

SHO injured in firing
F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: SHO Matni Police Station Imran-ud-din was injured on Friday in Peshawar's Matni Bazar by an unknown armed assailant. According to a private media report, SHO of Matni police station Imran-ud-din was on duty along with another team to perform his duties in Matni Bazar during Friday prayers, when armed men on a motor-cycle opened fire on them.

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Rain with snowfall predicted
F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Regional Weather Forecasting Centre Peshawar has predicted rain with snowfall over the hills in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during 7th to 9th January 2023, said a dispatch of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) issued to all Deputy Commissioners (DC) on Friday morning.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the establishment of Hazara Electric Supply Company ceremony.

LG polls will not be delayed at any cost: CEC

KARACHI (PPI): The Election Commission of Pakistan on Friday reserved the verdict on the MQM petition challenging the voters' lists to be used during the forthcoming local government elections in Karachi. The MQM has raised objections to the voters' lists under which the local government elections in Karachi would be held. During the hearing, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja remarked that the commission would not let the Karachi LG polls to be delayed. The MQM lawyer said that the use of old voters' lists during the forthcoming local government elections in Karachi was against the law. The CEC remarked that the MQM used to move to the courts in the past against the delimitations of constituencies.

"Why doesn't the MQM bring all the issues together? If the party has another issue, it should bring it before the commission so

that we will decide all cases together," the CEC said. Sikandar Raja said that the LG polls were going to be held using the same voters' lists on which the MQM had already contested the 2018 elections and by-elections. The MQM lawyer raised another point that on April 29, the election commission was incomplete. The CEC wondered that in its application, there was no mention of incomplete election commission. He told off the lawyer asking him to stick to his point and stopped beating about the bush.

"There is no way that the elections will be delayed. They will not be deferred at any cost," the election commissioner remarked. Sindh Additional Advocate General Fouzi Zafar requested the commission to allow him one-week more time to present his arguments on the case. But the commission abolished the Sindh government's right of presenting argu-

ments over its ill-preparation of the case.

The Jamaat-i-Islami representative told the commission that every possible effort was being made to delay the polls but he requested the ECP to make sure that the LG elections would be held on Jan 15. ECP Special Secretary Zafar Iqbal said that with every passing day, people keep becoming eligible for vote. If the ECP accepts the MQM plea, then it could never be able to conduct elections in the country, he said adding that as per the law, only those people could cast their votes whose names were registered at the time of election schedule release. The ECP DG law beseeched the commission to reject the MQM plea. He argued that voters' lists constantly keep updating with the passage of time. It was made clear in the ECP press release that the LG polls would be held as per the old voters' lists, he added.

Locals take to streets for peace in Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: Thousands of people in South Waziristan's Wana took to the streets on Friday against the recent wave of terrorism and demanded the immediate restoration of peace in the region. The protest comes as terrorism is again rearing its head in the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

People from all walks of life including political workers, social activists, traders and youth attended the peace march organised. Holding white flags and placards, the participants chanted slogans in favour of peace and against the fresh wave of terrorism in the region, particularly in the tribal districts.

Leaders of PPP, PTM, PML-N and AWP addressed the rally. They said the government was responsible for establishing safety and security in the region, asserting that terrorism was not acceptable at any cost. The speakers noted that there was an increase in attacks on security personnel in Wana, while ordinary citizens were being kidnapped for extortion.

They complained that the government had failed to control the situation and warned that protests in the area would continue until a police force was constituted to eliminate both the "good and bad Taliban" from the area. Talking to a private News Channel Awami National Party leader Ayaz Wazir — who also attended the protest said no one was safe in Wana, from political leaders to traders, tribal leaders and contractors. "Today, thousands of people have taken to the streets to demand peace. We won't sit quietly until the government guarantees peace," he added.

Court to indict Gill on 20th

ISLAMABAD (INP): A district and sessions court in Islamabad fixed January 20 for the indictment of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former SAPM, Dr Shahbaz Gill in a sedition case.

As per details, prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi and Shahbaz Gill's lawyer Burhan Moazzam presented before the district and sessions court. Gill's lawyer told the court that his client is outside the court in the ambulance. He cannot come to court as he is wearing an oxygen mask. He said that despite his health problem his arrest warrants have been issued. Furthermore, the court ordered all the respondents to make sure of their presence at the next hearing and fixed January 20 for the indictment of PTI leader Shahbaz Gill.

Earlier, Balochistan Police summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill in connection with a sedition case registered against him in Qila Abdullah.

Pakistan committed to complete IMF programme: PM

Shehbaz appeals business community to support govt's energy conservation plan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva on Friday called Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif over telephone, expressed her deep sympathy and concern on the human and material losses due to the recent floods and reiterated her commitment to help Pakistan in the difficult period.

The prime minister thanked the IMF managing director for her concern on the fallout of the floods and extended an invitation to her to participate in the Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference at Geneva.

Kristalina Georgieva thanked the PM for the invitation, saying she would be able to join the conference virtually as the IMF Board meetings had been prefixed for January 9 -10. The prime minister assured the IMF MD that Pakistan was committed to successfully complete the ongoing Fund's programme. He also thanked her for her understanding and empathy of the challenges that Pakistan had been facing.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appealed business community to support the government's recently announced energy conservation plan marking the early closure of markets and restaurants, to ensure judicious use of national resources and reduce the import bill.

"I appeal to the business community to extend their support to the government (for energy conservation). This will reduce the oil import and

bring down the dollar rate which would later be spent on country's progress including agriculture and medicine," the prime minister said addressing a ceremony for the establishment of Hazara Electric Company here, Covering a total area of over 16,774 square kilometers, the new company would cater to the needs of around 726,000 consumers across Haripur, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Battagram, Torgarh, Kohistan Upper, Kohistan Lower and Kolai Plus.

The prime minister said any difficulty faced by a nation necessitated collective action and expressed the hope that the traders from across the country would take part in this "jihad" to save the national resources. Referring to his telephonic interaction with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, the prime minister assured that, unlike its predecessor, the incumbent government would abide by its commitments with IMF without further burdening the masses.

However, he also sensitized the IMF head over the country's economic condition adversely affected by the worst floods and made it clear his government had already taxed the rich but could no more burden the poor. The IMF chief assured that their team would visit Pakistan for a review within two to three days, the prime minister added. Speaking highly for the Pak-China fraternal relations, the prime minister said in his meeting, the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang had also urged the IMF chief to support Pakistan considering the tough circumstances.

He also apprised the gathering of his 45-minute-long telephonic conversation with Chinese Premier in which the latter assured him not to leave Pakistan alone, which the prime minister said evidenced the improvement of bilateral relations strained by the poor foreign policy of the previous government. The prime minister criticized the previous government for undermining Pakistan's relations with friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE because the ex-prime minister Imran Khan utilized most of his energies for political victimization and blaming the opponents.

The prime minister assured that the coalition government would do its maximum for the relief of the masses including the provision of jobs. He with the establishment of HAZECO, a longstanding demand of the Hazara people was fulfilled and all the formalities in this regard would be completed immediately.

He said the government had already ordered the completion of half-complete gas projects initiated in the past as billions from the national kitty were already spent. He recalled that besides launching numerous development schemes across Hazara region, ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif had launched LNG-based power plants to inject another 11,000MW of electricity in the national grid to support the energy-scarce country. Calling Imran Khan a thankless person, the prime minister said the PTI chief had nothing to claim the credit for any development project in KP, Sindh, AJK, GB and Hazara.

Merger of erstwhile FATA a turning point: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the merger of erstwhile FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a turning point in the development and prosperity of the tribal people and said that the PTI provincial government as per its commitment has left no stone unturned for the development and rehabilitation of the merged districts; but the indifferent attitude of the incumbent federal rulers is a matter of concern.

The federal government wants to sabotage the ongoing development process by withholding the rights of the province, which is an undemocratic behavior and blatant injustice with the people of the province, especially the newly merged districts. He made it clear that out of the development budget of Rs. 55 billion for the merged districts, only Rs. 5 billion has been provided so far whereas out of the current budget of Rs. 85 billion, only 60 billion has been released.

He was addressing a meeting of the elected public representatives from the newly merged districts here at Chief Minister house, Peshawar. Ex federal minister for religious affairs Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, provin-

cial ministers Anwar Zeb and Iqbal Wazir, other members of National and Provincial Assemblies from NMDs attended the meeting.

Addressing the participants, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government has successfully completed the merger process despite numerous challenges. "In most of the merged districts, the provincial government had to start from zero because no attention was paid to the development of these areas in the past," he said and added that a new era of development has been started in the merged districts by introducing special development programs for redressing the decades-long deprivations of the tribal people.

Chief Minister said that the incumbent provincial government has taken concrete steps to bring the people of the newly merged districts into mainstream adding that after the merger of erstwhile FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, provincial departments have been extended to the newly merged districts and a special development program has been initiated with the sole purpose to address their longstanding deprivations.

The Chief Minister said that the incumbent provincial government, during the

last four years, has taken multiple steps resulting in significant improvement in the overall Services Delivery System. Despite multiple challenges, the provincial government has proved that it is not only committed to the development and prosperity of tribal districts but has gone beyond its capacity for this purpose. Absorption of Levies and Khasadars into regular police, regularization of ex-FATA project employees and provision of medical equipment and emergency medicine are among the important initiatives completed by his government.

Besides, significant measures have also been taken in the education sector including provision of scholarships to male and female students of merged districts, recruitment of new teachers, solarization of schools, construction of playgrounds, establishment and upgradation of educational institutions alongside establishing science and IT laboratories. Other important steps taken in the merged areas include; construction and rehabilitation of roads, establishment of micro hydro plants, construction of new grid stations, installation of transformers and feeders etc.

Pakistan rejects reports of airstrikes in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan on Friday rejected the reports regarding airstrikes targeting TTP hide-outs in Afghanistan and termed it "utterly baseless and malicious". The Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zehra Baloch issued the statement after Afghan journalists claimed that Pakistani fighter planes targeted the suspected hide-outs of the banned Tehreek-

e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists in two Afghan provinces, Kunar and Nangarhar.

The Afghan journalists also shared fake photos of smoke billowing out from the mountains in their WhatsApp groups. However, the security officials of Pakistan and Afghanistan have dined the reports of air raids. Furthermore, the TTP mili-

itants in Afghanistan also reportedly rejected the claims.

An Afghan-based newspaper also claimed that Pakistan targeted militants in Salala neighborhood near Gushta district on Thursday morning. Reacting to the reports in Afghanistan media, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said the reports are "utterly baseless and malicious".



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PIDU 2008-D



Rangers arrest head of street criminals gang

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in a joint intelligence-based operation in Orangi Town Frontier Colony arrested an alleged head of a street criminals gang and recovered a 9mm pistol along with 5 rounds from his possession.

According to a spokesman for Rangers on Friday, the arrested one was identified as Hidayat ur Rehman alias Kotay.

The arrested accused was involved in committing street crimes in Orangi Town, Board Office Roundabout, SITE area, 5 Star Chowrangi and adjacent areas.

Arrested accused along with his other accomplices in October 2022, snatched mobile phones and cash from a staff of a private news channel at gunpoint. The CCTV footage of the incident also made rounds over social media.

The arrested accused along with recovered arms and ammunition was handed over to the police for further legal proceedings.

Group of 25 bikers to perform Umrah besides visiting countries

LAHORE (APP): A group consisting of 25 bikers on Friday left for Saudi Arabia via road to perform Umrah besides visiting different countries.

According to the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) sources on Friday, the bikers group would visit Iran, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Urdan and Iraq.

The bikers were travelling with the mission of promoting peace, brotherhood and friendship.

They would travel for more than 14,000 kilometres and during this journey bikers would visit main cultural, religious and tourist places of the countries. The group of bikers left for the journey from the TDCP office at Gaddafi stadium.

It is pertinent to mention here that it is the fourth group of bikers visiting different countries prior to this a group of 16 bikers of Cross Route Club had visited Iran in 2019.

15 dead, 859 injured in 840 accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 15 people were killed and 859 injured in 840 accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

According to the Rescue 1122, 427 drivers, 19 underage drivers, 107 pedestrians and 340 passengers were among the victims of the traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 168 accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 159 people placing the provincial capital top of the list followed by 66 in Multan with 73 victims and third Faisalabad 60 with 58 victims. According to data, 719 motorcycles, 64 rickshaws, 98 cars, 24 vans, eight buses, 19 trucks and 84 other vehicles besides slow-moving carts were affected in the accidents.

'ROPE proved helpful to maintain law, order in city'

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mehmood Dogar has said that softwares of 'Smart Eye' and Registration of Private Employees (ROPE) under Tenant Registration System (TRS) have been proved very helpful to maintain law and order in the city.

"Smart Eye (a combination of Hotel Eye and Travel Eye)", has proved very beneficial to arrest criminals particularly proclaimed offenders.

According to a report, during the last year, police enrolled more than 574,000 tenants under TRS and also enrolled more than 19,000 private employees under Registration of Private Employees (ROPE).

Constitution binds CM Elahi to secure trust vote: Governor

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Governor Baligh ur Rehman on Friday said Chief Minister Parvez Elahi was constitutionally bound to secure vote of confidence in Punjab assembly. Hi statement comes in the wake of fresh talks on the vote of confidence in the province.

At a meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmakers, he said those spreading propaganda regarding economic default in the country would fail adding the incumbent government had put the country's economy on track. "It is the government's top priority to stabilize the economy and friendly nations have hinted at cooperation", he added.

Lawmakers included MPAs Rana Mash'hood Ahmad Khan, Khawaja Imran Nazir, Hina Pervez Butt, Sumaira Komal,

former MPA Faisal Hayat Jabboana, Rana Abdul Rauf Ghazali, Mian Fida Hussain Wattoo, MNAs Malik Muhammad Riaz, Nawab Sher.

Earlier, a political fiasco rose in the province after the deposed prime minister Imran Khan repeatedly announced to dissolve Punjab and KP assemblies. The governor de-notified Mr Elahi as CM that added fuel to the fire.

The CM moved the Lahore High Court (LHC) in response, and the LHC suspended the governor's notification that led to restoration of Mr Elahi as the CM. However, the court bound the CM to refrain from dissolving the Punjab assembly until he obtained the trust vote. The PTI top brass later claimed that Mr Elahi would secure a vote of confidence.

DEMP Karachi organises Digital Photographic Exhibition



F.P. Report

KARACHI: DEMP Karachi organises Digital Photographic Exhibition and Quiz Competition at Sindh Madrasat ul Islam University.

Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications, DEMP, Karachi organised a digital photographic exhibition and intra-university quiz competition in observance of 146th birth anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah at his alma mater Sindh Madresat ul Islam University Karachi.

Vice Chancellor Sindh Madresat ul Islam University Professor Dr.

Mujeebuddin Sarhai Memon and Director General Press Information Department Karachi Ms. Iram Tanveer inaugurated the digital photographic exhibition in the gallery of the university.

The photographic exhibition displayed rare digital photographs of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Dr. Allama Iqbal and glimpses from struggle of the Founding Fathers during the Pakistan Movement.

A three-stage quiz competition amongst 4 teams was also held in the main auditorium of the university. The students were asked various questions

pertaining to the personal life and struggle of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah for achievement of a separate homeland for Muslims of the sub-continent.

Vice Chancellor Sindh Madresat ul Islam University Karachi highly lauded the leadership qualities and statesmanship of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Director General Press Information Department Karachi Ms. Iram Tanveer while felicitating DEMP Karachi and SMIU for jointly organising this programme added that there would be no better place other than SMIU for observing the Quaid Day.

NADRA to carry out biometric verification of vehicle owners in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): NADRA will conduct bio metric verification of vehicle owners across Sindh through its 'Sahulat Program' to discourage vehicles operating on open letters and fake documents or without transfer.

An agreement has been inked, on Friday, between Sindh Department of Excise and Taxation and Anti-Narcotics and National Database and Registration Authority at a signing ceremony held here.

The agreement was signed by Director Excise Admin Waheed Sheikh on behalf of Sindh Excise Department and

Head of e-Government Salman Malik on behalf of NADRA in presence of Secretary Excise and Taxation and Anti-Narcotics Sindh Atif Rehman and Director General Excise and Taxation Aurangzeb Panhwer and other officers. Under the agreement, initially spanning

over three years in the first phase, process of bio metric verification of vehicle owners would start through NADRA Sahulat Program. Under this agreement, vehicles operating on fake documents and vehicles operating without transfer or running on open letters will be discouraged.



LAHORE: People are gathered around fire to keep themselves warm in cold weather near Railway Station.

NA body on SAFRON meets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) on Friday discussed the issue of FATA House Islamabad and recommended to the Ministry of Interior to handover the possession to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and submit the report to the Committee accordingly.

The Committee which met here at Parliament House with MNA Muhammad Jamal ud Din in the Chair, was of the view that FATA House was the property of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government after FATA merger. On the issue of non-inclusion of students from Deeni Madaaris as well as students from Erstwhile FATA into Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, the Committee was informed by the Chairman HEC that 9500 laptops given to the FATA students under the Laptop scheme.

The Chairman HEC further informed that Deeni Madaaris do not come under the policy and the HEC only awards laptops to the university students. The Committee recommended to the Chairman HEC to sit together with the Management of Wafaq-ul-Madaaris to amend the existing policy and also include Deeni Madaaris students in the said laptop scheme.

The Committee recommended that the DEO Tribal District South Waziristan would be invited in the next meeting for briefing explain-

ing the reasons of not submitting the feasibility report and PC-I of establishing of 39 boys and girls primary schools under ADP No. 389/210339 in South Waziristan.

Earlier, the DEO South Waziristan has given the assurance in the previous meeting of the Committee that the PC-I of the said schools of South Waziristan would be submitted to the Education Department, Government of KP as soon as possible.

The Committee further recommended to the District Education Officers (F/M) of Tribal District South Waziristan to submit the PC-I of the above-mentioned schools within one week to Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar and submit back report to the Committee accordingly. The Committee was also briefed by the Secretary Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC), Islamabad on the increase of medical/dental seats for FATA students in medical and dental colleges across the country in view of the Cabinet Decision made in its meeting on 2nd March, 2017.

The Secretary PMC informed the Committee that the seats have been increased only for session 2022-23.

The Committee appreciated quick response of PMC in allocating the additional seats, however the Committee recommended to the Pakistan Medical Commission

to issue one-time notification for doubling of seats in medical/dental colleges across the Country by 2028, so as to resolve the issue once for all.

The Committee further recommended that Health Secretaries of the provinces and Azad Jammu and Kashmir would be invited in the next meeting in order to resolve the medical and dental seats for FATA students across the country forever.

The Committee was also briefed by the Executive Director, Urban Policy and Planning Unite, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the Master Plan for Wana Urban center of Lower Waziristan and Miranshah/ Mir Ali urban centers of North Waziristan has already been completed.

However, the Master Plan for the urban center of Upper Waziristan Tribal District shall be developed in phase-II of the project which shall be initiated before June 2023.

The Committee recommended that headquarter of Upper Waziristan Tribal District may be established at Tehsil Ladha Waziristan as Ladha was the most feasible location than Spinkai Raghzi.

The meeting was attended by MNAs including Muhammad Afzal Khokhar, Chaudry Muhammad Ashraf, Naveed Ameer Jeeva, Afreen Khan, Nasiba Channa, and Mohsin Dawar, MNA/Mover and officials of the Ministry and its attached departments.

More than 3 mln citizens provided free treatment through Sehat Sahulat Program

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has so far spent Rs 69.80 billion on the free treatment of more than 3.165 million people through indoor treatment under Sehat Sahulat Program in private and public hospitals.

This data was shared by the Health department during a meeting, presided over by Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, held to review the facilities provided to the people of Punjab under universal health insurance and the

steps taken to empanel more hospitals, here on Friday. According to the data the program is being implemented in 795 public and private hospitals including 191 public and 604 private hospitals where free indoor treatment facilities are being provided.

Under the Sehat Sahulat Program more than 722,000 people received facility of Dialysis, 72,100 Coronary Angiography, 82,000

women underwent through process of normal delivery, 320,000 cesarean, 46,200 Hernia surgery, 49,300 chemotherapy, 39,000 citizens received angioplasty treatment, more than 243,200 citizens received eye treatment/operation and 120,000 citizens availed heart surgery through the Sehat Sahulat Program so far.

The Health Minister informed that Cyberknife treatment facility had also

been provided to cancer patients through Sehat Sahulat Card.

Special Secretary Syed Wajid Ali Shah, Additional Secretary Finance Shahida Farrukh, CEO Punjab Health Initiative Management Company Dr. Ali Razaq, officers of State Life Insurance Company, COO Punjab Health Initiative Management Company Shamshad Khan and other officers participated in the meeting.

TENDER NOTICE

INSTITUTE OF KIDNEY DISEASES HAYATABAD
PESHAWAR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) SYSTEM

Sealed tenders are invited for Supply Installation, Testing & commissioning of HVAC System for Institute of Kidney Diseases Hayatabad on Single-Stage Two Envelop bidding Procedure under KPPRA Rules 6-2(A) Technical & Financial on FOR and C&F basis. Tender should reach to the office of the undersigned through Registered Courier Service or by hand on or before 27/01/2023 at 11:00 AM and will be opened no the same day at 11:30 AM in presence of bidders or their

Sl No	Description	Quantity	Unit	Remarks
1	Supply Installation, Testing & commissioning of HVAC System for main building	2%	CDR	4th time tender
2	Supply Installation, Testing & commissioning of HVAC System for OPD/IBP Building	2%	CDR	1th time tender

Pre-bid meeting	Last date & time for submission of tender Documents	Last date & time of tender opening
16-01-2023, 10:00 AM	27-01-2023, 11:00 AM	27-01-2023, 11:30AM

TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

- The firm must be registered with Pakistan Engineering Council in category C-3 having specialization codes (ME-01) or higher.
 - The firm must be register with Income Tax, Sale Tax and on FBR active tax payer list; taxes will be deducted as per rules.
 - Bidding Documents/TORs can be Obtained from Procurement Officer IKD on written request/
 - Only typed tender on original company prescribing letter pad sealed & signed (Every page) should be submitted, hand written bid will not be entertain.
 - A pre-bid meeting will be held on 16/01/2023 at the conference room of IKD for any query about the tender at 10:00AM.
 - No conditional tender will be acceptable.
- Note:** The competent authority has the right to reject any or all bids under the rule 47 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public procurement regulatory authority (KPPRA) Procurement rules 2014.

DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF KIDNEY DISEASE HAYATABD PESHAWAR

INF(P)# 82/23, The Frontier Post Peshawar, Date: 07-01-23

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION TANK

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Financial procedure proposals / bids through E-Bidding are invited on the basis of single stage two envelope from the prequalified firm of PHE Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for supply, installation, testing & commissioning of the various solar pumping machineries. The works are offered schemes wise, detail of schemes are as under:-

S#	Description	No of Schemes
1.	Solarization of 400 WSS Both Existing & New WSS, Gravity Schemes & High WSS Head Without Solar in KPK ADP No. 251/150206	03-Nos
2.	Construction of Water Supply & Sanitation Schemes in KPK District Tank for The 2021-22 ADP No.309/210473	01-Nos
3.	Rehabilitation / Augmentation of PHE Existing Water Supply in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2019-20) ADP No.152/150208	01-Nos
4.	Construction / Rehabilitation of Water Supply & Sanitation Schemes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Phase-III) for the year (2017-8) ADP No. 281/200103	04-Nos
5.	Construction & Solarization of New DWSS including Gravity Based Schemes ADP No.288/195177	03-Nos
6.	Least Development Districts Uplift Programme under ADP No.1148/190446	07-Nos

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Tender Form/BOQ can be downloaded from PHE website (www.pheedpk.gov.pk) only by the prequalified firms/contractor.
- Financial bids must be accompanied by a bid security equal to 2% of the estimated cost of each scheme in shape of call deposit along with the stamp duty.
- Incomplete/conditional bid or bid with untested cutting/overwriting/disfiguring will not be accepted.
- Last date for submission of tender is **25.01.2023 upto 12:00 Noon**.
- Technical bids will be opened at 02:00 PM on 25.01.2023 in the office of undersigned in the presence of bidder or their representative opted to attend.
- The Firms / Bidders who quote Rates "More than 15% below" on the BOQ shall Deposit additional Call Deposit with the bid in form of percentage as per KPPRA Notification.
- Any other information regarding bidding may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on any working day.
- Firm should provide all relevant attested documents of their registration.
- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue authority, established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013), for works, consulting and non-consulting services as listed in schedule-II of the Act (bid).
- Tender / fees 0.03% on Bid Cost in shape of CDR. If not submitted then he will be considered non-responsive.

Executive Engineer,
Public Health Engineering, Division Tank

INF(P)# 81/23, The Frontier Post Peshawar, Date: 07-01-23



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan chairing a meeting of the elected public representatives from the newly merged areas.

People of different religions emphasis on establishing harmony



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Representatives of different religions here on Friday called for inter-faith harmony and justice in the society for a peaceful world. "Humanity can be served and the calamities in the world can be fought only through inter-faith harmony," they said while speaking during a conference on "Unity of Divine Religions for a Peaceful World" at Khana Farhang Iran here.

Religious leaders of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh and Kailash religions read their religious prayer words. Mehran Eskandarian, Director General of Farhang Iran Peshawar, welcomed the guests and said that according to the teachings of the

divine religions, the realisation of the truth, freedom, peace and security and the establishment of justice and equality in the world, finding solution of difficulties and problems and addressing sense of deprivation among destitutes segments could help establish a peaceful world.

He spoke about the importance of properly dealing with famine, hunger, extremism and natural disasters. Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Minority Affairs Wazirzada who was the chief guest on the occasion emphasized on forging unity among followers of all the religions, adding that people of different religions enjoy full liberty to observe their religious practices.

He said all the religions in the world teach peace and brotherhood in society and oppose violence and bloodshed in the name of religious extremism.

The conference was attended by Allama Abid Hussain Shakri, Provincial Woman Ombudsman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rukhsanda Naz, Lecturer Philosophy Department Peshawar University Syeda Noreen Fatima, Director of Pakistan Study Center Prof. Dr. Fakhru'l Islam, Muhammad Maqsood Ahmad Salafi, Shahzad Murad, Pastor of the Christian School, the spiritual leader of the Hindu community Pandit Sham Lal and the Chief Qazi from the Kailash nation and other dignitaries.

Govt pays attention to all segments of society: Saif F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Special Assistant to Chief Minister Muhammad Ali Saif on Friday said that the provincial government was equally paying attention to development of all segments of society indiscriminate of their political, religious or any other affiliations.

Talking to a delegation of Majlis-e-Wahadat ul Muslimin KP here at his office, he said that Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has put the province on path of development and prosperity, adding that KP government was fully aware of the problems of people and taking pragmatic measures to provide maximum relief to them in available resources.

The delegation apprised the CM's aide about the problems in their areas and requested the government's attention. They agreed to chalk out a mechanism with the government for the solution of their problems.

PESCO notifies power suspension F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) has notified suspension of electricity to various localities due to maintenance work. According to the notification issued here on Friday, power supply from 132 KV Shahi Bagh-Peshawar Fort-Taru Jaba Transmission Line will remain suspended on 8th January (Sunday) from 9:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M, resultantly consumers of 132 KV Peshawar Fort and Wapda House grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

Similarly, power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Oghi-Battal Transmission Line on 7th January (Saturday) from 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M resultantly consumers of 132 KV Battal grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

Furthermore, power supply will also remain suspended from 132 Haripur-Hattar Transmission Line on 8th January (Sunday) from 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M, and extra load management will be carried out on 132 KV resultantly consumers of Hattar 1,2, Haripur, Kholian Bala and 66 KV Haripur and Havelian grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

Similarly, power supply will also remain suspended from 132 Haripur-Havelian Transmission Line on 9th January from 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M, and extra load management will be carried out on 132 KV resultantly consumers of AMC Nathia Gali, Abbottabad, Kholian Bala grid connected 11 KV feeders will face inconvenience.

Canteen Manager LRH arrested F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Canteen Manager Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) was arrested for profiteering and selling of under-weight roti on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shafiqullah Khan was receiving complaints that the canteen of the hospital is overcharging patients and their attendants, which prompted him to direct immediate action.

In this connection, the Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Junaid Shah conducted raid on the canteen and arrested its manager for profiteering and selling under-weight roti. Furthermore, the team of the district administration also inspected restaurants in the surrounding locality of the hospital and arrested 12 more persons for profiteering, selling adulterated tea and erection of encroachments outside their shops.

The Deputy Commissioner Peshawar has directed the officers of the district administration to carry out the inspection of the canteens of all hospitals to take action over profiteering and violation of hygienic principles.

Committee setup to finalize new transport fare

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In pursuance of the directives of Chief Minister KP, Mahmood Khan for measures against increasing transport fares, Commissioner Peshawar, Raiz Mehsud held a meeting with the Transport Department, Traffic officials and representatives of the Public Transport Association here on Friday.

According to a press release issued here, during the meeting Transport Association agreed on the charging of old fares. Commissioner Peshawar also constituted a committee under the chairmanship of DC Peshawar to finalize new

fares within 72 hours time. Riaz Mehsud also issued directives to the district administration, Transport Department and Traffic police to take strict against those found charging exorbitant rates on passengers.

It merits mention here that Chief Minister, Mahmood Khan while taking notice of high transportation charges after ban on the supply of natural gas to CNG Stations, had directed Commissioner Peshawar to take measures for its prevention on an emergency basis.

Over 70 transporters penalized for overcharging commuters: Regional Transport Authority (RTA)

Peshawar launched a crackdown against public transport for overcharging commuters here on Friday.

On the special directives of the Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, Secretary RTA, Akbar Iftikhar carried out an operation against transporters and imposed a penalty of Rs.50,000/- on over 70 vehicles.

According to an official handout the ongoing crackdown against overcharging by transporters will continue on all routes and directed the transporters to charge commuters on the basis of the fixed fares. Otherwise, stern legal action would be taken against them.

CEO EZDMC pledges close, facilitative ties with industry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal Khattak has assured building close, facilitative and supportive synergy between industries and the company. He was addressing a reception organized in his honour by the Industrialists' Association Peshawar here the other day, said a press release issued here on Friday.

Chief Commercial Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Planning, Chief Zone Management and Estate Manager KP-EZDMC were also present on the occasion also accompanied the CEO.

Besides, Group Leader, Ghazanfar Bilour, executive members Riaz Arshad,

Adeel Rauf, Malik Niaz, Zarak Khan Khattak, Mohsin Wadud, Haris Mufti, Junaid Altaf, Subhani Zia and Dr Maqbool were also present on the occasion.

The KP-EZDMC chief was invited by the President IAP Malik Imran Ishaq & Management Committee to congratulate him on his service extension. After exchanging pleasantries, the CEO apprised the forum about future initiatives of the company and said that the PSO operated Fuel Station would be established in the Industrial Estate Peshawar (IEP) and also assured availability of subsidized industrial lubricants for the industry.

He told the industrialists the company has also planned beautification and face-lifting of IEP with landscaping, smart street systems and electric sign-

boards. The company is also going to establish a centralized security system with 24/7 patrolling, control room and active registry of factories' security guards and Hi-Tech CCTV cameras.

Furthermore, he said that a no-objection certificate for the construction of a boundary wall around the industrial estate has already been obtained from the Irrigation Department. He said that street/road lights would be energized through connections from the nearby industries and asked the industrialists to beef-up internal security arrangements and abstain from dumping debris on streets roads. The CEO assured that the company will leave no stone unturned for industrial development and support of the business community particularly industrialists.

2023- The year of Imran Niazi?

Mustajab Nazir Dhoki

IT WAS 2018 when PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) was selected and imposed as the new government of this country, a country we call Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Our country is Islamic Republic but unfortunately rate of murders, rape, and violence are very high in this country. From the beginning, this country has been facing many martial laws, so-called Islamic rules by Dictator Zia-ul-Haq, forced laws imposed by Gen Musharraf, attacks on holy places, harassments and murders of Non-Muslims, forced conversion of Non-Muslims, and cases of blasphemy.

Imran Niazi is basically a puppet of anti-democratic forces, he is the supporter of Taliban and their rules. Many people believe he is the young (selected) PM of Pakistan. Being 70 is not being young. It's an old age. Just like some people believe he is the man of words and honor. No dear. If he was, he would have never called the victims of Quetta people

'Blackmailers'. Imran Niazi is responsible for the murder and harassment of many people from Zainab, Huznoor to Noor Mukaddam. He was supposed to take a serious action. But he didn't. He has gone in the history as Utturns Khan.

There's one more thing, 2014 the attack on Army Public School. At that time Imran Niazi was enjoying his wedding while the families of martyrs were mourning for their young ones. He always did this. His fake promises, his fake accusations on President Asif Ali Zardari. After the fall of his selected government and when Shahbaz Sharif was elected as the PM of this country and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was elected as the Foreign Minister of this country, Mr Niazi created another drama, let's call it 'A Letter'. He was showing fake blank paper in front of media and making people believe that he is getting threats. Well really? Who will threaten him? He is fake, liar, manipulator, corrupt, dictator and shameless person.

2023, The Year of Imran Niazi, it's

trending on twitter. Well, of course his selected workers and paid social media companies spread this trend. Just like his government his workers are selected too, like Shah Mahmood Qureshi a culprit, a liar, a fake person. Now Imran and his puppets are calling this government 'Imported Government'. Well, you are imported. You are imported by some so called powers, you support violence, and you favor Taliban. Imran Niazi is the one who said there are no records of Prophet Esa in history. He is the person who does not know the history and he mocks PPP and bad-mouthed about women. Well, what can we expect from this loser?

I am not expecting anything positive from you, Mr Niazi. Keep on saying 'Imported Hukoomat Na Manzoor' as if we care? If people of Pakistan will vote for PPP as PTI is just a bunch of hypocrite freewheeling political Eskimos. I would like youngsters to follow Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and vote for him as we can see in past few months he did a lot for this country.

Development projects in merged districts bring prosperity: Minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Irrigation Arshad Ayub Khan on Friday said that due to the development works in the merged districts the socio-economic lives of locals have changed. Presiding over a meeting here to review the ongoing projects under the annual development program of the irrigation department for 2022-23, he said that work is going on rapidly on the projects of the irrigation department.

With the completion of these proj-

ects, thousands of acres of land in the merged districts would be irrigated that would usher a new era of agricultural and economic prosperity, adding that some projects were in the process of completion and would soon start delivering. The review meeting was attended by Secretary Irrigation Muhammad Ayaz, Chief Engineer Samit Circle and other concerned officials.

The participants of the meeting were given a detailed briefing on the ongoing projects under the ongoing annual development pro-

gram in the merged districts, in which they were informed about the cost estimation, efficiency, progress so far and the problems. During the briefing, it was informed that work is underway on 17 projects in the merged districts, while work on two new projects would start this year and four projects were in the stages of completion. During the meeting, the Provincial Irrigation Minister expressed satisfaction about the pace of work and issued instructions for further improvement.

Rizwan names Registrar in UoA F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Rizwan Ahmad has been posted as Registrar of the University of Agriculture. He is PhD from the Institute of Development Studies The University of Agriculture Peshawar and is an experienced officer of the University having rich experience in administration.

Previously he has served on the positions of Director Planning and Development, Director Financial Aid, Director VC's Secretariat and Head University Development Office and Project Director Technology Development Centre in the University. All faculty and administration in the University has warmly welcomed this decision of the worthy VC Prof. Dr. Jehan Bakht and termed that Dr. Rizwan Ahmad will prove beneficial for University.



PESHAWAR: Workers of PPP cutting cake to celebrate the birthday of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. - F.P. photo



PESHAWAR: Activists of Cooperative CNG Association holding a protest for acceptance of their demands. - F.P. photo

Our action plan is unity, says ATP chief

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Aamun Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faig Shah noted provincial and regional monopoly has created hurdles in building up a democratic society. State is being blackmailed by the setting up owing to the monarchy of a pressure group while powerful segments prevail everywhere in the country, Shah said while addressing different delegations and members of the legal fraternity here on Friday.

The ATP chairman observed Karachi has become the centre of politics, experiment site and board exercise and monopoly is being established which is an attempt to continue to lead down the economic jugular vein of Pakistan. Similarly, he said

some groups and parties have established their own monopoly that's given birth to hatred. ATP wants its elimination and fostering of a democratic society, he added.

"Our action plan is unity, consensus and harmony under which thinking like monarchy, civil dictatorship and politics-based on inherited would be culminated." So, he hoped that people would vote for a single manifesto and ideology and get rid from personalities and monopolies forever. Shah continued to say that it's a major political 'Jihad' [holy war], and its practical demonstration was shown by father of the nation, Quaid E Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

There is currently required the same zeal and zest while keeping in view the prevailing circum-

stances, he added. The ATP chief remarked an inclusive and strong government would be set up with bringing of reforms and practical implementation on public manifesto and justice.

In such situation, people would elect their representatives. He noticed the occupant group with assistance of bullying, highhandedness and rigging built a pressure and blackmailing the state. Shah raised the question: "how can economic progress come in a prevalent scenario? He emphasized the need for abolishment of civil dictatorship and personal politics. Shah suggested that vote should be polled to a nationwide program through framing of a roadmap. The ATP chief remarked true democracy will be the manifestation of the country's development and unity.

E-stamp paper formally inaugurated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As per the instructions of CM KP, Deputy Commissioner Furqan Ashraf on Friday formally inaugurated the issuance of E-stamp paper in the district here.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Sub Registrar Kohat and Revenue officials were also present on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion the DC said that with issuance of e-stamp paper would replace the old stamp paper and those would not be valid any further, adding that it would ensure transparency in resolution of disputes of property, purchase and sale, along with determining the correct value of the property and eliminating forgery and fraud. He said the e-stamp paper could be verified online.



In brief

5 people dead in road accident

BAGH (INP): A coaster met an accident near Rahim Kot in Bagh in Azad Kashmir in the wee hours of Friday in which five people lost their lives. According to details, a coaster boarding 12 people was going to Mushtamba and left Rawalpindi station at 12am (Friday). When the vehicle reached near Rahim Kot, it met an accident in which five of the passengers were killed. The coaster bearing number plate 6641skidded off the road and fell into a ditch. Five passengers including driver and conductor died on the spot while three others were injured. The injured were shifted to Dheerkot Hospital. Sources said the death toll might rise.

Cop killed along with friend

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Unknown motorcyclists on Friday killed a police official along with his friend in Pahar Khel area here. According to district police, two militants riding on a bike managed to escape from the scene after committing the crime, adding police official was also riding on a bike with his friend when they were targeted. A team of Rescue 1122 reached on the spot and shifted dead bodies identified as Younas Khan and Asmatullah Khan to district hospital, while police cordoned off the area and started a search operation.

Police kill two robbers

FAISALABAD (PPI): Two suspected robbers were killed in a crossfire with the police in Tandianwala area on Friday. A police team signalled four suspects to stop during checking near Chak 615 GB. The suspects opened fire on the policemen. Both sides exchanged fire as a result of which two suspects were killed and two others fled. The deceased were identified as Shahid and Ahsaan who were wanted by the local police for their involvement in several cases. Police seized two motorcycles and illegal weapons from the spot. Police claimed that the motorcycles were snatched from citizens. The dead bodies were shifted for autopsy and a case was registered.

Three killed in road accident

MULTAN (INP): In Multan, three people of a same family were killed and two others got injured when a car collided with a truck near head Muhammad Wala on Friday. According to Rescue 1122, dense fog and poor visibility caused the accident. Two injured children have been admitted in Nishter hospital Multan. The car riding family was on way to Rahim Yar Khan from Kot Addu.

Transporters warned

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The Regional Transport Authority (RTA) has warned transporters against overloading and overcharging passengers and imposed fine on several violators. In this regard, site teams of the RTA along with traffic personnel conducted an operation and inspected passengers' vehicles plying on Dikhan-Bannu and Chashm roads. During the inspection, a number of transporters were fined for overloading and overcharging passengers. The inspection team also took out extra seats from several vehicles. During an inspection which was conducted in line with directives of Commissioner Dera division Amir Afaq to facilitate passengers, the team returned the extra fare to passengers and directed transporters to comply with only the officially prescribed fare list.



SHANGLA: Local residents holding a protest at Belay Baba Bazaar as they demand completion of Doulat Kalay Raod. — F.P. photo

Anti-India demo held in Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): The International Forum for Justice and Human Rights organized an anti-India demonstration in Muzaffarabad, today, on the anniversary of martyrs of the Sopore massacre.

A large number of people, holding banners and placards in their hands with slogans against Indian state terrorism in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, participated in the demonstration. The protesters also raised high-pitched slogans against the brutalities of the Indian troops on innocent Kashmiris.

Vice Chairman of International Forum for Justice Human Rights Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami District Ameer Latif Abbasi, Municipal Chief Officer Jameel Afghani and Pasban-e-Hurriyat Vice Chairman Usman Ali Hashim addressing the protesters said despite the passage of 30 years the wounds of the tragic Sopore massacre are

still fresh in the hearts of the people of Kashmir. The speakers deplored that the perpetrators of the massacre were roaming freely and the victim families had not yet received justice. The speakers saluted the bravery of the Kashmiris and said that despite the Indian atrocities, their morale is high and they are steadfast in their demand for freedom.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International, Raja Najabat Hussain has urged the world powers to take solid steps for settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Raja Najabat Hussain addressing a function in Mirpur in connection with Kashmiris' Right to Self-Determination Day said a comprehensive strategy and policy should be formulated and the Kashmiris, who are the main parties to the dispute, should be given a role to implement it and

take it forward.

He said as a Kashmiri he appeals to all the national leadership, the heads of all national institutions and the heads of all decision-making bodies to take the Kashmiri leadership, Hurriyat leadership and other Kashmiris into confidence regarding the Kashmir dispute and take a solid decision according to the requirements of the time.

Raja Najabat Hussain said the people of Pakistani and Kashmir want to complete Pakistan by liberating the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir from Indian yoke. Strong and stable Pakistan could effectively advocate the Kashmir cause at international level, he added. He maintained that laces of Pakistanis and Kashmiris were living abroad and reiterated the pledge to make Pakistan a prosperous country. He said that the Kashmir freedom movement would be taken to its logical end at every cost.

Training session organized for lawyers

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The Roshni Helpline-1138 in collaboration with High Court Bar Association and District Bar Association organized a one-day training session for the lawyers' community regarding the sexual abuse of children.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) DI Khan, Muhammad Saleem Marwat, was the chief guest at the training session which was attended by Additional Registrar High Court Ghulam Abbas, District Attorney Dera Farhaj Sikander Baloch, Senior Vice President of Supreme Court Bar Association Saleem Ullah Ranizai, President High Court Bar

Hidayat Ullah Malana, General Secretary Waqar Alam, President District Bar Association Muhammad Irfan, General Secretary Aamir Farid Saduzai, Focal Person NGOs Registration Social Welfare Department Amjad Parvez and a large number of male and female lawyers of Dera Ismail Khan.

The head of Roshni helpline-1138 Muhammad Ali and the Operational Manager Ali Shan Zaidi informed the participants about the sexual abuse of children and presented a report in this regard. On this occasion, the participating lawyers assured their cooperation to resolve such cases on a priority basis.

The chief guest, RPO Muhammad Saleem Marwat appreciated the efforts of Roshni helpline-1138 and assured that the police department would resolve the cases of sexual violence against children on a priority basis so that the culprits involved in that sexual violence could be brought to justice and the sexual violence would be discouraged in the society. At the end of the training session, shields and certificates were distributed among the participants including RPO Muhammad Saleem Marwat, Additional Registrar High Court Ghulam Abbas, District Attorney Dera Farhaj Sikander Baloch and the lawyers.

SCA appeals to govt for flood hit victimism help

LARKANA (PPI): A meeting of Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) Larkana Division, was presided over by its President Syed Sirajul Oliya Rashidi here on Friday which was attended by Atta Muhammad Hab, Ali Raza, Iftikhar Ali Bhutto, Ghulam Nabi, Hussain Bakhsh and other growers.

Syed Siraj Rashidi is a statement appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief Minister Sindh, Chairman, People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and demanded that due to the short time given to survey the lands damaged by the recent floods, various Dehs of Warah Tehsil including Hamid Wah, Gul Buriro and others of Qamber-Shahdadkot district have been left behind.

He said that due to the lack of survey of thousands of acres the inhabitants have been suffering from double punishment. Siraj Rashidi demanded that the kind of devastation caused by the recent torrential rains in Sindh, especially the floodwaters from Balochistan and Punjab and the water left in the sewers

in the last hundred years has caused tremendous destruction for which there is no example of such devastation in the last 100 years.

Similarly, he said that after the water receded, the government ordered a survey of the affected lands in order to provide seeds to the poor farmers to grow wheat crops, but a large number of lands have been left without surveys. He said that it was announced to give Rs5000 per acre to the farmer for wheat seeds whereas, 80 kg of wheat is planted per acre. After the amount of wheat has been fixed by the government at Rs4000, it is impossible to get good quality wheat seeds with this amount, but it costs Rs10000 to plant one acre. while the cost of chemical fertilizers, diesel etc. is apart from this.

