorcycles and vehicles, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Eagle Squad is working under a safe city Islamabad centralized system, which is deployed in different areas of the city for patrolling and crime prevention.

During the last 24 hours, the Eagle Squad checked a total of 1150 pedestrians, 3250 motorcycles and 2595 vehicles during special and snap checking out of which 80 suspicious persons, 915 motorcycles and 700 vehicles were impounded at various police stations.

Eagle Squad also ensured the arrest of the numerous accused involved in mobile snatch-

ing and heinous crimes.

The Eagle squad also removed tinted glasses from 550 vehicles, and took stern legal action against 415 vehicles and 1150 motorcycles over non-registration and fancy number plates.

Islamabad Capital Police is taking all out efforts to curb the crime from the city. "Safety and security of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no stone would be unturned to save the lives and property of the citizens".

Capital Police registered 18,534 tenants and 1175 house employees: Following the special directions of Inspector General Police (IGP) Islamabad, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had introduced an online registration for tenants and house employees in order to control burglary in the city.

The system has been working very effectively for identifying such elements involved in crimes and bringing them to justice. Registration of ten-

ants and domestic workers not only keeps a close eye on the miscreants but also prevents the elements involved in any kind of dubious activity.

The IGP Islamabad urged the house owners to verify the backgrounds of people before giving them employment and get them registered with the nearest police station or online to avoid any untoward incident.

He also warned residents that evil-minded elements can disguise themselves as ordinary citizens and cause damage by engaging in serious incidents like theft and house robbery. He further said that, the federal capital Police was committed to provide modern facilities to citizens through innovation and modern technology.

The documents required for tenants and house employees registration include the original national identity card of the landlord, tenant/servant and one copy, passport size photographs, original contract and copy, and physical presence of both the parties was mandatory.

IRSA releases 25,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 25,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 43,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1497.24 feet and was 99.24 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 18,600 cusecs while outflow was 8,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1121.65 feet, which was 71.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 7,200 cusecs and 100 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded at 15,700, 17,800, 4,100 and 4,100 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,400 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Renowned playwright Asghar Nadeem Syed turns 73



ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned playwright, poet and intellectual Asghar Nadeem Syed turned 73 on Saturday. He was born on January 14, 1950 in Multan, to a Syed family.

He received his master's degree in Urdu language from University of the Punjab, Lahore and completed his PhD at Bahauddin Zakariya University, in Multan. Asghar Nadeem Syed has written many famous dramas for television.

His dramas highlight the social injustices in the society. Asghar has written plays depicting the feudal culture in rural areas, exploitation of women, and the country's oligarchic structure, comprising politicians, feudal lords, media moguls and bureaucracy.

Some of his famous plays include 'Chand Grehan', 'Nijaat', 'Hawain', 'Pyas', 'Maigh Malhar', 'Ghulam Gardish', 'Riyasat', 'Bol Meri Machli', 'Khuda Zameen Se Gaya Nahin', 'Tum Ho Ke Chup' and 'Jaani nisar'.

In 2013, he served on the Board of Governors of Pakistan Academy of Letters. He also served as media consultant at Pakistan Television Corporation.

He has written three books, namely 'Aadhe Chand Ki Raat', 'Tarz-e-Ehsas' and 'Adhoori Kulliyat'.

Sanjrani eulogises envoy for taking Pak-China relations to new heights

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Saturday eulogised the services of outgoing Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong for taking Pak-China relations to new heights.

The senate chairman shared the remarks after the farewell dinner hosted in honor of the outgoing envoy.

Both the dignitaries discussed important regional and international issues including bilateral relations were discussed.

Chairman Senate said that Pakistan-China friendship is an example

for the whole world and this time-tested friendship has always met challenges together.

He said that the relations between the two friendly countries are based on mutual respect and trust and China has supported Pakistan in every difficult time.

Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a gift from China to the people of Pakistan and acknowledged the active contribution of China to the relief and rehabilitation during the recent floods in

Pakistan.

He said that the Pakistani Nation is grateful to the people and government of China for this generous assistance.

On the occasion, Nong Rong appreciated the comments of the Senate Chairman and said that the government and people of China are also proud of their everlasting friendship with Pakistan.

He said that China will continue to cooperate in the development of Pakistan and both countries will continue to support each other's position at regional and global forums.

