

ECP starts preparations
ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has started preparations for the general elections of 2023. The ECP on Saturday wrote letters to all regional election commissioners in this regard. It directed them to send the draft lists of the polling stations to the police and agencies. After providing these lists, the regional election commissioners have been asked to seek feedback from the concerned institutions.

 @thefrontierpost

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

SHC directs FIA, PTA
KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court has directed the FIA and PTA to block any defamatory and scandalous material being disseminated on social media sites against actor Rabia Iqbal aka Kubra Khan. The interim order came on petition filed by Kubra Khan against what she called a scandalous and defamatory campaign launched by YouTuber Adil Farooq Raja against her and three other actors on the social media.

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PMs of Pakistan, Kuwait resolve to expand ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephonic conversation with the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan apprised the Kuwaiti Prime Minister of the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, to be held in Geneva, on 9 January 2023, and requested high-level participation. The Kuwaiti PM expressed firm support for the initiatives to strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the importance Pakistan attached to its relationship with Kuwait and reiterated the desire to further expand bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. He underscored the resolve to forge deeper economic engagement between Pakistan and Kuwait – including in trade, investment, labor, and other key sectors.

The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the close cooperation between the two countries at the multilateral forums. He appreciated the measures taken by Kuwait for the recruitment of Pakistani manpower in the fields of health, security, and infrastructure.

The Prime Minister of Kuwait reciprocated the sentiments of the Prime Minister and reassured them of the desire of the Kuwaiti leadership to further deepen and broaden bilateral relations with Pakistan. The two leaders agreed to maintain close contact and work together on all issues of mutual interest.

The two leaders agreed to remain in close contact and take forward the process of consolidation and further expansion of Pakistan-Kuwait relations. Kuwait hosts over 100,000 strong Pakistani diaspora which is contributing significantly in the development and progress of both nations.

Federal secy of Kashmir Affairs & GB passes away

F.P. Report

GILGIT: Federal Secretary of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Sher Alam Mahsud has passed away on Saturday. Federal Secretary Mahsud died last night. His funeral prayers will be held today at Farm 6, Lancers Farm, Chak Shehzad, Islamabad at 3pm. Sher Alam Mahsud was BS-22 officer in the Pakistan Administrative Service.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of federal secretary Kashmir (GB) Affairs Sher Alam Mahsud.

In his condolence message on Saturday, he said Sher Alam Mahsud was one of the best officers of federal bureaucracy. He said after his death, Pakistan civil service has lost a worthy officer. Meanwhile, Advisor on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira also expressed sorrow over the death of the federal secretary. He said Sher Alam Mahsud was an honest and committed officer.

AC extends interim bail to PM's son

LAHORE (Agencies): An accountability court in Lahore has extended the interim bail of Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a money laundering case.

Suleman, who returned to Pakistan earlier this month, was granted bail after he filed a petition for pre-arrest bail in the reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in 2020. As per details, Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appeared before the court. Suleman Shehbaz's counsel asked the court to grant them some time to answer the NAB questions.

The court told the IO to submit a detailed report at the next hearing. Suleman Shehbaz's interim bail in the money laundering case was extended till January 23. Earlier, an accountability court in Lahore granted interim bail to Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a money laundering case.



TAIPEI: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, center, inspecting a military drills at a military base in Chiayi, southwestern Taiwan.

Govt trying to control economic situation: Sana

FAISALABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan said that the PTI commitments with International Monetary Fund (IMF) had sandwiched Pakistan between the devil and deep sea, however, the present government was trying its optimum best to control the situation perpetrated due to harsh conditions of the IMF.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of a new NADRA Center near Painsara on Jhang Road here on Saturday evening, he said that the PTI government first inked documents with IMF and then backed out from its commitments which landed Pakistan into a very in alarming situation. "If present government tries to fulfill the harsh conditions of IMF, it jacks up the inflation and price spiral coupled with economic set back. If we back out from these conditionalities, then our economic survival will become next to impossible and even our friendly countries cannot extend financial help to us", he added.

He said that some elements were intentionally creating uncertainty for their ulterior political motives. Their propaganda was practically double-edged sword as they wanted to create problems for the sitting government in addition to pushing Pakistan towards bankruptcy. "However, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with his economic

team is making sincere efforts to overcome this situation and hopefully the people will hear a good news very soon near future", he added.

He said that during the period of Nawaz Sharif, the growth rate was as high as 6.2 per cent. Dollar was stable at Rs 105. Similarly the prices of electricity and gas were stable and affordable for the common people. He said that at that time the global economic analysts were optimistic that Pakistan was progressing satisfactorily but an incompetent person was clamped on Pakistan who reversed the economic gains of the PMLN government.

The minister said that the only objective of this incompetent person was to malign the opposition and he was fully involved in political engineering. During his tenure, false and unfounded cases were instituted against his political opponents but not even a single case was proved in the court of law. Without naming Imran Khan, the minister termed him as an absolute liar and said, "He was blaming that I have murdered 20 people. He was enjoying full powers in federal and provincial governments. He was in a position to prove myself guilty of these allegations but he used it just as a tool of political maligning and hence he was forced to get registered yet another false heroin case against me".

"This person is hood-

winking the masses especially the youth. He is promoting culture of abusive language, hate and obscenity. The people must reject him with their vote power as the country may face any mishap if he usurped the power again through illegal means", the minister added. Rana Sana Ullah said that Wazirabad attach was a personal deed of a person who was apprehended then and there and he also confessed the crime but PTI was making false propaganda of three culprits only to keep this case alive for their political maneuvering.

PTI withdraws contempt plea against CEC

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has withdrawn its contempt of court petition against the chief election commissioner. The contempt of court petition was filed against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja and members of the electoral watchdog by the PTI over failure to hold LG polls.

The IHC registrar had raised objections over PTI's petition against the head of a constitutional institution. After his objection, the PTI withdrew its contempt of court petition against the election commissioner of Pakistan.

'No one would be allowed to hold people hostage

GWADAR (PPI): Commissioner Mekran Division Syed Faisal Ahmed Agha, has said that neither any operation was conducted against the leaders of Haq Du Tehreek, Gwadar nor did any revenge was taken rather a simple action was taken to clear the Express Way area of Gwadar where Haq Du Tehreek, Gwadar had staged protest sit-in, besieging staff of Customs, Gwadar Port, Navy, including foreigners.

Addressing a press conference in the office of Deputy Commissioner, Gwadar here on Saturday, he said that a high level delegation had also arrived from Quetta to hold parleys with the leaders of Haq Du Tehreek, but leaders of HDT, Gwadar did not meet the delegation, adding, "Constitution of the country guarantees freedom of expression and having a meeting with anyone and the said right cannot be snatched by any officers of the department".

"No one would be allowed to hold people hostage again", said he, adding that there was no denying the fact that there were no trawlers in the maritime limits of Gwadar. He added that it was not a right that Fisheries Department, Government of Balochistan was not taking action against illegal trawlers rather twelve trawlers had been captured during the last fifty days in different operations conducted by the staff of Fisheries Department.

SBP's foreign exchange reserves slump to \$4.5b

KARACHI (Agencies): Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) dwindled down to only \$4.5 billion after the repayment of loans worth \$1.2 billion to United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks, sources told private TV channel on Saturday.

This, according to sources, leaves the country with an import cover of only under a month, as Pakistan tries to lessen imports amid a greenback shortage. A breakup shows Pakistan returned \$600 million to Emirates Bank, while it repaid \$420 million to Dubai Islamic Bank, according to sources. Sources said the coalition government would try to mobilise foreign funding worth \$1.5 billion in the upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will travel to Geneva on Sunday. He will lead a high-level delegation comprising federal ministers and SAPMs to

Switzerland where he will co-host the conference — along with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres — on January 9.

The conference aims to assist Pakistan's people and government recover more effectively from the recent devastating floods. "Maybe our friendly countries are waiting for the donors' conference so they can help us [and provide loans]," Minister Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal told media last month.

During the week ended on December 30, 2022, the forex reserves held by the central bank, dropped by \$245 million to \$5.57 billion — the lowest level since April 2014 — down from last week's reserves of \$5.821 billion. The net foreign reserves held by commercial banks amount to \$5.84 billion, with the total reserves clocking in at \$11.42 billion.

The NSC recently agreed on undertaking concrete steps — including import

rationalisation as well as preventing illegal currency outflows and hawala business — in order to strengthen the economy. Amid a crisis-like situation, Pakistan will have to repay approximately \$8.3 billion in the shape of external debt servicing over the next three months (Jan-March) of the current fiscal year.

The government is eyeing to pass the ninth review of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to secure a \$1.7 billion bailout package, but both sides have made no substantial headway in recent days. In this regard, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar said that despite an uphill task, the country would meet its international obligations and not default. Dar also sees Saudi Arabia and China beefing up their deposits in Pakistan "within a matter of days" and claimed that the forex reserves would see a rise gradually during the ongoing fiscal year.

PML-N challenges helicopter law in PHC

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has challenged the Aircraft, Helicopter bill approved by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly in Peshawar High Court. The bill regarding the use of government-owned helicopters has been challenged in court by MPA Sardar Yousuf, PML-N parliamentary leader in the KP Assembly. The provincial government and chief secretary were made respondents in the petition.

The PTI KP government recently passed a legislative bill in the provincial legislature to allow the use of aircraft or helicopters by the functionaries of the government at public expense for personal gains. Similarly, the legislation empowers the chief minister to allow any minister, advisor or special assistant to chief minister, public servant or government servant to utilize the facility at public expense.

The bill was passed amid serious controversy and opposition protest. The opposition contended that the law would allow everyone to use aircraft, and helicopter at public expense like a cab or rickshaw. Sardar Yousuf argued that the amendment to the laws was made illegally. No one, including Imran Khan, would be allowed to use public money, he said, adding that the bill was approved as the PTI was in majority in the provincial assembly.

He contended that any legislation with retrospective implementation is unconstitutional and in the case of the Aircraft, Helicopter bill since it was drafted for providing protection to PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his several cronies for callously using KP government's helicopter for several years despite any legal authority and entitlement. He argued that the provincial government had provided legal shelter

to the use of provincial government-owned helicopters since 208 through the bill.

AC unfreezes bank accounts of Dar

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An accountability court (AC) in Islamabad has unfrozen Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's bank accounts in assets case. As per details, the court has issued the written verdict on the assets beyond known sources of income case.

Dar's assets were unfrozen after the amendments to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws. The written verdict stated that the AC takes back the court's 2017 order to freeze the finance minister's assets. Now Dar

has surrendered and the trial is also not in the court's jurisdiction anymore. So hereby the accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir ordered to unfreeze all the assets of finance minister Ishaq Dar.

Earlier, the district administration of Lahore had also unfrozen Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's assets. The assets which were frozen by NAB in the assets beyond the means case were unfrozen by the district administration of Lahore.



PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTORATE



ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

JOIN PAKISTAN ARMY

AS DOCTOR - CAPTAIN / MAJOR

THROUGH

SHORT SERVICE REGULAR COMMISSION (SSRC)/ PAKISTAN TEMPORARY COMMISSION (PTC)

Online Registration From

09 - 31 January 2023



| CATEGORY | QUALIFICATION | GENDER |
|------------------------|---|-------------|
| Captain (GDMO) | MBBS | Male/Female |
| Captain (PTC) | MBBS & FCPS <small>Training Completed</small> | Male |
| Captain (GDDO) | BDS | Male |
| Major (Specialist) | BDS & FCPS | Male |
| Major (Specialist) | MBBS & FCPS | Male/Female |
| Major (Sub Specialist) | MBBS & Double FCPS | Male |

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Outreach & Media Wing, Personnel Administration Directorate, General Headquarters





CM reviews delimitation of UCs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi reviewed the notification of Election Commission regarding delimitations of union councils of Punjab during a consultative meeting held at CM office on Saturday.

The meeting was attended by Speaker Punjab Assembly Muhammad Sabtain Khan, Senior Provincial Minister Mian Aslam Iqbal, Provincial Ministers Raja Basharat, Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed and MNA Brigadier(Retd) Ijaz Shah. The meeting unanimously rejected one-sided notification of the Election Commission about delimitations of union councils and expressed that the one-sided notification about delimitations of union councils did not fulfill the legal requirements, said a handout issued here. The participants vehemently remarked that the Punjab government did not accept this one-sided notification of the Election Commission.

The CM stated that the one-sided notification of the Election Commission was an attempt to bulldoze public opinion, adding that the

local people and administration had not been included with regard to delimitations of union councils nor any consultations had been made in this regard.

CM maintained a legal and a constitutional course would be adopted about the one-sided notification of the Election Commission regarding delimitations of union councils, adding that the Punjab government would play its due role according to the Constitution and law. He underscored that the local government institutions were the nurseries of democracy. He highlighted that the problems of the masses could only be resolved at their doorsteps only through a strong democratic government. CM apprehended that if the delimitations took effect according to one-sided notification than strong local governments could not be formed under any circumstance. The legal and constitutional sides with regard to one-sided notification were also reviewed during the consultative meeting.

Ex-PA speaker calls on CM, discusses development projects: A senior lawyer Faisal Chaudhry and for-

mer Speaker Punjab Assembly Afzal Sahi called on Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi at his office here on Saturday.