On the other hand, he added, the wheat planting season has ended, but till now the seed supply to the farmers has not been completed, Rashidi said during the survey of the affected remote vast areas, 50% percent of the land could hardly be surveyed due to the

muddy, pumpy and dirty roads in the flood-affected areas. He said that due to the malice of the local revenue officers in Warah, the survey of 60% of the affected lands and houses of Gul Buriro village, Hamid Wah village has still not been carried out, from which dozens of residents have been deprived of the compensation/survey of their homelessness.

He said that the revenue's hungry officers have already stolen billions of rupees in the name of relief operations. He said that it was revealed in the report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Larkana in the Sindh High Court Circuit Bench, in which it was claimed to have spent more than three billion rupees in the form of food and draining stagnant water.

SCA said that Justice Amjad Ali Sahto and Justice Shams Abbasi of SHC expressed surprise at this report and said that hundreds of villages and vast areas of land are still under water. Judges ordered NAB to conduct an inquiry and submit a report.

Woman gives birth baby at Ambulance

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A woman gave birth to a baby in an ambulance while being shifted to hospital at Lakki Marwat on Friday. The Rescue 1122 Lakki Marwat spokesman said that a woman resident of Naurang Tehsil after experiencing labour pain, was being shifted in an ambulance of Rescue 1122 to hospital for childbirth.

But due to the medical condition of the woman, it was not possible to reach the hospital and permission was given by the family to deliver the baby in the ambulance. The Rescue's female medical emergency technicians, Kausar Jabben and Sahiba Bibi handled the case in a professional manner and the woman gave birth to a healthy child. The spokesman said that rescue ambulances were equipped with delivery kits and other necessary medicines to deal with such emergencies. He said both mother and the baby were in good condition and they were shifted to home.

2 wounded in a house fire in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: One Sher Ali Jan and his son Zeeshan were wounded when a fire broke out in a house due to gas leakage at Munda here on Friday, residents said. They said the Rescue 1122 fight fighters and emergency team reached the site and shifted the injured inmates to the nearby hospital.

The fire flames turned the household items into ashes. The residents said the victim Sher Ali Jan worked as a driver in a private educational institution and had to feed a large family. The Munda tehsil chairman Haji Inayatullah along with the PTI tehsil president Ubaidur Rehman and a local activist Syed Taimur Jan visited the victim's family. They demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the Lower Dir administration to help the family stand on its feet.

Rescue 1122 work appreciated

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Director General Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Khateer Ahmad has valued duties, the workers perform professionally during his visit, paid to district rescue headquarters office, subdivision Jamrud last day.

District emergency officer Syed Shoab Mansoor and emergency officer Baryal Mukhtyar received the guest and a smart contingent of Rescue officials presented him guard of honor. The visiting officer met the subordinate officials, examined the control room and inspected emergency equipment and vehicles.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Khateer Ahmad flanked by Director Operation Dr Muhammad Ayaz said that including district Khyber, all the Rescue 1122 centers were established and well equipped of all necessary modern equipment with support of KP government and were active to serve the people.

Universities BPS teachers elects its central cabinet

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The All Pakistan Universities BPS Teachers Association (APUBTA) has elected Dr Sami ur Rahman from the University of Malakand as its central and Dr Imtiaz Ahmad as general secretary for the next one year term, says a press release issued here on Friday.

Other office bearers include Dr Hafsa Jamshed from NTU Faisalabad as Vice President, Dr Rehana Kausar from AJK University as Vice President female, Dr Jawad Khan from Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan as joint secretary, Dr M Asif Jan from Kohat University as finance secretary and Dr Manzoor Ahmed from IIU Islamabad as media secretary.

The elections were conducted online and the cabinet notifications of various chapters were issued by completing the phase wise process. The process for the elections was officially started in November 2022 with the submission of nomination papers by the candidates. Earlier, the stage of election of the provincial leadership of the APUBTA and the members of Azad Jammu & Kashmir cabinet, Punjab, KP, Sindh, GB and Baluchistan had also been completed.

The newly elected central cabinet members on Friday expressed that they would continue to fight for the rights of the BPS teachers and would make every possible effort to take effective measures at every forum for the right to in-service promotion for the BPS teachers.

It is to mention that university teachers have been divided into two groups of teachers working on basic pay scale and Tenure Track System (TTS). Talking to local journalists the newly elected general secretary said the service structure had been granted to the TTS teachers and discriminatory policies were imposed on the BPS teachers that had raised severe seniority issues.

Scholar's defence: An M. Phil scholar Mr Javed Khan on Friday successfully defended his MPhil thesis at the University of Malakand (UoM), titled "Modeling and analysis of Sutterby fluid due to a rotating stretchable disk with Cattaneo-Christov heat flux theory" under the supervision of Prof Gul Zaman Department of Mathematics, UoM. His external examiner was Dr Faiz Ullah from the NUST Islamabad. The chairman Department of Mathematics, UoM, Dr Imtiaz Ahmad and faculty

members congratulated the M.Phil scholar.

Action against flour smuggling: Second major action against the Punjab government flour smugglers of the district administration. Deputy Commissioner Dir Payin / Commandant Dir Levies Captain Retd Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi had issued instructions to all in-charge Dir Levies check posts to keep a special watch on the delivery of food items and substandard food on all routes. On the information of Late Levies, a container filled with 650/600 sacks of flour was caught for smuggling government flour from Rawalpindi in Timergara.

Assistant Commissioner Timergara Mr. Shahzad Khan arrested the people involved in the smuggling and took legal action against them. action taken All the sacks of flour have been taken into government custody and investigation is ongoing against those involved in the smuggling of government flour while the relevant godown has been sealed. According to the preliminary investigation, government flour was being smuggled from Punjab to Bajaur through late. Which had to be packed in other brand sacks in the godown and sold at high rates.

Boys & girls continue protest against BISE fees

LARKANA (PPI): Hundreds of boys and girl students of various schools of Larkana are constantly holding protest demonstrations separately in and outside their respective schools while holding placards and shouting slogans here on Friday against lethargic and lukewarm attitude of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) authorities who have issued a notification to charge each student of Rs1100 from 9th class and 2600 from 10th class poor students despite the fact that Sindh Government has declared free education upto matric in the province.

These students belonged to Government Pilot Higher secondary School, government Model English School, Government

Municipal Higher Secondary School, Government Saint Joseph High School, Government Girls Higher School, Government Little Folks School, Government Deeni Madressa High School, Government High School, Kanga village, Rahim Bughio village and other schools of Naundero etc. They shouted slogans against the BISE authorities which had daringly and openly violated government directives for their nefarious designs.

Agitating students Farhat Abbasi, Muntazir mehdi, Kabir Memon, Sachal Jamali, Almas Bhutto, Yasra Soomro, Sawera Jatoi and others said that free textbooks are supplied to them by the government along with free education but this time BISE is charging Rs1100

from each 9th class students and Rs2600 from 10th class students as annual fee which is criminal act despite free education across Sindh. They said that if the BISE did not withdraw its arbitrary decision then so many students will be deprived of their basic right to education and remain illiterate as their parents cannot pay them because of flood devastation.

They urged PPP Chairman & Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, education minister Sardar Shah and Secretary, Universities and Boards to look into the matter personally forthwith and order withdrawal of the notification and remove Larkana BISE Chairman or else, they will not sit silently for their fundamental rights.

Three SHOs nominated for best performance

QUETTA (APP): Three Station House Officers (SHOs) of Quetta have been nominated for best performance award for the month of November and December 2022.

In this connection, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of DIG Quetta Ghulam Azfar Mesar and was attended by SSP Operation Abdul Haq Imrani, SSP Investigation Asad Nasir, SSP Traffic Bahram Mandukhel, SP headquarters, SP CIA and all Divisional ASPs DSPs and SHOs.

As per the decision of the meeting, Haji Abdul Hai Grani SHO Airport was nominated for the first position, Mohammad Ajmal SHO Kharotabad for second, and Abid Raza Mengal SHO Sialkot for the third position, while the first position in the division was bagged by President Division SP Naveed Alam.

SHO Kuchlak Niaz Hussain, SHO Airport Abdul Hai Grani, SIO Airport Masood Ahmed Kakar, SHO Shalkot Abidreza Mengal, SHO Pashtunabad Abdul Wali Achakzai SHO Bururi Muhammad Darsen, SHO Kharotabad Muhammad Ajmal SHO Police Station Shaheed Ameer Muhammad Dasti Javed Buzdar, SHO Sariab Ajab Khan Kakar, SHO Police

Station New Sariab Raza Shahwani were awarded with certificates of appreciation by the police department for their excellent performance.

According to details shared by police, as many as 219 cases were registered, 145 wanted persons have been arrested and 177 absconding accused were arrested in November and December 2022. More than 600 other criminals were arrested in November and December. CIA Quetta traced 17 cases in which five vehicles, five motorcycles and a truck, whereas Rs 19.2 million were recovered and a total of 23 accused were arrested.

Setup of special desk to resolve complaints

MULTAN (APP): Managing Director WASA Jawad Kaleemullah, issued orders to establish a special desk for the redressal of citizens' complaints. He ordered to get resolved all the complaints of citizens regarding the provision of water and drainage facilities on time and permanent solutions to sewer-related complaints.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting here on Friday. He warned action in case of non-removal of complaints in the given time frame. Meanwhile, he also ordered the Deputy Directors to make the de-silting campaign more efficient and effective in their respective limits so that the sewerage lines are cleaned and complaints resolved

before the next monsoon season. He said that said any obstruction and negligence in the uninterrupted provision of water and drainage facilities to the citizens will not be tolerated.

Meanwhile, former Speaker National Assembly Syed Fakhar Imam on Friday expressed deep grief over the martyrdom of two CTD officials and heaped praise on security forces for ensuring peace in the country by rendering sacrifices and continuation of their relentless efforts to counter terrorism.

Pakistan came into being following numerous sacrifices and later on security forces won peace in the fight against terrorism. But now terrorism was again rearing its head and the sons of

Pakistan like Naveed Sadiq and Nasir Abbas Bati recently sacrificed their lives to ensure that the people of Pakistan could live in peace, Fakhar Imam said while talking to Akhtar Abbas Bati, the director of finance at MNS University Multan, by phone to convey condolences to him on his brother's death in an attack in Khanewal.

He said that martyrs live forever and commended their honesty and devotion to duty. He prayed that may Almighty elevate the stature of Shuhada including Nasir Abbas Bati, grant them a place in Jannah and give courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with courage, fortitude and patience.



China Covid: Young people self-infect as fears for elderly grow

BEIJING (BBC): When Mr Chen's 85-year-old father fell ill with Covid in December, it was impossible to get an ambulance or see a doctor. They went to Chaoyang Hospital in Beijing, where they were told to either try other hospitals or sit in the corridor with an IV drip. "There was no bed, no respiratory machine, no medical equipment" available, Mr Chen tells the BBC.

His father managed to find a bed at another hospital, but only through a special contact, and had by then developed a severe lung infection. The elder Mr Chen has now recovered, but his son worries that a second infection in the future could kill him. Three years of Covid prevention measures were a complete waste and failure, he says, because the government eased controls too quickly, with no preparation, and so many have caught the virus.

"The outbreak will come back again. For elderly people, they can only count on their own fate," Mr Chen says. The final step in China's swift reversal of its contentious zero-Covid policy comes when it reopens borders for international travel. With mass testing, stringent quarantines and sudden, sweeping lockdowns gone, families like Mr Chen's are wary of what lies ahead. But younger Chinese, all of whom did not wish to be named, feel differently - and some told the BBC they were voluntarily exposing themselves to infection.

A 27-year-old coder in Shanghai, who did not receive any of the Chinese vaccines, says he voluntarily exposed himself to the virus. "Because I don't want to change my holiday plan," he explains, "and I could make sure I recovered and won't be infected again during the holiday if I intentionally control the time I get infected." He admits he did not expect the muscle aches that came with the infection, but says the symptoms have been largely as expected. Another Shanghai resident, a 26-year-old woman, tells the BBC she visited her friend who had tested positive "so I could get Covid as well".

But she says her recovery has been hard: "I thought it would be like getting a cold but it was much more painful." A 29-year-old who works for a state-run business based in Jiaxing, in the northern Zhejiang province, says she was thrilled when she heard the country's borders were



reopening. She is excited to travel to other parts of China again to see concerts. "Life was ridiculous when I had to ask my manager's permission to travel. I just want life to get back to normal," she says. "But I do worry about the elderly."

When her grandfather fell sick with Covid, he refused to go to hospital, even when his condition took a turn for the worse, she says. And reports of overwhelmed hospitals and crematoriums have only added to the worry - she says she has heard stories of corpses piled high in funeral parlours. She herself has not tested positive for the virus yet, but concedes that - when her husband did - she wore a mask 24/7 at home, even when she was sleeping.

"I did not want us to be sick at the same time," she says. "But I'm not scared of the virus, as the severe symptoms are rare." At least in the big cities, people have been returning to malls, restaurants and parks, and even queuing up for visas and tourist permits. The state-run Global Times newspaper declared "normal times are back", attributing the line to interviews with Chinese. If normal days are indeed back, it is an uncomfortable return to normalcy for many.

Mrs Liu's husband never got vaccinated because he suffers from advanced diabetes. Since the re-opening, he has stayed indoors and has disinfected every home delivery that has arrived, but the couple still caught the virus. Their daughter, also sick with Covid, scoured various locations in the midst of a cold Beijing winter for Paxlovid, Pfizer's anti-viral Covid medication, before finally purchasing a single box off the black market at

7500 CNY (£918). "My husband has recovered smoothly. It's a big relief for me," Mrs Liu says. "But when the second wave comes, what will happen to him?"

Ms Wang, another Beijing resident, and her family have pre-purchased Paxlovid before it becomes too expensive, as well as an oxygenator and pulse oximeter, for her grandfather-in-law. He has not gotten the virus but is in his 90s. "Anyways, the open-up is good for the economy. Business has recovered quickly," she remarks, adding that hotels, restaurants and shopping malls are all filling up with people again.

But beyond the major cities, it is difficult to know how people - particularly in China's rural regions - are responding to an about-face in government messaging. For three years, state-run media presented the virus as a dangerous menace to society, vowing that it would achieve "dynamic zero-Covid" to keep the population safe. But that rhetoric has been turned on its head in recent weeks, with doctors regularly trotted out to call for calm over confusion.

Mrs Li, a 52-year-old in Beijing, argues the government "did the right thing" for the first two years but should have ended its zero-Covid policy in early 2022. "Now we finally have all controls eased, but it's too sudden. The government could have done it phase by phase, region by region. Also winter is the worst season to do it. Why not wait until next spring? And why didn't the government prepare enough resources before opening up?" she asks. "2022 was the worst year for us. I can only pray 2023 won't be any worse."

Mexican cartel leader dies in shootout

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): An escaped Mexican cartel kingpin known as "El Neto" died after a shootout, four days after he fled prison in a violent mass break-out, authorities said. El Neto", whose full name was Ernesto Alfredo Pinon de la Cruz, was tracked down by intelligence forces in the city of Ciudad Juárez on the US border, and then shot after a pursuit, officials said.

"He was located, chased. He was injured, but on the way (to the state attorney general's offices) he died," Chihuahua state governor Maru Campos said on Twitter. "El Neto", a top gunman for the "Los Mexicles" cartel, escaped with 29 other inmates after raiders in armored vehicles attacked the prison in the border town of Juarez early on New Year's Day.

At least 19 people, including guards and other prisoners, died in the assault, one of Mexico's bloodiest prison raids in recent years, authorities said. Police and security forces launched a manhunt. At least seven people, including police, were killed in another confrontation during the search in the state, authorities said. Federal authorities who arrived to restore order said they found inmates had set up a "VIP zone" in the state-run prison with stashes of drugs and money. State prosecutors in Chihuahua said the head of the Juarez prison had been dismissed and was under investigation alongside others.

Opp appoints three exiled lawmakers to leadership

CARACAS (Reuters): Venezuela's opposition national assembly appointed three exiled lawmakers to direct it and create a commission to control foreign assets, including oil refiner Citgo Petroleum. The assembly voted last week to remove Juan Guaido, the public face of the fractious opposition since 2019, as its interim president. The United States and other governments had backed Guaido after deeming the 2018 re-election of President Nicolas Maduro as fraudulent.

Legislators who backed ending the interim government say their control of foreign assets is not at risk - despite warnings from Guaido and others - and the dissolution was necessary for unity ahead of presidential elections tentatively scheduled for 2024. The new leadership triumvirate is assembly president Dinorah Figueroa and vice-presidents Marianela Fernandez and Auristela Vasquez - from opposition parties Justice First, A New Era and Democratic Action respectively.

All three have lived abroad since the start of Guaido's interim government because of what the opposition says is government harassment. "I am convinced that this assembly, along with all the political parties ... will raise the flags of unity," Figueroa, a 61-year-old doctor, said during the virtual session. The new leadership will designate a five-member commission to manage foreign assets like Citgo, a subsidiary of state-owned oil company PDVSA.

Because of its backing abroad, the opposition is able to control assets in other countries, like \$1 billion in gold stored at the Bank of England. It hopes Washington will extend a license this month protecting Citgo from possible creditor seizures. Venezuela owes more than \$60 billion to creditors.

Citgo, which was on track for a \$2.5 billion profit in 2022, could face supervisory board shakeups and other changes under the new commission. Citgo did not immediately reply to a request for comment. The US government has not publicly revealed its position on the assets protection, but said after Guaido's removal that it will continue to support the assembly, originally elected in 2015. The interim government's former embassy in Washington has ceased operations until new officials are appointed, two sources said.

UN internal report flags east Congo rebels flouting truce

KINSHASA (Reuters): United Nations intelligence analysts have spotted suspected movements by M23 rebels in parts of eastern Congo from which they were meant to have withdrawn and signs the armed group has seized ground in other areas, internal UN documents showed.

The findings show there is continued uncertainty about both the exact status of the conflict in North Kivu province and the situation on the ground in the Kibumba area, which the rebels were meant to have left as of Dec. 23 as part of a ceasefire brokered by East African regional leaders.

"Their total withdrawal from the area has not yet been confirmed," wrote the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC), a UN intelligence unit, in a confidential report covering the period from Dec. 26 to Jan. 3, and seen by Reuters.

"Suspected M23 movements were still sighted in the area," it added. The report also highlights examples of M23 violently seizing new territory else-

where even after they participated in the ceremony to hand over Kibumba to East African Community (EAC) forces in what they called a goodwill gesture under the ceasefire. "Several clashes involving M23 were reported during the week, resulting in M23 taking control of further areas, notably threatening Kitchanga, Mweso, Sake, Kiloirwe, Mushaki and Nyamilima, and raising serious PoC (Protection of Civilian) concerns."

The M23 denied reports of its failure to leave Kibumba, saying it had withdrawn from its positions there as of Dec. 23 and was committed to the agreement reached by regional leaders in November that was meant to see the M23 withdraw from recently seized positions and allow thousands of displaced people to return to their homes.

At least 450,000 people were displaced last year in the fresh offensive by the Tutsi-led rebel group, which the government of Congo, Western powers, and a UN expert group say

is supported by neighbouring Rwanda.

Rwanda denies all involvement in the M23's resurgence, but the accusations have led to a major diplomatic crisis in the region. Earlier this week, a spokesperson for the EAC force told Reuters the withdrawal had been effective, but said "a few administrative non-combatant elements from M23 on the outskirts of Kibumba are in the final phase of withdrawal." Last Friday, presidential spokesperson Tina Salama told Reuters President Felix Tshisekedi remained committed to the ceasefire agreement.

"We all know they (the M23) have not completely withdrawn," she said, adding that rebels technically had until Jan. 15 for the full withdrawal. "There will be a reassessment at that time." The M23 was also meant to have withdrawn from the strategic military town of Rumangabo, but the EAC postponed a planned handover ceremony, saying it was still assessing the security situation.

US changes to Turkey's preferred spelling

WASHINGTON (AP): The State Department said it has adopted Turkey's preferred spelling for the name of the country, Turkiye, according to a request from the NATO ally after several months of hesitation. The department has instructed that new official documents refer to Turkiye instead of Turkey, although the pronunciation will not change, officials said. But neither the State Department website nor the Foreign Affairs Manual, which guides US diplomatic practices, had been revised to reflect the change as of midday.

"The Turkish embassy requested that the US government use the name "Republic of Turkiye" in communications," the department said. "We will begin to refer to Turkiye and Republic of Turkiye accordingly in most formal, diplomatic, and bilateral contexts, including in public communications."

The move comes ahead of an expected visit to Washington later this month by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu during which Turkey's position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its resistance to allowing Finland and Sweden to join NATO will be high on the agenda.

Several other federal agencies, including the Treasury Department, had already adopted the new spelling, which had led to inconsistencies in documents across the US government. The change was revealed as the State Department released a statement in support of a Treasury move to sanction several Turkey-related businessmen and companies for supporting the Islamic State. It was later confirmed by two department officials.

Turkey asked last year for its name to be changed to Turkiye in international forums and most, including the United Nations and NATO, had switched to the new spelling. The State Department, however, does not often change its style on the names of foreign countries and, in at least one notable case, has refused to do so for decades.

The US still refuses to refer to Burma as Myanmar although the country's military rulers formally adopted Myanmar in 1989. The last two countries that the State Department renamed following requests by their governments were North Macedonia, which changed its name from Macedonia in 2019, and Eswatini, which changed its name from Swaziland a year earlier.

Sierra Madre: Fighting to save what's left of a vital rainforest

MANILA (BBC): Francisco Elle is haunted by the faces of children he could not save. It's what drives him deep into the dense rainforests of the vast Sierra Madre mountain range day after day, carrying a heavy wicker bag full of fresh saplings on his shoulders. His lean figure ducks under a thick ceiling of leaves. Even with his glasses falling to the end of his nose, he manages to avoid being tripped by exposed tree roots as he hurries along a faint trail to his latest tree planting site.

Following him is tough going, especially as clouds roll down the hillside brushing the tips of the branches with a fresh mist of rain. He once made a living chopping down these trees which had taken centuries to grow. Now in his 50s, he has turned from illegal logger to forest ranger after witnessing what he describes as "nature's revenge". More than 1,000 people were killed when Francisco's village, along with several others, was washed away by a landslide in December 2004.

"I saw lifeless children all lined up on the street while the houses were all destroyed. There weren't any houses left, even ours was gone. When I remember the things we did, I feel helpless," he said during one of the few breaks he was willing to take that day. Does he feel guilty about his past? He turns away in tears. After several minutes, he answers: "I blame myself. Maybe if I didn't cut trees, maybe it wouldn't have happened."