11 outlaws including three offenders arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police apprehended 11 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered a stolen bike, drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directives, the Shams Colony police team arrested two accused namely Sahal Mushtaq and Hamza Yaseen and recovered

stolen motorbike and 530 gram hashish from their possession, while police team also arrested an accused namely Muhammad Nasir involved in illegally gas filling.

Similarly, the Golra police team arrested an accused Namely Waqar Ahmed involved in illegal petrol selling. Shahzad Town police team arrested two accused namely Nadeem Qureshi and Sulman Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol and one 12 bore gun along with ammunition from their possession.

Moreover, the Sihala police team arrested an accused namely Rehman Ullah and recovered one 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from their possession. Lohi Bher

police arrested an accused namely Abdul Sami and recovered one dagger from his possession.

During the crackdown against proclaimed offenders and court absconders Islamabad capital police teams arrested 03 absconders from different areas of the city.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

IGP Islamabad directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling possessing illegal weapons. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis, he maintained.

RDA preparing master plan for 25 years: DG RDA

RAWALPINDI (APP): Efforts are underway to prepare Peri-Urban Structure Plan and Site Development Zones for five tehsils of Rawalpindi district including Rawalpindi, Gujar Khan, Kallar Syedan, Taxila and Kahuta.

The RDA spokesman said Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) RDA Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa was preparing a master plan for 25 years.

Talking about the master plan, the DG said that the RDA in collaboration with the local government was preparing planning documents for the next 25 years, adding the plan would have all the details about housing schemes, industrial areas, central business areas and other places.

He said no housing society and industrial area would be made outside the site development zones and as per the directives of the government, the areas outside the site development zones would be only for agriculture and environment and RDA was working on this special task.

The DG said that the citizens who wanted to give suggestions regarding Peri-Urban Structure Plan and Site Development Zones, were requested to send emails with their proposals to RDA website www.rda.gov.pk.

He further said that RDA was working to prepare a master plan for the next 25 years and the suggestions of the public in this regard would be appreciated so that the planning documents could be prepared as soon as possible.

Bids to smuggle wheat foiled

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Saturday foiled three bids to smuggle 1760 wheat and flour bags.

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Mandra police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up three drivers namely Javed with 270 wheat bags, Shabbir with 240 wheat bags and Ifthikhar for carrying 1250 wheat flour bags.

He informed the accused were trying to illegally ship wheat flour bags out of the Rawalpindi division.

He said the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi were strictly monitoring all the exit points of the city to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids.



ISLAMABAD: People standing around fire, warming themselves as the temperature dropped in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

4 held hunting rare birds

BALKH (Agencies): Local officials of Balkh said that four people were arrested on charge of hunting rare birds in Balkh. The police of Balkh arrested four people on charged with the illegal hunting of rare birds. The detainees were carry hunting birds by the sea in Shulgarah district of Balkh province, while they arrested by police. A rifle and hunting tools were discovered from these people, the source added.

The Frontier Post

Jamadi-us-Sani 22, 1444 — Sunday, January 15, 2023

7 criminal arrested in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan security forces arrested seven people in connection to various criminal offense in Afghan Capital city on Saturday. The Kabul Police Headquarters in a statement received by this news agency said that the security forces arrested seven people involved in thievery and looting in Afghan Capital city on Saturday. The security forces also arrested 6 criminals in Takhar province of Afghanistan.

OCHA warns of extreme weather in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned of waves of extreme cold across Afghanistan in the coming week.

The organization on its Twitter handle on Friday said that temperature would fall as low as 35 in parts of Afghanistan this weekend.

OCHA said that humanitarian organizations are

providing winterization support to families including heating, cash for fuel, and warm clothes.

The organization asked humanitarian institutions for collective efforts in distributing cash, heating materials, and winter clothes assistance to needy people in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan Meteorological Department has previously predicted waves

of extreme weather in the country.

Currently, the capital Kabul is experiencing the coldest days and nights with the temperature falling to minus 18 degrees of Celsius.

Elsewhere, reports indicate that Badakhshan people are faced with many difficulties with access to water sources as some water sources have been frozen.

NDC takes charge of coal extraction in Balkhab

KABUL (TOLOnews): The National Development Company (NDC) said it has been assigned to take charge of the extraction of coal in Balkhab district by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan.

An official of the company said that they have started work in the field, providing jobs for over 2,000 people.

They said that the income of the project will be spent on national projects, especially in Qosh Tepa Canal.