Political situation, development projects of Jhelum and Faisalabad and matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

On the occasion, the chief minister said that Punjab government was moving in the right direction of development as our intentions were noble, adding that Allah Almighty always helped those who served humanity. He highlighted that the number of development projects had been started in the Punjab. The CM said that he had made education free up to Matric level during his first tenure and now had made it free up to BA level, adding that our every moment was devoted to bring ease among the lives of common people. Faisal Chaudhry remarked that CM Parvez Elahi was rendering commendable services for the well-being of people, saying that the spirit of CM for the welfare of lawyers community was laudable.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique addressing a Press conference at Pakistan Railways Headquarters.

Sindh governor hails CPSP role in promoting medical education

KARACHI (PPI): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori said Saturday that College of Physician and Surgeons Pakistan's (CPSP) role in promoting higher medical education in the country is commendable.

He also lauded the close cooperation of CPSP with UK and European countries in various medical fields.

Kamran Tessori assured that problems faced by institutions will

be resolved. He was talking to Vice-President College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) Prof Khalid Ahmed Ashrafi who called on him in Karachi.

Prof. Irshad Waheed and Ansar Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

The Governor and Prof Khalid Ahmed Ashrafi discussed issues including the promotion of medical education, the role of the College of

Physicians and Surgeons in the training of doctors.

Tessori further said CPSP trained medical experts are making Pakistan famous all over the world. He said award of Brain Gain for CPSP is a matter of honour for the country when the doctors return after completing the training. He assured that problems faced by educational institutions will be solved on a priority basis.

Govt struggling to revive Railways, Civil Aviation, PIA: Saad

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique has said the government is striving hard to revive the Pakistan Railways, Civil Aviation and Pakistan International Airlines despite the short period of the government.

Addressing a press conference held at the PR headquarters here on Saturday, he strongly condemned the negative propaganda against the PR and other departments.

He said that recently a propaganda news was published by a local newspaper without facts and added that the coaches were imported after observing strict standards.

He said that 46 coaches had been imported from China on transfer of technology basis while the rest of the coaches would be made in the railways carriage factory.

He said that it was a routine job that the PR reviewed and test every

imported product so did the PR did in this case and found a minor issue which would be corrected by the Chinese engineers at their own cost.

The minister said that the Railways had earned Rs 28.23 billion between July and December and the department had to bear a loss of Rs 7 billion due to the unexpected flood in the country while infrastructure of about Rs 500 billion was damaged.

The federal government had given Rs 21 billion subsidy to the railways, even though the railways had to pay pension to its pensioners from its own earning which was actually a difficult business, he added. He said that the earning of the railways was Rs 155 million while expenditures were Rs 190 million per day.

The minister said that the PR had moved to the Supreme Court against the ban on land utilization, adding if the ban was lifted then fine otherwise

land grabbers could grab the railways land. Talking about the Civil Aviation, the minister said that the government was out-sourcing operations of three airports according to the international model like United Kingdom, Germany, Europe, Delhi and Bombay. He clarified that no airport was being privatised and propaganda on the issue was actual enmity with the country and damaging for the state.

The minister said that operators from Qatar, UAE and other countries would participate in the open bidding and the airports would be out-sourced on the best offer. He said that the out-sourcing of the airports would bring foreign investment in the country.

PIA was an ill department, however, it was correctable and the current government would succeed in reviving this department, he hoped. He said that food quality in the planes was being improved.

PESHAWAR MARKET COMMITTEE (PMC)

BID NOTICE FOR COLLECTION OF LEVY FEE

The Peshawar Market Committee (PMC) is a Corporate Body under the Agricultural & Livestock Produce Markets Act-2007 and General Rules-2011, invites sealed bids for the Auction of Levy Fee (Market Fee) via Kohat Road / Frontier Road District Peshawar for the year 2023-24 on the following Terms and Conditions:-

- 01- All interested candidates are required to submit an application in the name of undersigned for obtaining Check list from the Record Clerk of PMC in the office of District Director Agriculture (Extension), Jamrud Road, Peshawar during office hours w.e.f 09/01/2023 to 16/01/2023. List of applicants will be issued on 17/01/2023 after that no application will be received.
- 02- Check list will be provided to the applicants and it will be mandatory for them to provide the following documents upto 23/01/2023:-
 - a) Photocopy of Valid CNIC of applicant
 - b) Two Photographs of applicant
 - c) Call Deposit (CDR) amounting to Rs. 1 (One) Million in favour of the undersigned
 - d) NTN Number Certificate
 - e) Character Certificate from Class-I Officer not older than the last three months
 - f) Police Clearance Certificate not older than the last three months
 - g) Last Three years Income Tax Returns alongwith Wealth Statement
 - h) Bank Account Maintenance Certificate
 - i) Bank Account Statement of last Six Months
- 03- Bid Form will be issued on 24/01/2023 at the rate of Rs. 10,000/- (Non-Refundable) on account of Bid Form Fee, during office hours to those candidates who will provide the above mentioned mandatory Documents, otherwise; Bid Form will not be issued nor they will be eligible to take part in Bid competition.
- 04- Bids in sealed envelopes will be received by the Auction Committee of PMC on 26/01/2023 at 02:30PM and opened by the Auction Committee on the same day at 03:00PM in the presence of Bidders or their authorized agents in the office of District Director Agriculture (Extension), Jamrud Road, Peshawar.
- 05- CDR and other relevant documents will be verified from the concerned quarters; in case of fake documents FIR will be lodged against the candidate(s).
- 06- The successful Bidders will be bound to deposit 25% refundable / adjustable security of the total Bid offered in Advance alongwith one month advance installment within a period of 15 Days from the date of approval of contract by the Peshawar Market Committee (PMC).
- 07- The successful Bidders will be bound to deposit Income Tax @ 10% of the total Bid offered within a period of Three Months from the date of approval or as per agreement.
- 08- The successful Bidder(s) will be bound to collect Levy Fee in accordance with Schedule-II mentioned in the Agricultural Produce Markets General Rules-2011. The contractor(s) will not be entitled for overcharging. Otherwise legal action will be taken against them as per agreement.
- 09- Contracts will be started from the 1st February 2023 which will be expired on 31st December 2024. Request for Extension in contract or Rebate will not be acceptable.
- 10- The Competent Authority i.e Auction Committee of Peshawar Market Committee (PMC) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the Bids with solid reasons.
- 11- Additional details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned or mentioned below contact number on all working days during office hours.

Administrator Peshawar Market Committee /
District Director Agriculture (Extension) Peshawar
0312-9227939

INF (P) 28/23

Student shot dead at tuition centre

KARACHI (INP): A teenage student, armed with a Kalashnikov rifle, shot dead one of his colleagues inside an educational institute in Gulshan-i-Iqbal, police and witnesses said.

They said Ahsan Akhtar, 19, was killed in a coaching centre in Block 13-D near Madina Masjid. Gulshan-i-Iqbal SHO Arshad Janjua said that a scuffle erupted between students of the centre on Thursday, but the administration intervened and 'pacified' the two sides. On Friday, the armed suspect, whose name was not provided by the police, entered the coaching centre premises, fired at fellow student Ahsan and fled. He suffered a bullet wound in the chest and was transported to a private hospital where he died during treatment.

The SHO said the incident appeared to be an outcome of 'some personal dispute'. However, he did not elaborate further. He claimed that the alleged killer had been identified and raids were being conducted to arrest him. However, he refused to tell his name. Some witnesses told the media that the suspect entered the premises with a Kalashnikov that was hidden in a sack. Three siblings suffered burns in an acid attack in Korangi on Friday, police and rescue services said. They added that Waqas Abbas, 19, and his sisters, Saima, 18, Saira, 16, were injured when unknown men threw acid on them near Saima Villas in Bagh-i-Korangi.

RASM-E-CHEHLUM

*Rasm-e-Chehlum of our Beloved
Mukhtar Hamid Raja (Late)*

Will be held on

Sunday 8 January 2023

*at Farm House No. 5, Orchard Scheme (Near
Faizabad), Islamabad. Dua will be offered at 2*

pm, after Zohar Prayers.

All relatives and friends are requested to attend.

BEREAVED

Kamran Hamid Raja, CEO Khyber Tv Network (Father)

Kaiwan Hamid Raja (Brother)

Brig (Retd) Mansoor Hamid Raja (Taya)

Air Marshal (Retd) Shahid Hamid (Taya)

Jawad Hamid Raja (Chacha)

Agha Murtaza Ali (Mamoon)

Khyber Network Family



PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL SITUATIONS VACANT

Applications are invited for the following posts in Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) from the candidates who fulfill the educational qualification, experience and age limit criteria as mentioned below. The applications must submit ONLINE on the link given below within 15 days of publication of this advertisement i.e. by **January 23, 2023 (1700 hours)**.

| Sr. # | Name of Post | No. of Post(s) | Age Limit (Maximum) | Qualification | Experience |
|-------|---|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 1. | P.A to Vice Chairman (PEC-16, Regular) | 04 (Punjab=1 Sindh=1 Balochistan=1) | 32 years | Master's degree (16 years of education) or B.A. /B.Sc. Good level of computer literacy and knowledge of general computer applications is mandatory along with MS Outlook, MS Word, MS Excel and Power Point. | - In case of MA/MSc, minimum 10 years of service in BPS-11/PEC Scale-11 and above, with at least 03 years of service in BPS-14/PEC Scale-14. - In case of BA/BSc Minimum 12 years of service in BPS-11/PEC Scale-11 and above with at least 03 years of service in BPS-14/PEC Scale-14. - Competence of Shorthand 100 wpm and typing speed of 50 wpm and knowledge of Computer and Word Processing as well as knowledge of English is mandatory. Competence in drafting is essential. |
| 2. | HR Assistant (PEC-14, Regular) | 03 (Punjab=1 Sindh=1 KP=1) | 30 years | B.B.A./B.Sc. or equivalent / higher education in HR. Good level of computer literacy and knowledge of general computer applications is mandatory along with MS Outlook, MS Word, MS Excel and PowerPoint | Minimum 05 years of HR/Admin related experience in BPS-11/PEC Scale-11 or above in a reputable Government/ public/private institute or department. |
| 3. | Sub Engineer Civil (PEC-14, Regular) | 01 (Open Merit) | 30 years | Minimum DAE Civil Engineering (minimum 2 nd Division) from relevant Board/Authority. | Minimum 03 years experience in relevant field. Candidates must be proficient in computer knowledge. |
| 4. | Electrician (PEC-07, Regular) | 01 (Open Merit) | 35 years | F.A. F.Sc or DAE (Electrical/ Electronics) or equivalent | 01 to 02 years of experience is desirable but not mandatory. Practical test/ exam to determine the technical knowledge and understanding of the technicalities involved. |
| 5. | Carpenter (PEC-07, Regular) | 01 (Open Merit) | 35 years | Minimum Middle level (8 years) qualification. Trade certificate in carpentry from recognized institute will be given preference. | Minimum 10 years experience in relevant field. |

- ☛ Applications are to be submitted ONLINE through PEC Job Portal on jobs.pec.org.pk. All requisite documents should be uploaded correctly. In case of no/irrelevant/incorrect uploading of documents, the application will not be accepted.
- ☛ At the time of interview, the candidates will have to bring original educational certificates/degrees, experience letters, CNIC, domicile and NOC (if applicable) for verification.
- ☛ Age relaxation as per Government Rules will be admissible.
- ☛ Persons serving in Govt./Public/Autonomous organizations must obtain NOC from respective department. No application will be entertained without said NOC.
- ☛ Age limit shall be calculated as per closing date of application as given in advertisement.
- ☛ Only shortlisted candidates will be called for Test/Interview, as the case may be.
- ☛ No TA/DA will be admissible for appearing in Test/Interview, as the case may be.
- ☛ The Competent Authority reserves the right to post the selected candidate anywhere in Pakistan, if required.
- ☛ The Competent Authority reserves the right to increase or decrease the no of posts, reject any or all the applications or cancel the recruitment process at any stage without assigning any reason.
- ☛ Last date for submission of applications is **January 23, 2023 (1700 hours)**.
- ☛ For further details, please visit PEC website (www.pec.org.pk).

**Director Human Resource
Pakistan Engineering Council
Ataturk Avenue (East), G-5/2, Islamabad, Tel: 051-9219500, 9219036-38**

PID (I) 4207/22



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan offering fateha for the sad demise of mother of MPA Fazal Ilahi.

‘Political forces should work together to help steer country out of the economic mess’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday said that all the political forces should work together to help steer the country out of the economic mess.

He was speaking at a meeting of QWP office-bearers from Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan and Kolai-Palas districts.

Jahanzeb Khan of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Mian Gul of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf also announced joining the QWP on this occasion. Aftab Sherpao asked the government and the opposition to set aside their differences and join hands to address the challenges being faced by the country.

He said political stability for necessary to improve the economic situation of the country. He maintained that holding the election would not

address the prevailing crises.

Rejecting the demand of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders for the fresh elections, he said the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led government would complete the remaining tenure and the election would take place in its due time.

Aftab Sherpao said the incumbent federal government had inherited a weak economy from the PTI government therefore the economic revival would now take time.

The QWP leader said PTI Chairman Imran Khan was bent on creating anarchy to make the country go bankrupt. He said the former prime minister was responsible for the prevailing economic conditions, adding the PTI leader lacked the ability to govern and landed the country into a host of problems due to his incompetence.

He added the country would not default as the government was taking

steps to improve the economy. He said that holding the fresh election was not the solutions to the ills the country was facing.

Aftab Sherpao asked the government to take steps to provide relief to the people in the face of skyrocketing inflation. He also urged the government to take measures to bring down the rising prices of the wheat flour and other essential commodities.