The Sierra Madre, Filipinos will tell you, is the backbone of Luzon, the main island of the country. Some even describe the mountain as their mother and protector. Stretching for more than 500km (310 miles) from north to south, her uneven, rugged peaks are thought to shield the 64 million people who live there, including those in the capital Manila, from the worst of the strong typhoons which barrel in from the Pacific Ocean. But 90% of the original rainforest is now gone. Illegal logging, mining and quarrying have taken a toll. And without the tree roots for stability and the vast canopies of the forest to absorb the heavy rains, landslides and

flash floods are becoming more common, especially as the frequency and the severity of the storms increase.

"People say illegal logging is destroying nature, but God gave all this to us so we can use it," says Marc. He is in his mid-50s and makes a living illegally cutting down wood for housing and other construction projects. He shows off a chainsaw that he bought after selling his cow seven years ago. It's a prized possession because chainsaws are registered here - just like guns.

Marc says the authorities will only "catch him when he is dead". He and his wife Grace live deep in the forest in a small woven bamboo hut with a corrugated iron roof which seems to defy gravity. It is built on a sloping hillside surrounded by coconut trees. Their last big order was in March. It took around a month to complete with the help of others and earned them around \$300 (£250), which amounts to 16,500 pesos. The orders come from a middle man. But getting the wood to them is a difficult process.

"We wait until midnight because we are hiding from the soldiers and forest rangers. We will get paid a week after that. Despite the risk, logging is the only source of income for some of the poorest Filipinos. "My message to people is to not get angry at us because we don't actually want to do this," Marc says. "We can only get our money for basic necessities from farming our land. Others can afford to get mad because they have other sources of livelihood but for us, we have none."

But Francisco says that doesn't change the fact that they still have to face the devastating impact of logging. "We did not know what we were doing, we just cared about getting money for our food every day because there were no other sources of livelihood. We would dig even the roots of the trees we cut. We would cut down all the trees in an area of the forest until there were no large trees left." Now, he believes, chopping down "just one piece of wood... is one of the greatest sins against nature". Near a flowing stream, he lays down his heavy bag of

saplings and directs an army of volunteers working for the Haribon Foundation - a dozen men and women carrying bags of saplings that weigh up to 15kg. Some are wearing flip flops, but they are still sure-footed as they clamber up the steep bank through cloying mud.

Under the rainforest canopy, Francisco vows to keep working to ensure "history will not repeat itself". "Our enemy now is flash flooding," he says. "Even my children, I teach them to plant trees, I tell them not to follow those who do logging." The clouds dip a little lower and the first drops of rain splash down onto the leaves. The volunteers continue to plant, unfazed. The saplings are narra trees - the fast-growing national tree of the Philippines.

In 10 years, they hope this part of the forest will be green again. Replanting trees in the Sierra Madre is a long, difficult and even dangerous job. Like rainforests everywhere, this one too is home to a conflict between those desperate to make a living and those desperate to preserve life. And the risk of that conflict becoming deadly is high. A Global Witness report identified the Philippines as one of the most dangerous places in the world to be an environmental or land rights activist.

"Once, we called out to someone to tell them to stop cutting trees. They told us that they might kill us," Francisco says. "I told them that we weren't there to pick a fight and we were just explaining what will happen to all of us if they continue what they do. I said 'you won't be the only one affected, it's all of us.' He says they had a frank discussion and peacefully went their separate ways. But that's not always the outcome."

At least 270 people have been killed in the last 10 years defending these rainforests. Two forest rangers who work for the Masungi Georeserve in the south of the Sierra Madre mountain range were shot and wounded in 2021, which prompted the reserve to call for urgent protection for their staff. The Department of Environment and National Resources has also made calls over the last

few years for their forest rangers to be armed.

But rangers are not the only ones vulnerable to attacks by armed illegal loggers - 114 of the environmental activists killed in the Philippines were from indigenous communities. The Philippines is losing around 47,000 hectares of rainforest each year, according to the Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. That's an area around the size of 87,700 football fields. It is also thought to have the highest number of threatened species in the world.

The majority is lost to logging, but the battle isn't just over timber. This vast mountain range is also rich in copper, gold, nickel, chromite and limestone. And that is big business in a developing country keen to rebuild its economy after being battered for nearly three years by the pandemic. There was a moratorium on new open-pit mining projects until 2021, but several companies have long-standing permits to use nearby land.

"We need a comprehensive review of all the permits given for mining," says Tony La Vina, associate director for climate policy and international relations at the Manila Observatory. "There are well-documented links between politicians and mining companies in the Philippines. Logging and mining have fuelled the political careers of many local and national politicians. That link has to be broken."

Getting a true picture of the scale of mining projects along the Sierra Madre mountain range which spans 10 provinces is difficult. The BBC contacted local officials in each province to find out how many permits they had issued in the last five years. Only those in one province, Rizal, responded. They said that they had issued three permits for "mineral extraction", but that the land owners had "prior rights" which allowed them to also mine in the protected area. The Department of Environment and National Resources, which issues mining or quarrying permits, is also yet to respond to the BBC's request for a comment.

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Provincial rights and oldage politics

SEVERAL members of the KP Provincial Assembly from the erstwhile FATA approached Peshawar High Court for the release of shares of the merged districts in the National Finance Commission following the merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the details, 3% shares were granted to erstwhile FATA in the 2010 NFC award while its stoppage has disturbed local governments' businesses, employees' salaries, and delivery of services to the citizens. The petitioners pleaded with the court to order the federal government to release requisite funds at the earliest.

There has been a series of accusations between the Federal Government and KP leaders over the issues of no disbursements of KP's Net Hydel Profit and 3 percent NFC share of Erstwhile FATA over the past eight months. KP Finance Minister accused the Coalition government of withholding Rs. 60 billion in the account of Net Hydel Profit (NHP) and not paying a single penny after assuming office in April last year. While the center also has to pay another Rs. 30 billion for the newly merged districts (NMDs) in respect of the 3% NFC award. According to KP authorities, the province only received only Rs. 8 bn out of Rs. 17 bn for the development projects in the tribal areas and the KP government was continuously paying the Sehat Card program expenses in tribal areas from the provincial exchequer. According to reports, the KP government had been facing severe fiscal constraints in meeting provincial expenditures and had been continuously demanding the release of its dues from the Federation.

Previously, the KP government was considering filing a petition in the Supreme Court to get its rights released from the center, however, after multiple moots of the provincial cabinet, the PTI-led provincial government moved regional MPAs in the lower court to put pressure on its political opponents ruling in the center. Historically, Pakistani politics had an old tradition of arm-twisting of their political opponents, while parties sitting in the federal capital commonly create problems for rivals governing any federating unit and vice versa. Although, the world has touched the moon and Mars but our leaders are still living in the 19th century and using tactics of the primeval age. In fact, Pakistani politicians must get rid of such kinds of politics and set new traditions of constructive and positive politics, so the country moves toward a better future.

French setback in Africa

FRANCE is resolutely backing its ambassador in Burkina Faso despite a request by the host government to replace Envoy amid growing anti-French sentiment in the African nation. French Foreign Minister has told the media that the French government fully backs its Ambassador's viewpoint, who is doing a great job in difficult situations in Burkina Faso. The Chief Diplomat did not hint about recalling of French Envoy who became an unwanted figure in the host country.

Paris's diplomatic relation with its former African colonies including Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigar, and Gana has largely deteriorated over the past years due to the ongoing covert war between the Russia-sponsored mercenary organization, the Wagner Group, and the western undercover front organizations in Africa and Western Sahara region. French Special Forces stayed in most of the African nations under bilateral arrangements to support their fight against Al-Qaeda and ISIS-linked terrorist organizations, but the alliance could not achieve desired objectives and ended up leveling allegations and criticism against each other. Interestingly, all African partners betrayed France one by one and colluded with anti-west forces and struck security contracts with the Russian private Army the Wagner Group, and also allowed Russian firms to explore oil, gold, and other valuable deposits in their countries.

Burkina Faso went through two military coups during the past year, while each military dictator overthrew his successor on the charges of inability to defeat militancy. After the recent coup, angry protestors attacked the French Embassy, French Cultural Centres, and a French military base and demanded the exit of foreign troops from the country. The protesters also asked the military dictator to get Russian support to defeat rebels. The French Ambassador reacted to the situation and noted that his country wants a standing Burkina Faso in the region and also vowed to boost cooperation with African partners.

However, French Envoy expressed concerns over growing Russian influence in the Sahel and accused the Russian government of hatching an anti-French conspiracy. Hollande's statement attracted a flurry of criticism from the host nation who in turn demanded his expulsion from the country.

The anti-west sentiments rapidly grew up in Burkina Faso, where authorities expelled a UN Humanitarian Coordinator after declaring her Persona Non-grita, and currently public-military pressure pressing hard for severing Burkina's ties with Paris. The French had been pushed back in western Africa where French allies accused the French military of yielding insignificant results against insurgent groups. The French government is helpless in proving its loyalty to former allies because the French troops could neither defeat rebel groups nor can maintain security in the Sahel region. Thus, French warriors are no more needed in Africa, yet the Macron government has instructed French Development Agency to speed up its activities to win Africans' hearts.

The violence-hit and barren Africa has become much more important for the global powers, who are eyeing vast hidden reserves, long coasts, and adjacent territorial waters across the continent. The criminals and toxic leaders are trading their nations, while the power-hungry countries have multiple tools to trap other nations. The desperate Burkinabes have tightened their knot with Moscow to feel secure, however, no one cares about others' misery and every pedlar fills his pocket first.

Quote of the day

There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time.
— Calvin Coolidge, American President [1923-1929].

Tell us, Washington, how do you really feel about American public opinion?

TELL us, Washington, how do you really feel about American public opinion?

For years now, Beltway establishmentarians have been trying desperately to countermand the idea that they are in fact, elites: out of touch, impervious to what regular Americans want and need, and slaves to conventional foreign policy doctrine and dogma.

But it is wartime again, and that's when the masks slip. It began with the steady stream of Eliot Cohen and Anne Applebaum columns from the start of the Russian invasion, all demanding that Americans see the war in Ukraine as our fight, a struggle for democracy, the liberal world order. If Americans do not have the stomach for it, there is something wrong with us, a moral failing.

These ham-fisted approaches befit the neo-conservatives who wield them, as they did the same in the Global War on Terror, and to a great extent, worked to keep the Iraq War going for almost a decade and the war in Afghanistan shambling on for a full 20 years.

In addition to the destruction of two countries, trillions of dollars, a massive refugee crisis, a new generation of U.S. veterans dependent on lifetime assistance, and countless dead and wounded, these "elites" are in great part responsible for the mistrust of Washington that has

eaten away at the culture and politics here to the core.

Poll after poll show a plunging lack of faith in American institutions, including the once-vaunted military. That's what going to war based on lies, distortions, and rhetorical bullying will do to an already strained and tribalized society. Add a financial collapse (2008) that Washington addressed with an unprecedented bank bailout, while homeowners and workers struggled to survive, and you have the basis for major populist movements — on the left, and the right.

The rise of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump were buoyed in part by a continuing skepticism of the ongoing wars and of the elites at the helm of U.S. foreign policy, which had become as self-serving and disconnected from American interests as they were.

You would have thought they had learned their lesson.

But the war in Ukraine has given them new purpose and in that vein, to both patronize and ignore the wants and needs of the American public. A new commentary by Gian Gentile and Raphael S. Cohen, deputy director of the Rand Corporation's Army Research Division, and Air Force Strategy and Doctrine Program, respectively, says it all. Clearly written for Beltway practitioners and politicians, the takeaway from "The Myth

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

of America's Ukraine Fatigue" is clear: don't mind the polls, or even American public opinion. Ukraine's (and in effect, Washington's) long war will go on no matter what the hoi polloi is thinking, or feeling. In war, from a purely political perspective, it's usually safer for politicians to stay the course.

Perhaps this is why democracies' track records of playing the long game in armed conflicts is actually pretty good. From the ancient Athenians during the Peloponnesian War on through to the present day, democracies have not usually been the fickle, shrinking violets their detractors make them out to be. In the United States, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan were all eventually deeply unpopular. Yet the United States fought for three years in Korea, almost nine years in Iraq (before going back in after the initial withdrawal), and almost 20 years in both Vietnam and Afghanistan. All these campaigns involved significantly more investment of American blood and treasure than the U.S. commitment to Ukraine has demanded thus far.

The authors are referring to a number of recent polls that would appear to show that Americans' unconditional support for Ukraine against the Russian invasion has its limits and in some cases, may be flagging. To start, Cohen and

Gentile say that isn't true, that Americans support Ukrainian sovereignty and the fight for it. Absolutely. What the authors don't say is that the polls indicate that Americans are also concerned about a protracted war that could lead to more death and a direct U.S. confrontation with the Russians. That they are less enthusiastic about supporting Ukraine "as long as it takes," and have shown a growing interest in negotiations to end the war sooner than later, even if that ultimately means concessions for both sides.

Instead of recognizing the nuance and giving credit to Americans for understanding the implications of another long war (whether they are directly involved on the ground or not), the authors blame the media for hyping up what they believe is the negative messaging from the surveys. Furthermore, they suggest that — citing the cases of Vietnam and our recent wars — conflicts will go on (and rightly so!) no matter where public opinion is at.

If past is precedent, and present trends continue, it could be years before any of the declines in the American public's support actually result in a change of policy," the authors contend. Cohen and Gentile (much like their counterparts in the Iraq and Afghanistan War eras, did) diminish those "amplifying the Ukraine fatigue narrative," claiming they fit into

neat little categories: 1) "America First" Republicans who'd rather focus on domestic issues 2) "knee-jerk" anti-war activists on the left, and 3) those who "may genuinely sympathize with Russian talking points" that Americans will tire of the war.

Meanwhile, "some Americans may really believe that they are paying more of a price for the conflict than they in fact are, but this is primarily based on perceptions — not facts."

Right. That is exactly what Fred Kagan, the AEI neoconservative who helped to craft the Iraq War Surge plan said in this lengthy National Review piece in 2008, entitled "Why Iraq matters: Talking back to anti-war party talking points," in which he deployed this fatuous bromide:

Americans have a right to be weary of this conflict and to desire to bring it to an end. But before we choose the easier and more comfortable wrong over the harder and more distasteful right, we should examine more closely the two core assumptions that underlie the current antiwar arguments: that we must lose this war because we cannot win it at any acceptable cost, and that it will be better to lose than to continue trying to win.

Which makes this all very ironic, since (Col.) Gian Gentile was one of the few brave souls in the active duty military who were openly speaking out

against Fred Kagan's "Surge" and the counterinsurgency craze that was rocking the Blob during that period. He was an arch critic of Washington's hyper-message management and selective history machinations. It is head scratching that he would oversimplify the effects of public opinion on recent wars — and suggest its relative unimportance — while offering the thinnest of arguments for in essence, "staying the course."

"The leaders of the free world need to remind their publics what is at stake in Ukraine—not just for European and global security, but for democracy at large," Gentile exclaims in his recent piece with Cohen.

This, from an historian who in his 2013 book, "America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency," not only took on what he called the "myths" of Iraq and Afghanistan, but the shibboleths of the U.S. counterinsurgency in Vietnam and the British military's "success" in Malaya (1948-60) as well.

Gentile's "Ukraine fatigue myth" article is elite thinking, which reads as a pep talk for Beltway insiders in the wake of recent polling. For the rest of us, it is a cogent reminder that the same people who did not want regular Americans to actually think about foreign policy during the Iraq War, are still out there, whether they want to call themselves "elites" or not.

Ukraine opens a new front

Vladimir Kornilov

“Israel is starting to implement a pro-Russian foreign policy regarding the war in Ukraine,” internal critics of the new government of Benjamin Netanyahu ring the bells. Ukrainian figures are creatively developing this idea (as they say in Kyiv, “disperse evil”), declaring that Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen is becoming “pro-Hitler”.

The reason for such an angry reaction was the speech of the new head of the Israeli Foreign Ministry at the inauguration ceremony, as well as the subsequent telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Frankly speaking, neither of these is evidence of a sharp change in Israel's foreign policy and, moreover, is not an indicator of the transformation of this state into a "pro-Russian" one, as Ukrainian propagandists are shouting about. But Kyiv cannot do without such accusations if something does not go according to the scenario Ukraine wants.

Ukrainian Ambassador to Israel Yevhen Korniychuk, in the best traditions of the modern Kiev school of diplomacy, immediately used the very fact of Cohen's telephone conversation with Lavrov as evidence of a “dramatic change in Jerusalem's policy” — they say that the predecessor of the current Israeli Foreign Minister had not spoken to his Russian counterpart since the start of the military special operation in Ukraine.

True, in attacking Cohen for his telephone conversations with Moscow, Ukrainian officials clearly

got excited. Already after the angry tirades of Korniychuk, there were reports that the Israeli diplomat not only coordinated his conversation with the notorious "Washington Regional Committee", but also allegedly received an order from US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, with whom he spoke the day before, to convey a certain message to the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry. You understand, from the point of view of Ukraine, the execution of instructions from Washington cannot be considered punishable in any way.

But, as mentioned above, Cohen received the bulk of the criticism for his remarks on the Ukrainian conflict, made during his inaugural speech last Monday. The speech itself was about maintaining the main foreign policy of the State of Israel and for the most part was devoted to the high-profile vote on the eve of the UN General Assembly resolution No.

Cohen said only a few words about Ukraine, which, at first glance, are difficult to find fault with. To quote the entire passage: "On the Russian-Ukrainian situation, one thing is certain. We will make fewer public statements and prepare a detailed memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Cabinet of Ministers in order to form a responsible policy in this area. In any case, our significant humanitarian assistance to Ukraine will continue."

It would seem that this is not punishable. But what a noise arose - and not only in Kiev, but also in Washington swamps (the

very ones that Donald Trump promised and could not drain). Korniychuk condemned Cohen for allegedly promising to remain silent instead of condemning "massive shootings of civilians." Of course, the ambassador was referring to Russian strikes on military-civilian infrastructure, and not to the barbaric shelling of residential areas in the cities of Donbass, which Ukraine does every day during the New Year holidays. Those are not subject to discussion and even more condemnation, from the point of view of official Kyiv.

An outcry came from Washington, too. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, known for his anti-Russian obsession, scolded the new minister: "The idea that Israel should talk less about Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine is a little unnerving." The Israeli media did not hesitate to point out this remark of the senator: "Graham's remarks are a bad sign for the new government."

The Republican senator belongs to the camp of conservative "Trumpist" Republicans, which served as Netanyahu's main support in Washington." Although it should be understood here that Lindsey Graham was famous for his rabid Russophobia long before Trump appeared in politics, and it is unlikely that his attack on Cohen has anything to do with the collective opinion of some "

To tell the truth, the new government of Israel has not dramatically changed its approaches to the Ukrainian crisis yet. Netanyahu said on Wednesday that he intends to conduct a "revision of international relations." But this was not about Ukraine, but more about the same UN resolution mentioned above, which was painfully received in Israel. At the same time, the new old prime minister traditionally blamed his predecessors for this, saying that they had a year to prevent such a vote, but they allegedly did nothing. And only Netanyahu, who took office on December 29 (that is, literally the day before the UN vote), according to him, took certain steps to "influence some countries and urge them to vote in our favor."

Surely, in this case, the prime minister of Israel, who returned to his post, also had in mind his telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, which took place on the very first day after Netanyahu's inauguration. According to the Axios website, it was a very heavy (if not scandalous) conversation. Zelensky, traditionally for himself, began to beg in the hope of getting weapons and air defense systems.

Netanyahu also noted the fact that Ukraine always begs for something from Israel, receives a lot of humanitarian aid, and instead of "thank you" regularly votes in the UN for anti-Israeli resolutions. Michael Brodsky, the Israeli ambassador to Ukraine, pointed out this obvious impudence more than once. In particular, a few days before the events

described, he commented on the strange "gratitude" of Kiev: "Unfortunately, recently public opinion, especially those who supported Ukraine, have been at a loss after Ukraine's vote in the UN against Israel... To be honest, these "The votes have left Israelis who support Ukraine absolutely bewildered. I think that as a result of these votes, support for Ukraine has decreased. And this does not motivate the government to provide additional assistance to Kiev."

Surely the same arguments were expressed by the head of the Ukrainian regime and Netanyahu. But Zelensky would not have been Zelensky even if he had not put up for auction his "principled" position on the Middle East. According to Axios, he suggested that the Israeli prime minister vote against the UN resolution on the condition that Ukraine be provided with the necessary weapons. Allegedly, Zelensky did not like Netanyahu's answer - as a result, the Ukrainian leader ordered his delegation simply not to come to the vote on December 30, which was done. Such is it, "principleness" in Ukrainian.

Apparently, the Zelensky team considered this step wise. True, in Israel itself, such auctions were perceived for what they really were: an attempt at inadequate blackmail by Ukraine. And they already require an appropriate response to such behavior.

The editor-in-chief of the Jewish News Syndicate, Jonathan Tobin, upon learning of Zelensky's antics, burst into an angry column

where he drew the appropriate conclusions: "Despite Zelensky's Jewish origin, he is not a friend of Israel and the Jewish people... As long as Zelensky continues to intimidate Israel and flirt with anti-Semitic actions, the who cares about the Jewish state would do well to stop portraying him as a Jewish hero or any hero at all." Here is such a striking result of the clumsy attempt of the head of the Kyiv regime to blackmail Israel. Yesterday's "most influential Jew of the year" according to The Jerusalem Post in the blink of an eye turned into an "enemy of the Jewish people."

Tobin, in his column, also recalled Zelensky's flirting with Bandera, who were responsible for the extermination of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. In Israel, the trick of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine received a wide response, on the official Twitter account of which a post appeared on January 1, glorifying Stepan Bandera in connection with his birthday and accompanied by a photograph of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, General Valery Zaluzhny, against the background of a portrait of a Nazi collaborator.

But, mind you, the scandalous post was deleted after the angry protests of Poland, not Israel. It's hard to say what Zelensky bargained for - judging by the negotiations with Netanyahu, he doesn't care what he puts up for sale. Integrity has never been and never will be the strength of the Ukrainian president.

Moscow looks determined to bleed Kyiv’s missile defense stockpiles with barrages of suicide drones

RUSSIA has undertaken a major shift in its strategy in Ukraine over the past few months. With the frontlines at a relative stalemate, Moscow has shifted its focus from heavy shelling to a brutal game of whack-a-mole in which it fires a series of drones and missiles at sensitive infrastructure in Ukraine.