“Creating employment opportunities, elimination of deprivation, financing of national projects, especially the Qosh Tepa agricultural canal, are the main operational plans for the National Development Company under the framework of coal mining project in Balkhab,” said Farid Azim, provincial manager of the National Development Company.

Meanwhile, the first deputy prime minister, the acting minister of mines and petroleum, on a trip to Balkh province instructed local officials to ensure the safety and security of domestic and foreign mining contractors.

Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar emphasized speeding up the standard extraction process of mines, especially coal mines.

The Chamber of Industry and Mines said the extraction of coalmines should be conducted professionally to increase the industry.

“Mining capacity should be increased so that we can do exports as well,” said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, the deputy head of the Chamber of Industry and Mines.

According to the National and Development Company, the only possible reserves in two coalmines in Balkhab, including Golvarz Guakh and Shurabek Pol Ashuqan valleys, are estimated at 1.5 billion tons.

Int’l organizations should not linked humanitarian aids to political: Zabiullah Mujahid

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, in response to the recent meeting of the UN Security Council on Afghanistan, said that international organizations and world countries should not linked humanitarian aids with political issues.

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan understands UN concerns. But in the meantime the Islamic Emirate is striving to set all substances in the light of Islamic Sharia. Because it cannot ignore its sense of responsibility towards its religion and people,” the spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

The International organizations and world countries should understand the situ-



ation of our country and the religious aspirations of our nation and should not linked humanitarian aids with

political issues, he said. The spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid assured that the Islamic Emirate is ready

to cooperate in accordance with the religious principles and values of the country in all sectors.

Displaced families struggle with cold weather



NIMROZ (TOLOnews): Dozens of displaced families in the city of Zaranj, the center of Nimroz province, said they are faced with a tough situation after heavy rain and sandstorm in the province.

The families said that their tents have been damaged due to sandstorms and they are struggling with the cold weather.

After their tents were damaged, at least 70 displaced families were sent to a sports stadium in Zaranj city.

“We ask the government to provide shelter for us,” said Ehyauddin, member of a displaced family.

“We have nothing. We need help. We are poor,” said Mah Gul, member of a displaced family.

The families said that they are struggling with the freezing weather despite being moved to an indoor stadium in the province.

“Last night, it was so cold. There was a storm. It destroyed our tent. We had nothing to keep ourselves warm,” said Khal Bibi, member of a displaced family.

“We decided to move these displaced people to an indoor sports stadium,” said Abdul Shakur Nawabi, head of the physical educa-

tion department in Nimroz.

Officials in Nimroz asked aid organizations and investors to help the displaced people.

“We called on all people those who are rich to help these people,” said Sidiqullah Nusrat, head of the refugee and repatriations department in Nimroz.

“We are here to bring them food and blanket,” said Mohammad Qasim, head of the disaster management department in Nimroz.

This comes after heavy snowfalls in at least 20 provinces of the country in the last few days.

Thousands of acres of usurped land freed in Paktia: Officials



PAKTIA (Agencies): 63000 acres of usurped land has been freed in Paktia, say officials at the

Ministry of Justice of the country.

The provincial head the committee for recovery of

usurped lands recovery Abdul Rauf Saeed, says that they have recovered 63,000 acres of land in

Pataan area of Gardiz city center and other districts of that province from usurpers.

These lands have been taken back from the usurpers as a result of eight months of efforts of this commission, he added.

According to him, over five hundred acres of land in the center and other districts of this province are under investigation by the committee.

The Ministry of Justice said that the Ministry has been identified over 17,300 acres of usurped land in Farah, Ghazni and Nangarhar and directed the authorities to prevent the construction of facilities on these lands.

\$40m aid arrived

KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank announced the arrival of a new package of humanitarian aid to Kabul. DAB said that a package of 40 million US dollars in cash aid arrived in Kabul today and was transferred to one of the country’s commercial banks.

Da Afghanistan Bank welcomed the humanitarian aid of the international community and called for more cooperation in this field. The bank thanked the international community for its support of Afghanistan and asked for further cooperation with the war-torn country.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of humanitarian cash aid to Afghanistan, this is the 55th aid package that reaches Kabul in the form of cash and is delivered to one of the commercial banks in the country. Since the beginning of the process of delivering humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, nearly 2 billion US dollars of humanitarian aid has reached the country.

