

Buzdar withdraws bail plea

LAHORE (TLTP): An accountability court (AC) has disposed of the former Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar's bail plea in a case pertaining to awarding a liquor licence to a hotel by violating the law. The former chief minister of Punjab is accused of allegedly receiving Rs50 million in bribes to get a liquor licence issued to a hotel in violation of the law.

@thefrontierpost

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

LHC bars ECP

LAHORE (TLTP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has barred the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from removing Imran Khan as Chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) following his disqualification in the Toshakhana reference. The court issued the directions while hearing a petition moved by PTI chief in LHC against the ECP's proceedings in the Toshakhana reference.

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 349

Regd. No. 241

JAMADI-US-SANNI 13 1444 -- FRIDAY, JANUARY 06 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

Price. 20

PM emphasizes timely CPEC completion

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday held a telephonic conversation with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang where-in he emphasized Pakistan's unwavering focus on timely progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

During the "comprehensive" telephone conversation, the prime minister assured the Chinese Premier that Pakistan would provide a completely secure and conducive business environment for Chinese investors. "The two leaders' discussion was characterized by warmth and cordiality, in keeping with the best traditions of the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership," a PM Office statement said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz and Premier Li exchanged New Year greetings, noting that bilateral relations had grown to new heights in 2022, and agreeing to maintain the steady momentum of bilateral cooperation in 2023. Recalling his visit to China in November 2022 and wide-ranging conversations with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li, the prime minister underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering closer relations with China.

He reiterated Pakistan's unstinting support on China's core interests. Both the leaders also discussed regional issues of mutual interest. Premier Li Keqiang assured the prime minister that China viewed Pakistan not only as a strategic friend but as a country whose stability and economic welfare was of utmost importance to the

Implementation of energy saving measures reviewed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday here chaired a meeting to review the implementation of the measures taken for saving energy in the country. The meeting was told about the progress made on the implementation of the solarization projects. In the initial phase solar panels of 1000 megawatts would be installed on federal government buildings.

In this connection, the process of bidding would be started next week. It was further told that the process of policy-making for the production of solar panels at the local level in the country, had entered the final phase. Consultation with the industries related to the manufacturing of solar panels had been completed. The participants were told that in order to increase the production of electric motorcycles, the local industry was taken into confidence to formulate a comprehensive policy. It was suggested in the policy that all the industries would be converted by the end of the year to the production of electric motorcycles. The participants agreed to the suggestion.

region and to China.

China would always stand in solidarity with Pakistan, Premier Li added. Noting the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being held in Geneva on January 9, PM Shehbaz briefed Premier Li on the latest progress in post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation in Pakistan. He conveyed Pakistan's profound gratitude for China's prompt and generous support for the flood-affected people.

Premier Li assured the prime minister of China's continued support for Pakistan's reconstruction efforts and the success of the Conference. Both leaders agreed to maintain close communication to fast-track the bilateral cooperation agenda for mutual benefit of the peoples of Pakistan and China in 2023 and beyond.

Immense potential of growth in Pakistan-UK

relations: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said that the Pakistan-UK relations were rooted in history, shared legacy and strong people-to-people bonds, which had gone from strength to strength. He said that the UK was Pakistan's largest European trading, investment and development partner. He said that the trajectory of the bilateral relations between our two countries showed the immense potential for growth for the benefit of the two countries.

The Prime Minister made these remarks in his meeting with outgoing British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner who paid a farewell call on him at the Prime Minister's House. The Prime Minister lauded the services rendered by Dr Turner for the promotion of Pakistan-UK ties, especially in the fields of trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

High prices of flour irk Peshawarties

PESHAWAR (APP): The high prices of flour and bread in open markets here Thursday irked Peshawarties whom termed it failure of the provincial government to control its prices. The poor people, labourers, farmers and general public while expressing displeasure over the shooting prices of flour and bread in different areas of Peshawar City have complained that flour of the officially approved rate was being given on the basis of political affiliations while underprivileged were being deprived.

According to market survey, the price of 80KG flour bag was swelled to Rs12,000 and 20KG bag to Rs28,00 that irked the poor strata and under privileged segments of the society. Riaz Khan, a former school teacher told APP that the Provincial Government's approved rate of the 20KG flour bag was fixed at Rs1350, which was being sold at Rs2800 in open market that was beyond purchasing power of common man.

He said the Provincial Government has paid a deaf ear on the shooting prices of flour in KP where ata dealers as well as flour mills owners were sucking blood of poor people on the pretext of shortage of supply of wheat from Punjab. As result, he said that the prices of bread was also increased at most areas of Peshawar including Chowk e Yadgar, Shoba Bazar, Qissa Khwani, Haji Camp, Namak Mandi, People's Mandi and Hospital Road where upto Rs30 per bread was being charged.

Riaz Khan urged the district administration to control prices of flour and ensure that the essential commodity was available in open market to people on the government approved rate. The prices of flour was also increased in Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan and Charsadda districts, annoying masses.

Riaz said that provision of affordable flour (ata) to people was the responsibility of the Provincial Government and urged the KP Chief Minister to approach Punjab Government where PTI was ruling to provide quick flour bags stock of the commodity to facilitate people of KP.

Earthquake jolts parts of Pakistan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A moderate earthquake of 5.8 magnitude jolted parts of Pakistan, confirmed the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) Thursday, with no loss of life so far.

The epicentre of the earthquake was Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region, while its depth was 173 kilometres, according to the seismological centre. It shook not only parts of Pakistan but its neighbouring countries — India and Afghanistan — as well. The seismic centre said that the earthquake tremors were felt in Gilgit, Jhelum, Chakwal, Pakpattan, Lakki Marwat, Nowshera, Swat, Malakand, Azad Kashmir, and other areas of the country.

Support to Kashmiris reassured

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have reassured Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris in their just struggle for right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

In their separate messages in connection with Kashmiris' right to self-determination day on Thursday, they regretted that the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have not been able to exercise their right for the last seventy-four years.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing British High Commissioner, Christian Turner paying a farewell call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

It's decisions are it's decisions: Ned Price

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON: US State Department Spokesperson, Ned Price while replying to a question by *The Frontier Post* said that it's Pakistan decision to take action against the terrorists hideouts in Afghanistan, in self defence.

Ned Price in reply to another question by *The Frontier Post* did not acknowledge that the US is encouraging Pakistan to take action terrorists hideouts in Afghanistan but continued by saying that Pakistan has lost many lives in terrorist attacks and that Pakistan is a partner.

To the last question of whether US is aware of the fact that on both sides of Afghanistan and Pakistan border it is mostly the Paktoon population and if Pakistan conducted such attacks, it could lead to a war like situation, Ned Price replied by referring to Pakistan "it's decisions are it's decisions."

Yesterday press briefing at the US State Department started by question from Matt of AP and he literally jumped on Ned Price by asking what the US was doing

about the girls education in Afghanistan. Matt also asked whether US was going to take some concrete action or just play with words. Matt also regretted in one of his question that why the US was in illusion that the Taliban have changed.

After Matt, Nazira an Afghan female journalist jumped by taunting saying that the Taliban say that they have defeated the US and asked what are the next steps that the US could take against the Taliban? After Nazira, a journalist from Pakistan, Jehanzeb asked what actions can the US take against the terrorists hideouts in Afghanistan. Ned Price replied by saying that President Biden has his own commitments and his commitments are that when the US needs to eliminate somebody in Afghanistan they will do it unilaterally just like they did in the case of Al Qaeda leader Zawahri.

Mr Lalit, a journalist asked Ned Price about the growing tensions and war of words between Pakistan and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Mr Ned Price very patiently answered all the related to Afghanistan



and reiterated that the Taliban government can not have it both ways. He said that if the Taliban government in Afghanistan wants to grow its relationship with the rest of the world they have to allow basic human rights which comprises of girls education and women right to world. Ned Price made it clear that without women participation no country can move forward. But Ned made it clear that any future actions will be taken after consultations and ally's and partners. Ned Price also reminded the Taliban government in Afghanistan that the US till date continues to be the largest humanitarian aid donor in Afghanistan and banning women from work will jeopardize millions of Afghanistan from their basic needs of survival.

Bilawal: Terrorists got NRO during Imran's era

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman and foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday alleged that the terrorists were given NRO during the Imran Khan era.

While addressing a press conference after chairing PPP central executive committee (CEC) meeting in Karachi, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that his political party adopted a clear policy against terrorism and extremism. "We think that terrorists and extremists are enemies of Pakistan and Islam."

"Terrorists got NRO during Imran Khan era. The terrorists got released and later they flee

from the country. We condemn Imran Khan's policy against terrorists and extremists. The same policy should be adopted for terrorists and criminals."

The PPP chairman backed the decision of the National Security Committee (NSC) and said that the session of the parliamentary security committee should be summoned at the earliest to take all political parties on board regarding the policies to uproot the menace of terrorism. He said that PPP always supported timely elections and opposed early elections.

"If someone is trying to delay the elections then PPP will oppose it. We think that there is a lot of

time before the organisation of general elections. PPP has always supported timely polls in the country." He further said, "It is a big achievement to remove a selected prime minister in a constitutional way."

Bilawal said that some elements are running the politics of division and hatred. "Establishment has decided to not intervene in politics which is praiseworthy. PPP welcomes the former army chief for admitting to intervention in politics. The establishment promised to remain apolitical which is a good omen. We also want to stop non-political people from interfering in the political affairs of the country."

Court extends Imran's bail in foreign funding case

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): A banking court in Islamabad has extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan till January 31 in the foreign funding case.

Banking Court Judge Rakhshanda Shaheen conducted hearing on the plea of Imran Khan for granting him the exemption from personal appearance on medical grounds. The TLTP learnt that Imran Khan's lawyer told the court that on January 3, Imran Khan underwent a medical check-up, adding that the doctors had advised him bed rest for two more weeks.

He added that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had also been asked that it could come to Imran Khan's

Zaman Park residence for investigation. Imran Khan's lawyer pleaded with the court to grant him further two-week exemption from personal appearance on medical grounds. The special prosecutor contended that Imran Khan was running the political affairs, but he did not appear before the court. He requested the court to reject Imran Khan's plea for exemption from personal appearance.

"Neither does Imran Khan appear before court, nor is he being investigated. Apart from surety bonds, Imran Khan has not followed a single court order," he stated. "Why is Imran Khan not being investigated? Why should Imran Khan's interim bail decision not be withdrawn?" the court ques-

tioned. "Imran Khan wants to be investigated, but there are many reasons for not appearing before the court. He will appear before the court as soon as the doctors give him the permission," Imran Khan's lawyer told the court.

"The court should approve the extension in the bail of Imran Khan," he pleaded. Special Prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi pointed out that it was not possible for the investigation officer to go to Lahore to investigate. "It is the duty of the investigation officer to conduct investigation. The court will not give any direction," the court remarked.

Other accused in the case including Amir Mehmood Kiani and Saifullah Niazi also appeared before the court.

ECNEC approves mega KP water supply scheme

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan has said that the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has accorded approval to a mega developmental project of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government regarding Gravity Flow Water Supply Scheme Mansehra City.

The newly approved Water Supply Scheme would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs. 18.583 billion which will provide clean drinking water to more than 2,000,00 population of Mansehra City.

In a statement issued to this effect here on Thursday, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the approval of this mega

scheme as an important achievement of the provincial government and good news for the people of district Mansehra. He said that the project on completion would provide an all time solution to the long standing issue of clean drinking water in the city.

The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan made it clear that his government is working under a comprehensive strategy to resolve public issues across the province adding that work on drinking water supply schemes in different parts of the province is underway.

He said that the provincial government has initiated Cities Improvement Project worth Rs. 97 billion which is aimed at streamlining the civic services delivery with special focus

on the drinking water supply and solid waste management system. Under the project, work on drinking water supply schemes has already been initiated in the different divisional headquarters of the province.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan said that the provincial government is committed to resolve the issue of drinking water for inhabitants of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in general and major cities in particular. Keeping in view the drinking water shortage due to limited ground water resources in Mansehra city, Gravity Flow Water Supply scheme has been planned with a 62.5 Km long supply line. The project, on completion, will provide uninterrupted clean drinking water to citizens, he concluded.

Pak-S Arabia defense ties discussed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir held in-depth talks with Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman in Riyadh, the Saudi Press Agency reported early Thursday.

The meeting between the defence chiefs discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance defence and military cooperation. "Pleased to meet H.E General Asim Munir, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff. We emphasized the strategic partnership between our brotherly countries, reviewed the bilateral military and defence relations, and discussed ways of strengthening our cooperation," Prince Khalid tweeted.

He also congratulated General Munir on being appointed as Chief of Army Staff. A number of Saudi and Pakistani military and civil officials attended the meeting. COAS General Syed Asim Munir is on an official visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 4th to 10th January. The COAS will be meeting the senior leadership of both the brotherly countries to discuss matters of mutual interest, military to military cooperation and bilateral relations focusing on security related subjects, said a statement issued by the ISPR.

SBP-held reserves plunge to lowest

KARACHI (Agencies): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)-held foreign exchange reserves fell further as the country paid external debts and tries to keep afloat amid a severe economic crisis. During the week ended on December 30, 2022, the central bank's forex reserves fell \$245 million to \$5.57 billion, a statement from the central bank said Thursday, down from last week's reserves of \$5.821 billion.

The net foreign reserves held by commercial banks amount to \$5.84 billion, with the total reserves clocking in at \$11.42 billion, the statement mentioned. The reserves, which hit their lowest level since April 2014, will now only provide import cover worth 1.06 months, as the country tries to lessen imports amid a greenback shortage.

The National Security Committee (NSC) earlier this week agreed on undertaking concrete steps — including import rationalisation as well as preventing illegal currency outflows and hawala business — in order to strengthen the economy. Amid a crisis-like situation, Pakistan will have to repay approximately \$8.3 billion in the shape of external debt servicing over the next three months (Jan-March) of the current fiscal year. The government is eyeing to pass the ninth review of the IMF to secure a \$1.7 billion bailout package, but both sides have made no substantial headway in recent days. In this regard, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar said that despite an uphill task, the country would meet its international obligations and not default.



Forest dept to observe 2023 year of abundant plantation

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Forest department will celebrate 2023 as the year of abundant plantation and protection of wildlife with an aim to achieve new targets in the province. It was announced by Punjab Forest Minister Syed Abbas Ali Shah while chairing a meeting regarding performance here on Thursday.

The minister said more than 102 million saplings had been planted in 2022 while the highest plantation was done in Bahawalpur with 2 million saplings.

Punjab Forest Minister Syed Abbas Ali Shah said that three development schemes were completed at the cost of Rs 803 million which were about the expansion and renovation of Bhakkar Forest Park, Forest Academy and Forest Complex. On the other hand, animal breeding resulted in the increase of 381 animals and birds in the Safari Zoo and 287 in Lahore Zoo. Abbas Shah said significant steps were taken for plantation and wildlife survival during the last year.

The minister appreciated the annual departmental performance and praised officials besides instructing them to continue the same performance in new year as well.

CTD captures 12 suspects

LAHORE (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department claimed to have captured 12 suspects in various parts of Punjab on Thursday.

According to CTD officials, the suspects were arrested from Layya, Faisalabad, Lahore, Okara districts of Punjab and cases were registered against them.

As many as 677 people were biometrically verified during 39 combing operations, while 12 people were arrested during interrogation of 2417 suspects.

The CTD officials said that combing operations will continue in the context of new wave of terrorism, adding that all resources are being used to suppress the evil elements.

KU extends last date for submission

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi has extended the last date for submission of evening programs about online admission forms till January 10, 2023.

According to the in-charge KU Directorate of Admissions Dr Saima Akhtar students could submit their online admission forms in BS First Year, Third Year as well as in various diploma, and certificate programs in different departments of the University in the evening program till January 10, 2023.

She advised that students should visit www.uokadmission.edu.pk to get all the relevant information including the online admission form and prospectus.

Gloomy Winter Aroosa Fatima

Gloomy winter reign again, shadowed corners, darker lanes; chilly breeze, ashen mist, snowy trees, faded jeans, aimless walks, withering leaves. Shorter days and longer nights, lonely foyers and empty sights.

Cakes, coffees, soups, sweet pies, travelling, working, sleepy eyes; privileged enjoying fancy arrangements, passengers-homeless filled with resentment. Cold won't stay, never the warm did, will savour the fruit that is forbid.

Let's drink from the grief; while we are here, spring will come, sadness will disappear.

(To the people who are working to earn livelihood in the cold winter nights)

CM chairs meeting to review LWMC affairs

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi chaired a meeting to review the affairs of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) at his office here on Thursday.

The chief minister expressed satisfaction over resolving the financial issues as LWMC handed over a cheque of Rs.2.90 billion to Türkiye company Ozpak.

The CM noted that Türkiye is counted among Pakistan's best friends, adding that its investments in waste management and other sectors would be welcomed.

Lahore would be made a clean and

orderly city, he said and added that waste management companies are being activated for cleaning big cities. The best sanitation system will be devised for every city of Punjab, he added.

The Ozpak delegation included Nizamettin Kocamese country head of Ozpak and Afzaal Shah project director. Provincial Minister Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed, Secretary Local Government Department Mubashar Hussain, CEO LWMC Ali Anan Qamar and Chairman CM Complaint Cell Zubair Khan were also present.

Educated, health mothers can lay foundation of better society: Governor

LAHORE (INP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman has said that the only educated and healthy mothers can lay the foundation of a better society.

He was talking to Country Representative of United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) Dr. Luay Shabaneh who called on him at Governor House Lahore here on Thursday. UNFPA Program and Technical Specialist Shoaib Ahmed Shahzad (SRH/FP) and Technical Specialist Gender/GBV, Tania Durrani were also present during the meeting.

Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that only educated and healthy mothers can lay the foundation of a better society. He said that an educated society, better health care facilities and awareness can resolve the problem of over population. Governor

Punjab said less resources and ever increasing population hinders the economic growth of any country.

He stated that government's efforts to overcome the problem of majority population can only yield positive results, if people cooperate and supplement these efforts. Governor Punjab said that as chancellor he has formed a health consortium in universities and started family medicine program. He added that health universities are working on family medicine program which is need of the hour. Speaking on this occasion, Dr. Luay Shabaneh, the country representative of the United Nations Population Fund, said that Pakistani health universities are doing excellent work in education, teaching and research field along with providing the best medical facilities to the people.

SIU arrests gang of illegal arms smugglers

KARACHI (APP):The Special Investigation Unit (CIA) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi on Thursday claimed to have arrested five of a gang including a policeman involved in illegal arms smuggling from Darra Adamkhel to Karachi.

According to SSP SIU Karachi, the accused were arrested from Nusrat Bhutto Colony, North Nazimabad.

They were identified as Zeeshan Abbasi, Abbas alias Arbaz, Anwar Jan, Imran and Muhammad Mohsin. Five 9mm were also recovered from their possession.

Arrested accused used to smuggle arms from Darra Adamkhel to Karachi and supplied them to criminals in Karachi.

They used to transport the arms from

Darra Adamkhel to Abbottabad where Faizan, an accomplice and a close relative of arrested accused Zeeshan, used to pack the arms in sweets boxes. Faizan is posted in the office of DPO Abbottabad. After packing, the arms were transported to Sorhab Goth, Karachi and Lasbela from where accused Zeeshan and Anwar collected the arms and later supply it to criminal elements.

Accused Anwar is a Police Constable posted at Madadgar-15 Police Station Paposh Nagar. The accused received the weapons packed in sweet boxes from the bus stand in police uniform.

The cases under relevant sections had been registered and further investigations were underway.

CS directs timely resolution of Qeemat Punjab App complaints

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Abdullah Khan Sumbal has directed all the deputy commissioners to ensure timely resolution of complaints received on the Qeemat Punjab App and raise public awareness about the use of this App.

He gave this directive while presiding over a meeting held to review the prices and availability of food items, especially flour, ghee, pulses and vegetables, at the Civil Secretariat here on Thursday.

The meeting decided to increase supply in the market and establish trucking points for one week to eliminate the impression of flour shortage. The authorities briefed the chief secretary that flour is available in all the districts at the fixed price and there is no shortage anywhere.

The Chief Secretary ordered the field officers to intensify the crackdown on illegal transportation of wheat and flour. He mentioned that providing relief to the people from inflation is the first priority of the government.

The Secretary Industries Department presented the report on ranking of the districts regarding the performance in price control.

The Chief Secretary directed the dis-

tricts of Multan, Khanewal, Rahim Yar Khan, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad to improve their performance, while he appreciated the districts with more than 73 percent score - Chinot, Narowal, Okara, Pakpattan, Sahiwal and Sialkot. He said that a score of less than 50 per cent in performance indicators was not acceptable in any case.

The Chief Secretary said that subsidies were being given to the deserving people through the Ehsaas Ration Riayat Program, providing discounts on four items including flour. He said that the administrative officers should play their role in making the Ehsaas Ration Riayat Program a success.

The meeting was briefed that the authorities conducted more than 30,000 inspections across the province during the last three days, arresting 94 people, registering 48 cases and imposing fines of Rs four million over different violations. The administrative secretaries of industries, agriculture, food departments, Additional IG Special Branch and officers concerned attended the meeting while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

Islamabad Capital Police issued 2420 fine tickets to the traffic violators

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police has expedited stern legal action against the traffic rules violators and issued 2420 fine tickets to road users during the last 24 hours, a police public relations officer said.

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

Various police teams

issued 2420 fine tickets to road users over violation of traffic rules in which 214 challan were issued over lane violation, 36 for red signal violations, 125 for using mobile phone during driving, 11 for amateur driving, 10 over violation of one-way, 63 driving on the wrong side of the road, 08 for violation of zebra crossing, 182 for not fastening seat belts, 76 for having tinted glasses, 09 for emitting smoke, 96 for having fancy number plates, 266 bikers for riding without helmets and 323 motorists for violations of different traffic rules.

Strict action would be taken against traffic rules

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

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



LAHORE: Coal vendors selling coal for domestic and commercial purpose at his roadside setup at.

Senate body recommends NEECA to audit energy efficiency of Parliament Building

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change has recommended the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) to conduct energy efficiency of the Parliament building to ascertain its share in conserving energy through solarisation. The meeting chaired by Chairperson of the Committee, Senator Seemee Ezedi discussed agenda items pertaining to consideration of public petition on Green Building Initiative and international conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan co-hosted by Pakistan and the United Nations in Geneva.

The Ministry of Climate Change officials briefed the Committee on the agenda items and informed that the guidelines were available for Green Building Initiative whereas the codes to be followed in the process would be prepared by the end of this month.

The official added that the building structures consume 80% of the global energy whereas the initiative aimed to curb environmental impact of buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He also clarified that the Green Building Initiative was for high-rise buildings and not houses. It would not cause greenhouse effect rather would help absorb carbon emissions, he added. Director General, Pakistan

Environmental Protection Agency, Farzana Altaf Shah added that the people were using paints that contained zinc and were also carcinogenic in nature that were also affecting the environment.

She told the Committee that there was no work done in Pakistan regarding the use of hand washing water for flushing. Moreover, the dumping of cement bags, glass etc. was also important as it remained on the dumping sites as non-decomposed.

"Even though many buildings are built, there is still a lot of solid waste lying around after the culmination of construction work. At present, there is no company in the country for ensuring complete solid waste management. In Capital, the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (MCI) is responsible for municipal solid waste management," she added.

She informed that there was need to conduct research on the leaching effect on the roads being constructed from plastic waste because where solid waste dumping occurred, leaching did take place.

Senator Dr. Humayun Khan Mohmand said square designing uses less building materials. However, there should be incinerators to ensure solid waste management and all the institutions had to work together for

safe dumping of solid waste, he added. The Climate Change Ministry officials briefed the Committee that waste to energy plant was not established yet, whereas the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) had demanded to charge nine points per cent power for setting up any waste-to-energy plant.

Senator Taj Haider said all public buildings in the Capital should be shifted over solar. "Solarisation will help save money and provide room for new ideas to generate and provide benefit to the masses," he added.

The Ministry official also briefed the Committee on International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan. He said the main objective of the conference was to attract the global community for the rehabilitation of flood affected people.