The result of this bombing campaign has been substantial. Over the holidays, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that "nearly nine million people" had lost electricity — nearly one-fifth of Ukraine's pre-war population. As Barry Posen of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently noted, such a tactic "could turn the winter into a brutal struggle for survival for Ukrainian civilians."

But the campaign's main target may lie further west. According to the New York

Times, each Iranian-made suicide drone costs about \$20,000, while the missiles Ukraine uses to shoot them down cost at least \$140,000 and often much more. (American-made NASAMS missiles cost \$500,000, and each PATRIOT round costs as much as \$4 million.)

So when Russia launched

has pledged to Ukraine's defense. And it's uncertain whether the Kremlin is capable of mass-producing suicide drones throughout the year.

But the 80-drone barrage could be the first sign of a significant escalation in

Connor Echols

materialize. "Even though U.S. and British officials have regularly predicted that the Russian military would exhaust its supply of munitions, it has evidently found them somewhere," Posen wrote in Foreign Affairs.

As Michael Carpenter, the US ambassador to the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, recently argued, the United States faces many difficult trade-offs when it comes to assistance to Ukraine, and the high price tag of certain systems will inevitably make it harder to provide others. "You have to factor in costs," Carpenter told Politico. "The enemy certainly factors in costs."

es 80 drone attacks on Moscow manages to maintain this rate of attack each weekend, then Kyiv's backers could be on the hook for over \$1 billion per year in air defenses alone.

And, when it comes to Russia's ability to manufacture weapons, Western doubts have often failed to

Russia's strategy. If Moscow manages to maintain this rate of attack each weekend, then Kyiv's backers could be on the hook for over \$1 billion per year in air defenses alone.

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In other diplomatic news related to the war in Ukraine:

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Putin in a Thursday conver-

Turkish leader also spoke with Zelensky later in the day and said that he is ready to lead mediation between the belligerents.

— The United States continues to talk with Russian officials about a potential prisoner swap for ex-Marine Paul Whelan, who the U.S. says has been wrongfully held by Moscow since 2018, according to CNN. "We're going to be creative in doing everything we can to bring about Paul Whelan's return to the United States," said State Department spokesperson Ned Price in a press briefing.

— Putin declared a temporary ceasefire from Friday afternoon through Saturday night in honor of Christmas, which many Russians and Ukrainians celebrate on January 7, according to NPR. The move comes after the head

(Continued on Page 7)

An unstable ceasefire

IN the end, as in any war, the most important factor in the future course of the Ukraine conflict will be what happens on the battlefield. There are essentially three possibilities, though each of these would bring in its wake a range of potential consequences: a Ukrainian breakthrough; a Russian breakthrough; and a stalemate roughly along the present lines of military control.

With Russian forces increasing in numbers and dug in along shorter front lines with massive artillery support, it will be a major challenge for the Ukrainian army to break through. Nonetheless, the Ukrainians have astonished the world so often since the Russian invasion began that further victories cannot be excluded.

If Ukrainian troops were to break through to the Sea of Azov, isolating Crimea; or if they succeeded in recapturing a large part of the separatist eastern Donbas region that Russia has backed since 2014, then it seems likely that in response Russia would threaten, and possibly execute, some form of drastic escalation. This might begin with the symbolic bombardment (with conventional missiles) of NATO air bases or supply lines in Poland or Romania. In any event, the Kremlin's intention would also be to raise the possibility of a slide towards nuclear war between Russia and the United States.

Such a Russian attack would most probably lead to a limited and proportional U.S. military response

(for example, the bombardment of a Russian base in the occupied part of Ukraine). Faced with the danger of nuclear war, however, powerful voices in the United States and Europe would also most likely call for a ceasefire in Ukraine, arguing that Kyiv had won a sufficient victory by recapturing almost all of the territory it has lost since the Russian invasion of February 2022 (though not most of the areas occupied by Russia and its local allies since 2014). The West would be helped in proposing a ceasefire if a further Russian defeat had led to the fall of President Putin, as this would be seen as a great Western and Ukrainian success in itself.

However, with Ukraine apparently on the road to complete victory, such moves for a ceasefire would meet fierce resistance from the Ukrainian government, from certain NATO members including Poland and the Baltic states, and from important sections of the U.S. political establishment and media. The outcome of such a crisis therefore cannot presently be predicted; but clearly the risk of escalation to full-scale war between NATO and Russia would be extremely high.

A Russian offensive leading to a victorious breakthrough does not seem to be part of Russian plans in the short term, apart from limited moves to take the town of Bakhmut in the western Donbas. All the indications are that Russian forces are fortifying their existing lines so as to prevent any more Ukrainian successes like the recapture of the eastern

Anatol Lieven

part of Kharkiv region and of the city of Kherson. However, if Ukrainian forces suffer heavy casualties and use up their ammunition stocks and armored vehicles in failed offensives over the next few months, then a successful Russian counter-offensive might be a real possibility.

Western intelligence estimates are that Ukrainian and Russian casualties have been roughly equivalent — and Russia has three and a half times Ukraine's population. In the war's first months, Russia's potential advantage in manpower was nullified by the Putin regime's unwillingness (for domestic political reasons) to send conscripts into action and to call up reserves. These shortages are now being rectified by the call-up of 300,000 additional troops (albeit of very questionable quality). Russia is also producing considerably more artillery shells than Ukraine is either producing itself or receiving from the West, and it is not clear how far increased U.S. production can make up for this shortfall in the next few months.

Given the record so far and the continued limits on Russian manpower, armor and ammunition, however, there is no realistic chance that a Russian breakthrough could lead to the capture of Kyiv. It is not even remotely likely that Russia could capture Kharkiv, while Russia's withdrawal from Kherson to the left bank of the Dnieper River makes an offensive against the Ukrainian Black Sea ports of Mykolaiv and Odessa virtually impossible.

However, if Russia captures the whole of the Donbas region and strengthens its land bridge to Crimea, it seems highly likely that Putin would claim that key Russian goals (as set out at the start of the invasion) have been achieved, and that Moscow would then offer a ceasefire and peace talks without preconditions.

Such a Russian offer would also open up deep splits within the West, and between Western countries and Ukraine; for, with the possibility of Ukrainian victory fading into the distant future, and the prospect of an unending war, many in the West would argue that a ceasefire would be the best deal that Ukraine was ever likely to get.

This argument would gain strength from the fact that only a stable ceasefire would end Russia's destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure and allow Ukraine and its partners to begin the long and very expensive process of rebuilding the Ukrainian economy so as to advance Kyiv's hopes of joining the European Union. This could also appeal to some pragmatic Ukrainians, who might believe that a ceasefire and economic growth would allow Ukraine to strengthen its armed forces so as to resume the war at a later date — something that Russia's attacks on the Ukrainian economy are presently making very difficult.

Ukrainian and Western opponents of accepting a Russian-proposed ceasefire of course would argue that this would allow Russia to build up its own forces for a future new war, although

this argument would be weakened if Moscow declared publicly that its war aims had been achieved.

Barring a breakthrough by either side, the prospect is that of an indefinite and bloody stalemate along the present battle lines, reminiscent in many respects of the situation on the western front in World War I. The question would then be how long it will take — and how many people will have to die — before both sides become exhausted and decide that there is no point in continuing the struggle.

The scene would then be set for an unstable ceasefire such as has existed between India and Pakistan in Kashmir for most of the past 75 years; or indeed a much larger version of the ceasefire in the Donbas from 2015 to 2022. Such a ceasefire would be accompanied by peace negotiations, but also by periodic explosions of violence and possibly full-scale war.

Such a ceasefire would be better than the present massive bloodshed in Ukraine; but unless accompanied by successful negotiations to reach a settlement or at least minimize armed tensions, it would be fraught with negative elements: the potential for new wars, not only in Ukraine but also between Russia and other former Soviet states; the difficulty of Ukrainian reconstruction and progress towards the European Union; the impossibility of restoring minimally cooperative Western relations with Russia; and the likelihood of stronger cooperation between Russia, China, and Iran.



One of the fundamental goals of society: Relief of extreme want

IT is 70 years since de Jouvanel's *The Ethics of Redistribution* was first published. This text rightly remains popular in classical liberal and conservative circles. Among other things, Jouvanel recognizes that it is possible for a society to place a premium on individualism while remaining committed to other shared group values. This, combined with his trenchant criticism of Marxism and socialism, make him indispensable reading for liberty-friendly individuals.

I revisit the text to draw out two somewhat unnoticed, but important, features. The first is that Jouvanel's fundamental teaching is not (merely) that redistribution leads to bad outcomes. His primary moral teaching is that redistribution, as a matter of fact, becomes an enemy of all antecedent values. The second point is critical of Jouvanel, albeit in a friendly manner. I think that he does not appreciate how strong his first insight is. Redistributionism spares no antecedent values; it may also spare no antecedent concepts. It is possible that the goal of redistribution can infect discussions of what it means to care for the poor. The very notion of eliminating poverty is not safe from the redistributive impulse.

Jouvanel distinguishes between relief of the poor and redistributionism: "it is inherent in the very notion of society that those in direct want must be taken care of." Indeed, it seems that unemployment benefits for subsistence "whether it be a minimum income in days of unemployment or basic medical care for which he could not have paid" is "the primary manifestation of solidarity." Such a project is one of the primary tasks of society, as Jouvanel sees it.

Redistribution "is everything which relieves the individual of an expenditure that he could and presumably would have undertaken out of his own purse." The many deleterious effects of redistribution are the focus of the text in question. This is not a conceptual distinction. Taxation to spare people from extreme want might do the same thing. However, Jouvanel carves out a space for aiding the needy and focuses his criticism on a different phenomenon.

I will not canvas all of the problems Jouvanel identifies with redistribution. Instead, I want to discuss the fundamental lesson Jouvanel has to offer. Suffice it to say that within Jouvanel's text, one can break the negative consequences of redistribution into two general kinds: moral and economic.

The impact of redistribution yields an interesting bipartite shift. On the economic side, it yields a shift in terms of who provides various goods and services. It is a shift from private individuals to the government. This is accompanied by a moral shift in how different institutions are valued. Once one focuses one's concerns on the distributional patterns of wealth or income in society, entities that produce goods become vitally important.

One such example that occupies Jouvanel is the privilege that governments grant to corporations over families. This privilege, at least as Jouvanel openly discusses it, is seen in the way that government thinks about the importance of

Lamont Rodgers

each. Businessmen are regarded as entrepreneurs who require a friendly tax code, while those who start families are not similarly treated. He writes, "It is quite incomprehensible that a breeder of dogs for the race-track should be allowed his costs... while (the family) is not."

There are other moral consequences. A society viewed through a redistributionist lens would judge the good of society in terms of "maximized...sum of subjective satisfaction." But that is not the judgment that "anyone with a Christian background or a classical education" would have. A commitment to redistribution may change the way one thinks of a good society. Presumably, there are some preferences that virtue, for example, might require us to restrain or overcome. If I enjoy watching videos of athletes getting injured, the preference-satisfying view might hold that my doing so is part of a good society. It is difficult to find such a view in the Greek and Christian tradition.

Finally, individuals lose their power to provide goods, services, and care to others. He writes that "a paradoxical outcome of the socialist policies that those services which were rendered without thought of reward should be on their way to disappearance." This does not need to be limited to socialism though. Anyone who has the impulse to redistribute is susceptible to marketizing erstwhile freely provided goods and services. If one wishes to redistribute to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities, for example, one could favor the government's delivery of goods and services that were available, though perhaps unequally, in years past. Jouvanel explicitly discusses the private funding of authors and artists as examples here.

What I want to draw attention to is the fact that these are just examples of bad consequences that can and have followed from redistributionist policies. Jouvanel tells us toward the end of his second lecture that "unless...all prevailing values are discredited, it is inevitable that the redistributionist State should assume the upkeep of those values." But the deeper worry is that it will not do so. The deeper concern is that the redistributionist desire will trump prior values. This suggests that we should be leery of giving in to the redistributionist impulse in both ourselves (if we have it) and others, for the antecedent values we have cannot be safeguarded from the demands of redistribution. They cannot be safeguarded either in terms of what actually happens, or in terms of people's attitudes toward what happens.

Jouvanel is prescient in this regard. We can see this in laws prohibiting feeding the poor or building houses for the homeless without a permit. I could take autonomy to be vital to the development of one's moral character. I could see that the initiative to eliminate a problem is at the core of being a good person. But if I also think that the state should be given jurisdiction over decisions regarding the relief of homelessness, I will inadvertently have relieved individuals of their ability to do one of the things that makes autonomy important. Worse, I—or others—might come to

think that this problem is intractable. The government is properly in charge of this and there is nothing they can do about it. It is not for me unilaterally to get up and fix the problem. Something like this attitude seems to be common among otherwise good and caring people in California, for example. In some municipalities, it is illegal to feed the poor. In the city of Los Angeles, thousands of tiny homes for the homeless have been seized by the city.

Those of us who have read John Rawls might wonder why we may not just give the antecedent values some kind of lexical priority over redistributionism. Rawls famously privileges his principle of equal basic liberties over his distributional principle. He claims that it is impermissible to impinge upon the principle of equal basic liberties to achieve a distribution that better satisfies his distributional principle. One might wonder why this approach is unavailable to anyone with distributionist aspirations. When the core of antecedent values comes into conflict with redistributionism, the former should win.

Jouvanel approaches many—but not all—of the issues in *The Ethics of Redistribution* as a practical thinker. He is armed with empirical facts about what happens in the world. He then traces these occurrences to their conceptual origins. So a philosopher could certainly show that it is possible to combine mild redistributionism with a commitment to antecedent values. That fails to show that there is any reason to believe that real political trends will adhere to that scaling of commitments.

In this regard, I do not think that Jouvanel fully cashes out his vital insight. The redistributionist urge could be resisted; it could be rendered subservient to other values; but it might still manifest in a different way. Even the modest commitment to a social safety net is susceptible to the weaknesses of redistributionism, but this is not a point that Jouvanel stresses in the text.

One way the redistributionist urge could manifest itself is by thickening what is involved in the idea of providing for the "subsistence" and "direct wants." One might treat ever-expanding levels of education as necessary for subsistence. A career that one enjoys or finds satisfying might count as a direct want. Reliable internet access might be lumped in there as well. This list is not fabricated. Various redistributionists identify these and many more as part of satisfying basic needs of humans.

This rearing of the redistributionist head is something that can occur quite innocently. Jouvanel is aware that many pernicious outcomes arise from reasonable concerns. Relieving poverty by decreasing the taxes the poor pay during war is not a "conscious policy of breaking down taxpayers' resistance" to taxation. It is merely one of the reasons people became less resistant to taxation. But what *The Ethics of Redistribution* warns us against is the threat redistribution poses for other values. One must guard against allowing it even to infect how one thinks about what Jouvanel sees as one of the fundamental goals of society: relief of extreme want.

‘What are we for?’

THE appearance of the "Admiral Gorshkov" with the "Zircos" on board made an indelible impression on the world community, becoming the number one New Year's news. Recall: On January 4, Vladimir Putin took part in the ceremony of entering combat service of the fresh (built in 2018) frigate Admiral Gorshkov.

Equipped with Zircon hypersonic missiles, the frigate set off on a long voyage across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, as well as the Mediterranean Sea. The Russian president specifically stressed that "we will continue to develop the combat potential of the armed forces, produce promising models of weapons and equipment that will guard Russia's security in the coming decades."

Defense Minister Shoigu explained that the purpose of the campaign is "to counter the threats to Russia, to maintain regional peace and stability together with friendly countries." Another interesting detail: "During the exercises and training, the crew's actions to use hypersonic weapons and long-range cruise missiles in various environmental conditions will be practiced."

In 2020-2022, Admiral Gorshkov has already conducted exercises using Zircon missiles. All shootings were successful. Then it was in the Barents Sea, now, as we see, the geography of testing hypersonic weapons has changed somewhat. It is also interesting how it will be possible to establish cooperation with the navies of friendly countries - the Chinese comrades, for example, also have a wide range of hypersonic anti-ship missiles.

It would seem that all this is the usual routine of naval exercises. However, our Anglo-Saxon strategic partners staged an unhealthy stir around this news.

"A chilling warning that

Russia is sending to the whole world," is how the British tabloid *The Sun* describes Admiral Gorshkov's campaign. Their colleagues from the *Daily Mail* published an informative picture roughly describing the speed and range of the Zircon, and thickly filled the article with completely bazaar curses against the Russian leadership. "In impotent rage," as we used to say in Soviet times.

In 2019, the Admiral Gorshkov, casually passing along the coast of Foggy Albion, has already ruffled the nerves of the British. The destroyer *Defender* then advanced towards him. And the main newspaper of the country, *The Times*, commented on the appearance of the Russian frigate with an extremely stupid note: allegedly, there was a secret weapon on board the Admiral Gorshkov, which at a great distance caused hallucinations and nausea in the "potential enemy". Like a good Englishman will come out to the beach, look at the Russian ship on the horizon - and that's it, "goes to Riga." I don't know, maybe they should drink less there?

American publications also did not ignore the Admiral Gorshkov's going to sea with the Zircos on board. The *New York Times* noted that hypersonic missiles are being developed today in many countries around the world. The newspaper has "no confidence" that the Russian missiles "will work as advertised." However, journalists were forced to note that, according to independent experts, US hypersonic developments are noticeably inferior to Russian ones.

Indeed, hypersound in the United States is still at the testing stage - and the vast majority of them end unsuccessfully. Only in December was it possible for the first time to success-

Victoria Nikiforova

fully test the long-suffering Strela missile (its speed is almost half that of the Zircon), which the Pentagon has been fiddling with for several years.

However, from the first test to the launch of a product in a series, the path is very long. Officially, it is believed that the first hypersonic missiles should appear in the United States this summer. Many American military analysts think differently: "We still have many years before the appearance of mass-produced hypersonic products."

But it's not just the lack of hypersonic weapons. In 2018, then US Deputy Secretary of Defense Michael Griffin, speaking before Congress, said: "We do not have (hypersonic) systems capable of countering China and Russia, we also do not have defenses against their systems."

At the same time, the Ministry of Defense was instructed to develop appropriate defense systems against hypersonic weapons. Hundreds of millions of dollars poured into these programs each year. The results are not clear yet. In any case, the American aircraft carriers still have the Aegis system, which is categorically incapable of intercepting Zircos. This, by the way, was also noted by Minister of Defense Shoigu, sending the "Admiral Gorshkov" on a campaign.

A year ago, the Americans proposed the option of protecting aircraft carriers. It was proposed to launch satellites into orbit that would track the very moment of launching a hypersonic missile, transmit real-time data about its flight to ships equipped with the Aegis system, and from there an SM-6 missile would launch to intercept. As US Navy Vice Admiral John Hill said, "today this is our only possible defense

against hypersonic weapons."

How this system will work in reality and whether it will work at all, there is no certainty. So far, all over the world, hypersonic missiles continue to be affectionately called "aircraft carrier killers." Perhaps it was this circumstance that caused such a nervous reaction of our Anglo-Saxon opponents. Probably, it is not necessary to explain that right now five American aircraft carriers are hanging out in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

For many decades, the United States provided its vassals with a "security umbrella". Now (for the first time in a long time) there is a feeling that this umbrella is full of holes. A historic moment, of course.

At the traditional press conference, State Department spokesman Ned Price declined to comment on the Admiral Gorshkov campaign. "We don't participate in propaganda exercises," he remarked coldly.

However, while he was saying this, pointers from the State Department were apparently flying to the American embassy in Moscow. Because literally the next day - the Admiral Gorshkov had not yet managed to pass the English coast - the US Embassy addressed the entire Russian people.

In a hastily edited video, the embassy tells Russians how much they are loved in America. And it turns out that we defeated Hitler together - what a surprise, otherwise it all seemed as if Brad Pitt defeated him alone. And we suddenly conquered space together - here, obviously, it is proposed to forget what anti-Soviet hysteria the Americans spread after the Sputnik and after Gagarin's flight. And our culture in America is very much loved: music, there, dancing, "The Nutcracker" - a

Moscow looks determined to bleed Kyiv’s missile defense stockpiles with barrages of suicide drones

(Continued from Page 6)

of Russia's Orthodox church called for a pause in fighting for the holiday, a request that Ukraine slammed as "a cynical trap and an element of propaganda."

— In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Finnish analysts Tapio Kanninen and Heikki Patomäki suggest a potential path toward peace.

“An option that should be seriously considered is to demilitarise the contest-

Covid cases in China, according to the BBC. Georgieva noted that Europe and China will almost certainly see an economic slowdown, while the United States is “teetering on the verge.”

— In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Finnish analysts Tapio Kanninen and Heikki Patomäki suggest a potential path toward peace.

“An option that should be seriously considered is to demilitarise the contest-

ed territories in Eastern Ukraine and put them temporarily under the auspices of the UN. After a period of back-channel diplomacy and negotiations, the UN Security Council could declare, or the parties could directly negotiate, a binding ceasefire, with the deployment of a peace-keeping force and other UN personnel. The areas of Ukraine occupied by Russian forces would be demilitarised and governed temporarily by the UN,

with some flexibility in specifying the boundaries of the territories.

[...] A ‘UN transitional administration of Eastern Ukraine’ would also be tasked with helping to negotiate and draft a new legal basis for the status of these regions and holding regular elections, as well as a possible referendum.”

U.S. State Department news: In a Tuesday press briefing, Price argued that reports of division among American elites over

Ukraine policy have been exaggerated. “Secretary [Anthony] Blinken last month had an opportunity to brief both houses of Congress along with some of his counterparts from the Defense Department, from the intelligence community and elsewhere. We provided an opportunity for all members, all senators, all House members, to hear about our approach,” he said. “What we heard in turn was broad bipartisan support for that approach.”

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PSX stays bullish, gains 290 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 290.78 points, a positive change of 0.71 percent, closing at 41,007.52 against 40,716.74 points the previous day.

A total of 181,976,391 shares were traded during the day as compared to

111,790,556 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.795 billion against Rs 3.095 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 320 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 164 of them recorded gains and 139 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 17 companies remained

unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Cnergyico Pk with 27,912,328 shares at Rs 4.05 per share K-Electric Ltd with 17,660,273 shares at Rs 2.36 per share, and Pak Refinery with 16,077,002 shares at Rs 13.81 per share. Pak Services witnessed a maximum increase of Rs

130.00 per share price, closing at Rs1905.00, whereas the runner-up was Premium Tex, with a Rs 42.01 rise in its per share price to Rs659.00. Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 209.90 per share closing at Rs 5400.10, followed by Sapphire Fiber with Rs 101.07 decline to close at Rs 1246.60.

Rupee sheds 02 paisa against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 02 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs 227.13 against the previous day's closing of Rs 227.11.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and sell-

ing rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 234.25 and Rs 236.5 respectively.