Iran delivers medical aid to Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): After an attack hit Kabul, that martyred and injured several, the Islamic Republic of Iran delivered medical and pharmaceutical aid to Afghanistan.

The deputy ambassador of Iran Seyed Hassan Mortazavi in Kabul, said: a plane with ten tons of medicine and 3.5 tons of medical equipment to treat and help the injured who suf-

fered from a recent explosion, we’re delivered.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is with the people of Afghanistan and will not leave them alone under any circumstances, he added.

Afghans condemn Australia’s boycott of men’s cricket team

KABUL (AI Jazeera): “Cricket! The only hope for the country. Keep politics out of it,” tweeted Afghanistan’s most famous cricketer Rashid Khan after Australia withdrew from One-Day International (ODI) series against the south Asian nation scheduled to be held in March.

Khan, the face of Afghan cricket and the captain of the country’s T20 team, was not alone. Soon a chorus of condemnation followed, including from fellow cricketers, expressing their disapproval of Australia’s decision to boycott the Afghan men’s team.

“I am really disappointed to hear that Australia have pulled out of the series to play us in March. I take great pride in representing my country and we have made great progress on the world stage,” Khan said in a statement on Thursday.

“This decision from CA [Cricket Australia] sets us back in that journey,” he said.

Mohammad Nabi, the Afghan cricket team’s former captain, also condemned the cancellation of the series to be played in Dubai.

“Let’s separate sports and politics,” he said, adding that Afghan cricketers are role models and proud ambassadors of the cricketing fraternity.

“Pathetic” decision Afghan fast bowler Naveen ul Haq Murid called scrapping the series “childish” and accused Australia of taking away Afghans’ only reason for happiness instead of being supportive. Afghans used #StopPoliticsinCricket to express their views, with some of them welcoming the Australian decision.

Australia cricket board said its decision was taken

in the wake of the recent Taliban announcement to further curb women’s freedom. Last month, Taliban rulers banned women from university and also barred them from working in NGOs. Women are also banned from attending school beyond the sixth grade and working most jobs outside of their homes.

The Australian government has backed the board’s decision.

The Taliban have so far not issued a statement, but former President Hamid Karzai expressed his disappointment.

“Disappointed to see the Australian Cricket board making this decision [e]specially given the challenges the Afghan people face. We remain incredibly proud of our National Cricket team and all our young sports representatives,” he tweeted.

Cricket has widespread

support in a nation racked by decades of war and occupation. People, including cricketers, highlighted that the sport has brought smiles to Afghan faces amid violence and upheaval. The Taliban returned to power in August 2021, when the US-led foreign forces withdrew from the country after 20 years.

Australia gave similar reasons for cancelling a one-off test match against Afghanistan in Hobart, Australia, in November 2021.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board said it was saddened by “the pathetic” decision by Cricket Australia. It pledged to approach the International Cricket Council – the sport’s highest governing body. The ICC has yet to comment on the issue.

It accused Cricket Australia of prioritising political interests over fair

play and sportsmanship, undermining the integrity of the game.

“Cricket has played a significant role in promoting unity and national pride in Afghanistan,” the board said.

“After years of war and conflict, cricket has helped to bring people together and provide a sense of normalcy to the country. It has also been an important source of hope and inspiration for all Afghans, particularly young people.”

Khan, the Afghan cricketer, also threatened to pull out of Australia’s Big Bash T20 League. Khan plays for the Adelaide Strikers franchise.

“If playing vs Afghanistan is so uncomfortable for Australia then I wouldn’t want to make anyone uncomfortable with my presence in the BBL. Therefore, I will be strongly considering my future in

that competition.”

Australia on Friday defended their decision to pull out of a cricket series against Afghanistan.

“Basic human rights is not politics,” Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said in a statement sent to AFP.

“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.

“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, referring to Afghan cricketers’ public stand for women’s rights.

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”.

But one of the women involved in the development of women’s cricket in Afghanistan told an Australian website, SBS News, the boycott could lead to more countries cancelling matches. If that happens, Tuba Sangar, Afghanistan’s former women’s cricket develop-

ment manager, said, Afghanistan could lose its membership in the ICC.

Sangar told SBS News that Afghanistan did not get “the full membership [of the ICC] easily”.

Questioning the Australian board’s decision, Ben Gardner, managing editor of wisden.com, wrote that Australia played Afghanistan in T20 World Cup last year despite the Taliban ban on women’s cricket in September.

