

Sepoy martyred in blast
F.P. Report
BANNU: A soldier of the Pakistan Army on Monday embraced martyrdom as an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded in general area Jani Khel of Bannu district. According to the ISPR, the martyred soldier was identified as Sepoy Gul Sher (age 24 years, resident of Khyber district). It added that the sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists in the area.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

FM arrives in Tashkent
TASHKENT (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan to attend the 26th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers (COM). The theme of the conference is "Year of Strengthening Connectivity". The minister will address the council and will separately hold bilateral meetings with participating ministers of member states and other dignitaries on the sidelines of the event.

Vol. XXXIX No. 08 Regd. No. 241 RAJAB 01 1444 -- TUESDAY, JANUARY 24 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES Price. 20



KARACHI: A former police officer Rao Anwar talking to media persons after acquittal.

Amnesty schemes ruin country: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Monday remarked that it was the authority of Parliament alone or the provincial assembly to approve amnesty schemes, but here, every institution was introducing these schemes on its own.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa said that it was the amnesty schemes which had ruined the country in an organized way. One-time amnesty for the smuggled vehicles had been introduced for hundred times, he added. The court also expressed annoyance over the non-appointment of the attorney general of Pakistan. Justice Faez Isa remarked that there were more than 5,000 lawyers of SC but the executive was still unable to choose the one for this post.

The court said that as per the law, this important slot couldn't be left vacant. Whether a bargain was being made on the appointment of the attorney general, it asked. A three-member bench headed by Justice Qazi Faez Isa dismissed the appeal of Pakistan customs against the decision of the appellant tribunal for de-seizing of a smuggled vehicle on payment of duties.

Justice Isa remarked that the customs office was incompetent to stop the smuggling of vehicles due to which it used to announce the schemes. He further said that the court could summon record from Federal board of Revenue (FBR) regarding the number of amnesties to date. How these schemes could be announced under the law of customs, he asked.

The court observed that the smuggling of gold and silver was understandable but how the vehicles could be smuggled. Vehicles with strange number plates could be witnessed on the roads of the federal capital, Justice Isa observed, adding that the owners of these vehicles might be very influential. Justice Faez Isa noted that the British prime minister was fined for not fastening his seat belt and he also rendered an apology for the conduct. In Pakistan, the institution was not as powerful to fine even an ordinary officer of CDA on a violation, he said.

Expressing annoyance with the customs office, the court remarked that no one smuggles a vehicle by hiding it in his pocket. But once the vehicle reached here the department started to chase it, he said. Justice Yahya Afridi said the customs department should end up the dispute after taking its duties. Customs' lawyer adopted the stance that if a vehicle was smuggled here, then it fell in the jurisdiction of this department. At this, Justice Isa said that there was no answer to the basic question that how the vehicle was smuggled into the country. The court subsequently dismissed the appeal of Pakistan customs against de-seizing of a smuggled truck which was seized in 2018 by the department.

PM forms body on power breakdown

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, taking strong notice of the major breakdown of electricity across the country, set up a high-level committee to find out the cause.

The prime minister also sought urgent report from Federal Minister for Energy Engineer Khurram Dastagir on the matter. He emphasized for finding the pitfalls that led to the electricity breakdown and stressed fixing the responsibility. Shehbaz Sharif ordered swift measures to restore electricity, saying that inconvenience to the general public would not be tolerated.

Shehbaz prays for early recovery of injured Sherry Rehman: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday prayed for early recovery of Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman.

The prime minister expressed sympathies and good wishes for the minister who underwent a surgery for her injured hand. He prayed to Allah Almighty for the early recovery of the minister to enable her resume official responsibilities at the earliest.

PM felicitates Mohsin Naqvi: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday extended felicitations to Mohsin Naqvi on his appointment as the caretaker chief

minister of Punjab.

The prime minister in a statement welcomed the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and expressed confidence that all requisites for holding a free, fair, and impartial election would be fulfilled. "As the President of the Muslim League (Nawaz), I welcome the appointment of Mohsin Naqvi and pray that he succeeds in fulfilling this responsibility as per law and constitution," he said.

The ECP on Sunday appointed Mohsin Raza Naqvi as the caretaker chief minister of Punjab. A meeting of the ECP presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja picked Naqvi from among four nominees – two from the government and two from the opposition – already received by the ECP.

Two candidates were nominated by the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) and allies, and as many by the coalition government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League – Qaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), led by former chief minister Chaudhary Pervez Elahi. The ECP finalised the name of Mohsin Naqvi after keenly observing and discussing the profiles, performances, and other details of the four nominees, namely Mohsin Naqvi, Ahad Cheema, Ahmed Nawaz Sukhera and Naveed Cheema.

SBP jacks up policy rate to 17 per cent

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In line with the market expectations, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday jacked up the benchmark interest rate by 100 basis points to 17% — the highest since October 1997 — to fight the wild inflationary fires spreading across the country.

SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad, in his maiden monetary policy press conference after assuming charge in August, revealed that the committee has observed that "inflationary pressures are persisting and continue to be broad-based". "If these remain unchecked, they could feed into higher inflation expectations over a longer than-anticipated period therefore the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) stressed that it is critical to anchor inflation expectations and achieve the objective of price stability to support sustainable growth in the future," he further explained. The central bank raised the benchmark interest rate by 100 basis points (bps) today taking the total increase to 750bps since January 2022 to counter rising inflation.

The MPC — which was constituted as a statutory committee under the State Bank of Pakistan Act — decided to increase the key benchmark rate due to three important economic developments: Inflation; External sector challenges; Global economic conditions. Explaining each of the aforementioned factors individually, the governor said that despite some moderation in November and December, inflation continues to remain elevated. Importantly, core inflation has been on a rising trend for the past 10 months.

Moreover, near-term challenges for the external

sector have increased despite the policy-induced contraction in the current account deficit. "The lack of fresh financial inflows and ongoing debt repayments have led to a continuous drawdown in official reserves," he said. The MPC also took notice of the global economic and financial conditions broadly remaining uncertain in the near-to-short term, leading to mixed implications for the domestic economy.

The central bank, in its monetary policy statement, further elaborated that the expected slowdown in global demand could negatively impact the outlook of exports and workers' remittances for emerging economies, including Pakistan. "This would partly offset the gains from the import contraction. On the flip side, some moderation in international commodity prices may help reduce inflation and the improvement in global financial conditions may also provide some relief to the external sector," he said.

The committee also noted that the fiscal deficit widened to 1.5% of GDP in the first four months of FY23 from 0.9% in the same period last year, while the primary surplus fell to 0.2% of the GDP, as compared to 0.3% last year. "The current fiscal stance is inconsistent with monetary tightening," it mentioned, adding that among the evolving macro-economic challenges, it is important for the fiscal policy to achieve the planned consolidation in order to help contain inflation and pave the way for sustainable growth.

The statutory committee noted reiterated its November 2022 assessment that the short-term costs of bringing down inflation are lower than the

long-term costs of allowing it to become entrenched. It also emphasised the engagements with the multilateral and bilateral partners to overcome domestic uncertainty and to address the near-term external sector challenges.

In this regard, the MPC viewed the completion of the pending ninth review under the IMF's External Fund Facility (EFF) as "critical for reducing uncertainty" and unlocking multilateral and bilateral inflows. In its forward guidance, the MPC emphasised that anchoring of inflation expectations is important to achieve the medium-term inflation target of 5-7% by December 2024 and "requires coordinated monetary and fiscal policy efforts."

The statement mentioned that the broad money growth decelerated in the first half (July-December) of the fiscal year 2022-23, "primarily reflecting the stress on the external account". On the other hand, domestic credit expanded owing to a seasonal rise in private sector credit along with increased budgetary borrowing because of reduced external financing.

"The disaggregated analysis of private sector credit shows retirement in consumer finance and moderation in working capital and fixed investment loans."

Regarding the inflation outlook, the uncertainty on their future path and expected near-term adjustments remain the major upside risks to the inflation outlook. "Reflecting these concerns, both the consumer and business inflation expectations have drifted upwards over the short and medium term in latest pulse surveys," the statement mentioned.

Maryam to return home on Saturday

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that Pakistan Muslim League (N) Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz would leave London on January 26 and reach Lahore on January 28, Saturday night at 8 pm.

In a tweet, the minister said that with the prayers of the people, Maryam Nawaz Sharif was returning home after recovering from surgery. The minister thanked the people of Pakistan for their prayers and good wishes.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb also said that the appointment of caretaker chief minister Punjab was made according to the constitution and law and now there would be elections and not the selection in the province.

Imran Khan was worried over Mohsin Naqvi's appointment as caretaker chief minister because this was not done by witchcraft but according to the constitution and law, she said in a tweet on Monday. She termed Imran a 'foreign agent' who used \$3 millions funds of Shaukat Khanum hospital for business purpose. She also criticized Tehreek-e-Insaf's Chairman for imposing Usman Buzdar on the people of Punjab. The minister rejecting the PTI's criticism over caretaker chief minister's appointment said now there would be elections in Punjab and no longer selection as done in 2018.

SC seeks report from IG Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday sought a report from the inspector general of Police Islamabad on filing an appeal against the reinstatement of three personnel involved in a robbery incident at the house of a diplomat.

Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial questioned why the case of three police personnel was mishandled as an appeal was filed after the time bar. He observed that three personnel were involved in the incident of robbery and recovery was also made from them. The CJP observed that the three personnel were terminated without regular inquiry into the matter and they were reinstated by the service tribunal but an appeal against their restoration of services was filed after the expiry of the time limit.

He questioned why the IGP didn't order to conduct a regular inquiry into the incident. Justice Athar Minallah said that the answer should be sought from IGP on this matter. Deputy attorney general Malik Javed said that the three police employees were currently appointed in the police fields.

It may be mentioned here that the three employees of Islamabad police, Asif Ali, Lal Shehbaz and Tariq Mehmood, had been terminated from service in 2017 for carrying out robbery in a diplomat's house. However, they were restored by the Federal service tribunal.

Massive power breakdown across country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD, LAHORE, KARACHI, QUETTA: A massive electricity breakdown hit the country Monday morning disrupting life in all major cities including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta.

Sources said transmission lines of Tarbela and Mangla dams were tripped and all power plants in Guddu, Jamshoro, Muzaffargarh, Haveli Bahadur Shah and Balloki shut down. The NPC fuse was also switched off to save the system. The power supply went off suddenly at 7:32 am with IESCO, LESCO, MEPCO, SEPCO, QESCO and K-Electric were the most affected.

A number of cities in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab were without power supply. As many as 22 districts of Balochistan were without electricity and supply was suspended to 117 grid stations of IESCO.

According to QESCO officials, both electricity power transmission lines coming from Guddu to Quetta have been tripped impacting 22 districts including Quetta, Khuzdar, Sibbi and Dera Murad Jamali. Karachi, the economic hub of the country, also knocked out of the grid because of the NTDC system collapse.

Sources said National Transmission & Dispatch Company (NTDC) and power distribution companies have launched efforts to restore the power supply which may take 27 hours. In a couple of tweets, the Ministry of Power said the system frequency of the national grid went down at 7:34 this morning, causing a widespread breakdown in the power system. System maintenance work is progressing rapidly."

In another post, the ministry said the restoration of power supply from Warsak to grid stations has been started and in the last one hour limited number of grids of Islamabad Supply Company and Peshawar Supply Company have been restored. The country has faced such power breakdowns several times in the past and the recent one showed that the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) had failed to put in place permanent remedial measures to overcome such incidents.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has recently imposed a fine of Rs20 million on the NTDC because of breakdowns and collapsing of its towers. A similar kind of power breakdown had plunged the whole of Pakistan into darkness on October 13, 2022 when a disruption occurred in two 500kV transmission lines in Karachi.

Before that a major power blackout was occurred on January 9, 2021 which had plunged much of Pakistan into darkness. In 2015 an alleged militant attack on a key power supply line plunged around 80% of the country into darkness for more than

nine hours.

In October of last year, Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Quetta, Multan, and Faisalabad were hit by a power outage. At that time, the power minister said that nearly 8,000 megawatts of power went offline. Back then, Dastagir had said that the simultaneous faults in two power lines, which had triggered the breakdown, at the same time was concerning for the government. He had also announced that an in-depth inquiry was ordered and promised action.

Energy Minister Khurram Dastagir Khan Monday shared that a power breakdown across the country, caused by a "variation in frequency" in the country's South, may take 12 hours to restore completely.

While sharing details about the fault, Dastagir told reporters that the power generation units are temporarily switched off in winter at night as an economic measure to save fuel. "When the units were turned on at 7:30am this morning one by one, frequency variation was reported in the southern part of the country between Jamshoro and Dadu. There was a fluctuation in voltage and the power generation units were shut one by one due to cascading impact. This is not a major crisis," Dastagir insisted.

He said that the restoration efforts are underway and claimed that the supply to some grid stations had already been restored while complete restoration will likely take 12 hours.

"Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) and some grids of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) have already been restored," claimed the minister. Talking about the breakdown in Karachi, the minister said that the matter in the port city is complicated as it has a complete electric supply system of its own. "We provide K-Electric about 1,000-1,100 megawatts routinely, however, it will be restored within a few hours. It is not certain how long will it take to sort this issue. However, my target is to restore electricity in the country in the next 12 hours," said the minister.

Meanwhile, the electricity supply is being restored in a phased manner after a country-wide power breakdown at 07:34 a.m. Monday which was caused by an abrupt drop in the frequency system of the national grid. The day-long power outages disrupted the routine public life across the country, with fluctuating internet services and electricity generators fully exhausted by evening due to constant burden and functioning. The electricity will hopefully be restored completely by tonight as the technical teams of the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) and other experts are busy in rectifying the fault, which occurred in the North-South system earlier in the morning.

ATC acquits Rao, others in Nageeb murder case

KARACHI (Agencies): An anti-terrorism court in Karachi on Monday acquitted former Malir SSP Rao Anwar and 17 others in the Nageebullah Mehsud murder case. In its brief verdict, which was pronounced by ATC XVI judge at the Karachi Central Prison, the court said that the prosecution had failed to submit sufficient evidence against Anwar and other accused persons.

During the trial, the court recorded the testimonies of 51 witnesses — including the medico-legal, forensic and ballistics experts, nine private witnesses and police officials produced by the prosecution. During the hearing today, the ATC judge noted the prosecution had failed to prove that the victims were kidnapped and murdered in a fake encounter by Rao Anwar and his 14 subordinate officials.

"Geo-fencing reports and call records failed to

prove the presence of Rao Anwar and others at the place of the fake shoot-out," he observed. A detailed verdict in the case is awaited. Speaking to private TV channel after the acquittal, Anwar thanked God and said that "fake allegations" against him had been proven wrong today.

The former cop went on to say that he will give a detailed response on the accusations against him in "a talk show" soon. He claimed that 25 people were wrongly nominated in the murder case and the person killed was a "wanted terrorist" whose name was Naseemullah and not Nageebullah. "He was a wanted militant about which advertisements were also given in leading newspapers."

When asked whether he would like to rejoin the police force, the former police official said one year of his service was left and he "would like to serve

Karachi". After the verdict was released, lawyer and human rights activist Jibran Nasir — who is representing the legal heirs of Nageeb — tweeted that his clients would appeal today's judgment before the high court.

Separately, he told media that the legal team acting for Nageeb's case had made public their apprehensions when the prosecution's witnesses began to refile from their statement and important documentary proof went missing. "The decision will be appealed at an appropriate forum but those who provided political patronage to Rao Anwar and exerted pressure in the proceedings to weaken the prosecution case fail to understand how with every such injustice our governance structure and the social contract between the citizens and the state is eroding and crumbling away," Nasir added.

Commander US AFCENT, Air Chief discuss security situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Commander of Ninth Air Force (US Air Forces Central Command - AFCENT), Lieutenant General Alexus Grynkewich called on Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Bafar Sidhu here on Monday.

According to a PAF news release, matters pertaining to the regional security situation, and enhanced bilateral and defence cooperation were discussed during the meeting. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel and the exceptional

progress made by the PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. He also appreciated Pakistan's efforts in promoting regional peace and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields.

The AFCENT Commander offered heartfelt condolences to the people of Pakistan over the loss of life amidst devastation caused by floods and appreciated the efforts put in by the PAF for relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims. The Air Chief highlighted that Pakistan and the United States of America enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further

enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the two strategic partners.

The Chief of the Air Staff also shared his vision of modernising PAF to meet the evolving security and geopolitical challenges. The Air Chief further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relations with the United States of America, which are based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability". Both sides agreed to further optimize military-to-military ties, particularly in training and operational domains.

Governor attends annual degree show at NCA

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended the annual degree show at National College of Arts Lahore here today as a special guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that students are our asset and the future of the country. Governor Punjab said that the art education given in NCA is in accordance with international standards in every way.

He said that educated youth with a positive mind-

set are the asset of the country, adding that with positive thinking, we can create a beautiful Pakistan. Governor Punjab said that coming to a prestigious institution like NCA is a unique experience.

He said that after seeing the students' projects in the degree show, he was more convinced that talent and creativity are at their peak here.

He said that as a chancellor, he was trying hard to improve higher education.

He added that consortia have been formed in seven important fields in the universities.

On this occasion, Governor Punjab along with Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Murtaza Jafari and senior faculty members also visited the degree show and appreciated the displayed projects of students.

Later, while talking to the media, in response to a question regarding announcing the date of Punjab Assembly elections, Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman said that adherence to the constitution and law is his priority. The constitutional process is ongoing.

He said that so far nothing has been done against

the constitution neither will be done. In the future, all matters will be handled according to the constitution and law.

Meanwhile, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, saying: "I strongly condemn the despicable act of desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden. Desecration of the Holy Quran is a deplorable act. The incident has hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims around the world under the guise of freedom of expression."



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attending annual degree show at National College of Arts Lahore.

More hospitals to be empaneled

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Secretary Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi said on Monday that more hospitals should be empaneled in the province to benefit maximum people under the Sehat Sahulat Programme.

A meeting, chaired by the secretary, discussed in deta-

ils the Sehat Sahulat Programme and the ways to make it more effective. Special Secretary Syed Wajid Ali Shah, Additional Secretary Shahida Farrukh, Additional Secretary Agha Nabeel, Chief Planning Officer Abdul Haq Bhatti, CEO Health Initiative Managem-

ent Company Dr Ali Razzaq, COO Shamshad Ali Khan, Hasnat and Mian Muneeb also attended the meeting.

Punjab Health Initiative Management Company chief executive officer and officers concerned gave a detailed briefing to the health secretary.

Caretaker CM takes notice of hooliganism

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has taken notice of hooliganism of prisoners in Gujrat Jail and directed the commissioner and RPO Gujrat to immediately reach the jail.

Every possible step should be taken to overcome the unrest unleashed by prisoners and legal action be initiated after identifying the culprits, he added.

Caretaker CM meets officers

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi reached Chief Minister's Office on Monday at his own vehicle sans protocol.

An introductory session was held wherein he met officers of chief minister office there.

DC holds open court to redress grievances

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lahore Muhammad Ali held an open court (khuli kutchehri) in his office and heard the public complaints against various departments, here on Monday.

He listened to people's problems and issued necessary instructions. On-the-spot directives were also issued for redressing complaints and directed the departments concerned to improve the quality of service for providing maximum relief to people.

The DC assured the applicants of an early resolution of their issues and directed the officers concerned to take necessary steps in this regard.

The DC is holding an open court on daily basis from 10am to 11am, and people could present their complaints in his office. He assured the general public that their complaints would be resolved on emergency basis in the open court.

Shazia grieves over death of Byram

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson BISP Shazia Atta Marri has expressed her deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of well-known businessman Byram D. Avari.

In her condolence message here on Monday, she was saddened to learn about the death of Byram D. Avari.

The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

Green Line train being launched

LAHORE (APP): The Green Line train is being launched once again after flash floods in the country.

According to Railways sources here on Monday, the train was being operated as superior service and top of the line facilities would be provided in it.

High quality breakfast, food, bedding, utility pack and high tea were the facilities being provided in the train, sources added.

Sacred life of holy Prophet (PBUH) beacon for entire humanity: Ahsan Iqbal

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that Muslims had to meet their challenges by seeking guidance from the sacred life of Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) which was a beacon for entire humanity.

Addressing an inaugural session of a two-day International Seerat Conference on 'Social Responsibilities of Women and Seerat-e-Tayyaba (PBUH)' here at Punjab University, he said the sacred life (Seerat-un-Nabi) of Holy Prophet (PBUH) had introduced those golden principles which had not only enlightened people in Arab but also Europe, Africa, Asia and Morocco to Indonesia.

Ahsan Iqbal said: "The glorious teachings of last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) are interpretation

of the commandments of Allah Almighty." He said: "Our forefathers had practiced the golden principles taught by our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH) in letter and spirit which helped them in becoming world superpower."

He said non-Muslims deeply studied factors behind the power which Muslims experienced as a result of following the Holy Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH).

The message and vision of social justice given by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) was unprecedented and matchless that helped Islam to grow rapidly, he added.

He said it was a high time to think, why today Muslims were not benefiting from the holy Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) which in past led to social, political and economic revolution and the reason was only lack of implementation.

He said, "Islam has given identity, respect and status to women and there are a number of Hadees Sharifs which prove the importance of women."

The Minister said that unfortunately visionary progress of Muslims halted after Baghdad fall which negatively impacted the leadership approach of Muslims.

He said that Shariat given to the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) would provide guidance to entire humanity till the day of judgement.

Ahsan Iqbal said that human had gone through different stages of evolution and today we were in the age of knowledge revolution.

Industrial revolution changed the power parameters and instead of muscle power, brainpower gained more significance, he said and added that the age of

brainpower actually ended the division between man and woman.

He said there was a need to harmonize thinking in accordance with the age of industrial and knowledge revolution.

He said, "It is unfortunate that we have never accepted innovation and there is a need to promote approach of critical thinking among our people."

He said that Seerat chairs were established in 2017 on contemporary issues with an objective to achieve success in different sectors of life. He said Islamic Seerat Centre on Gender Studies was being established which would soon be completed.

He stressed the need for implementing knowledge to achieve desired results.

Dr Shahida Parveen, Dr Muhammad Arif Khan and Prof Dr Muhammad Hammad also spoke.

Minister directs to expedite work on uplift schemes

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Industries and Cooperative Department Jam Ikramullah Dharejo has directed the officers concerned to expedite work on development schemes and to complete them within the stipulated time.

According to a statement issued here on Monday, he was presiding over a meeting here in his office on Monday.

Secretary Industries and Commerce Rasheed Ahmed Solangi, MD SITE Tariq Anwer Khokhar, MD Sindh Small Industries Shahid Ali Shah and other

officers also attended the meeting.

Tariq Khokhar told the meeting the number of ongoing development schemes was nine, which would be completed at the cost of Rs 756 million, out of which Rs 137 million had been utilized.