The price of the euro decreased by Rs 2.05 and closed at Rs 239.15 against the previous day's closing of Rs 241.20, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen lost three paisa to close at

Rs1.71, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.47 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound, which was traded at Rs 270.36 as compared to its last closing of Rs 272.83. The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal increased by 01 paisa and 02 paisa to close at Rs 61.83 and Rs 60.43 respectively.

Gold prices up by Rs 300 to Rs.183,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs 300 on Friday and was sold at Rs 183,700 against its sale at Rs183,400, the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 257 and was sold at Rs 157,493 against Rs157,236, whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up to Rs 144,369 against its sale at Rs144,133, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs. 30 to Rs. 2,100 whereas that of 10 grams declined by Rs. 25.72 to Rs. 1800.41.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$ 9 and was sold at US\$ 1839 against its sale at US\$1848, the association reported.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships, Navios Constellation and Elise carrying Containers and Mogas berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively on Thursday. A total of 05 ships were engaged at PAQ berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, two ships,

Navios Constellation and Leni left the port on Friday morning and two more ships, Gion Trader and Elise are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.



ISLAMABAD: Street vendor selling muffers to the customers at Weekly Juma Bazar Peshawar Morr.

Weekly inflation goes up by 1.09 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.09 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on January 05, 2023, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group, was recorded at 219.56 points as compared to 217.20 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 30.60 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed

a 1.13 percent increase and went up to 227.98 points from last week's 225.44 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 1.23 percent, 1.21 percent, 1.19 percent and 0.98 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 23 (45.10%) items increased, 09 (17.65%) items decreased and 19 (37.25%) items remained stable.

The items which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis included potatoes (4.61%), eggs (1.31%), tomatoes (1.17%), LPG (0.85%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.71%), cooking oil 5 litres (0.32%), sugar (0.24%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.11%) and pulse masoor (0.05%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included chicken (16.09%), rice basmati broken (5.16%), wheat flour (4.87%), rice irri-6/9 (3.45%), bananas (2.97%), onions (2.65%), bread (1.24%), salt powdered (1.07%) and pulse moong (1.02%).

On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the commodities that witnessed a decrease in prices included chillies powdered (22.98%), electricity for q1 (13.96%) and gur (1.11%). Whereas, the commodities that witnessed an increase in prices on a YoY basis included onions (501.23%), chicken (82.50%), tea packet (65.41%), diesel (60.63%), eggs (50.51%), salt powdered (49.50%), petrol (48.21%), pulse moong (46.99%), rice basmati broken (46.17%), bananas (45.64%), wheat flour (45.35%) and rice irri-6/9 (43.11%).

ZTBL to provide financial assistance to PARC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) will provide financial assistance to Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) to extend its research outreach to the doorsteps of farmers for improving their livelihood opportunities across the country.

In this regard ZTBL will collaborate with PARC for the up-scaling of PARC's innovative farming technologies to transform the agriculture sector for enhancing per-acre crop output. To this effect, both organizations have signed a MoU to establish a collaborative relationship in promoting and adapting the latest agricultural technologies, best crop management practices, and agriculture mechanization for improving farm efficiency and for the benefit of the farming community. Under this MoU PARC and ZTBL will work jointly to conduct awareness webinars, field days, seminars, and workshops to disseminate the latest developments in the agriculture sector.

PSGMEA organizes seminar

SIALKOT (APP):Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) in collaboration with Computer Xpert Sialkot organized a seminar on "Grow your Export Business with "ALIBABA.COM".

Addressing the participants, Member Executive Committee Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Saleem Akhtar Bhutta said that the aim of conducting effective seminars and training/workshops for SMEs was to keep updated young entrepreneurs with the current e-commerce trends, fill knowledge gaps, and to provide learning on e-commerce platforms.

He added that the trainings would help youngsters to become a successful B2B seller on Alibaba.com and Amazon. Director Computer Xperts Bashir Bhatti gave a brief presentation on the benefits of working with OEM/ODM manufacturing and the importance of product knowledge in adherence to new business development.

He said that the Alibaba was the biggest B2B platform in the world as the businessmen were getting leads from more than two hundred countries of the world.

USC cuts price of premium brands ghee across the country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Utility Store Corporation (USC) on Friday announced that the corporation has reduced the price of premium brand (Dalda) ghee by Rs 12 per kilogram (Kg).

According to press release, the price of 5 kg tin has also been reduced by Rs. 50.

1 kg of premium brand ghee (Dalda) would be available at 500 per kilogram instead of Rs.512 whereas 5 kg tin new price set at Rs

2530 compared to Rs 2580. The New prices have been applied immediately, it added. For purchasing the items other than those subsidized, no terms apply nor any password needs.

One-Time Password (OTP) has been temporarily abolished for the new targeted subsidy customers, now they can get subsidy by just showing the original and valid identity cards.

Only targeted subsidies

(Registered customers of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will send their ID Cards number to 5566 to get one-time password for the purchasing of subsidized items. Subsidy is being given only on wheat flour, sugar, ghee, pulses and rice.

In addition to subsidized items, hundreds of items of other standard brands are also available at affordable prices than market.



RAWALPINDI: Vendor making tea for the customers at Kohati Bazar.

Lofty US home prices persist despite interest rate hikes

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Higher borrowing costs are leading to fewer US home sales, but prices are staying elevated in a holdover from the torrid peak-pandemic market.

In November, existing home sales were down more than a third from the January 2022 level, according to the National Association of Realtors (NAR). That came shortly after the borrowing rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage -- the reference lending product in US real estate -- hit 7.16 percent in late October, the highest level in 21 years.

Interest rates have retreated slightly since then, but stand well above their levels for most of the last decade and a half, a reflection of the Federal Reserve's monetary policy pivot to counter inflation.

"The market has certainly shifted here in Denver,"

said David Schlichter, a real estate agent for Compass in Colorado, who called the peak pandemic of the recent past "the hottest market in history."

But today's batch of properties last longer on the market and are "selling for a price below the asking price," Schlichter said.

Drake, a home buyer who declined to give his last name, expects to soon close on a house in Austin, Texas at four percent below the listing price.

"Now is the best time to buy in the last 1.5-two years if you're reasonably secure in your job and have a decent down payment saved," he told AFP.

Notwithstanding these examples, real estate prices have remained relatively strong, reflecting the limited stock of available homes, said industry insiders. The median sales price in November was

\$370,700, according to NAR, down 11 percent from the June peak.

But that's still up 3.5 percent from the year-ago period and some 30 percent higher compared with May 2020 before the pandemic set the market ablaze.

In light of a slowing economy, CoreLogic has forecast that prices will fall 2.8 percent by November in 2023 compared with the 2022 period.

But nothing like the 2008 subprime debacle is expected. Between June 2008 and January 2012, home prices slumped 27 percent amid the Great Recession.

Lending practices in the US housing market have changed significantly from that period.

In 2006, nearly 35 percent of mortgages were tied to an adjustable-rate in which lending fees rose when the Fed lifted interest

rates.

Today, only about 10 percent of mortgages do this, insulating most legacy mortgages from a hit from the Fed's pivot away from near-zero interest rates.

The limited volume of available housing stock is another big point of contrast with that period.

Real estate companies overbuilt during the last housing boom period during the first decade of the 21st Century, said Lawrence Yun, chief economist at NAR.

"The homebuilders have been underproducing for this past decade," Yun said. "So if there's a mild recession again, I think the inventory increases should not be that great."

Slim pickings as far as available homes for sale translates to lofty home prices, a burden to first-time buyers.

Asian markets fluctuate after healthy start to the new year

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian investors struggled on Friday to maintain the week's positive momentum as they eyed sharp losses on Wall Street that came after forecast-beating jobs data that suggested the Federal Reserve will have to keep lifting interest rates.

Regional markets have enjoyed a strong start to the year, largely thanks to optimism over China's reopening.

But long-running fears that central bank policy tightening would cause a recession were brought back into play by figures showing more jobs than expected were created in the US private sector last month.

The reading from payroll firm ADP indicated

the labour market remained tight -- putting upward pressure on wages -- meaning the Federal Reserve still had much work to do in its battle against decades-high inflation.

Several top Fed officials also lined up on Thursday to warn the bank will likely have to keep lifting borrowing costs this year, with some suggesting they could go as high as 5.4 percent.

Minutes from the December meeting reinforced bets on further tightening.

Thursday's data make the release of a key non-farm payrolls report later in the day much more important.

"What the Fed really wants to see is some slack build up in the labour

markets, in hopes it can do this gently without creating much of a downturn," former Indian central bank boss Raghuram Rajan told Bloomberg Television.

"But it may well be that by the time it seems that it will have raised rates enough, that the momentum takes us down to a mild recession at the very least."

SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes added: "Although ADP has not been the sharpest predictor for NFP, any incremental evidence that the labour market remains hot supports the Fed's hawkish impulse."

Asian markets fluctuated after all three main indexes on Wall Street fell more than one percent.

Hong Kong dipped after three days of gains that saw it add more than six percent, while Singapore, Wellington and Manila were also in the red. Shanghai was flat but there were gains in Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Taipei and Jakarta.

Still, there is a general sense of optimism in Asia as China emerges from almost three years of zero-Covid lockdowns and other strict containment measures.

There is hope that the easing of restrictions will see a boom in countries' tourism industries, and Hong Kong is a major beneficiary with the border set to open at the weekend.

Still, China's swift exit from zero-Covid has also caused plenty of concern

as infections soar across the country and put further pressure on the already stuttering economy.

This has helped cause a slump in oil prices as investors bet on a drop in demand from the world's biggest importer of the commodity.

Both main contracts rose on Friday but they are both down almost 10 percent on the week.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 0.6 percent at 25,975.14 (break)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: DOWN 0.1 percent at 21,024.16

Shanghai - Composite: FLAT at 3,155.14

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.0533 from \$1.0524 on Thursday

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.1929 from \$1.1909

Euro/pound: DOWN at 88.30 pence from 88.34 pence

Dollar/yen: UP at 133.67 yen from 133.42 yen

West Texas Intermediate: UP 1.0 percent at \$74.43 a barrel

Brent North Sea crude: UP 0.9 percent at \$79.43 a barrel

New York - Dow: DOWN 1.0 percent at 32,930.08 (close)

London - FTSE 100: UP 0.6 percent at 7,633.45 (close)

Meanwhile, Tokyo stocks opened nearly flat Friday in cautious trade after falls on Wall Street, where better-than-expected jobs data reinforced concerns that the Federal Reserve will pursue more interest rate hikes.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index zigzagged between positive and negative territory, adding 0.02 percent, or 4.63 points, to 25,825.43 at the open, while the broader Topix index gained 0.01 percent, or 0.22 points, to 1,869.12.

The dollar stood at 133.47 yen, against 133.42 yen in New York on Thursday.

The Tokyo market digested the news that hiring in the United States spiked in December, with private payrolls rising by 235,000 jobs, to exceed analyst expectations.

The report "provides a more definitive snapshot of the US labour market," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management wrote in a note.

"Any incremental evidence that the labour market remains hot supports the Fed's hawkish impulse," Innes added.

This, coupled with newly released Fed minutes that continued to suggest a hard line on inflation, reignited the view among investors that "monetary tightening by the Fed will continue", senior market analyst Toshiyuki Kanayama of Monex said in a commentary.

Among major shares in Tokyo, SoftBank Group edged up 0.27 percent to 5,761 yen, Sony Group added 0.33 percent to 10,420 yen and Toyota was up 0.27 percent to 1,812 yen.

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing rose 0.56 percent to 80,100 yen.



In brief

Gymnastic Championship

HYDERABAD (APP): The National Women's Gymnastics Championship 2023 will start on January 7 at the Gymnasium academy Hall, Sindh University, Jamshoro. President, Sindh Gymnastics Association, Ahmed Ali Rajput informed here on Friday the participants from all the provinces and the units affiliated with the Pakistan Gymnastics Federation would participate. The event would be held under the supervision of the Secretary General of Pakistan Gymnastics Federation Pervaiz Ahmed. Director Center for Physical education, Health and sports Sciences of Sindh University Jamshoro Prof. Dr. Akram Ansari will inaugurate the championship.

Vince shines as Sixers beat Stars

MELBOURNE (Agencies): England batter James Vince hit an unbeaten 91 from 59 balls to help Sydney Sixers seal a thrilling win over Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League. The Hampshire captain hit nine fours and two sixes as the Sixers moved one point clear at the top of the table. Jordan Silk's huge six in the final over nudged the visitors closer to victory, before Dan Christian hit the winning runs with the penultimate ball. Marcus Stoinis earlier hit 52 off 28 balls as the Stars posted 173-5. The result leaves the Stars bottom of the table with just two wins from their eight matches so far. With England one-day seamer Luke Wood bowling the last over, 11 runs were still needed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Vince should have been run out pushing for two off the first ball but Nottinghamshire's Joe Clarke, keeping wicket, fumbled the throw in from the outfield and missed the stumps with Vince short of his crease. A single followed next ball before Silk's huge six tipped the match in the Sixers' favour, but he was given out the next delivery via the Decision Review System when he was adjudged to have nicked an attempted uppercut through to the keeper. Two runs were still needed from the final two balls, but new batter Christian kept his composure to clip his first delivery through square leg for four to seal the win.

Volleyball Championship

PESHAWAR (APP): The final round of the All Pakistan Inter-University Men Volleyball Championship organized by the Directorate of sports University of Peshawar kicked off here at Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Indoor Hall, inside the campus here on Friday. Secretary Higher education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dawood Khan graced the occasion as a chief guest. Deputy Director Sports Higher Education Commission Islamabad Muhammad Asif, Vice Chancellor UET Swat, Project Director University of Engineering Swat Prof. Dr. Najeeb, former Principal Government College Peshawar Prof. Dr. Sharif Gul, Dr. Noor Zada, Deputy Director Sports HED, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Arshad Hussain, Director General Sports University of Peshawar Bahre Karam, former international volleyball player Ghulam Abbas, Laiq Khan, players, officials and large number of spectators were also present during the colorful opening ceremony wherein a total of 14 teams from different universities across the country are taking part.



KARACHI: Players shake hands after a tantalising draw.

Hamza Khan advances to British Jr Open quarterfinals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Hamza Khan won two back-to-back matches to book his quarter-final berth in the Boys U-19 category of the British Junior Open Squash Championship in Birmingham, the UK on Friday.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation, in the first fixture, Hamza downed Lazlo Godde in straight games 11-4, 11-9, 11-5. In the third round, he edged passed Joachim Chuah in an exciting contest by a scoreline of 12-10, 11-7, 10-12, 11-6.

In the quarterfinals, Hamza will compete against Omar Azzam of Egypt.

Hamza's compatriots Noor Zaman and Ashab Irfan could not reach the quarter-final stage. Noor lost to Yassin Shohdy after a five-game epic battle by a game score of 8-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-13, 7-11, while Ashab Irfan was handed defeat by Rowan Damming 13-11, 7-11, 10-12, 5-11.

In Boys U-13 category, Nouman Khan and Ahmed Rayyan Khalil displayed stunning performances to advance to quarterfinals. Nouman overcame Egyptian boy Yassin Bayumi 11-9, 9-11, 11-7, 8-11 and 11-6.

In the quarterfinal, he will lock horns with Egypt's Mohammed Ashraf. Similarly, Ahmed Rayyan

saw off England's Ali Khalil 11-9, 11-7, 11-9 to face Carlton Capella of USA in the quarterfinal.

In Boys U-15 category, Pakistan's Mubeen Khan lost to Jack Elriami 9-11, 7-11, 5-11.

In Boys U-17 category, Abdullah Nawaz of Pakistan edged passed Harith Daniel Jeferi 11-7, 11-9, 11-7. However, he could not reach the quarterfinal as in his next match, he conceded defeat to Alex Broad Bridge 12-10, 6-11, 11-1, 9-11 and 7-11.

In Girls U-11 category, Pakistan's Mahnoor Ali beat Lannon Welch of USA 11-8, 11-7, 11-9 to take on Egyptian girl Lille Mashaal in the quarterfinal.

Italian football great Gianluca Vialli dies at 58

ROME (Agencies): Former Juventus, Chelsea and Italy striker Gianluca Vialli has died of pancreatic cancer aged 58, sparking a stream of tributes to a player who was stylish on and off the pitch.

Vialli was diagnosed with cancer in 2017 but was still able to play a significant role in Italy's European Championship title-winning campaign in 2021 assisting long-time Sampdoria strike partner and national coach Roberto Mancini.

However, he announced a temporary leave from his role with the national team in December to focus on his health. Vialli spent eight seasons at Genoa-based Sampdoria before joining Juventus in 1992 for a then world record 16.5 million Euros.

He won the Champions League with Juventus before joining Chelsea in 1996 and becoming player-manager in 1998.

"We have always been with you, Gianluca," a statement read on Juventus' official website.

"Ever since you arrived in 1992, when it was love at first sight.

"We loved everything about you, absolutely everything -- your smile, you being a star and leader at the same time, on the pitch and in the dressing room.

"At Chelsea, Vialli took over from the sacked Ruud Gullit late in the season, and went on to lead the club to victory in the League Cup, UEFA Cup Winners' Cup and UEFA Super Cup.

He also guided Chelsea to victory in the 2000 FA Cup final but was sacked in the following season.

Chelsea's current co-owners Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali said in a statement: "This is truly an awful day for Chelsea Football Club. Gianluca's legend will live on at Stamford Bridge.

"His impact as a player, a coach and most importantly as a person, will be forever written across our club's history." Sampdoria, where Vialli won the Serie A title and European Cup Winners' Cup, said in their statement: "You came as a boy, we salute you as a man.

"We will not forget your 141 goals, your backhands, your cashmere jerseys, your earring, your platinum blond hair, your Ultras bomber. You gave us so much, we gave you so much: yes, it was love, mutual, endless. A love that will not die, today, with you."

Sarfraz leads Pakistan to thrilling draw with New Zealand

KARACHI (AP): Sarfraz Ahmed continued his red-hot form with a thrilling century to help Pakistan draw a nail-biting second and final test against New Zealand as the series ended 0-0 on Friday.

The 35-year-old Sarfraz, who also struck half-centuries in his three previous innings after being recalled for the series following a near-four year absence, made 118 before the last-wicket pair hung on in dimming light for 21 balls to take Pakistan to 304-9, just 15 runs shy of its victory target.

"Dream comeback for him," captain Babar Azam said. "Sarfraz did not let the fire die within him in four years. His work ethic was always there and he continued to wait for his turn."

New Zealand took seven wickets on the final day and was within one more scalp of forcing a win. Sarfraz stood firm for 4 fours and 48 min-

utes and featured in a second successive century stand with Saud Shakeel (32) after the Black Caps had reduced Pakistan to 80-5 before lunch thanks to Michael Bracewell (4-75) claiming two wickets in six deliveries.

Sarfraz and Shakeel defied New Zealand for nearly three hours before Shakeel fell to a brilliant reflex catch in the slips by Daryl Mitchell early in the final session. Agha Salman made a brisk 30 but was clean bowled by Matt Henry before New Zealand struck twice with the second new ball under fading light.

Hasan Ali was trapped leg before wicket by Tim Southee and Sarfraz was superbly snapped up by Kane Williamson low at leg slip off Bracewell's sharp off-spin, and the Pakistan batter walked off to a standing ovation from the sparse crowd at the National Stadium.

No. 10 Naseem Shah

and No. 11 Abrar Ahmed then held out against Bracewell and fellow spinner Ish Sodhi (2-59), with all 10 fielders around the bat, before bad light ended play with three overs left.

"Came down to the last moments, great end to 10 days of pretty tough toil," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee. "We knew from the nature of the surface that things could happen late in the test but Sarfraz was probably the difference. We could've won had we got him earlier."

Sarfraz, who hit nine fours and a six in his first test century since making 112 against New Zealand in Dubai in 2014, said: "When 140 runs were left (in the final session), the management said that you need to keep trying to score when the ball is there to hit. If those two wickets didn't fall then the result could've been something else."



ADELAIDE: Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a forehand against Denis Shapovalov of Canada during day six of the 2023 Adelaide International.

Adelaide Int'l: Djokovic beats Shapovalov to set up Medvedev semi-final

ADELAIDE (AP): Novak Djokovic beat Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 6-4 at the Adelaide International on Friday to set up a semifinal with Daniil Medvedev.

The combined ATP-WTA event is a warmup for this year's Australian Open, which the top-seeded Djokovic missed last year after being barred from the country because he was not vaccinated against COVID-19.

"Early on he was a better player. He was dictating," said 35-year-old Serb Djokovic after improving to 8-0 against his Canadian opponent. "(Then) I started finding my serve and my groove on the court."

The 21-time Grand Slam winner, who is preparing for a shot at a 10th Australian Open title, will face third-seeded Medvedev on Saturday.

"I don't think there's going to be too many short points tomorrow unless we both serve well," Djokovic said. "Normally

when you play Daniil, you have to be ready to go the distance, physically, mentally, game-wise."

Medvedev, the runner-up last year to Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open, defeated fellow Russian Karen Khachanov 6-3, 6-3 on Friday.

"It's never easy to play your compatriot," Medvedev said. "I'm happy that I managed to really raise my level, especially in the end of both sets, and really happy to be through to the semis."

Medvedev is the 2021 U.S. Open champion, but has lost twice in the finals in Australia — and in 2021 it was against Djokovic.

"For sure I played well last year and I'm playing well right now," Medvedev said. "To be honest, that's all that matters. In order to win a slam, or be in the final, you have to be at your best for seven matches."

"I managed to do it once and I was really close last year," he added. "And

that's what I'm going to try to do again in a few weeks in Melbourne."

In other quarterfinals on Friday, American Sebastian Korda defeated sixth-seeded Jannik Sinner 7-5, 6-1 and Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan beat Alexei Popyrin of Australia. Korda will face Nishioka in the semifinals.

Teenage qualifier Linda Noskova also beat two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka. The 18-year-old Czech player overcame Azarenka 6-4, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (6) in a quarterfinal that lasted nearly three hours.

A first-round winner over third-seeded Daria Kasatkina, Noskova has now won five consecutive matches in only her sixth appearance in the main draw of a WTA event. World No. 5 Aryna Sabalenka was the first woman through to the semifinals after beating Marketa Vondrousova 6-3, 7-5.

Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Youth Program



Shahid Khan Afridi

PESHAWAR: Under the Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif Youth Talent Hunt Program, the opening ceremony of the Girls Hockey League started yesterday at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex. On this occasion, Momina Ilham, Ambassador for the Hockey League on behalf of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, was the guest.