He added that almost one-third of the country was still flooded and the conference theme was Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF). The flood damages were determined by the Planning Commission and the Provincial Governments whereas the post-flood needs assessment was by several institutions in joint effort, he said. In Sindh, there were losses mainly due to the population residing on the banks of the Indus River, the Ministry official said.

Railways retrieved 974 acres of land from land grabbers

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 961 acres of its land worth Rs23,406 million during various anti-encroachment operations across the country from the land grabbers.

"Around 480 acres retrieved in Punjab, 139 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 331 acres in Sindh and only 24 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told a state run news agency. He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached. The official said that in the light of the directives of the

Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all Divisional Superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment.

"The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three

months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added. He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals,

groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades. "The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments," he added.

| Government of Pakistan NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) | |
|--|--|
| RENTAL OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED FOR NADRA Office Parova, District D I Khan (Re-Tender Notice No. 2022/Estate/Parova) | |
| OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Accommodation should be in the vicinity of Tehsil Parova, District D I Khan. Space measuring of total covered area 2000-3500 sq ft along with public and staff washrooms. Prominent, having independent entrance and proposed building should not be in residential area. Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport. Dedicated 3 Phase Electrical Meter / Connection Preference will be given to the building in which dedicated transformer is installed. Tap Water facility along with overhead tank. Ramp for wheel chair for disable citizens. Space, NOC for installation of direction board, sign board and heavy generator. Roof top for satellite dish antenna installation. Proper outer shutter / door. Sufficient space for maintaining the public queue & parking area. Tenancy for a longer period (i.e. preferably for 10 years). | |
| <p>Note:- Interested parties / owners can purchase the bidding documents on submission of a written application at a cost of Rs. 100/- from below mentioned address or from concerned offices between 10:00 am - 04:00 pm hours (except gazette holidays). The bids / proposal should be submitted duly completed in all respects by 23rd Jan, 2023 at 11:00 am hours (under Single Stage - Two Envelope bidding procedure). The envelopes shall be clearly marked as Technical and Financial proposals. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on 23rd Jan, 2023 at 11:30 am hours in presence of available bidders/their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary:-</p> | |
| Technical Bid (Separate Envelope): | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photocopy of property ownership documents, of building (recently attested by concerned department) offered on rental basis to NADRA. Photocopy of valid CNIC, NTN, GST & SST. Completion and Fitness Certificate of the building Undertaking on Non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / building is not temporary / permanently debarred from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility on NADRA whatsoever in this regard). Pictures of the building offered for lease. Valid Site Plan / Map of the building duly approved from concerned authority. In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process. | |
| Financial Bid (Separate Envelope): | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owner's consent showing monthly rent & covered area of the building. Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained. Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes, except GST / SST, which shall be mentioned separately. No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent. Opening date / time of Financial Proposal will be informed to all successful bidders of General Proposal Evaluation. NADRA reserves the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal. Bid can also be rejected if owner of selected building fail to produce acceptable required / property documents. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk | |
| PID (I) 4194/22 | |
| For any query contact on following address: Director (Admin) NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa BOBI Building, Plot No. 31 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar Telephone: 091-9217840 | |

Release of NFC award: MPAs approached High Court

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Member Provincial Assembly from erstwhile Fata approached Peshawar High Court for release of their shares in National Finance Commission following merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The writ petition was filed by six MPAs from erstwhile including Syed Ghazan Jamal, Shafiq Sher Afridi, Anwar Zeb Khan, Jamal Khan, Muhammad Iqbal and Naseer Ullah while provincial, federal governments along with cabinet division, NFC, Council of Common Interest and Finance division have been made respondents.

The writ stated that petitioners are MPAs while representing various constituencies from erstwhile Fata following merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after 25th constitutional amendment. The petition added that in 2010 NFC award 3% shares were granted for erstwhile Fata while its stoppage has disturbed businesses of duty including salaries of employees.

The petition further argued that awarding of NFC in every five years is constitutional obligation and requested PHC to order competent for holding NFC meeting while pleaded for provision of funds as per populace ratio of erstwhile Fata district.

Following filing writ at PHC, MPA Ghazan Jamal said that they had upheld at

issue at the floor of assembly for several times but to no veil and now knocked the doors of honorable court for their constitutional rights.

He added that in writ court is requested to order federation for release of erstwhile Fata's share.

MPA claimed that Sindh didn't willing for NFC award while added only Rs5 billion is released for erstwhile Fata and claimed that all representatives of merged districts stand with shoulder to shoulder for obtaining their constitutional rights.

He added that they pressurize federation from every forum to release erstwhile Fata share in NFC award.



PESHAWAR: VC SBBWU Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed and Member Higher Education Regulatory Authority Dr. Yasir Kamal with participants during a conference on Harnessing Youth for Peace at SBBWU.

0.3m fake cannulas recovered from godown

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration and Medicine Control Task Force in a joint crackdown conducted raid on a godown of surgical services and recovered 300,000 fake Cannula-IV, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The value of the recovered fake Cannula-IV from the surgical services is situated near Faisal Movers' Bus Station.

On receiving a tip the

Zia hails appointment of Ghulam Ali as Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia ul Haq Sarhadi while hailing the appointment of Haji Ghulam Ali as Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has expressed the hope that his rich business background will help in the promotion of commerce and trade in the province.

In a press statement issued here on Thursday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi who is also Chairman of Frontier Custom Clearing Agents Association said Haji Ghulam Ali is a very suitable selection for the gubernatorial post due to his close and cordial contacts with people from all segments of society.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shafullah Khan formed a team comprising Deputy Director Drug Control, Khushal Khan, Inspector Zeeshah and Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Junaid Shah and directed them to conduct on the godown wherein the illegal packing and stamping of Cannula was in progress.

The workers inside the godown were putting the stamp of GMCC on the Cannula imported from UMS Health Care Medical Devices Vietnam through Hashir Surgical Services Peshawar to Pakistan.

A huge quantity of stock, manufacturing machinery,

packaging material, stamping machine, lasers and other equipment was confiscated and a case against the accused persons was registered under Drug Act 1976. Further investigation was in progress.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shafullah Khan has appreciated the performance of the members of the raiding team including the officers of district administration and health department.

The Deputy Commissioner has directed the officers of district administration to inspect factories within the areas of their jurisdiction to take stern action against fake factories.

Flour distribution point record checked

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Assistant Food Controller Kamal Khan, Ration Controller Peshawar Jamshid Khan Afridi and media coordinator Noor Muhammad along with staff visited and inspected flour distribution points, on Saturday.

The team checked record of flour distribution points at Kohat Road, Dabgari, Dura Road, Ring Road and

Gul Bahar while more 70 flour quota licenses were cancelled on unavailability of record.

Ration Controller Peshawar directed flour dealers to displayed prices of flour as Rs1295 per 20 kilograms pack to ensure provision of subsidized flour to common man. He claimed that stern actions should be taken against flour's distributors on public complaints immediately.

Registration of Transgender to begin next week

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan with the cooperation of the Social Welfare Department KP, NADRA and Da Hawa Loor, a non-governmental organization is beginning the registration of transgender in Peshawar from next week.

The decision was taken during a meeting held here in the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner with Director Local Government Elections PEC, Zulfikar Ahmad in the chair here on Thursday.

Besides, Assistant Director (Social Inclusion), Syed Aun Ahmad Naqvi, Assistant Director NADRA & Focal Person, Shahid Khan and Miss Mehnaz of the Social Welfare Department while Miss Khurshid and Ayesha represented the Da Hawa Loor.

The meeting decided that in the first phase the registration of transgender will begin in the office of Social Welfare Department Peshawar as a pilot project from next week.

Zulfikar Ahmad stressed the need for conducting a special awareness campaign regarding the registration of the community.

Member of int'l smuggler gang held

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Excise Department on Thursday conducted a major operation and arrested a member of a gang of international smugglers while recovering 23 machine readable passports (MRPs) and 20 fake identity cards made for Afghan nationals.

The passports and identity cards were to be used in drug smuggling abroad, said the spokesman of Excise department, adding that the Excise Department conducted operation in Tajabad and Arbab Road areas here on hideouts of the facilitators of international drug smugglers and confiscated fake MRPs and CNICs and arrested one of the main members of the group, Rahimullah from the spot.

The operation has been done at the student hostel located in Tajabad and the shop located on Arbab Road. It should be noted that many important suspects of this international smugglers group have already been arrested.

Excise Department's operations against drug smugglers and their facilitators continued and more success is expected in this regard.



PESHAWAR: Former City President Zulfikar Afghani addressing a gathering on occasion of birth anniversary of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Minister underlines need for best irrigation system

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan on Thursday underlined the need for best irrigation system to get best production of crops.

Chairing a mid-year review meeting regarding the annual development program of Irrigation Department, North and South Zone, he said that agriculture played an important role in the country's development and it was imperative to develop best irrigation system.

He said that according to PTI's manifesto, the provincial government had taken record measures to

implement public welfare projects, adding the funds allocated for the projects in the annual development program for the year 2022-23 should be utilized within the stipulated time.

Secretary Irrigation Mohammad Ayaz, Additional Secretary Naser Ali, Chief Engineer South Nasir Ghafoor Khan, Chief Engineer North Ishaq Khan, All Circle S.Es and other officials participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, the Provincial Minister for Irrigation was given a detailed briefing on the ongoing projects under the Annual Development Program for the year 2022-

23. During the briefing, the participants were informed about the progress of the ongoing projects, problems and other issues.

During the briefing, it was informed that under ADP 2022-23, work is underway on 68 projects in the South Zone of the Irrigation Department and 80 projects in the North Zone of the Irrigation Department.

During the meeting, Provincial Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan directed to bring more transparency in the irrigation department and conduct regular review meetings.

Drug free Peshawar drive from next month

PESHAWAR (APP): Third phase of the Drug Free Peshawar campaign of taking the remaining few hundred drug addicts from the roads of the city and shifting them to rehabilitation centres would begin from February.

The decision was taken during a meeting held here with Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud in the chair on Thursday. Besides, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shafullah Khan, officers of the Social Welfare, and Excise Department, the administrative officers of other concerned organizations also attended.

They decided that after complete cleansing roads of drug addicts, those addicts which are inside their houses would also be shifted to rehabilitation centres.

The meeting was told about historic success achieved during the first two phases of the campaign during which 2500 rehabilitated drug addicts have rejoined their families. Only 15 rehabilitated drug addicts had restarted addiction and once again shifted to rehabilitation centres.

The participants of the meeting were of the view that those who returned to drug addiction was due to the lack of interest by their families and hinted at taking action against such families to recover expenses incurred on the treatment of their family members.

The meeting also finalized preparations for the third phase of the campaign and conducting surveys regarding drug addicts during night time.

Two more industries, access road inaugurated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Industries Abdul Karim on Thursday inaugurated 4.5 km access road, 5km zone internal roads, Falak Niaz Marble and Dada Minerals Pvt Ltd at Mohmand Economic Zone (MEZ) here on Thursday.

"This is an investment of PKR 95 million and will generate 300 direct and indirect employment opportunities," he said after inauguration of the roads and industrial units.

KPEZDMC Chief Zone Management, Fakher-i-Alam Sahibzada and Chief Project Planning and Development, Imtiaz Ahmad were also present on the occasion.

During the briefing it was informed that MEZ is spread over 350 acres of land with leasable area of approx 237 acres. The merger of erstwhile FATA into KP has allowed KPEZDMC to functionalize this Zone.

Speaking on the occasion the CM's aide said that MEZ would be well equipped with industrial processing and production units and offered many investment and employment opportunities.

He said that the zone was bordered by Charsadda, Bajaur and Khyber districts besides Afghanistan, which were naturally rich in Marble and other minerals including, dimensional stones, granite, coal, manganese Ore, and limestone.

Abdul Karim said that trading activity was reasonably dominant and around 40-50 truckloads per day cross the border to Afghanistan using two crossings; Yaqubi Kandao and Lwar Ghakhai.

The major goods moving from Pakistan to Afghanistan includes timber, poultry, fertilizers and pesticides, etc. and the ones moving into Pakistan includes electronic goods, fruit, dry fruits, vehicles, vehicle parts, etc. With proximity to Peshawar, this Zone would invigorate industrial activities and uplift the socio-economic condition of district Mohmand, creating employment opportunities for the locals, and kindling hope of revival.

BRT to launch four new routes from 10th

PESHAWAR (APP): Trans Peshawar has announced to launch Rapid Bus Service (BRT) on four new routes from 10th January, to reduce burden on existing routes besides providing respectable commuting services to people of different areas.

Initially 12 buses will be operated on "Express Route 12" (ER-12) with 11 stops including Shah Alam Bridge, Siwan, Bakshu Bridge, Linde Sadak, Shaheed Tahir Chowk, Charsada Adda, Bacha

Khan Chowk, Khyber Bazar, Sadar Bazar, University of Peshawar and Mall of Hayatabad.

The spokesperson of Trans Peshawar Sadaf Kamil informed here Thursday that 62 new buses have arrived in Pakistan, out of which 12 buses would start services on January 10 on ER-12 while the number of buses would be increased on the existing routes in the next few days.

She said that "ZU Peshawar" is popular for its low fares and excellent

service and the routes are being gradually increased due to the increasing need and demand of the people.

She said that approvals of five new routes have been done and BRT service on these routes would be started gradually in the next few weeks.

Apart from ER-12, the other routes included DR-11 from Mall of Hayatabad to Phase 6 Terminal, DR-4B Chamkani to Malik Saad Shaheed via Ring Road, SER-13 from Pabi to Malik Saad Shaheed and

DR-14 from Regi Model Town to Tehkal.

At present this DR-3B is active from Shah Alam Bridge to Malik Saad Shaheed in which about 22 stations namely Shah Alam Pul, Wahid Garhi, Toda, Autumn, Faqirabad, Siwan, Sugar Mill, Nasapa Bala, Nasapa, Muslimabad, Bakshu Pul, Ibrahimabad, Habibabad, Shiro, Jhangi, Linde Sadak, Nishat. Mill, Badhani Pul, Shaheed Tahir Chowk, Charsada Adda, Eid Gah, Shahi Bagh, Khyber Bazar, Bacha

Khan Chowk and Malik Saad Shaheed have been added.

These routes provide travel facility to about 17,000 passengers on a daily basis. The opening of ER-12 would not only reduce the rush of DR-3B but this route would also reduce the rush from Malik Saad Shaheed station to Mall of Hayatabad.

The ER-12 route would save the time and fare of the students of the University of Peshawar, she said.

Speakers stressed need for integrated approach towards child rights

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) in collaboration with UNICEF organized a Consultation on Institutional Framework for Child Protection in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday at the local hotel Peshawar. The objective of the Consultation was to discuss and to adopt a systematic approach to child protection issues in KP who are subject to various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, which can be physical, emotional or sexual, including economic exploitation.

NCRC Chairperson Afshan Tehseen highlighted the importance of child protection in Pakistan, stressing that children are an essential element of our society and that education and a safe environment are their fundamental right and that parents and the community play an important role in protecting children. She also stressed the need to remove loopholes in the existing laws for children at the federal and provincial levels. She also pointed out that many laws still lack implementation

mechanisms and rules. The Commission is liaising with the concerned departments at the federal and provincial levels. The Chairperson highlighted the important role of the Commission, which has handled more than 260 complaints of child rights violations and provided direct relief to victims. She highlighted that Police Order has been restored in Islamabad on the intervention of the NCRC.

Arshad Khan, Secretary to the Government, Information and Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - highlighted the challenges in the education sector. He shared that there is enough education infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, both in the merged and settled districts, but the low enrolment rate and persistently high dropout rate of about 71 million children aged 5-6 years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a challenge, and the role of the community, especially parents and the media, is very important. He informed that there are more than 10,000 Afghan children studying in different schools and that the impression that



they cannot be admitted to schools is wrong.

Mohammad Ali Babakel, Additional Inspector General of Police Operations, highlighted the role of police in handling child protection cases in the province. He shared the details of police officers listed in the KP Police Act, 2017 and informed that KP is the only province with its own Police Act in Pakistan. He informed that as per Section 2 (a) of KP Police Act, 2017, police officers

must make all efforts to help people in distress, especially women and children. He also informed that in 2022, police in KP have registered a total of 265 cases of rape of children and 4 cases of rape of children with murder. He also informed that a total of 283 cases of juvenile offenders have been registered in KP province. He stressed the urgency of addressing the problem of cybercrime against children.

Jawad Ullah, member of

NCRC identified various challenges in the field of child protection in KP and mentioned the major progress made by the government of KP. He also informed the participants that NCRC has issued policy briefs on key areas, namely child marriages, child domestic labour and street children. The policy briefs examine the issues of vulnerable children from a legal perspective, focusing on existing laws and enforcement mechanisms, and make recommendations to legislators, policy makers, government agencies, NHRI, the judiciary and civil society.

Dr Riffat Sardar, Chairperson of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women remarked that stereotypes about early child marriages are the bottleneck and that every journey starts with small steps and awareness is the key to success. She spoke about the importance of passing the Child Marriage Bill, which has not been passed by the Provincial Assembly KP.

Sohail Ahmed, Child Protection Specialist UNICEF said that KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) survey was carried out to assess the issues being faced by children in Pakistan.

The objective was to fill the gaps and information with respect to knowledge attitude and practice. He highlighted initiatives undertaken by UNICEF in collaboration with Social Welfare Department and KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission to strengthen the child protection system in the province.

Mr. Irfan Khan- Director Labour and Manpower discussed the role, available institutional arrangement and efforts of the department to deal with the issue of child labour. Child Labour laws are being implemented by Labor Inspectors to protect them from Child Labour. He also highlighted the work undertaken by the department to conduct child labour survey which is near to its completion.

Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Acting Chief KP Child Protection & Welfare Commission, shared his observations on the child protection system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and said that the Commission is trying hard to effectively monitor and coordinate child rights issues at provincial and local levels. He shared that Child Protection Units have been established in different districts of the province. He also highlighted that the helpline 1121 is operational where children and people can lodge their complaints. Child Protection Committees with referral mechanisms and networks have been formed in all districts.



In brief

Heroin smuggling bid foiled F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A bid of smuggling of narcotics from Afghanistan to Pakistan was foiled when the police officials recovered 49 kg from Afghanistan returned truck here at Michni checkpoint, Torkham last night. The police official said that on tip off, the narcotics eradication team (NET) with support of local police officials stopped a suspected Afghanistan returned empty truck vehicle bearing registration no. KBL-77437 for examination. During checking 49 kg and 800 g fine quality heroin were recovered, concealed in various cavities of the truck. An allegedly smuggler driver of the truck known as Noor son of Abdussatar, an Afghan national was arrested and put behind the bars for investigation, the official said. District police officer (DPO), Muhammad Imran said that on the direction of the highup, operation against narcotics had been initiated across the Khyber and all necessary initiatives would be adopted to curtail smuggling of narcotics. He also praised the NET and police officials for carrying out successful activity at the Michni check post.

30 power pilferers nabbed

MULTAN (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) has caught 30 power pilferers during separate operations launched across South Punjab in a day. MEPCO teams accompanying task forces raided different places in Multan, Vehari, Sahiwal, Rahimyar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalnagar, Khanewal, and Dera Ghazi Khan and detected theft of 27,611 electricity units. MEPCO official said on Thursday. A fine of over Rs 6,77,000 was imposed on the pilferers over involvement in tampering with the body of meters, direct supply, installation of loop in meters, slowing down meters, meter dead stop and meter screen wash.

Landslide kills 2 children in Swat F.P. Report

MINGORA: Two children died after a land slide fell on them in Swat district on Friday. Police said that five years old Abbas Khan and Umair Ali (4) was playing in an under-construction building at village Mashkai in Tehsil Charbagh when an avalanche fell on them and trapped. The residents of the area rushed to the site and retrieved the bodies. Later, the victims were laid to rest at their ancestral graveyard.

Man held for making prank call

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Police on Thursday arrested a man for making a prank call on emergency number 15 to register a report of a fake robbery at his home. Police sources said the accused identified as Muhammad Shabir called the police station to lodge a robbery complaint worth Rs. 1.5 million, which was later proved as a false claim after investigation.

Four injured in road mishap F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Four persons including three children were injured when a car collided with a tractor-trolley near Pushta Bridge here on Thursday. The car was heading towards D I Khan from Lakki Marwat when it met the sad incident. The Rescue 1122 station-33 medical team reached the site timely and provided first aid to the injured and shifted them to the hospital.

Two more industrial units opened in Hattar

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Secretary Industries Commerce and Technical Education and Chairman Board of Directors (BOD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Saqib Raza Aslam visited Hattar Economic Zones to inaugurate two more industries and launch a tree plantation campaign.

Member BOD Hasan Farid and CEO KP-EZDMC Javed Iqbal Khattak also accompanied the Secretary Industries during his visit to Hattar Special Economic Zone for the inauguration of various industries as well as to meet

representatives of Hattar Industrial Association on Thursday. During the meeting with the Hattar Industrial Association (HIA), the visiting delegation was briefed by Mr. Malik Ashiq Awan, Chairman of HIA, on the issues about the zone, he association acknowledged and appreciated the role of the Provincial Government and particularly of KPEZDMC in addressing the problems faced by the industrialist.

Chairman BOD / Secretary IC&TE also inaugurated M/A Ali Steel Industries and Farhad Enterprises. These industrial projects, worth PKR 850 million, will generate more

than 800 employment opportunities upon commercial production. Farhad Enterprises is set to become the first ever cold storage in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the state-of-the-art cold storage plant equipped with artificial intelligence and a capacity of 5000 metric tons. Furthermore, the Fire Brigade 24/7 services office after rehabilitation was also inaugurated during the visit to resolve if any fire emergency happens in the zone promptly. Later, in a bid to lower the global warming impact and reduce carbon emissions, and as part of the beautification of the zone, a tree plantation campaign was also launched.

Increase in external security of prison ordered

Shafiullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai visited District Jail Swat, Deputy Commissioner Swat Junaid Khan also accompanied him. On the occasion of the visit, Deputy Superintendent Syed Rahim Shah gave a briefing regarding the security, facilities and corrective measures of the District Jail.

On this occasion, they reviewed the internal and external security of the jail, met the inmates in the male and female barracks and heard their problems, saw the facilities in the sports

arena, checked the quality of food items and food menu for the inmates, visited the detox and rehab center and reviewed the measures taken for counselling, inspected the vocational training center, inspected the ongoing classes in the Juvenile Correction School and spoke to the teachers and children, inmates in the jail.

Commissioner Malakand and DC Swat met doctors, Hakeem and other staff in the jail hospital, inspected the OPD and inquired about the wellbeing of the patients admitted in the wards. During the briefing on behalf of the Deputy Superintendent Jail,

it was informed that the process of construction of retaining wall and jail road and installation of night vision cameras are in the process.

Commissioner Malakand and Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai issued orders to ensure early progress on installation of night vision cameras and construction of retaining wall and road. Commissioner Malakand also issued orders to the jail administration to increase the external security of the jail. Deputy Commissioner Swat Junaid Khan issued orders to send the plan to the district administration to organize a sports gala for the prisoners.

Quota of flour dealers terminated over violation

F.P. Report

TANK: The district administration has tightened noose around profiteers, terminating the official quota of three subsidized flour dealers for violating officially prescribed procedures. The action was taken against the dealers by Assistant Commissioner Jamshed Alam when he paid a surprise visit to the market while posing as a customer to monitor distribution of subsidized flour by flour dealers and at mobile distribution points in the district.

He checked the record of allotted quota, weight, quality, stock register and prices of subsidized flour at various designated flour dealers. During inspection, the AC found grave anomalies and irregularities in officially prescribed procedures by three flour dealers and thereby terminated their official flour quota.

Deputy Commissioner Hamedullah Khattak has appreciated the AC for taking action against profiteers and that the district administration was committed to extending relief to citizens. He said as many as 1945 subsidized four bags weighing 20 kg were distributed among people on a daily basis across the district.

Of these 1500 bags were distributed through the designated flour dealers, while 400 bags were doled out on need-based through a mobile distribution mechanism. He said that officials concerned of the district

administration as well as those of the food department have been mobilized for effective supervision and monitoring of the entire supply chain of subsidized flour in the district.