He pointed out that Afghanistan was granted ICC full membership in 2017 despite the country not having a women’s team.

“What this [boycott] does do is deprive Afghanistan’s cricketers of the platform from which they can speak out. Their cricket team is their greatest cultural export....” Gardner wrote in the article.

Alvi: Govt with clear mandate vital to overcome crises

F.P. Report

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that a government with a clear mandate, regardless of which party came to power, was essential and the only solution for Pakistan to overcome its present financial woes, adding that all the stakeholders needed to display cooperation and unity and make strong efforts in order to steer the country out of the present financial situation.

The President expressed these views while addressing the 4th Financial Crime Summit held at Karachi, on Saturday. The 4th Financial Crime Summit was held at Karachi and was attended by Salim Raza, Former Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Kazi Rahat Ali, Secretary General, Pakistan Freelancers Association PAFLA, and other notables from different walks of life.

Talking about country's financial situation, the President regretted that we had not learnt from the past and other countries had outpaced Pakistan in terms of economic development. He said that political cooperation was needed to overcome the present financial situation and expressed support for the Government's idea of conserving energy by shutting down the markets in the evenings. The President highlighted that man's conscience was the greatest deterrent against crime, and different religions, including Islam, endeavoured to inculcate the spirit of self-accountability. He said that enacting strong laws, ensuring their implementation, apprehending corrupt elements, imposing appropriate punishments and discouraging corruption, both financial and moral, at the societal level were essential to curb financial crimes.

The President said that Quaid-e-Azam had also highlighted the prevalence of corruption among the Muslim elites of Indo-Pak sub-continent, adding that collective efforts were needed to make Pakistan a nation that was based on morality and the sayings of the Founding Father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He regretted that pilferage and corruption had crippled

pled Pakistan and we were now reliant upon aid and loans. He said that corruption was prevalent across the world and was not just the problem of developing countries and needed to be curbed by eliminating loopholes from financial laws and systems.

The President said that he did not sign the NAB Amendment bill as he believed it to be against the spirit of accountability and justice. He said that under new financial crime laws throughout the world, the accused and the owner of assets has to provide the money trail. He said that Islamic history was filled with morally and financially upright personalities, adding that Holy Prophet (PBUH) was regarded as "the Trustworthy" among his people, and trustworthiness was an important factor while dispensing the business of the state.

The President lamented the irony that instead of bringing greater transparency in governance and financial matters, transparency was being brought into the personal lives of people by leaking their audios and videos. He added that backbiting (gheebat) and social media were creating rifts in society. The President also underlined that digitalization and digitization would help bring greater empowerment and enhance women's accessibility in different sectors. He added that Pakistan lacked cyber capabilities and he had drawn the attention of the government and its different agencies to focus on this aspect. He said that we needed to overcome resistance against the adoption of technology and bring attitudinal changes for making fast-paced development.

The President regretted that the global world order was based on vested interests instead of morality and international laws as India was being allowed to perpetrate human right violations and atrocities against its minorities, especially Muslims in India as well as in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) with impunity. He said that Pakistan trusted the world order and global institutions to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, adding that the trust might have been misplaced.

JI files contempt of court petition against delay in LG polls

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat-i-Islami Saturday submitted a contempt of court petition in the Sindh High Court against the provincial government for writing a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan expressing its inability to hold the local government elections in Sindh by citing inefficient security.

JI lawyer Usman Farooq Advocate said that despite court order, the Sindh government wrote a letter to the ECP requesting it to delay the LG polls. He said that it was Sindh government's responsibility to make security arrangements for the local elections. The lawyer said that the court had given clear instructions in this regard. The Sindh chief minister and chief secretary were made respondents in the petition. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday rejected a letter of the Sindh government seeking postponement of second phase of the local government elections in the province and ordered to conduct the polls on Jan 15.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired an emergency meeting held to discuss the provincial government's request and decided that there would be no change in the schedule of local bodies polls. The Sindh government had again asked the ECP to postpone the local body elections in Karachi division and Hyderabad district, citing delimitation issue and unavailability of army troops for deployment at the polling stations.

Political parties urged to resolve issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has emphasized for defusing the tense environment surrounding the conduct of local government elections in Karachi and Hyderabad on Sunday.