He was accompanied by Chairman of Higher Education Commission Islamabad Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, Deputy Director of Sports and Coordinator of Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Youth Program for KP Maria Sameen, DSO Charsadda. Tahsinullah Khan, Tanveer of UET Lahore, Mubasher Saeed of Karachi

University and other personalities were also present. On the occasion of the opening ceremony, all the players presented a march past while the girls of Government Girls High School Daulatpura presented a magnificent performance.

In the matches held last day, Peshawar defeated Hazara, in which international hockey player Momina Ilham scored a magnificent hat-trick. In this way, Peshawar won against Hazara with three goals to zero. In the second match, they also beat Swat. M compared to zero Nishiman, Shazia and Kainat Nimat scored goals on behalf of Bannu.

Prime Minister's Special Stunt for Youth Program Shaza Fatima and Prime Minister's Assistant Amir Muqam in the light of the special instructions of the Prime Minister's Youth Talent Hunt Program.

Under the supervision of PK Coordinator and Deputy Director of Sports Maria Sameen, a training camp was organized for one hundred and twenty five players of the first trials at the level of the regions, which include Bannu, Peshawar, Swat, Mardan, Hazara and Charsadda, after which hockey is now held.

The league has started. Qualified coaches trained the players in a two-day training camp. Four sessions were held daily. Now the best twenty-five players will be selected from the winner and runner-up teams in the league, which will be done by the selectors coming from Karachi and Lahore.

After which the selected team of KP will participate in the National Hockey League which is being held in Karachi. They will represent the country not only at the national but also at the international level.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inter-Constituency Games ended in a grand ceremony

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakhtunkhwa Men Inter-Constituency Games organized by the Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ended in a colourful ceremony with two provincial ministers - Minister Sports and Youth Affairs Atif Khan and Minister for Housing Dr. Amjad Ali graced the occasion as guests and distributed trophies and cash prizes among the winners and runners-up teams.

Secretary Sports Captain (Retd) Mushtaq Ahmad, DG Sports Khalid Khan, Deputy Director Sports Jamshed Baloch, DSOs, coach of victorious Badminton Peshawar team Bushra Khan and other

officials were also present.

In the football match between the teams of Chitral Constituency PK01 and Swat Constituency PK06, Swat won after a sensational contest by solitary goal. Speaking on this occasion, Provincial Sports Minister Mohammad Atif Khan said that it is a pleasure to see the youth playing in the province. Work is underway on various sports projects costing about 50 billion rupees. He also appreciated Peshawar Badminton Coach Bushra Khan on her team Peshawar victory against strong Hazara Region team in a tough battle by 3-1.

Peshawar's Tanzeela, Iqra also played well against Mehraj and Mehaq



of Hazara in the in the three and a doubles. Peshawar won three singles while Hazara won the doubles. Along with Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity and Inter-School Games, organized for the first time in history.

He said it is also for the first time that the govern-

ment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has organized Inter-Constituency Men and Women Games in which more than 14000 athletes from 115 constituencies in events like football, cricket, volleyball (Men) and Cricket and Badminton (Women) took part.

He said the initiative



was taken to involve the school, college and universities kids in healthy activities. He said that the government also assured equal playing fields to the boys and girls and good talent out of these activities are coming to the national and international levels.

He said Games like

Mixed Martial Arts competitions, Polo Games and Hockey matches are being organized in Peshawar and Polo matches are being organized in Chitral as well. He said that the best opportunities and facilities are being provided to the players and they are being given good

prizes of Rs. 110,000 to the winners and Rs. 60,000 to the runners-up.

The series of scholarships will continue and it is hoped that these players will make the country and the nation famous in the future. At the end, the guests gave away trophies and cash prizes.



In brief

IRSA releases 24,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 24,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 36,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1493.56 feet and was 95.56 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 15,800 cusecs while the outflow as 5,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.15 feet, 69.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 5,700 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. Whereas, the release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 7,100, 16,200, 7,800 and 16,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,700 cusecs of water was released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF seized hashish, opium, heroin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized over 256 kg of hashish, 39 kg of opium 2 kg of heroin in two different operations and arrested four drug peddlers. According to a spokesperson, the force had recovered over 256 kg of hashish, and 39 kg of opium and arrested two drug peddles from Islamabad. In a Joint operation, the ANF and Punjab Rangers in Kasur seized over 2 kg of heroin and arrested two drug pushers. The cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

Police arrest 23 anti-social elements

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi District Police, in the ongoing operations, conducted raids in different areas and held 23 accused drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders, and other criminals besides recovering Rs 50,000, eight mobile phones, two motorcycles, 5.8 kg hashish, 31 liters liquor, fireworks and other items from their possession. According to the police spokesman, the Rawal Division police netted three accused thieves and recovered cash Rs 50,000, eight mobile phones, laptops and electronics items from their possession. He said that the New Town and the Sadiqabad police arrested Shehzad, Mohsin Sohail and Riaz, and recovered stolen items from their possession. In two raids, the Pirwadhai and the Sadiqabad police arrested four accused robbers identified as Imran, Owais, Farhad and Rizwan and recovered two stolen motorcycles, laptops and weapons from their possession. Meanwhile, the Gujjar Khan police arrested an accused identified as Khalid Sharif who had gunned down his real brother, Sajid Sharif over a petty issue. The Rawalpindi Cantonment police arrested Raheem for his alleged involvement in abduction of a citizen, named Atif. The spokesman added that the Dhamial police arrested an accused named Ashfaq for sexually assaulting a woman. The Kalar Syedan police held Haseeb for his alleged involvement in the sexual abuse of a boy. The Rawalpindi district police also arrested nine drug peddlers and bootleggers, and recovered 5.8 kg hashish and 31 liters of liquor from their possession. The spokesman further said that the Rawal Division police also held three fireworks dealers, identified as Mudassir Shabbir, Zaem uddin and Mustafa.



ISLAMABAD: CEO SK Hydro presenting a cheque of One Hundred Thousand US Dollars to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for the flood victims.

Amir Muqam meets delegation of female Pakistani students

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistani female students studying in Afghanistan called on the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Division Engineer Amir Muqam.

Advisor to the Prime Minister, Engineer Amir Muqam, assured all possible support to Pakistani

female students studying in Afghanistan.

Engineer Amir Muqam assured them that he will write to the Prime Minister regarding the admission of 105 female students who are unable to continue their education in Afghanistan.

Advisor to the Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said that he will raise this issue in the next meeting of the federal cabinet. The advisor said

that Pakistani students studying in Ukraine are also facing similar issues. He added that he will try his level best to solve their problem.

Parents of students were also present on the occasion.

The students, and their parents, thanked the Advisor to the Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam for the assurances of making efforts for their cause.

Art, Craft Bazar to open today

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two-day Behbud Art and Craft Bazar will open on January 7, here at Pakistan China Friendship Center to promote handmade products and support the less privileged women.

The festival will feature a variety of products, games for kids, traditional food, live music and fun for the whole family, also providing opportunity to meet the artisans from all over Pakistan. Behbud Art and Craft Bazar was established in 1967 by Behbud Association of Pakistan, which is a non-profit, non-political social welfare organization run mainly with the help of a team of volunteers, who have a significant record of philanthropic dedication and community service.

"It aims to support the less privileged women and make them self-reliant and productive members of the society. This is done by providing skill training together with income generating opportunities, subsidized health facilities and educational services for street children. Behbud has enabled thousands of women and their families, spanning over four generations to improve their quality of life," said the organizers while talking to APP. The Association organizes Behbud Art and Craft Bazar, a famous family festival every year in Islamabad, that attracts thousands of people from twin cities and other parts of the country.

should be taken against criminals, he added. The gangs involved in car and bike lifting and snatching should be brought to justice and strict action in accordance with the law should be taken against them.

The security plan of sensitive offices, educational institutions and other public places including places of worship should be reviewed.

Additional teams of tourist and traffic police should be deployed for the convenience of the tourists during the snowfall season in Murree, Aamir Zulfiqar directed.

The IGP said that strict action should be taken against officials who take bribe from hotels and harass tourists unjustifiably. Crackdowns should also be launched to wipe out professional pickpockets' gangs, he ordered.

IGP directs police to review security arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Inspector General of Police, (IGP) Punjab, Aamir Zulfiqar Khan on Friday directed the police officers of Rawalpindi region to review security arrangements of the sensitive place in busy markets.

During a crime meeting held here on Friday, the IGP instructed the police officers to launch targeted operations on daily basis against drugs, gambling, and other crime dens.

City Police Officer, Rawalpindi, District Police Officers of Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, and Talagang gave a briefing about police performance and crime rate in their respective districts.

The IGP expressing displeasure over the crime situation in Rawalpindi issued instructions to accelerate ongoing operations against criminals and anti-social

elements. Amir Zulfiqar Khan said that the officers who would fail to control crime rate in their respective areas would have no right to remain on their seats. Police teams in plain clothes should be deployed at sensitive places in busy markets, the IGP said adding, the sense of security among the citizens should be strengthened by taking timely actions against the criminal elements. Aamir Zulfiqar said that delay in registration of First Information Report (FIR) would not be tolerated and reply would be sought for delay in FIR particularly of robbery, theft and burglary.

He directed the authorities concerned to formulate a comprehensive strategy to net street criminals and resolve traffic congestion problems in Rawalpindi city. Indiscriminate actions

Safe City project of Islamabad successfully operating to serve citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Safe City project is playing key role in maintaining law and order situation in the federal capital and assisting the police officials in nabbing criminal elements through surveillance cameras.

According to police source, more than 100 kilometers of optical cable including damaged cameras have been recently repaired and made functional on a priority basis. The process of installing 750 new cameras has been also completed to further increase the efficiency of Safe City Islamabad in which 50 additional cameras equipped with artificial intelligence technology were installed for effective monitoring at entry and exit points.

Similarly, the installation of 20 additional cameras for reading vehicle number plates under the automatic system has also been completed. To further improve the communication system 14 out of 20 ELTV towers have been enabled. Safe City also established a secure online portal for ongoing recruitment in Islamabad Capital Police to better coordinate all stages from online registration of candidate, submission of applications and conduct of tests.

Flashlight and radar system has been repaired and reactivated on roads while 48 CDA cameras were installed at various locations to maintain law and order situation in Islamabad. Surveillance cameras at metro-bus service were also connected with Safe City while F-10, Shifa International Hospital, Jinnah Supermarket, DHA, various private institutions, shopping malls including toll plazas of National Highway were also linked to the centralized system Safe City Islamabad. Automatic tracking of vehicle number plates and a new system of auto-alert message on vehicle theft and loss has been introduced at Safe City while the e-challan system has been re-engineered and its performance has been further

improved.

Islamabad Capital Police Helpline Pukar-15 and Eagle Squad have been linked with Safe City's centralized system while outdated data sharing cables were repaired and connected to the data center.

Islamabad Capital Police FM Radio 92.4 has been shifted to the Safe City while SOPs have been issued to improve the performance of all wings of Safe City. Around 3,800 controller servers have been connected with POC through assistance of Huawei. He said that OMC of Safe City identified 999 suspicious persons, 16,470 unregistered motorcycles, 5658 vehicles with black glasses and 3968 professional beggars with the help of modern cameras and sent information to the concerned police for immediate action. Likewise, surveillance of 563 protests and rallies in Islamabad was ensured and law and order situation was maintained.

More than 9, 42,000 calls were received on the helpline of Islamabad Capital Police during this year in which more than 90 thousand calls were related to the police while 98 percent of the total calls were unnecessary. A complaint management system was launched which is fully operational and working efficiently.

This system received more than 1, 36,000 citizen's complaints and more than 1, 32,000 complaints have been redressed while the rest of the applications are being processed on a priority basis. Around 507 hotels, guest houses and shelter homes in Islamabad are connected with the Safe City Hotel-Eye software in which the data of more than 81 thousand citizens have been registered. After the scrutiny registered data, 88 suspects have been locked up in different police stations. Similarly, the Islamabad Capital Police Traffic Division ensured compliance with the law by taking indiscriminate actions against drivers who violated traffic laws in 2022.

‘Pak-UK relations based on shared culture of democracy’

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Friday said Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) enjoyed cordial relations based upon a shared culture of democracy and a parliamentary form of government.

He expressed these views during his meeting with Speaker of the House of Commons Lindsay Hoyle on the sidelines of the 26th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth (CSPOC) in Canberra, Australia.

The speaker said these ties could be further strengthened by enhancing parliament-to-parliament contacts.

Discussing the innovative initiatives introduced by the parliament of Pakistan, he said it had been at the forefront to guide the nation on the path of progress of development. He informed that it was the first

Green Parliament, the first in the region to establish a parliamentary caucus on child rights, first to open the doors for those who were real pillars of democracy like women, children, minorities, and the transgender community on the occasion of diamond jubilee celebration.

He also said this year parliament of Pakistan also enacted a record number of legislations besides fighting successfully the case of climate justice for Pakistan.

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle expressed solidarity with the flood-affected people of Pakistan.

He said enhancing parliamentary contacts was pivotal to learning from parliamentary experiences.

He also said innovative parliaments were essential prerequisites to tackling global challenges.

Low gas pressure multiplies problems in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP):

With the increase in cold, shut-off or low gas pressure in various parts of the twin cities has multiplied the problems of the domestic as well as the commercial consumers. The low or zero pressure specially during morning and evening timings compelled the residents of the twin cities to buy breakfast, lunch and dinners from markets which is much expensive as well as an unhealthy option for families.

A number of families have started using substitutes compressors, cylinders, electric roti makers and electric stoves to cook food which is not risky but also very expensive option for the consumers.

Beside the issues of domestic consumers, the commercial users especially restaurants, hotels and Tandoor owners are also facing the same issue and using alternate to run their businesses.

They also increased the rates saying that they can't manage the gas expense in the routine prices and are forced to transfer that burden to the customers.

Shazia Bibi, a house wife living in Arya mohalla Rawalpindi while talking to APP said, "Normally I prefer to cook healthy and hygienic food for my family but now the outage of gas has compelled us to buy unhygienic food from the restaurants almost regularly which is effecting the health of my family."

She said, "Many restaurants are also taking advantage of the situation and increased the prices of food which badly disturb the overall budget which is a big concern for me."

A working women Sadia Ali said, "The low gas pressure in my area has multiply my problems as I can't finish my kitchen work on time and get late from my office almost every day."

She said, "Restaurants and Tandoors are not a good solution as there are long queues outside during breakfast and dinner times which are times of rush for working people."

The play will begin performances in Islamabad after successfully finishing 100 shows in Karachi. The play, which has been written by the eminent writer Anwar Maqsood, was able to gather audiences from all walks of life, and individuals of all ages and genders. It drew packed houses from the first performance til the very last, said M. Ahmed Shah, President - Arts Council of Pakistan while addressing a Press Conference here Friday at PNCA. The famous play will be performed for the first time

in Islamabad on January 7. The play, Saadhay 14 August which features some of the most well-known national figures from both the past and present, is a part of the trigological series that was first staged as Pawanay 14 August, ten years ago. The series' final chapter, Saadhay 14 August commemorates its conclusion. The play's legendary writer, Anwar Maqsood states "This series is really close to my heart and was made while keeping something positive while also considering the current plight of the nation.

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HEC Scholarships- Capitalizing nation's real resource

ISLAMABAD (APP): Human capital has always been the best-ever resource for any country to glitter on international horizons by taking strides in different arena of life and taking nation to new heights of progress and self-sufficiency.

For this purpose, the educated youth is inevitable and every nation diligently focuses this area by creating more opportunities for its students within the country and at the best universities across the globe.

Higher Education Commission (HEC) has performed valuably in recent years in offering various international scholarship schemes to make education accessible for students, particularly those from far-flung and less privileged areas.

"Over 40% of the government's total investment in higher education sector has been on human resource development and we have maintained the most transparent and cautious approach for selection of students" said Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad.

"Our students are very talented and under Erasmus Mundus scholarship program, which is very competitive, this year the highest number of students securing these scholarships are from Pakistan," Dr Mukhtar said.

"We have allocated funds for need-based scholarships in recurring budget for universities so no brilliant student who falls within the merit, has to discontinue studies due to financial constraints," he added. "Owing to our initiatives, Pakistan won the greatest number of Erasmus+ Scholarships with India remaining second."

Dr. Mukhtar appreciated USAID for providing Master's scholarships to 700 female students to study in different disciplines in top 30 partner institutions of Pakistan and "we are endeavoring to secure more slots."

The USAID has been supporting scholarships for meritorious but financially disadvantaged students for the last 18 years to assist Pakistan Government in efforts to enhance students' enrolment, especially female students from less developed districts to study in engineering, business,

social sciences, agriculture and medicine disciplines.

"With the investment of \$33.2 million, over 6000 need-based scholarships have been awarded making it one of the largest USAID funded scholarship program of Pakistan," the HEC Chairman said. "Under this program, 60% scholarships have been awarded to female students."

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

"We are also endeavoring for more scholarships for Pakistani students at the University of Oxford," Dr Mukhtar said as he mentioned to facilitating institution-to-institution collaboration in academic and research areas with currently 22 Pakistani students availing scholarships for higher studies at Oxford University. Pakistan-UK Education Gateway can prove to be another potential way forward for students amidst some practical measures like sponsorship for mobility of students and scholars. The HEC has also signed a Document of Understanding (DoU) with the Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia to jointly work under a collaborative arrangement on various academic and research areas. Under the agreement, ECU will admit up to 15 HEC's PhD scholars – who meet the HEC scholarship criteria and the normal selection criteria for entry to an ECU PhD course including academic and English language entry requirements as indicated on the ECU website – per year for five years, starting in 2023.

Major research areas covered under the agreement include Engineering; Arts and Humanities; Education; Medical and Health Sciences; Science; Nursing and Midwifery and Business and Law. "Australia is keen in increasing number of Pakistani students and scholars. Around 100,000 Pakistanis are currently residing in Australia to pursue their higher education and are

extended all necessary support," Dr Mukhtar said.

According to HEC Scholarships Department, during 2023 total 508 scholars are preceding foreign countries on scholarships under HEC's foreign scholarships schemes. They are from different level of Higher education including 246 PhD, 116 MS/BS, 102 IRISP (6 Months) and 44 Post Doctorate.

Currently, a total number of 2,812 scholars are studying at foreign universities under various scholarship schemes including 1760 students enrolled in PhD, 857 in MS/BS, 130 in IRISP (6 Months) and 65 in Post Doctorate. Most of foreign scholarships are offered in seven disciplines including Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Biological and Medical Sciences, Business Education, Engineering and Technology and Physical and Social Sciences. "On directives of the present government, the HEC has taken numerous steps to increase number of foreign scholarships for Pakistani students," said a senior official at HEC. "These initiatives include 75th National Top Talent Scholarship Program aimed at increasing the number of Pakistani scholars in World's Top 20 Universities. The government of Hungary has also increased number of scholarships for Pakistani students."

The HEC offers international scholarship at various educational levels as per selection criteria spelled out in relevant PC-I of schemes, available on HEC website www.hec.gov.pk. The Commission also offers international scholarships through various scholarship projects and programs including Overseas Scholarships Phase-III, HRDI – UESTP Overseas Scholarships, US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, HEC-USAID Fulbright Scholarship Program Phase-III, Post-Doc Fellowship Program Phase-III and Academic and Research Linkages with different countries and agencies under Bilateral Agreements. The scholarships are also being offered to Nationals of OIC, Commonwealth, SIDS and Hungary to Study at Different Pakistani Universities.

Electricity supply suspended

LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): Electricity supply to southern Kandahar and Helmand provinces has been cut off after the water reservoir of Kajaki Dam has declined, an official said on Friday. Mawlawi Mohammad Qasim Riaz, director of Information and Cultural Affairs Department, told Pajhwok Afghan News that they decided to cut electricity supply from Kajaki Dam after the level of water in its reservoir had dropped.

Water canal inaugurated

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): A 5.2 kilometres long water canal built at the cost of 20 million afis has been inaugurated in the Dawlatabad district of northern Balkh province, an official said on Friday. Najibullah Yazdanpana, head of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), in Balkh said the canal start from the Shaikh Hassan main canal and end at the Qarashgik village. The project was funded by the UNDP and constructed by the SCA in four months, he added.

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

Ulema from Egypt, Sudan, Palestine call on interior minister Haqqani



KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani has asked Ulemas from Egypt, Sudan and Palestine to convey the message of the people of Afghanistan to the world and its people.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) on its Twitter handle wrote that visiting ulema met interior minister

and announced their full support from Islamic system in Afghanistan.

According to the ministry these ulemas termed the victory of Jihad in Afghanistan unprecedented and said that continuation of victory was embedded in unity and progress.

Acting Interior Minister

Sirajuddin Haqqani stressed over the unity of Muslim world and termed unity, sincerity and obedience keys for the success of Jihad in Afghanistan.

He hailed the support of ulema from the Islamic system in Afghanistan and urged them to convey the message of Afghanistan to the world in true manner.

Concerns over Restrictions on Women: UN Official to Visit Kabul

KABUL (AFP): In an interview with AFP, Türk said that he plans to travel to Afghanistan to look into the state of women's rights and that he would meet and talk with several Islamic Emirate officials there.

"Afghanistan is the worst of the worst and it is an expression that should all be for everyone in the globe of the north or in the globe of the south a reminder of what poverty thinking can lead to and I mean to repress women in the way that it is happening is unparalleled, we have to act at most solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan and we need to make sure that these can not be the norm in the future," Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said.

A number of women urged the Islamic Emirate to reconsider its decision on the ban on women working and female student education in the country.

"Hope for life is fading away gradually. Along with women, a large number of men also lost their jobs. The officials who issued these orders should revoke

them and permit women to continue their work," said Sima Gul Jamali, a women's rights activist.

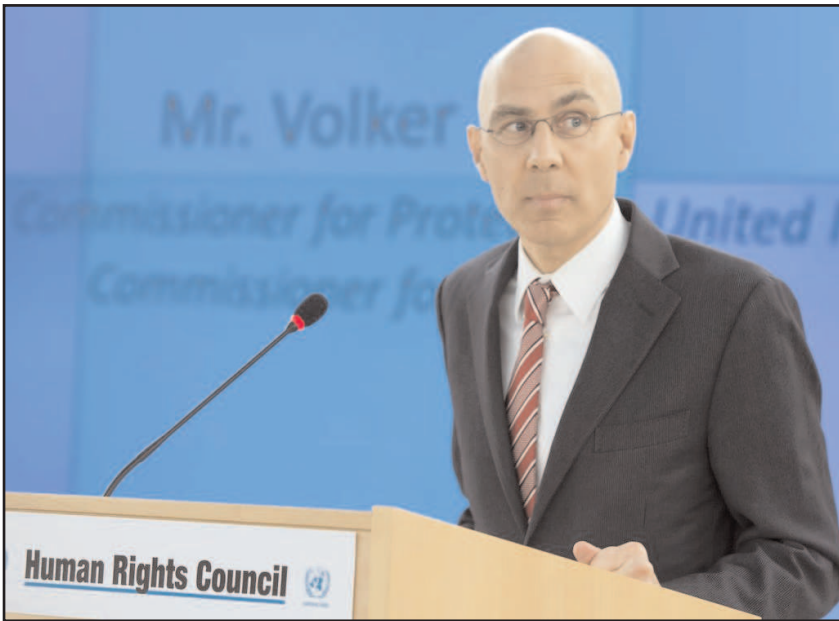
"Human rights, particularly women's rights, are ensured in any country if women can get an education, work outside home, participate in politics, society and culture," said Ehsanullah Ehsan, a religious scholar.