He said that all out efforts would be made to ensure provision of food items to citizens at officially prescribed rates and in this transparency would be maintained at all costs. There is a zero tolerance policy in this regard and strict action would be taken against those found involved in any kind of violation or negligence.

Thieves' gang busted: The district police on Thursday busted a gang that was allegedly involved in stealing electricity transformers and recovered stolen cables from the possession of the arrested accused.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Headquarters Inam Khan Gandapur along with Station House Officer (SHO) SMA Asghar Khan Wazir briefing media persons said that a raiding party was formed under the leadership of SHO SMA Asghar Khan Wazir after frequent theft of transformers cables in Tank was reported. Following, the team successfully tracked down the gang and arrested the suspect involved in cable theft.

The police also recovered the stolen cables from the electricity transformers. On the other hand, the DSP headquarter said that on a tip-off, Asghar Khan

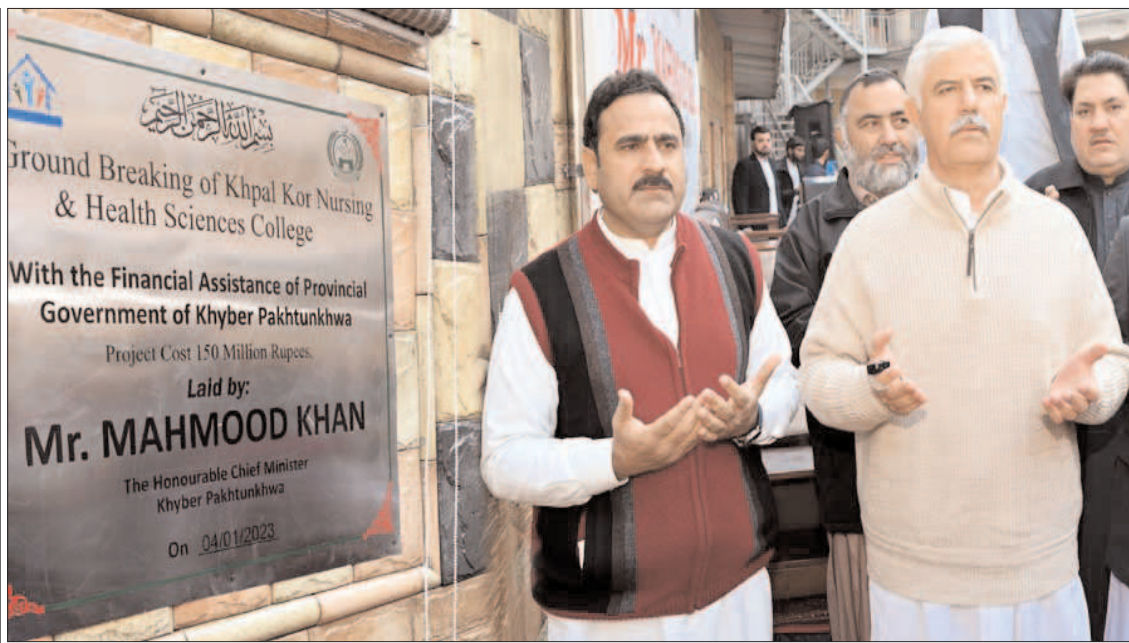
Wazir, SHO of SMA police station, recovered 50 kg of hashish hidden underground in Manjikhel jurisdiction by unknown drug dealers and filed a case. DSP Headquarters Inam Gandapur said that Tank police will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to eradicate drugs and all resources were being utilized to achieve the objective.

Swat Police promotes 29 jawans F.P. Report

MINGORA: District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Shafiullah Khan Gandapur took a major step on Thursday and promoted 29 jawans of Police from constable to the rank of head constable.

The decision was taken during a meeting held in his office as per vision of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) KP, Muazzam Jah Ansari and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand, Sajjad Khan. All newly promoted head constables have been promoted on the basis of merit.

DPO Swat, Shafiullah Khan Gandapur has congratulated the newly promoted head constables and said that now their responsibility has been increased and they were urged to perform their duties with honesty and dedication.



MINGORA: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan performing the groundbreaking of Khapal Kor Nursing and Sciences College in Swat.

Flour prices increased due to KP govt's incompetency Syed Wali Ullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Flour Dealer Association (FDA) general secretary Haji Ikram Shah blamed Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for hike in flour prices because government does not provide sufficient amount of wheat to mills, on Thursday.

This he said while talking to media personnel and added that police is grabbing bribe from vehicle carrying wheat from Punjab to Pakhtunkhwa at Attock check-posts. He claimed that under 1973 Constitution supply of food item cannot be restricted from one province to another federating unit.

FDA general secretary claimed that Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on rabbit's sleep while each pack of flour reached to Rs2700 per 20 kilograms. He added that flour prices were increased due to arrogance, negligence and incompetence of provincial government.

Woman burnt to death

FAISALABAD (INP): An elderly woman was burnt to death as her bed caught fire from a gas heater in the area of Chak Jhumra police station.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Wednesday that 70-year-old Parveen Kausar wife of Muhammad Ashraf was taking rest in her house situated at Quaid Abad Street No. 3 Chak Jhumra when her bed reportedly caught fire from a gas heater.

As a result, the fire severely burnt the ill-fated woman and killed her on the spot besides burning other house-hold items. Fire fighters of Rescue 1122 rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control whereas the body was handed over to area police which started investigation, he added.

Two dacoits arrested: The police arrested two dacoits during an encounter in the area of Jhang Bazaar police station. Police said here on Thursday that Dolphin team signaled two suspects riding on a motorcycle late last night but the accused accelerated their bike.

The police chased them and directed to surrender but the outlaws opened indiscriminate firing. The dolphin retaliated and during the exchange of gunshots, both criminals received injuries and fell on the ground.

The police arrested both accused and took the two-wheeler into custody which was snatched by the robbers from a citizen in the precinct of Balochni police station.

The accused-- Javid and Shaukat were wanted by the police in a number of dacoity, robbery, theft and other cases, said police. The team also recovered two pistols, mobile phones, cash and other items from them, while further investigation was underway.

Number of Sasta Atta points increased: The district administration has increased the number of Sasta Atta sales points to 74 to supply cheap wheat flour to the consumers. As many as 63,948 wheat flour bags of 10 kg, at the rate of Rs 648 per bag, were being supplied at the sales points on a daily basis, said a spokesperson for the district administration here on Thursday.

Illegal timber and subsidized wheat seized

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Deputy commissioner Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi along with divisional forest officer Shah Khalid, additional assistant commissioner Hazrat Bilal, Tehsildar Khall and police officials raided different spots at Toormang here on Wednesday night and recovered a huge quantity of timber.

Several persons were booked under forest ordinance 2002 while the timber loaded in seven vehicles were seized. The DC directed the DFO and AAC to strictly check the deforestation and timber smuggling in the area. Talking to local elders the DC said that forests were the nation's asset and no one would be allowed to cut forest trees.

Meanwhile the administration seized 900 bags of subsidized flour loaded in a container at a check post in Timergara. The flour was being illegally smuggled from Rawalpindi to Dir. The assistant commissioner Timergara Shehzad Khan confiscated the flour and

ordered registration of a case against the persons involved in the smuggling.

The DC along with tehsil chairman Khall Ashfaqur Rahim and other officials also visited the flood affected bridge and a water channel at Khall. Talking to locals he said that the tehsil chairman office, TMO office and a public park would be built on the state land at Khall.

Chancellor visit: The vice chancellor of the Riphah International University Hassan Muhammad Khan on Thursday visited the Chakdara campus of the varsity and addressed the students and faculty members. The function was also addressed by vice chancellor Prof Dr Anees Ahmad, Prof Dr Iqbal and others.

The chancellor said that education did not mean to get a higher degree in economics, physics and mathematics but it was something above it. He asked the students to take advantage of the new technology in their studies and focus on their character. He said the Riphah International University was established

to bring a silent reforms revolution through education and moral character. The chancellor said that unfortunately most of the varsities in Pakistan lacked the Islamic moral values. He said that co-education was not the sign of development. He said the students should be given the lessons of love, equality, justice and Islamic ideology.

Jandol press club elects office bearers: Mr Waheed Khan Tajik was elected as president and Habibullah as general secretary of the Jandol Press club for the year 2023. The annual elections were held in Jandol here the other day. According to the results Waheed Khan was elected as president, Noor Zaman Musakhel as vice president, Habibullah Saddiqi as general secretary, Liaqat Seemab as deputy general secretary, Shuiab Hadi as finance secretary while Umar Khaliq Durrani was elected as chairman, Malik Faiz Musakhel as vice chairman, Syed Izharud Din and Wahidullah as members for the executive council.

PTI to secure majority in fresh elections: MNA

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Member National Assembly and vice president PTI, Punjab, Ch. Shaikat Ali Bhatti said that Imran Khan is only ray of hope for the nation who can steer the country out of all crises while present rulers has pushed the National Economy into quicksand and present government of PDM has made difficult for people to get two-time meals as well as to pay utility bills of hefty amounts. He expressed these views while addressing a function held for shearing his achievements during three year and four months period of PTI government with journalists.

Ex-District Nazim Ch. Mubashar Abbas Bhatti, Ex. CEO Health Dr. Rehmatullah Saqib, prominent host Mazafar Ali, CEO Health Dr. Imran Nayyar, candidate for PP-70 Ch. Sakander Nawaz Bhatti and Chairman Press Club Hafizabad Rai Ghazanfar Kharal also addressed the function. Chaudhry Shoukat Ali Bhatti said that present government was completely failed to deliver and leadership of the PDM was derailed the progress and prosperity of the country in the lust of power while local and foreign investors and financial institutions were not trusting on present rulers.

He claimed that the country was near to default and present government was ready to declare the country bankruptcy which

would be dangerous for survival of the nation. He regretfully stated that in the tenure of PTI whenever, government had to increased prices of oil products due to increase of International market, the mostly media houses raised hue and cry against the PTI government but now when prices of oil products was increased by the present government, the same media houses were quit silent, is it not double standard of media houses, he questioned?

PTI leader added that federal and Punjab governments of PTI were accord approval of different development projects with the cast of more than Rs. 48 billion for the district Hafizabad and more than twenty billion rupees had been spent on execution of projects including construction of road from Kot Sarwar

Motorway Interchange to Gujranwala, establishment of University of Hafizabad, construction of the new building of DHQ hospital Hafizabad etc. so far in the district. He said that first year of the PTI was spent in raising funds and strengthening national economy while in second year, the corona situation was damaged the economy and only one year and three month PTI government was launched development projects in the country including Hafizabad.

If the PTI government was not toppled by the regime changers, the mostly projects could be com-

pleted in the district Hafizabad and 12 lakh population of the district were enjoying better healthcare, educational, communicational and other facilities, he hoped. He further said that I have fulfill mostly promises made with the people of my constituency consisting of 12 lakh population and try his best to come up on the aspirations of people to follow footsteps of my father Chaudhry Mehdi Hassan Bhatti and remained successful.

He also claimed that electricity and sui gas facilities were provided in all villages of district Hafizabad while new pipeline was also laid from Tibba Shah Behool to Pindi Bhattian for improving pressure of sui gas during this tenure. He also said that construction work on other development schemes which were stopped by the PML (N) government in Punjab was restarted.

The people are well aware of performance of political workers and people would be elect only those candidates in upcoming elections who provided basic facilities to them and would not be deceived by tall claims of political jugglers at all, he added and said that popularity of Imran Khan was increased among the people due to his commitment of make the country corruption free and to shape the country as real welfare state and people desired to see Imran Khan as Prime Minister once again.

Internet service restored in Gwadar

QUETTA (APP): Internet service has been restored in the port city of Gwadar, said Farah Azeem Shah, spokesperson of the Balochistan government on Thursday. In a statement issued by the DGPR, she said that in order to maintain the law and order situation, mobile and internet services were temporarily halted in Gwadar city.

Amnesty International demanded the restoration of

the internet in Gwadar city. "The shutdown of internet service was extended until the complete restoration of law and order in the coastal city," the spokesperson recalled, adding that the government restored 3g and 4g internet services after the law and order improved in Gwadar. She noted that after the week-long protest, the situation in Gwadar has been improving gradually as the citizens are satisfied

with the government's measures for peace and security.

The provincial government is taking timely measures while realizing the problems of the people of Gwadar. Due to the untiring efforts of the administration, business and other activities are fully restored. About trade activities at the port, she noted that Gwadar port is also fully functional.



HYDERABAD: Workers of PPP (SB) cutting the cake during the 95th birthday anniversary of founding chairman of PPP and late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.



Migrants crowd Mexico's refugee offices

TAPACHULA/MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Thousands of migrants have flocked to government offices in southern Mexico seeking asylum since the United States said it would keep restrictions used to quickly expel hundreds of thousands of migrants who have crossed the US-Mexico border. Last month, the US Supreme Court said it would maintain a COVID-19 era measure for expediting expulsions of undocumented migrants to Mexico until it had had time to consider Republican arguments against its repeal, which US President Joe Biden said could extend the curbs until at least June.

Meanwhile, Biden administration officials told Reuters the measure known as Title 42 could soon be applied to more nationalities, including Cubans, Nicaraguans and Haitians, stirring fears of expulsions and encouraging migrants to seek asylum to safeguard freedom of movement inside Mexico, analysts and officials say. Cuban migrant German Ortiz, who is waiting to apply for asylum in the Mexican city of Tapachula near the Guatemalan border, wants to make his way quickly to the United States.

"Once the new law is enforced, they'll close the road to us," said Ortiz, who arrived in Tapachula on Dec. 31. "We don't want to risk it, we must get to the border now." Mexico currently only accepts certain nationalities expelled from the United States, but is expected to soon take in

more under Title 42 as Washington deals with a record 2.2 million migrants arrests at the US southwest border in 2022. Title 42 was originally put in place to curb the spread of COVID, but US health authorities have since said it is no longer needed for public health reasons. Immigrant advocates say the policy is inhumane and it exposes vulnerable migrants to serious risks, like kidnapping or assault, in Mexican border towns.

Andres Ramirez, head of Mexico's Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), estimated that up to 5,000 migrants turned up at COMAR's Tapachula offices on Jan. 2 and 3 - among the largest groups the agency has ever seen in such a short time. Many of the migrants included Haitians and Nicaraguans. Ramirez said many migrants seek asylum to obtain documents they believe are necessary to traverse Mexico so they can then go to the US-Mexico border later. Mexico has sought to contain mass movement of migrants toward the US border by breaking up caravans and setting up checkpoints throughout the country.

Ramirez believed the mass of recent arrivals could be migrants from Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti seeking to reach the United States before rules change. "They're trying to run," he said. Police in Tapachula and the National Guard erected fences around COMAR offices to block large crowds of migrants,

Reuters images show.

"I've been sleeping here since Jan. 1, waiting for them to help me, to give me shelter," said Mauricio Hilario, a 27-year-old Salvadoran migrant camping outside the COMAR building with dozens of other people, including small children. Nearly 400,000 migrants were detained in Mexico through November, twice as many as in 2019, official data show. Migration is expected to feature prominently on the agenda when US President Joe Biden meets his Mexican and Canadian counterparts for a leaders' summit next week in Mexico City.

Lorena Mena, director of Continente Movil, a think tank specializing in migration issues, said any expansion of Title 42 would likely increase risky migration because traffickers will encourage expelled migrants to keep crossing the border as they have not been officially deported. "The fact that people cross borders does not take away their rights, among them, to request asylum," she added, saying many will try again.

Some migrants, such as Raquel, a 44-year-old Venezuelan who was selling boiled eggs with salt to pay for a small, shared room in Tapachula, expressed hope the summit could yield a plan that will make it easier to reach the United States. "I'd like both countries to help us and give us a chance to get in ... legally without having to risk crossing Mexico or turning ourselves in," she said.

China releases Covid hospital data after reporting gap, says WHO

GENEVA (Reuters): The World Health Organization received data from China on new COVID-19 hospitalisations after a reporting gap, with figures on Thursday showing a nearly 50% increase in the week to Jan. 1. The UN health agency received no data from China in the weeks after Beijing lifted its zero-COVID policy in early December, prompting some health experts to question whether it might be hiding information on the extent of its outbreak.

The WHO's latest report showed 22,416 new hospitalisations for mainland China in the week to Jan. 1 versus 15,161 the previous week. This was still below the all-time peak of nearly 29,000 admissions in early December. Over the same week, the report showed China had 218,019 new cases and 648 new deaths, although these figures typically include Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau as well as mainland China. During the same period, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported nine deaths.

The WHO did not release a report last week due to end of year holidays. WHO officials gave their clearest criticism yet of China's recent handling of the pandemic, saying COVID-19 data is not giving an accurate picture of the situation and under-represents the number of hospitalisations and deaths. The body is preparing to meet Chinese scientists on Thursday as part of a wider briefing among member states on the global COVID-19 situation as concerns grow about the rapid spread of the virus in the world's No. 2 economy.

Venezuela receives first European cruise ship

CARACAS (AFP): Venezuela received its first European cruise ship in 15 years after long being avoided by tourists due to high levels of insecurity and economic turmoil. The Bahamas-flagged "Amadea" docked at the Caribbean island of Margarita with almost 500 passengers -- mainly from Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland -- on board.

"For many years Venezuela was off the radar of cruise ships," said Tourism Minister Ali Padron, as he welcomed the historic docking. Exchange controls, product scarcity and unreliable basic services such as water and electricity have long kept foreigners at bay, forcing travel agencies to close their doors. Venezuela "became a very insecure, high-risk destination," Reinaldo Pulido, vice-president of the Conseturismo tourism council, told AFP.

But after years of hyperinflation and a currency in free fall that plunged Venezuelans into misery and pushed millions to flee the country, the ravaged economy -- and tourism sector -- has recently shown timid signs of recovery. The de facto dollarization of the economy and easing of price controls have bolstered imports, resulting in a greater variety of products on offer and new shops opening. And since last year, the country has received tourists from Russia who are unwelcome in many other countries since the start of the war in Ukraine.

There are no official tourism figures by which to measure the trend. For Conseturismo president Leudo Gonzalez, the arrival of the Amadea "opens the possibility of (Venezuela) returning to the radar of the main cruise lines."

Philippine police chief offers to quit over drug-linked cops

MANILA (AP): The Philippine national police chief said Thursday he has tendered his resignation to encourage nearly a thousand other ranking police officials to do the same to regain public trust after some enforcers were arrested due to illegal drugs, further tainting the police force's notorious image.

Interior Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. appealed to all police generals and colonels to submit their "courtesy resignations" in a drastic move to improve the police force's image after law enforcers in the frontlines of the drug crackdown were caught engaging in drug dealing. Police Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr. told a televised news conference that those who would submit their "courtesy resignations" -- offers to voluntarily resign from the force -- would stay in their jobs unless President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. decides to accept their resignation after an investigation. Azurin dispelled fears of a massive loss of leaders that could paralyze the 227,000-member force.

He also defended the police top brass, saying less than 10 of more than 100 generals were currently being investigated for alleged links to illegal drugs. He said some fellow officials opposed the move and lamented that just a few misfits were ruining the image and careers of a majority of decent officers, including hundreds of full colonels. "Our organization is on trial here," Azurin told a nationally televised news conference.

The call by Abalos for top police resignations sparked questions and concerns because, for years, an internal police disciplinary office along with a police commission has been investigating and helping prosecute officers accused of extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, as well as those accused of crimes and corruption under the government's anti-drug campaign. Others said the move could demoralize police officials who carry out their work properly. "While this process may be outside the disciplinary machinery of the Philippine National Police, this will be undertaken due to the exigency of the situation," Azurin said.

He asked a five-member committee, which would be formed to assess



possible links of police generals and colonels to the illegal drugs trade, to be fair and objective. The national police force's image took a blow in October, when a police sergeant was arrested for drug pushing and for helping conceal nearly a ton of methamphetamines, a powerful and prohibited stimulant in Manila. A regional chief of the country's main antinarcotics agency and his men were implicated in a brazen drug dealing that happened in his office in December. The alarming arrests bolstered concerns over a police force that former President Rodrigo Duterte used to enforce his brutal anti-drugs crackdown, which left more than 6,200 mostly poor suspects dead based on police estimates and sparked an International Criminal Court investigation as a possible crime against humanity.

Duterte himself had once described the police force as "rotten to the core" but still proceeded to harness law enforcers nationwide to carry out his extra tough anti-drug campaign. In 2017, he ordered the police to stop all anti-drug operations amid mounting criticisms after rogue anti-narcotics officers were accused of strangling to death a South Korean businessman in the main police camp in the capital region. He later allowed the police to resume anti-drug raids. Human Rights Watch said the call for

top police resignations could work against the government's anti-drug campaign.

"It is a cynical ploy that allows abusers to evade accountability, especially because Abalos invoked the defects of the criminal justice and judicial systems to try to justify his idea," said Carlos Conde of Human Rights Watch. Marcos Jr. had said he would continue his predecessor's anti-drug campaign but would do it differently, including by focusing on the rehabilitation of drug users and avoiding the use of excessive force. In an interview with The Associated Press in New York in September, Marcos redirected his criticism to law enforcers when asked if Duterte went too far with his lethal drug crackdown.

"His people went too far sometimes," Marcos had told the AP. "We have seen many cases where policemen, other operatives, some were just shady characters that we didn't quite know where they came from and who they were working for. But now we've gone after them." Marcos has not taken aggressive actions to prosecute his predecessors over the massive drug killings. He teamed up with Duterte's popular daughter, now Vice President Sara Duterte, in an alliance that has been credited for helping him win the presidency in the 2022 elections.

Longest-serving Palestinian prisoner freed from Israeli prison

WEST BANK (Agencies): The longest-serving Palestinian prisoner, Karim Younis, has been released after serving 40 years in Israeli prisons. Israeli prison authorities released Younis, 66, from Hadarim prison just north of Tel Aviv on Thursday morning.

He was arrested in 1983 and charged in Israeli courts with the killing of an Israeli soldier in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights three years prior. Younis hails from the Palestinian village of Ara within Israel, where large crowds of relatives and friends greeted him on Thursday. Younis spoke to Al Jazeera shortly after his release, comparing it to a "military operation".

He said that he had been moved between different police cars before being dropped off at a location that turned out to be a bus station in Ranana, a town north of Tel Aviv. There, he was able to get in contact with his family, with the help of a passer-by. Reporting from Ara, Al Jazeera's Imran Khan said Younis was released at 5:30am (02:30GMT) and that people had poured into the streets of his village to welcome him. "He was a key figure in the Palestinian struggle," said Khan. "He is seen as somebody who was a rising star within Palestinian politics when he was arrested and charged with murder."

While the vast majority of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails are from the occupied West Bank, Younis is a Palestinian citizen of Israel. "The Palestinians say he was simply resisting the occupation, the Israelis say this was an internal Israeli matter. He was originally sentenced to life, which was then commuted to 40 years. He is being released simply for the fact that he served his sentence," added Khan. Israeli military intelligence visited Younis' family prior to his release and "told them not to mark it", said Khan. However, it appears that the family and villagers in Ara have disregarded those instructions.

Younis said that officers came to his cell in the early hours of the morning and told him he was to be released. "I wanted to shower and get ready, but they prevented me," he said. Younis was eventually picked up by a relative and brought to his hometown of Ara. Israeli authorities have not commented on the reports. Upon his release, Younis visited the grave of his mother who died eight months ago, with images of him emotional at the grave shared by local and international media outlets. There are some 4,700 Palestinian prisoners currently held in Israeli prisons, including 150 children and 835 people held without trial or charge.

Mali escapes sanctions over detention of 46 Ivorian soldiers

BAMAKO (Agencies): West African leaders will not go through with a threat to sanction Mali for jailing 46 Ivorian soldiers, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said, preferring to give time for Togo's mediation in the diplomatic spat to bear fruit.

Malian authorities detained the Ivorian troops after they arrived at Bamako airport on July 10 to provide backup security for a United Nations peacekeeping mission, accusing them of being "mercenaries". The move sparked diplomatic tensions between Bamako and Abidjan, which has decided not to replace its military contingent with the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) when the current group rotates out in August.