Shahid Shah told the meeting that the number of ongoing development schemes was eight while the cost of these schemes was Rs 397 million. Five new development schemes were also included in ADP, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Jam Ikramullah

Dharejo said that the Sindh government was committed to providing better infrastructure in industrial zones and it was the need of the hour to complete development schemes on time in order to facilitate industrialists and to motivate them to establish new industries.

He said PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah were very keen on industrial development in Sindh and were taking all measures to resolve the issues related to industrial zones.

New policy introduced

LAHORE (APP): The University of Engineering and Technology (UET) has introduced a new admission policy, students will now be able to register for the UET entry test on a first-year basis.

On payment of Rs 1800 tokens can be obtained through HBL Online Banking and HBL CONNECT until March 03, 2023. For admissions in non E-CAT programmes, the token can be obtained by February 13 on payment of Rs 2,000.

All Pakistani students who have passed or are about to take the Intermediate exams will be allowed to sit in E-CAT 2023. However, candidates who do not appear in the UET entrance test will not be eligible for admission in the undergraduate programs of any government and private sector engineering institution.

The Entry Tests will be held from March 13 to 17, 2023 while results will be announced on March 24, 2023.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Abdul Halem Civil Judge V /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 407/1. Institution 3/11/2022 Date of hearing. 4/2/2023. Nor Zada VS Bakht Rawan. Declaration Suit, Notice to no. 12.Lamheran Widow Sheren sect Ajjar. 15.Samdia Bibi. 16. Farman. 17.Aqib sons of Mohammad Zahid. 35.Mst Zakira wife of Hazrat Bilal. 29.Raza Shah s/o Zahir Shah nation Afghan. 28.Sher Shah s/o Zahir Shah resident of Sadiq Khel Hujra Sura thesel Mandan district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 4/2/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Abdul Halem Civil Judge V /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 434/. Institution 8/6/2022 Date of hearing. 4/2/2023. Mst. Hadiat VS Said Bahadur Khan, Declaration Suit, Notice to no. 8.Liaqat Ali son of Malak Zay resident of Cheena thesel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 4/2/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Name Correction

My Correct name is Zahid Khan. While in my Government Documents (DHA) Peshawar Record mistakenly written as Muhammad Zahid. Please Correct as Zahid Khan S/o Ayub Khan Bajour.

Document Lost

I had lost by cheque book titled with Said Shabir Ahmad son of Amir Jawal Shah bearing account number# 11417900772504. I had already blocked my account to avoid misuse and public at large are requested to return cheque if anyone found it.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Asad Zaman with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Zaman citizen number 1620229250509 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Nazia (Daughter)2.Taufeeq Zaman (Son)3.Asad Zaman (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Salmaan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Habib Gul citizen number 1620209288129 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Sidra Noor (Daughter)2.Wazir Jamal (Spouse)3.Abdul Basit (Son)4.Muhammad Salmaan (Son)5.Luqman (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Babar Niaz with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Niaz Ali citizen number 1310109343157 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Hina Sundas (Daughter)2.Kainat Bibi (Daughter)3.Gulzar Fatima (Spouse)4.Amir Niaz (Son)5.Umar Niaz (Son)6.Babar Niaz (Son)7.Fahad Niaz (Son)8.Uzman Niaz (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA ABBOTABAD-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Mohsin Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Mustafa Ali citizen number 1410127277239 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Mufesela Jan (Daughter)2.Shahida Jan (Daughter)3.Foremla Jan (Daughter)4.Sultan Bibi (Spouse)5.Sakhi Marjan (Son)6.Mohsin Khan (Son)7.Jamshid Khan (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HANGU-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Haseeb Ahmad with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Shabir Ahmad citizen number 1730147351945 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Sobia Khan (Daughter)2.Sana Shabir (Daughter)3.Nayab Bibi (Daughter)4.Musarat Shabir (Spouse)5.Aziz Ahmad (Son)6.Haseeb Ahmad (Son)7.Saad Ahmed (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MEGA CENTER PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Bibi Shahnaz Sultana with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Raja Dilshad citizen number 1330203369813 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Laraib (Daughter)2.Aisha Gulifam (Daughter)3.Arifa Gulifam (Daughter)4.Bibi Shahnaz Sultana (Spouse)5.Asif Shahzad (Son)6.Adil Shahzad (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Saud Ur Rehman with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Habib Ur Rehman citizen number 1420259540951 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Razia Bibi (Daughter)2.Kishwar Sultan (Daughter)3.Noshara Begum (Spouse)4.Saud Ur Rehman (Son)5.Naseeb Ur Rehman (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KARAK-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Maqbool Anwar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Anwar citizen number 1420121374007 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Shahida Begum (Daughter)2.Sajida Begum (Daughter)3.Hajat Mana (Spouse)4.Maqbool Anwar (Son)5.Hazrat Ali (Son)7.Mansoor Anwar (Son)8.Said Anwar (Son)9.Masood Anwar (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KARAK-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Shahad Rahim with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Razia Begum citizen number 1210174265574 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Sobia Rahman (Daughter)2.Maria Sana (Daughter)3.Aiman Sana (Daughter)4.Sana Ur Rahim (Spouse)5.Fahad Rahim (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA DI KHAN-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Mukhtyar Ali with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Shireen Begum citizen number 1540237586216 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Safia Bibi (Daughter)2.Sanam (Daughter)3.Seema Farooq (Daughter)4.Sardar Ali Khan (Spouse)5.Mukhtyar Ali (Son)6.Muhammad Bilal (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MALAKAND-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Altaf Hussain with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Razia Begum citizen number 1730112082818 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Zameera Bibi (Daughter)2.Alif Raja (Daughter)3.Gul Taj Bibi (Daughter)4.Altaf Hussain (Son)5.Ali Akbar (Son)6.Hilal Hussain (Son)7.Shahid Gul (Son)8.Gul Akbar (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MEGA CENTER PESHAWAR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Tauseef Ahmad Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Samia Naz citizen number 1430118721308 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Tanveer Ahmad Khan (Brother)2.Tauseef Ahmad Khan (Brother)3.Tauqueer Ahmad Khan (Brother)4.Atia Rana (Sister)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Nizakat Ali with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Shireen Begum citizen number 1430119607381 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Amma Kalsoom (Daughter)2.Bilqees Bibi (Daughter)3.Nasim Jan (Daughter)4.Shaguffa (Daughter)5.Parveen (Daughter)6.Tasleem (Daughter)7.Zainab Wasti (Daughter)8.Rafiqat Ali (Son)9.Nizakat Ali (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Bushra Gul with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Syed Jehangir Shah citizen number 1720173691937 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Bushra Gul (Daughter)2.Noureen Gul (Daughter)3.Saeeda Khatoon (Daughter)4.Hameeda Khatoon (Daughter)5.Dur Ajam Bibi (Spouse)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Tehzeeb Akhtar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Gul Muhammad citizen number 1720142605691 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Nageena (Daughter)2.Nasreen Akhtar (Daughter)3.Zainab Gul (Daughter)4.Tehzeeb Akhtar (Spouse)5.Sabir Hayat (Son)6.Uzman Khan (Son)7.Yar Muhammad (Son)8.Faizan (Son)9.Dawood Khan (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Majid Ali with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Begum citizen number 17201212777986 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Zaraq Gul (Daughter)2.Madina Gul (Daughter)3.Majid Ali (Son)4.Hammad Ali (Son)5.Abdullah (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Raina with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Azhar Shah citizen number 1720121086885 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Zaraq Gul (Daughter)2.Madina Gul (Daughter)3.Majid Ali (Son)4.Hammad Ali (Son)5.Abdullah (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Hamid Mahmood with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Khalid Mahmood citizen number 1730113377155 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.

1.Shumaila Naz (Daughter)2.Saima Naz (Daughter)3.Saira Naz (Daughter)4.Tehzeeb Akhtar (Spouse)5.Sabir Hayat (Son)6.Uzman Khan (Son)7.Yar Muhammad (Son)8.Faizan (Son)9.Dawood Khan (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

INCHARGE SFU, NADRA NOWSHERA-SFU



Aimal lays foundation stone of Bacha Khan Trust Complex

PESHAWAR (APP): The provincial president of Awami National Party (ANP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bacha Khan Trust, Aimal Wali Khan laid the foundation stone of Bacha Khan Trust Complex in Charsadda on Monday.

Besides, general secretary ANP Mian Iftikhar Hussain, Khushdil Khan advocate, Sardar Hussain Babak, Samar Haroon Bilour, members of the provincial cabinet, council and office bearers of Bacha Khan Trust and its subsidiaries were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the function, Aimal Wali Khan said that the establishment of Bacha Khan Trust Complex at

Uthmanzai is a matter of pride.

He said that the day is historic and a source of pride for every associate of that movement. He said that the construction of Bacha Khan Markaz is also completed in Buner, saying in future it would be established in every district of the province.

Aimal Wali Khan said that foreign orchestrated movement has first targeted the educational institutions to push Pakhtuns to the darkness of illiteracy.

He said that Bacha Khan had established independent and autonomous educational institutions to bring the nation out of darkness one hundred years ago and today schools are being

operated under the auspices of Bacha Khan Trust in various districts of the province, wherein the children are being provided free education.

The CEO Bacha Khan Trust said that Bacha Khan Complex will not only impart modern education to children of District Charsadda, rather will also house a safe house for orphans.

Bacha Khan Trust Complex is spread over an area of 160 kanal, which will house a Bacha Khan, hostel and Bacha Khan Markaz. Construction work on the complex will begin soon. Land for the construction of the complex was donated by president ANP Tehsil Charsadda, Taimur Khattak.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Coordinator KP Child Rights Movement Sana Ahmad addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Chinese New Year celebration ceremony held

PESHAWAR (APP): A colorful ceremony in connection with the Chinese New Year was held here at China Window on Monday.

A large number of senior government, political and social figures and citizens from all walks of life attended the event. The ceremony was organized by the Chinese Cultural Center in China Window.

Former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Iqbal Zafar Jhagra and Secretary Higher Education KP Dawood Khan, Senator Haji Hidayatullah, Ex MPA Samar Haroon Bilour and President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq formally inaugurated the celebrations.

On the occasion, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra said that the head of Pakistan Muslim League Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif played a very important role in Pakistan-China friendship. The speakers said that the people of China organized events all over the world on the occasion of New Year and today this series of events in Peshawar was undoubtedly a clear example of friendship between the people of both the countries.

The speakers expressed the hope that the Chinese New Year would be a year of China's progress, achievements and stability in the friendship between Pakistan and China, and will achieve economic and

economic development.

The participants of the ceremony said, "The China Window in Peshawar has been sent message of friendship, affection and love to the people of China by organizing the celebration of the new year, the main purpose of which is to tell the people of China that like other cities of the country, the people of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also want to strengthen friendship ties with the people of brotherly country."

In the event, traditional music of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and China was also arranged, documentaries on Pakistan-China friendship and New Year were also shown, while a cake was also cut on this occasion of happiness.

Peshawar Serena Hotel hosts Mehfil-e-Samma



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Tourism Promotion Services (Limited) Pakistan hosted a Mehfil-e-Samma with the legendary Qawwal Imran Aziz Mian to celebrate its latest acquisition 'Peshawar Serena Hotel' to its portfolio of luxury hotels, resorts, forts, palaces in the south and central Asia.

According to a press release issued here on Monday, the beautifully organized musical evening began with a meet and greet that included prominent personalities from the corporate sector, the business community, and media houses.

The evening was an ode celebrating Serena Hotel's arrival in the oldest city of Pakistan, adds the press release. The management of Serena believes that Peshawar has untapped potential for tourism and boasts a rich cultural heritage, which will help in

extending the tourist circuit in the province but will also allow regional connectivity for tourists and business travelers through its vast portfolio of hotels in Islamabad, Peshawar, Kabul, and Dushanbe.

The hotel shall serve as a gateway to central Asia, taking the brand portfolio to a whole new level, it remarked.

The management of Serena Hotel has retained the employees of Pearl Continental Hotel and has been working on the restoration and conservation of the existing 1970s building, with the intention to add to the existing structure.

Serena is well associated with conservation circuit, with the Heritage Circuit being a part of the Serena Palaces and Forts that have been restored and renovated and are now being utilised as a historical hotel, the proceeds of which are

handed back to the community in an annual ceremony.

A provincial job fair is planned to provide the youth with opportunities to become a part of the Serena family, where internships, mentorship programs, and management training will be offered to the students of the region, showcasing Serena's ethos of community development, and capacity building.

The management has been actively engaged with the community, through the corporate social responsibility platform called 'Jazba-e-Khidmat', which is an initiative to provide donations and support to flood affectees of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.

Now through the Peshawar Serena platform, the management will be distributing ration bags to the nearby areas affected by the catastrophic flooding of 2022.

COC filed against recruitment in PO

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A Contempt of Court (COC) has been filed against Secretaries Communication, Establishment and Finance along with three officials Post Office General Pakistan for initiating recruitment in Post Office despite Peshawar High Court (PHC) orders in this regard.

The COC was filed by Fazal Shah Mohmand Advocate on behalf of petitioners and stated that PHC has granted status quo against recruitment in Post General Office while recruitment has been made on political nepotism and against the regulations.

The petition further added that procedure for recruitment was amended unlawfully while Deputy Post Master General and Chief Coordinator are responsible officials in this regard and requested for contempt proceedings against them.

The COC argued that Federal Investigation Agency was also made compliant for enquiry as per amended regulations for recruitment in Post Office.

3 alleged narcotics' sellers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police have arrested three alleged narcotics sellers during a crackdown on narcotics' sellers in the interior city, said a press release issued here on Monday.

The accused were allegedly involved in supply of narcotics in interior city localities of Kachi Mohallah, Ashraf Road, Hashitnagri Bazaar and other areas in the jurisdiction of Police Station Shaheed Gulfat, Hashitnagri.

During initial investigations, the accused have confessed involvement in the narcotics selling business. Three kilograms of hashish have also been recovered from their possession.

Police Station Shaheed Gulfat has registered a formal FIR against the accused and further investigations are in progress.

Parents urged to extend cooperation to polio teams

PESHAWAR (APP): Assistant Commissioner Zainab Naqvi has convinced the parents who refused to administer polio drops to their children in different areas of the district following which the parents agreed to vaccinate the children.

According to the district administration on Monday, AC Zainab Naqvi during counseling of the parents in Tehkal Payan, Tehkal Bala, Jahangir Abad and adjacent areas told them that anti-polio drops were meant to save their children from disabilities in future. She told them that these drops will not only keep them safe but also help them in leading a healthful life.

She urged the parents to extend cooperation to the polio teams to eliminate this crippling disease from the society.

The parents, after detailed counseling and discussion, agreed to administer anti-polio drops to their children. The AC Zainab Naqvi on the occasion administered polio drops to the children and marked them as vaccinated.

Power shut down notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified power suspension from various grids of the province due to unavoidable maintenance work on January 24, 25.

Power supply would remain suspended from 220 KV Shahi Bagh Grid Station on January 24 and 25 from 8 AM to 4 PM, load management would be carried out on 132 KV Shahi Bagh, Wapda House, Peshawar Fort grid connected 11 KV feeders.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Dr. Shehzad Bangash and Inspector General of Police Moazam Jah Ansari meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

KP Health care commission sealed 345 health centers

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission in its quarterly report released here on Monday said that the commission inspected 2,227 health centers across the province and 345 health centers over various reasons while issuing notices to 490 others.

It said that there were a total 12,712 registered health centers in the province and 834 more health centers were registered during this quarter, adding that for the first time in the province, the licensing of health centers was started.

It said that temporary licences were issued to 10 hospitals and 15 clinical laboratories while 394 complaints of different natures were resolved during the period.

The commission launched an online system to eliminate quackery besides improving the quality and standard of hospitals in the province. It also conducted a four-day special campaign in Dabgari Garden Peshawar in which 396 health centers were inspected, notices were issued to 133 and 31 were sealed.

KPTMA urges government to waive off demurrage charges

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association (KPTMA) has urged the government to waive off demurrage charges of consignments stuck at ports for clearance.

In a statement issued by Chairman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association (KPTMA), Afan Aziz here on Monday, the Spinning Textile Mills of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) are facing significant difficulties due to the non-availability of foreign exchange in State Bank and commercial banks, resulting in a significant number of consignments being stuck at ports for clearance.

He said that delay in clearance is causing a financial burden on the mills as they are being charged huge amounts of demurrage and container detention charges by the relevant port authorities, container terminal companies and shipping companies.

In his connection, he said that KPTMA has also written letters to the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs and the Ministry of Finance requesting a waiver of demurrage charges and seeking prompt support in directing State Bank and commercial banks to assist the mills in retiring existing letters of credit of USD 10 Million and establishing new ones for importing essential raw materials.

Mr. Aziz also praised the state bank's circular dated December 27, 2022, which relaxed import restrictions on export-oriented sector imports, and stated that spinning mills qualify for import relief as they are an export-oriented sector.

He also emphasized that spinning mills convert

Admin to construct bomb-proof wall

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar has decided the construction of bomb-proof external boundary wall for Iranian Consulate and removal of hurdles in front of the facility to improve the flow of vehicular traffic in University Town.

The decision was taken during a meeting held here with Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud in the chair. Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Assistant Chief Protocol Officer (Foreign Office), SP Cantonment and Assistant Commissioner University Town, the Director West City Metropolitan also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Peshawar was informed that PC-I of the making the external wall of Iranian Consulate to improve its security has been completed and work on the project after meeting all legal requirements.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Khan Mehsud directed the beginning of the construction of all after fulfilling legal procedure and removal of security blockade after the construction of road to improve the flow of traffic in University Town.

Saima Saeed defends Ph.D thesis



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A Directorate of Philosophy (Ph.D) scholar Saima Saeed defended her thesis in Environmental Sciences at University of Peshawar, on Monday 23 January.

Public Defense was arranged for the award of Ph.D Degree to Scholar Saima Saeed under the Supervision of Prof. Dr. Sardar (Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology).

The scholar identified the beneficial and essentialness of the trace element

"Selenium in soil, vegetable and poultry" and highlighted its health risks on human. The chairperson Dr Muhammad Nafees facilitated the whole event and appreciated all the examiners (Dr. Alia and Dr. Said Mohammad) for their valuable time.

Cold, partly cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted that cold and partly cloudy weather is expected over most parts of the province, while very cold in upper parts and hilly areas.

It said that rain with moderate to isolated heavy snowfall over the hills is likely to occur over Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Malakand, Bajaur, Buner, Swat, Shagnela, Kohistan, Battagram, Torgar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Khyber and Kurram districts.

Isolated drizzle with wind and thunderstorm is likely to occur over Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera and Mardan districts during evening/night.

During the last 24 hours cold and partly cloudy weather prevailed over most parts of the province, while very cold in upper parts/hilly areas. However, rain (with snow over the hills) occurred in Kohistan, Kurram, Swat, Mansehra, Upper Dir, Chitral, Mohmand, Khyber, Bajaur, Kohat, Nowshera and Abbottabad districts.

Rain Recorded (in mm): Pattan 19, Parachinar 13, Kalam 12, Malamjaba 08, Balakot 05, Dir 04, Mirkhani 03, Ghalanai 02, Khyber (Tirah 02, Landi Kotal 01), Drosh, Bajaur (Khar & Pashat), Chitral, Peshawar Airport 01 (each), Kakul, Kohat & Risalpur Trace (each). Snow recorded (in inches): Kalam 06, Parachinar 05, Malamjaba 04 & Dir 01.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different

stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 16/04, Chitral 16/01, Timergara 12/03, Dir 09/-2, Mirkhani 06/-1, Kalam 00/-06, Drosh 06/00, Saidu Sharif 13/01, Pattan 07/04, Malam Jabba 00/-6, Takht Bhai 16/03, Kakul 09/03, Balakot 07/03, Parachinar 04/-3, Bannu 17/03, Cherat 12/02, D.I. Khan 21/06.

The lowest temperatures recorded in the province were -10°C in Tirah valley of Khyber and -06°C each in Malam Jabba, Kalam.

Prioritizing girls' educ demanded

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins and Pakistan Education Champion Network PECN working to promote girls' education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa demanded the upcoming provincial government for prioritizing girls' education as a development priority for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and allocating increased budget resources to strengthen access to education for vulnerable girls affected by humanitarian crises especially.

Addressing a press conference here at Peshawar Press Club on Monday, Qamar Naseem, Program Manger Blue Veins and Education Champion from PECN said there are 33,464 government schools for 5.45 million children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the recent floods have further damaged about 1500 government schools.

According to a government report on KP Flood Damages & Assessments, an estimated 9,150 (Millions) are needed to restore 1,500 schools damaged by devastating floods. The speakers at the press conference said "Recent floods and resulting humanitarian crisis have devastating effects on the education sector as well."

"Taking forward the commitment for improved access, retention, and enrollment to education for girls, upcoming government must make efficient resource allocation and equitable policy actions," they stressed.

"Investment in inclusive and gender-responsive education models that respond to the unique needs of girls, especially from vulnerable settings must be a priority for all stakeholders", Qamar added.

Sana Ahmad, Provincial Coordinator of Child Rights Movement Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said, "bringing 2.9 million out-of-school girls of KP the number reported by Benazir Income Support Programme Survey report 2021, should be the main target and indicator for social and economic development.



In brief

Hot clothes distributed F.P. Report

TIRAH VALLEY: Officials of Frontier Constabulary (FC) Tirah Rifle 103 wing gave away winter packages among the residents of Rajal, Kamarkhel, Sipah areas of Tirah Valley, district Khyber last day. Following heavy snowfall in the area, the forces officials visited various villages and distributed hot clothes, coats, wrappings (chadar) socks and commodities of winter package among the dwellers including children. Malik Fazullah Jan Afridi, head of Koki Khel tribe thanked Lieutenant Colonel Temoor Khurshid for the welfare activity and said it would provide relief to the downtrodden elements of the tribal society.

DPO visits police station F.P. Report

KHAR: District Police Officer (DPO) Shaukat Ali here on Monday visited police station Loi Sam and checked-posts in Inayat Kalay and adjoining areas here and inspected the law & order situation. He met with police officials deputed in check-posts and station in-charge Loi Sam PS and directed them to keep vigilant over anti-social activities in their respective areas and to ensure wearing bullet-proof jackets and helmets during performing duties. He also checked security measures taken by the police in these checkpoints and police station Loi Sam for protection. He expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and lauded the services of SHO Sohail Salar.

Two killed in road mishap

NANKANA SAHIB (INP): Two persons were killed and two others were injured in a road accident near Balochni (Shahkot) on GT Road on Monday. Rescue officials said the accident took place when a speeding car got out of the driver's control and crashed into a wall. Two of the car occupants died on spot while the other two were injured. The deceased and the injured were shifted to the THQ hospital, added the officials.

Four gangsters held in Sialkot

SIALKOT (APP): Police claimed on Monday to have arrested four robbers of a gang and recovered motorcycles, cash and illegal weapons from their possession. During a crackdown against criminals, Civil Lines police traced Ali Raza gang by using professional skills and with the help of modern technology. The police recovered Rs 600,000, 7 motorcycles, 13 mobile phones, four pistols and several bullets from the possession of outlaws who were wanted by police in different cases of theft and robbery. Cases have been registered against the criminals. Further investigation was underway. DPO Sialkot Muhammad Faisal Kamran has announced commendatory certificates and cash prizes for police team.