But Islamic Emirate spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid rejected the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' remarks and said that the Islamic Emirate is making efforts to ensure women all their rights in line with the Sharia law.

"This claim is untrue. We're making efforts to address every deficiency.

Women are granted all the rights provided for them in Islamic law," Mujahid said.

Previously, Ramiz Alakbarov, the UN's under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief, said that Martin Griffiths will visit Afghanistan soon to speak with Islamic Emirate officials regarding women's work in NGOs.



Journalists in Paktia criticize lack of access to information

PAKTIA (ToloNews): A number of journalists in Paktia province on Friday criticized the lack of access to information by officials and said the issue has left a negative impact on their activities.

They said that officials and spokesmen are not providing them with information on time.

"It is the responsibility of officials and relevant organizations to provide accurate and timely information to the media," said Abdul Rahman Wayand, a reporter. The journalists asked officials to implement their obligation to provide journalists with access to information.

"Some departments are not sharing information in some cases with journalists. We want this problem addressed," said Habibullah Sarab, a journalist. "We had a meeting

with local officials in provinces and they assured us that they will provide us information on matters that are not against the country and national interests," said Khalid Zahin, a journalist.

Local officials in Paktia at a meeting with journalists assured them that they will cooperate with the media regarding access to information.

"If it is in the interest of Islam and our country

and does not conflict with the policy of the Islamic Emirate, we will accept the requests that you (journalists) have," said Inamullah Salahuddin, the deputy governor of Paktia.



Animals skin made products face market stagnation

KABUL (Pajhwok): A number of individuals associated with coats making from animals skins have said their business was facing market stagnation and asked the government to explore new markets for their products.

Animals skin made garments has long history in Afghanistan, people used to make different types of coats and other products from animal skins that had local and foreign buyers but currently its market had declined. Individuals associated with this business have complained against decline in their business and said with the decline in the number of tourist their business had suffered and their clients had declined.

Sania Mohammadi, the owner of Sania Mohammadi Animals Skin Industry, during an exclusive interview told Pajhwok Afghan News that he spent two decades of his life making wearing products from animals skin.

Hailing from Taimani area, Mohammadi sell his product such as coats, jackets, cloves, overcoat and handkerchief in his shop in Shah-i-Naw.

He complained against the decline sale and said: "In the past the animals skin made products had good market in the country, local and foreign tourist wanted to buy these products, but currently their business is facing decline."

Referring to the decline in their products sale compared to the past he said

currently their products were only sold in exhibitions, but that too is very limited, he added: "A few days ago, an exhibition was launched in which I sold only 6 caps and some men's vests. The source stated that due to the decrease in sales and the lack of raw materials (animal skins), their production has also decreased.

In the past, there were enough raw materials because animals such as foxes, deer and others were hunted, but hunting of animals has been prohibited for several years, and for this reason, they are facing a shortage of raw materials.

He wants the government to explore market their products so that the business of animals skin made products in the country does not face stagna-

tion. Haji Waheed, the owner of Abdul Basit Handicraft shop, in Shah-i-Naw also complained against the decline in their sale. He is associated with this business over the past several years said currently 15 individuals, including men and women, have been working with them while in the past over 50 people were working with him.

"Our sale is down by 90 percent and like me all businessperson have no sale," he said.

He added in the past we made 100 coats in a month and sold them but currently they have no sale and over the past few months they have no sale.

He also asked the government to explore market for their products.

Mohammad Asif, the

owner of another shop in Taimani area, said in the past they sold few animals skin made coats but currently they could only sale their products in the exhibitions. He asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to ensure their industry will not collapse and urged the government to organize more exhibitions to promote the sale of their products. Akhunzada Abdul salaam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said several exhibitions had been organized inside and outside the country to promote the business of animals skin made products.

He said the IEA fully supported them and efforts are being made to do more marketing for the sale of their products.

Court decision on some media outlets expected Sunday

KABUL (ToloNews): The Ministry of Information and Culture on Friday said the court's decision regarding the activities of some media outlets would be announced on Sunday.

The press office of the ministry said the case refers to those print and digital publications that work from abroad against the system.

The court's order to cancel the licenses of media organizations that operate outside of the country do not apply to TVs and radios, the Ministry of Information and Culture added.

"They are 10 media outlets and they are very small media. Television networks and radio stations are not among them. They are all digital and print media," said Abdul Haq Hamad, head of publications at the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Hamad added that a decision would also be made in the coming week on the cancellation of those media outlets whose licenses have not been renewed.

Some media-supporting organizations argued that the court's decision should be impartial.



"All media organizations within and outside the country are concerned about the decision and this decision should not cause the suppression of freedom of speech and media in Afghanistan," said Hujjatullah Mujaddidi, head of the Afghanistan

Independent Journalists Union.

The Ministry of Information and Culture had scheduled a trial for the media outlets on Jan. 5, but the session was postponed due to the absence of representatives of the media outlets.

IRC urges return of female aid workers

KABUL (Pajhwok): The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has urged the UN to engage the de facto authorities in a practical and coordinated manner to secure a path towards the status quo ante in which female aid workers can safely and effectively work, according to a statement on Friday.

For decades, IRC has worked in countries and settings around the world where Islamic law is followed – including in Afghanistan since 1988. All IRC staff, men and women, are afforded a safe and respectful work environment. Most IRC staff are national staff (including 99% of IRC Afghanistan's 8000-person

staff), working in their own communities in full respect and accordance with local laws and cultural and societal norms (including complying with hijab) to reach all populations in need. The role of women in the humanitarian sector in Afghanistan, and in all contexts in which we work, is an operational necessity, the organization said in a statement.

IRC's ability to reach those most in need and deliver in the hardest-to-reach areas is intrinsically linked to our staff. 82% of female-headed households in Afghanistan are food insecure—32 percentage points more than male-headed households.

Without female staff at all levels

and across all sectors, we cannot deliver principled, needs-based aid and programs at scale for those hit hardest by this crisis. The challenges hold true for every sector of the humanitarian response, not only for programs related to protection, gender-based violence and women's empowerment. Because our ability to reach all Afghans in need relies on female staff at all levels of our organizations, IRC has paused programs in Afghanistan. In the last year we have supported over six million Afghans. This means with each day our programs cannot be delivered tens of thousands of vulnerable Afghans face even more hardship.





WANA: Thousands of people in South Waziristan's took to streets on Friday against the recent wave of terrorism and demanded the immediate restoration of peace in region. — F.P. photo

Virtual Studio of PTV to help bridge tech gap

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Friday said in the era of modern technology, largest Virtual Studio of Pakistan Television would help in bridging the tech gap.

This she said while inaugurating the Virtual Studio of PTV along with Minister for Power Division Khurram Dastgir. The minister said that Pakistan Television had the required assets but there was need to use them in the best way. Today, with the efforts of PTV staff and management, IT solutions were being used in PTV, which was a requirement of the modern age, she said.

"The establishment of Virtual Studio is another milestone for Pakistan Television which has the distinction of being the largest virtual studio in Pakistan, she said. She said that now the PTV News will now work in a modern way, providing accurate news to the viewers. Pakistan Television's state-of-the-art virtual set will present national, regional and international news as well as weather and sports news and current affairs programs to the public in an innovative manner, she said.

Pakistan Television has achieved many milestones during its 58-year journey. With its largest Virtual Studio, Pakistan Television

News will now keep the public updated with news, analysis and real views of Pakistan in a modern way. With the establishment of Virtual Studio, viewers of PTV News would be able to learn about national, regional news, politics, culture, education, current affairs and world affairs in a modern way.

The minister said that best audios, high definition videos, beautiful graphics and PTV News will be part of the screen. Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahira Shahid, MD PTV Sohail Ali Khan and Chairman Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Saleem Baig were also present on the occasion of the inauguration.

PM announces awards for martyred CTD officers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday announced conferring Hilal-e-Shujaat upon the martyred Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) officers including ISI Director Naveed Sadiq and Inspector Nasir Abbas. PM announced conferring civil awards upon ISI Director Naveed Sadiq Shaheed and Sitara-e-Shujaat upon Inspector Nasir Abbas Shaheed who embraced martyrdom in firing by terrorists in Khanewal.

The prime minister made this announcement during his visit to the residence of martyred ISI Director Naveed Sadiq in Islamabad today.

He met with the wife, son, and daughter of the martyred director of the ISI and commiserated with them, Radio Pakistan reported. He also offered Fateha for the departed soul.

USC cuts ghee prices across country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Utility Store Corporation (USC) on Friday announced that the corporation has reduced the price of premium brand (Dalda) ghee by Rs 12 per kilogram (Kg). According to press release, the price of 5 kg tin has also been reduced by Rs. 50.

1 kg of premium brand ghee (Dalda) would be available at 500 per kilogram instead of Rs.512 whereas 5 kg tin new price set at Rs 2530 compared to Rs 2580. The New prices have been applied immediately, it added. For purchasing the items other than those subsidized, no terms apply nor any password needs.

One-Time Password (OTP) has been temporarily abolished for the untargeted subsidy customers, now they can get subsidy by just showing the original and valid identity cards. Only targeted subsidies (Registered customers of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will send their ID Cards number to 5566 to get one-time password for the purchasing of subsidized items. Subsidy is being given only on wheat flour, sugar, ghee, pulses and rice. In addition to subsidized items, hundreds of items of other standard brands are also available at affordable prices than market.

Russia sends more troops to Belarus as fears of new attack grow

MOSCOW (Agencies): A train carrying Russian troops and equipment has arrived in Belarus amid concerns that Moscow could use its ally's territory to attack Ukraine from the north. The Belarusian defence ministry confirmed the arrival of the contingent on Friday and said President Alexander Lukashenko had visited a military base where Russian troops are already stationed.

During the meeting, Lukashenko and an unnamed representative from the Russian army discussed the two countries' joint military drills, it said. Russian troops "are ready to carry out tasks as intended", the representative said. The developments came after Belarus, which has backed Russia over its war in Ukraine, said that it will receive more weapons and equipment from its neighbour as the two continue to boost military cooperation.

The Belarusian defence ministry said the goal of creating a joint force was "strengthening the protection and defence of the Union State [of Russia and Belarus]". "Personnel, weapons, military and special equipment of the armed forces of the Russian Federation will continue to arrive in the Republic of Belarus," the statement said. The two countries are preparing for joint air force exercises, the ministry said, without providing any further details.

The Belarusian government has repeatedly said the country will not join Russia's war in Ukraine. But Moscow deployed thousands of forces to Belarusian territory under the pretext of military drills before launching its offensive and then funnelled troops into Ukraine when its invasion began on February 24. According to Kyiv, Russia continues to use Belarusian airspace for drone and missile attacks. Any new attack on Ukraine from Belarus would open

a major new front in the war, which has killed tens of thousands of people.

Lukashenko has blamed Western nations for the war, accusing them of seeking confrontation with Russia and provoking the ongoing bloodshed. The 67-year-old says Ukraine has the power to end the conflict by accepting Moscow's demands - namely the loss of partly-occupied regions in eastern and southern Ukraine. Meanwhile, the United States is of the view that Russian President Vladimir Putin's ally Yevgeny Prigozhin, the founder of Russia's Wagner Group, is interested in taking control of salt and gypsum from mines near the Ukrainian-held city of Bakhmut, a White House official said.

There are indications that monetary motives are driving Russia and Prigozhin's "obsession" with Bakhmut, the official told the Reuters news agency. The US has previously accused Russian mercenaries of exploiting natural resources in the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Sudan and elsewhere to help fund Moscow's war in Ukraine, a charge Russia has rejected as "anti-Russian rage". Out of Wagner's force of nearly 50,000 mercenaries, more than 4,100 have been killed and 10,000 others wounded in Ukraine. Of them, more than 1,000 were killed between late November and early December near Bakhmut, the official said.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said that the Wagner Group is likely in need of new forces due to its heavy losses in Ukraine, particularly of former prisoners who were released from jails in Russia and agreed to fight with the promise of earning a pardon. Prigozhin, who has been sanctioned by Western countries for his role in Wagner, was featured

bidding farewell to former convicts who had served out their contracts in Ukraine and urged them to avoid the temptation to kill when back in civilian life.

The Wagner chief likely engaged in publicising the "supposed pardons to augment the Wagner Group's recruitment campaign in Russian prisons", the ISW said, and to reassure the reported "80 percent of deployed Wagner Group personnel in Ukraine who have been promised some type of legal reward for their participation in hostilities". "Prigozhin has increasingly pinned his standing in the Russian ultranationalist pro-war community on the Wagner Group's ability to capture territory and, particularly, on its offensive on Bakhmut," the institute added.

"Prigozhin likely intends to further motivate Wagner personnel and generate new paramilitary forces in a misguided and implausible effort to reverse the culmination of the Bakhmut offensive." The White House said late last month that the Wagner Group took delivery of an arms shipment from North Korea to help bolster Russian forces in Ukraine, a sign of the group's expanding role in that conflict.

The mercenary force emerged publicly for the first time during Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014. Then, from 2015 onwards, Wagner appeared wherever Russia had geopolitical interests: first in Syria's civil war on the side of President Bashar al-Assad, then Libya, CAR, and Mali, among other countries. Prigozhin, who served nine years in prison in Soviet times for robbery and other crimes before going into business during the 1990s, last year admitted interfering in US elections and acknowledged for the first time his role in founding Wagner.

Sindh cabinet okays reserved seats for LG Councils

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh cabinet on Friday approved reserved seats for the local government councils. As per the official sources, these reserved seats are for six categories. They include women, youth, labourers/farmers, non-Muslims, special persons and transgenders.

The Sindh cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, fixed the price of sugarcane at Rs302 per 40kg. It also approved the start of crushing season from November 20. The provincial cabinet also decided to fix quality premium at Rs0.50 per 40kg. It is to be noted here that the Punjab government has fixed the price of sugarcane at Rs300 per 40kg. The Sindh Home Department reduced the span of the sentence of nine prisoners convicted by the Anti-Terrorism Court on the basis of education. The prisoners whose sentence had been reduced by months between six and 22 passed the Adib, Matriculation and Intermediate exams.

Abdul Jabbar, Muha-

mmad Ali, Syed Amir Hussain, Khalid Abbas, Syed Shahzad, Ali Raza, Syed Nair Raza and Khalid Aziz were among the prisoners whose sentences were pardoned. It merits a mention here that there is a remission of punishment for six months for passing Adib Urdu/Sindh, Matriculation and Intermediate exams.

A debate was also held on Baldia Fire Compensation Case during the cabinet meeting. The Baldia Factory caught fire on November 11, 2012. Over 200 workers had burnt alive in that fire. It was told in the meeting that the German company gave \$1 million to compensate the dead and injured workers of the Baldia Factory. "The Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI) is giving pensions to the families of the deceased on a monthly basis," it was said.

The cabinet also approved handing over the control of the malnutrition programme to the PPHI. The Sindh government had started the Food Emergency Programme in

2016 under the Accelerated Action Plan. "The Health Department achieved the Accelerated Action Plan's targets. A budget of Rs2.9 billion has been allocated for the year 2022-23," the meeting was told.

The provincial cabinet also approved the purchase of buses for Rs1.7 billion on the request of the transport minister. The Transport Department will purchase 43 new buses for the People's Bus Service in the year 2022-23. Culture Minister Sardar Shah requested the cabinet to run buses for tourism as well.

The Sindh chief minister directed the culture minister to submit his proposal in writing. The provincial cabinet also endorsed the agreement with the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) to run four drug rehabilitation centres. The proposed rehabilitation centres are located in Karachi. The cabinet also reiterated its vow to make Karachi drug-free. Provincial ministers, advisors, special assistants, chief secretary, P&D chairman, principal secretary to Sindh chief minister and secretaries concerned attended the meeting.

PM for enhanced institutional coordination to wipe out terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday emphasised the enhanced coordination among the federal and provincial institutions to wipe out terrorism from the country.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting to discuss the security situation, said the terrorists and militants would never be able to deter the nation's resolve. No sacrifice would be evaded for the security of the homeland, he added. He directed the interior minister, secretary interior and national coordinator of NACTA to hold con-

sultation with the provinces and submit a report.

He also instructed the provincial apex committees to hold their meetings regularly and enhance their coordination with the provinces. The interior minister and interior secretary briefed the meeting on the overall security situation while four chief secretaries and inspectors general of police briefed about the security situation in their respective provinces as well as the measures being taken for security.

The interior minister and IG Islamabad thanked the

prime minister for increasing the salaries of the Islamabad Police and ration allowance of FC at par with other forces. The minister said the morale of Islamabad Police was high. The prime minister directed the NACTA national coordinator to further enhance the coordination with the Counter Terrorism Departments and law enforcement agencies in the province. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Advisor Ahad Chema and heads of the law enforcement agencies and provincial chief secretaries and IGPs attended the meeting.

BHC annoyed over arrest of political workers

QUETTA (TLTP): The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has shown dismay over the arrests of political workers in the Balochistan's port city of Gwadar. In this matter, the court also issued notices to the chief secretary of Balochistan, secretary of home, inspector general of police, and deputy commissioners of Gwadar and Turbat.

The TLTP learnt that the court passed this order on a constitutional petition filed by Rahib Buledi, a senior lawyer on behalf of the Gwadar Rights Movement (GRM). A division bench of the BHC comprising Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar and Justice Shaukat Rakhshani expressed displeasure over the recent arrests of political workers in Gwadar.

Advocate General of Balochistan, Asif Reki Advocate informed the court that the protesters had caused damages to public and private properties in Gwadar. He said police and the administration had not detained any innocent persons in Gwadar. However, Rahib Buledi in his petition accused the administration of using force against what he claimed peaceful protesters. He said without any justification police raided the homes of activists and picked them up without any arrest warrants. The bench ordered issuing notices to all concerned authorities in this regard and adjourned the hearing for ten days.

In the meantime, internet service was restored in Gwadar after ten days. The spokesperson government of Balochistan in a statement said that the service has been restored on the instructions of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Qudus Bizenjo. She said the government was aware about the difficulties of the residents of Gwadar.

'Support for Pakistan has ebbed away - yet its deadly floodwaters have not'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the apocalyptic rains and floods that had hit Pakistan last summer claimed 1,700 lives, left a swathe of territory the size of Switzerland under water and affected 33 million people - more people than live in most European countries.

In an article for the Guardian newspaper, Shehbaz Sharif wrote: "International attention has receded, but the waters have not. Large parts of Sindh and Balochistan provinces remain inundated. The number of food-insecure people in Pakistan has doubled to 14 million; another 9 million have been pushed into extreme poverty. These flooded areas now look like a huge series of permanent lakes, transforming forever the terrain and the lives of people living there. No amount of pumps can remove this water in less than a year; and by July 2023, the worry is that these areas

may flood again.

"Pakistan is suffering not just from flooding but from recurring climate extremes - earlier in spring 2022, the country was in the grip of a scorching, drought-aggravating heatwave that caused forest fires in the west. The fact that some of the same areas that received record temperatures were subsequently submerged underlines the sharp swings in weather patterns that are becoming a norm.

"Pakistanis have responded to this latest calamity with exemplary resilience. Already facing severe economic headwinds, the government scrambled to generate funds enabling direct cash transfers of more than \$250m (£200m) to more than 2 million households. In all, we managed to mobilise about \$1.5bn in emergency relief out of our own meagre resources.

We are grateful to the international community and friends of Pakistan for their generosity in helping us to

avoid the worst. While the World Health Organization had designated the situation as a high-level health emergency, the feared water-borne diseases and localised epidemics did not break out due to the efficient working of our vast network of medical camps. Similarly, we were able to restore the damaged communication networks between cities and villages very quickly. Yet more than 2 million homes, 14,000km of roads and 23,000 schools and clinics have been destroyed. A post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA), carried out in collaboration with the World Bank and the EU, estimated that the damage caused by floods exceeded \$30bn - a 10th of Pakistan's entire GDP.

"These numbers only scratch the surface of the challenge at hand. They demand a response that would stretch and overwhelm the resources of any country. The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, witnessed the

"unimaginable" destruction first-hand during a visit to Sindh province in September. Terming it "climate carnage", the secretary general found himself at a loss for words. "a flooded area that is three times the total area of my own country, Portugal". This devastation has been greater than that caused by the 2010 floods in Pakistan, which the UN then described as the worst natural disaster it had ever responded to. Pakistan simply cannot do this alone.

"This is why the secretary general and I are co-hosting the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Geneva on 9 January. We will be joined by world leaders, representatives of international development and humanitarian organisations, and friends of Pakistan to signal support and solidarity with a country that is grappling with a natural disaster not of its making.

"We will also present a comprehen-

sive roadmap for post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation, developed with the assistance of the World Bank, the UN, the Asian Development Bank and the EU. The resilient recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction framework essentially envisages a two-pronged response. The first part relates to meeting the immediate challenges of recovery and reconstruction, requiring minimum funding of \$16.3bn over a period of three years. Pakistan must meet half the funding from its own resources. But we will count on the continued assistance of our bilateral and multi-lateral partners to bridge the gap.

"The second part of the contribution to Pakistan's reconstruction and rehabilitation outlines Pakistan's long-term vision for building climate resilience. This would require an investment of \$13.5bn over a 10-year period. Building better communications infrastructure and a more robust

irrigation system, and designing efficient early warning systems to mitigate the effects of future natural disasters is not a luxury for Pakistan but an absolute imperative.

"Of course, I am conscious that the Geneva conference marks only the beginning of a long and arduous journey. But a substantive outcome will reassure millions of imperilled people - who have already lost everything - that they have not been forgotten; that the international community will help them to rebuild their lives. "It will also remind us that we are all - increasingly - at the mercy of forces of nature that do not respect borders and can only be tamed by joining hands. It is, therefore, my sincere hope that our gathering in Geneva comes to symbolise our common humanity and generosity of spirit - a source of hope for all people and countries who may face natural adversity in the future."