Regional bloc ECOWAS gave Mali a deadline of January 1 to free the troops or face sanctions.

Nevertheless, a Malian court last month sentenced the troops to 20 years in prison. Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo, the current head of ECOWAS, told journalists that "there will be no immediate sanctions against Mali". "We have given time for Togolese mediators to do their job, in order to resolve the situation. It's just a matter of common sense," he said.

Togolese President Faure Gnassingbe paid a "friendly working visit" to Bamako, the Malian presidency said in a statement. An official at the Malian presidency, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that Gnassingbe had called for a

"presidential pardon" for the troops during his meeting with Malian coup leader Assimi Goita. Of the 49 soldiers who were initially arrested, three women were freed, however, the court sentenced them to death in absentia in its December 30 ruling.

The troops were found guilty of an "attack and conspiracy against the government" and seeking to undermine state security, public prosecutor Ladji Sara said in a statement last month. In his New Year's address, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara promised that the imprisoned soldiers "will soon return to Ivorian soil". "We must trust the head of state," Ivorian government spokesman Amadou Coulibaly said after a cabinet meeting.

"Ivory Coast has chosen

a way -- that of negotiation -- it is the diplomatic way, we remain resolutely committed to this path," he added. He declined to comment on the convictions of the Ivorian soldiers. "We never comment on court decisions taken in Ivory Coast; there is no reason for us to comment on court decisions taken abroad," he said.

Ivory Coast has categorically denied the soldiers were "mercenaries". On December 22, an Ivorian delegation visited Bamako to discuss the detention of the soldiers. At the end of that visit, a memorandum was signed, and Ivorian defence minister Tene Birahima Ouattara said the matter was "on the way to resolution". However, Goita did not mention the Ivorian soldiers in his end-of-year speech.

EU offers China free vaccines as Covid surge

BRUSSELS (Reuters): The European Union has offered free COVID-19 vaccines to China, the EU executive said, as infections there surged following Beijing's relaxation of its "zero-COVID" policies. China has not responded to the offer yet, a spokesperson for the European Commission told journalists at a regular briefing. He did not specify the amount of vaccines the EU was offering or their manufacturers.

"In view of the COVID situation in China, (Health) Commissioner Stella Kyriakides has reached out to her Chinese counterparts to offer EU solidarity and support," he said. "This includes public health

expertise as well as variant-adapted EU vaccine donations." Asked whether Beijing would accept the EU offer, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Mao Ning sidestepped a direct reply, telling Reuters that China's vaccination rate and treatment capacity continued to rise and its supplies were "adequate".

She said China was open to "strengthening solidarity and cooperation with the international community" to better meet its pandemic challenges, though it could "meet the demand of anyone who wants to be vaccinated". China has so far insisted on using only Chinese-made vaccines -- which are of the inactivated virus type and not based

on the Western mRNA technology -- for its own population. Last month, Germany shipped 11,500 BioNTech COVID vaccines to German companies and embassy and consulate locations in China for use by German nationals there.

A source familiar with the situation said at the time that talks were underway with other European Union governments about getting them to citizens of other nationalities. EU health experts were to meet to discuss the COVID situation in member states ahead of another gathering when EU government representatives will weigh a coordinated approach by the bloc to travellers from China.

Wagner while neighbouring Ghana's president alleged the same thing in December. "There was a coup [in Mali] and there is an organised and methodical anti-French discourse going on," Colonna said. "Potentially, yes, one can imagine a link in this anti-French campaign and Wagner."

Collapse, contamination: Mexican scientists sound alarm at Mayan Train

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Parts of Mexico's remote southern jungles have barely changed since the time of the ancient Maya. In the eyes of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a railway his government is building - known as the Tren Maya - will bring modern connectivity to areas for generations deprived of significant economic benefits.

But the railway and its hasty construction also critically endanger pristine wilderness and ancient cave systems beneath the jungle floor, droves of scientists and environmental activists say. The railway "is splitting the jungle in half," said Ismael Lara, a guide who takes tourists to a cave that shelters millions of bats near the

Calakmul Biosphere Reserve. Lara fears the train, due to pass close by, will disrupt wildlife routes and attract too much development to fragile ecosystems.

Over almost a year, Reuters photographed construction at points along the full length of the planned rail track, documenting the evolution of the flagship project which Lopez Obrador has pledged to finish by the end of 2023. The 1,470 km (910 miles) of rail are set to carry diesel and electric trains through the Yucatan Peninsula and connect Mexico's top tourist destination Cancun to the ancient Mayan temples of Chichen Itza and Palenque.

The railway has deeply divided

Mexicans and the controversies surrounding the construction exemplify struggles developing countries across the globe face to balance economic progress with environmental responsibility. FONATUR, Mexico's tourism agency charged with the project, has said the railway will lift more than a million people out of poverty and could create up to 715,000 new jobs by 2030. Construction costs are seen at up to \$20 billion, Lopez Obrador said in July.

But with the project already billions of dollars over budget and behind schedule, scientists and activists say the government cut corners in its environmental risk assessments in a bid to complete it while

Lopez Obrador is still in office. In December, United Nations experts warned the railway's status as a national security project allowed the government to side-step usual environmental safeguards, and called on the government to protect the environment in line with global standards.

FONATUR defended the speed with which the studies were produced. "Years are not required, expertise, knowledge and integration capacity are required," it said in response to questions from Reuters. It declined to comment on the UN statement. The Tren Maya route cuts a swathe up to 14 meters (46 ft) wide through some of the world's most unique ecosystems, bringing the modern world close

er to vulnerable species such as jaguars - and bats. It will pass above a system of thousands of subterranean caves carved out from the region's soft limestone bedrock by water over millions of years.

Crystalline pools known as cenotes punctuate the Yucatan peninsula, where the limestone surface has fallen in to expose the groundwater. The world's longest known underground river passes through the caves, which have also been the site of discoveries such as ancient human fossils and Maya artifacts like a canoe estimated to be more than 1,000 years old. If built badly, the railway risks breaking through the fragile ground, including into yet-to-be explored caves below,

says Emiliano Monroy-Rios, a Mexican geochemist with Northwestern University who has extensively studied the area's caves and cenotes.

Diesel, he adds, could also leak into the network of subterranean pools and rivers, the main source of fresh water on the peninsula. With less than 20% of the subterranean system believed to have been mapped, according to several scientists interviewed by Reuters, such damage could limit important geological discoveries. The government's environmental impact study for Section 5, the most controversial stretch, says environmental impacts are "insignificant" and have been adequately mitigated.

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 415-3740551

Tact of Myanmar’s dictator

MYANMAR'S ruling military dictator, General Min Aung Hlaing, unveiled plans for an election later this year and called for national unity during his speech on the 75th anniversary of the country's independence. Military dictators urged their countrymen, other nations, and international organizations to support the genuine, discipline-flourishing multiparty democratic system in Southeast Asian nations. General also announced pardons for thousands of political prisoners along with a partial commutation of the sentences of other inmates not convicted of serious crimes, in a bid to normalize people-military ties and form a conducive environment for the military junta.

Myanmar Military Junta invaded its nation by overthrowing the elected government of Nobel literate Aung San Suu Kyi in early 2021. The Military Generals ousted the elected government over allegations of poll rigging and corruption and put the Country's legitimate Prime Minister behind the bars. The countrywide protests erupted against the military coup which had been continuing over the past two years. The global community including the United Nations, the US, and the European Union imposed sanctions against General Hlaing and his senior aides, however utmost International pressure and global sanctions did not alter the course of the dictatorial regime.

The public was outraged by the military coup against Suu Kyi's popular elected government and the public uprising met with a horrified and brutal crackdown by the military General, that not only intensified the violence across Myanmar but also led to the emergence of an armed insurgency in the country. According to the reports, over 27000 Burmese had been killed, thousands had been arrested, and several villages were burnt out by the Burmese military during 22 months-long civil unrest. Aung San Suu Kyi was trailed on 18 offenses and a closed-door court awarded her 33 years imprisonment on different accounts, while her National League for Democracy (NLD) party has effectively been broken up, with its Supremo and several important leaders in detention or hiding.

Presently, the Burmese Dictator wanted to invent a new kind of democracy that sufficiently fulfills the political needs of the general along with approving him as a long-term civilian cum Military head of the state simultaneously. The military junta has taken practical steps toward holding polls by the end of this month after the ongoing six-month extension of a state of emergency is completed in Myanmar. The military intends to introduce a new political group to provide an alternative political leadership while keeping all forms of dissent and anti-coup leaders behind the bars.

Previously, the Burmese general used Buddhist monks against Rohingya Muslims and wept the Muslim minority from their Country, now those trained fighters had joined the anti-Army protests and built tremendous pressure on the government.

Although, the Myanmar general has worn a white cloak to hide to change guise and also set the stage to form a political herd to deceive the world, however, the global community is aware of his malafide intentions.

Religious seminaries and modern education

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the government would extend its maximum support to the seminaries to help them impart education to modern-day needs. According to the Premier, the seminaries are Islamic or Pakistani NGOs, which are delivering free-of-cost education, books, and boarding facilities to poor and orphan students in the country. Shehbaz assured the Madrasas of providing maximum administrative autonomy and easing their registration process besides extending government support in their social work.

Madrasas and religious seminaries are magnificent school systems in the country that provide free religious and traditional education to poor children in the country. Currently, around five million students are studying in thousands of Madrasas across the country. The seminaries also teach the students to memorize the Holy Quran besides providing Fiqh and Hadeeths and other subjects of Islamic Shariah. Historically, Madrasas and religious seminaries played an important role in promoting literacy in the past, however, Madrasas and Masjids in some parts of the country had been used for recruiting and mobilizing Mujahideen during the Afghan jihad. Later, a few seminaries were also used by anti-state elements for the accomplishment of their nefarious designs against the state during the war on terror. Due to reasons, these vital institutions had been labeled as terrorism nurseries by the West and past governments introduced a mechanism for monitoring and registration of religious seminaries.

The successive governments had endeavored to transform religious seminaries into Modern Madrasas to gradually bring them into mainstream society. While current-day subjects including English, Math, science, and information technology in their sallybai so these institutions also produce doctors, Engineers, and IT specialists along with the religious teachers and Islamic Scholars. However, the government must not ease the monitoring and registration mechanism regarding religious seminaries, rather the certification of Imams, masjids, and religious scholars should be strengthened, besides the provision of financial, literary, and technical support to Madrasas, so no-half literate or ill-motivated person could not use this guise for bad intention. However, if possible, the government should allocate a monthly honorarium for the Imam masjid so they live a dignified life in society.

Quote of the day

“Fall down seven times, get up eight.”
— Japanese Proverb

IN 1980, both the United States and the Soviet Union possessed the means and the will to bring about the end of the world. The world's only superpowers were locked in an arms race fueled by an immoral and ignoble strategy to preserve a tenuous, often tumultuous peace by threatening the annihilation of the citizens of each nation—the madness of Mutual Assured Destruction. The year marked the beginning of the fourth decade of the Cold War.

The flawed diplomacy of détente had done little more than maintain a stand-off between the United States and the Soviet Union, even as Moscow increased its nuclear warfare capabilities to some 40,000 warheads, fielded the largest conventional military in Europe, continued to hold Eastern Europe captive, and offered ongoing support to armed rebels and communist insurgencies on three continents. Foreign policy experts and senior government officials in Washington saw the Cold War as a permanent fixture of the geopolitical landscape.

The newly elected President of the United States did not.

William Inboden's new book, *The Peacemaker*: Ronald Reagan, the Cold War, and the World on the Brink is a masterful account of the most significant American foreign policy success of the 20th century—the orchestrated demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. In this crisply written appraisal of Reagan's singular role in crafting and implementing grand strategy, Inboden details Reagan's determination to address both the scourge of Soviet communism and the apocalyptic threat of nuclear war.

The author has the experience and first-hand knowledge needed to assess national security strategy. Inboden is the executive director and William Powers, Jr. Chair of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin. Previously he had served as a staff member in both the United States

Senate and the House of Representatives. From 2005 to 2007, Inboden served as the senior director for Strategic Planning and Institutional Reform at the National Security Council under President George W. Bush.

The Peacemaker is also a fine work of solid research and scholarship that uncovers new information about this transformative period in geopolitics. Readers will enjoy it not only as a history of the ending of the Cold War, but as an interpretive history of U.S. foreign policy under Reagan. Inboden draws repeatedly on primary sources to create an unfolding narrative of Reagan's White House years, a chronological approach that gives “the reader the vantage point of seeing history as it happened and as it appeared to Reagan and the senior members of his administration.” Those sources include the vast collection in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Reagan's diary, hundreds of unclassified documents, and first-hand accounts from Inboden's interviews with dozens of senior Reagan administration officials. The author also provides a complete bibliography and seventy pages of notes of attribution and welcome elaboration and explanation.

Negotiated Surrender
What emerges from this able scholarship is a comprehensive review of the implementation of a security strategy Inboden describes as negotiated surrender. Reagan “perceived the Soviet Union's frailty and illegitimacy and developed a strategy to exploit its weaknesses while also partnering with it to reduce the risk of nuclear apocalypse.” As president, he would lead the effort to negotiate for reduced tensions, arms reductions, and ultimately to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Reagan was a champion of the liberal democratic order. “He believed in a trinity of religious freedom, political freedom, and economic freedom,” with an almost religious fervor and loathed Soviet communism for its denial of these freedoms. Reagan's strategy was not “merely to delegitimize Soviet communism,

but to show a positive alternative of democratic capitalism” and put extreme pressure on the ideological, economic, and military fault lines in the Soviet system.

He sought to break this system apart by finding fissures and driving wedges into every crack. He pursued policies to free the Warsaw Pact satellite nations from Moscow's control, to liberate the Soviet people from the police state, to isolate the Kremlin from the rest of the world, and to impose such unsustainable costs on Soviet communism that it would collapse.

Reagan pursued a comprehensive Cold War strategy that sought to rebuild America's strengths and pose them against the Soviet Union across virtually every dimension.

Inboden acknowledges that the two prongs of Reagan's strategy—negotiation and pressure—“can, and often did, exist in tension with each other throughout the Reagan presidency.” That elemental tension would bedevil staff who sought to implement policy—Secretary of State Schultz viewed the policy as more of a hawk than did the dovish Secretary of State Weinberger—cause turmoil in the White House, provide ammunition for the president's critics, and alternately enrage and befuddle Moscow.

Peace Through Strength

Inboden argues the keystone of Reagan's strategy was the ability to negotiate from a position of strength. That strength would come from a restored and robust American economy and a rebuilt military capability. Reagan proposed and Congress approved a \$1 trillion defense budget for 1982-86, but the program did not consist only of massive budget increases: “At its core were cutting-edge weapons systems based on unique technologies that could outmatch anything the Kremlin wielded no matter how much more the Soviets spent and built.” In addition to rebuilding the nation's military might, Reagan restored its morale and returned military service to a place of honor in

the hearts of Americans. Even as the United States embarked on an accelerated program to upgrade its nuclear capabilities and build precision-guided munitions, stealth aircraft, and the world's largest carrier navy, Reagan committed to reframing the strategic balance between the superpowers. Reagan proposed to build a massive, space-based, missile defense system to shield America from nuclear attack.

The Peacemaker recounts how the “process of creating what would become the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was interagency malpractice.” In one of the most startling revelations in the book, Inboden describes how Reagan worked in secret to draft an address to the nation to propose a “comprehensive and intensive effort” to render “nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete,” writing the most important parts of the speech himself. Knowing that Schultz and Weinberger would oppose it, Reagan simply left them out of the loop.

Schultz and Weinberger only learned that Reagan would be announcing one of the most consequential decisions of his presidency two days before the speech. Then, as NSC official John Poindexter recalls, “all hell broke loose.” Though the secretaries of state and defense rarely aligned on policy questions, both agreed that the SDI announcement would overturn decades of strategic doctrine, rattle the allies with fears that America was retracting its nuclear umbrella, and violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Schultz importuned Reagan to amend the speech. . . . Pentagon officials . . . scrambled to kill the proposal outright. . . and warned that SDI would “create a furor from which we would never recover.”

Reagan incorporated some of Schultz's edits, aiming to mollify the allies and comply with the ABM treaty, but otherwise disregarded the caterwauling of his staff.

Reagan and Gorbachev
Throughout The Peacemaker, the author

credits Reagan with both an intuitive and a personal approach to the conduct of foreign policy. Despite what Pentagon and CIA analysts were telling him, for example, Reagan believed the Soviet Union was nearing an economic crisis. Moscow simply could not sustain its military spending and then “SDI sent tremors through the Kremlin” once officials understood they had neither the money nor the technological capabilities to keep pace with the newest American initiative.

Reagan developed genuine personal relationships with foreign heads of state, not merely as statecraft, but as Inboden claims, because he genuinely empathized with other people. His rapport with Britain's Margaret Thatcher, is of course, well documented. Inboden also explores the importance of Reagan's relations with world leaders that included Japan's Yasuhiro Nakasone, West Germany's Helmut Kohl, and Canada's Brian Mulroney. No relationship would prove more pivotal, however, than the one Reagan forged with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Inboden understands that the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union—despite revisionist claims of structural factors and trends in the international system that argue inevitability—was neither foreordained nor without risk of catastrophe. The author credits much of the result to the personal relationship developed by Reagan and Gorbachev as together, “their actions would lead to the slashing of nuclear arsenals, the liberation of Eastern Europe, the dismantling of the Soviet Empire and the Cold War's peaceful end.”

The author explains how Reagan came to understand Gorbachev was a reformer, how Gorbachev realized Reagan's desire for a nuclear-free world was genuine, and how the two weathered diplomatic exchanges that would otherwise have scotched any chance at future rapprochement. Inboden, for example, explains how the desultory outcome of the first meeting between the two leaders at their summit in Reykjavik, Iceland still

“showed both sides just how far each was willing to go in taking dramatic steps to transform the Cold War.” As Gorbachev and Reagan came away from that meeting “their momentary frustration turned to grudging, then open admiration—and trust.”

That trust would bear fruit more than a year later. At a White House ceremony, Reagan and Gorbachev would sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, “a document unprecedented in the annals of the Cold War.” For the first time in history arms control had been replaced by a negotiated agreement for arms reduction and an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles was eliminated. It was a treaty six years in the making since Reagan first proposed the INF and the first sign that real change was coming to the Soviet Union, and even that the Cold War was thawing.

For Reagan, it was the final vindication of his once-ridiculed strategy of negotiating peace from a position of strength. In years to come, this lesson in superpower strategy and diplomacy seems to have been discarded as future presidents embraced America's unchallenged military strength as their object of first resort—in Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq, and in flailing attempts at nation-building. Reagan “was in fact extremely reluctant to deploy the military in combat.” During his presidency, he only ordered ground forces into combat, once, in Grenada. Reagan's was a strategy not only for the Cold War, but for careful consideration framing strategy in future superpower confrontations.

Reagan once summarized his approach to ending the Cold War in five words: “We win and they lose.” The Peacemaker explains in studied detail that Reagan signaled with that phrase a complete departure from decades of American diplomacy and policy. For him, it summarized both a strategy and resolve to negotiate with Moscow, reduce the nuclear arms threat, end the Cold War, and dissolve the Soviet Union. And it worked.

A ‘desert storm’

David Narmania

then at least did not look criminal. But gradually, due to the lack of competitors, the United States ceased to measure their strength. First, Yugoslavia - here NATO's criminal intervention in the conflict at least ended in success for the West. However, further steps finally convinced the world: the sole rule of Washington not only does not bring global justice, but is also problematic even for the United States itself - and, as a result, for other countries.

First, the invasion of Afghanistan, which turned into a shameful flight 20 years later, and then a new operation in Iraq, which laid a wonderful foundation for the emergence of the "Islamic State", demonstrated extremely convincingly that the United States could not cope.

At the same time, under the guise of democratization and with the support of the White House, people who were very far from the values of freedom, equality and fraternity came to power - for example, Saakashvili, who unleashed a war in South Ossetia and accelerated the final split of Ukraine, Yushchenko. Similar events were observed in the Middle East - not a single state began to live better after the "Arab Spring", and some even ceased to exist.

All these events forced us to return from fantasies about a single humanity to

the harsh realities of an imperfect world order, which, by the way, continued to operate here according to the old laws - at least in terms of international relations.

And these laws are as follows: over time, the systems of international relations replace each other, ensuring for some time a relatively stable existence for the participating countries. This is done through the rules of the game formulated in international agreements and institutions that ensure their observance. As these institutions weaken and the balance of power shifts, one system is replaced by another. On paper, everything looks smooth, but there is one thing: since 1648, when the first - Westphalian - system of international relations was formed, the transition from one SMO to another has never been peaceful. It was always preceded by major conflicts: the Vienna system marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Versailles system marked the end of World War I, and the Yalta-Potsdam system marked the end of World War II.

The guarantors of the latter system were the USA and the USSR, which headed the capitalist and socialist blocs, which were generally equal in strength. But after the voluntary renunciation of its role by the Soviet Union, it actually ceased to exist.

And now we can sum up the intermediate results: the West could not offer the world a universal new model of the device, and sole control turned out to be beyond its power. And here we come to a disappointing conclusion: we are in for a long period of formation of the new system.

And as the last four centuries of world history show, each subsequent war, in which the world order is born, is bloodier than the previous one.

Does this mean that we are waiting for the third world? Well, at least what is happening now gives hope that the leaders of the leading powers understand the danger of a nuclear conflict and are trying to avoid it. Perhaps the world will face a series of regional confrontations that will witness the weakening of yesterday's leaders and the strengthening of ambitious challengers.

Probably, the special operation of Russian troops in Ukraine is the first conflict of its kind. Russia turned out to be the main loser in the Cold War, and therefore (unlike, for example, China) could not afford a calm progressive development, since it faced the threat of further collapse due to the expansion of NATO to the east.

The fact is that, having lost military bases in Crimea in 2014, Russia could not have carried out a military operation in Syria: Novorossiysk would not have coped with providing a speech can be added to the long list of Joe Biden's gaffes that have fed into growing speculation about the cognitive decline of America's oldest president. The Democrat, who turned 80 in November, 2022, acknowledged that it was fair to be concerned about his age, but defended his mental and physical fitness for office on MSNBC's The Sunday Show. "I think it's a legitimate

troops in the Middle East the way Sevastopol could do. And without the participation of the Kremlin, the Assad regime would not have survived in the confrontation with the IS and the opposition. This would turn the region into a hotbed of instability - then the export of radical Islamism to the Caucasus and other Muslim regions of Russia would begin. And there, the terrorist attacks in Moscow are within easy reach. Does anyone doubt that extremists and separatists would receive support from the "civilized world"? Well, history shows that ideological contradictions did not prevent the West from actively sponsoring Russia's enemies.

All of the above makes Russia the main interest in the formation of a new world order that would ensure its security. The main one, but not the only one. China, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia and many other countries have gained strength over three decades and are ready to defend their interests. In some cases, in confrontation not only with the West, but also with each other. But while they have so far been able to negotiate among themselves, the struggle between the "revisionists" and the "guardians" of the outgoing system of international relations is becoming more and more acute, not only on the Ukrainian front. And such problems are not solved in a hurry.

SLEWS of gaffes, biza-rre body movements and embarrassing instances such as shaking hands with "thin air" ha-ve left many questioning whether the oldest president in the history of the US - Joe Biden - is ment-ally fit to run the country.

Joe Biden has served up yet another installment of his off recurring “word salad” while giving a speech

in Kentucky on January 4. Speaking against the backdrop of the Brent Spence Bridge linking Cincinnati, Ohio, and Covington, Kentucky, while touting implementation of his huge \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, the octogenarian POTUS said:

“Our best days are ahead of us. Are not behind us. I’ve long said. I mean, this. I have never, ever, ever been more optimistic about

America's prospects. And am today. Never. Never. I've traveled over 140 countries around the world. I was the paraphrase the phrase in my old neighborhood. The rest of the countries the world is not a patch in our jeans. If we do what we want to do, we need to do.”