6 people fainted due to gas leakage

ABBOTTABAD (APP): At least six people including children were fainted in two different incidents of gas leakage here on Monday. In the first incident, four persons, including a minor and two women reportedly fainted due to gas filling in a room at Bari Sheikh Albandi. The medical team of Rescue 1122 responded in time and shifted them to district head-quarter hospital.



CHARSADDA: Provincial president of ANP KP Aimal Wali Khan laid the foundation stone of Bacha Khan Trust Complex.

Flour sacks increased to 20 thousand per day

F.P. Report

LODHARAN: Deputy Commissioner Babar Rehman Warrich has said that trucking sale points have been increased to supply subsidized flour to the people. He said that 3700 bags of flour are being provided to the people on a daily basis at trucking sale points established across the district.

According to details, as many as 20,000 bags of 10 kg are being provided to the public at subsidized rates every day across the district. He expressed these views while reviewing the supply of subsidized flour across the district in the committee room of his office here today.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Malik Ahmad Faraz Awan, Assistant Commissioner Igra Mustafa, Assistant Commissioner Sheikh

Rizwanul Haque, Assistant Commissioner Ashraf Saleh, District Food Controller Zaheer Mayo participated in the meeting. DC said that trucking sale points have been increased in the three tehsils of the district for the convenience of the people. He said that two trucking sale points of subsidized flour are fully operational in all three tehsils of the district. He issued instructions to the District Food Controller to ensure timely supply of subsidized flour at the sale points.

DC instructed the assistant commissioners to fully monitor the grinding process in flour mills according to the official wheat quota. He said that monitoring staff should be appointed at the sale points. Deputy Commissioner Babar Rehman Warrich said that to prevent illegal movement of wheat, food

department teams and police personnel should also be posted at the exit points.

He directed the Assistant Commissioners to take concrete action against those selling flour at more than the prescribed rates. He said that in order to ensure the supply of quality flour to the public at subsidized rate, the food department should fully monitor the grinding process of wheat as per government quota in Lodhran flour mills. He added that the supply record of Flour Mills should also be monitored to ensure the availability of subsidized flour in the market as per the government quota. He said that to ensure the supply of subsidized flour to the people and to remedy the hoarding, the teams of the Food Department Lodhran should be made more active.

Focus on ensure timely completion of uplift plans

TANK (APP): The district administration has accelerated efforts to ensure that ongoing development projects were completed within the scheduled timeline.

As part of such efforts, Additional Assistant Commissioner Jamshed Alam paid a visit on Monday to the several ongoing development schemes in the district including the construction of drains, rescue 1122 building and ongoing construction work on station road.

During the visit, the officials concerned informed about progress of work on these ongoing

schemes and said that pace of work had been expedited in line with directives of the district administration to meet the stipulated time frame. Jamshed Alam said that no negligence would be tolerated and action would be taken against those, if they were found using substandard material in construction work.

He said that an effective monitoring mechanism should be in place by conducting regular inspections on site to ensure quality work and that development projects were completed within the stipulated timeline. Similarly,

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Tanvir Khan paid a visit to water-supplying tubewells in the city and inspected their operational condition.

He instructed the staff concerned that no laxity should be shown in repair of machinery in case it developed any fault in order to ensure uninterrupted supply of clean drinking water to citizens. However, he found all tube-wells in functional condition and said that district administration was committed to providing all basic necessities of life to residents on priority basis.

Provision of relief to masses directed

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Commissioner Hazara Division Shaukat Ali Khan Yousafzai on Monday directed all the Deputy Commissioners to provide relief to the people in every sector in their respective districts by ensuring availability of edible items on the government fixed rates.

Presiding over a meeting, he directed them to eradicate all types of encroachments from their areas, regularly check markets and flour mills to ensure supply of flour and food items to the people at the fixed rates. He said that all deputy commissioners

should impose a complete ban on plastic bags in their respective districts as it was the biggest cause of environmental pollution. He further directed to overcome the shortage of staff in education, health and other public departments. The Commissioner directed to expedite land acquisition process in the areas where work on hydropower projects underway and the issue was hampering the work. He made it clear that there was no shortage of petrol and directed the DCs to take strict action against hoarders and those spreading fake news on social media channels.

Regarding supply and provision of subsidised flour to the masses, he said that all the flour mills, dealers and flour points should be checked on a daily basis for delivery of government flour. He directed that all additional assistant commissioners and assistant commissioners and officers of the line departments should inspect the market and ensure the sale of food items at the fixed rates. The Commissioner made it clear that being the civil servant it was the responsibility of all including himself to provide relief to the common people and end all kinds of encroachments wherever they are.

Ghotki police rescues five abductees

SUKKUR (APP): The local police in an operation against outlaws, rescued five abductees here on Monday. According to SSP Ghotki, Tanveer Hussain Tunio, the district police destroyed some 50 hideouts during the operation and rescued five abductees from the captivity of the criminals late Sunday night.

SSP Ghotki told Media that Tariq, a resident of Kasur, was recovered from the captivity of criminals in the Katcha area of

Ravaanti five days ago and he informed the police about the presence of other victims in the captivity of the criminals, adding that Ghotki Police had used drone cameras and armoured vehicles in an operation.

The abductees included Hussain Ahmed from Pishin, Saeed Ahmed from Punjab, Molvi Asmatullah from Rajanpur, Khalil Rehman from Hyderabad and Muhammad Bakhsh Tanghwani from Kandhkot.

Convocation of UET on 26th

WAH CANTT (APP): The 20th convocation of University of Engineering and Technology Taxila is scheduled to be held on January 26. Governor Punjab will be chief guest on this occasion. He will also inaugurate newly constructed foreign students and girls hostels on this occasion.

Civil society appreciated services of outgoing DC F.P. Report

MALAKAND: The civil society appreciated services of outgoing Deputy Commissioner Malakand Muhammad Arif who is posted as Director Anti-Corruption Establishment.

The civil society claimed that DC Muhammad Arif Yousafzai has initiated crackdown against drug-dealers and tightened grip against the outlawed citizens. They added that former DC had played great role in elimination of crime from the Malakand district.

The speakers claimed that newly posted Director Anti-Corruption Establishment Muhammad Arif Khan will play his administrative role to eliminate corruption from public sector department. They are hopeful for Muhammad Arif Yousafzai that he will ensure delivery services.

Reduction in pollution Adnan Shafi

POLLUTION is increasing in our cities day by day while people are affecting as well as environment. Which had impacted every aspect of livelihood. Pollution is impacting life expectancy and caused hazardous diseases. The air pollution is major contributor for different respiratory diseases.

These diseases can be tackled by eliminating pollution. The city government is responsible for keeping the city clean and pollution free. The authorizes should be do something urgently to reduce the increasing pollution.

Police arrest alleged murderer F.P. Report

MINGORA: Police has arrested alleged murderer involved in firing on his sisters in which two were killed while one was critically injured over domestic dispute, on Monday.

These views were expressed by District Police Officer Shafi Ullah Gandapur while addressing a press conference in his office along with SP Investigation Swat Shah Hassan, SP Special Branch Pir Zar Badshah and other police officers.

DPO further said that the accused Naseer Khan son of Akbar Khan, a resident of Jamal Abad Sangota, on January 22, 2023, at around 05:15, shot and killed his three real sisters with weapon on the basis of a domestic dispute as a result of the firing two sisters Izat bibi, Rabia Jan killed and Naz BiBi were critically injured. The accused fired and fled from the spot.

The local police of Manglawar police station, SHO Usman Ali and other police immediately cordoned off the area as soon as they received the information. During the search operation, the accused fled towards the Swat river where police arrested the accused along with weapons. During the initial investigation, the accused confessed his crime. Further investigation is going on.

ANP laid foundation stone of Bacha Khan Trust Complex

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: The provincial president ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bacha Khan Trust, Aimal Wali Khan laid the foundation stone of Bacha Khan Trust Complex in Charsadda on Monday.

Besides, general secretary ANP Mian Iftikhar Hussain, Khushdil Khan advocate, Sardar Hussain Babak, Samar Haroon Bilour, members of the provincial cabinet, council and office bearers of Bacha Khan Trust and its subsidiaries were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the function, the provincial president of ANP and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Bacha Khan Trust, Aimal Wali Khan said that the establishment of Bacha Khan Trust Complex at

Uthmanzai is a matter of pride as Bacha Khan started his movement from the area 100 years back.

He said that the day is historic and a source of pride for every associate of that movement. He said that the construction of Bacha Khan Markaz is also completed in Buner, saying in future it would be established in every district of the province. Aimal Wali Khan said that foreign orchestrated movement has first targeted the educational institutions to push Pakhtuns to the darkness of illiteracy.

He said that Bacha Khan had established independent and autonomous educational institutions to bring the nation out of darkness one hundred years ago and today schools are being operated under the auspices of Bacha Khan Trust

in various districts of the province, wherein the children are being provided free education. The CEO Bacha Khan Trust said that Bacha Khan Complex will not only impart modern education to children of District Charsadda, rather will also house a safe house for orphans.

He said they want the extension of the network of Bacha Khan Schools to the whole Pakhtun region, so our future generation does not remain behind anyone in the race of development. Bacha Khan Trust Complex is spread over an area of 160 kanal, which will house a Bacha Khan, hostel and Bacha Khan Markaz. Construction work on the complex will begin soon. Land for the construction of the complex was donated by president ANP Tehsil Charsadda, Taimur Khattak.

Lectures under ‘Aligarh Movement 2.0’

MULTAN (APP): Civil Services academy Lahore is going to execute "The Aligarh Movement 2.0" initiative in south Punjab, under which budding bureaucrats have started delivering lectures to students in south Punjab schools, from pedagogic to administrative affairs and budgeting.

Thirty (30) trainee officers of Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS) were deputed on a week-long assignment as teachers at south Punjab schools and now it was the turn of Provincial Management Services (PMS) under-training officers to do the same, said Dr. Ehtasham Anwar, a brainchild of secretary school education south, while addressing PMS trainee officers dur-

ing a meeting at the education secretariat here Monday.

The Aligarh Movement 2.0 was launched by CSA Lahore in coordination with south Punjab school education department and trainee officers were required to oversee administrative affairs, deliver lectures to students, budget preparation, assess standard of education being delivered, and the facilities available for the students, the secretary said.

Dr. Ehtasham said that every trainee officer would prepare a school transformation plan after the week long training. Dilating upon the plan, Dr. Ehtasham Anwar said that it was being perceived as the continuation of unfinished agenda the Pakistan

Movement leader Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had introduced 150 years back. However, he added, focus of this plan was today the policy makers and heads who run affairs to invite their attention to treat education with the importance that it deserved but never received. It will help them better understand the problems confronting school education and visualize a way forward.

Additional secretary school education Sarosh Fatima, deputy secretaries Khawaja Mazhar ul Haq, Saif Ur Rahman, DPI secondary south Punjab Zahida Batool, DPI elementary Pervaiz Iqbal, other officials and trainee officers were also present.

Cleanliness drive kicks-off in Parachinar

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Tehsil Chairman Parachinar Muzamil Hussain kicked off clean-up drive to ensure hygiene environment in the premises, on Monday.

According to details, the cleanliness campaign has been started again in the suburbs of Parachinar city, the capital of Kurram district, with the cooperation of Municipal Municipality TMA Department and Tehsil Chairman Muzmal Hussain Upper Kurram. It should be remembered

that when Tehsil Chairman Muzamil Hussain was successful for the first time with a huge majority and was elected as the Chairman of Upper Tehsil, he not only awakened the inactive department for a long time, but also made the entire city clean with his colleagues.

The major expenses of the project have not been spent. Tehsil chairman was already a well-known social leader in the tribal districts, now he is also considered as a politically transparent leader because any human leader is recog-

nized by his actions and performance. The Department of Municipality Municipal Committee has not shown seriousness in carrying out its responsibilities.

Tehsil Chairman Muzamil Hussain assumed charge of his position a year ago, since then the municipal department is also continuing its efforts to perform its responsibilities well. Tehsil Chairman Muzamil Hussain has also appealed to the people to cooperate with TMA and take care of city cleanliness.

Rescue 1122 extricates cat from deep well

CHITRAL (APP): Authorities of Rescue 1122 in KP have saved a cat and a goat that got trapped in a deep well and cliffs in Lower Dir and Upper Chitral districts, respectively.

According to details shared here on Monday, the officials of Rescue 1122 in Dir Lower received a call for help of a cat that fell into a deep well and is stranded in the death trap for the last several days. On receiving call, Rescue staffers rushed to the site at Talash Deri area and started rescue operation.

One of the official took the risk of descending into the well while clinging on a rope and reached to the lower bed for rescuing of the cat.

The white colored beautiful cat forthwith runaway to safety soon after getting out of the well. Meanwhile, in another incident, Rescue staff was approached by a shapered community of Astoor area in Upper Chitral about trapping of a goat in cliffs at an elevated portion of mountains.

The goat was stuck in

cliffs for the last four days and rescue officials reached her by hiking the mountains on foot for more than two and a half hour. The stuck goat was rescued and brought back to home for handing it over to the owner who was very much thankful to the rescue team members.

It merits a mention here that Rescue 1122 is not only providing services to humans who are need of emergency help but also performing duty with full dedication for saving of trapped animals and birds.

Five-member gang among 4 female busted

ATTOCK (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Monday apprehend a five-member gang. Among the accused arrested were four female members of the gang involved in highway robberies in Taxila, Wah, Hassanabdal, Attock and Haripur.

According to Police spokesman, the gang comprising women posing themselves as commuters offered lift to the passengers waiting for public transport on GT road. After robbing them

of gold ornaments, cash, cell phones and other valuables, the robbers would throw them out from moving vehicles.

On Monday, the gang traveling in a Suzuki van offered lift to two women identified as Mehreen Mumtaz and Aysia Bibi waiting for public transport near Burhan near Hassanabdal and on gun-point snatched cash and jewelry from them, and then threw them on GT road, near Lawrencepur.

After some passersby spotted them in distress, they made emergency call on NHMP helpline, sub-

sequently a patrolling police party spotted the van near Attock and rounded up the robbers and shifted them to police station Burhan for further legal action.

According to initial investigation by ASI Aqeel Ahmed, the arrested robbers were identified as Javaid Iqbal resident of Wah, Mehal Bibi resident of Hafizabad, Zartaj Bibi native of Nowshera, Attiya Bibi resident of Taxila and Nazman Bibi native of Taxila. Police registered a case and launched further investigation against them.



Taiwan president tells pope war with China not an option

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has written to Pope Francis to say that war between Taiwan and China is not an option and only by respecting the Taiwanese people's insistence on sovereignty and freedom can there be healthy ties with Beijing.

The Vatican is Chinese-claimed Taiwan's sole European diplomatic ally, and Taipei has watched with concern as Pope Francis has moved to improve relations with China. The democratically governed island has formal ties with only 14 countries, largely due to Chinese pressure. In the letter, sent in response to the pope's World Day Of Peace message on Jan. 1, Tsai said war in Ukraine has made the world appreciate the value of peace and that maintaining regional security has become an important consensus.

"In my National Day speech last year, I reiterated that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are the



foundation for the development of cross-Strait relations and armed confrontation is absolutely not an option," Tsai said, according to a copy of the letter released by her office on Monday. "Only by respect-

ing the commitment of the Taiwanese people to our sovereignty, democracy, and freedom can there be a foundation for resuming constructive interaction across the Taiwan Strait," she said, referring to the

speech she gave on Oct. 10 last year.

China staged war games near Taiwan last August, and Beijing has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control. Tsai wrote that Taiwan has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and provided masks and protective equipment to countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it "hopes to give the world a better Taiwan".

"Though we are still excluded from the World Health Organization, we are convinced that taking the lead in making positive contributions will drive a 'virtuous circle'," she added. Taiwan has complained repeatedly that its exclusion from the WHO, due to Chinese pressure, has hampered efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the WHO and China have denied that. Taiwan rejects China's sovereignty claims, saying that only the island's 23 million people can decide their future.

PM: It's 'now or never' to stop Japan's shrinking population

TOKYO (Reuters): Japanese Prime minister Fumio Kishida pledged on Monday to take urgent steps to tackle the country's declining birth rate, saying it was "now or never" for one of the world's oldest societies. Japan has in recent years been trying to encourage its people to have more children with promises of cash bonuses and better benefits, but it remains one of the most expensive places in the world to raise a child, according to surveys.

Births plunged to a new record low last year, according to official estimates, dropping below 800,000 for the first time - a watershed moment that came eight years earlier than the government had expected. That most likely precipitated a further population decline in a country where the median age is 49, the highest in the world behind only the tiny city-state of Monaco.

"Our nation is on the cusp of whether it can maintain its societal functions,"

Kishida said in a policy speech at the opening of this year's parliamentary session. "It is now or never when it comes to policies regarding births and child-rearing - it is an issue that simply cannot wait any longer," he added.

Kishida said he would submit plans to double the budget for child-related policies by June, and that a new Children and Families government agency to oversee the issue would be set up in April.

Japan is the third-most-expensive country globally to raise a child, according to YuWa Population Research, behind only China and South Korea, countries also seeing shrinking populations in worrying signs for the global economy. Other countries are also coming to grips with ageing and shrinking populations. Last week, China reported that its population dropped in 2022 for the first time in 60

Machu Picchu closed indefinitely

MACHU PICCHU (BBC): Peru has closed its famous tourist site Machu Picchu indefinitely over the ongoing protests against the country's new president. The government said it closed the site, and the Inca trail hike leading up to it, to protect tourists and citizens.

Hundreds of people who were stuck for hours at the foot of the 15th Century Inca citadel have now been rescued. The violent protests, which have seen dozens of people killed, began when Peru's previous leader was ousted. Rail services to Machu Picchu were suspended after some train tracks were damaged, allegedly by protesters.

It left 418 people stranded at the site, tourism minister Luis Fernando Helguero said at a news conference. However, the tourism ministry announced that everyone - 148 foreigners and 270 Peruvians - had been safely evacuated on trains and buses. They are not the first visitors to have been stranded at Machu Picchu because of civil unrest - last month, hundreds of tourists were airlifted out after being stuck there for several days. Sitting high on a mountain in the Andes, Machu Picchu is considered one of the new seven wonders of the world. It is hugely popular with tourists, with around a million people visiting every year.

Some visitors arrive at Machu Picchu via the Inca Trail, which is a famous multi-day hike. In a statement, Peru's culture ministry said that those who had already bought tickets for the site would be able to use them for one month after the end of the demonstrations, or get a refund. Demonstrators in Peru are demanding fresh elections and calling for the new President, Dina Boluarte, to stand down, which she has so far refused to do. They want her left-wing predecessor, Pedro Castillo, who is in jail and facing charges of rebellion and conspiracy, to be released. Mr Castillo denies the accusations and insists that he is still Peru's legitimate leader. Authorities announced that another protester had died following demonstrations in the southern region of Puno, where police stations were set on fire.

Eritrea troops leave historic Tigray city

TIGRAY (BBC): Eritrean troops have left the ancient city of Axum in Tigray but remain in two other towns in the war-stricken Ethiopian region, local residents said, as the United States hailed a pullout seen as key to a landmark peace deal. The Eritrean army had moved across the border into Tigray to support federal government forces against the region's dissident authorities in a conflict that erupted in November 2020 and has since killed untold numbers of civilians and set off a desperate humanitarian crisis.

A peace deal between the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed in South Africa's capital Pretoria in November last year silenced the guns in the north of Africa's second most populous state. But Eritrea, whose troops have been accused by the United States and rights groups of some of the worst atrocities in the conflict -- including the massacre of hundreds of civilians in Axum -- was not a party to the agreement.

Witnesses told AFP that Eritrean forces were no longer in the holy city, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its towering carved obelisks. "I don't see any Eritrean soldiers at the moment in the city," one resident said. "They left... carrying dozens of artillery pieces, anti-aircraft guns and tanks."

Large movements of troops and armour have also been witnessed in recent days in the Tigrayan towns of Adwa and Shire, which lie on the same east-west road as Axum. Three residents of Shire said they had seen large convoys of soldiers start leaving the town in buses and trucks, some carrying banners declaring "Game Over". But locals said some troops remained.

"I saw Eritrean soldiers patrolling in the town together with members of the Ethiopian National Defence Force," said one Shire resident. "Eritrean forces are still present in substantial numbers, even though I have seen Eritrean troops stationed in other parts of the city leave in previous days," added a local woman in Adwa.

The United States, and others in the West, have sought to pressure Eritrea to remove its troops, and Washington imposed sanctions targeting its armed forces as well as President Isaias Afwerki's political party. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke of their "ongoing withdrawal" in a telephone call with Abiy, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 in part for his rapprochement with Eritrea.

Bali welcomes back first flight from China

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP): A direct flight from China landed in Indonesia's resort island of Bali for the first time in nearly three years after the route was suspended due to the pandemic. At least 210 people were on board the chartered plane operated by Indonesia's Lion Air from Shenzhen in China's southern Guangdong province. Some Chinese tourists who arrived at the airport in Bali said they were glad to have the chance to travel internationally again after China ended its strict COVID-19 restrictions. "I feel very happy and relaxed. It was a long time we did not go abroad," said An Pei, a Chinese tourist who was on the flight. The flight followed the

Chinese government's decision to lift travel restrictions announced on January 8 and it coincided with the start of the Lunar New Year, which was being marked. The Shenzhen-to-Bali route will operate once a week during its initial phase, according to a statement from Danang Mandala Prihantoro, a spokesperson for Lion Air. Indonesia is targeting 255,000 tourists from China in 2023. Indonesia recorded 94,924 visits from China from January to October 2022. More than 2 million tourists from China visited Indonesia each year before the pandemic. The return of Chinese tourists is expected to support the overall target of foreign tourist arrivals this

year. Indonesia aims to record 3.5 million to 7.4 million foreign visits, said Sandiaga Uno, the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, in a statement. China is one of the largest markets for inbound tourism in Indonesia. "Based on online travel agent data in China, there has been an increase in search volume for overseas tourist destinations by 430%," Uno said. Indonesia is in the top 5 searches and Bali's search volume has increased by 250%," Uno said. Indonesia's government is exploring ways to attract more Chinese tourists, including the possibility of direct flights from three main cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Greece expanding border wall, calls for EU help on migration

FERES, Greece (AP): Greece prevented around 260,000 migrants from entering illegally in 2022 and arrested 1,500 traffickers, an official said. Citizens' Protection Minister Takis Theodorikakos was speaking to ambassadors from other European Union countries plus Switzerland and the United Kingdom as he guided them to a still expanding border wall in the country's northeast.

Theodorikakos emphasized to the 28 envoys that Greece's border is also the EU's external border. "The task (of protecting the border) needs the support ... of European public opinion, the European Union itself and its constituent members individually,"

Theodorikakos said. "It is our steadfast position that member states of (first reception cannot be (the migrants') only European destinations." There must be solidarity among member-states and a fair sharing of duties...close coordination is a must," he said.