In a statement on Saturday, he said differences amongst the political parties on the holding of the local government elections have assumed a worrying situation. He warned that some miscreants can take advantage of the situation and the law and order situation may arise. As per details, the interior minister said expressed concerns on Karachi and Hyderabad local government elections. He said that the opposition among political parties is concerning, as two parties are in favour of holding LG polls and two are against it. There are chances of clashes between political parties on the issue of LG polls and the terrorist can benefit from this uncertain situation.

Rana Sanaullah urged all the political parties to resolve the issue with reconciliation and dialogue. The election commission of Pakistan and the Judiciary should take notice of the current crisis. Earlier today, the Sindh government suggested the election commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone the LG polls in Karachi and Hyderabad amid security threats.

The Sindh government has advised the ECP to postpone elections in 8 out of total 17 districts; 7 districts of Karachi and 1 district of Hyderabad. It is pertinent to mention here that after MQM-P's demand, the Sindh government announced to postpone the Karachi and Hyderabad LG polls.

Court gives Imran last chance to appear

ISLAMABAD (INP): A court in Islamabad has accepted PTI Chairman Imran Khan's request seeking his exemption from court appearance in the prohibited funding case for one day only with a warning to ensure his presence during next hearing on Jan 31.

A banking court heard a petition filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan seeking bail in the foreign funding case on Saturday. During hearing, the PTI lawyer requested the court to exempt Imran from appearing before the court. Banking Court Judge Rakhshanda Shaheen accepted the request with a warning that it was the last time that the court was giving PTI chief exemption from court appearance.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 4th Financial Crime Summit.

KP Assembly will be dissolved after Khan green signal: CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly will be dissolved as and when green signal is received from the party chairman Imran Khan. He said that the prevailing economic crisis and unprecedented inflation in the country is because of the imported setup at the federal level which has played havoc with the national economy.

While addressing the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected cabinet and governing body of Peshawar Press Club, the Chief Minister strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Police Station Sarband and termed it a heinous crime against humanity. He clarified that the provincial police force is fighting on the front line. The entire nation stands with its police force who have rendered numerous sacrifices for the establishment of peace. He strongly criticized the Federal Minister for interior for his ridiculous statements against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police adding that the incumbent federal cabinet is involved in the heart wrenching incident of Model Town, Lahore and have FIRs registered against them.

Regarding the steering committee notified by the incumbent federal government, Mahmood Khan termed the step as unconstitutional and baseless having no legal ground after the 25th constitutional amendment. Appointment of a Civil Servant as its chairman and the Governor as its member is incomprehensible.

He clarified that the notification will be challenged at every level as it is tantamount to usurping the rights of the province. The entire development planning and identification of projects under the Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP) has been carried out by the provincial government. However, the current federal government is hesitant in provision of funds for their immoral political motives and have put to the wind all legal and constitutional obligations.

He lamented the federal government for not providing the budgeted funds of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province adding that huge funds are being provided to MNAs who are part of PDM under the Sustainable Development Goals. Out of the allocated Rs 55 Billion development budget for the merged districts, only Rs 5 Billion have been provided so far which is a clear violation of the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

province. Currently, the provincial government is paying salaries and Sehat card funds, of the merged districts, from its own kitty.

The Chief Minister maintained that the imported federal cabinet does not have public confidence and even international donors are hesitant in providing donations. Commenting on the wheat situation in the province, Mahmood Khan clarified that the annual requirement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is 50 Lakh metric tons out of which the provincial produce is only 12 lakh metric tons. Rising of wheat prices in other provinces has automatically increased flour prices.

However, the provincial government has increased its daily quota of subsidized wheat to flour mills from 5,000 metric tons to 6500 metric tons which will help substantially in regulating wheat prices. Moreover, the provincial government is also providing subsidy to the tune of Rs 35 billion on wheat for provision of cheap flour to its consumers. The ceremony was also attended by Minister for Higher Education Kamran Bangash, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Secretary Information Arshad Khan, Director General Information Imdadullah and others.

Iran hangs former defence ministry official for spying

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran has executed a British-Iranian national who once served as its deputy defence minister, its judiciary reported on Saturday, defying calls from London for his release after he was handed the death sentence on charges of spying for Britain.

Britain, which had declared the case against Alireza Akbari as politically motivated, condemned the execution and said it would not stand unchallenged. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called it "a callous and cowardly act carried out by a barbaric regime with no respect for the human rights of their own people."