As those who heard this confusing mish mash of words tried to make sense

Svetlana Ekimenko

of it, Sen. Josh Hawley's, R-Mo., press secretary Abigail Marone commented that it, "makes perfect sense if your brain is mush."

Social media users similarly convulsed, with author and US media columnist Buzz Patterson joking that this was yet another episode of "what the hell did Joe Biden say?" The rambling attempt at

‘In charge of the nukes?’

Ukraine is one step away from the global energy revolution

WHILE the general Russian public was smoothly entering the new year and from bright, comfortable apartments wished victory for our military in the NVO zone, from the opposite side of the contact line they practically made a jump into the future. The prime minister of our southwestern neighbor said at the last cabinet meeting that Ukraine will build low-capacity power plants, which will create a decentralized energy system. At the same time, according to the plan of the Kyiv managers, new generation facilities will be implemented in the existing energy system. Also, the head of the Ukrainian government noted, much larger investments are required in their own gas production in order to increase the volume of domestic production.

Here one could laugh that the energy system of Ukraine will exist only as long as the Russian military command will allow it, but we will not. The idea of the so-called energy downshifting, that is, moving away from the construction of large generation facilities towards small and medium-sized power plants, has been floating around for a long time, actively inflating within the current liberal agenda by all kinds of politicians and pseudo-scientific fighters for the environment. Since another exclamation in this case was made from Ukraine, let's consider on its example the reality of the implementation of such, without a doubt, a revolutionary project for the transformation of the national energy supply. Moreover, Ukraine today is a testing ground where not only military and information technologies are tested, but also many other technologies.

Let's start with a purely infrastructural aspect.

At the end of 2021, the Ukrainian energy system was rightfully considered one of the most powerful in the European part of the continent. Naturally, all this is the achievement of Soviet industry and state planning, because independent Ukrainians built absolutely nothing in this sector.

At that time, four nuclear power plants were in operation: Rivne, South Ukrainian, Khmelnytsky and the infamous Zaporozhye NPP today. The total installed capacity of fifteen reactors was estimated at 13.5 gigawatts, and the share of nuclear electricity in the country's energy balance put Ukraine in second place after France.

The lion's share was also contributed by the main laborers of generation - local thermal power plants (TPPs), in total there were fifteen of them. These are Uglehorskaya, Zaporozhye, Burshtynskaya, Krivorozhskaya, Zmiievskaya, Starobeshevskaya, Trip-

olskaya, Ladyzhinskaya, Kurakhovskaya, Zueskaya, Luganskaya, Pridneprovskaya, Slavyanskaya, Dobrotvorskaya and Mironovskaya thermal power plants. All of them, without exception, worked on coal, and such grades as G (gas), ASH (anthracite coal) and T (skinny), that is, exactly the nomenclature that is mined within the borders of the Donetsk coal basin. For this, Ukraine should also thank the Soviet system, so hated by it, because when designing the republican energy systems, Moscow proceeded from the availability of a resource base with a minimum logistical shoulder.

It is not for nothing that we called coal-fired thermal power plants hard workers. Their turbines and boilers poured into the general network about 28 gigawatts, that is, twice as much as their nuclear counterparts. Here it is also necessary to mention the fact that 12 of the stations listed above are in one form or another part of the business empire of the Ukrainian oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, which means that the latter actually holds both the population and the government by the throat, manipulating prices and supplies as you please.

Ukraine is a full-flowing country, therefore there is also a hydropower sector, namely, in 1991, Kiev received 11 hydroelectric power plants (HPPs) as a legacy from the USSR. Among them are Dneprovskaya, Dniesterskaya (pumped storage and two cascades in Nagoryany and Novodnestrovsk), Kanevskaya, Kakhovskaya, Kyiv (PSPP plus a power turbine unit in Vyshgorod), Kremenchukskaya, Tashlykovskaya and the very tiny Tereblyarikskaya hydroelectric power station in Transcarpathia. Another six gigawatts with a ponytail in the common piggy bank.

But that's not all.

Twenty-one combined heat and power plants (CHP) also contributed, which, in addition to performing the main function, that is, heating and distributing water, also generated electricity along the way. In the volume of another 6.5 gigawatts. There are also four wind and seven solar power plants in the remnants, but their production in the overall balance is so negligible that mentioning them is just a waste of time.

In total, at the time of the beginning of the NWO, Ukraine had a single operating energy system with a total capacity of about 51 gigawatts.

According to the national operator Ukrenergo, in 2021, the country produced 156 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, of which more than half came from nuclear power plants. There is no contradiction here with what was said above. Kyiv, in full agreement with the local oligarchic

Sergey Savchuk

group, deliberately squeezed all possible production juices from nuclear power plants. The reason is extremely simple - nuclear electricity is the cheapest, in the same 2021 in Ukraine it was on average two times cheaper than coal and gas. Zelensky's team, under the guise of "Russia's aggression", not only increased prices for the population many times over, but also sharply increased exports during the period of peak prices. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine reported that in the period from January to October 2021, the proceeds from the sale of electricity abroad was \$326.9 million, and in 2022, that is, in the midst of hostilities, it was already \$542.5 million. The main buyers were Poland, Slovakia and Romania. As they say, to whom is war, and to whom is mother dear.

It is almost impossible to assess the current state of the Ukrainian generation, since Kyiv has introduced the strictest censorship and secrets any profile data. At the same time, the tricks used by the local military and power engineers are additionally noted. According to unverified information, piles of combustible materials like tires and oiled rags are laid out near the still operating thermal power plants and thermal power plants, which are set on fire (especially) if the Ukrainian air defense managed to shoot down the Russian "Caliber" or "Geran". This is done in order to mislead the Russian command by simulating the defeat of the object while it is actually intact.

Kyiv itself gives an indirect assessment. For example, the head of the board of Ukrenergo, Volodymyr Kudrytsky, recently described the extent of damage as unprecedented. Of course, this should be taken with a fair amount of skepticism, but the same Denys Shmygal urges Ukrainians to reduce electricity consumption by at least 25 percent, otherwise he threatens them with total and protracted blackouts.

Let's take it for granted that today, to one degree or another, from a third to a half of Ukrainian generation and distribution facilities have been damaged, with the exception of nuclear power plants, which the Russian General Staff does not include in principle in the list of targets for strikes. If we assume in theory that the line of contact will freeze for an indefinite period, no one even mentions the idea that attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure will stop. That is, missiles will fly, stations and substations will burn, local repairmen will restore and mask them, but the overall damage will increase. Simply because Kyiv does not even think about negotiations, more-

over, it behaves extremely boorishly.

Now back to the main topic of our conversation. Let's define terms.

Power plants with a capacity of up to 25 megawatts are considered small, while each power unit must have a capacity of no more than ten megawatts. The concept of an average power plant is rather vague; by default, all generation facilities in the power range above small, but below nuclear power are recorded in this category. That is, up to 400-500 megawatts.

We will immediately discard all kinds of renewable energy sources (renewable energy sources), since only a funeral team can build them as part of saving the country. The construction of coal and gas thermal power plants and thermal power plants was put on stream by China, where, according to rumors, physicists and power engineers managed to bring boilers to an ultra-supercritical level, and they have an efficiency of up to 60 percent. The problem is that interstate relations between Ukraine and China are at the bottom and show no signs of life. This was facilitated by total decommunization and the actual persecution of people even for wearing clothes with Soviet paraphernalia, to which the Chinese leadership is extremely sensitive. The final point was put by the scandal with Motor Sich, when the deal that had already taken place by direct order from Washington canceled, and the Chinese owners were simply thrown, in simple terms, for a very large amount.

Small - scale power generation is developing rapidly in Russia. Few people know that about 20 million people (that is, more than half of the population of Ukraine, if compared) in our country live in areas not covered by the central power supply. The light in these houses is provided by those same small stations, the scale of construction of which is slowly but steadily growing. For example, today, beyond the Urals, under the BOT contract (build-operate-transfer) scheme, a number of small thermal power plants and thermal power plants are being built, and several commissioned ones are already operating with a load of up to 95 percent. It is clear that Kyiv will never ask us for help, so we also reject this option.

Turkey has achieved great success in the middle segment. Local kulibins came up with a simple but effective concept, when a gas turbine and a tank for liquefied gas are installed on a watercraft. As a result, such an "electric barge" with a capacity of about 300-350 megawatts can be fitted to any island where it makes no sense to pull an overhead power line. Ankara is already selling such stations with might

and main and will gladly offer them to Kiev. The only problem is that Ukraine is a very "deep" country, from the southern sea edge to, for example, Sumy, about 500 kilometers. You can't stretch the wire for such a distance, but at the moment there is no experience of river-based Turkish floating thermal power plants.

America, beloved by Ukrainians, will not help either. No prejudice, just the bare facts.

The Americans really managed to "green" and increase the generation capacity within their country, but this did not happen due to new developments and the construction of fundamentally new facilities, but solely due to the transfer of the army from coal stations to natural gas. The latter appeared in abundance after the so-called shale revolution, when there was so much blue fuel that the US completely covered its own needs and began to export it.

In Ukraine, the situation with gas production is rotten.

In 2013, when Arseniy Yatsenyuk promised an ocean of his own gas for \$50 on air, Ukraine's own production was 21.4 billion cubic meters. By 2021, thanks to all the achievements of the Maidan, it has grown negatively to 19.8 billion. Even if consumption is steadily falling (30 billion cubic meters in 2020 and 27 billion in 2021), this type of fuel is still categorically lacking, moreover, deposits in the Black Sea, where it was planned to produce about ten billion cubic meters per year.

The European Union does not build or develop new generation power plants at all, mercilessly exploiting the remaining nuclear, gas and coal ones, experimenting with wind, tides and the sun along the way. As a result, prices for all categories of consumers stubbornly climbed up long before February last year, and in especially successful cases, certain areas and regions plunged into primordial darkness and coolness.

What Shmygal's government is counting on is absolutely incomprehensible, especially given the fact that Ukraine is currently bankrupt. Even Vladimir Zelensky admits this, endlessly demanding the next tranches of financial assistance. However, no one mentions that this assistance is not free of charge and the loans received in the form of guns and banknotes will have to be repaid, and even with interest. However, what kind of fairy tales you can not tell your fellow citizens, just to stay in power and keep your hands inside these very cash flows. It is strange that the Ukrainian prime minister did not promise to hold an international chess tournament in Vasyuki, the truthfulness would be approximately the same.

Maduro's legitimacy has been under attack for nearly a decade, since the 2015 Venezuelan parliamentary election.

That election is widely regarded as the last fully democratic election in the country.

The assembly members seated in that election in 2018 named Guaidó as acting president of the country during a constitutional crisis in 2018.

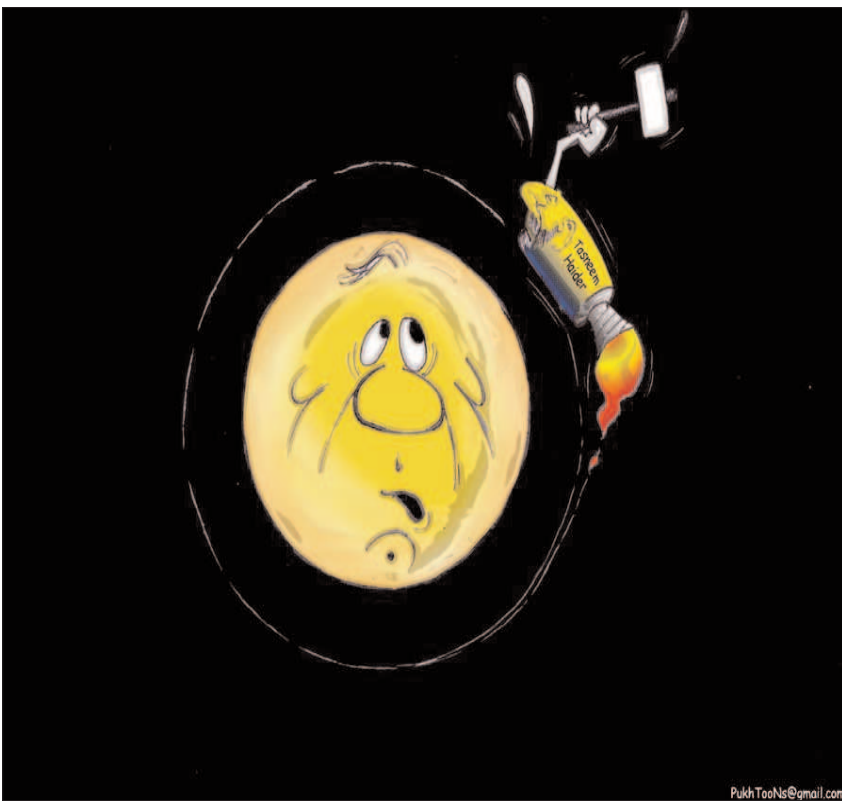
The Biden administration eased restrictions on Venezuela's oil sector in November following tentative progress achieved in Mexico City between the Maduro government and the political opposition, called the Unitary Platform, representing the 2015 National Assembly.

That was part of a White House strategy to encourage Maduro to take steps toward democratic reforms. The sanctions relief — valid for only six months — allows Chevron to ship oil from Venezuela to the U.S., and the proceeds are not expected to directly benefit Venezuela's state-owned oil company or the Maduro government.

While the oil exports add to the U.S. supplies — with the global energy market under strain amid efforts to squeeze Moscow's oil exports and bankrupt its ability to wage war on Ukraine — American officials and experts have said the Venezuelan supply is

A strong economy will help Marape's chances of survival but tough decisions like expenditure restraint or ending foreign exchange rationing will harm them.

The prime minister will then face a tough decision between prioritising the national interest or his own chances of political survival.



President Biden administration's Venezuela policy is in flux

Laura Kelly & Rafael Bernal

THE Biden administration's Venezuela policy is in flux after the country's US-backed opposition leader was ousted late last month amid political infighting within the Venezuelan democratic political coalition.

Juan Guaidó's ouster throws a wrench in U.S. and European policy toward the country, as most Western democracies recognized Guaidó as the legitimate president of Venezuela.

That ouster now threatens to upend the Biden administration's delicately laid plans to support democracy in Venezuela while carefully engaging with Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro to inject the country's substantial oil supplies into the global economy.

President Biden's strategy marked a reversal from the former Trump administration, which sought a maximum pressure campaign of sanctions and isolation against Maduro, and has drawn pushback from Republicans hawkish on Venezuela.

The administration secured the release last year of seven Americans in a prisoner exchange with Maduro; however, at least four Americans are still detained in the country.

"It seems that for now, for this phase, for this round, Maduro, of course, is gaining legitimacy, gaining leverage again," said Diego Area, the deputy director for strategic development at the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center.

Maduro's legitimacy has been under attack for nearly a decade, since the 2015 Venezuelan parliamentary election.

That election is widely regarded as the last fully democratic election in the country.

The assembly members seated in that election in 2018 named Guaidó as acting president of the country during a constitutional crisis in 2018.

The Biden administration eased restrictions on Venezuela's oil sector in November following tentative progress achieved in Mexico City between the Maduro government and the political opposition, called the Unitary Platform, representing the 2015 National Assembly.

That was part of a White House strategy to encourage Maduro to take steps toward democratic reforms.

The sanctions relief — valid for only six months — allows Chevron to ship oil from Venezuela to the U.S., and the proceeds are not expected to directly benefit Venezuela's state-owned oil company or the Maduro government.

While the oil exports add to the U.S. supplies — with the global energy market under strain amid efforts to squeeze Moscow's oil exports and bankrupt its ability to wage war on Ukraine — American officials and experts have said the Venezuelan supply is

not expected to make a huge difference in supplementing Russian oil on the market.

"It's too early to tell how fast Chevron will be able to move to get things up and running again, because this is a significant change at the operational level of how things functionally come together at the level of the oil fields," said Michael McCarthy, a professor at George Washington University's Elliott School for International Affairs.

Still, the careful opening to Maduro was aimed at encouraging the dictator to take more steps toward compromise with the political opposition.

But follow-up Mexico City talks have yet to materialize.

Critical of the Biden strategy, Sens. James Risch (R-Idaho), ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and senior committee member Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) introduced legislation that would make any sanctions relief on Venezuela contingent on Maduro carrying out concrete democratic reforms.

"Any change in U.S. policy toward Venezuela must be contingent on a transfer of power from the Maduro regime to a democratically elected government," Risch said in a statement last month when introducing the legislation.

"As such, my legislation would condition the removal of U.S. sanctions on the Maduro regime on a standards-based transition to democratic order in Venezuela," he said.

Area, of the Atlantic Council, said that while the infighting among the opposition and its rejection of Guaidó is concerning in the short term, it could pave the way for strengthening support among the Venezuelan people that has fallen over the National Assembly's inability to subvert Maduro.

"The opposition, if it would have decided to maintain Guaidó in power, nothing would have changed. It was a lose-lose dynamic," Area said.

"They decided, the majority of the democratic, political parties, didn't want to continue with Guaidó, overall, because they are now in the electoral agenda again, they think that elections will eventually and progressively bring democratic institutions again in the country, etc.

And the same with the European Union and U.S. is also aligned with that position," he said.

Still, the vote doesn't mean Guaidó's political career is over, although the end of his de jure presidency was essentially set in stone months ago.

Guaidó puzzled some observers by clinging to his post, apparently betting the farm on his powerful network of support outside Venezuela that includes top U.S. officials such as Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), both of whom tweeted in

support of Guaidó on Tuesday.

"Maybe the Guaidó side was hoping that come December, the Durbins, Menendezes, the others who have been strong public backers of his leadership as well as folks inside the State Department in the Biden administration would have to back him," said McCarthy.

That support failed to materialize, but Guaidó remains the most visible member of a Venezuelan opposition that for decades has failed to fully coalesce behind a single leader.

The Biden administration appears to be transferring its support of Guaidó to the National Assembly as a whole.

"We continue to recognize the authority of the 2015 National Assembly, and we recognize it as the last remaining democratic institution there," national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Wednesday.

"Mr. Guaidó remains a member of that 2015 National Assembly, and we're going to continue to coordinate with him and other like-minded democratic leaders and actors there in Venezuela to support the Venezuelan people."

Key to the National Assembly's power is that it is entrusted with approximately \$3 billion in overseas Venezuelan assets frozen by the U.S. and its partners.

State Department spokesman Ned Price on Tuesday said that the administration is going to continue to have discussions with members of the National Assembly on how they will oversee such overseas assets.

Those assets, which include multibillion-dollar investments such as U.S.-based oil company Citgo, will likely be key to future negotiations between the Biden and Maduro camps.

While Guaidó's interim government had a clear claim to control overseas assets such as Citgo, the Maduro government will now have a new legal claim in its fight to recover control.

"My understanding is that the legal studies that have been done within the U.S. government conclude that the U.S. will still be able to help protect those assets from Maduro, at least for another year, while negotiations are ongoing," said McCarthy.

And the end of the Guaidó presidency will likely come with few immediate effects either for Venezuelan citizens or for the foreign policy and domestic power dynamics of the country.

"This event ... is not a very impactful political event in the daily lives of the Venezuelan citizenry right now. This has not been something that the public has been seized with. And that speaks to the broader and deeper crisis of representation in the opposition, quite frankly," said McCarthy.

Tough Economic challenges await Papua New Guinea

2022 was a momentous year for Papua New Guinea (PNG). It held its 10th national elections. The 2022 election has been labelled one of the worst since elections were first held in 1977, due to inadequate preparation, violence and poor organisation. The elections also made history by returning 64 per cent of incumbent MPs to parliament. Normally only half the incumbents are returned.

The overall results were in favour of the ruling Pangu party, which won 34 per cent of the seats — the second highest since independence. The incumbent Prime Minister James Marape was re-elected unanimously by MPs after the election.

The government projects that Papua New Guinea's economy will grow by 4.6 per cent in 2022, and 4.0 per cent in 2023, with a marginal rise in formal sector employment, after doing poorly in 2021 due to COVID-19. The non-resource component of Papua New Guinea's economy — covering sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism — portrays a more accurate picture of the economic situation, given the enclave nature of the resources sec-

tor.

After negative growth in 2020, the non-resource sector is estimated to have grown by 4.8 per cent in 2021. Projected growth rates for 2022 and 2023 for this sector are 4.5 per cent and 4.6 per cent, respectively, but it remains to be seen whether this will be achieved.

The 2023 budget which was announced in November, increased government spending by more than 10 per cent, leading to a deficit of 5.4 per cent of GDP. The pre-election 2022 budget also saw a large increase in spending, but promised to start cutting expenditure by 2023.

Papua New Guinea has since benefitted from the Russia-Ukraine war, with higher petroleum prices resulting in a windfall in mining and petroleum tax revenue and an improved current account.

According to its own legislation, the government should save a significant part of the windfall in its Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF). But in the 2023 budget, the government decided instead to 'fully allocate extra resource revenues to increased investments, and further household relief, rather than a SWF or other savings options'. To add to the con-

Andrew Anton Mako

fusion, the government announced a token first deposit into the SWF, far below what the law requires.

Inflation — estimated at 6.6 per cent in 2022 and 5.7 per cent in 2023 — is hurting real incomes and may exacerbate economic hardship.

The government's relief package of K560 million (US\$159 million) in the 2023 budget is welcome news for low-income earners. But apart from a subsidy for school project fees, the unemployed and the country's majority rural population have been left out, with no indirect tax cuts on basic goods and services.

The effectiveness of the measures has also been called into question, given Prime Minister Marape's remarks regarding the K610 million (US\$173 million) relief package provided in 2022 elections that 'the agencies that were supposed to implement this were slow'.

The temporary supply-side measures put in place by the government over the last few years, such as the agriculture transport subsidy, need to be transitioned quickly to concrete policies to lower the cost of produc-

tion and increase productivity in the non-resource sector. Increased road spending under Marape's flagship 'PNG Connect' program may help, but the electricity sector is in crisis with daily blackouts in parts of the country and law and order seems to be deteriorating.

Progress in these areas will be essential to transition from a resource-based economy and to grow other productive sectors to support and sustain the economy when mineral wealth and resources are exhausted in over a generation's time.

Another important issue that the government will need to grapple with in 2023 is exchange rate convertibility. The central bank, in its effort to lessen the kina's depreciation, moved from a floating to a pegged regime in 2014. It has been rationing foreign exchange ever since. This is impeding the private sector's ability to import and grow.

This has not only affected businesses, but also the public. For example, Air Niugini recently suspended flights temporarily due to lack of aviation fuel as the supplier Puma Energy and the central bank couldn't resolve forex issues. The treasurer acknowledged the problem in his budget

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.



Businessmen blame govt for current economic turmoil

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Businessmen in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa blamed the present coalition government in centre for current economic turmoil and criticizing for adopting anti-business and industry policies and contradictions in statistics which are beyond the ground realities, calling it as economic-terrorism for KP and rest of part the country.

Speaking at a news conference, President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Muhammad Ishaq along with traders and industrialists said business and industrial growth has slowed down over the past eight months owing to enforcement of business-hostile policies.

Ishaq noted the situation is getting from bad to worse with each passing day. He added the national economy has brought a brink of a complete collapse.

The SCCI chief asked if the government wants to put the economy on the right track, so it should revisit its policies and make consultation with the business community, otherwise, the inconsistent policies were not in the best interest of the economy and the country.

Ishaq gave an elaborated statistical and critical analysis about provision of electricity to businesses and industries, saying that the government has started imposition of heavy tariffs. He added that charges on the name of quarter tariff adjustment, fuel adjustment price were being collected the billions of rupees from industries now have been imposed fixed charges.

The SCCI president maintained industries were working on capacity of 10 to 15 per cent, in such a situation imposing huge power tariff is completely unjust and unfair. He said the irony is that 3.1 million was recovered in the name of fixed charges in power bills from closed industrial units in the last one month. He said it is completely unfair and unjust to attach a business community with circular debts. He demanded the re-introduction of maximum demand indicators policy by abolishing fixed charges.

Ishaq while expressing serious reservations over ban on opening of Letter of Credits (LCs) for the last four months said that more than 100,000 LCs have so far blocked, in which 1800 containers of a private company had been stuck up in Karachi port, on which 200 dollars per containers collected as demurrage charges on daily basis.