The Greek minister's sentiments were echoed by Cypriot Ambassador Kyriakos Kenevezos, who spoke of the "need for understanding" from countries that don't have external EU borders. U.K. Ambassador Matthew Lodge said that "our priority is to protect the human life and dignity endangered by the criminal trafficking networks ... even though we are no longer an EU member, we are closely

cooperating."

Greece's five-meter (16-foot) steel wall facing neighboring Turkey to the east across the Evros River called Meric in Turkey currently extends more than 27 kilometers (17 miles) and, according to Greek authorities, helps cover another 10 kilometers (six miles). Greece is currently expanding the wall, adding a 35-kilometer (22-mile) stretch with the ultimate goal of extending it to cover most of the 192-kilometer (120-mile) border. Greece has repeatedly accused Turkey of weaponizing the plight of migrants by encouraging them to cross the border to discomfit Greece and the rest of the EU effectively cooperating with traffick-

ers. Turkey accuses Greece of violent pushbacks that endanger the lives of migrants.

Turkey, whom the Cypriot ambassador called "the elephant in the room" in meeting, also has its own migrants' problem hosting about 5 million of them. EU leaders are worried that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could encourage a mass exodus to the EU, where most of the migrants and refugees want to end up, preferably at one of the more prosperous bloc members. The EU's border protection agency, Frontex, will add another 400 border guards in Greece 250 of them in February to the existing 1,800-member force, Theodorikakos said.

US ambassador heading to Africa as part of Biden's big push

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The US ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, is the second Cabinet member heading to Africa as part of President Joe Biden's big push to engage with the world's second-largest continent. The US Mission to the UN said she will travel to Ghana, Mozambique and Kenya starting Jan. 25 "to affirm and strengthen our partnerships with key current and former UN Security Council members."

Thomas-Greenfield's visit follows last week's start of a 10-day African visit by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. She arrived in Dakar, Senegal late Wednesday and will also visit Zambia and South Africa. Biden announced

at the end of a US-Africa Leaders Summit in December that he will visit sub-Saharan Africa in 2023, the first trip to the region by a US leader in a decade. The summit and trip are aimed at strengthening US relations with Africa, where China has surpassed the US in trade and is aiming to increase its military presence, and Russia has military ties with the authorities in Mali and Central African Republic.

Biden stressed at the summit that he is serious about increasing US attention to the continent and told the 49 African leaders attending the meeting in Washington that "Africa belongs at the table" in every conversation of global consequences. The

first stop for Thomas-Greenfield, a former US assistant secretary of state for Africa, is Ghana, which is in the second year of a two-year term as an elected member of the Security Council. On Jan. 25 she will meet with women leaders and civil society representatives, the US mission said.

Thomas-Greenfield then heads to Mozambique, which is just starting its first-ever two-year term on the council. During her visit on Jan. 26-27, the US mission said she will meet with UN officials, entrepreneurs, alumni of US exchange programs, international relations students and civil society members engaged in work to adapt to climate change, the mission said.

The ambassador's final stop on Jan. 28-29 is Kenya, whose two-year term on the council ended on Dec. 31.

The US mission called Kenya "a key partner" and said Thomas-Greenfield's visit will focus on humanitarian programs, including the regional response to drought and assistance to refugees, and on "the impact Russia's war against Ukraine continues to have on global food security, which has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region." The ambassador will also meet refugees pending resettlement in the United States and Kenya-based entrepreneurs "at the forefront of the country's transition to a green economy," the mission said.

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 415-3704551

The curse of Islamophobia

PRIME Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has strongly condemned the despicable act of desecration of the Holy Quran by a right-wing extremist in Sweden the other day. According to the premier, the garb of freedom of expression cannot be used to hurt the religious emotions of 1.5 billion Muslims across the world.

The recurrent incidents of Islamophobia have become customary in some western countries and India, where profanation of poise personality, desecration of the Holy Quran and Islamic verses, and physical attacks on Muslims and Mosques are common. Western nations always cover up such extreme religious bigotry and criminal acts in the garb of freedom of expression and civil liberties whereas Modi's India is intentionally transforming its nation into a Hindu state, by inciting anti-Muslim sentiments in its country.

Historically, such hateful and biased acts had been increased in recent years after the rise of Nationalism and far-right politics in nations across the world because far-right politicians and religious clerics use hate speech and racism to boom their politics and missionary status in the country. In fact, Islamophobia is a manifestation of hate speech and religiously motivated crimes against Muslims due to their beliefs, religious attire, physical appearance, culture, and traditions, and this trend has been shaped into a grave challenge worldwide. Previously, Pakistan and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) have raised the issue at the United Nations. The global forum condemned Islamophobia in all its forms and manifestation and designated March 15 as a global day to combat Islamophobia to create awareness against hateful acts, racism, and religious bigotry against Islam and Muslims in the world. However, despite acknowledgment of the volume and seriousness of the issue at the UN, the Islamophobic incidents in Europe and other parts of the world are unrestrictedly occurring every other day. Muslims residing in non-Muslim nations feel themselves unsecured and deprived of their basic rights and religious freedoms while those provocative actions hurt over 1.5 billion Muslims across the world.

Unfortunately, western nations, who usually claimed to be the so-called advocate of human rights and religious freedom adopted a shameful policy of utter denial of religious bigotry, and Islamophobia in the name of civil liberties and termed naked incidents of terrorism as shooting and arms license violations.

After years of denial and the occurrence of countless terror and hate incidents, western nations have finally admitted the presence of white supremism as a threat to their nations yet western governments hesitate to validate Islamophobia as a rising threat to their society in the contemporary world. Until and unless nations around the globe diagnose and cure the ailment this curse will persist in one or the other way.

After the acknowledgment and designation of International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the United Nations and the international community need to move toward achieving consensus over legal and legislative measures to condemn and censure this hateful act, and for that purpose global dialogue, education, and stern legislation is of utmost importance. Pakistan and the OIC must work to declare Islamophobia and punishable offense and UN member nations must uphold their responsibility to combat this curse in true letter and spirit, so no selfish politician and disgruntled cleric could use his guise against Islam and Muslims in the future.

Peru's political crisis

PERU closed the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu Saturday and authorities expelled protesters from a university where they have been holed up as they wage relentless anti-government demonstrations in the capital. There had been clashes between protesters and police over the past weeks that caused 46 deaths, and hundreds of injuries while thousands of tourists were stranded at different tourist sites in violence-hit Southern Peru.

The Republic of Peru hit an unprecedented public uprising after lawmakers removed an educator turned politician and former President Pedro Castillo from his office through impeachment. The impeachment process was kicked off by the parliamentarians in a response to President's plan to dissolve the parliament and rule the country by decree to enjoy sole authority in the South American nation. Thus, the constitutional process ended up in the removal of the leftwing leader, while parliament filed a lawsuit against him on the charges of conspiracy and rebellion that sparked widespread protests in rural areas of the country, as Peru's middle class considered the sacked President a reformer and nation saviour.

The limitless and authoritarian rule had been a weakness of so-called democratic rulers across the world. However, some observed restrained and kept themselves within the constitution and parliamentary norms while others acted smartly and conceived plans to change the law and introduced new electoral rules to extend their term in the high chair. Interestingly, many like Putin and Lukashenko successfully made their way whereas others like Kais, and Castillo failed to implement their plans and received censure and admonishment from the public.

Presently, farmers and middle-class Peruvians are staging demonstrations and demanding the release of Castillo and the return of his rule that might change their fate, while the interim administration has imposed a nationwide emergency to control the law and order situation in the country. Apparently, innocent masses believe in the unreal assertions of populist leaders and desire to experience the realization of daydreams, which never happens. Presently, thousands of poor Peruvians are on the roads in the support of a leader, who attempted to sabotage the law. In fact, the public demand solution to their issues, and no one cares about the law and credibility of the figurehead.

Quote of the day

I respect only those who resist me, but I cannot tolerate them.
— Charles de Gaulle, 1890-1970, French President.

Afghanistan provides lessons on US weapons flows

James Webb

leaders said would not happen.

However, it was about to get even worse. In 2014 the Islamic State, a conglomeration of disaffected Iraqi Sunni tribesman working in concert with al-Qaida in Iraq, emerged and seized Fallujah primarily with American equipment intended for Iraqi Security Forces. In 2015 the group then seized Ramadi and a cache of American-made weapons that would drive the rapid expansion of the Islamic State.

ISIS then used 2,300 Humvees, 52 M198 Howitzers, 74,000 machine guns, 40 M1A1 Abrams tanks, and other American-made systems to buttress a “Caliphate” which at its peak encompassed roughly one-third of Syria and 40 percent of Iraq. It took a reintroduction of U.S. troops into Iraq and thousands of airstrikes over multiple years to subdue the group and return captured territory.

2.) While it is undeniable that the Taliban made effective tactical adjustments to U.S. forces during the war in Afghanistan, it is more important to consider how extended exposure to U.S. technology led to it being both compromised and used against us.

In 2011, Iran captured and then reverse-engineered a CIA RQ-170 Sentinel drone. However, according to an Iranian Engineer, this did not happen by luck. Instead, Iranians reverse-engineered

less capable drones over multiple years until they found a weak point, the GPS. Iran then tricked the drone into landing unscathed on an Iranian airfield.

The Sentinel episode followed a 2009 incident in which Shiite militants in Iraq with ties to Iran were found in possession of live Predator Drone feeds. The militants had managed to access the feed through cheap, publicly available software.

It is vital to understand that at the time, the Predator and Sentinel were considered “state of the art.” Yet, both were compromised by a foreign adversary after exposure on the battlefield. Iran is now sending Russia drones to attack Ukrainians on the battlefield today.

Moreover, it is well documented that as the Afghan government collapsed in 2021, the Taliban captured at least \$7 billion worth of U.S. equipment, some of which has made its way into the hands of Iranians. At the same time, the Taliban has also promised to share the spoils with Beijing. It is important to keep this in mind as the next batch of sophisticated weaponry is sent to Ukraine.

Presenting further risk is Ukraine's detailed history of arms diversion and corruption before the war, while the sheer instability of the country creates further vulnerabilities for our arms supplies. The U.S.

government insists it is monitoring this, though watchdogs warn there is not enough oversight yet to ensure these weapons will not someday get into the wrong hands.

Within the next few months, Patriot missile batteries and Bradley Fighting Vehicles will be delivered to Ukraine. Additionally, Great Britain has promised 14 Challenger 2 tanks and enough mechanized equipment to outfit a brigade. London hopes that Ukraine will use this delivery as the core of a 2023 Spring counter-offensive by Ukraine. Whether this happens and what the result will be is to be determined.

Something to keep in mind is how easily conventional armies can adapt.

In 2022, Ukraine took possession of at least 20 U.S. HIMARS multiple rocket launcher systems, a technology only previously shared with NATO allies. Additionally, the advanced rocket artillery system is a pillar of the Marine Corps Force Design 2030 Concept, centered on defending the littorals in the Pacific from potential Chinese encroachment.

Additionally, in 2022, the U.S. Army requested \$1 billion in funding for precision missiles, fired primarily from HIMARS, for use in the Pacific. It would be naive to think that the Russians would not share their experience contending with HIMARS with China, with which it engages in military drills on a regular basis now. Such a development could severely

degrade vital elements of the new Pacific strategy, such as MCFD 2030, before it is even fully implemented.

Besides that, analysis from the Foreign Policy Research Institute states that Russia has already adapted to the presence of HIMARS and may already have enough information to have the edge over the system.

According to the report from Rob Lee and Michael Kofman, despite HIMARS having an immediate impact on the battlefield, Russian forces adapted within weeks, significantly reducing its effectiveness. While detailing Russian adaptations, Lee and Kofman wrote, “...the overall effect of HIMARS may be overstated, and its impact leveled off after the first two months of use on the battlefield.”

The war in Ukraine has understandably evoked strong emotions. However, we should not let this convince us that flooding Ukraine with even more advanced weaponry is a panacea for the conflict. Further, we would be wise to remember how similar policies in Afghanistan and Iraq sent the boomerang careening back at us.

Will this latest batch of weapons headed to Ukraine finally win the peace? While this is possible, do we fully understand what we are giving up to do so? As history shows, no matter how advanced a weapon is, someone will eventually figure out a way to counter it.

Not Accountable explains the problem in a nutshell

Mark Pulliam

ing became collusive. The unions brag about it: “We elect our own bosses.”

Sitting on both sides of the bargaining table has allowed public unions to turn the democratic hierarchy upside down. Elected officials answer to public employees. Basic tools of good government have been eliminated. There's no accountability, detailed union entitlements make government largely unmanageable and unaffordable, and public policies are driven by what is good for public employees, not what is good for the public. Public unions keep it that way by brute political force—harnessing the huge cohort of public employees into a political force dedicated to preventing the reform of government.

This critique echoes the work of public-sector union critics such as Daniel DiSalvo, Manhattan Institute senior fellow, CUNY professor, and author of Government against Itself: Public Union Power and Its Consequences. The only solution, Howard argues, is to declare public-sector collective bargaining unconstitutional: “America's republican form of government requires an executive branch that is empowered to implement public policies, not one shackled to union controls. Public employees have a fiduciary duty to serve the public and should not be allowed to organize politically to harm the public.”

Not Accountable is not a dense treatise or a legal brief. In 200 pages of text, including a Foreword by Mitch Daniels, former Governor of Indiana and President of Purdue University, Howard ably distills the issues into a five-point indictment. He argues that public employee unions have:

Severed the links of accountability;

Rendered government substantially unmanageable with detailed rules and veto powers;

Made government unaffordable with opaque benefit packages and compensa-

tion manipulations;

Changed public policies to the harm of the public good; and,

Entrenched these abuses, and made reform practically impossible, through organized political power.

Howard elaborates on each of these points in a series of concise, elegant chapters, with anecdotes drawn from current events, references to classical political theory, and supporting end notes for readers wishing to dig deeper. For the most part, a 30,000-foot overview is enough to convince the reader that we face a serious problem—loss of sovereignty coupled with what Howard aptly calls “bureaucratic kleptocracy” via a “union spoils system.” The more difficult issue is crafting a solution. Political reform is stymied by unions' pervasive rent-seeking and institutional capture of state and local government.

Howard's constitutional objections, while—to my mind—compelling, are not particularly original; he mainly cites scholars who made similar arguments decades ago, including the prolific Sylvester Petro (who unsuccessfully argued *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* [1977] before the U.S. Supreme Court, only to be posthumously vindicated when the decision was overturned 41 years later in *Janus*) and Edwin Vieira, Jr. However, the legal case against public-sector unionism (other than *Abood*, *Janus*, and similar agency fee challenges) was never fully litigated, has been all-but-forgotten, and unfortunately vanished from the public conversation—until now. Howard has resurrected formidable but neglected legal arguments so that they may, hopefully, gain the overdue airing they deserve.

One of the reasons public-sector unionism has not attracted the attention of many legal scholars is that the subject is governed by a patchwork quilt of state laws and regulations. The federal National Labor Relations Act applies only

to private-sector employees. Nationally-prominent scholars tend to be drawn to uniform schemes of law, such as the NLRA. Collective-bargaining rights for federal government employees, first conferred (via Executive Order 10988) by President Kennedy in 1962, were later expanded by Congress in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

Although seldom noticed, government employee unions are a major issue at the federal level. Howard notes that “All told, the executive branch must bargain with a dozen different unions, each focused on specific cohorts. Together 25 percent of federal employees belong to unions, with total coverage somewhat higher.” These unions contribute to the Beltway morass.

Unlike some critics of public-sector unionism, Howard does not overlook congressionally-mandated collective bargaining by federal government employees, which he contends usurps the executive branch's authority under Article II of the Constitution. Moreover, Howard ingeniously argues that the states' surrender of sovereignty to unions representing government employees violates the Guarantee Clause of Article IV, which guarantees “to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government.” Stripping elected officials of their authority, and conferring it instead on self-interested representatives of government employees, robs the voters (“we the people”) of control over state and local government. The Founders would surely object to a collective-bargaining scheme that structurally empowered union officials at the expense of governors, mayors, and other public executives. Therefore, Howard maintains that the issue should not be deemed a non-justiciable “political question.”

Whether these—and other—constitutional objections to public-sector unionism will find a sympathetic hearing in court

remains to be seen, but this much is clear: Absent a constitutional challenge, the dysfunctional status quo will continue or even worsen. Howard ends *Not Accountable* with these words:

No one elected unions to co-run American government. No democratic principle gave legislators and other officials the right to surrender governing powers to unions. No ethical value allows public employees, having taken an oath to protect the public, to organize politically to harm the public. Democracy under union restraints can't work as the framers intended. That's why union controls on the operating machinery of government should be ruled unconstitutional.

Judging from the enormous impact of Howard's numerous prior books, including the critically-acclaimed national best-seller *The Death of Common Sense* (1995), and *The Collapse of the Common Good* (2002), *Not Accountable* will be widely read and find a large and receptive audience on both sides of the partisan aisle. (His 2010 Ted Talk entitled “Four ways to fix a broken legal system” has been viewed over 770,000 times.)

Howard's thoughtful perspective and well-deserved reputation for dispensing non-wonkish common sense make it likely that his message and proposed reforms will not be ignored. A half-century ago, when America began the failed experiment of public-sector unionism, a small group of perceptive scholars predicted doom, in heavily-footnoted jeremiads that were largely ignored. It turns out they were prophetically correct. One hopes that Philip Howard's *Not Accountable* will motivate Americans to pay closer attention and heed his sensible recommendations.

It is not often that public policy disasters offer a second chance at correction. Getting it wrong a second time would be unpardonable—and tragic.

doing the right thing. The true story is more of a person making and breaking a New Year's resolution. There's nothing binding about the debt ceiling: Congress can (and does) raise the ceiling whenever it wants with the same majority vote that's required to approve spending.

(Continued on Page 7)

THE threat of faction—a “mortal disease,” James Madison warned in *Federalist 10*—has plagued popular government since time immemorial. The eternal desire to improve one's economic position at the expense of others without the benefit of consensual exchange has long tempted mankind into (again, using Madison's words) “mutual animosities” that eventually found voice in Karl Marx's toxic class consciousness. In the pre-industrial era, the “dangerous vice” of rent-seeking often consisted of debtors seeking to avoid their repayment obligations through the use of worthless paper money. During the 20th century, the New Deal institutionalized economic warfare between employers (capital) and employees (labor) in the guise of collective bargaining.

In the 1960s, the private-sector model of unionization was imprudently extended to government employees, and in the ensuing decades—coinciding with the meteoric growth of local, state, and federal employment—public employee unions have become one of the most powerful factions in America. James Madison would be astonished and chagrined. The number of unionized government employees now rivals that of their private sector counterparts, forming a special interest group that in many cases controls the dynamics of representative self-government. Unions representing government workers plunder public treasuries, hamstringing elected officials, hindering efficiency and reform, and aggressively lobbying to benefit the narrow interests of their members over those of the taxpaying public.

The baleful effects of public-sector unionism are particularly evident in the field of K-12 education, where unionized teachers dictate a self-serving agenda. In America's major cities, government employee unions such as SEIU and AFSCME have replaced

rary and last until an adversary makes adjustments to mitigate them. The U.S. war in Iraq is not only a case study of how U.S. adversaries adapt their tactics to negate American technology, but also how arming proxies can “boomerang.”

The Iraq war famously began with “Shock and Awe” in March 2003. With U.S. military and technical prowess on display, this conventional campaign delivered Baghdad to U.S. troops in less than a month. However, Iraqis were not done fighting. Having been soundly defeated in the open, they transitioned to guerrilla warfare, making the narrow streets of densely populated cities the new battlespace.

In places such as Fallujah, Ramadi, and Baghdad, Iraqi insurgents canalized the greatest maneuver force in the world into narrow streets littered with improvised explosive devices, commonly known as “roadside bombs.” IEDs represented perhaps the most impactful adaptation of the war. Often consisting of artillery shells and harmless household items such as a cell phone, or garage door opener, they accounted for 60 percent of U.S. fatalities in Iraq.

While the initial invasion of Iraq came at a cost less than 150 American lives, by the time President Obama completed the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, nearly 4,500 Americans had been slain in grinding urban combat with an insurgency that

Boss Tweed as political power brokers.

Yet, despite the dysfunction resulting from the indefensible extension of collective bargaining to government workers—something that both FDR and George Meany opposed—the topic of public-sector unionism has largely been ignored by the legal academy as if self-interested public employees tilting the playing field of democracy in their favor is no different than the influence of K Street lobbyists or climate change activists. The Supreme Court's 2018 decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* drew fresh attention to the subject of public-sector unionism, but the focus was generally limited to agency fees and compelled speech. Unlike, say, the administrative state or campaign finance regulation, there is a dearth of current legal scholarship on public-sector unionism.

Into that vacuum steps well-respected lawyer and veteran public policy analyst Philip K. Howard in his latest book, *Not Accountable: Rethinking the Constitutionality of Public Employee Unions*. Howard, Chair of the non-partisan reform group Common Good, is a serial best-selling author with a knack for explaining complex problems in simple terms and identifying commonsense solutions. In *Not Accountable*, Howard boldly takes on the juggernaut of public-sector unions and concludes that collective bargaining by government workers is an unconstitutional subversion of sovereign power.

Not Accountable explains the problem in a nutshell:

Union power in government happened almost by accident in the 1960s, ostensibly to give public unions the same bargaining rights as trade unions. But government bargaining is not about dividing profits, but making political choices about public priorities. Moreover, the political nature of decision-making allowed unions to provide campaign support to friendly officials. Public bargain-

IT'S time again for Debt Ceiling Theater. Since 1940, Americans have typically caught this show just about every eight months. The actors and dialogue change, but the characters and the plot never do. “Party out of power” shows that it's tough on spending by refusing to raise the debt ceiling. “Party in power” trots out the poor, the

environment, the elderly, the military, or whatever else will get the voters all worked up, and cries that “party out of power” is holding the country hostage. Even the media has a cameo appearance as “concerned institution informing the public and holding politicians' feet to the fire.”

In fact, the actors are all there to make a buck. The

media attracts viewers and advertising dollars by scaring people with implications of impending societal collapse. The two parties get to rile up their bases in a sort of half-time-between-elections slugfest. But everyone knows how the show is going to end.

Once in a while, to really get the crowd on their

feet, the President will offer up a showstopper in which he “shuts down” the government. But the shutdown only ever applies to non-essential government services (don't ask why we're spending on anything that's non-essential, anyway). And as soon as the shutdown ends, all the money that would have been spent

during the shutdown is then spent retroactively.

Spending is never shut down, it's just deferred.

The show's ending hasn't changed in more than 90 performances. In the nick of time, Congress raises the debt ceiling and everything goes back to normal. To resonate with voters, the show is advertised as a story of a household grappling with its debts and

‘Send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves’

WHEN the United States involves itself militarily in a conflict, it often finds it hard to get itself out, let alone avoid deep entanglements that blow well past lines it had drawn at the start of the intervention.