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency reported the execution early on Saturday, without saying when it had taken place. Late on Friday, British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly had said Iran must not follow through with the sentence — a call echoed by Washington.

"Alireza Akbari, who was sentenced to death on charges of corruption on earth and extensive action against the country's internal and external security through espionage for the British government's intelligence service [...] was executed," Mizan said. The report accused Akbari — arrested in 2019 — of receiving payments of 1,805,000, £265,000 and \$50,000 for spying. In an audio recording purportedly from Akbari and broadcast by BBC Persian on Wednesday, he said he had confessed to crimes he had not committed after extensive torture.

Sunak said on Twitter he was "appalled by the execution". Cleverly said in a statement it would "not stand unchallenged". "We will be summoning the Iranian Charge d'Affaires to make clear our disgust at Iran's actions." British statements on the case have not addressed the Iranian charge that Akbari spied for Britain. Iranian state media broadcast a video on Thursday that they said showed that Akbari played a role in the 2020 assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, killed in a 2020 attack outside Tehran which authorities blamed on Israel at the time.

In the video, Akbari did not confess to involvement in the assassination but said a British agent had asked for information about Fakhrizadeh. Iran's state media often airs purported confessions by suspects in politically charged cases. Reuters could not establish the authenticity of the state media video and audio, or when or where they were recorded. On Thursday, state media had reported that 61-year-old Akbari had held high positions in the country's defence establishment.

Akbari was a close ally of Ali Shamkhani — now the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council — who was defence minister from 1997 to 2005 when Akbari was his deputy. His posts included "deputy minister of defence for foreign affairs" and a position in the "secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council". Akbari had also been an "adviser to the commander of the navy" as well as "heading a division at the defence ministry's research centre". Akbari, a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war that raged from 1980-1988, was arrested sometime between March 2019 and March 2020, state media said. Mizan, citing a statement from Iran's intelligence ministry, had said earlier this week that Akbari became a "key spy" for Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, more commonly known as MI6, due to "the importance of his position".

Reflecting Iran's worsening ties with the West, London-Tehran relations have deteriorated in recent months as efforts have stalled to revive Iran's 2015 nuclear pact, to which Britain is a party.

Britain has also been critical of the Islamic Republic's crackdown on anti-government protests, sparked by the death-in-custody of a young Iranian-Kurdish woman in September. A British foreign office minister said on that Britain was actively considering proscribing Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organisation but has not reached a final decision.

2 Palestinians shot dead by Israel troops

WEST BANK (Agencies): Israeli troops have shot dead two Palestinian men in the occupied West Bank during an army raid near a flashpoint town. The two men — Ezzedine Bassem Hamamreh, 24, and Amjad Adnan Khaliyyeh, 23 — were killed on Saturday "during an assault on the village of Jaba, south of Jenin", the Palestinian Ministry of Health said.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group said Hamamreh and Khaliyyeh were its members. In a statement, the group condemned the killings, describing the two men as "heroic martyrs". It said they were killed while trying to intervene against the "occupation forces, which were carrying out a cowardly assassination operation".

A third Palestinian, 19-year-old Yazen Samer Ja'abari, died of injuries he received when he was shot by Israeli forces on January 2, the ministry added. Ja'abari was wounded in the village of Kufr Dan near Jenin during an army raid, in which two other Palestinians were killed. The latest deaths bring to 12 the number of Palestinians killed this year by Israeli forces in the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967. The number includes three minors. The Israeli military has been engaged in a campaign of intensified raids and killings that has lasted almost a year.

PM will have to take trust vote: Imran

LAHORE (Agencies): In what appears to be a tit-for-tat move, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said Saturday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will have to take a trust vote. Against the backdrop of the recent political developments in the country, Khan, during an interview on a private television channel, said: "PTI has passed the test. Now, Shehbaz Sharif will be fully tested."

Referring to the recent vote of confidence taken by Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi, Khan said: "Our numbers had been completed. Moonis Elahi worked hard at the last moment to achieve the required numbers of the PML-Q." The cricketer-turned-politician while denying allegations of horse trading said that the PDM was still stuck to the "politics of Changa Manga".