The chamber president said the government, Minister for Commerce and state bank of Pakistan is answerable for this whole scenario as 10.8 billion dollars imported consignments had so far stuck up at Karachi port. He said the situation has become so bad that a trader cannot import even 1500 to 1600 dollars of raw materials.

On the other hand, he said dollar scarcity was also creating great difficulties for the business community. He called the circular of the State Bank of Pakistan a mere joke with the business community. He expressed apprehensions that the industries may close down

in the coming days if the current situation would continue to prevail in the country.

Regarding the increasing lawlessness in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ishaq said the current state of security situation was creating great unrest among the business community as traders are continuously receiving extortion calls and threats from foreign SIMs.

Commenting on Pak-Afghan bilateral trade, the SCCI senior vice president Shahid Hussain gave detailed statistical figures and views on declining on the occasion.

He said the trade volume had dropped by 800 million dollars which stood at 2.5 billion dollars a few years back whereas trade with five central Asian republics is around 75 billion dollars in which Pakistan's share is around 465 million dollars. He said huge potential existed in CARs market but Pakistan didn't reap its benefit efficiently.

Talking about export from Afghanistan to re-export of China, Mr Hussain said restrictions have been imposed which has created difficulties for KP traders to carry out trade with China, urging that government to carry out a balanced approach while doing trade, friendship, relationships, business and politics with China.

Ishaq, on the occasion expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), calling it as a white elephant, demanding to completely abolish the PEDO or change the cur-

rent management of the institute.

The SCCI chief strongly opposed the ban on plastic bags, saying that no such restriction was imposed in Punjab and Quetta, which is reflecting the double standard policy of the incumbent government. He urged the government to review its decision to save investment of billions of rupees in the plastic manufacturing sector.

Ghazanfar Bilour, Chief Minister Focal Person on Ease of Doing Business and Investment also spoke on the occasion and flayed the anti-trade and industries policies of incumbent coalition government. He said the government and its cabinet members had given examples of foreign countries, but I have asked from them, the facilities were provided to investors in Pakistan, which are available to businessmen in the rest of the world.

Bilour also lamented that KP and Balochistan didn't invite a meeting on war on terrorism, which is the most affected by this menace of terrorism.

The presser was attended by SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal, Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad, Malik Niaz Ahmad, Riaz Arshad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi,

Zulfiqar Ali Khan, executive members Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Muhammad Arshad Siddique, Ms Qurtul Ain, Naem Qasimi, along with traders, industrialists association president Malik Imran Ishaq, traders, manufacturers, importers and exporters.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq addressing a news conference. — F.P. photo

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Maersk Chicago, Gion Trader and Al-Wajbah carrying Containers, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile two more ships, Navios Constellation and Qurania Luck carrying Containers and Wheat also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Conti Chivalry and Hansa Sealancer left the Port on Thursday morning, while three more ships, Maersk Chicago, Al-Wajbah and Leni are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A Cargo volume of 167,407 tonnes, comprising 124,533 tonnes imports cargo and 42,874 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,511 Containers (1,989 TEUs Imports and 2,522 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 21 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 02 ships, Navios Constellation and Elise carrying Containers and Mogas are expected to take berths at QICT and FOTCO on Thursday.

Pak-Italy trade witnesses over 158% surplus in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's goods and services trade with Italy witnessed a surplus of 158.11 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Trade surplus during the months under review was recorded at \$256.423 million against \$99.345 million last year, showing 158.11 percent growth. The overall exports to Italy were recorded at US \$491.636 million during July-November (2022-23) against exports of US \$406.750 million during July-November (2021-22), showing growth of 20.86 percent, SBP data revealed.

On year-to-year basis, the exports to Italy also increased 14.87 percent from \$78.879 million in November 2022, against the exports of \$90.616 million in November 2021. Meanwhile, on month-on-month basis, the exports to Italy however dipped by 02 percent during November 2022 as compared to the exports of \$92.482 million in October 2022, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed a decrease of 2.01 percent in first five months, from US \$ 12.313 billion to US \$ 12.065 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Italy into the country during the period under review was recorded at US \$ 235.213 million against US \$307.405 million last year, showing decline of 23.48 percent in July-November (2022-23).

On year-on-year basis, the import for Italy witnessed also decreased by 57.24 percent from US \$76.810 million in November 2021, against the imports of US \$32.843 million in November 2022.

PSX turns around, gains 177 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 177.44 points, a negative change of 0.44 percent, closing at 40,716.74 against 40,539.30 points on the previous day.

A total of 111,790,556 shares were traded during the day as compared to 142,881,828 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 3.095 billion against Rs 4.334 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 308 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 124 of them recorded gains and 161 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd. with 18,615,500 shares at Rs 2.37 per share Cnergycio PK with 8,535,543 shares at Rs 3.78 per share, and Bankislami Pak with 7,361,500 shares at Rs 13.31 per share.

Pak Services witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 108.79 per share price, closing at Rs1775.00, whereas the runner-up was

Bhanero Tex. with a Rs 72.00 rise in its per share price to Rs1032.00.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 250.00 per share closing at Rs 9349.00, followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs 140.00 decline to close at Rs 5610.00.

Rupee sheds 17 paise against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 17 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 227.11 against the previous day's closing of Rs 226.94.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 233.75 and Rs 236 respectively.

The price of the euro increased by 62 paise and closed at Rs 241.20 against the previous day's closing of Rs 240.58, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen lost three paise to close at Rs171, whereas a decrease of 32 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound, which was traded at Rs 272.83 as com-

pared to its last closing of Rs 273.15.

The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal increased by 04 paise and 06 paise to close at Rs 61.83 and Rs 60.41 respectively.

Gold prices dip by Rs5,200 to Rs183,400 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs 5,200 on Thursday and was sold at Rs 183,400 against its sale at Rs188,600, the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 4,458 and was sold at Rs 157,236 against Rs161,694, whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went down to Rs 144,133 against its sale at Rs148,220, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs. 30 to Rs. 2,130 whereas that of 10 grams declined by Rs. 17.14 to Rs. 1826.13.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$ 14 and was sold at US\$ 1848 against its sale at US\$ 1862, the association reported.

Nikkei index rebounds on United States gains

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's blue-chip stocks advanced Thursday following Wall Street gains as markets shrugged off messaging from the Federal Reserve reiterating its commitment to lowering inflation.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.40 percent, or 103.94 points, to 25,820.80, while the broader Topix index trimmed earlier gains but closed up 0.04 percent, or 0.75 points, at 1,868.90.

The market enjoyed a surge after the opening bell as investors cheered the overnight gains of US shares.

Investors were encouraged by falls in bond yields in Europe and the US as well as China's economic

reopening. They were having a fresh look at high-tech and other shares that had been sold down until now," IwaiCosmo Securities said in a note.

However, the market became locked in a narrow range in the afternoon session, with sellers outnumbering buyers.

Internationally, investors are keeping their eyes on Federal Reserve and betting that the peak of inflation has already passed.

"The market believes interest rates are expected to top out by mid-2023, with goods inflation moderating amid retail discounting," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management wrote in a note.

"So, barring a resur-

gence in resource prices, particularly oil, inflation data suggests we have passed peak even if the current trend looks unfriendly."

The dollar traded at 132.55 yen, down from 132.67 yen in New York on Wednesday.

Among major shares, Sony Group rose 2.16 percent to 10,385 yen. Advantest rose 2.06 percent to 8,440.

SoftBank Group rose 1.86 percent to 5,745 yen. Uniqlo-operator Fast Retailing edged up 0.15 percent to 79,650 yen.

Toyota added 0.47 percent to 1,807.5 yen. Energy developer Ipx fell 1.12 percent to 1,322 yen. Panasonic Holdings lost 0.50 percent to 1,086 yen.

Stocks extend solid start to year, oil prices rebound

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets mostly extended the solid start to the year on Thursday as China reopens its economy from lockdowns, while oil prices recovered after heavy losses.

Markets tracked on Wednesday's rally on Wall Street that came even as minutes from the Federal Reserve's December meeting showed officials lining up more hikes to US interest rates to fight decades-high inflation. The upbeat mood has been boosted by signs that China is implementing policy changes to make it a more attractive location for investment.

A decision allowing Ant Group to raise \$1.5 billion in funding was seen as an indication that authorities' long-running crackdown on the tech sector could be coming to an end. Fresh measures to support the struggling property sector have also been unveiled.

Reports that Beijing was considering lifting a two-year ban on some imports of Australian coal, as well

as a slight thawing of ties with Washington, were also providing some hope for the year ahead.

That all comes against the backdrop of a rollback of the country's strict zero-Covid policy, which had sapped economic growth since the start of the pandemic. The move has fanned hopes that the world's second-largest economy will bounce back after three years of lockdowns and tough restrictions, though the surge in infections in recent weeks has also raised concerns about the near-term outlook.

"The medium-term prospects still appear quite bullish, especially if China can bounce back strongly later this year and fully transition to living with Covid, like much of the rest of the world," said analyst Craig Erlam at trading firm Oanda.

Crude prices jumped but were still well down on the week, as the demand outlook remains weak owing to China's Covid crisis keeping people at home and

Europe's mild winter lowering energy use. In a sign that the energy crisis may be easing, natural gas prices in Europe are at their lowest levels since November 2021, wiping out the rises seen after Russia's conflict with Ukraine.

Traders are now awaiting the release of US jobs data at the end of the week, which will give the latest snapshot of the world's top economy after almost a year of Fed rate hikes and surging inflation.

The Fed minutes released on Wednesday showed officials intend to keep hiking rates and would not ease policy until prices are under control, keeping traders on edge that the central bank will tip the economy into recession.

"However, we must remember that the Fed also did not forecast raising rates by 400 basis points twelve months ago, so their forecasting ability" raises questions, said Joe Gilbert at Integrity Asset Management.

Services trade deficit shrinks by 49.50% as exports grow by 5.73%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The services trade deficit narrowed by 49.50 per cent as exports witnessed a growth of 5.73 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

According to PBS data, the exports from the country during July-November (2022-23) were recorded at \$2,899.98 million against the exports of \$2,742.84 million in July-November (2021-22), showing growth of 5.73 per cent.

On the other hand, the services' imports declined by 15.51 per cent from US\$

4,456.41 million last year to US\$3,765.41 million during the period under review.

Based on the figures, the services trade deficit was recorded at US \$865.43 million this year against a deficit of US \$1,713.57 million during the last fiscal year, showing a decline of 49.50 per cent.

On a year-on-year basis, the services exports during the month of November 2022 went up by 14.04 per cent to US\$ 650.01 million against the exports of US \$569.99 million during November 2021.

On the other hand, the imports decreased by 26.51 per cent from US\$973.04

million last November to US\$ 715.11 million in November 2022, according to the data.

On a month-on-month basis, the services exports from the country increased by 18.18 per cent as compared to the exports of US\$ 550.00 million in October 2022. The imports also went up by 0.82 per cent as compared to the imports of US \$709.28 million in October 2022, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, during the first half of the current fiscal year, the merchandise trade deficit witnessed a decline of 32.65 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as com-

pared to the corresponding period of last year.

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

The exports during the period were recorded at US\$ 14.249 billion against US\$ 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.

Amazon to axe 18,000 jobs as it cuts costs

LONDON (BBC News): Amazon plans to cut more than 18,000 jobs, the largest number in the firm's history, as it battles to save costs.

The online giant, which employs 1.5 million people globally, did not say which countries the job cuts would hit, but said they would include Europe.

Most of the job losses will come from its consumer retail business and its human resources division. Boss Andy Jassy cited the "uncertain economy" for the cuts, saying it had "hired rapidly over several years."

"We don't take these decisions lightly or underestimate how much they might affect the lives of those who are impacted," he said in a memo to staff.

He said the announcement had been brought forward due to one of the firm's employees leaking the cuts externally.

"Companies that last a long time go through different phases. They're not in heavy people expansion mode every year," he added. Reacting to the announcement, one

Amazon Fresh store worker told the BBC: "We're not allowed to speak about it, even to each other."

"I'd like to keep my job, obviously," the employee said. But they were aware that there are a number of vacancies at the moment in the UK and if this job was axed, they would simply apply for another.

Amazon has seen sales slow after business boomed during the pandemic when customers at home spent a lot online.

A potent combination of a downturn in advertising revenues due to businesses seeking to save cash, alongside consumers spending less as the cost of living crisis bites, is hitting tech firms hard.

Retail analyst Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, tweeted that the Amazon job cuts were "a big number" but the company - across its entire operation - had taken on about 743,000 more people since 2019, "some of which was based on irrational exuberance during the pandemic", he

said. "We're now in a different era and Amazon is on a diet," said Mr Saunders, adding more cuts are likely in the months and years ahead.

Other big tech firms including Meta - which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp - and cloud-based business software firm Salesforce have also both recently announced big cuts. Amazon has already announced that it is cutting back on projects like the Echo (better known as Alexa) and delivery robots - which were nice-to-haves but not actually making money.

Anecdotal, there is a tendency in Silicon Valley for firms to hire and retain talented workers on attractive salaries, even if they're not immediately needed, primarily in order to stop them working for rivals. This culture is a luxury which big tech can no longer afford to maintain.

Amazon employees affected by the cuts will be told by 18 January.

The move comes after the technology giant said

last year that it would reduce its headcount without saying how many jobs would be cut.

The company had already stopped hiring new staff and stopped some of its warehouse expansions, warning it had over-hired during the pandemic.

Amazon started laying off staff as early as November, according to LinkedIn posts by workers who said they had been impacted by job cuts.

Posts seen by the BBC included those from employees in Amazon's Alexa virtual assistant business, Luna cloud gaming platform division and Lab126 - the operation behind the Kindle e-reader.

It has also taken steps to shut some parts of its business, cancelling projects such as a personal delivery robot. "Prior to the pandemic, tech companies would often remove only the bottom 1% to 3% of their workforce," Ray Wang from the Silicon Valley-based consultancy Constellation Research told the BBC.

Low demand fears are also supported by rising COVID cases in China, which cap further price increases. Adding to demand worries, the world's second-largest economy, China, significantly increased its first batch of 2023 export quotas for refined oil products, which shows the country is expecting less consumption.

A weaker dollar further fuels stronger demand in the market.

Meanwhile, global recession fears led to lower demand expectations. Weaker demand worries heightened especially after IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said one-third of the world's economies are expected to go into recession in 2023.



In brief

Tickets for Pak v NZ ODIs go on sale

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Cricket Board said on Thursday that the tickets for the three One-Day Internationals between Pakistan and New Zealand at the National Bank Cricket Arena are available online at www.pcb.bookme.pk. A spokesman of PCB said here that the fans can pay through Easypaisa, Jazz Cash, credit or debit cards, or bank transfers. The three one day international series will commence from 9 January followed by matches on 11 January and 13 January. The ticket prices are: PKR250 for general enclosures (Nasim-ul-Ghani, Iqbal Qasim, Muhammad Brothers, Intikhab Alam and Wasim Bari), PKR500 for first-class (Asif Iqbal, Waqar Hasan and Majid Khan), PKR750 for premium (Imran Khan, Quaid, Wasim Akram and Zaheer Abbas) and PKR1500 for VIP (Hanif Muhammad, Javed Miandad and Fazal Mahmood). The sales point for e-ticket offices are Asghar Ali Shah Stadium in Nazimabad, RJ Mall (Pakistan physical disability cricket association) and Sector- 35-F Korangi number four from 4-8 January.

Pak team announced

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) on Thursday announced a three-member Davis Cup for the Junior Davis Cup qualifying event, scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan in May, this year. The Pakistan Junior Davis Cup 16&U team has been selected after the two-day trials at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad, a PTF spokesman said in a statement. Eight players were invited for the trials as per their ranking and performance. However, after the completion of the trials Hamza Roman, Nadir Reza Mirza and Abubakar Talha were selected. Pakistan number 1 Aqeel Khan will be accompanying the team as a non-playing captain/coach. Senator Salim Khan Saifullah Khan President PTF congratulated the selected players and wished them good luck. He asked them to work hard for the event.

Pindi

Gymkhana win

LAHORE (APP): Pindi Gymkhana opened their 20-K Cup 2023 T20 Cricket Tournament campaign on a winning note as they defeated hosts Model Town Greens by 19 runs in the opening match here at Model Town Greens ground on Thursday. Pindi Gymkhana won the toss and elected to bat first. Their batters though couldn't start well and kept on losing wickets on regular intervals yet their middle order batted with responsibility and helped their side post a decent total of 127-9 on the board. Wasif Khan emerged as the top scorer with 21 runs off 24 while Intiaz Ali struck 20 and Nadeem Ahmad scored 19 runs. Ahmad Arif bowled well for Model Town Greens Club and clinched four wickets for 16 runs while Mirwais Khan grabbed two wickets for 18. In reply, Model Town Greens just fall short by 19 runs as they were bowled out on 108 in 17.4 overs. Ali Annar was the wrecker-in-chief of the host club's batting line up as he grabbed four wickets for 22 runs. He was assisted by Zaib Butt (3 wickets for 21) and Asfand Mehran (2 for 16). From Model Town Greens, Bilal Dar (35), M Azeem (24) and Waris Khan (16) could cross the double figures while rest of the batters failed miserably and resulting in the defeat of the hosts.

Late strikes boost NZ as Pakistan chase 319

Some enterprising batting after tea, a late declaration from Tim Southee, and two Pakistan wickets in the final ten minutes of the fourth day gave New Zealand a massive advantage going into day five.

On the last day of the deadlocked Test series, New Zealand will need eight wickets to win while Pakistan need to either score 319 - a record target on Pakistan grounds - or survive a maximum of 90 overs. New Zealand won two of the three sessions, starting off by dismissing Pakistan's overnight No. 11 inside the first over to take a 41-run lead. After that, Tom Latham (62), Kane Williamson (41), Tom Blundell (74) and Michael Bracewell (74*) made useful batting contributions to take their innings forward.

The way Blundell and Bracewell batted in the third session would've deflated Pakistan, however. Pakistan took three top-order wickets in quick succession after lunch to dream of possibly chasing a lower target, but the Blundell-Bracewell duo put on 120 for the fifth wicket. That helped New Zealand eventually declare on 277 for 5 and set a target of 319.

Then, Pakistan, left with three overs to bat before stumps, lived their worst-case scenario. Abdullah

Shafique was bowled by Southee for a duck and Mir Hamza also went for zero courtesy an Ish Sodhi ripper. Pakistan ended the day at 0 for 2.

The day had also begun for Pakistan poorly, lasting only one over with the bat on the fourth morning to be bowled for 408 and conceding a 41-run deficit. Even though Hamza dismissed Devon Conway with a first-ball duck, Latham and Williamson used their sweeps, and the latter his shots straight back, to put on a partnership of 109.

Latham and Williamson then looked to extend New Zealand's lead, but both were dismissed in a frenetic period of play. Latham, on 57, was caught on the back foot off Abrar Ahmed around the stumps, but survived an lbw dismissal since Pakistan, with only one review in hand, did not go up after umpire Alex Wharf turned it down.

That decision from Babar Azam did not hurt Pakistan, though, since Latham was out for 62 next over trying to flick Naseem Shah off his hips, only to hit it to the left of a diving Abrar at short midwicket. The new batter Nicholls then survived a caught-behind decision from umpire Aleem Dar, but his review changed the decision after no edge was

detected. Abrar, now high on confidence after the Latham catch, then trapped Williamson going for the sweep. Williamson went up to review, and was deemed out by the faintest of margins with the ball clipping the outside half of leg stump. Blundell then was given out lbw by Wharf first ball courtesy an Abrar googly, but his review saved him, with a spike coming up on replay.

Blundell made the most of that chance, and a dropped catch by the wicketkeeper and Agha Salman at first slip, to motor along to his ninth half-century. It was a forgettable day for Sarfaraz, who dropped a total of three chances.

Bracewell, meanwhile, made a streaky start, genuinely struggling against the Abrar googly from around the stumps. But he hung in there and built on the longer the partnership grew in the final session.

Bracewell really showed his wares after the 75th over when New Zealand's lead had touched 270. At the time, he was on 45 in 99 balls, but then smacked Abrar for back-to-back fours to reach his maiden Test fifty. While Blundell fell for 74 trying to slog another boundary, Bracewell remained unbeaten on 74.

Haris Sohail, Fakhar Zaman return to Pakistan squad for New Zealand ODIs

| PAKISTAN SQUAD | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| FOR 2023 MEN'S ODI SERIES AGAINST NEW ZEALAND | | |
| | | |
| Babar Azam (c) | Haris Sohail | Mohammad Nawaz |
| Fakhar Zaman | Agha Salman | Mohammad Hasnain |
| Imam-ul-Haq | Shahnawaz Dahani | Haris Rauf |
| Shan Masood | Tayyab Tahir | Mohammad Wasim |
| Mohammad Rizwan | Usama Mir | Naseem Shah |

KARACHI (PPI) With one eye on this year's 50-over ACC Asia Cup and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, the Pakistan men's interim selection committee on Thursday named a 16-player squad for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League matches against New Zealand, which will be played here at the National Bank Cricket Arena on 9, 11 and 13 January.

Uncapped batter Tayyab Tahir and wrist spinner Usama Mir have been named in the squad after producing stellar performances in the Pakistan Cup, while Shan Masood and Haris Sohail have been recalled after missing out

on ODI cricket since 2019 and 2020, respectively. Kamran Ghulam, who is part of the Test squad, has also been included in the ODI side for the first time.

Fast bowler Haris Rauf, who was injured during the first Test against England in Rawalpindi, has regained complete fitness and has been named in the line-up. However, Shaheen Shah Afridi, despite making good progress, has not been included as the selectors, in consultation with the medical panel, have decided to give him more time to reclaim complete fitness. He is expected to return to competitive cricket next month in the HBL Pakistan

Super League 8.

Pakistan vice-captain Shadab Khan was not considered for selection after he suffered a fracture on his right index finger in Australia last week.

Pakistan's ODI squad: Babar Azam (captain), Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shahnawaz Dahani, Shan Masood, Tayyab Tahir and Usama Mir

Shahid Afridi, Interim Chief Selector: "We had limited ODI cricket last year and this year, we are scheduled to play 11 ODIs before we participate in the ACC Asia Cup, followed by the World Cup in conditions that will be familiar to us. So, we aim to make optimum use of these 11 ODIs by providing opportunities to our consistent performers that will enable us to select the best available players for the two important tournaments.

"In this background, we have decided to recall experienced Haris Sohail and Shan Masood as we believe the two lads still have plenty to offer to Pakistan cricket. We have not only rewarded Tayyab Tahir and Usama Mir for their outstanding performances in our domestic events, they have also been identified as future prospects.

Doping to be discouraged in bodybuilding: Saeed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The president of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Body Building Association, Saeed ul Rahman Yusufzai, has said that those who do not adhere to ethical standards will not be allowed to participate in bodybuilding competitions.

In a statement he said bodybuilding is a healthy form of recreation that has a positive image in Pakistan and should not be polluted by any means. "Such actions can discourage young people from playing games and encourage them to engage in bodybuilding," Saeed added.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bodybuilding Association will take steps to prevent

such activities from happening and will make a code of conduct for bodybuilding. He condemned the recent incident of doping in bodybuilding competitions and said that any form of doping is condemnable and can be eliminated.

He instructed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bodybuilding Association Secretary General, Adeel Khan, to take strict action against those who protest against the fair judgments made in bodybuilding competitions and to support those who are trying to distance themselves from such activities. He also appealed to members of his cabinet, the public, and others to not request or support such elements in order to present a good

image of bodybuilding and to show respect and tolerance in other areas of life.

Meanwhile, Joint Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bodybuilding Association Inayat Ullah, said that the limits of tolerance should not be crossed in any case during competitions. He said that the KP Bodybuilding Association will immediately hold a meeting on the rules of conduct in relation to competitions and that every club and bodybuilder will be made to abide by these rules and regulations. "Those who do not comply will not be allowed to participate in the matches and will be brought to justice in accordance with the law," he added.



KARACHI: Pakistan's Wicketkeeper, Sarfaraz Ahmed makes a successful appeal for LBW against New Zealand's Kane Williamson (C) during the fourth day of the Second Cricket Test Match at the National Stadium.