He said the provincial government had failed to safeguards the rights of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. He added that law and order was deteriorating in the province, but the PTI government was least bothered to improve the situation.

The QWP leader said that maintaining the law and order was the prime responsibility of the provincial government. He said the provincial government had failed to deliver and the PTI leaders were now hiding behind lame excuses.

ICP decides to increase police for security measures

PESHAWAR (APP): The administration of Islamia College Peshawar (ICP) on Saturday decided to deploy contingent of heavy police in the college premises to maintain law and order situation. A meeting was held under the supervision of Provost and Director Security Syed Kamal that was attended by SHO Campus, senior officers, faculty staff and presidents of all associations.

In the meeting it was decided, to maintain law and order situation heavy police would be deployed in the college.

Ban has been imposed on all kinds of students' political events, displaying of arms and ammunition and using drugs in the college.

College uniform has been made mandatory for students and will not be allowed in the classes.

Visiting cards would be given to all kinds of guests on gates while entering the college. Action would be taken against those who violate the notification.

Jhagra to represent KP in Geneva conference

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Minister for Finance and Health Taimur Salim Jhagra will represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the international conference to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on January 9.

The Spokesman of the minister said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa delegation left for Geneva and Minister for Finance Timur Jhagra will represent the province.

The provincial minister will inform the international donors about the devastating flood in KP and government measures and steps taken for the rehabilitation of flood affectees.

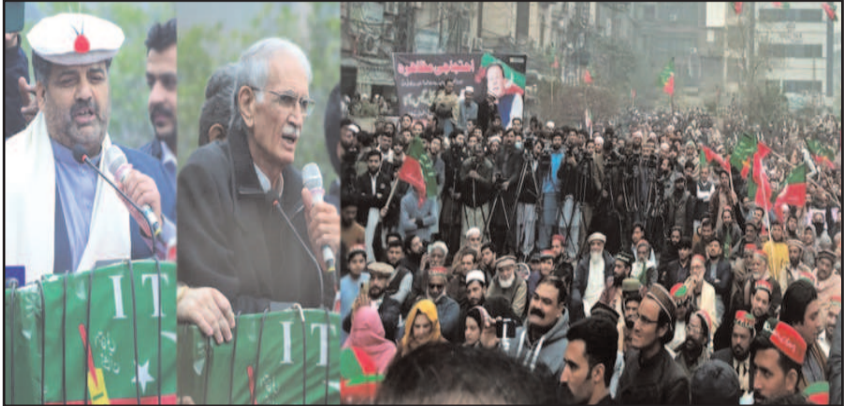
Principal EPTC Nowshera transferred

PESHAWAR (APP): Principal Elite Police Training Center (EPTC), Nowshera, Zulfiqar Ali Tanoli has been directed to report to Elite Force, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (EFKP) headquarters for sending policemen to travel during night time to DIKhan.

A notification issued by Additional Inspector General of Police Elite Force, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (EFKP) on Saturday said that the official sent police trainees to travel to district DIKhan after sunset. The police trainees were sent to DIKhan for performing duties with polio staff.

Tanoli was directed to report to headquarters for violating the directives according to which travelling of police force after sunset has been banned for safety purposes.

End flour crisis or leave govt: Perver Khattak tells PDM



PESHAWAR (NNI): Former Defence Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Perver Khattak has demanded with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to end the 'prevailing flour crisis' or leave the government.

The former defence minister made these remarks while addressing a protest rally against the federal government in Peshawar over the 'rising inflation and deteriorating economy'.

Addressing the participants, Perver Khattak asked the Pakistan

Democratic Movement (PDM) to leave the government 'if you cannot even procure wheat'.

He claimed that the ruling coalition has looted the country for the past 35 years, adding that they came into power to end their 'corruption cases'.

"No legislation has been enacted so far in the interest of the nation," he said, adding that the government could not prove any corruption against former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

Perver Khattak further said that the government does not have enough

money to procure wheat. "They are running the country by taking loans," he said, lambasting the incumbent rulers for not having any roadmap to get the country out of crises.

It is pertinent to mention here that flour crisis has intensified across the country, with prices of the commodity have skyrocketed. The flour prices skyrocketed in Lahore while the commodity was not available in most shops across the province.

The 15kg flour bag is being sold for Rs 2,050 now, after the increase of Rs 150.

47 senior medical officers promoted in BPS-19

PESHAWAR (APP): Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has promoted 47 senior medical officers working in BPS-18 to next grade of BPS-19 on regular basis in the best public interest.

In a notification issued by Health Department KP on Saturday, the decision has been made in the light of the recommendations of Provincial Selection Board in its meeting held in November 2022.

The promoted senior medical officers are Dr Jehanzeb Khan, Dr Aqib Khan, Dr Raza Ali

Orakzai, Dr Falak Naz, Dr Robina Gul, Dr Abdul Hanan Khan, Dr Sajjad Karim, Dr Bashirud Din, Dr Rehmatullah Jan, Dr Mohammad Jameel, Dr Shakeel Ahmed, Dr Razaullah Khan, Dr Hamid Gul, Dr Ghulam Qadar, Dr Rozina Tariq, Dr Mohammad Umer, Dr Azhar Azeem, Dr Nasreen Begum, Dr Mohammad Jawad, Dr Gul Nawaz, Dr Asad Ali, Dr Imtiaz Khan, Dr Abdul Rehman, Dr Ikhtiar Ali, Dr Nasrman Ullah, Dr Jameel Anwar, Dr Umer Hayat, Dr Yasir Mehmood, Dr

Mohammad Jameel Khan, Dr Mohammad Usman, Dr Sherzada, Dr Najeeb Khan, Dr Basit, Dr Ejaz, Dr Syed Mohammad Tahir Shah, Dr Mohammad Nadeem Wahid, Dr Azeem Ullah, Dr Inam Ullah Akbar, Dr Javed, Dr Mian Feroz Shah, Dr Azam Khan, Dr Tariq Jalil, Dr Sara Younas, Dr Javed Iqbal and Dr Hanifullah.

All the promoted officers would work on one-year probation period under Civil Servants Act 1973, the notification said.

Heavy fog grips Peshawar city, surroundings, visibility very low

PESHAWAR (INP): The traffic flow is slow in Peshawar city with heavy fog gripping the entire surroundings and the visibility is very low, an official of the Met Office said.

According to details, the traffic to other districts including Peshawar, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat is also affected due to heavy fog here on Saturday.

He said, due to heavy fog, the cold has increased

and most people were confined to their homes due to fog intensity.

However, a new spell of rain is likely to occur in most districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from today (Saturday), the Official of the Meteorological Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said.

The rain will continue intermittently till Monday said the official in a media talk here on Saturday. However, he said snowfall

is also expected in hilly areas from Saturday and would continue up till Monday. The Met Office Official also confirmed that heavy fog in Peshawar since early morning with the highway closed at certain points. He said, there is a possibility of rain in Peshawar, Dir, Chitral, Swat and Kohistan and snowfall on the mountains with Abbottabad, Bajaur, Kurram, Charsadda and Kohat likely to receive rain.

Shah Alam to Hayatabad BRT route to operational

PESHAWAR (APP): The new route of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Shah Alam to Mall of Hayatabad would be operational from Jan-10 and people would travel without any hindrance.

A notification issued by Information Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Saturday said that the new route named Express Route-12 would help control the overcrowding of passengers in buses.

It said that ER-12 route consists on different areas including Shah Alam, Sewaan, Bakhshu Pull, Landay Sarak, Shaheed Teehsen Square, Charsadda Bus Stand, Bacha Khan Square, Khyber Bazar, Peshawar Cantt. and Mall of Hayatabad. Residents of the above areas will be able to travel to their destination easily on a new route.

50kg heroin seized at Khyber post

PESHAWAR (PPI): Authorities on Saturday claimed to have seized a huge quantity of heroin worth millions from the secret pockets of a truck coming from Afghanistan in Khyber district.

According to police officials, on a tip-off the truck was searched after it crossed the border at Maichni checkpoint following which about 59 kilograms of heroin hidden secretly in the vehicle were recovered. The police took the driver into custody. Police Sub-Inspector Qamar Abbas said 49.8kg heroin was seized from the truck. The seized contraband was worth millions in internation-

Ph.D. thesis defended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mr. Hanif Ur Rahman defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Offshore Outsourcing Decision of Application Maintenance: A Study from Client-Vendor Perspective" on December 16, 2022 at Department of Computer Science, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KPK, Pakistan.

He conducted his research under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Raza and Dr. Palwasha Afsar. Hanif Ur Rahman published five articles in international



reputed journals having top ranking; "W" category in HJRS by HEC.

His thesis report was evaluated by professors from two foreign universities (Spain and Poland), and University of Peshawar while his external examiners were Prof. Dr. Zahoor Jan, Islamia College Peshawar and Prof. Dr. Sara Shahzad, University of Peshawar.

On the occasion of public defense, the Ph.D. scholar answered various questions of the participants and discussed the experiences gained during the research activities. Professors and faculty of the respective department and other scholars participated on this occasion.

Life-Time Achievement Award presented to Syed Yawar Ali

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Life-Time Achievement Award presented to Syed Yawar Ali, Chairman Nestle by the Institute of Cost & Management Accountant of Pakistan ICMA for his outstanding contributions in the corporate sector on Saturday 07th January 2023 in Lahore.

Syed Yawar Ali is currently Chairman of Nestlé Pakistan Limited, Wazir Ali Industries Limited, Prime Genetics (pvt) Ltd. He has also been on the Board of Directors of State Bank of Pakistan and Pakistan International Airlines and Chairman of Lahore Electric Supply Company, Chairman, Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan and Chairman, Pakistan Dairy Association and Pakistan Business Council.

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA Pakistan) was established in 1951 with the objective to regulate and promote the profession of Management Accounting in Pakistan. By virtue of the authority vested in by the Act and



Regulations, the Institute has been entrusted with the responsibility to provide professional education, examine competencies and confer internationally recognized post-graduate professional certification. Mr. Zia ul Mustafa, Chairman Strategic Board ICMA presented the

award to Syed Yawar Ali, Chairman Nestle. Ms. Munaza Elahi Director Marketing / Corporate Communications ICMA & Mr. Abdul Razzaq Chairman Lahore Branch Council ICMA were also present at the event including senior members of ICMA.





In brief

Five power pilferers caught

SARGODHA (INP): The Faisalabad Electric Power Company (Fesco) caught five accused involved in power theft on Saturday. According to a spokesperson for the Fesco, a task force raised different areas of the city and detected theft of 1,130 units. The accused, including Hamad, Saleem, Sqlain, Rustom and Maqsood, were involved in meter tampering, direct supply and other violations.

Robbers arrested

FAISALABAD (INP): Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested two robbers and recovered weapons from their possession. A police spokesman said officials conducted a raid in Chak No 51-GB and arrested Arshad and Ehsan who were wanted to police in a number of robbery and other cases. The police also recovered one motorcycle, weapons, cash, mobile phones and other items.

Govt action against beggars

SIALKOT (INP): The district government on Saturday caught eight more beggars and handed them over to the police. On the direction of Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Deputy Director (DD) Social Welfare Muhammad Sharif Ghuman along with a team and police conducted a surprise checking in the area of Jinnah Islamia College Road, Kashmir Road, Lorry Adda, Clock Tower Chowk, Commissioner Road and Khawaja Safdar Road and arrested eight beggars and handed them over to the respective police station for legal action. DD Social Welfare Sharif Ghuman said that a few days ago, 20 beggars were also caught during the operation.

Four killed in shootout

DERA BUGTI (APP): Four people including a woman, a child and an attacker were killed in a shootout inside a house in Dera Bugti on Saturday Morning, a private tv channel reported. Unidentified gunmen attacked a house in Shahi Pat area of Dera Bugti and shot dead three inhabitants including a woman and a child. The other members of the family managed to retaliate in which a gunman was also killed. Law-enforcement personnel shifted the bodies to a local hospital. They also cordoned off the whole area to hunt down the attackers.

Three hurt in stray dog attack

MULTAN (APP): At least three persons including two girls sustained injuries after being bitten by a stray dog at Chak R.S here on Saturday. According to Rescue officials, a stray dog attacked and injured three people near Chak R.S. Upon receiving the information, Rescue teams rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to Tehsil Headquarters hospital Shujaabad. The victims were identified as 22 years old Safia, 15 Rabia and 10 years old Ali Shan.

Wheat quota suspended

MULTAN (APP): The food department has suspended the wheat quota of over 1000 flour mills over misappropriation in government flour. The food department in Punjab has released data on operations during the last eight months across the province in order to ensure an uninterrupted supply of flour. Legal action was taken by suspending the licenses of 80 flour mills due to disruption in flour supply.

Flour prices rise to alarming level in Balochistan

QUETTA (PPI): Flour shortage continues in Balochistan, as the 20kg price of flour has reached Rs 2,800, according to a report on Saturday. As per details, the prices of flour have skyrocketed in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan while the commodity was not available in most shops across the province.

The 20kg flour bag is being sold for Rs 2,800 now, which was Rs 2,300, a week ago in the province. Flour shortage has also hit the Quetta utility stores

despite the government's subsidized flour scheme. The flour mills association said that 25 thousand bags are required for 18 flour mills daily in Quetta. They urged the government to arrange 9 to 10 lac four bags on daily basis. The mills associations further said flour will disappear from the market in few days, if wheat was not provided to them.