It happened in Vietnam, when U.S. military advisers helping the South Vietnamese fight Viet Cong eventually became U.S. soldiers fighting an American war. It happened in Afghanistan, when an initial invasion to capture al-Qaida and overthrow the Taliban morphed into a nearly two-decade-long nation-building project. And it could be happening right now in Ukraine.

Little by little, NATO and the United States are creeping closer to the catastrophic scenario President Joe Biden said “we must strive to prevent” — direct conflict between the United States and Russia. Despite stressing at the start of the war that “our forces are not and will not be engaged in the conflict,” current and former intelligence officials told the Intercept back in October that “there is a much larger presence of both CIA and US special operations personnel” in Ukraine than there was when Russia invaded, conducting “clandestine American operations” in the country that “are now far more extensive.”

Among those clandestine operations, investigative journalist and former Green Beret Jack Murphy reported on Dec. 24 to little mainstream attention, is the CIA’s work with an unnamed NATO ally’s spy agency to carry out sabotage operations within Russia, reportedly the cause of the unexplained explosions that have rocked Russian infrastructure throughout the war. This is the kind of activity that skirts dangerously close to direct NATO-Russia confrontation.

To put it into perspec-

tive, consider the way that swaths of the U.S. political establishment viewed the mere act of Russian meddling in the 2016 election an “act of war” — outrageous, but orders of magnitude less serious than helping to carry out infrastructure attacks on another country’s soil.

Meanwhile, the United States and its NATO allies have serially blown past their own self-imposed lines over arms transfers. At the start of the war, the New York Times cautioned that the overt supply of even small arms and light weaponry “risks encouraging a wider war and possible retaliation” from Moscow, while U.S. offi-

Branko Marcetic

ce Russian president Putin pulled back on his nuclear threats in October.

As the Ukraine war effort has stalled and Russian forces have made small advances, NATO arms transfers have now escalated well beyond what governments had worried just months ago could draw the alliance into direct war with Russia, with the U.S. and European governments now sending armored vehicles and reportedly preparing to send tanks. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov had predicted as much in October last year.

“When I was in D.C. in

alliance’s initial goals were to help Ukraine defend its independence and sovereignty by repelling a Russian invasion bent on regime change. Two months later, U.S. officials were publicly talking about “victory” and inflicting a “strategic defeat” on Russia that would leave it “weakened.” Biden has repeatedly vowed to support Ukraine “as long as it takes,” even as Zelensky and other officials have made repeatedly clear their goals are now to retake Crimea, something that could spark nuclear escalation.

Talk of diplomacy is again nearly absent from U.S. commentary on the

acknowledging the risk of nuclear retaliation that such a move would carry. Fears of such an escalation “have dimmed,” U.S. officials told the paper.

By escalating their support for Ukraine’s military, the U.S. and NATO have created an incentive structure for Moscow to take a drastic, aggressive step to show the seriousness of its own red lines. This would be dangerous at the best of times, but particularly so when Russian officials are making clear they increasingly view the war as one against NATO as a whole, not merely Ukraine, while threatening nuclear response to the alliance’s escalation in weapons deliveries.

NATO governments are increasingly painting the conflict to their publics not as a limited effort to help one country repel an invasion from a larger neighbor, but rather as an existential battle for the survival of the West, mirrored in the Russian leadership’s own evolving view of the war as a battle for survival against hostile Western powers. Notably, this has happened despite the Biden administration’s public endorsement of diplomacy late last year.

If the intention is to keep this war a limited, regional one between two neighboring states with NATO playing only a peripheral, supportive role, all of these trend lines point in the exact opposite direction. Unless officials make a concerted effort to de-escalate and pursue a diplomatic track — and prominent voices in media and politics create the political space for them to do it — Biden’s vow to avoid World War Three will mean as much as President Johnson’s 1964 promise not to “send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.”



What is the logic behind this strategy, and what are the chances that it will succeed?

SINCE October Russia has been swaging a brutal campaign to destroy Ukraine’s electricity transmission infrastructure. What is the logic behind this strategy, and what are the chances that it will succeed?

The United States has a lot of experience in using air power to attack civilian infrastructure — with a poor track record. Russia’s strategy is unlikely to succeed — and may merely serve to strengthen the international support for Ukraine.

Putin’s campaign to make Ukrainian cities unlivable was a response to setbacks on the battlefield. After Russian troops were forced to retreat from around Kharkiv in early September, Putin responded

Peter Rutland

electricity — about a quarter of the population. At any one time some 25 percent of cell phone base stations across the country are down.

Ukraine brought in additional anti-missile weapons to try to shoot down the incoming barrage. They are downing from 40 to 80 percent of Russian missiles, according to Ukrainian defense sources. Initially the defenders used Soviet era systems such as the Buk and S-300; Germany subsequently promised to send four Iris-T systems and 30 Gepard mobile anti-aircraft guns. The Gepards are highly effective against the slow-moving Shahed drones — but the Swiss manufacturer is reportedly

that generally holds up in subsequent research.

In the Korean and Vietnam wars, the U.S. specifically targeted the enemy’s electric power grid, as it did in the 1991 Gulf war, and 2003 Iraq war. In 1999, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea boasted with regard to the bombing of Yugoslavia: “The fact that lights went out across 70 percent of the country shows that NATO has its finger on the light switch now.”

But a 1994 MA thesis by U.S. Air Force Major Thomas Griffith concluded that such attacks “are usually ineffective in achieving strategic objectives, despite accomplishing the intermediate goals of diminishing electrical generating capacity, hindering war produc-

The 1949 Geneva Convention bars attacks on civilians unless the attacker can claim the attacks have a military purpose. Modern international humanitarian law insists on distinction, proportionality and precautions if attacks cause civilian casualties. Attacks on power stations are considered illegal by the International Red Cross, but they are acceptable in U.S. military doctrine. The only relevant court case seems to be that stemming from a 2000 attack by Ethiopian jets on the Hirgigo power station in Eritrea.

ed by announcing a partial mobilization of reservists and by declaring the annexation of the four occupied provinces of eastern Ukraine.

However, the military misfortunes continued. On October 8 an explosion damaged the Kerch Straits bridge linking Russia with Crimea. The same day, Putin appointed Gen. Sergei Surovikin as overall commander of the “special military operation” (SMO). Surovikin was formerly head of the southern military district, which successfully occupied a large swathe of southern Ukraine in the early weeks of the war. He earned the nickname “General Armageddon” during the Syrian civil war, in which Russian air power reduced opposition-held cities to rubble.

Surovikin launched a systematic campaign to destroy Ukraine’s power grid. The strikes targeted the transmission system, since power stations are more difficult to damage, and 60 percent of Ukraine’s electricity comes from nuclear facilities — which have been off limits from Russian attacks. There have been from 20 to 80 attacks per day, month after month (not all of them at the electricity grid). In addition to its own cruise and ballistic missiles, since August Russia has been using crude Iranian Shahed suicide drones.

Ukrainian engineers have scrambled to restore power, while importing generators to enable hospitals, military facilities and other vital services to continue operating. Ukraine has scoured Europe and beyond for replacement equipment compatible with Ukraine’s Soviet-era facilities. At the peak of the attacks in November, up to half of Ukrainians were without electricity for hours on end. On December 25, some nine million Ukrainians were without

refusing to supply replacement ammunition.

In November, the U.S. sent two National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems to Ukraine, with four more on the way. There are concerns that it is more costly for Ukraine to shoot down the incoming projectiles than it is for Russia to launch them.

In January the attacks continued but on a reduced scale, with some speculating that Russia is running out of missiles. On January 10 Putin appointed the chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov as commander of the SMO, replacing Surovikin, who continues to serve as head of the southern military district forces. It is hard to interpret exactly what this shuffling of commanders means, but at minimum it signals that Putin is dissatisfied with the way the war has been waged to date.

There is little sign that the campaign is breaking Ukraine’s will to resist. On the contrary, polling suggests that it has made Ukrainians even more determined to fight on.

Western opinion is divided over whether the Russian strategy makes sense. MIT Professor Barry Posen describes the bombing campaign as “well executed” and “cunningly effective,” serving to divert Ukraine’s resources away from preparing offensive operations. In contrast the British military authority Lawrence Freedman dismissed it as a “sociopath’s tantrum.”

Russia is not the first country to resort to air strikes against civilian targets as a short-cut to victory.

Such thinking was central to the US and RAF air campaigns in World War II. In a 1999 book entitled Bombing to Win Robert Pape argued that such campaigns have been singularly ineffective, a conclusion

tion, and causing civilian discomfort.” They do not substantially impact the will or the military capacity of the country to resist.

Apart from being ineffective, the Russian campaign may also be a violation of international law. (There is no question that the war as a whole is illegal, as an unprovoked attack on a neighbor.) On the other hand, attacks on civilian populations are as old as warfare itself. Disruption of the water supply has been a tactic of war since at least 2500 BCE. The Bible says that if a city under siege refuses to surrender, the attacker should “kill every man” if the city falls. (Deuteronomy 20: 13) (But the fruit trees should not be chopped down.)

The 1949 Geneva Convention bars attacks on civilians unless the attacker can claim the attacks have a military purpose. Modern international humanitarian law insists on distinction, proportionality and precautions if attacks cause civilian casualties. Attacks on power stations are considered illegal by the International Red Cross, but they are acceptable in U.S. military doctrine. The only relevant court case seems to be that stemming from a 2000 attack by Ethiopian jets on the Hirgigo power station in Eritrea. In 2005 the Eritrean Claims Commission ruled that it was a legitimate military target. But if Putin’s main chance for victory is a weakening in international support for Ukraine, his despicable targeting of civilian infrastructure appears to be having the opposite effect, strengthening Western resolve to send new and more advanced weapons to the warfront. Russia has not learned from the past mistakes of the U.S. in bombing electricity grids. On the contrary, it seems determined to repeat them.

Should United States fight a nuclear war?

NORTH Korean nuclear weapons are no longer the only nuclear weapons-related headache on the Korean Peninsula.

In Seoul, led by the conservative Yoon Suk-yeol administration, the calls for South Korea’s nuclear armament are growing louder. On January 11, Yoon said if North Korea’s nuclear situation becomes more serious, “we may deploy a tactical nuclear weapon here, in the Republic of Korea, or possess our own nuclear weapons,” adding “we, too, can rapidly develop our own weapon with our own technology.”

Senior members of Yoon’s party have been even more vocal. Seoul mayor Oh Se-hoon, who is on the short list for the next presidential candidate for the ruling People Power Party, said South Korea needed “an ‘active nuclear umbrella’ or its own nuclear weapons,” arguing that “a ‘passive nuclear umbrella’ that depends entirely on the will of the United States is inadequate.”

Meanwhile, Daegu mayor and former presidential candidate Hong Joon-pyo criticized the United States for continuing to pursue the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (which is premised on both Koreas being nuclear weapons-free,) saying

Washington was being “pathetic” for holding onto a “30-year-old project that has long become impossible.”

A nuclear-armed South Korea would entail many grave consequences. Combined with the Yoon administration’s belligerence, it makes an atomic inter-Korean conflict more likely. In late December, North Korea shocked Seoul by sending five drones across the demilitarized zone, one of which entered the no-fly zone over South Korea’s Office of the President. In response to the drone incursion, Yoon said he was “prepared to expand the war,” and suggested that South Korea may scrap the September 19 Military Agreement, a key agreement from 2018 that defused the military tensions that had been escalating.

Under the agreement, the two Koreas sought to minimize the possibility of an accidental conflict by mutually disarming soldiers in the Joint Security Area, pulling back the military presence along the demilitarized zone, and refraining from conducting drills near the Armistice Line.

Without the September 19 Agreement, the two Koreas may once again walk right up to the line of conflict — both figuratively and literally — with even an inadvertent act of vio-

Nathan Park

lence having a potential to spiral out of control.

South Korea’s nuclear armament would also upend the current regime of nuclear non-proliferation, which has gradually removed nuclear weapons from the world in the past several decades. Many East Asian nations are in a comparable situation as South Korea’s: technologically capable of developing a nuclear weapon, but refraining from doing so despite significant geopolitical threat because of the security guarantee from the United States. If Seoul forges ahead with nuclear weapons development, the decision may well encourage Japan or Taiwan to likewise pursue nuclear armament.

To prevent this result, the United States may be compelled to impose sanctions upon South Korea for violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (of which South Korea is a signatory,) similar to the Clinton administration’s sanctions against India in the late 1990s.

Doing so will likely be the end of the U.S.-ROK alliance, which necessarily means a fundamental rearrangement of U.S. interests in the region.

It is ill-considered and reckless for Yoon Suk-yeol and South Korea’s conservatives to call for nuclear

armament while casually disregarding Seoul’s obligation under the NPT. But Washington is not without fault for letting the situation come this far. South Korea’s call for nuclear weapons is a natural outgrowth of U.S. inaction to North Korea’s nuclear program. When it comes to North Korea, the Biden administration has defaulted into “strategic patience” — at this point, little more than a euphemism for neglect — because it has no appetite to replicate Donald Trump’s showy but ultimately hollow attempt to engage with Pyongyang.

On the other hand, however, the North Korea hawks too have little to say. Their basic logic that just a little more sanctions would lead to North Korea’s collapse was critically undermined when Pyongyang managed to survive its years-long, total embargo that it imposed upon itself to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Sharp analysts such as Ankit Panda of the Carnegie Endowment, Jeffrey Lewis of the Middlebury Institute, and Frank Aum of the United States Institute of Peace, have come to the logical conclusion: it is indisputable that North Korea is a nuclear state, and denuclearization, if it happens at all, will only happen gradually through a sustained engagement over many

years.

But the U.S. government, as well as most of the Korea-related policymaking community in Washington, are slow to heed their advice. Rather than reckoning with reality, the United States is sitting on the sidelines while Pyongyang develops increasingly more sophisticated nuclear weapons and missiles. In the face of such inaction, it should not be surprising that Seoul would react by doubting the U.S. security commitment and threatening to challenge nuclear non-proliferation.

There is no need for the United States to intervene into every corner of the world. But non-interventionism does not mean an abdication from diplomacy, especially when it comes to an issue as important as nuclear weapons.

The United States needs to take an active initiative on the Korean Peninsula, by implementing a serious and realistic plan to slow North Korea’s nuclear weapons development while putting a firm stop on South Korean talks of nuclear armament by emphasizing the importance of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

If Washington fails now, the next discussion that Washington will have regarding the two Koreas may well be whether the United States should fight a nuclear war.

‘Concerned institution informing the public and holding politicians’ feet to the fire’

(Continued from Page 6)

What the public spectacle does is to give voters the impression that our politicians are making tough decisions and whipping our financial house into shape. But that’s nonsense. The federal debt stands now at more than \$31 trillion. And that’s not counting retirement benefits the government has promised to federal workers and Social Security recipients, which it won’t have the money to pay. It’s unclear how much that is, but Social Security’s own

estimates come in at around \$50 trillion. Far from there being a hope that politicians are getting this mess under control, there’s every sign that they’ve given up even trying.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the federal debt will increase by an average of almost \$1.5 trillion per year over the next ten years. Given that the CBO has underestimated the future debt in 80 percent of its past 200-plus forecasts, the actual number is likely to be closer to \$1.8 trillion per year, on average.

If interest rates remain at their pre-inflation levels, then the interest on the debt will consume 16 percent of annual federal receipts by 2033 (up from 15 percent today).

But here’s the twist: if the Federal Reserve continues to help finance the government’s ongoing trillion-dollar deficits as it has since 2020, we’re going to see ongoing inflation as the growth in the money supply continues to outpace the growth in the economy. Eventually, that inflation gets priced into bonds, and so interest rates rise. But, to

hold inflation under control, the Fed needs to slow the growth in the money supply, but that raises interest rates. Either way, low interest rates are a thing of the past.

And being \$31 trillion dollars in hock, just a one-percentage-point increase in interest rates would eventually increase the government’s annual interest expense from 15 percent of its revenues today to 24 percent by the end of the decade.

So when the Profligate Democrats are stuck in their tracks by Responsible

Republicans, do your best to forget that those roles were reversed just a couple of years ago. Go ahead and convince yourself that This Time It Will Be Different, all evidence to the contrary. And by all means, fool yourself into believing that we deserve better.

But we don’t. We deserve exactly the government we have insisted upon for all these years. We also deserve the heavy price that will come for our own irresponsibility in repeatedly re-electing this troupe. No partisan theater will ever sugarcoat that.

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.



Pakistan Stock Exchange gains 35 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a slightly bullish trend on Monday, gaining 35.61 points, a modest positive change of 0.09 percent, closing at 38,443.59 against 38,407.98 points the previous day.

A total of 81,287,333 shares were traded during the day as compared to 93,450,275 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 2.809 billion against Rs 3.508 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 315 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 130 of them recorded gains and 159 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Al Shaheer (R) with 9,929,531 shares

at Rs 0.07 per share, TRG Pak Ltd with 7,837,355 shares at Rs 100.67 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 5,939,515 shares at Rs 1.10 per share.

Bhanero Textile witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 22.99 per share price, closing at Rs 1,199.99, whereas the runner-up was Thal Ind. Corp XD with a Rs 21.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 312.00.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 128.99 per share closing at Rs 1,596.01, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs 119.99 declines to close at Rs5,190.01.

Rupee closes at Rs 230.15 against USD

The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 51 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs 230.15 against the previous day's closing of

Rs 229.66.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 237.85 and Rs 240.1 respectively.

The price of the euro increased by Rs 2.32 and closed at Rs 251.18 against the previous day's closing of Rs 248.86, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen lost two paise to close at Rs 1.76, whereas an increase of Rs 1.77 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound, which was traded at Rs 285.65 as compared to its last closing of Rs 283.88.

The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal increased by 14 paise each to close at Rs 62.66 and Rs 61.28 respectively.

Gold prices up by Rs

950 to Rs 188,150 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs 950 on Monday and was traded at Rs188,150 against sale at Rs187,200 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 814 to Rs 161,308 against Rs160,494, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat increased to Rs147,866 from Rs147,119, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of one tola silver increased by Rs20 to Rs2,100 whereas that of ten gram went up by Rs17.15 to Rs1,800.41 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$3 to US\$ 1,924 as compared to its sale at US\$1,927 on the last trading day, the association reported.



HYDERABAD: Vegetable traders unloading tomatoes from delivery trucks for trading at vegetable market.

Tokyo shares end higher after US rallies

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks surged at the close on Monday, following Wall Street rallies, while a lull in the yen's appreciation against the dollar also supported the Japanese market.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index jumped 1.33 percent, or 352.51 points, to end at 26,906.04, while the broader Topix index advanced 0.96 percent, or 18.51 points, to 1,945.38.

The dollar slipped to 129.06 yen in the early afternoon before recovering to 129.70 yen in the late afternoon in Tokyo. The levels compared with 129.51 yen on Friday in New York.

Global investors were encouraged as US Federal Reserve officials reiterated that the central bank may lift rates at a slower pace as inflation gradually comes down.

"After US gains, investor sentiment further improved and buying went to a broad range of shares," IwaiCosmo Securities said.

Market players were also monitoring speculation that the Bank of Japan could move towards monetary tightening after Governor Haruhiko Kuroda's term expires in April.

Hopes for Chinese recovery also brightened sentiment, said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

"Although most Asia markets are closed for Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations, Japanese and Australian stocks are picking up on the better mood from US investors and on expectations of China's economy returning to some semblance of a pre-pandemic trend," he said.

Hopes for returning Chinese demand helped lift Nippon Steel, which jumped 2.36 percent to close at 2,690 yen.

Construction equipment maker Komatsu, which also has a major presence in Asian and Chinese markets, rose 1.39 percent to 3,019 yen.

Top automaker and major exporter Toyota gained 0.32 percent to 1,889 yen and Honda rose 0.78 percent to 3,093 yen.

Nissan added 0.86 percent to 434.1 yen after reports said the French government supports plans being discussed by the Japanese carmaker and Renault to rebalance their alliance, including reducing Renault's 43.7 percent stake in Nissan.

Ethiopian industrial sector attracts Pakistani investors

ISLAMABAD (APP): The efforts of the Embassy of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Islamabad has started yielding results as a major business group from Pakistan has flown to Addis Ababa, the other day, to explore investment opportunities in its industrial sector.

A high-level delegation of Arif Habib Group visited Addis Ababa where they met with business people and officials of the government of Ethiopia and discussed prospects of investing in the country's production sector, a press release said.

On Tuesday, January 17, 2023, the delegation led by Arif Habib Group of Companies Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Muhammad Kashif met with Commissioner of Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) Enginer Lelise Neme and expressed keen interest to invest in manufacturing of fertilizer, cement and steel in Ethiopia.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the

Islamic Republic of Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula was also present during the meeting.

During the meeting, the EIC commissioner briefed the delegation on the ease of doing business, incentive packages, and investment climate in Ethiopia which was conducive and favorable for investment operations.

On the occasion, the ambassador extended gratitude to the delegation for visiting his country and said it was high time for the foreign investors to invest in Ethiopia which offered lucrative opportunities, business-friendly environment, cheap cost of production as well as multiple incentives on foreign direct investment.

The ambassador said Ethiopia had undergone a lot of transformation since Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed came into power who had a vision to transform the country into a major investment destination not in Africa but also in the world.

"We are committed to facilitating the investors in our country, that is why we have established a one-win-

dow operation for them," he added.

He assured the delegation of the government's support in starting and doing business in Ethiopia which had been producing 96.4 per cent electricity from water and geothermal sources that provided at cheap rate.

The delegation of Arif Habib Group has held a meeting with officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Mines in which they were briefed them about the policies, opportunities and commitment and support of government to harvest the availed opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, mines and services.

Arif Habib Group is a giant company with \$2.5 Billion net assets that has a diversified portfolio of investments ranging from financial services, industries and real estate development and advisory.

It has a history of building Joint Venture (JV) partnerships and is continuing to expand business collaborations with domestic as well as foreign entities.

FPCCI hails SBP decision on stuck-up containers

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh Monday welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan policy decision to allow clearance of pending LCs [letter of credit] of the containers stuck at the ports or those which are in-transit.

He said the issue was causing detention charges, demurrage, shortages of raw materials for industrial production, closure of major industrial units, disruptions in the supplies of agricultural inputs, closure of plants due to unavailability of spare-parts of the machinery and equipment, non-fulfillment of export orders, loss of revenue due to dwindling production and massive layoffs.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh highlighted that the SBP had advised commercial banks to provide facilitation to those importers who could extend their payment terms to 180 days or more; else,

to those who could arrange for funds for their import payments from abroad.

Additionally, commercial banks had also been advised to release the documents of shipments that had arrived at port in Pakistan already or for those shipments which had been in-transit on/before January 18, 2023. He mentioned that the SBP governor visited the FPCCI Head Office and listened to the grievances of trade and industry in detail. The session was attended by prominent personalities of country's all chambers, trade bodies and associations – either in-person or through video link from across various cities and countries.