"The country has changed and they don't realise it," the PTI chairman said, adding that for the first time in the country's history, Punjab stood

against the Punjab establishment during the by-elections in July 2022. "The by-polls changed the country's politics." The former premier said that he realised the opposition being shocked at CM Elahi's success at getting the required number of votes after seeing their photos while seated in the assembly. "They thought the establishment was behind them and they will win," the PTI chief said, taking a jibe at the opposition.

Lauding CM Elahi's support for his decisions in Punjab's political matters, Khan said: "The way Elahi is standing with us, there was immense appreciation in the party. He was the chief minister and made a real sacrifice. We are recommending he merges the party."

He insisted that a merger with the PTI will be in PML-Q's interest. "Now only PTI's ticket will work in the election. Whoever leaves politics at this time, will end their politics," he said. Shedding light on the challenges he faced during

his tenure as the prime minister, Khan said that the three and a half years were "tormenting" for him.

The PTI chairman criticised the federal government for its spending on visits abroad. "They are going to ask for money and are staying at the most expensive hotels."

They don't care about Pakistan's money being spent," he said, adding that the country needs a strong government to take decisions. Reiterating his fears of political engineering, the PTI chief said: "I am currently seeing political engineering in the country. They are gathering MQM-P and sending Balochistan Awami Party to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)." Khan revealed that there are plans to give seats to PPP in South Punjab and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while in Punjab people are being asked to join the PML-N. "They have not learnt anything from the past. Political engineering has ruined the country," he lamented.

Key infrastructure hit in Russian strikes: Ukraine

KYIV (Agencies): Ukraine reported a fresh wave of attacks and hits on key infrastructure facilities on Saturday, a day after Russia claimed to have captured the ravaged eastern town of Soledar following a long battle. Victory in Soledar would be a rare achievement for Moscow after an embarrassing series of military setbacks — although Kyiv insisted fighting was still ongoing in the city.

On Saturday morning, Ukrainian infrastructure was again under fire as winter deepened, officials said. "Today, the enemy fired at energy facilities again," operator Ukrenergo said, adding it was working on "eliminating the consequences" of the strikes. In Kyiv, AFP journalists heard several explosions while Ukrainian officials reported strikes on a power facility. "There is a hit to an infrastructure facility, without critical destruction or fire," the Kyiv city administration said.

A fire broke out in a warehouse after fragments of a rocket fell, it said, adding there were no reported casualties in the capital. In the northeastern Kharkiv region, "the enemy launched another missile attack on critical infrastructure and industrial facilities," governor Oleg Syngubov said. There

could be emergency power cuts in the city of Kharkiv, the second largest in Ukraine, and in the surrounding region, Syngubov warned. Attacks were also reported in the southern Zaporizhzhia region. The head of the central Cherkasy region, Igor Taburets, said that "the enemy is attacking the territory of Ukraine again."

Russian attacks killed three people on Friday, the deputy head of presidency Kyrylo Tymoshenko said. There is uncertainty about the fate of Soledar, a salt mining outpost that Russia claimed to have captured, which Kyiv denies. Both sides have conceded heavy losses in the battle for the town, with Moscow desperate to sell any win back home after repeated humiliations and Ukraine determined to hold — and win back — ground. On an icy road near Soledar on Saturday, AFP journalists saw Ukrainian medics tending to the wounded brought from the nearby frontline.

Bloodied helmets, bullet-proof vests and pieces of uniform were discarded on the side of the road after being cut from corpses. The health workers are "here to help the living," said a 31-year-old medic who identified himself as Vadim. Two men — one with a bandaged head, and another with an

injured leg and carried on a stretcher — were quickly helped into a waiting ambulance. The wounded are usually taken to stabilisation points before being transferred to the hospital, Vadim explained. Another medic bent over one of the wounded men's vest, collecting the remaining bullets.

"Things are consistently difficult," said Vadim, but "the Ukrainians are keeping their positions". The Russian defence ministry on Friday announced it had "completed the liberation" of Soledar the previous day and pledged more "successful offensive operations" in the eastern Donetsk region. In a separate statement, it praised the "courageous and selfless" forces of the mercenary group Wagner for storming Soledar. The nod was an unusual recognition of the controversial force following talk of infighting and rivalry between Wagner and the official military.

The founder of Wagner, Yevgeny Prigozhin, insists that his force spearheaded the offensive for Soledar. Ukraine has insisted it still controls the frontline city, despite Russia's claims to have taken it. Regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said on national television on Saturday that "Soledar is controlled by Ukrainian authorities, our military controls it".