On other hand, the sources within the Balochistan food department, they have struck a deal of 200,000 wheat

sacks from Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation (PASSCO). The wheat will reach Quetta from Layyah tomorrow, they further said. Earlier, a massive flour shortage hit the Quetta utility stores despite the government's subsidized flour scheme. 1-kilo bag of flour is sold at Rs130 which was previously available at Rs125 in the province. Whereas the 20 kg is sold for Rs 2500, the 50 kg bag is raised from Rs 6000 to Rs 6500. The 100 kg large bag now cost Rs 12000.

Various projects inaugurated in Hafizbaad

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: In order to provide better communication facilities to commuters, construction work on Motorway Interchange M-2 Pindi Bhattian to Burjhan (Chiniot) and Pindi Bhattian to Thathah Khairu Matmal has been started with the estimated cost of Rs. 191 million. MPA Mian Ahsan Ansari Bhatti laid foundation stone of the schemes. Coordinator PTI Pindi Bhattian Mian Azam Ansari Bhatti, ex-MPA Mian Intisar Hussain Bhatti, President Theesil Bar Mian Tasawar Abbas Bhatti, Mian Nazim Abbas Bhatti, Assistant Commissioner Pindi Bhattian Bilawal Ali Hunjra and workers of PTI attended the ceremony.

Addressing on the occasion, MPA Mian Ahsan Ansari Bhatti and Mian Azam Ansari said that Leader of PTI Imran Khan was put the country on the track of progress and prosperity and when his prudent policies were started yielding fruit, his government was toppled while present coalition government of PDM was push the country in swamp of inflation.

They said that we were standing with Imran Khan and would continue delivering the people of Pindi Bhattian under people friendly vision of Imran Khan.

They said 13 parties were united against Imran Khan and failed to defeat him in elections which reflected his popularity

3 held for killing property dealer

WAH CANTT (APP): The Wah Saddar Police on Saturday arrested three nominated accused who abducted a property dealer and later thrown his body after brutal torture.

Abdul Rehman, who works as a property dealer in New city area was allegedly abducted by his partner over money issue from the New city area in the limits of Wah Saddar Police station on December 5 and later his hands and legs tightened with rope, strangled to death body was found from a deserted place near Mirza village in the limits of Attock Saddar Police station on December 7.

Police registered a case against the nominated accused including the

deceased partner and other copartners under sections 302, 365, 201, 148, 149, 109 and section 7 of the anti-terrorism act (7-ATA). Police on Saturday arrested the three nominated accused identified as Ahmed Hassan, Bilal and Sohaib.

Police arrest 12 gamblers: The Wah Saddar Police on Saturday raided at a gambling den and arrested as many as 12 persons while gambling.

Sub Divisional Police Officer Taxila Circle DSP Mian Afzaal Shah told the media persons that Wah Cantonment Police raided at a gambling den and arrested as many as 12 persons while gambling. Gambling tools, bet money, two motorcycles and cell phones also seized during the raid.

CTD arrests five TTP terrorists

GUJRANWALA (PPI): Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab on Saturday claimed to have arrested five TTP terrorists in intelligence-based operations. The CTD Punjab revealed the arrest of five terrorists identified as Inamul Haq, Maskeenullah, Wahid Khan, Sher Nageeb and Shah Wali. They all belonged to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The CTD officials said they have also recovered explosive material, weapons and suicide vests from terrorists' possession. Four cases have been registered against the terror suspects and they were shifted to an unknown place for interrogation, the officials added. On the direction of the Punjab IGP, 526 combing operations have been conducted during a week in which 130 suspects have been arrested and 21,227 people were quizzed. Gujranwala and Sahiwal have been saved from major attacks, said the CTD.

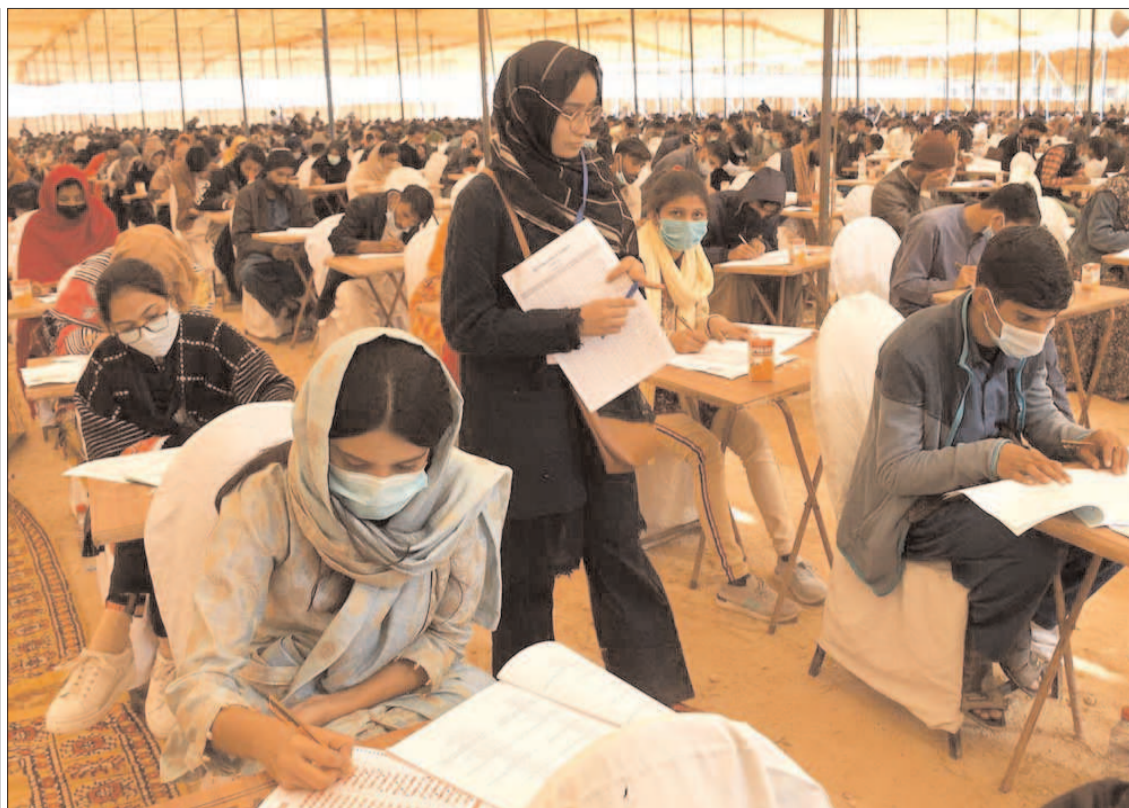
Construction of Diabetes Centre begins F.P. Report

SAHIWAL: Construction of a hospital consisting of state-of-the-art facilities for diabetes and its related complications treatment has started in Sahiwal. In this connection, a ground-breaking ceremony was organized here today. The event commenced with the recitation of Verses from the Holy Quran.

Speaking at the occasion, Chairman TDC, Dr. Asjad Hameed delivered a detailed speech on TDC's journey, vision and expansion plans. Chaudhry Mustafa, an Australian Pakistani and land donor (8 Kanal) for the aforementioned hospital revealed the goals of the TDC Sahiwal Chapter.

Sheikh Muhammad Younis, a renowned industrialist of the area while expressing his views said with the construction of TDC in Sahiwal, a large number of the population in Punjab shall be catered quality treatment.

Sheikh Muhammad Younis thanked Chaudhry Mustafa and his brother Professor Javed Rashid for the donation of land and spoke high about TDC and its stern resolve to work tirelessly for a Diabetes free Pakistan. The participation of the area's well-known personalities and residents made this ceremony memorable.



JAMSHORO: Students busy in solving their questionnaire during the entry test for admissions in Degree and Diploma Programmers.

Measures for ensuring security to conduct digital census: Uqaili

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Secretary Abdul Aziz Uqaili said the provincial government was taking steps to ensure the best security arrangements for the successful conduct of the digital census. He expressed these views while presiding over a high-level meeting regarding preparations for conducting the seventh digital census in the province.

Additional Chief Secretary Interior Zahid Saleem, Secretary Local Government Dostain Khan Jamaluddin along with military officials and all Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners participated in the meeting through video link. The chief secretary said the Federal government was going to conduct a

digital census for the first time in the country saying that the Census was very important in any country because it provides information about population size, economic condition and migration, in the light of this.

He said the provincial government would conduct the census in the province at the appointed time with full responsibility and all necessary arrangements to be made to ensure its transparency. He said the census was a constitutional obligation and to complete it everyone has to perform their duty with full honesty and transparency, because this census process would play a key role for the planners.

The current census is an important step towards setting goals for the

future development process and giving a new dimension to the development journey and on the basis of this, the beginning of the coming journey will be determined, he said. He said if the census process was conducted on the right lines, it has many advantages, so the census data was correct, and then it would not destroy the rights of any class and could not create a feeling of deprivation in any class. When each province and each region will be included in the development process of the country according to their population, so there will be a sense of unity in the whole country, he noted. He also directed that all deputy commissioners should hold DICC meetings in their respective districts.

Advisory for sugarcane farmers

FAISALABAD (APP): The agriculture experts on Saturday advised growers to prepare their lands for commencing cultivation of sugarcane crop with the advent of February. According to a spokesman for the agriculture (extension) department, most excellent time for sugarcane cultivation is from February 1 to March 15.

They should also use seed of approved sugarcane varieties, including CP-77-400, CP-72-2086, CP-43-33, CPF-243, HSF-240, SPSG-26, SPF-213, SPF-245 and COJ-84, he added. He said sugarcane was an important crop which not only help in catering domestic requirements but also play a pivotal role in mitigating financial constraints of growers.

The field staff of agriculture department had been activated to guide farmers for bringing themaximum land under sugarcane cultivation in Punjab. More information could be obtained through agriculture helpline or from the nearest agriculture office, he added.

Meanwhile, the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has announced to auction 62 Kanals of sugarcane crop here on January 10 (Tuesday).

The UAF spokesman said on Saturday that sugarcane auction would be organized at 10 am at Postgraduate Agriculture Research Station, Jhang Road, whereas the successful bidder would be bound to deposit 1/3 of the total amount on the spot. More information could be obtained from Directorate of Farms UAF during office hours, he added.

Agri experts urges people for kitchen gardening:

The agriculture experts on Saturday advised people to adopt kitchen gardening as it could help in mitigating financial constraints by providing healthy, cheap and hygienic vegetables. According to a spokesman for the agriculture (extension) department, people should cultivate vegetables at home and reduce their budget.

He said that seeds of all vegetables were easily available in the market as well as in the agriculture department and people could also cultivate vegetables at rooftop if space was not available in lower portion, lawn or courtyard. "These vegetables are not only pesticide-free but also fit for human consumption and keep people healthy", he added. Responding to a question, he said people could grow vegetable in pots, plastic bags, crates and boxes as well as on open spaces in their houses.

Dr Amjad Saqib visits FCCI: Dr Amjad Saqib, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Akhuwat Foundation, on Saturday visited the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was warmly welcomed by President FCCI Dr Khurram Tariq himself and his team.

Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli, Vice President, and Haji Muhammad Abid were also present besides Mian Muhammad Kamal-ul-Din, Moazam Bin Zahoor, Coordinator Abu Bakar and Focal Person of Akhuwat Muhammad Shahzad.

Dr Amjad Saqib underlined benefits of collective efforts and hoped the business community of

Faisalabad would extend help for the have-nots by providing them all basic amenities in addition to providing them interest free loans to start their own businesses.

He said affluent people must realize their religious obligations that no one should go to bed without a meal and their other basic needs should also be fulfilled. He added that Akhuwat had established a strong team of 400 volunteers to serve the have-nots in Faisalabad without any help from the government departments. Later Dr Khurram Tariq presented a cheque of donation to Dr Amjad Saqib while Dr Amjad Saqib gave him a gift of his latest book.

Cops directed to take steps for their own safety F.P. Report

TANK: District Police Officer (DPO) Tank Waqar Ahmed on Saturday directed the duty personnel to take precautionary measures for their own safety along with ensuring the safety of lives and property of the people. The DPO stated this during his visit to Gul Imam check post along with DSP Rural Alamgir Khan to review the security situation in view of the prevailing situation.

The district police chief, on this occasion, issued instructions to the policemen to maintain law and order. Keeping in view the recent threats, he reviewed the overall security situation, security arrangements, fences and trenches.

Two children die of gas suffocation F.P. Report

SWABI: Two children died and four other family members fainted due to gas suffocation near Swabi on Saturday.

According to rescue sources, the head of the family Naveed, his wife, two daughters and two sons were asleep in the room of their house with the gas heater on in Kotha area of Topi in Swabi when two children died of gas suffocation while four others fainted.

The deceased boys were identified as 13-year-old Ahmad Umar and three-year-old Hasnain Umar. Due to gas outage in the night the heat went off but as the supply resumed the gas filled the room. Rescue 1122 Swabi personnel discovered all the family members in a serious condition and rushed them to Bacha Khan Medical Complex.

Girl dies in mishap F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A girl was killed and her uncle got injured after a motorcycle, they were riding on, was hit by a tractor here on Fateh Morr, Dera-Paroa Road in the limits of Gomal University Police Station.

According to details, Zarmina Bibi, daughter of Azhar Bhatti and resident of Haji Morah, was travelling to Naivela from her home along with her maternal uncle on a motorcycle. All of a sudden, their two wheeler was hit by a tractor on Dera-Paroa Road at Fateh Morr. As a result, the girl died on the spot while her uncle got injured.

International conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan

S.Z Babar

ON one hand the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is elucidating the international organizations about the disaster caused by the floods in Pakistan while on the other hand restoration work in the flood-affected areas is being vigorously carried out with the limited resources at hand, for instance, the Prime Minister of Pakistan visited Subbatpur yesterday, which was considered as one of the most flood affected areas, for this purpose.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the affectees of flood along with tribal elders, said that he was delighted to see that the

erstwhile water-submerged region was coming back to life with the help of federal and provincial government. The Prime Minister further said that there is no doubt that the government's resources are limited, but it was also true that he, along with all of PDM, will never rest until the flood-affected areas are fully restored.

The upcoming International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan to be held on the 9th of January is undoubtedly a great success; the head of the United Nations will not only participate personally in the said Conference, but he has also invited the representatives of other important countries to participate. The countries with which Pakistan enjoys friendly bilateral relations have definite-

ly helped in catastrophic times of floods. Such countries are also assisting in rehabilitation of the flood affectees. Millions of families deserve assistance as a significant proportion of the flood affectees is still homeless.

This is one of the gravest challenges being faced by the government. Despite the successful presentation of the case, help is still awaited. The cost of devastation caused by this catastrophe is beyond the affordability of the flood affectees. Hence, they are looking for assistance on an emergency basis in order to repair their homes and infrastructure. According to an estimate, about 1 million houses were destroyed in Pakistan due to the recent rain spell. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that helping the flood affectees

is not a favor by the government but a primary duty.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan is going to send a message to the world on January 9th that the flood-affectees are of prime importance and that Pakistan's contribution to global climate change is negligible. The world leaders, including the United Nations, are well aware of this fact. Global climate change has considered Pakistan as a scapegoat; the industrial sector in Pakistan doesn't create any significant carbon footprint, so the question is how would the other world countries, including the United States, help Pakistan. The statistics are proof that all the international financial institutions, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, claim to improve the

economy of developing countries, but this is precisely not the case; it is impossible that a developing country continues to violate international laws and the world leaders, including the United States, can't preclude it. There is no such situation as a conflict in the national or financial interests of the states. It is certainly unfortunate that the government of Imran Khan of the past left no stone unturned in increasing the difficulties of Pakistan in the then world scenario.

The controversial narrative he set at the time of his departure from government resulted in a virtual rift between Washington and Islamabad, as Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, accused the United States in rallies, largely freezing relations

with the United States which were badly affected by his anti-American stance. In this background, the representatives of the American government clearly told that the United States had no hand in bringing down the PTI government in Pakistan and US played no key role in the removal of Imran Khan from office.

Thankfully, Imran Khan has accepted defeat, directly or indirectly, according to his opponents. Not being able to blame anyone else, Imran Khan should know that his vision and intentions will be revealed only when he extends his hand to the PDM government without any preconditions so that on January 9, the positive effects of the world conference could be multiplied for the country.



China's 'great migration' kicks-off under shadow of COVID

SHANGHAI (Reuters): China on Saturday marked the first day of "chun yun", the 40-day period of Lunar New Year travel known pre-pandemic as the world's largest annual migration of people, bracing for a huge increase in travellers and the spread of COVID-19 infections.

This Lunar New Year public holiday, which officially runs from Jan. 21, will be the first since 2020 without domestic travel restrictions. Over the last month China has seen the dramatic dismantling of its "zero-COVID" regime following historic protests against a policy that included frequent testing, restricted movement, mass lockdowns and heavy damage to the world's No.2 economy.

Investors are hoping that the reopening will eventually reinvigorate a \$17-trillion economy suffering its lowest growth in nearly half a century. But the abrupt changes have exposed many of China's 1.4 billion population to the virus for the first time, triggering a wave of infections that is overwhelming some hospitals, emptying pharmacy shelves of medicines and causing long lines to form at crematoriums. The Ministry of Transport said that it expects more than 2 billion passengers to take trips over the next 40 days, an increase of 99.5% year-on-year and reaching 70.3% of trip numbers in 2019.

There was mixed reaction online to that news, with some comments hailing the freedom to return to hometowns and celebrate the Lunar New Year with family for the first time in years. Many others, however, said they would not travel this year, with worry of infecting elderly relatives a common theme. "I dare not go back to my hometown, for fear of bringing the poison back," said one such comment on the Twitter-like Weibo.

There are widespread concerns that the great migration of workers in cities to their hometowns will cause a surge in infections in smaller towns and rural areas that are less well-equipped with ICU beds and ventilators to deal with them. Authorities say they are boosting grassroots medical services, opening more rural fever clinics and instituting a "green channel" for high risk patients, especially elderly people with underlying health conditions, to be transferred from villages directly to higher level hospitals.

"China's rural areas are wide, the population is large, and the per capita medical resources are relatively insufficient," National Health Commission spokesman Mi Feng said on Saturday. "It's necessary to provide convenient services, accelerate vaccination for the elderly in rural areas and the construction of grassroots lines of defense." Some analysts are now saying the current wave of infections may have already peaked.

Ernan Cui, an analyst at Gavekal Dragonomics in Beijing, cited several online surveys as indicating that rural areas were already more widely exposed to COVID infections than initially

thought, with an infection peak already reached in most regions, noting there was "not much difference between urban and rural areas." China will reopen its border with Hong Kong and will also end a requirement for travellers coming from abroad to quarantine. That effectively opens the door for many Chinese to travel abroad for the first time since borders slammed shut nearly three years ago, without fear of having to quarantine on their return.

More than a dozen countries are now demanding COVID tests from travellers from China. The World Health Organisation said that China's COVID data underrepresents the number of hospitalisations and deaths from the disease. Chinese officials and state media have defended the handling of the outbreak, playing down the severity of the surge and denouncing foreign travel requirements for its residents. On Saturday in Hong Kong, people who had made appointments had to queue for about 90 minutes at a centre for PCR tests needed for travel to countries including mainland China.

For much of the pandemic, China poured resources into a vast PCR testing program to track and trace COVID-19 cases, but the focus is now shifting to vaccines and treatment. In Shanghai, for example, the city government announced an end to free PCR tests for residents from Jan. 8. A circular published by four government ministries Saturday signalled a reallocation of financial resources to treatment, outlining a plan for public finances to subsidise 60% of treatment costs until March 31.

Meanwhile, sources told Reuters that China is in talks with Pfizer Inc to secure a licence that will allow domestic drug-makers to manufacture and distribute a generic version of the US firm's COVID antiviral drug Paxlovid in China. Many Chinese have been attempting to buy the drug abroad and have it shipped to China. On the vaccine front, China's CanSino Biologics Inc announced it has begun trial production for its COVID mRNA booster vaccine, known as CS-2034.

China has relied on nine domestically-developed vaccines approved for use, including inactivated vaccines, but none have been adapted to target the highly-transmissible Omicron variant and its offshoots currently in circulation. The overall vaccination rate in the country is above 90%, but the rate for adults who have had booster shots drops to 57.9%, and to 42.3% for people aged 80 and older, according to government data released last month. China reported three new COVID deaths in the mainland, bringing its official virus death toll since the pandemic began to 5,267, one of the lowest in the world. International health experts believe Beijing's narrow definition of COVID deaths does not reflect a true toll, and some predict more than a million deaths this year.

Iran hangs 2 men accused of killing security official

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran hanged two men on Saturday for allegedly killing a security official during nationwide protests that followed the death of 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman Mahsa Amini on Sept. 16. The two men executed on Saturday had been convicted of killing a member of the Basij paramilitary force militia. Three others have been sentenced to death in the same case, while 11 received prison sentences.

"Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, principle perpetrators of the crime that led to the unjust martyrdom of Ruhollah Ajman were hanged this morning," the judiciary said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency. The latest executions bring to four the number of protesters officially known to have been executed in the aftermath of the unrest.

Amnesty International said last month that Iranian authorities are seeking the death penalty for at least 26 others in what it called "sham trials designed to intimidate protesters in the popular uprising that has rocked the country". It said

all of those facing death sentences had been denied the right to adequate defence and access to lawyers of their choosing. Rights groups say defendants have instead had to rely on state-appointed attorneys who do little to defend them.

Amnesty said the court that convicted Karami, a 22-year-old karate champion, relied on forced confessions. Hosseini's lawyer Ali Sharifzadeh Ardakani said in a Dec. 18 tweet that Hosseini had been severely tortured and that confessions extracted under torture had no legal basis. He said Hosseini was beaten with his hands and feet tied up, kicked in the head until he passed out, and subjected to electric shocks on different parts of his body.

Iran denies that confessions are extracted under torture. Mahsa Amini died in custody in September after being arrested by morality police enforcing the Islamic Republic's mandatory dress code laws. The protests that ensued represent one of the biggest challenges to the Islamic Republic since its establishment in 1979. The Basij force, affiliated with Iran's powerful Revolutionary

Guards, has been behind much of the crackdown. Iran, which has blamed the unrest on its foreign foes including the United States, sees its crackdown of protests as preserving national sovereignty.

The rights group HRANA said that, 517 protesters had been killed during unrest, including 70 minors. It said 68 members of the security forces had also been killed. As many as 19,262 protesters are believed to have been arrested, it said. Iranian officials have said that up to 300 people, including members of the security forces, have died.

The first protester known to be executed was 23-year-old Mohsen Shekari on Dec. 8, less than three months after his arrest. He was accused of burning a trash bin, blocking a road, stabbing a member of the Basij militia with a machete and threatening public safety. Majid Reza Rahnavard, 23, was hanged from a crane in public on Dec. 12 in the northeastern city of Mashhad, less than a month after his arrest. He was accused of stabbing to death two Basij members and wounding four other people in Mashhad.

Taiwan offers China help again to deal with COVID

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan has again offered to provide China with assistance to help it deal with a surge in COVID-19 cases but Chinese authorities have not yet responded, official Taiwan media reported. China scrapped its stringent COVID controls last month after protests against them, abandoning a policy that had shielded its 1.4 billion population from the virus for three years.

Victor Wang, Head of Taiwan's Central Epidemic Command Centre, told the official Central News Agency it sent an email to

Chinese authorities this week and asked how Taiwan could help with the surge of cases in China. Rising cases in China has sparked concerns from the World Health Organisation that Beijing was under-reporting virus deaths. Wang said Taiwan has also sent an email to China in early December to "remind" authorities there about a community outbreak and severe cases among children.

China, which claims the island as its own despite strong objections of the democratically-elected government, views Taiwan

President Tsai Ing-wen as a separatist and has refused to talk to her administration since she took office in 2016. In a New Year address earlier this month, Tsai for the first time offered to provide China with "necessary assistance" to help it deal with a surge in COVID cases, but said Chinese military activities near the island were not beneficial to peace and stability. Health Minister Hsueh Jui-yuan said Taiwan could offer medication or vaccine to China but it's not clear if Beijing would accept it, according to the Central News Agency.

Kosovo soldier suspected of wounding two Serbs locals

PRISTINA (Reuters): Kosovo police arrested an off-duty soldier suspected of shooting and wounding two young Serbs near the ski resort town of Shterpece, a case likely to further inflame relations between local Serbs and the government in Pristina. Police said both victims, aged 11 and 21, were taken to hospital and their injuries were not life threatening. Police said the suspect was 33 years old.

"I was informed that a member of the Kosovo Security Force was involved in the case that happened in Shterpece and security and justice bodies are dealing with the case," Defence Minister Armend Mehaj said in a statement. "I strongly condemn the attack on two citizens of Kosovo... deeply concerned about their injuries," Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti said in a statement.

The case is expected to deepen mistrust between majority ethnic Albanians and the Serb ethnic minority that lives in Kosovo. Around 100,000 ethnic Serbs live in Kosovo, half of them in the north. Most refuse to recognise Kosovo's 2008 independence. The other half live in other parts of the country, such as Shterpece, and most recognise the Pristina government and take part in political life.

Just last week, Serbs ended a road blockade lasting more than three weeks to protest against the arrest of a former Serb police officer for assault. They removed the barricades after the officer was released from police custody and put under house arrest. As a sign of protest at shootings, some local Serbs blocked the main road connecting Shterpece with the rest of the country. "They were shot at while wearing Christmas clothes. Someone wanted to give us a bloody Christmas," said Petar Petkovic, head of Serbia's government office for Kosovo, on Twitter, referring to Serbia's Orthodox Christmas that is celebrated on Jan. 7.

The arrested soldier is from the Kosovo Security Force which is a lightly armed force because NATO still remains the main military force responsible for maintaining security. Albanian-majority Kosovo declared independence with the backing of the West, following a 1998-99 war in which NATO intervened to protect ethnic Albanian citizens.

Syrians in rebel enclave hold protest

IDLIB (AP): Thousands of Syrians held protests in different parts of the rebel-held northwest against recent moves by the governments in Damascus and Ankara to improve ties. The protests in villages and towns in Idlib and Aleppo provinces came a week after the Turkish, Syrian and Russian defense ministers held previously unannounced talks in Moscow in the first such meeting between rivals Turkey and Syria since the start of the Syrian conflict 11 years ago.

Turkey has been a main backer of insurgents fighting Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces presidential and parliamentary elections in June and is under intense pressure at home to send Syrian war refugees back to Syria. Damascus and Ankara have been holding talks at the security level in recent months but last week's meeting in Moscow raised alarms among opposition activists who fear they could pay a price for a Damascus-Ankara reconciliation.