Irfan Sheikh stated that the FPCCI had worked very hard to persuade the SBP in this regard as many industries had already shut down their production units and many more industrial units were about to do the same. The FPCCI delivered the

results for the entire business community and in the larger national interest, he added.

Irfan Sheikh thanked business community in general and the FPCCI office-bearers and members in particular for their hectic efforts in this regard and not losing hope along the lines. He added, "We used every possible platform at our disposal to get the plea of the business community heard," he asserted.

The FPCCI president demanded that the SBP should closely monitor commercial banks to ensure that the decision was implemented in letter and spirit as it had become a matter of survival for hundreds of factories and thousands of jobs. He also proposed that preference should be given to export-oriented industries; food products; industrial raw materials; energy producing imports and agricultural raw materials while clearing the backlog.

Emirates hit record with 30 million members enrolled worldwide

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Emirates Skywards has hit a new record with more than 30 million members enrolled worldwide. The award-winning loyalty programme of Emirates and flydubai is celebrating big with incredible offers including a chance to win one million Skywards Miles.

Over the past two decades, the loyalty pro-

gramme has evolved and grown to become one of the most recognized and valued loyalty programmes in the world. With industry leading initiatives, innovative product offerings, and more than 150 brand partners - Emirates Skywards continues to redefine the loyalty experience for customers, in the air and on-ground.

Dr Nejjib Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President Emirates

Skywards, said: "Thank you to each of our 30 million members who have made Emirates Skywards the successful loyalty programme it is today. This is a major milestone for us and we are very happy to be giving back to our loyal members who have played an invaluable role in our success. Stay tuned for some of the most amazing offers this month - from a chance to win 1 million

Miles, upgrades to Business Class, and complimentary Tier upgrades - we have something in store for everyone!

We always strive to provide our members the best value, choice and exceptional rewards a loyalty programme can offer - when you fly, dine, shop, or drive. We're very proud of this milestone and look forward to the road ahead of us."

ICCI, Moscow Chamber ink MoU to promote trade relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has inked a Protocol of Intentions with Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) to work jointly for promoting business linkages between the private sectors of both countries and enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia.

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Chairman, Commission on Foreign Economic Relations with Partners in Pakistan of MCCI Stanislav Korolev, signed the document during a ceremony held at ICCI.

President, Pakistan Trade House in Russia Dr. Zahid A. Khan, was also present in the signing ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Russia had great potential to enhance trade relations as their cur-

rent bilateral trade was far less than their actual potential.

He said that both countries should make efforts to take bilateral trade to at least US\$ 5 billion within the next few years.

Pakistan could export many products to Russia including agricultural products, textiles, clothing, pharmaceuticals, rice, leather, sporting goods, surgical equipment and others, he added.

Ahsan Zafar said that Pakistan and Russia should sign a free trade agreement to boost trade volume adding that Pakistan was a huge market and Russian investors should invest in energy, oil & gas, infrastructure development, railways and other sectors in Pakistan.

He said that ICCI would consider taking a delegation to MCCI in May or June this year for B2B meetings to explore new areas of bilateral trade pro-

motion.

Senior Vice President, ICCI Faad Waheed said that Russia had helped Pakistan in establishing Pakistan Steel Mills and we would like to revive similar flagship Russian projects in Pakistan in cooperation with Moscow Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Vice President ICCI Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that Pakistan and Russia should encourage frequent exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation.

Meanwhile, Stanislav Korolev said that Russia wanted to expand trade ties with Pakistan and ICCI should lead efforts for promoting business relations with Russia.

He has been working since 2015 for an Islamic Bank in Russia to promote trade relations with Muslim countries including Pakistan, he added.

He said that Russia is

quite advanced in the pharmaceutical sector and can cooperate with Pakistan in this field.

He said that the Energy Ministers of Russia and Pakistan had signed protocols for boosting cooperation in the energy sector as the three-day Pakistan-Russian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation has examined the prospects for boosting cooperation in the energy field.

He hoped that the signing of protocol between ICCI and MCCI would contribute to improving trade ties between the two countries.

Ameer Hamza, Humayun Kabir, Maqsood Tabish, Sheikh Ejaz, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful proposals for improving bilateral trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Russia.

POL import bill contracts by 8.8% in 1st half of current fiscal year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group contracted by 8.80 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year (2022-23), as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-December (2022-23) stood at \$9,285.534 million, as against the imports of \$10,181.765 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS data.

Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 16.90 percent, from \$5,056.557 million last year to \$4,202.187 million during the time period

under review.

Likewise, the imports of liquefied natural gas declined by 18.72 percent, from \$1,949.704 million this year against the imports of \$2,398.661 million recorded during the corresponding period of last year.

On the other hand, the products that witnessed positive growth included petroleum crude, the imports of which grew by 15.17 percent, from \$2,410.587 million last year to \$2,776.186 million whereas imports of liquefied petroleum gas increased by 13.14 percent, from \$315.783 million to \$357.267 million. The imports of all other petroleum products increased by 7.06 percent, from \$ 0.177

million to \$0.189 million.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 12.02 percent during the month of December 2022 as compared to the same months of last year.

The petroleum imports during December 2022, were recorded as \$1,585.263 million against the imports of \$1,801.918 million during December 2021. On a month-on-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country declined by 3.70 percent during December 2022, as compared to the imports of \$1,646.185 million November 2022, said the data.

It is pertinent to mention here that the the trade

deficit witnessed a decline of 32.65 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The trade deficit during July-December (2022-23) was recorded at \$17.133 billion against the deficit of \$25.438 billion in July-December (2021-22), a decline of 32.65 percent.

The exports during the period were recorded at \$14.249 billion against \$15.125 billion last year, showing a decline of 5.79 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 22.63 percent by falling from \$40.563 billion last year to \$31.382 billion during the current fiscal year.

Pharmaceutical goods' export increases by 26.85% to \$175.025m

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of pharmaceuticals goods from the country has witnessed an increase of 26.85 percent during the first half of the fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period last year.

Pakistan exported pharmaceutical products worth US\$ 175.025 million dur-

ing the period from July-December (2022-23) as compared to the export of US\$ 137.978 million during July-December (2021-22), showing a growth of 26.85 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, the export of pharmaceutical goods also rose by 88.21

percent from 15,197 metric tons to 28,603 metric tons, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the pharmaceutical goods' export increased by 26.83 percent during the month of December 2022 as compared to the same month of last year.

The pharmaceutical exports in December 2022

were recorded at US \$31.176 million against the export of US\$ 24.581 million in December 2021, the PBS data revealed.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of pharmaceutical goods however decreased by 2.43 percent in December 2022 as compared to US\$ 31.953 million in November 2022.

Stock markets rise on improving US rates outlook

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets headed higher Monday as investors eyed less aggressive US interest rate hikes this year with inflation starting to cool from sky-high levels.

Tokyo was the standout performer, rallying more than one percent following a blockbuster pre-weekend performance on Wall Street as tech shares rallied.

Comments from top Federal Reserve officials provided support to equities after they indicated the bank could lift rates at a slower pace compared with 2022.

The euro on Monday reached the highest level since April last year, at \$1.0927, before slipping back. "Investor confidence

has surged into the Lunar New Year after China lifted its drastic Covid restrictions and hopes have risen that the end to interest rate hikes may finally be in sight," noted Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

"There have been signs economies may prove more resilient in the downturn," she added.

Philadelphia Fed boss Patrick Harker has again called for slower US rate increases, while Kansas City Fed boss Esther George said she was optimistic the world's top economy could still achieve a soft landing despite worries that a series of big borrow-

ing-cost hikes last year would tip it into recession.

Investors will also looking to US inflation data coming out Friday in the hopes it will give the Fed added reason to slow its rate hikes. Wall Street opened higher on Monday in a week that is heavy with earnings reports from big companies including Microsoft, Intel and Boeing. The Dow added 0.1 percent as trading got under way.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare said investors will be looking in particular at what companies say about their 2023 earnings prospects.

With stock valuations higher than their 10-year average, O'Hare said

"companies reporting their results this week can't blow it with their guidance."

In Europe, London and Paris edged higher in afternoon trading, while Frankfurt was flat.

In Asia, trading was thin with a number of stock markets closed for the Lunar New Year holiday.

"Although most Asian markets are closed for Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations, Japanese and Australian stocks are picking up on the better mood from US investors and on expectations of China's economy returning to some semblance of a pre-pandemic trend," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.



In brief

Polo Tournament starts today

LAHORE (APP): The 3rd Allama Iqbal Polo Tournament sponsored by Lahore Smart City will get underway tomorrow, Tuesday (January 24) here at the Jinnah Polo Fields. According to Jinnah Polo Fields Lt Col Shoaib Aftab (R), the two-week eight-goal tournament will be featured by nine teams which are divided into two pools. Pool A consists of SOC Gold Polo, BN Polo, 4 Corps Polo team and Remington Pharma while Pool B comprises Platinum Homes/Master Paints, FG/Din Polo, Master Paints, Diamond Paints and Inara Polo/Black Horse Paints. The inaugural match of the prestigious tournament will be played between BN Polo and Remington Pharma at 1:15 pm while the second match of the opening day will be contested between Diamond Paints and Inara Polo/Black Horse Paints at 2:30 pm. The final of the tournament will be played on February 5.

Sindh sports college program kicks off

HYDERABAD (APP): Sports competitions under the Sindh College Sports program kicked off on Monday under the supervision of Regional Director Colleges Shaheed Benazirabad. The opening ceremony was performed by Member Sindh Assembly Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Deputy Commissioner Shehryar Gul Memon, Director Anti Corruption Mir Nadir Ali Abro and Regional Director Collages Prof Shahida Taj Abro by cutting the ribbon. Addressing the ceremony, Chandio said that emergent steps were being taken to alive the sports grounds by Sindh Government and giving prestigious chances to youths of the province. Earlier Regional Director Colleges SBA, Shahida Taj Abro while welcoming the guests said that the Department of College Education of Sindh Government has organized the fifth Sindh College Games under which the separate male and female students' games commenced in SBA Region Colleges.

Everton manager sacked

LONDON (BBC): Everton have sacked manager Frank Lampard after less than a year in charge at Goodison Park. Defeat at fellow strugglers West Ham United on Saturday was Everton's ninth loss in 12 Premier League games. They are second from bottom of the table with 15 points from 20 matches, above Southampton on goal difference. Former England midfielder Lampard, 44, replaced Rafael Benitez in January 2022 with the team 16th in the table and helped Everton avoid relegation. Everton are now looking for their sixth permanent manager in five years. After a 1-1 draw at reigning champions Manchester City on 31 December, Everton have lost 4-1 to Brighton at Goodison Park, were knocked out of the FA Cup with a 3-1 defeat at Manchester United and were then beaten by Southampton despite taking the lead, before the latest defeat by West Ham. They have managed only three wins all season. There have been widespread and vocal protests from fans against the board in recent games, and supporters staged a sit-in demonstration after the loss to Southampton.

Pakistan not withdrawing from series against Afghanistan

LAHORE (Cricinfo): Pakistan will not pull out of their upcoming bilateral series against Afghanistan, like Australia did, with PCB chairman Najam Sethi saying that "cricket and politics should be kept separate". The series in March, however, will now comprise three T20Is and not ODIs and will be played at an offshore venue, with the Afghanistan and Pakistan boards sharing the revenue 50-50. On January 12, Cricket Australia had announced its decision to withdraw from playing Afghanistan because of the Taliban's "further restrictions on women's and girls' education" in Afghanistan. When asked about PCB's stance on the issue, Sethi said: "That is not our business and we don't like to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

My personal stance is that politics and cricket shouldn't be mixed up, so following that principle the series is subject to pending approvals from the Pakistan government and I think approvals will be granted."

The switch from ODIs to T20Is was made because both Pakistan and Afghanistan have already qualified for the 2023 ODI World Cup in India and so the World Cup Super League points don't matter so much. "I met with the executive members of Afghanistan Cricket Board and they were asking us to play a (ODI) series but we didn't find any attraction playing the series," Sethi said at a press conference on Monday.

"It's mainly because the series was meant for the

[Super League] points, and now no matter who wins it won't make a difference. So we agreed to play a series of three T20Is in Sharjah just after the PSL subject to government approval. We will share 50% of the revenue from the series equally. And we will jointly outsource the production."

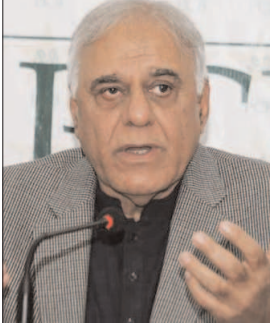
The bilateral series against Pakistan was meant to be hosted by Afghanistan in the UAE in 2021 but had to be postponed following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan because no commercial flights were taking off from Kabul at the time. The T20I series will be played between March 20 and 28. Pakistan are also scheduled to play another three-match ODI series against Afghanistan in August 2023.

Haroon Rashid appointed Chief Selector: PCB

LAHORE (APP): Former Pakistan batter Haroon Rashid has been appointed as Chair of the men's National Selection Committee, while other members of his panel will be announced in due course. Haroon played 23 Tests and 12 ODIs from 1977 to 1983 and last held this position in 2015-16. Most recently, he was the Convener of the Interim Selection Committee after having previously served in administrative and coaching roles with the age-group and national sides.

Chair of the PCB Management Committee, Najam Sethi stated at a news conference here on Monday: "I want to congratulate Haroon Rashid and hope he will use his cricket knowledge, understanding and background while picking squads for the upcoming international assignments."

Haroon Rashid on his appointment said : "I am honoured to have been entrusted with this responsi-



bility and look forward to working very closely with the team management and the National High Performance Centre so that we have clear pathways and can work collectively to select best available players for what will be a busy and high-profile year of cricket, including the ACC Asia Cup, ICC Men's Cricket World Cup and the tour of Australia for three Tests. "One of the key aspects I will like to focus on my time will be improving communication. This is a critical area as the players need to have

absolute clarity on why they have been selected or not selected, which, in turn, will help them to deliver the desired results, work harder on their skills and remain motivated."

Pakistan FTP commitments from now until June 2024:

13 Apr-7 May – NZ to Pakistan (5 T20Is & 5 ODIs) July – Pakistan to Sri Lanka (two Tests)

August – Pakistan to Afghanistan (three ODIs)

September – ACC 50-over Asia Cup in Pakistan October/November – ICC Men's Cricket World Cup India 2023

December/January – Pakistan to Australia (three Tests)

February/March – West Indies in Pakistan (two Tests, three T20Is)

May – Pakistan to Netherlands (three T20Is), Ireland (three T20Is) and England (five T20Is)

June – ICC Men's T20 World Cup USA/West Indies 2024

Australian Open results Djokovic beats Minaur; Rublev & Shelton through

Novak Djokovic made light work of home hope Alex de Minaur as he continued his pursuit of a record-extending 10th men's title at the Australian Open.

Serbia's Djokovic, 35, still had his left thigh strapped but he looked in no trouble as he won 6-2 6-1 6-2.

The fourth seed will play Russian Andrey Rublev in the quarter-finals.

Rublev, seeded fifth, saved two match points - and fought back from 5-0 down in a final-set tie-break - to beat Danish teenager Holger Rune.

Later on Monday, the 25-year-old discovered he would face Djokovic after the former world number one had too much quality for 22nd seed De Minaur.

On the prospect of facing Djokovic, Rublev joked: "No-one wants to face Novak, I want to be in the other half of the draw."

Djokovic has been wearing strapping all tournament to protect a hamstring injury and asked for treatment in a medical timeout during his third-round win over Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov. But, despite the concerns of his fans, he moved freely in a confident win against De Minaur, which took two hours and six minutes.

"I kept my focus all the way through to play my best match of this year so far," said Djokovic.

"Tonight it wasn't obvious I was dealing with an injury. I didn't feel anything today, today was great."

De Minaur, who became the final Australian player to fall in the singles, was unable to cope with Djokovic's quality and precision from the baseline. Rublev should provide a sterner examination - of Djokovic's fitness and his incredible record at Melbourne Park - when the pair meet on Wednesday.

Djokovic infamously did not play last year after a row about his vaccination status which led to court hearings and his eventual deportation.

On his return, he has continued from where he left off at what he calls his "second home", extending his winning streak there to 25 matches.



As well as a 10th Australian Open, Djokovic is going for a record-equalling 22nd men's Grand Slam title.

Rublev earlier ended a dramatic match when he sealed a 6-3 3-6 6-3 4-6 7-6 (11-9) victory over 19-year-old Rune on Rod Laver Arena.

Rune served for the match at 5-3 in the final set and then had two match points on Rublev's serve when 6-5 up.

The Russian ultimately got over the line with a fortunate net-cord winner. "It's not a rollercoaster. A rollercoaster is easier," said Rublev after his win. "I was 5-2 down in the fifth set, 6-5 two match points and then 5-0 in a super tie-break. This is the first ever time I win a match like this."

"To be in the quarter-final is something I will remember for sure all my life. I have no words man, I am shaking," Rublev looked to have taken control when he led by two sets to one and created three break points in the opening game of the fourth set moments after Rune had his heart-rate checked by medical staff.

But Rune fought back to take the fourth and then broke early in the decider. From 5-3 down, Rublev won eight straight points to level up again but Rune again wrestled back the momentum, getting two match points on Rublev's serve only for the Russian to force a 10-point tie-break.

National Ice Sports Competition to conclude in GB

ISLAMABAD (APP): The six-day National Ice Sports Championship continued in Naltar, Gilgit-Baltistan will conclude on January 24 (Tuesday) after witnessing huge participation from the locals as well as international adventure lovers.

According to an official source, the ice sports championship arranged in the beautiful snow-covered mountains of GB is a part of the winter festival at Naltar which include many sports, business, and cultural activities.

The event, which started on January 19, not only attracted sports and adventure lovers but also allured nature lovers to the rich and mesmerizing scenic beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The festival featured competitions of ice hockey, ice-skating, paragliding, indigenous games, and a freelancing seminar and talks on climate change, climate actions eco-system, biodiversity, and wildlife.

The event offered an opportunity for visitors to experience the unparalleled winter wonders which not only provide healthy entertainment to the people of the area but also a source of attraction for local and international tourists.

These events also help promote the positive image of the country, project winter tourism, and portray the beauty of Pakistan globally.

Another great attraction of the event is the display of local handicrafts, cultural beauty, and traditional foods.

The freezing breezes, the frozen waters, and the icy and snowy picturesque landscapes of the GB are great winter attraction that makes the winters of the area distinguished from the rest of the world.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, winter is a time for hearty meals, games, and social gatherings and the people of the area have a number of traditional activities that are perfect for the season.

Winters in Gilgit-Baltistan was a phase of the year when people get absolutely free from chores, for this reason, they needed an activity or a couple of activities to keep themselves occupied and help them cope with the extreme bitterness and harshness of winters.

All Pakistan National U15 Boys Squash C'ship begins

PESHAWAR (APP): All Pakistan National Under-15 Boys Squash Championship began on Monday, here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex in Peshawar Sports Complex with more than 100 players taking part.

Well-known industrialist Haji Asadullah was the special guest along with squash legend Qamar

Zaman, Chief Organizer Manoor Zaman, Associate Secretary Sajjad Khalil, Finance Secretary Wazirzada Gul.

Talking to media persons, Qamar Zaman said that the best U-15 players from all over the country were participating in the championship, and "I hope good players will emerge from these competi-

titions."

"There is a lot of expectation from the junior players," he said adding, "these young players aged 7 to 15 have the ability to become champions, but they need to work day and night." He said that the PAF Academy was playing an active role in the promotion of squash in the province.

Ludhiana Gymkhana second team qualifies for 20-K Cup 2023 semis

LAHORE (APP): Ludhiana Gymkhana emerged as the second team that qualified for the semifinal of the 20-K Cup 2022 after routing Ali Garh Club by 7 wickets in the second quarterfinal played here at the Model Town Greens ground on Monday.

Ali Garh Club, batting first, scored 160 runs for the loss of 10 wickets in 19.1 overs. Muhammad Faizan contributed with

38 runs while Ahsan Bhatti struck 32 and Faraz Ahmad 31 runs. Imran Ali and Muhammad Junaid bowled extremely well for Ludhiana Gymkhana and clinched 3 wickets each for 20 and 34 runs, respectively.

Ludhiana Gymkhana replied strongly and chased the required target for the loss of three wickets in 18.5 overs. Fahad Munir was top scorer with 52 runs off 50

balls while Ahmad Ashfaq hammered 34 and Kashif Siddique 31 runs. Shahid Iqbal bagged two wickets and Bilawal Bhatti took one wicket for Ali Garh Club.

For his brilliant batting display, Fahad Munir was named player of the match. The third quarterfinal will be played between Model Town Club and Shakkamal Cricket Club tomorrow Tuesday (January 24) at 11am.

Jon Rahm wins second 2023 PGA Tour title

CALIFORNIA (BBC): Spain's Jon Rahm held off rookie Davis Thompson to win The American Express, his second PGA Tour title of the year.

Rahm and Thompson, 23, were tied with three holes to play but the European Ryder Cup player made a birdie and two pars to claim a one-stroke victory. The 28-year-old finished with a four-under-par 68 as American Thompson shot a closing 69 at La Quinta, California. Rahm now has four victories in his last six starts and has moved up to third in the world ranking.

The former US Open champion, who won the Sentry Tournament of Champions at the start of the month, also claimed two wins on the DP World Tour at the end of 2022.

Rahm's birdie on the par-five 16th saw him pull ahead of Thompson, who made par. Thompson - in only his 20th PGA Tour start - then missed a 48ft putt on the 17th for birdie, with his ball glancing off the pin, which he had cho-



sen to leave in.

At the 18th, Rahm drove into a bunker but recovered to within 15ft of the hole, while Thompson's approach rolled off the back edge and he missed with his attempt at a chip-in birdie, allowing the Spaniard to two-putt for the win. "I think today was about as comfortable as I've been in a long time on the golf course, tee to green," said Rahm.

"Every time I felt like this in the past, I've ended up going on to win, just because it takes a lot of pressure off a lot of parts of my game, knowing that basically I'm going to hit the shot that I'm envision-

ing. And that's a really unique zone to put yourself in." American Xander Schauffele shot a blistering closing 62 to claim a share of third with Chris Kirk while Scottie Scheffler finished tied 11th on 22 under.

The 26-year-old missed a birdie on the final hole that would have seen him return to world number one by a fraction of a point ahead of Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy.

McIlroy will make his 2023 debut in Dubai on the DP World Tour this week.

England's Justin Rose was the highest-placed British player as he finished in a tie for 26th.



In brief

Megal posted as Commissioner ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capt (Retd) Noor-ul-Amin Mengal on Monday has been appointed as chief commissioner of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). According to a notification issued here, Mengal, a BS-20 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service and presently awaiting posting in the Establishment Division, has been transferred and posted as chief commissioner ICT with immediate effect. Mengal, who hails from Balochistan, had previously served in key positions, including c o m m i s s i o n e r Rawalpindi, secretary sports Punjab, and commissioner BISE.