Khawaja begins another new year with a hundred at the SCG

(CRICINFO): Until today, Usman Khawaja had been the one member of Australia's top five to not make a century this season. It should probably come as no surprise that he put the record straight at the SCG.

It was on this ground, a year ago to the day, that Khawaja returned to Test cricket against England, largely by accident when Travis Head was ruled out with Covid. It remains one of the great 'what ifs' of this current team if that opportunity hadn't presented itself. Khawaja would memorably go on and make twin hundreds in that match which meant he was undroppable. He ended 2022 with 1080 runs at 67.50, and that even included a lean finish in the first two Tests against South Africa. Now he has started 2023 in style. He has been one of cricket's great comeback stories of recent times.

When Khawaja completed the second run in the 76th over he became

just the fourth batter to make three consecutive hundreds at the SCG after Wally Hammond, Doug Walters and VVS Laxman. By the end of the day, when he sat unbeaten on 195 with rain seudding across again, he was averaging 130.83 at the venue, almost double his next best where he has played more than a single Test.

There is a lot of talk about how long this Australian Test team will stay together with a thought that the potentially era-defining seven months which lie ahead could be the last time for this group. Khawaja turned 36 a few weeks ago, the same age as his opening partner and good friend David Warner, leading to questions about the transition. "We're going to enjoy the next 12 months, enjoy it as much as we can," Warner told Fox Cricket during the opening day's play. "For us it's about not leaving this team with a big hole. I know through those

five-year transition period when a lot of the greats left, they're big holes to fill with the amount of games you play. "We always talk about games played and how much that means into a team's performance and perspective with experience. You can't fill that void."

Whether Warner's MCG double-century has re-energised his Test career to last beyond the overseas tours of India and England remains to be seen - he was coy last week on potentially playing Boxing Day again and has previously hinted Tests will be the first to go - but as a single-format player there would appear no reason, if the hunger remains, that Khawaja could not push towards 40.

"At the moment he's at the top of his game, he's scoring runs at will and batting beautifully so at the moment think he's pretty comfortable and playing really nicely," Steven Smith said.

Djokovic into Adelaide International last eight with win over Quentin Halys

ADELAIDE (BBC): Novak Djokovic earned a hard-fought win against Quentin Halys to move into the quarter-finals of the Adelaide International on Thursday.

The Serb rallied back from 5-2 down in the first set and 5-3 in the second to beat the Frenchman 7-6 (7-3) 7-6 (7-5). Djokovic will face Canada's Denis Shapovalov on Friday as he continues his build-up to the Australian Open. Australia's Nick Kyrgios has withdrawn from the second week of the Adelaide tournament with an ankle injury.

The 27-year-old also pulled out of last week's United Cup and so will have had limited match time going into the Australian Open, which gets underway on 16 January. The world number 22 could go into the first major tournament of the season having not played a singles match since an ATP event in Tokyo in October.

Meanwhile, Djokovic, who beat Kyrgios in the 2022 Wimbledon final, will be bidding for his 10th Australian Open title in an attempt to equal Rafael Nadal's overall men's Grand Slam record of 22.

The former world number one is



set to miss this season's Indian Wells and the Miami Open after the United States extended its requirement for international visitors to be vaccinated against Covid-19.

Djokovic, who was deported prior to the 2022 Australian Open because of his Covid-19 vaccination status, said "it is what it is" when asked about the prospect of

missing more tournaments. "If it is official then it is. What can I do? Nothing," the 35-year-old said. "I'm hoping [to play], but if I can't go, I can't go." Seventh seed Shapovalov, Djokovic's quarter-final opponent, raced through Thursday's second-round Adelaide International tie with a 6-4 6-3 victory over Russian Roman Safiullin.

DI Khan clinches KP Inter-Constituency Women Games Cricket trophy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dera Ismail Khan clinched the trophy after defeating Dir Lower in the final of the Cricket event part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inter-Constituency Women Games which concluded here at Hayatabad Sports Complex on Thursday.

Dera Ismail Khan won the cricket final by 5 wickets before Dir Lower won the toss and made 96 runs in the 10 overs spell wherein Khawla Khan and Sumra were the top runs contributors. Khawla made an elegant knock of 33 runs with three sixes and five boundaries while Sumra made 29 runs including five boundaries and one six.

Member Provincial Assembly Humayun Khan, Rabia Basri, Madiha Nisar and Sumira Shams graced the occasion as guests and distributed trophies and cash prizes among the winners and runners-up. Their guests and a good number of spectators were also there and witnessed the thrilling final.

DSO Charsada Tahsinullah Khan, DSO Dir Lower Abrar Khan, Deputy Director Syed Jafar Shah, Bushra, Caretaker Yasir Islam and other personalities were present. The final cricket match was played between



the teams of Dera Ismail Khan and Dir Lower in which Dir Lower Batting first, the team scored 96 runs in the allotted overs for the loss of six wickets, which included Bushra's innings of 27 runs and Jalwa's innings of 25 runs. Both Khawla and Sumra also played a good role in the opening. DI Khan achieved the target in the last over and claimed the title of champion with Aisha scoring 25 runs while Khadija scored 19 runs. In the final match of Badminton, the Peshawar team won the trophy by defeating the Hazara Region team by 3-2.

Finally, prizes were distributed among the winning players. Director Sports Female Games Rashida Ghaznavi in her address paid tribute to the members of the assembly and other personalities that they played their

role in the success of these games and that such events will continue in the future and the athletes Opportunities and facilities will continue to be provided.

In the final round competition continues with enthusiastic excitement at the different grounds of Peshawar, in which the players are using their full potential for the success of their teams. Bannu defeated Peshawar while Nowshera defeated Charsadda after a brilliant match to reach the semi-final of the Men Volleyball.

In the first quarter-final of the event, Bannu won the match against Peshawar by 25-20, 25-21 and 25-23 By winning Bannu, Peshawar was eliminated from the event. Surprisingly, by keeping good teams in the same group, the tournament has

been made possible and a good team like Peshawar has been eliminated from the final stage. Before that, in the group matches, Nowshera defeated Karak by two goals and South Waziristan defeated Bitagram by two goals to nil in the football event.

In the first match that started at Shama Cricket Ground, Peshawar defeated Swabi by 10 wickets. Swabi scored 120 runs in the allotted overs. Mehran scored the highest score 45 with four sixes. Mohsin scored 18 runs and Zia scored 13 runs. The target was achieved without any loss. On behalf of Peshawar, Sartaj played a brilliant innings with the help of six sixes and played an impressive innings of 51 runs and remained not out. Ahmed remained not out with 20 runs. Peshawar's opener was injured for 18 runs and the innings could not continue. Before that, Kohat qualified for the next stage by defeating Abbottabad by six wickets. In the Tehmas Khan Football Gowand football matches, Chitral was declared victorious after losing the match. Earlier, the committee headed by Azizullah Khan objected to the players of Peshawar, which was later accepted as correct and declared the match in favor of Chitral.



In brief

IRSA releases 23,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 23,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 36,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1493.12 feet and was 95.12 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 5,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.00 feet, which was 69.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 5,700 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. Whereas, the release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 11,000, 16,200, 9,500 and 500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,100 cusecs was released from River Chenab at Marala.

Man deprived of Rs2m in robbery

ISLAMABAD (APP): The robbers escaped after robbing a man of two million at gunpoint during the robbery incident in the Defense area of Lahore on Thursday. According to a private media report, the CCTV footage of the robbery incident has come to light, in which two robbers can be seen snatching cash from the car rider. Meanwhile, after the incident, the robbers also took the key to the citizen's car with them, while the police registered a case on the request of the victim.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for January 6 (Friday) for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to the IESCO spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Park View, Pindi Bord, Fuji Foundation Hospital, Morgah Feeders, and GSO Circle. Whereas, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Commercial Centre, Feroq Azam, 4th Road, E Block, Shaheed M Din, Abu Bakar, Abdul Rehman, Sixth Road, T&T, Asgarnal, B Block, New Milpur, Shukria, Jami Masjid Road, C Block, Effendi Colony, Syedpur Road, Faizabad, Sadiqabad, Noor Muhammad Road, Dhok Khaba, Malikabad, Cricket Stadium, Shamsabad, National Market, Ghousia Colony, PTCL, Haidari Chowk, Tariq Shaheed, Urology Center Feeders and surrounding areas.

Govt. to complete its term: Ranjha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha, a Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader said on Thursday that the government would complete its constitutional term and election amendments would be conducted before the election to maintain transparency. While talking to a private news channel, Mohsin Ranjha said the coalition government was ready to talk about early elections, but the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should come to parliament and work out a framework for the transparency of elections. PML-N leader alleged PTI leaders of having "double standards," as they were receiving remuneration and using the facilities of parliament houses while also playing politics in the name of resignations.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi met H.E. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan.

Futuristic, Innovative parliaments; pre-requisite for progress & development: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said on Thursday that the Parliaments have to be innovative for inventing new ways to resolve the challenges faced by nations.

Addressing the participants of 26th Conference of Speakers and Presiding officers of Commonwealth (CSPOC) on "Role of Speaker and Presiding Officer in Leading Parliamentary Innovations," in Canberra Australia, he said, "the world is going through sweeping changes". As representatives of the people, the onus of innovating new socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic order falls upon parliamentarians.

He said that the global upheaval caused by the Coronavirus pandemic called for a new working and social environment while the catastrophes brought by the steep climate change also desired a new approach to human living, said a message received here. He also drew the attention of participants to the economic upheavals and the consequent social and political unrests.

The Speaker said that "Democracy is ever evolving" adding that the journey of humanity's pursuit for a more just, equitable and inclusive society saw the significant transition in the

aftermath of the industrial revolution.

He said that meaningful participation of the common citizen in holding the government of the day accountable was the only guarantee against dictatorships as well as the power capture by the populist, fascist and extremist movements. He reminded that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto termed space between people and its Parliament as the "Democracy Deficit", which must be addressed by Parliaments of World.

While talking about open, transparent, equitable and accessible Parliament the only solution to bridge the divide among the general public and the parliament.

The Speaker said that 1st 5-year National Assembly Strategic Plan (NASP) was introduced in 2008. This was reviewed and improved in light of our experiences in 2014 and the 3rd and present 5 year NASP was penned in 2019. Each has been backed by a definite Annual Work Plan and every Department of National Assembly was required to align its annual budgetary requirements to achieve the targets set in the Strategic Plan. The entire process was regularly monitored and evaluated through a specially created wing of Special Initiatives in the National Assembly, under which a Project

Management Unit was entrusted to be the Secretariat of the NASP.

The Speaker said that in 2009, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, which was an across-the-board alliance of all women parliamentarians, has now become a global parliamentary brand, referred as a role-model by the 2010 Inter Parliamentary Union Report, CPA Publications and various UN Agencies.

The second step was the creation of a Special Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals in 2014 when Pakistan's Parliament became the first-ever parliament to shift its development agenda from MDGs to SDGs. The efficiency and effectiveness of this group can be gauged from one example: In light of its targeted approach towards energy conservation, Pakistan's Parliament became the first-ever 100 percent Green Parliament by installing a One Mega Watt Solar System.

The Parliamentary SDGs Secretariat was also instrumental during the recent devastating floods in Pakistan where the Parliament lead the international discourse in COP 27 at Sharam-Al Sheikh in making the world realize that Pakistan is the victim and not responsible for global environmental degradation.

ANF seizes over 10 kg heroin, 39 kg opium poppy

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting three counter-narcotics operations seized over 10 kg heroin, 39 kg opium poppy besides netting three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed in an operation near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 1.5 kg heroin from secret cavities of a car and held two accused.

In second operation, ANF raided near Jhelum G.T.Road area and recovered 39 kg opium poppy from the possession of an accused resident of Jhelum.

In third operation, ANF recovered 438 grams heroin in which was tactfully concealed in ladies suits being sent to London through International Courier Office Kamra.

Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations and further investigations are under process.

Pakistan, Iraq agree to increase bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan and Iraq have agreed to increase bilateral cooperation in diverse sectors.

The willingness came in a meeting between Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi and Iraqi Ambassador Hamid Lafta here in Islamabad on Thursday.

They discussed bilateral relations and the problems of Pakistani pilgrims, especially those stranded in Iraq.

Both expressed their desire to sign an MoU soon to increase bilateral cooperation to promote a comprehensive pilgrimage policy, employment opportunities for Pakistanis in Iraq and to send Pakistani manpower to Iraq and curb illegal immigration.

The Iraqi ambassador formally invited the federal minister to visit Iraq next month to finalize the Hajj policy and export Pakistani manpower to Iraq, which he accepted.

Sherry Rehman urges Apex Court for formal hearing of Z.A. Bhutto's reference

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of 95th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan Peoples Party and former premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday urged the apex court to conduct a formal hearing of the reference filed regarding his judicial killing and correct the historical mistake.

In a flurry of tweets, the Federal Minister paid homage to her leader. "Today, under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, People's Party is following the mission of Shaheed Bhutto and Shaheed Bibi," she added.

Senator Rehman extended her best wishes on the occasion of the 95th birthday of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to his family, party leadership, workers and his

fans all over the world including Pakistan. "As a Pakistani and a member of People's Party, today is a very happy day for us. Born in Larkana on January 5, 1928, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the first constitutionally elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, the founder of the People's Party, the creator of the Constitution of Pakistan and the nuclear programme. Because of his public vision, politics, struggle and sacrifices, people gave him the title of Quaid-e-Awam (the people's leader)."

She added that the main objective of his politics was to empower the oppressed lower class and the workers. He laid the foundations of public politics and parliamentary democracy in Pakistan, giving the people electoral politics as the center of power and authority that was never seen before in the country's history.

The minister underlined that Shaheed Bhutto gave a social contract to keep the federating units united. Bhutto ensured the rights of the poor, women and minorities along with social and economic justice, she added. He introduced Pakistan as an important partner in the world and gave the country a nuclear programme for national defense and integrity.

"By judicially killing Shaheed Bhutto, the enemies thought that the constitution, democracy and People's Party would be destroyed from the country. Today, I want to tell this mindset that despite all your efforts and oppression Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's constitution, democracy and People's Party are intact."

Photo exhibition organized at PAC to mark Kashmir's 'Right to Self-Determination Day

RAWALPINDI (INP): To mark the "Right to Self-Determination Day" of Kashmir, a photo exhibition was organized at Punjab Arts Council (PAC) on Thursday.

Chairperson, Peace & Culture organization Mushal Hussain Malik who was the chief guest of the inaugural ceremony speaking to media on the occasion said that Instead of giving Kashmiris their inalienable right to self-determination, India has turned its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir into a prison where death continues.

She said, "Even after 75 years, Kashmiris are still standing where they were in 1948. Fascist Modi's conspiracy to turn Kashmiris into a minority by building new settlements

in the occupied valley is continuing. Despite being the target of all the Indian atrocities, the Kashmiri people are shouting the slogan of Pakistan Zindabad." Mushal Hussain said that the United Nations should increase pressure on India to implement its resolutions on Kashmir. Another year of Indian cruelty and brutality has passed in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Let's pray that 2023 will be the year of freedom from Indian rule for Kashmiris, she added. Speaking on the occasion, Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that the United Nations Security Council had passed a resolution on January 5, 1949, in which the right of self-determination of Kashmiris was recognized.

Amir Muqam presides over meeting of top officials of National Heritage and Culture Division

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A progress review meeting on various projects of the National Heritage and Culture Division was held under the chairmanship of Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political & Public Affairs and National Heritage & Culture Division, Engineer Amir Muqam.

Adviser to the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the overall performance of the officers and other employees

of the division. Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Farina Mazhar and Senior Joint Secretary Muhammad Bilal were also present in the meeting. Engineer Amir Muqam directed the concerned departments to expedite the progress on initiatives by the present government in an efficient manner. He directed that the process for the appointment of departmental heads on vacant posts should be prioritised. The adviser pledged

that all possible measures would be taken for improving the efficiency of the division and attached departments. In the meeting, Engineer Amir Muqam was briefed on the progress on various projects and initiatives.

Later, the Advisor to the Prime Minister held meetings with delegations from the whole country, especially KP, at his Islamabad office, listened to their problems and issued orders on the spot regarding many of their issues.

Senate Committee on Climate Change meets

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change was held here at Parliament House on Thursday with Senator Seemee Ezdi in Chair. The meeting commenced with deliberation on the Public Petition regarding the "Green Building Initiative". Musaddiq Ahmed Khan, Additional Secretary for Ministry of Climate Change, briefed the committee that Green Building concept is designed to built, maintain and reuse with an objective to protect occupant health and Green Buildings code, which is being formulated by ministry of climate change in consultation with provinces, aimed to create awareness on sustainable green buildings and reduce impacts of global warming and urban heat, which will be completed within a month. He further apprised that urban agglomeration consumes approximately 80 pc of global energy out of which 40 pc accounts for buildings. He further added that the new code will meet the sustainable development goals pertaining to human settlements, production patterns and action to combat climate change impacts. The Chairman committee emphasized to take concrete steps for disposal of waste products and should be made integral part of Green Buildings Code. Senator Seemee Ezdi stressed that the need for energy conservation in the larger interest of the country and recommended the example of

Parliament House in terms of energy conservation shall be followed in every Government office.

The Senate Committee was also apprised by ministry on the "International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan", co-hosted by Government of Pakistan and United Nations. Additional Secretary for Ministry of Climate Change informed that primary aim of this conference is to aware the international community on the recent flood devastation in Pakistan and to pledge support for rehabilitation of the affected areas. It was further informed that 33 ml people were effected and 8 ml displaced with a loss of 15.23 bl dollars to the country's economy. The Chairman Committee applauded the ministry for their efforts in bringing the international community together to combat this global dilemma striving to ensure the normalcy of affected people.

The meeting was attended by Senator Keshoo Bai, Senator Farooq Hamid Naek, Senator Khalida Ateeq, Senator Taj Haider, Additional Secretary for Ministry of Climate Change Musaddiq Ahmed Khan, Senior Joint Secretary for Ministry of Climate Change Muhammad Farooq, Director General for Pakistan Environment Protection Agency Farzana Altaf Shah and other relevant officers were also in attendance.



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National heritage and Culture Engr. Amir Muqam chairs meeting to review various projects of National Heritage & Culture Division.

Drug factory discovered

BADAKHSHAN (Agencies): The Counter-Narcotics Department officers have discovered an illegal drug lab in Argo district of Badakhshan province. Provincial Media Office in a statement said that a drug production factory was discovered and closed in Argo district of the province where 12 kilograms heroin, 123 kilograms chemical materials, and a car have been seized. The source said that two people were arrested in connection to running the illicit facility.

The Frontier Post

Jamadi-us-Sani 13, 1444 — Friday, January 06, 2023

2 drug traffickers arrested

NANGARHAR (Agencies): The local security officials of Nangarhar province of Afghanistan said that Counter-narcotics officers of the province arrested two people on charge of drug trafficking on Thursday. According to the source at the Counter-narcotics Department of Nangarhar province of Afghanistan said that a person who had secreted 240kg of drugs in his car, while, arrested by police Nangarhar province of Afghanistan on Thursday.

IEA sign extraction contract of Amu oil field with China



KABUL (Khaama Press): Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan signed the extraction contract of the Amu oil field with the Chinese company (CPEIC) on Thursday.

The signing ceremony took place in presence of the Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan Wang Yu, and the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan, Shahabuddin

Delawar, and other high ranking Afghan officials. During the official signing ceremony of the extraction contract of Amu oil field with the Chinese company, China Petroleum Economics and Information Research Center (CPEIC), the Afghan Minister said that some 3000 jobs will be created for Afghans inside the country. And the capacity of extracting oil from the Qashqari mine will increase

from 200 tons to 1000 tons and more. The area of this contract is estimated 4500 square kilometers, scattered in the country's three northern provinces including Sari-pul, Jawzjan and Faryab. In the contract, it is stated that Afghanistan's share is 20 percent at present, and it will reach up to 75 percent in the future. This comes as foreign investment in Afghanistan is almost zero since the

Taliban overtook power in August 2021. To change the current economic status quo, the authorities of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is desperately knocking every sing door to attract foreign investment to the country. This could be a good start for foreign businessmen and investors to consider Afghanistan as a potential and lucrative market in the region.

‘Learning religious, sciences education right of every Afghan’

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the Secretary General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, Markus Potzel, said that learning religious and modern sciences' education is the right of every Afghan.

Potzel said, "UNAMA has the status of a bridge between the Afghan government and the international community and tries to bridge the gap between them." He expressed concern over current situation about

women's education and work, and the recent decrees of the Islamic Emirate will have a negative impact on the work and aid of the international community. Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan should accept the appeal of the international community concerning women's education and work and inclusive government in this country. For his part, Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, expressed his appreciation for the humanitarian aid of the United Nations said: The Islamic Emirate has completed all

the conditions for recognition and the United Nations should hand over Afghanistan's post in that organization to them. Kabir said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to an inclusive government, and in the current government there are people from every nation, adding that more efforts are being made to include people experts in the government. The Islamic Emirate believes that learning the religious and modern sciences' education is the right of every Afghan, Kabir said that the Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan is engaged in enlightening the religion and culture of Afghans in order to create a suitable environment for the education and work of women, adding we ask that the impartial help of international community on the matter. Deputy Prime Minister reminded that the Islamic Emirate would not allow anyone to use Afghanistan's soil against other countries, said that the Islamic Emirate will not interfere in the affairs of any country and will not allow anyone to inverse.

Minister of Public Health meets Minister of Higher Education



KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Acting Minister of Public Health, Dr. Qalandar Ebad met the Afghan Acting Minister of Higher Education Mawlawi Nida Mohammad Nadeem on Thursday. During a meeting, the Afghan Ministers discussed in providing facilities to the medical students, a standard studying environment, researching hospitals, Standardization of specialized sections, and coordination. Meanwhile, Both sides emphasized on cooperation and coordination in the sectors of health.

Expert pomegranates worth \$48 million to abroad

KANDAHAR (Agencies): The officials of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment of Kandahar, said that in this season, pomegranates worth over 48 million dollars have been exported to foreign countries. The deputy of this chamber, Abdul Baqi Bina said that the pomegranate harvest this year was up and the export of the fruit has increased several times compared to last year. The Kandahar pomegranates with its best taste and quality and are mostly exported to Pakistan, India, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, he added. Meanwhile, Mawlawi Shams ur Rahman Musa, head of agricultural, Irrigation and Livestock of Kandahar, says that pomegranate trees have been planted in ten thousand acres of land in different districts of Kandahar this year.

Residents facing health facilities shortage

HERAT (Pajhwok): Local officials in the Pashtun Zarghun district of western Herat province admit the district encompassing 240 villages and over 100,000 population has the least health facilities. Ustad Yaser Osmani, the district administrative chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Currently we have only six health centers or clinics that cannot cater to the needs of all people of the district". He said the residents of the district were demanding of the government to upgrade the clinic of the district bazaar to a well-equipped hospital. Local residents also complain about the smaller number of health centers all over the district and say the available centers have less primary health facilities. Mohammad Amin, a resident of Deh Kushk area, said he travelled a long distance to reach the district center, but the clinic here

had no medicines for patients. "Besides DehKusht area, residents of many remote villages come to this clinic where health facilities are equal to nothing," Amin added. Abdullah, another resident of Manzil area also said, the existing facilities in the district clinic could not cater to the needs of its population. He said the provincial administration should provide health facilities to the people of the entire province, including Pashtun Zarghun district, as their top priority. He said the residents of Pashtun Zarghun district had to visit the provincial capital, Herat City, even for simple health problems. Other residents also urge the government to establish a modern and well equipped health center in the district. Abdul Sattar Noori, an official of one of these health centers, told

Pajhwok Afghan News they faced the shortage of doctors and other health facilities in the local clinics. "We need a well-equipped hospital in the district center", he said. Pajhwok tried to get the opinion of the provincial Health Department, but did not succeed. However, officials of other departments acknowledge the health centers in Pashtun Zarghun district lack facilities and that efforts are being made to resolve the issue. Mawlawi Naemulhaq Haqqani, the provincial Information and Culture Department head, said: "Officials of the Islamic Emirate are trying to establish health centers in remote and neglected areas of Herat province". He said the Ministry of Public Health along with some relevant institutions would identify vulnerable and needy areas for establishing health centers, Haqqani added.