"Listen Erdogan, the blood of the martyrs cannot be sold," chanted a group of protesters. Russia, a main backer of Assad, has long been pressing for the reconciliation. Syria's civil war has killed hundreds of thousands and destroyed large parts of the country. It has also displaced half of Syria's pre-war population of 23 million.

Many of the displaced now live in tent settlements in the rebel-held northwest Syria while Turkey is estimated to now host around 3.7 million Syrian war refugees.

Philippine military chief replaced by retiring general

MANILA (AP): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Saturday cut short the term of the military chief of staff he appointed five months ago and replaced him with a retiring general without explaining the surprise move. Marcos's office announced the replacement of Lt. Gen. Bartolome Bacarro, who had received the highest military award for combat bravery as a young army officer. A statement that did not specify any reason for the change in military leadership. Bacarro's three-year term was supposed to end in August 2025.

The appointment of military chiefs is a sensitive issue. The military has a history of restiveness, failed coup attempts, corruption scandals and has faced accusations of human rights violations. Efforts have been made for years to instill professionalism in the military and insulate it from the country's traditionally chaotic and corruption-tainted politics. Lt. Gen. Andres Centino, the military chief of staff who Bacarro replaced in August last year, was installed by Marcos to the top post of the 144,000-strong armed forces. Centino, who was due to retire next month, was chosen over a dozen senior generals and will have a fresh three-year term.

Asked for reaction on his removal, Bacarro told reporters without elaborating in a text message that the military would support the new chief. A new law that took effect last year fixed the term of the military chief of staff to three years to allow a top general more time to initiate reforms and press a yearslong campaign to modernize an underfunded military confronting Muslim and communist insurgencies and increasingly aggressive actions by China in the disputed South China Sea, where the Philippines lays claim to contested islands, islets and reefs with other



coastal states.

In a turnover ceremony at the main military camp in the capital on Saturday, Bacarro handed a saber symbolizing military leadership to Centino and thanked the military, his family and the president. Marcos did not attend but was represented by his close advisers, including Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin. Bersamin stressed in a speech he was impressed by the smooth military leadership transition, which he said should be emulated by politicians to avoid disruptive post-election unrest like what has happened in America.

"Continue with this tradition, where you respect each other, where you give so much consideration to the qualifications of your fellow officers in order to enable your organization ... to move forward instead of looking back," Bersamin said. Marcos, he said, had asked him and other key presidential advisers to show the "highest respect" to Bacarro for his battlefield exploits and hinted the general may be given another govern-

ment post after the end of his military career.

In 1991, Bacarro received a medal of valor for thwarting an attack by about 150 communist guerrillas on a northern Philippine town despite his smaller force. Wounded in the thigh by rebel fire, he commandeered a dump truck and rammed a fence to allow government militiamen, who were pinned down, to escape. His sudden removal follows a decision by the national police chief, Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr., to tender his resignation after Marcos's interior secretary appealed to nearly 1,000 police generals and colonels to quit and allow a committee to investigate and weed out top officials involved in illegal drugs. Azurin asked top police officials to support Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos's drastic move. But he added some generals opposed the call for them to resign within the month because they were not facing any criminal lawsuits and have not been linked to the drug trade.

Cubans crossing into US stunned to hear of new asylum limits

ARIZONA (AP): Migrants who entered the US illegally under moonlit skies and waist-deep cold water were devastated to learn they may be sent back to Mexico under expanded limits on the pursuit of asylum. About 200 migrants who walked in the dark for about an hour to surrender to Border Patrol agents in Yuma, Arizona, included many Cubans — who were stunned to hear that a ban on asylum that previously fell largely on other nationalities now applies just as much to them. Several were political dissidents of the Cuban government who were driven to leave by longstanding fears of incarceration and persecution and a new sense of economic desperation.

President Joe Biden announced that Cubans, Nicaraguans, Haitians and Venezuelans will be expelled to Mexico if they enter the US illegally, effective immediately. At the same time, he offered humanitarian parole for up to 30,000 people a month from those four countries if they apply online, pay for their airfare and find a financial sponsor. Mario Enrique Perez, 32, said he would rather be incarcerated in the US than be returned to Mexico, where, he said, he and his wife endured many slights and poor treatment during a two-month journey across the country. They frequently had to get off buses to avoid shake-downs at government checkpoints, slowing their pace.

The vast majority of Cubans reach the US by flying to Nicaragua as tourists and make their way to the US border with Mexico. Perez said they trade information "like ants" about which routes are safest and easiest, which is why he picked Yuma. Nellij Jimenez, 50, said she rode horses on her three-month journey through Mexico to avoid shakedowns at government checkpoints. Her son, whom

she described as an active dissident, fled to Spain years ago. She held out in Cuba despite links to her son — even getting jailed during the July 2021 protests — but held out until economic desperation forced her to sell her convenience store in the city of Cienfuegos to finance her trip to the United States.

She hopes to settle with relatives in Nebraska. "I did not see this coming," Jimenez said of the new limits on asylum. Niurka Avila, 53, said the Cuban government surveils her and her husband, who are known dissidents. She spoke with disgust of Cuban officials, saying she couldn't bring herself to wear traditional guayabera dress because they do. They "appropriated" it, she said. Avila, a nurse in Cuba, said that Mexico was not an attractive option and that she and her husband hope to join family in Florida.

"(Mexico) is a violent place, and our family is here," she said. The new rules expand on an existing effort to stop Venezuelans attempting to enter the US, which began in October and led to a dramatic drop in Venezuelans coming to the southern border. Together, they represent a major change to immigration rules that will stand even if the Supreme Court ends a Trump-era public health law that allows US authorities to turn away asylum-seekers. "Do not, do not just show up at the border," Biden said as he announced the changes, even as he acknowledged the hardships that lead many families to make the dangerous journey north.

"Stay where you are and apply legally from there," he advised. Biden made the announcement just days before a planned visit to El Paso, Texas, for his first trip to the southern border as president. From there, he will travel on to Mexico City to meet with North American leaders. At the

US-Mexico border, migrants have been denied a chance to seek asylum 2.5 million times since March 2020 under Title 42 restrictions, introduced as an emergency health measure by former President Donald Trump to prevent the spread of COVID-19. But there always has been criticism that the restrictions were used as a pretext by the Republican to seal off the border.

Biden moved to end the Title 42 restrictions, and Republicans sued to keep them. The US Supreme Court has kept the rules in place for now. White House officials say they still believe the restrictions should end, but they maintain they can continue to turn away migrants under immigration law. Spokesperson Boris Cheshirkov of UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, welcomed the expansion of safe and regular pathways that will now be available to an "unprecedented number" of people trying to enter the United States, but said the agency also wants more details about how the new process will be implemented.

"These are quite significant and multifaceted announcements," he told reporters in Geneva at a regular UN briefing. "We're analyzing what has been announced and especially the impact that these measures may have — including on the situation and the thousands of people that are already on the move." Cheshirkov reiterated the UN agency's long-running concerns about the use of Title 42 because of the risk that many people may get sent back to Mexico "without considerations of the dangers that they fled and the risks and hardships that many of them may then face." "What we're reiterating is that this is not in line with the refugee law standards," he added. "Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right."

Romania seizes more cars in Tate case; court next week

BUCHAREST (AP): Four more luxury vehicles have been seized in the investigation into Andrew Tate, a divisive social media personality who was detained in Romania last week on charges of human trafficking and rape, an official said. Prosecutors investigating the case seized the additional four vehicles on top of 11 others seized in raids last week. Ramona Bolla, a spokesperson for Romanian anti-organized crime agency DIICOT, told The Associated Press.

At least seven of the seized vehicles — some of which local media report are limited editions worth up to \$300,000 — are registered to Tate and his brother Tristan Tate who was detained last week in the same case, she said. Some of the other vehicles either aren't registered or don't have documentation. Bolla also said that more than 10 properties or land owned by companies registered to the Tate brothers have been seized in the investigation so far.

"If we prove they gained money through human trafficking," Bolla said, "they will be taken by the state and (will) cover the expenses of the investigation and damages to the victims." Tate, a British citizen and former professional kickboxer who has amassed 4.4 million followers on Twitter, was detained last week along with his brother Tristan in Ilfov, an area north of Romania's capital,

Bucharest. Two other Romanian suspects are also in custody.

DIICOT said in a statement last week that it has identified six victims who were subjected to "acts of physical violence and mental coercion" and were sexually exploited by group members. The agency said two British citizens in the case lured victims using pretenses of love, and later intimidation, constant surveillance, and other control tactics into performing pornographic acts intended to reap "important financial benefits."

All four suspects are expected to appear in a Bucharest court next week to have their appeals heard contesting a judge's decision last week to extend their arrest warrants from 24 hours to 30 days, Bolla said. The Tate brothers will also appear in court next week to appeal the seizure of some of their belongings.

In a statement posted on Andrew Tate's website — which sells a program called "The War Room" for more than \$5,000, intended "for men who understand something is missing" — says his detention is an "unfounded, politically-driven attack." Since his arrest last week, a series of posts have appeared on Tate's Twitter account. One of them, reads: "Your enemies perpetuate "justice" and "civility" in a society designed to enslave you. You feel sad inside FOR A REASON. You can feel

something isn't right. You must escape the Matrix."

Peru's tourism sector hurt by protests

LIMA (Reuters): Weeks of deadly protests in Peru after the ouster and detention of President Pedro Castillo have taken a toll on the country's economy, particularly its tourism sector, a minister and industry representatives said. Up to 60% of travel bookings for the first half of the year have been canceled since the protests began, Peru's minister of foreign trade and tourism said. More than two dozen people have died due to clashes and accidents linked to road-blocks.

"We had really expected tourism to take off this year," Minister Luis Fernando Helguero said in an interview on local television station Canal N. "The worst part are the cancellations in the first half of the year, some 50% to 60%. The deadly protests ramped up again after a two-week break over the holidays, and began in the turmoil following the Dec. 7 ouster of Castillo, who tried to illegally dissolve Congress and was later detained. Demonstrators have demanded the resignation of the new president, Dina Boluarte, the closure of Congress, a constitutional reform and the release of Castillo."

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Local governments, an unending conundrum

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 on January 15.

The local bodies' elections had always been a matter of concern for all political parties due to their vested interests regarding their vote bank and influence in electoral constituencies at the grassroots level. The local bodies form a breeding ground for political groups and each party intends to instate its workers in lucrative positions so both party and leaders improve their image through public work by using public money during their term in office. Awfully, no political party in the center and provinces ever voiced in favor of such a local body mechanism that empowered the masses and fulfilled their needs satisfactorily rather than all political clots always upheld their party interests through primeval tools and feudalistic arrangements. After the 18th amendment, the local bodies became a provincial subject and currently all federating units have varying local government systems which suit the needs of the party ruling in the provinces.

Karachi being a mega city, an industrial and commercial hub in the country had always been a battleground for the competing political groups. All combatant political groups including PPP, MQM, JI, and PTI have plans to politically conquer mini Pakistan while diverging avenues, conflicting game rules, and varied ethnic and linguistic groups constitute their power those do not come in one basket to pave their way for the slot of Karachi Mayor. Different parties have diverse priorities some wanted polls on the old voters' list, others wanted new constituencies and some advocated the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), etc. All groups desire authority, no one wants to sit on opposition benches and everyone aims to achieve this goal by foul play, political pressure, agitations, and the court's verdict thus political process has come to a halt and people are suffering from the selfishness of their leaders.

Presently, MQM pleading postponement of LG elections in Karachi while quoting incorrect voters list, earlier it rejected the recent delimitation in the city. The PPP government in Sindh demanded a halt to LG polls quoting its no preparation and nonavailability of troops for the security of LG elections. At the same time, the Federal government also expressed its inability to provide security troops for the Karachi elections because of the LEAs' engagement in flood relief activities. Interestingly, the ruling PPP government has blocked the Local bodies election in Karachi for the consecutive fourth time while the coalition government in the center also backed PPP's stance by refusing the provision of security personnel on the mere excuse of relief work that has already been completed across the country.

All above are lame excuses for the Political elite, which has utterly politicized the local institutions and ruined the district administration. In fact, local bodies must be free from poisonous politics and should purely work for the provision of basics to the public, while political parties must contest elections on their economic and national agendas instead of street renovations and sanitation work, so the country gets out of the prevailing political dogfight and moves toward political stability and economic prosperity in the future.

Russo-Belarus nexus

ACCORDING to the media, a large contingent of the Russian military equipped with the latest military arsenal has reached Belarus to participate in a joint military drill in the neighboring state. Meanwhile, Russia also provided more modern weapons and related equipment to its close ally to boost military cooperation between the two nations. According to the Belarusian Defense Ministry, Personnel, weapons, military and special military equipment of the Russian Federation will continue to arrive in the Republic of Belarus to create a joint force to strengthen the protection and defense of the Russian Federation and Belarus.

Russian Strongman Vladimir Putin and Belarusian long-term authoritarian ruler, Alexander Lukashenko had forged a close Strategic partnership between the two countries. Both nations had close economic and trade ties along with comprehensive security and defense cooperation under the CESTO framework while a Russian military contingent permanently stayed in Belarus in the past decades. Russia had always supported its close ally during its diplomatic row with Western nations over the issue of illegal migration, human rights, and trade disputes. Currently, massive Russian military mobilization toward Belarus had created fear in western nations bordering Belarus including Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland about a possible Russian invasion amid ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both Moscow and Minsk have rejected such notions but announced a large-scale military drill near the Belarus-Ukraine border in the coming days.