50% tripped grid stations restored

ISLAMABAD (APP): A spokesperson for the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday said the technical experts were busy in the complete restoration of power in the region as so far, they had managed to restore almost 50 per cent of the tripped grid stations. "The feeders are being restored in a phased manner to protect the system from overloading," the spokesperson said in a press statement. The IESCO spokesperson advised the consumers to avoid excessive use of electricity, once it was fully restored, for uninterrupted transmission.

49 vehicles fined in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) issued challan tickets to 49 vehicles parked wrongly while creating hindrances in the smooth flow of traffic. CTP also impounded 03 vehicles on the violation. According to the CTP spokesman, following the directives of Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan, the in-charge Traffic Circle Cantt along with his team issued challan tickets to 49 vehicles for creating an obstruction in the smooth flow of traffic. On the occasion, Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan said that wrongly parked vehicles create a blockage of traffic. Therefore, the CTO said, the road users must follow traffic rules to avoid any kind of action and to cooperate with traffic police to maintain flow.

Int'l Day of Education

ISLAMABAD (APP): International day of Education will be marked on January 24 (Tuesday) across the globe including Pakistan to highlight the importance of education to maintain harmony and peace in the world. This year's theme of the day 2023 is 'To invest in people, prioritize education'. This year the day would be celebrated to maintain strong political mobilization around education and chart the way to translate commitments and global initiatives into action.

IRSA releases 43,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 43,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 42,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1497.12 feet, 99.12 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 16,300 cusecs while the outflow as 25,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1126.30 feet, which was 76.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 7,200 cusecs and 100 cusecs respectively.

Floods cause acute food insecurity among 6m in Pakistan: WB



ISLAMABAD (APP): At least six million people faced acute food insecurity across Pakistan after the disastrous floods, a recent report issued by the World Bank said. "According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 6 million people (30 The Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC) has officially approved the increase in the number of seats for admission to Gomal University's Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences and the development has been widely welcomed by the employees of the university.

"The efforts of Vice Chancellor Gomal University Professor Dr Shakibullah and In-charge of veterinary faculty Prof. Dr Kamal Shah have paid off as the PVMC, in its 52nd meeting held at Islamabad, has formally approved enhancement in the number of students to be admitted into faculty of veterinary and animal sciences of Gomal University," said a university spokesperson. It is to be noted that since the veterinary and animal sciences faculty of Gomal University which is currently in financial straits, is considered to be one

of its income-generating programs and this development has been widely welcomed by employees with their hopes rekindled that the university would now soon come out of the economic difficulties.

Gomal University Vice-Chancellor Professor Prof Dr Shakibullah said that the decision applied to the current admissions and thanked the Pakistan Medical Veterinary Council on behalf of the university's employees for accepting such a request and enabling the university to enrol more students in the said programme. He said that it was a welcome development which would open up opportunities for more students who were willing to join the faculty and serve the country after completion of the programme.

On top of it, the VC said it would also help the university tide over the current economic situation which has currently posed challenges for management. er cent of the population analyzed) experienced acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+), and this was projected to increase to 8.5 million between September and December 2022", the World Bank's Food Security Update

(January 2023) said. In Pakistan, floods killed more than 11 million head of livestock and destroyed more than 9.4 million acres of cropland between June and August 2022 in the most food-insecure provinces of Balochistan and Sindh, the update added.

The Update added that the food inflation in Pakistan has also increased significantly. The food inflation rose from 8.3% in October 2021 and 15.3% in March 2022 to 31.7% in September 2022 and then 35% in December 2022. The high incidence of climatic shocks, depletion of foreign currency reserves, and depreciation of local currencies keep food inflation high and make healthy food less affordable in South Asia.

"In December 2022, year-on-year consumer price inflation for food prices was 7.9 per cent in Bangladesh, 7.4 per cent in Nepal, 35.5 per cent in Pakistan, and 64.4 per cent in Sri Lanka. Last summer, floods caused by higher-than-normal monsoon rains in some parts of South Asia and less-than-normal rainfall in other parts have widely disrupted food production", the update added.

Unhealthy air quality in capital poses health risks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The air quality in the Federal capital was reported unhealthy on Monday amid dry weather putting vulnerable and sensitive age groups comprising children, women and the elderly at risk of contracting respiratory ailments.

Air pollution in the metropolis remained high since the onset of the fall season as prolonged dry weather, increased vehicular traffic, and garbage and wood burning continued to surge. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) daily air quality report indicated a heightened ratio of air pollutants, recorded above permissible limits, and the air quality was unhealthy.

The agency is responsible to ensure the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997. The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a haz-

ardous atmospheric contaminant, remained at 44 microgrammes per cubic meter on average which was higher than the NEQS of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy.

PM2.5 is generated through the combustion of an engine, industrial emissions, burning garbage or inflammable material and dust blown up by fast-moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads. Senior Pulmonologist at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Dr Zia Ul Haq, told APP that dry and cold air was mainly the reason behind respiratory diseases during winter.

He said the respiratory tract of an individual, consisting of throat and lungs, has internal surfaces possessing normal bacteria and no breach in it. However, he said, increased exposure of an individual to dry and cold air at different phases in outdoors causes

breaches in the lining of the respiratory tract which leads to an infection and also damages the normal secretions taking place inside the breathing organs.

He said the pulmonologists usually advise the elderly above 50 years of age or patients of chronic heart, kidney, and lung diseases to get the flu vaccine during the peak winter season to avoid respiratory diseases. The senior pulmonologists said the people were also advised to avoid unnecessary prolonged outdoor visits during the morning and evening timings of cold weather whereas in case of any visit, they should properly cover their eyes, and face by wearing face masks and coverings. Moreover, he also directed the masses to ensure the intake of warm fluids as necessary beverages like warm water and hot tea, etc to control damage to the respiratory tract amid bad weather and air quality.

Islamabad Zoo's receives Rs500 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Zoo has finally received an allocation of Rs 500 million to resurrect a "most-modern" Wildlife Conservation and Information Centre'. The said amount is being earmarked for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23). The present government was very keen on reviving the Islamabad Zoo as a constructive wildlife rehabilitation facility and a wild species learning centre where experts, students and the general public could learn more about the indigenous species of the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP).

The National Park has become a repository of the endangered common Asian leopards and pangolins, the most trafficked antelope, Chairperson, of Islamabad Wildlife Management board (IWMB) Rina Saeed Khan told APP while sharing her insights on the issue.

She added that the Zoo was made non-operational after the judgement of former Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Justice Athar Minallah due to poor management of the

wildlife including the Asian Male Elephant Kaavan. Khan said the blueprint for the Wildlife Centre was ready, designed by famous architect Raza Ali Dada who had created the conceptual design of the Centre.

She noted that the major issue of land was resolved as the 25-acre piece of land was given to the IWMB by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the no objection certificate (NOC) was issued. "All codal formalities have been met and only the Federal cabinet's ratification is left which will be fulfilled soon," she added. The initial concept paper or PC-I was submitted and the nomenclature for the institution was proposed as "Margalla Wildlife Centre", the Chairperson said.

Rina Saeed Khan informed that many international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) working on wildlife protection such as 'Free The Wild' and others were interested in future collaborations with the IWMB, particularly to enhance capacity for the rescue centre. She said the Board has rescued and rehabilitated many black

bears and there was also need to work out for their future.

"The Ministry is working under and with the Ministry of Climate Change," she added. The wildlife centre as proposed by the ministry would possess advanced technological solutions to provide wildlife information to its visitors. It would become the first with virtual reality and bring 'visitors closer than ever before to animals.' "High-tech movies and documentaries will be played and a virtual show will be arranged on a daily basis while a part of the land will also be used to keep rescued animals. Visual gallery and 3D shows will be arranged to apprise the public about the wildlife and the need to preserve their freedom," she said.

A period of nearly one and half months has been set to start the construction work on the revival effort of the Islamabad Zoo. Chairperson IWMB Rina Saeed said that two-third of the land would have entertainment area for the citizens, whereas one-third of the land would be used to establish a rescue and rehabilitation center at the zoo.

Arrangements underway for festival

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director of Punjab Arts Councils (PAC) Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed on Monday said that arrangements were being finalized for a two-day "Gandhara Festival" to be held on January 29 at Taxila Museum.

Talking to APP, he said that the Gandhara art exhibition, Gandhara book fair, folk dances, documentary on Gandhara culture and traditional food stalls would be part of the event. At the same time, Waqar informed that famous Lok artists Saine Zahoor and Hamid Ali Khan would perform in the Sufi musical night on January 30.

He added that PAC would also organize an event from January 31 to February 4, connecting with the Gandhara festival. The director informed that Naem Hazarvi would perform folk music on January 31; Mehfil-e-Samaa by Imran Aziz Mian on February 1; Musharia on Feb 2, Folk music night on Feb 3. Meanwhile, drama "Ashoka the Great" would be performed on February 4. He said the event entry would be free of charge for the people.

Elderly woman killed

RAWALPINDI (APP): An elderly woman was killed in a fire triggered by a gas leakage in a house and another woman injured here in Dhoke Kala Khan, Sadiqabad area. Rescue 1122 teams were immediately rushed to the scene. Fire tenders and other emergency vehicles participated in the rescue operations.

According to the relatives, they slept after burning the gas heater at night, and the clothes lying nearby caught fire. The deceased victim was identified as 100-year-old Sarah Bibi who was completely burnt due to fire. While the other victim woman, identified as 66-year-old Rabia, suffered burn injuries.

Rescue personnel gave first aid to the injured woman and shifted her to the hospital. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 appealed to the citizens to use gas appliances carefully and properly switch off gas equipment before going to bed to avoid any mishap.

RWMC busy removing snow

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) was wiping out snow and extras from the Murree areas despite continued snowfall. According to RWMC Spokesman, RWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ahmed Nawaz Gondal deputised sanitary at all choking points to ensure smooth water drainage to provide maximum facilities to the tourists visiting the hilly station.

In addition, he said that Mall Road, TMA, NADRA office and GPO Chowk areas were being cleared round the clock to make them accessible for tourists. Meanwhile, the RWMC communication teams conducted a door-to-door campaign in UC-34 Banni. Waste bags and pamphlets were distributed among the residents to highlight the importance of cleanliness.

The teams also informed about the company's helpline 1,139 that if they have any query regarding waste collection or cleanliness, they can register their complaints and give their feedback on it.

100m worshippers visit grand mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): More than 100 million worshippers have entered and exited the Grand Mosque since the beginning of 1444-H, while about 1,193,000 worshippers have been able to pray at the Hajir Ismail since the year's beginning. President of the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques Sheikh Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sudais said.

This came during his participation in the 2nd session of the 22nd Scientific Forum for Hajj, Umrah, and Visit Research, organized by Umm Al-Qura University, represented by the Two Holy Mosques Institute for Hajj and Umrah Research. More than 1,500,000 guests benefited from the vehicle transportation services in a single year, according to Dr Al-Sudais.

He also noted that more than 50 electric vehicles have been deployed to transport the elderly and those with special needs in the Prophet's Mosque as part of a project to improve the experience of the elderly and those with disabilities, in collaboration with the General Authority for Awaqaf and the Doyof (Guests) Al Rahman Program, Saudi Gazette reported.

Students express satisfaction over PMDC's restoration

ISLAMABAD (APP): A large number of medical students have expressed their satisfaction over the restoration of previous status of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), terming it a good omen to safeguarding the future of medical and dental education in Pakistan.

According to them, during the era of Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) in the previous government tenure, mostly medical students remained under extreme stress due to inconsistency in policies of the past administration of the commission. Similarly, they added, many students who participated in the MDCAT exam, had to face hardships due to faulty examination system and the attitude of administration of not addressing the genuine problems of aspirants due to which the MDCAT exam lost its efficacy.

"We have to face errors in all process of MDCAT exam as even the answer keys were faulty and many brilliant students couldn't get through, while many failed students were declared pass," Atif Kaleem, a student said. He said, due to this situation thousands of students got admissions

abroad.

Another medical student, Basit Khan said that the PMC conducted the entry test by arranging it through external testing authority, which resulted in depriving 55 percent of Sindh students from getting admission in medical and dental colleges. He said that the capable students had been deprived of admissions as no criteria for awarding these marks were given to the colleges, and it was according to their whims and wishes that those students were selected on a faulty exam held by the PMC.

"Scams of millions of rupees are under inquiry against the PMC for giving contract to ghost companies, who were not even registered at the time of bidding," he added. Salma Maroof, a mother of a medical student, said that the PMDC had capped the tuition fee of all local and international students from time to time while the PMC had given no fee bar. "Rather the PMC removed the cap on fee by allowing all the colleges to charge as per their wishes," She said that the PMDC had prescribed minimum qualifications and experience required for teachers for appointment in medical and dental institutions

while the PMC left the faculty on the mercy of the institutions.

Senior faculty members were humiliated by the institutions while the future of students was in hands of junior and inexperienced faculty. According to official sources at PMDC, as per PMDC bill the composition of council is nominated having representation of all the provinces' health bodies, universities or stakeholders to give their input in policy-making for its smooth implementation.

"Whereas in PMC all members were nominated directly using discretionary powers without following any merit while all members of PMC council were having conflict of interest working in private sectors, and nominated without criteria." They said that PMDC was an internationally accredited whereas the PMC faced a lot of problems in accreditation with international stakeholders which created panic among the doctors working abroad. The sources said that as per PMDC rules the local students were registered by PMDC after passing from the recognized institutions whereas the PMC created three exams for full license, provisional license and temporary license.

Various milestones achieved under STEM project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Sector Development Program "Launching of STEM in Pakistan- Phase-I" has achieved various milestones during the fiscal year 2021-22 to give impetus to Pakistan's preparations for developing a workforce for the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

According to an official source, the project is being executed through the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology. Since the initiation date of the project (August 10, 2021), training modules are being developed for the Grade IX- XII for which correspondence with national stakeholders including the National Curriculum Council (NCC), Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Agha Khan University (AKU), was made, paving the way for making a consolidated document in this regard.

Furthermore, 76 best

national scientists were contacted throughout the country and were requested to provide experiments for STEM. A tender for the Development of Training Modules on STEM Education is also in process and is expected to be completed by December 2022.

Under the STEM project, 50 Higher Secondary Schools (HSSs) or Cadet Colleges have been selected by transforming their existing labs into Mini STEM FABLABS, in addition to teacher training programs and module development on STEM education. The payment of Rs one million was being provided to each school for developing the FABLABS which will provide students an opportunity to get hands-on training regarding state-of-the-art equipment, including Design Computers, 3D Printers, Vinyl Cutters, and Robotics ultimately enabling young minds

for a better future.

The task of purchasing IT Equipment was completed during FY 2021-22 through a tender and different IT Equipment were purchased and installed in STEM PSF academy. The PSDP "Launching of STEM in Pakistan, Phase-I" was initiated as an umbrella project which shall be simultaneously executed across the country with the support of federal and provincial stakeholders or education departments.

The major objectives of the STEM project were to officially launch STEM, the modern tool for the promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education in Pakistan in 50 HSS/Cadet Colleges in the first phase and to coordinate the provision of specialised national and international capacity building programs on STEM education for science teachers and pedagogues.

Rain with snowfall over hills expected

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rain with snow over hills is expected in Upper Punjab, Islamabad, Potohar region, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan during the next 24 hours, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

Moderate to heavy rain/snowfall is expected at a few places in Kashmir. Cold and dry weather is expected in other parts of the country. According to the synoptic situation, a

westerly wave was affecting the upper parts of the country and was likely to continue over the upper parts during the next few days.

During the last 24 hours, rain with snow over hills occurred at scattered places in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Murree and Chillas. Cold weather prevailed elsewhere in the country. The rainfall recorded was Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Kalam 12 mm, Pattan 07, Malamjabbab 06, Parachinar, Dir (Upper)

04, Mirkhani 03, Drosch, Chitral 01, Kashmir: Garhi Dupatta 04, Muzaffarabad (City, A/P 03), Rawalakot 03, Punjab: Murree 01 and Gilgit-Baltistan: Chillas 01 mm. The snowfall recorded was Kalam 06 inches, Parachinar 05, Malamjabbab 02, Dir 01 and Murree 0.5 inches. The lowest minimum temperatures recorded were Leh -13 C, Kalat -08, Gupis, Malamjabbab -07, Kalam, Quetta -06, Hunza -05, Skardu, Astore, Zhoob, Dalbandin and Bagrote -04 C.

64 head constables, 39 ASIs promoted in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 64 head constables were promoted to the post of Assistant Sub Inspector ASI while 39 ASIs were promoted to the post of sub-inspector SI. According to a police spokesman, the Departmental Promotion Board was constituted to assess the performance of personnel. The board was chaired by Regional Police Officer RPO Rawalpindi Region Nasir Mehmood Satti while the other members

included district police officers of Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal along with City Police Officer CPO Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari Rawalpindi. After checking the records of 65 ASIs for sub-inspector, 39 were promoted. Whereas, out of 71 head constables for ASI, 64 were promoted.

According to the vision of IG Punjab, the promotion process has been completed timely, RPO Nasir Mehmood

Satti said promoted personnel are proud of the department, adding that the officer should perform their duties with more hard work, honesty and integrity.

Electricity outage may affect traffic signals: The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) have warned citizens to exercise caution while driving as widespread electricity outages may affect traffic signals in many areas.

Salang highway opened

PARWAN (Agencies): According to media reports, the Salang Highway of Parwan province of Afghanistan opened for passenger cars from both sides and cargo trucks from one side. The Ministry of Public Works in a statement said that Monday the weather in Salang is partly cloudy and snow will continue intermittently. Cargo trucks can move from north to south and passenger cars can travel from both sides by sealing the chains.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rajab 01 1444 Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Illegal weapons discovered

HERAT (Agencies): Security officials said that police discovered and seized a quantity of weapons. The police personnel of Pashtun Zarghun District of Herat province, in an operation, discovered many different types military equipment, including one 40 single rifle, 40 shajors, 2 rifles, 1 cannon and 40 shells from the district. No one has been arrested on charges with this case, but the efforts of the forces of the Islamic Emirate to arrest the perpetrators of this case underway.

Afghanistan criticizes Uzbekistan for cutting power supply

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan urges Uzbekistan to restore the power supply following the previous agreement between Kabul and Tashkent.

Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi on Sunday called on Uzbekistan to provide the amount of electricity mentioned in an agreement signed between Kabul and Tashkent, Tolo News Reported.

Muttaqi slammed Uzbekistan for turning off Afghanistan's electricity supply amid the bitter win-

ter in the country.

"Uzbekistan cut off electricity supplies; now people are facing problems. Neighbours and friends should help each other in difficult moments," he added.

Afghanistan's interim foreign minister stated that the Uzbek government must keep its word and supply power to Afghanistan by the agreement between Kabul and Tashkent.

Last week, Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat announced the suspension of the power supply from Uzbekistan due to a techni-

cal issue. The technical problem still has not been fixed, and the people of Afghanistan are facing problems amid the freezing winter.

The amount of indigenous electricity generation within the country needs to be increased to meet the requirement of the Afghan people. Moreover, during the past two decades, infrastructure has yet to be invested, particularly power generation; instead, Afghanistan imports its electricity from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Iran.

Cold wave, carbon monoxide poisoning cause over 100 deaths

KABUL (TOLONews): More than 100 people have died of exposure to severe cold weather and carbon monoxide poisoning over the past two weeks, the State Ministry for Disaster Management said, adding that the deaths have happened in 15 provinces.

"At least 104 people have died in various provinces. At least 50 houses have been damaged or destroyed," said Shafay Rahimi, a spokesman for the ministry.

Abdul Zahir, a resident of Ghor, said that he lost one of his children due to cold weather.

Zahir said that he is struggling with dire economic conditions.

"I didn't have anything to burn. All the kids are sick. One of them was martyred and three others are in the hospital," he said.

People said that vulnerable families are mostly victims of extreme cold weather in the country.

"Many families don't have food to eat, water to drink and anything else to warm their homes," said Mohammad Azim, a resident of Faryab.

Based on statistics from the Information and Culture Ministry, tens of thousands of livestock have perished due to cold over the past two weeks.

China urges Kabul to ensure chinese nationals' safety in Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): Chinese Foreign Minister issued a request in a phone conversation with his Afghan counterpart to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel and institutions in Afghanistan.

Qin Gang, the foreign minister of China, held a phone conversation with Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister of Afghanistan, hoping that the Afghan government would take decisive action to ensure the security of Chinese personnel and institutions in Afghanistan.

The request was made only a few weeks following an attack on a Chinese-owned hotel in Kabul's capital, where five Chinese people suffered severe injuries.

Muttaqi wished the Chinese a happy New Year Festival and stressed that Afghanistan would never allow any force using its territory to conduct activities that would damage Afghanistan-China friendship and China's interests.

He noted that Afghanistan would relentlessly confront terrorism in all its forms and take strong

measures to ensure the safety and security of Chinese citizens and institutions.

Since the interim government took control of power in August 2022, the Chinese economic presence in Afghanistan has been growing. Recently, a Chinese company signed oil extraction from the northern Amu Darya basin.

The Chinese minister said that China is ready to contribute more to Afghanistan's economic and social development to improve the livelihood of Afghan citizens.

On the other hand, Afghanistan welcomes China to play a more critical role in regional affairs and to strengthen friendly relations and cooperation with China, Muttaqi stressed.

China and Afghanistan are neighbours, and Afghanistan's security situation can affect Chinese interests in the region. Experts say that China's presence and economic support align with the Chinese security concern in the country and its long-term strategic policy in the region.

Afghan deaf community wants IEA to solve issue



KABUL (Agencies): The country's deaf community, in a meeting with Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to address their problems. They are complaining, even though they are deserved it, the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled has not registered them for receiving help.

Batur, who spoke in sign language, in this meeting, talked on behalf of others regarding the problems and

challenges of the country's deaf community to Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister.

He mentioned that unemployment and poverty are the main problems of the deaf, and said that the deaf is still not registered in the framework of the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled. He asked the officials of the Islamic Emirate to pay special attention to the problems of the deaf community.

For his part, Deputy

Prime Minister Hanafi said: "The deaf community, like other citizens, has their rights, and the Islamic Emirate pays attention to addressing the problems of the Afghan people, especially those who are in unusual circumstances, as one of its priorities."

He stated that the officials of the Islamic Emirate will utilize all their efforts to identify and address the problems of the county's deaf community.

30,000 Afghans returned home

KABUL (Agencies): local officials of the Refugees and Repatriation Department of Nimroz say that about 30 Afghans have returned to the country through the Silk Bridge.

The provincial head of Refugees and Repatriation, Mawlawi Seddiqullah Nusrat, the province, said that 29,933 Afghans have returned to the country through the Silk Bridge in a month.

Among these people, 28,175 singles and 477 families, totaling 1758 people, have returned to the country through the Silk Bridge, he said.

2043 poor people and families have been helped with food and cash by the International Refugees Organization in coordination, he added.

According to him, 46 dead bodies have been brought to the country in the last month.

565,000 needy people received aid

KABUL (Agencies): OCHA for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid says; 565,000 needy people in Afghanistan have been assisted this winter.