IEA rejects US official's remarks on its commitments

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate rejected the remarks by US State Department spokesman Ned Price and said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to all its promises. The deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, Bilal Karimi, said there is no evidence to show that Afghan soil will be used against any other country. "All territory of the country is controlled by the Islamic Emirate and there is no evidence to show that there is any action from our country towards other countries and their activities," Karimi said. Price said at a press conference that "Taliban have repeatedly broken" their promises.

"And meanwhile, we continue, just as I said a moment ago, to call on the Taliban to uphold the very commitment they have made to see to it that Afghan soil is never again used as a launchpad for international terrorist attacks. These are among the very commitments that the Taliban have been unable or unwilling to fulfill to date," Price said. Analysts expressed mixed views on the commitments of the Islamic Emirate and the US remarks. "The US still interrupts Afghan borders. The US aircraft are still in the Afghan air space," said Omid Safi, head of the Rawand-e-Pishraft Mili. "The Islamic Emirate has fulfilled all of its commitments and has not yet violated them. And terrorist groups have not yet acted against any neighboring country or another country," said Kamran Aman, a political analyst. This comes as Pakistani officials have recently accused Kabul of not taking action against TTP.

Hospital fill with children suffering from pneumonia

KABUL (Agencies): In a bitterly cold bedroom at the start of winter in Kabul, 22-year Maryam sat with her baby son bundled up in a red jumper as he coughed days after being discharged for the third time from a hospital ward for suspected pneumonia. Every time 10-month old Rahmat's parents bring him home from the crowded, but warmer hospital, they say he gets sick again. The parents said they spend whatever they can from their shrinking income to trying to heat the room, which drops below freezing at night. "I am scared, it is only the beginning of winter, what is going to happen?" said Maryam, saying the family could only buy coal in small quantities and had to cut back on food to afford even that after her husband lost his construction job. The family is among many in Afghanistan unable to afford adequate heating, often having to choose between food and fuel as an economic crisis grips the country. Doctors and aid workers say thousands of children are being admitted to hospital with pneumonia and other respiratory diseases caused by the cold and malnutrition. The crisis, aid agencies say, is likely to get worse.

Group of robbers arrested

PARWAN (Agencies): the local security officials arrested a 6-members a robber group in Jabal- Saraj district of Parwan province. The Parwan security spokesman Mohammad Kamran Zahid said that the security forces arrested 6-members of skilled robber group from Jabal Saraj district of the province. The detainees were involved in several criminals' cases in the province, he said.

Afghan, Pakistani officials discuss railway project

KABUL (TOLOnews): Afghanistan Railway Authority said that the head of the authority on an official trip to Pakistan discussed the start of the feasibility study of the Trans-Afghanistan railway project. Abdul Sami Durani, a spokesman for the ARA, said the head of the Pakistan railway has also pledged to pay the cost of assessments of the railway project. "Trans-Afghanistan railway project has the neces-

sary preparations for technical assessments and Pakistani officials said they will jointly pay the cost of feasibility study of the project," said an ARA spokesman. A number of political analysts said that Trans-Afghanistan Railway is the biggest economic project in the region and if implemented, Central Asia will be connected with South Asia through Afghanistan. "If Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan

reach an agreement on the railway project, it will have many benefits to Afghanistan," said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, deputy head of the chamber of commerce and investment. The railway authority said that the project covers 764 kilometers of the railway from Mazar-e-Sharif city in Balkh to the Torkham crossing in Pakistan and will be completed in five years with an estimated budget of at least \$6 billion.

Turkish charity foundation to build education center



KABUL (Agencies): The head of Jamiat al-Anhar Turkey, in a meeting with deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, said that the charity is ready to build an education center in the Helmand province of the Afghanistan. Deputy Prime Minister Hanafi said that the Islamic Emirate supports the pro-

grams that are carried out in the direction of scientific and cultural promotion in Afghanistan, according to a statement released by Arg. Sharing details with Deputy Prime Minister Kabir, the head of Turkish charity foundation said that Jamiat al-Anhar has built 48 religious school and orphanages outside of Turkey. Al-Halili said that this

time, they are planning to build an educational institution in Helmand, where religious and modern sciences are taught simultaneously. For his part, Deputy PM Hanafi, hailed the charity contribution, said that the officials of the Islamic Emirate support the programs that are carried out in the direction of the scientific and cultural promotion in Afghanistan.

8 daesh members killed 7 arrested in operation

KABUL (Agencies): At least 8 alleged members of the Daesh group killed and 7 others arrested in a series of operations carried out by Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan security forces. "An operation was carried out in the Qalacha and Shuhada-e-Salehin areas of Kabul city against the hideouts of Daesh (IS) members, 8 Daesh members were killed and 7 others were captured alive," the spokesman of IEA

Zabihullah Mujahid said in his Twitter handle. "Likewise, 2 Daesh members were arrested alive in Nimroz province in southeast of the country he added. According to Mujahid the affiliated members of the IS, carried out attacks on Longan Hotel, on Chinese nationals citizens, the airport and the Pakistani embassy in Kabul, Mujahid said that insurgents had planned to

carry more terroristic attacks on some other important places. The affiliated members of ISIS also charged with transfers of foreign ISIS members to Afghanistan, Mujahid added. Mujahid said that a large amount of light weapons, hand grenades, mines, and explosives devices were discovered, and a number of suspects were detained for further investigation.

Elders seek reopening of girls education centers



KHOST (TOLOnews): Some tribal elders in the southeastern province of Khost called on the Islamic Emirate to reopen educational centers for women and allow them to work in government and non-governmental organizations. They suggested that if a proper decision is not made, the distance between the Islamic Emirate and people will extend. "The women should be given permission to work in the organizations and it would be better to reopen schools for girls considering the Islamic hijab," said Shahpoor, a tribal elder. "If there is no, a human would be like a deaf and blind. We call on all officials of the Islamic Emirate to lighten the candle of our education," said Simeen Khan Zadran, a tribal elder. "If women are needed in various organizations, they must be allowed to work within the Islamic rules and our traditional customs," said Torkyal Mangal, a tribal elder. Speaking to a gathering in Khost, the deputy minister of tribal affairs and borders, Abdul Khaliq Abid, said the views of Islamic clerics and elders are essential for the Islamic Emirate. "We want to sit with our elders and clerics and consult with them and listen to their ideas and also learn from them about the protection of religion," he said. This comes as the ban on women and girls from education and working in NGOs has sparked reactions at national and international levels.

Marriyum busts Imran's false narrative of 'helplessness'

ISLAMABAD: (APP):Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said it was only Imran Khan who was responsible for the ruined economy and damaged social fabric of the country as it was the result of his four-year misrule marred by massive unemployment, extreme inflation, poverty, incivility, immorality, and media muzzling.

Addressing a news conference, the minister busted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's narrative of "helplessness", which was nothing but a "pack of lies".

The PTI even today had its governments in four federating units, including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, but ironically its chairman was complaining of "helplessness", she said.

Marriyum said Imran Khan had changed his narrative on the "regime change" as he was now blaming only one person instead of a foreign country.

"Imran Khan now keeps on hyping that his government was changed by only one person, who also planned for his murder," she said. The PTI chief was right as it was only one person - Imran Khan himself who had played havoc with the country, deprived the poor of their livelihood, traded off Kashmir, taken historic foreign debts, and looted the national wealth ruthlessly during his four-year rule, the minister added. She said it was only Imran Khan who had allowed mafias to rob the national exchequer, pushed the country into an economic quagmire that caused extreme inflation and unemployment, increased gas and electricity prices, muzzled the media, not only got beaten journalists with their ribs and nasal bones broken but also sent many behind the bars, damaged moral values and promoted the culture of intolerance among the youth by churning out lies consistently. The minister said Imran Khan had boasted to create 10 million jobs and

wipe out corruption within 90 days of taking charge of the government, but instead he deprived the youth of sports facilities, rendered 6 million unemployed, and set records of embezzlement and kickbacks.

It was also Imran Khan who squarely damaged the social values by instilling vulgarity into young minds, and launched malicious campaigns against the armed forces martyrs and vile attacks on working women. Marriyum said it was astonishing that the person, who remained imposed on the country for four years, was persistently complaining of his "helplessness" since his ouster from power. How a "helpless person" had plundered the Toshakhana and also allowed his cabinet members to get kickbacks by delaying the purchase of LNG from abroad, she wondered.

She asked how his wife Bushra Bibi had demanded a five-karat diamond ring and sold expensive watches "purchased" from the Toshakhana, and her friend Farah Gogi in connivance with the former Punjab chief minister accumulated a huge sum of illegal money if he (Imran) was helpless.

How it was possible for a "helpless Imran Khan, to keep Tayyba Gul hostage in the Prime Minister's House to blackmail the then NAB chairman, she added.

Similarly, she said, a question arose that how he had managed to get Maryam Nawaz arrested in the presence of his father and send all the other leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz behind bars in fake cases. Marriyum said it was now for his supporters to introspect that how a "liar and impersonator" could be their leader, who changed his narratives like the weather. She said the person whose party still had a government in Punjab, was complaining of helplessness in registering a case of a murder attempt on him. He made the announcement of dissolving the Punjab Assembly but was surprisingly unable to get the attackers arrested despite having his own government and chief minister in the province.

PM for steps to enhance IT exports

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to take practical steps to enhance the country's IT exports from the current \$2.6 billion to \$15 billion within the next three years.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting to discuss the promotion of the information technology sector, also directed to enhance IT professionals from 0.6 million to 1.5 million. He instructed the Higher Education Commission, universities, and training institutes to work on the said target on a priority basis, besides improving the educational curriculum in accordance with the market needs.

The prime minister also ordered the formation of a standing committee to deliberate on the linkages between the government and the IT industry and for the resolution of the industry's issues. The committee would comprise the representatives of the IT industry, the State Bank of Pakistan, the finance ministry, the IT ministry, and other relevant departments.

The prime minister assured to resolve the IT industry's issues and asked the relevant authorities to take effective measures for the purpose. He also urged the IT industry to bring its export revenue to Pakistan and instructed the State Bank of Pakistan and Federal Board of Revenue and other departments to take effective measures.

He said Pakistan had a huge potential in the IT sector which needed to be exploited. He said the IT industry stood alongside the government to improve the national economy. The prime minister said that IT entrepreneurs had played a key role in the promotion of the IT sector. However, the country's IT exports were not in accordance with the existing talent.

He said the government would recognize the exporters who had played their role to enhance IT exports. The representatives of the IT sector apprised the prime minister of their issues and put forward their suggestions. Federal ministers Ishaq Dar and Aminul Haq, Advisor Ahad Cheema, SAPMs Tariq Bajwa, Jahanzeb Khan, and Syed Fahad Hussain, senior government officers, and representatives of the IT sector attended the meeting.

Inflation on the rise: Sh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed warned on Thursday that government's plan to disqualify PTI Chairman Imran Khan could cost it heavily. In a tweet, the former interior minister said the PDM government was imposed on Pakistan in an illegal way but the move boost the popularity of Mr Khan, who was ousted as prime minister through a no-confidence vote by the joint opposition in April last.

"They are deliberating ways how to disqualify Imran Khan. It would be the government's another wrong decision," he wrote, adding: "Even a pole would win if it is given a ticket by Imran Khan". Mr Ahmed also hit out at Federal Minister for Food Security Tariq Bashir Cheema for advising public to not consume chicken meat as it is unhealthy. A day earlier, the AML chief said the government had failed to bring political and economic stability in the country. He said the unpopular decisions taken by the government had dented the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its coalition partners, adding that foreign exchange reserves had decreased by half while inflation was on the rise. He also warned the public against worsening economic situation in the country. He said the government should take the provinces and traders organisations into confidence on its decision regarding early closure of markets.

A day earlier, the federal cabinet approved an energy conservation plan under which markets would be closed by 8:30pm and wedding halls at 10pm. "A message of elections has been conveyed and schedule is yet to be decided," he said while asking the public to start preparations for the general election.



MUZAFFARABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir chanting slogans during a protest on the occasion of Right to Self-Determination Day.

Imran seeks CJP-backed body to probe assassination bid

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Thursday demanded the formation of a powerful committee, under Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial's supervision, to probe the Wazirabad assassination bid.

In a press conference, Khan said: "I earlier stated this as well that I only hope for justice from one place [SC] as powerful people will not allow the investigation to take place." Khan was shot in the leg on December 3 as he waved to crowds from a truck-mounted container while leading a protest march to Islamabad to pressure the government into announcing an early election — but it was cut short in Rawalpindi.

Hinting at the involvement of the armed forces in his attack, Khan said that although the Pakistan Army was a top institution that serves its country, there are "black sheep" in every institute. "Now, I want the person who planned to have me killed to cooperate with the JIT. These people are intentionally obstructing justice," the ex-premier said.

The PTI chief earlier blamed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, and a senior military officer for allegedly being involved in his assassination bid. Khan further said that when Naveed, the suspect in the assassination bid, was arrested, his confessional video statement was released almost immediately "even when I had not reached the hospital after getting shot at".

The PTI chief said that Naveed

claimed he was working alone. "He was programmed to say this." The ex-prime minister claimed that the suspect was asked to say that he was working alone as if there had been someone aiding him, then he could not be called a "religious fanatic". Khan said the police quickly recorded the video statement of the suspect and disseminated it among "journalists and television channels" who work against the PTI.

The PTI chief claimed that Naveed was not a random religious fanatic rather he was a trained shooter. "And I know this because I have practised shooting. Blaming the police for not following orders, he said that the officers at the police station where the suspect was held, did not cooperate with the relevant authorities. Khan then said that he had earlier revealed in two public gatherings that a plan was being hatched to have him assassinated and that "two to three people were involved in it".

"Who were the people creating hurdles in the investigation? Who were the people who did not record the statements?" the ex-PM questioned. Khan maintained that if he has taken a suspect's name, then it was his right to get a first information report (FIR) registered against him and that the police — which comes under his own government — denied him that right. The FIR was registered almost a week after the attack on Khan on Supreme Court's orders, but the PTI rejected it and said that the FIR did not include the person's name that the party wanted.

Khan then added that there were



three shooters and not one — a claim made earlier by PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry. However, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said there was only one shooter and he was a "religious fanatic". In less than a span of two months, Khan took another U-turn on the "US conspiracy" narrative and claimed that he knew how the loyalties of his lawmakers were changed in the US embassy.

In November last year, Khan said that he no longer blamed the US administration for his ouster from the government. "Our people were called to the US embassy," he claimed. The deposed prime minister said that he knew who was involved in the regime change operation. He retired that money given to the lawmakers to change their loyalties. Without taking the name of former army chief Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, Khan said he knew how a single person decided to topple his elected government.

Pak capable to counter any threat to peace: FO

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Foreign Office has said Pakistan is determined and capable to counter any threat to its peace and security. Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly news briefing here in Islamabad on Thursday regarding terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan, Foreign Office Spokesperson

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that engagement mechanisms between Pakistan and Afghanistan are functional.

She said Pakistan will continue to engage with the Afghan side on matters of mutual concerns including security and border management. The Spokesperson said Pakistan has consistently said it will continue to support the Afghan people in their quest for a unified, independent and sovereign Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and the neighbors.

Responding to a question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

said a positive momentum is being witnessed in relations between Pakistan and the United States. She said Pakistan wants to proceed forward on the basis of mutual trust, respect and interest. The Spokesperson said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have close fraternal ties which are rooted in history and common faith. She said our relations are multi-dimensional and that includes cooperation in defense domain.

She said the visit of the Army Chief to the Kingdom is in the context of promoting Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations and defense ties. As regards the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being held in Geneva on Monday next, the Spokesperson said Pakistan expects long term response from the international community for building a climate resilient infrastructure. Giving an overview of Indian human rights violations in illegally occupied Jammu and

Kashmir, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the Indian security forces reportedly killed 214 Kashmiris, fifty seven of them in custody or in fake encounters during the last year.

Only last week, four individuals were killed in a fake encounter in Sidhra town in Jammu. There are reports that bodies were charred beyond recognition. She urged the international human rights machinery and organizations to take note of this tragedy. The Spokesperson said over four thousand Kashmiris remain imprisoned in different jails in IIOJK and India. Political prisoners and human rights defenders continued to be targeted and incarcerated.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan will continue to extend unstinted moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their quest for self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

MQM will not part ways with PDM: Tessori

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori has said Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) "will remain part of" the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — the ruling coalition government. Responding to a question in an interview, the governor expressed the hope that such a situation will not occur in which disagreements between the MQM and PPP worry the PML-N, which has its prime minister in the federal government.

The host mentioned that there are "reports that [...] neither you — the MQM — nor the Peoples Party is ready to back off", and asked how much of a "frustrating situation" this was for the federal government, referring to the possible cracks forming in the PDM alliance if the MQM decides to part ways. Tessori replied: "No, I do not think that such a situation will occur. MQM will remain part of the PDM. And the effort will be that all people are understanding and not cause trouble for the people."

The statement comes after a series of talks between the MQM and PPP over objections the former had on the delimitation done for the local government (LG) elections to be held in Karachi and Hyderabad on Jan 15. The leaders of the two parties, along with federal ministers, met at Bilawal House on Monday upon the PM's recommendations but failed to meet the desired objec-

tive with the PPP unconvinced by the MQM's demand to conduct fresh delimitation in the two cities.

The next day, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari told reporters that the party would continue to work with the MQM despite differences. However, later in the day, the MQM announced plans to hold a protest on Jan 9 against the PPP while admitting a deadlock with the PPP government with "grim chances of a positive outcome".

In an effort to gain allies, MQM leader Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui also visited the headquarters of the Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) on Tuesday night and met its chairman Mustafa Kamal. In the most recent development on the matter, Dr Siddiqui visited the headquarters of the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Wednesday where he invited all political parties, including rivals JI and PSP, to join its voice against "injustices with urban Sindh".

During the interview on Wednesday night, Tessori went on to list the current issues facing the public: "The distressed condition of the people is very worrying [as] gas isn't being supplied [properly] to the whole country, there is an electricity crisis and a water crisis, people are facing unemployment, the economy is in a bad shape." The MQM leader said: "In this period, instead of criticising and correcting each other, [...]

serve the people."

He warned that the public would "raise their voice if they did not receive gas [and] electricity [and other necessities], which would be unsuitable for all the political parties". He reiterated that it was "not a time to do politics [...] but to serve the people". Commenting on the deadlock with the PPP on LG elections' delimitations, Tessori said Siddiqui's stance was in line with the agreement signed with the PDM allies, which "clearly states that both sides would jointly carry out the delimitation [with consensus]".

The governor added: "If an [agreement] has been signed, why is it not being fulfilled? [...] I can only request both parties — not force them — that they draft a solution with consensus and without conflict." When asked whether the MQM in Pakistan has any connection with MQM-London, Tessori replied that his party is MQM-Pakistan and there is "only one MQM that has a kite as its logo". The MQM leader added, "Any MQM other than us — whichever MQM is it and wherever — has no relation to MQM-Pakistan."

When asked about his sudden return to the country to become governor, Tessori said he was not removed from the party but "suspended". He further said that Siddiqui invited everyone, including him, to the party in a press conference and that's when he decided to rejoin the party.

ECNEC approves Rs10b laptop scheme

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved the National Youth Laptop Scheme worth of Rs 10 billion to help the youth improve their digital skills.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said that 100,000 students would get the laptops under this scheme while Baluchistan students would get a special quota in the scheme. Further, he said that the students who does not fall under the scheme due to merit would also be able to get laptops on easy installments through commercial banks.

Similarly, he said the

ECNEC also approved

Sindh Human Capital Investment at a cost of Rs 55 billion and Flood Response Emergency Housing Project at a cost of Rs 160 billion to rebuild the houses in flood-hit areas of Sindh province. The World Bank is financing both projects. The ECNEC also approved the scholarship project for 5000 students in Balochistan and erstwhile FATA who would be able to get an education in the universities of developed areas of the country under this project. Ahsan Iqbal said the ECNEC also approved another project worth Rs 80 billion to reconstruct the infrastructure in the flood-hit areas of Balochistan. He said the federal government was financing this project through its own resources. Under this project, 10,000 Balochistan students would

also be given paid internships, he added.

ECNEC also approved a project worth Rs 40 billion under which 20 least developed areas of the country would get development projects for 10 years. Under this project, 40 billion would be contributed by the federal government while Rs 40 billion would be contributed by the respective provincial government. He said the ECNEC also approved another project under which the engineers and technical graduates would get a one-year paid internship (Rs 40,000 per month) in all the development projects under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). The ECNEC also approved 75 scholarships that would be awarded to Pakistani students who manage to get admission in the world's top universities.

IHC directs govt to submit Toshakhana gifts details

ISLAMABAD (TLTP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has raised questions pertaining to the gifts received by presidents and prime ministers since 1947 and has directed the government to submit these details within a month. IHC Justice Mianqul Hasan Aurangzeb issued a written order for the December 26 hearing.

The TLTP learnt that as a petitioner, Advocate Abuzar Salman Khan Niazi filed a request for the implementation of the June 29 decision of the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC). The court has written in its order that according to the petitioner, on April 23, the Cabinet Division was asked for information in this regard, to which it replied that the information is classified and cannot be provided. Following this, it noted, the petitioner appealed against this to the PIC, who ordered on June 29 to provide the requested information under the Right to Information Act. It is worth mentioning here that during the last hearing, Deputy Attorney General Syed Ahsan Raza Shah had apprised the court that he was not sure whether the Toshakhana record before 1990 was available. "Such information should be present on websites," he had added. Justice Aurangzeb had asked why the petitioner was limiting the information to the extent of former presidents and prime ministers, and why the public servants should not be included in the list. "This shows your intention,"

Justice Aurangzeb had remarked. He had added that any petition like this was only related to the prime minister. Earlier last month, the Lahore High Court (LHC) sought the details of gifts taken from the Toshakhana since 1947. Justice Asim Hafeez sought details of the Toshakhana gifts on citizen Munir Ahmed's plea. During the hearing, the federal government's lawyer had apprised the court that the details could not be provided. However, the court had directed the authorities concerned to submit the details of gifts taken from Toshakhana since 1947, by January 16. PTI chief Imran Khan was facing a scandal regarding the Toshakhana gifts for allegedly indulging in corrupt practices, which the former premier denies. **IHC quashes PEC licence renewal case:** The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has quashed FIR against the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) for violations in licence renewal and upgradation based on fake documents, stating that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) exceeded its authority in this regard. The court has also ordered the PEC to hear the complaint and decide according to its law. The TLTP learnt that Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir of IHC issued a written decision against the FIR registered by FIA against PEC under corruption provisions. The court declared the registration of the case by FIA as exceeding the authority and dismissed it.

Covid positivity ratio soars

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has recorded uptick in Covid-19 infections soaring the infectivity rate tremendously after the country registered 33 more coronavirus cases with no fatality during the last 24 hours (Wednesday), showed the figures released by the National Institute of Health (NIH) on Thursday morning.

According to the NIH data, the death toll in the country remained the same at 30,638 whereas the number of total infections now rose to 1,575,887 after adding the fresh 33 cases. During the last 24 hours (Wednesday), 3,942 tests were conducted throughout Pakistan whereas the positivity rose to 0.84 percent. The number of patients in critical care has shot up to 19.

On the other hand, international passengers arriving in Pakistan's airports will undergo random testing for Covid-19. In a tweet, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority announced screening of two percent of passengers arriving in Pakistan by international flights which has started at country's major airports.

"Owing to the Covid-19 situation in the region, screening of 2% of passengers arriving in Pakistan by int'l flights has started at country's major airports. Where needed, RAT and PCR tests are being conducted too," the tweet said. The authority also urged passengers to keep their vaccination certificate handy while at airport.

The World Health Organization criticised China's "very narrow" definition of Covid deaths on Wednesday, warning that official statistics were not showing the true impact of the outbreak. There is growing concern over China's steep rise in Covid infections since Beijing last month abruptly lifted years of hardline restrictions, with hospitals and crematoriums quickly overwhelmed.