Earlier, Russia massed thousands of military troops near the Belarus border with Ukraine under the pretext of a military drill before launching February 24 invasion against Kyiv and now Kremlin again gathered its forces in Belarus on the same lines. Russia has used Belarusian airspace for drone and missile attacks on Ukraine. Therefore, Russia is likely to use Belarus soil for launching another attack against its neighbor once more in the future. Presently, the Ukrainian nation has proved its wits during the year-long war while desperate Russia can risk another invasion against any nation to trade a bargain for a plausible end to its so-called special operation which has now become a disgrace for Moscow.

Quote of the day

I believe as long as we allow conditions to exist that make for second-class citizens, we are making of ourselves less than first-class citizens.

— Dwight Eisenhower, American general & President

Germans are preparing for battles near Berlin

EUROPE still believes in Ukraine's victory and hopes to defeat Russia on the battlefield. Germany nevertheless decided to supply Ukraine with heavy weapons, no matter how Olaf Scholz tried to delay the solution of the issue. Berlin had long been urged to give Kyiv a "real weapon," but the German authorities said they would not act separately from their NATO allies, meaning primarily France. Therefore, the decision of Paris to transfer light tanks AMX-10 RC and Bastion armored personnel carriers to Ukraine drove the Scholz cabinet into a corner. It was no longer possible to pull further, and Berlin announced its intention to supply Ukraine with 40 Marder infantry fighting vehicles.

Kyiv's reaction was very indicative; they called it a "correct, but very belated decision" that had a "bitter aftertaste." Andrey Melnik, the same former ambassador to Germany, who now

holds the post of Deputy Foreign Minister, said this. "The first violation of the taboo", as he described the supply of infantry fighting vehicles, should not be the last - now the FRG should immediately ship everything and more to Ukraine: "We are talking about all available heavy weapons, such as battle tanks, fighter jets, combat drones, warships, submarines, ballistic missiles."

It is clear that Melnik is just fooling around: the Germans do not have ballistic missiles, although at one time it was they who invented them. But that was in the time of Hitler - although even the V-2 could not change the course of the war. Just as the deliveries of the BMP Marder will not be able to change it now. Therefore, in Kyiv they swear at the Germans and demand Leopard 2 tanks:

"Without this type of tank, it will be very difficult for Ukraine to regain further territories," Kyiv Mayor Klitschko wrote. Belief in Leopards is strong

Petr Akopov

in Kyiv — Ukrainian leaders have long wanted them from Berlin. And in Germany, there are many politicians who are confident that the supply of tanks will bring Ukraine's victory closer. CDU leader Friedrich Merz said on New Year's Eve that supporting Ukraine with battle tanks and armored personnel carriers would not have dragged out this war, but shortened it: "Germany and other European countries should have supplied Ukraine with Western-style infantry fighting vehicles and tanks long ago."

And about what will happen if German tanks do not end up in the steppes of Ukraine, Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, warned on Wednesday:

"If Mr. Scholz wants the Germans to fight near Berlin and near Stuttgart on German tanks with the Russians, then he can continue this game. Conduct sociological research, whether we need to give

tanks or not."

That is, if you do not want us to fight the Russians near the Dnieper on your tanks, then wait for the Red Army on the Rhine and Main. Ukrainian leaders talk about this all the time, scaring Germans, Europeans, and the West as a whole. Intimidation by the Russian threat is a key element of all Ukrainian propaganda: we are an outpost of the West, we stand in the way of the Russian hordes, give us weapons and money. The Poles say the same thing, but this role is much more familiar to them, because they have been fulfilling it for many centuries (with a break for the times of the socialist camp). After the start of the special operation, the Poles take revenge on the Germans and other Europeans: look, we warned you that the Russians would go to the West, but you did not believe us, traded with them. They also tease the Germans with the demands of trillions in reparations

for the Second World War (not remembering the German lands received), that is, they behave like an impudent madman. Ukrainian authorities imitate the Polish?

Partly yes, but in general and Warsaw, and Kyiv simply perform the same roles in someone else's performance. The play "Asia against Europe, or the Russian threat to Berlin and Paris" is more than one hundred years old, but its Anglo-Saxon author does not need to bother writing new plots - it is enough just to add a new act to it after the next intermission. This time, however, outright hack-work came out: yesterday's Russia, that is, Little Russia, was lured to the role of "Europe". Reckoning that the viewer is young and inexperienced? Yes, but there are still experienced spectators who remember not only previous productions, but even real events of the past that were by no means yesterday - what is it like for them to watch all this? Nothing, they will not go

anywhere, they will buy tickets and make a cash desk, and if they resist and want to stay at home, we will scare them by arranging a performance right under their windows.

That's where all this nonsense about the "war with the Russians near Berlin" comes from - you need to scare the Germans with cries of "The Russians are coming!" so much so that they gave weapons and money to the Anglo-Saxon operation to destroy the Russians on Russian soil. Do the Germans believe in a threat to Europe? No, but they give money and infantry fighting vehicles, and then they will give tanks.

And then they will be surprised at the consequences: how is it, because our tanks were supposed to secure Europe, but it turned out exactly the opposite? Amazing short-sightedness and forgetfulness for a great nation - it can, of course, be explained by increased suggestibility, but Russians have every right not to make allowances for this.

Taiwan's domestic politics and economy will intensify

Sheryn Lee

major military exercises that crossed the Taiwan Strait median line for the first time, along with punitive economic measures targeting Taiwan's agricultural and aquatic goods. Beijing also released an updated white paper on Taiwan that reiterated that 'differences in social systems are neither an obstacle to reunification nor a justification for secessionism'.

The courting of Taiwan's semiconductor industry continued as part of efforts by the United States, Japan, India and Europe to reshore production. This led to a broader debate about whether this would reduce the deterrent effect of Taiwan's 'silicon shield' vis-a-vis China.

But Taiwan's role in advanced semiconductor innovation is unlikely to reduce any time soon. Even though Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company's Arizona foundry will produce advanced (3nm) semiconductors by 2026, the company will begin mass production of smaller (2nm) chips by 2025 in Taiwan. After a technological breakthrough in 2022, it

will also build a foundry for the production of even smaller chips (1nm) in northern Taiwan.

But despite Taiwan's higher profile, international efforts to support it shouldn't be overestimated. The number of European delegations remained lower than during the pre-pandemic period and the European Union and its member states made no changes to their 'one China' policies. The Biden administration also balanced its statements of support for Taiwan with statements that the United States' 'one China' policy hadn't changed. And there remained a backlog of US\$19 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, somewhat undermining Washington's pledges to enhance Taiwan self-defence capabilities.

As Taiwan continues to invoke its value as a democratic Indo-Pacific partner in the US-led liberal order, external scrutiny of Taiwan's domestic politics and economy will intensify.

Many observers perceived the Kuomintang's (KMT) wins in Taiwan's mid-term November elections and the resignation of

President Tsai as the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) chairperson as a bellwether for the 2024 general elections. But local elections have traditionally favoured the KMT and there has been no increase in party preference for the KMT in public opinion polls. Both the DPP and KMT will have to monitor the Taiwan People's Party's potential rise as a third political force after the party won 14 councillor races in its local electoral debut.

Less international attention was paid to the failed constitutional referendum, held alongside the midterms, to lower the voting age from 20 to 18. Such a reform has long been championed by the DPP. The measure would have brought Taiwan in line with most other liberal democracies and added almost half a million youth voters to the electorate ahead of the 2024 general elections.

Taiwan also lacks absentee voting — which would likely be used by a portion of the electorate to vote for the KMT, given that approximately half a million Taiwanese citizens live and work in mainland China.

Taiwan's lack of labour rights for the migrant Southeast Asian workers that power its semiconductor foundries remains unaddressed. Taipei has had little incentive to tackle the problem amid critical labour shortages and global demand for cheap consumer electronics.

After the failed 2021 referendum to restart Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant, Taiwan has also suffered from a series of blackouts, which impacted semiconductor foundries and will likely exacerbate energy deficits. Taiwan's informal regulations for refugees and its lack of resources for asylum seekers have also led to unclear residency status for immigrants from Hong Kong and Macau, despite warm rhetoric from Taiwan's government.

Future Taiwanese governments will continue to promote Taiwan's market economy and democratic government as pillars of its defence. It will be increasingly important during President Tsai's final year in office to define a legacy that ensures necessary social and electoral reforms can be enacted even if they seem contrary to national security imperatives.

Remember, the commodity money takes care of itself—and us too, if we let it

THIS will be brief, appropriate to the topic at hand. It consists of a quote from Milton Friedman found in Joseph Salerno's outstanding book, Money: Sound and Unsound:

If a domestic money consists of a commodity, [such as] a pure gold standard or cowrie bead standard, the principles of monetary policy are very simple.

There aren't any. The commodity money takes care of itself. (emphasis added)

Imagine that. If we have sound money, we don't need the Fed. Or Congress. We just need sound money.

End of essay.

Postscript:

Economist Nouriel

Roubini once attacked the gold standard:

Roubini raises the following question: If you are on a gold standard, or modified gold standard, what do you do in the event of a bank run—if you don't have enough gold to fully back the currency?

Translated: What happens if the banks have created bogus IOUs for their depositors' gold? Suggestion: Have them indicted for fraud. Gold

mental bases and institutions of the market economy.

Roubini also says that a "gold standard limits the flexibility and range of actions that central banks can take." He thinks it's a shortcoming, but that alone should recommend it.

At the start of World War I, the belligerent governments went off the gold

George Ford Smith

standard so they could fight the bloodiest war in human history. Gold, since it can't be created on demand, would have severely limited the "flexibility and range of actions" governments could take.

Sound money is not a product of central bank policy decisions. But who cares about sound money

doesn't need the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. It doesn't need the WEF, the FOMC, or AOC.

It just needs to be left alone. The gold standard "requires nothing else than that the government abstain from deliberately sabotaging it," Ludwig von Mises wrote in The Theory of Money and Credit.

What all the enemies of the gold standard is

inspired by the superstition that omnipotent governments can create wealth out of little scraps of paper.

If wealth could be created out of scraps of paper or their digital equivalent, world poverty would be a thing of the past.

Remember, the commodity money takes care of itself—and us too, if we let it.

Credit expansion—inflation—is indispensable to a growing government. From Human Action:

The gold standard removes the determination of cash-induced changes in purchasing power from the political arena. Its general acceptance requires the acknowledgment of the truth that one cannot make all people richer by printing money. The abhorrence of the gold standard is

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North Atlantic bloc welcomes the new year in a state of deep division

IN the North Atlantic bloc, whose activity at the Russian borders partially provoked the Ukrainian crisis, internal contradictions are growing. About what awaits NATO in 2023 - in the material of RIA Novosti.

Failed Scandinavian expansion

Back in 2021, the Swedes and Finns did not seek a military alliance. People were quite satisfied that their countries were de facto and so in NATO - at the level of information exchange, joint military exercises.

According to Finnish President Sauli Niiniste, the Russian special operation in Ukraine changed the situation. Now more than 70 percent of Finns (as well as Swedes) are unambiguously in favor of joining the bloc.

NATO has been waiting for them for a long time. Both Sweden and Finland have strong economies, they will not become "subsidized", and the boundaries of the alliance will be moved apart.

When it became known in the spring that Stockholm and Helsinki would simultaneously apply for membership, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg promised: "We will accept it with

open arms."

But the process was slowed down by Turkey. To expand the bloc, a consensus of all 30 participants is required, and Ankara put forward its own conditions to Stockholm and Helsinki.

Terrorists and planes for Erdogan

Turkey requires Sweden and Finland to stop supporting Kurdish organizations that it considers terrorist. By the way, many EU countries at the national level are in solidarity with this. At the same time, in Sweden, the Kurds are quite influential and even represented in government.

Under the terms of the tripartite memorandum, the Swedes and Finns pledged to expel the Kurdish figures. There are more than 70 people on Ankara's list. So far, less than ten have been deported.

Turkey uses the problem of NATO expansion in the framework of bilateral relations with the United States.

For Washington, Ankara is not an easy ally. Possessing the second most powerful army in the alliance and controlling the Black Sea straits, Turkey is actively putting pressure on its partners.

In particular, to return to the program for the development and production of

Renat Abdullin

the fifth generation F-35 fighters, from which Ankara was excluded after the purchase of Russian S-400 air defense systems.

So far, there has been no progress on this issue, but the Americans made a kind of gesture of goodwill - they unfrozen the previously blocked deliveries of F-16 fighters in the defense budget. Probably, if it comes to the F-35, Ankara will give the green light to the Scandinavians.

Security Guarantees

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, speaking to reporters in mid-December, assured that the United States "soon will be able to call Sweden and Finland NATO allies."

The head of American diplomacy tried to separate Ankara's demands from the problem of expanding the alliance. "This is not a bilateral issue between the United States and Turkey. And it will not turn into one," he stressed, adding that Finland and Sweden had a productive dialogue with Erdogan.

In the meantime, the United States tried to "brighten up the expectation." In May, Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde, following a meeting with Blinken, said that

Washington had provided security guarantees to Stockholm. What they are is not clear. It is very likely that these are just big words.

Before full-fledged entry into the bloc, the key fifth article of the NATO charter - on mutual defense - will not apply to Sweden and Finland. And the US is in no hurry to directly get involved in the conflicts of "wards". And this is convincingly demonstrated by the example of Ukraine.