The aid organization, in a statement, said that "its new aid is only 59% of the total goal set by this organization". The donations include home heating devices, blankets and cash.

OCHA announced two days back that the number of people in need of aid in Afghanistan has increased to 28 million people. OCHA called for more international assistance with this country to expand relief activities in Afghanistan.

1,100 MW electricity to be produced

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Mines and Petroleum Minister, Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar met with the representative of Turkish Company and Assadullah Haroun, among the last prisoners released from Guantanamo prison.

Delaware and the representative of the Turkish company discussed the production of 1100 megawatts of electricity from the gas fields of Jawzjan, said the Ministry in statement.

UK's MP calls on govt to support Afghan medical students

KABUL (Khaama Press): A Sutherland Member of Parliament called the Home Office to support a foundation trying to get female medical students from Afghanistan to the UK to complete their studies.

Jamie Stone, the MP for Sutherland, and two of his colleagues are urging support for The Linda Norgrove Foundation's plan to relocate Afghan female medical trainees

from Afghanistan to the UK in the light of higher education restrictions by the Taliban de facto government.

Ms Norgrove, 36, a Sutherland native who volunteered as a humanitarian aid worker in Afghanistan, was killed in a failed rescue attempt in September 2010 after being kidnapped in the eastern province of Kunar.

Her parents, John and

Lorna Norgrove, established the Linda Norgrove Foundation following her kidnap and death. The organization now supports the education, health and income of Afghan women and children affected by the war.

Mr Stone praised the foundation's work and the challenges ahead of similar charities in Afghanistan. He stated, "That's why we have written to the Home

Office – not only to highlight the fantastic work that The Linda Norgrove Foundation is doing but also to shine the light on the obstacles that other charities doing similar crucial work are facing."

He also urged the UK government to support women who have their rights stripped away and make it easier for them to come to the UK to complete their education.

Ministry seeks fair solution for women's jobs

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Economy said on Monday that efforts are underway to allow women to work in non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Abdul Rahman Habib, a spokesperson for the ministry, said that women will be allowed to work in NGOs that require their presence. "Women's working in NGOs has stopped for a while and efforts are underway to find a fair solu-

tion and allow women to work where their presence is required," Habib said.

Meanwhile, Husna Raufi, owner of a tailoring business in Kabul, said her efforts are aimed at helping women by providing job opportunities for them.

"We established this business at least one and a half months ago where at least 10 women are working," said Husna Raofi, head of a workshop.

Meanwhile, a number of women asked the Islamic Emirate to lift all restrictions on women in the country. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to allow women to work and get an education. They should also remove all restrictions on women," said Tamanna, a worker at the tailor's shop. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to provide job opportunities for us," said Mursal, a worker at the shop.

Women have been banned from working in NGOs and attending universities over the past month. The decision led to the suspension of activities of many aid agencies, some of whom have resumed part of their operations in Afghanistan.

New minister appointed

KABUL (Agencies): Mullah Mohammad Esa Thani introduced as new Acting Minister of Public Works. Thani was officially introduced as the Acting Minister of Public Works today based on a decree from the Supreme Leader of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. He previously served as Deputy Minister of Energy and Water.

Uniforms distribution process started



FARAH (Agencies): Local security officials of Farah say that the uniforms distribution process to the police has started in this province.

During the occasion of uniforms distribution, the Deputy Governor, Mawlawi Abdul Karim Jahidiyar, said to the police that they should treat well people

and protect, religion, country, and soil and protect your countrymen, against any aggressor with complete courage.

Afterward, the intelligence department of the province, Mawlawi Amruddin Khalid, said that all security and defense soldiers are required to learn

all the methods and principles of holy Jihad along with all kinds of weapons and professional training.

The series of distribution of special police uniforms started some time back from Kabul and it is decided that special uniforms will be distributed to the police in all provinces.

Silk bridge to be open for transit vehicles



KABUL (Agencies): Nimroz Governor, Mullah Najibullah Rafi met with senior delegation of Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Dr. Mohammad Karmi, and the officials of the civil and military departments of the province.

Governor of Nimroz, Mullah Najibullah Rafi, in this meeting talked about the importance of good ties between the two countries, the fight against human trafficking and drugs. He stated

the fight against these phenomena as one of the priorities of the Islamic Emirate and the local administration.

Governor Rafi asked the Iranian delegation to treat the Afghan refugees well and called this action effective for strengthening the relations between the two countries.

For his part, the Governor of Sistan and Baluchistan, Dr. Mohammad Karmi said that complete victory of Muslims can be attained

with unity, solidarity and acceptance of each other.

Aiming to strengthen the good ties between Afghanistan and Iran, economic and security committees were formed after discussion and exchange of views.

The meeting, stressed that in order to promote trade between the two provinces, 24 hours the Silk Bridge should be open to transit vehicles and at least 600 transit vehicles travel on it daily.

Afghanistan committed to 1351 water treaty

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in a meeting with Iranian ambassador in Kabul, said that Afghanistan is committed to the 1351 water treaty between Afghanistan and Iran.

Minister Muttaqi met with Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the special representative of the Iranian president for Afghanistan affairs and the new ambassador of that country.

The country's Foreign Minister congratulated Qomi on his new position, wished him success, afterward both sides discussed in details on the political and economic issues between the two countries, with emphasis on good neighborhood and the pursuit of common bilateral interests.

Muttaqi said that Islamic Emirate committed to the 1351 water treaty between Afghanistan and Iran, but the decrease of rain has caused a lack of water, and we hope that this problem will be solved with Increase the amount of rain in the next season.

Traffic incident left one dead, three injured in Baghlan

BAGHLAN (Agencies): A person lost live and three others were injured in a traffic incident in Baghlan province of Afghanistan on Monday.

The traffic official of Baghlan, Qari Nazirullah Abadi, said that this incident took place, while a Corolla vehicle deviated from the road in the North Salang area of Baghlan and overturning, where killed one person and injured three others.

The non-compliance of driver blamed the cause of the incident.





ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi meeting with Chairman of National Commission for Human Development, Col (R) Dr. Amirullah Marwat, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Selection of Punjab interim CM PTI to kick off street protests

LAHORE (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan announced Monday that his party would take to the streets tomorrow (Tuesday) against Mohsin Naqvi's appointment as Punjab's caretaker chief minister, vowing that he would not accept a "corrupt" person in such a high-ranking post.

In a televised address, the former prime minister said he foresaw the appointment of people to top offices after the election of Naqvi — who took oath as the caretaker CM a day earlier. "When I was in power, I received a report about a man who tried the most to topple [PTI's] government. His name was Mohsin Naqvi. The intelligence bureau also gave a report on his activities," Khan said, expressing his concerns over the media mogul.

"Mohsin Naqvi will bring all those people who are our staunch opponents," he added. Continuing his tirade against the newly-appointed Naqvi, Khan said: "When I was in power, I received a report about a man who tried the most to topple [PTI's] government. His name was Mohsin Naqvi. The intelligence bureau also gave a report on his activities." The deposed prime minister, whose government was toppled last April due to a no-confidence motion against him, censured the Punjab interim chief minister for his association with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari.

"What would be the reputation of a man whom Zardari takes as his son? Naqvi neither possesses the moral standards nor the impartiality," Khan said. The PTI leader also deplored the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to appoint the media mogul as chief executive of the country's biggest province. "The standards of our democracy have degraded so much that no one trusts the government to conduct transparent elections. The basic reason behind a caretaker government is its neutrality."

The former premier lamented that the names proposed for the interim CM slot by his party were all rejected. "We chose Nasir Khosa's name thinking they will like it. Ahmed Sukhera was the cabinet secretary at the time, we thought there wouldn't be an objection to him too. Naveed Akram Cheema was also [Prime Minister] Shehbaz Sharif's secretary. But they rejected all our names." According to the PTI chairman "peaceful" protest demonstrations will be held in Lahore and

Rawalpindi on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively, he said, adding that later they would hold protests in Faisalabad, Multan and other cities.

"Protest demonstrations will be staged in different cities on daily basis," Khan revealed the party's future strategy against the interim CM. "We do not accept Mohsin Naqvi as caretaker chief minister at all." Slamming the electoral watchdog, the deposed prime minister said that nobody has harmed the country more than the ECP. The election should be held within 90 days after the dissolution of the assembly, he further said.

Raising questions on the impartiality of the ECP, the PTI leader said if the electoral body was to appoint "such a person" then what happened to its claims that the caretaker CM should be unbiased? The move is taken in line with the agenda to oust Imran Khan and the PTI from the political process in the country, the ex-PM added. He urged the masses to support the PTI for their future.

Lashing out at the country's top election organising authority, the PTI chairman said that he had never seen such a dishonest ECP in his life. "Every decision of this ECP comes against us." He added that they moved the top court against the judgements of the ECP eight times and the apex court nullified the verdicts of the electoral watchdogs. Terming the Toshakhana case as a "big joke", the deposed prime minister said that the incumbent government provided all the details about him in the case but when the court sought a record, they say "it is secret".

He also accused PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and Zardari of stealing vehicles from Toshakhana. Speaking about his key demand after being removed from the helm of power, Khan said that elections should be held in Punjab prior to the holy month of Ramadan. He added that his party would move the court against the appointment of Naqvi as caretaker chief minister and seek a date for the general polls in the province.

"Just like in Karachi, the thieves want to be imposed on the country through rigging," he added. He urged the masses to take to the streets against the thieves. The PTI chief maintained that his party accepted the nomination of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's interim CM Azam Khan after the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) suggested the "correct name".

PO election for LCs: PHC grants status quo

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted status quo against election for Presiding Officers at City/Tehsil Council while ordered respondents to submit comments, on Monday.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai Advocate argued that petitioners were initially appointed as Presiding Officer prior to the amendment introduced vide notification dated 7th November 2022, whereby, section 77C was inserted, according to which in the first meeting of the Tehsil Council, following an elec-

tion or whenever office of the presiding officer falls vacant for any reason.

The counsel further added that one the member of the Tehsil Council commands, the confidence of the majority of the members shall be appointed as Presiding Officer. He contended that the said notification shall have no respective effective effect, petitioners' rights were earlier created and apparently the amendment introduced has no retrospective effect.

The order sheet stated that Additional Advocate General (AAG) Syed Sikandar Hayat Shah pres-

ent in court in some other cases, was put on notice on behalf of the respondents, who accepted the same and sought time to submit report, adjourned to date in office while in the meantime status quo shall be maintained.

The writ petition filed by Babar Khan Presiding Officer City Local Council Mardan, Hazart Bilal Tehsil Council Surkh Dheri, Muhammad Tahir Presiding Officer Upper Orakzai along with eight others while Chief Secretary, Secretary Local Government and Deputy Commissioners of each district.

PTI decides to withdraw resignations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has decided to withdraw the resignations of their remaining 44 Members of National Assembly whose resignations are yet to be accepted by the speaker.

PTI leader Asad Umar said on Monday that the party had emailed National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf informing him about the resignation withdrawal decision. The party wants to withdraw resignations of its 44 MNAs whose resignations have not been accepted so far, he added. The PTI leader said the party's next step would be to get its member appointed as the Opposition Leader in the National Assembly.

On Friday, National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf accepted another 35 resignations of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmakers. The National Assembly speaker after accepting the resignations sent the list to the Election Commission of Pakistan which later de-notified the fresh lot of 35 PTI lawmakers after completing necessary action.

Earlier, on Jan 17, the speaker had accepted resignations of 34 MNAs of the PTI and one resignation of Awami Muslim League Chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmad. As many as 123 PTI MNAs had resigned en masse from the lower house of parliament following the ouster of PTI chief Imran Khan in April last year. Subsequently, the NA speaker had accepted only 11 of the resignations, stating that the remaining lawmakers would be summoned individually for verification. So far, the total resignations of the PTI MNAs accepted by the NA speaker has risen to 80.

IHC rejects Asad Qaiser's plea

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday rejected the request of former speaker National Assembly and PTI's leader Asad Qaiser seeking to quash an FIR against him registered under section 144 and misuse of a loudspeaker.

Justice Triq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the petition filed by the PTI's leader. The court said that the case challan had been presented and the matter was before the trial court now. Asad Qaiser's lawyer read out the FIR content before the bench and said that his client was not present at the said place yet he was nominated in the FIR. On query by the bench, the state counsel said the PTI held a protest for the release of Shehbaz Gill and violated section 144. After listening to arguments, the court terminated the petition of Asad Qaiser.

India refuses visas to 239 Pak devotees

NEW DELHI (INP): India has refused visas to hundreds of Pakistani devotees who wanted to visit Ajmer Sharif to attend the annual urs celebrations of Sui saint Khawaja Moynuddin Chishti in Ajmer in Rajasthan. The Indian High Commission in Islamabad has declined to issue visas to 239 Pakistanis.

In total 488 Pakistanis applied for Indian visa whereas 249 of them were issued visas. Six officials were deputed to take care of the pilgrims during their stay in India; however, only one of them was granted permission to go with the pilgrims. The Pakistani devotees who were issued visas will depart for India on Tuesday, after being informed about their travel plan through messages on cell phones, and they were directed to reach Lahore.

Imran heading gradually to complete failure: Kh Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Monday said Imran Khan was heading gradually towards a complete political failure as all his decisions were proving wrong and miscalculated.

Addressing a news conference here, the minister responded to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s objections and criticism on the appointment of Mohsin Raza Naqvi as interim Chief Minister Punjab and revocation of their resignations from the National Assembly. Asif in the prologue of his media briefing congratulated the interim chief minister for assuming his new responsibilities. He wished that under his leadership free and fair elections would be held in Punjab.

He also welcomed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)'s decision being taken as per law and said that the entire process was done according to the constitution. The minister clarified that the nominees presented by PTI and others did not have good exercise as one the nominee a serving government employee and the other was a dual national. "Their vetting was not good for these nominees. So that's why they had to face humiliation in this case," he added.

Moreover, the government's nominees had one ex-civil servant and one media personality, he said, adding, "PTI also gave the name of another honourable bureaucrat who himself apologised to take the task. Hence the PTI's objection on Naqvi's appointment is a fake cry."

While clarifying the media over the allegations of plea bargain against the interim Punjab chief minister, he said Naqvi's name was dragged into an issue of NAB plea bargain but the fact was he had taken some loan from the accused in Haris Steel Mill Case in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). "Naqvi provided a cheque with a letter during the probe and returned the loan to the accused. A few news articles erroneously reported it as a matter of plea bargain whereas one letter could not be considered as a plea bargain. And, if he has done anything illegal then we are not going to defend him," he added.

The Minister said Naqvi was the

coalition government's nominee and it was his right to defend him. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), he said it was propitious to have a unanimous nomination for KP interim Chief Minister. Berating former Chief Minister Punjab, Asif said, "However, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and PTI had most of the objections. Elahi at this age has gone against all his relatives and may God bless him with a long life. He has gone against his eldest brother Chaudhary Shujat, and Naqvi is his son-in-law in relations. He must do efforts to unite them."

Commenting on the National Assembly (NA) situation, he said the PTI tendered resignations at th NA after hurling abuses on the Assembly and used foul language against the Parliament which was known to all. "Imran Khan used indecent language against the NA and now they all want to return to the same platform. They (PTI) are demanding justice from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) whom they rebuked indiscriminately." The Minister said the PTI leaders and MNAs were demanding withdrawal of their resignations, whereas they should have led the opposition earlier and avoided confrontation with the Parliament. "The PTI should stop believing that the institutions like Courts, ECP and Parliament will pay the price for their wrong decisions."

Imran Khan, he said was a failed project and he wanted to revive himself on the political scene, adding, "I believe that he is gradually losing ground in the political arena." He said that historically, Imran Khan always resigned after becoming an MNA. "Back in November 1, 2007, he tendered his first resignation then boycotted, later in 2013 and 2014 he first resigned and then withdrew it, and now recently in 2022 he again gave his resignation and is demanding its withdrawal," said Khawaja Asif.

Besides, Khan had contested eight elections and his companions claimed that he would contest on 35 seats which now increased to 70 vacant constituencies. As per his antecedent, he would also resign and recontest, the Defence Minister said. "Imran Khan is losing sanity and becoming

obsessive as his behavior, his political conduct and backing out of political decisions qualify him to an uncertain state of mind. Any individual with a stable mind can never make such statements and decisions. The price for that is being paid by his workers and MNAs," Khawaja Asif said.

His MNAs, he noted that were still living in the Parliament Lodges despite after one year of resignations and were enjoying all perks. "This means it was not a conclusive decision and not a final verdict on consensus in the party." He claimed that this issue would settle after general elections to be held as per the Constitution and it would further prove how much popularity Imran Khan has and what status he bears in the country.

"Khan used to praise former Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary then criticized him. He also praised former ECP head late Justice (R) Fakhruddin G. Ibrahim who was a great person and then also passed degraded remarks against him. They used to praise former COAS, General Bajwa a lot and then their remarks are also evident to the nation. Gen (R) Bajwa and the nation are also listening to it what they (PTI leadership) used to say earlier." He said Khan was not loyal to anyone including his mentors, this country, this soil and his companions, adding, "He has lust for wealth and power and I don't want to add more."

Responding to media queries, he said the general elections would be held on time by the will of Allah. He added that the appointment of interim Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi could not be challenged as the process has passed all codal formalities starting from the leader of the opposition to the ECP. The matter in KP, he said was resolved with consensus, however, in Punjab no agreement was met so the case was resolved by the ECP as per the procedure. "If they challenge it in the court then it's a legal battle and will be contested as per the law by the coalition government." They tried on roads starting from 2.5 mln and came to 25k people then what next he must call for 2500.

Ex-Indian spy chief calls for talks with Pakistan, China

NEW DELHI (INP): Former Indian spy chief A.S. Dulat said that India and Pakistan should resume talks to resolve a host of matters that trouble both sides, including terrorism and the Kashmir dispute. He also underscored the need to talk to China. Speaking at a literature festival in Jaipur, the former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief said there was no need to scrap Article 370 of the Indian Constitution that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, saying there was nothing left in it and it was only a "fig leaf".

Mr Dulat was also of the view that "militancy" will continue to come down, but "terrorism will stay unless we sort it out with Pakistan" and batted for dialogue with Islamabad. "Pakistan has been an inherent part of Kashmir. Since 1947, what the government of India has been trying to do is to mainstream Kashmir and get Pakistan out of the Kashmiri minds. And I think we've succeeded to a very large extent."

He was in conversation with senior journalist Mandira Nayar about his latest book *A Life in the Shadows: A Memoir*, published by HarperCollins India. "I had argued that we didn't have to do away with Article 370 because there was nothing left in it. It was only a fig leaf which had provided a Kashmiri a little bit of dignity."

The Modi government abrogated Article 370 on Aug 5, 2019. It was, however, unfortunate that Delhi had always viewed the region in "black and white" and ignored its "greys", Mr Dulat, who is the only RAW chief to have visited Pakistan, said he had been to Pakistan four times, between 2010 and 2012.

"I have been to Lahore twice and also visited Islamabad and Karachi. It was a great experience," he added. He said he got to know Pakistan better through Track 2 or backchannel diplomacy. In his latest book, he also talks about Ajit Doval, the current National Security Adviser of India.

At one point, there was a

conversation about bringing Mr Doval across to Pakistan, a chance, Mr Dulat said, the neighbours lost. Asked to draw parallels between the 'Doval Doctrine' and the 'Dulat Doctrine', the former head of India's external intelligence agency said he didn't have a doctrine.

"Mr Doval has a doctrine, I don't know. People talk about it," he added. Mr Dulat, who retired from service in 2000, said efforts were also made to start a military-to-military dialogue. "We were talking over each other. When we began to talk, suddenly, the Pakistanis complained, nothing was happening. Everything is status quo ante. We must try to find a way to move forward. I said, 'Just invite Ajit Doval to Lahore'."

Mr Dulat also talked fondly about Asad Durrani, his counterpart and former director general of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Their equation took the shape of the 2018 book, *The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace*.



ISLAMABAD: Commander of Ninth Air Force (US Air Forces Central Command AFCENT), Lieutenant General Alexus Grynkwich called on Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here on Monday.

Two children among 11 burned to death in Thai van crash

BANGKOK (Agencies): Eleven people, including two children, burned to death in a passenger van crash in central Thailand over the Lunar New Year holiday, police said Monday. Traffic accidents are common in the kingdom, which has a notorious road safety record, particularly during busy public holidays.

The van carrying 12 people was travelling from northeastern Amnat Charoen province to Bangkok when it veered off the highway in central Nakhon Ratchasima province Saturday night, said Police Colonel Yingyos

Poldej. Yingyos told reporters that one man had been able to climb out a window, but the other passengers were trapped and died in the blaze.

The survivor, Thanachit Kingkaew, a 20-year-old student, said he was asleep when he was jolted awake after hearing someone scream. "I woke up and the next thing I know, the van was upside down. I didn't see what happened," he said. "After the crash, the fire started engulfing the whole van starting from the back."

"I started kicking the windows and managed to crawl

through a small hole," he said. "Soon after that, the van exploded." Nikhom Seau, a volunteer with a local rescue team, said the van exploded just seconds after it was engulfed in flames. "It took less than 30 seconds for the fire to consume the whole van," he said.

"I couldn't do anything with the fire extinguisher I had. The van then exploded three to four times." Yingyos, the police colonel, said the van used both fuel and compressed gas but initial reports found the gas tank had not leaked.

Alvi flays 'immoral incident' of desecration of Holy Quran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday strongly condemned the abhorrent act of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden. He termed the act as senseless, provocative and Islamophobic which has hurt the religious sensitivities of Muslims around the world.

The president said this immoral incident was an act of needless incitement and a serious provocation to the feelings of Muslims in the world. He said it was against the internationally accepted norms and principles of legitimate expression of the right to freedom of expression or opinion, which obliged everyone to not resort to hate speech and incite people to violence.

Dr Arif Alvi said that Islam preached respect and reverence for all religions of the world whereas this heinous act has hurt Muslims by insulting their sacred values, and reflects the alarming levels of Islamophobia. The President urged the international community to show a common resolve against Islamophobia. He underlined the need for international efforts to consolidate the values of tolerance and coexistence and criminalize all acts that promote the ideology of hatred.

Freezing weather claims 104 lives

KABUL (APP): Heavy snowfall and freezing weather have claimed 104 lives including children and women in Afghanistan over the past two weeks, spokesman for the Ministry of Natural Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs Shafiuallah Rahimi said here on Monday.

In talks to local media, Rahimi said a total of 104 people including children and women had lost their lives due to heavy snowfall, freezing weather and gas suffocation in Takhar, Badakhshan, Nimroz, Kandahar, Laghman, Ghazni, Urzgan, Jawzjan, Sari Pul, Faryab, Pakтика, Balkh, Samangan, Bamyan and other parts of the country over the past couple of weeks. In cash-strapped Afghanistan where there is no heating system, people often use coal, wood or liquid gas to keep themselves warm, which in many cases claims human lives due to gas leakage or carbon monoxide.