Laissez-faire policy

The Kyiv regime insists that Ukraine is about to be accepted into NATO. The Americans, as you know, warmly support them, and they are the main ones in the alliance (after all, even all the main documents are kept in Washington). But there is no unity on this score among the allies. So, Turkey, for which relations with Russia are important, Hungary, which has a number of claims against Kyiv in Transcarpathia, doubts.

The United States is actively promoting the "open door" policy. But in this case, internal political considerations get in the way.

Despite large-scale arms deliveries, the White House has repeatedly stated that American soldiers will not officially fight on

Ukrainian soil.

Adhering to this principle, Biden solves several problems. The first is external, image.

He not only demonstrates a willingness to help Ukraine, but also hints at a compromise with Russia. The second goal is the internal electorate. Americans who have not recovered from the consequences of the pandemic, suffering from rising inflation, even if they sympathize with the Ukrainians, do not want to fight in a distant country.

And this is very upsetting for Vladimir Zelensky. "There was no agreed position to take Ukraine into NATO. I don't see an agreed position regarding the fact that Ukraine will be taken into NATO," he was indignant back in March. And later, according to sources, Biden even raised his voice at him, because he complained too much.

In July 2023, NATO will have to choose a new Secretary General. A candidate for the position, which many consider formal, must be agreed upon by all members of the alliance - current and potential. And the block came to the change of leadership with serious contradictions, discrediting even its own "open door policy."



Peace to the incoming!

FEW doubted that Moscow's proposed 36-hour Christmas truce would be exclusively one-sided. But practically no one, probably, could even imagine what kind of reaction this initiative, merciful and generous, would cause there and among those who self-appointed defenders of goodness and justice.

Elena Karaeva

Christmas. Paris intends to drive light wheeled tanks to Kiev, which, however, would have to be disposed of anyway, since all the terms of use have expired, and the United States and Germany turned out to be less stingy - but the economy there is more powerful, like the military-industrial complex. Washington will supply the Bradley BMP. Berlin will give the Patriot battery from the royal shoulder.

which needed to be restored. And here begins a different story. About how all the projects were supervised by the Elysee Palace. About how the then Minister of Culture, during a meeting with Brigitte Macron, found out that the presidential couple had opted for an architectural solution that suggested that the outline of a possible new spire left no doubt that it was a phallus directed upwards. And at the base of the spire-phallus are two testicles. Also golden in color. Roslyn Bashlot (namely, she was then in charge of the French Ministry of Culture) says that breaking through the wall with her head in order to get the project to restore the old spire approved came out to be a big political penny, since the attitude towards her at the highest level of power has changed radically.

Kiev immediately - repeatedly and loudly, so that everyone was already aware of it - rejected the truce. Official London said that the decision of the Russian commander-in-chief, in the words of the Foreign Office, "will not bring the prospects of peace closer."

The State Department did not like the Russian initiative either, which, of course, Brussels could not lag behind, saying (and this is really a pearl) that "it does not trust a truce declared unilaterally." The words about the mistrust that pan-European diplomacy, which has lied about in all respects, have no doubt, will definitely go down in history.

The reaction of our foreign policy opponents to an absolutely natural gesture, to an absolutely natural mercy, like a litmus test, showed not only all the gloomy flaws of the Western collective unconscious, but, on the other hand, showed us, all of us, everything with which and with whom Russia has to fight today.

On the day, and this must be emphasized after all, a great religious holiday.

Since on the days of major religious holidays, as well as on the days preceding them, in Europe - in particular, in France - the situation, on the contrary, is so tense that religious institutions (cathedrals, for example, or synagogues) are guarded by special police and gendarmier units. As, for example, it was at the past Hanukkah and Christmas. This is what it looks like today in France, where regular birds of political correctness and public consent sing about tolerance around the clock. Consensus, so to speak.

In peacetime, in a state of all freedoms, the right of believers to quietly attend Christmas and Hanukkah services had to be protected by policemen and gendarmes armed to the teeth. Yes, yes, we are aware of the threat of terrorism, but the problem is much deeper than the desire of fanatics to destroy those who otherwise live and believe.

People who treat their own shrine and their own memory in the way that practically the entire European establishment does, of course, cannot understand and will never understand, firstly, why the Russians, as one, came to the defense of everything that is dear to them. Therefore, in the eyes of Europeans, we behave like savages. And like barbarians. Secondly, the Europeans do not understand and will never understand that strength is by no means in the number of various bradleys and patriots set up to kill and attack. On us.

Our strength is in generosity. Primarily. Our strength is in mercy. Our strength lies in the fact that even during the battle there are ideals according to which on the day when the birth is celebrated, we do not want to kill.

Our strength lies in the fact that even at the time of the special operation, we all remain human beings.

A world that still imagines itself to be the navel of the earth, believing that everything and everything revolves to satisfy its wishes, and, as a maximum, after satisfying these wishes, allowing you to enter your servants' room - well, so that it could be polished one more time, so be it boots, - I completely forgot that human civilization (regardless of geography) rests on a completely different foundation. That a society that supports civilizational ideals lives according to completely different laws and principles. This is not about volumes of legal codes, but about everyday actions and feelings. This is mercy. This is courage. This is solidarity. And that's empathy.

Russia has committed an act, behind which there is strength and conviction in the rightness. The West responded with words in which fear is mixed with confusion, no matter how polished soulless formulations try to hide it.

Yes, soulless. The ones without a soul. Because only heartlessness and emptiness can push on the day when believers, as, by the way, non-believers too, want to celebrate a holiday that is significant for themselves and for their families, to the complete depreciation of these desires. Because - some kind of Orthodox there, and even living according to some kind of calendar of their own, why worry about them?

Those who are without a soul put forward a counter initiative. And also before

the fire that almost destroyed Notre Dame in Paris did not arise from malicious intent, but because those who repaired the famous and precious oak formwork were impatient to smoke on the rafters. An outstanding cigarette butt (and this is the main version of the investment)

Russia, albeit slowly, gradually, but calmly and confidently, is building an era of mercy.

The one that is embedded not only in the Gospel, but also in politics. Therefore, in fact, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Russia said: in these 36 hours there will be a truce, no matter what anyone says or thinks. Small world. Short. Peace to the incoming!

PRESIDENT Biden's re-election campaign is preparing to launch.

After months of "will he or won't he," Biden and his senior aides are readying the details around his 2024 campaign.

Multiple sources tell The Hill the president is planning to make his intentions to run for a second White House term public in the coming weeks, likely in February, around the State of the Union.

One source close to Biden's 2020 campaign with knowledge of the president's plans said a more formal announcement is expected to come in April.

Behind the scenes, his advisers are meeting with key allies and are putting together an expansive and revamped digital presence.

Biden is moving closer to the official reelection announcement after spending time with his family in St. Croix over the holidays discussing his next steps for another bid, said the source familiar.

The intention to mount another presidential campaign began to crystallize even as some Democrats continue to question whether Biden will run again, mainly because of his advanced age. He turned 80 in November.

"I think it's all about timing at this point," said one Biden ally. "It seems like he's all in. It's not really 'if' he runs anymore."

The State of the Union is typically held in late January or early February, but the president has to be invited by the Speaker of the House to address the Congress and the chaos surrounding the Speakership this week has inevitably delayed the address.

In recent months, as Biden has mulled his next steps together with first lady Jill Biden, he has been getting briefed by advisers on what a potential campaign would look like.

Last month, a group of Biden's top advisers met with key allies and constituency groups to talk about the president's agenda. But one attendee told NBC News it had the feel

Amie Parnes & Hanna Trudo

of a "strategy session ahead of a campaign launch."

And as Biden tried to make a decision about his political future, his aides were quietly building the infrastructure needed for a new campaign. The Washington Post reported last month that aides were working to expand their digital footprint on platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp, where political advertising is prohibited.

The potential expansion is the result of an extensive research effort paid for by the Democratic National Committee to lay the groundwork for Biden's expected launch.

Those around Biden maintain he has time on his side, particularly amid the GOP disharmony in the Speakership vote this week.

Some influential members of Biden's inner circle, including one member of Congress, were hesitant to weigh in on the president's next steps until the Speaker race concluded, signaling the delicate nature of the ongoing preparations, one

source close to the lawmaker said.

The hush-hush nature has punctuated much of the Biden era, and the weeks leading up to a potential announcement were no different, including on Capitol Hill. For the most part, as Republicans scrambled, Democrats focused their attention elsewhere.

As Biden's senior aides, including Mike Donilon and Bruce Reed, toiled on a State of the Union speech, which they have been trying to perfect for weeks, the president spent time touting legislative projects, including his infrastructure package.

On Wednesday, the president traveled to Kentucky, where money from the bipartisan infrastructure bill will be used to reconstruct a bridge between Kentucky and Ohio. Alongside Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Biden was able to telegraph that he had kept one of his campaign promises — bringing the parties together — as Republicans battled on the

House floor.

One Democratic operative said it was the perfect backdrop to what a campaign kickoff might look like.

"The bipartisan infrastructure event this week is a good soft campaign launch for the president," said the Democratic strategist.

"It positions Biden's accomplishments, shows him as a unifier and contrasts him with Republicans who are cannibalizing each other during this messy Speaker fight."

Biden has not been shy about his desire to seek reelection, especially if it turns into a rematch against former President Trump, with his aides and allies often echoing his eagerness around the matter.

But even the loquacious president dodged questions about a hypothetical campaign-in-the-waiting in recent days. "There's an election co-ming up?" Biden quipped after reporters pressed him about a decision to run again. "2023 is going to be a good year," he added.

Risky strategy

THE Biden administration released some 180 million barrels of oil from America's emergency stockpile ahead of the 2022 midterm elections, ostensibly to try to get a grip on the skyrocketing price of gas at the pump, with the reserve subsequently tumbling to its lowest levels since 1983.

Tasked with the purchase of three million barrels of sour crude oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in February, the US Department of Energy has reportedly rejected multiple offers from producers, hoping to get a better deal.

Informed sources told US business media that the offers the DoE has received so far have been turned down due to prices being deemed too high, and for failing to meet other requirements, which were

not outlined in any detail.

The failure to get a deal means the purchase will be put off until an unspecified later date, the Energy Department has confirmed in a statement.

"DoE only select bids that meet the required crude specifications and that are at a price that is a good deal for taxpayers. Following a review of the initial submission, DoE will not be making any award selections for the February delivery window," the department said Friday.

Neither the DoE nor the media sources offered any information on which producers submitted bids, nor the possible reasons, besides cost, that they were turned down.

Risky Strategy

Washington's strategy of holding off on the purchase of crude oil to fill up its depleted reserves bears a

Ilya Tsukanov

passing resemblance to the disastrous policy by European countries in the spring and summer of 2021 to gamble with their energy security by holding off on refilling their underground natural gas storage reserves, hoping for a drop in prices at a later date. The price drop never came, and the surge in orders caused a pent up demand caused a major supply crunch in the fall and winter of 2021, which was exacerbated through 2-022 by shocks caused by the crisis in Ukraine, and Brussels' rejection of Russian energy. It remains to be seen how the US Energy Department's strategy will play out in the long run.

Created in 1975 in the wake of the OPEC oil embargo, the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is, as the name suggests,

America's backup energy stockpile, designed to cushion the blow of any major domestic or global emergency that results in a dramatic decline in oil production or imports.

In January 2022, the United States had some 593 million barrels of sweet and sour crude oil in its emergency reserves, enough to last the country - which consumes about 20 million barrels of petroleum daily, approximately 30 days in case of a complete halt in production and imports for any reason. In March of 2022, President Biden announced a historic release of 180 million barrels of oil, and by December 30, the reserve had plummeted to 372 million barrels, enough for about 18-and-a-half days of import- and production-free consumption.

Biden's critics fumed over the president's policy,

not just over the release of the SPR itself - which they deemed a populist move designed to improve the Democratic Party's chances in the 2022 midterms, but in the way the release was handled.

In July, Republicans demanded that the president be impeached and brought up on criminal charges after media revealed that over five million barrels of oil released from the reserve had been shipped abroad to India, European countries, and at least 950,000 barrels to Sinopec, a Chinese energy giant that Hunter Biden had invested in.

Oil prices began to tumble this past summer after reaching a high of up to \$120 a barrel for WTI crude in mid-June, with WTI currently trading for about \$74 a barrel, with Brent crude at \$78.50 and Russia's Urals blend at \$49.

excuses which are not "co-gent enough or professional".

It is necessary "to ensure that the expertise acquired [by soldiers] is not easily lost by the service and to recoup the investment made [by the army] to the benefit of the nation, while service personnel [quitting] at will does not augur well for the Nigerian Army," the statement read.

According to the statement, as military service in the country is voluntary, there is an opportunity for "any personnel to leave at different times". However, taking into account the resources and efforts which are invested in training staff, their decision to leave is "inimical to the system". Therefore, the reasons for quitting the service must be cogent, legitimate and valid.

"Loss of interest in military service will no longer be tolerated as a basis for discharge. This reason is, to say the least, lame and therefore not accepted. Personnel are expected to explain their reason for lack of interest," the army stated.

media has reported.

In the past, reasons given by soldiers wishing to retire from army life have included loss of interest, low morale, corruption in the service and intimidation by superiors. Some soldiers have pointed out that corruption is so rampant in the army it is hampering the anti-terrorism campaign in north-eastern Nigeria. Corruption was also cited as the underlying reason for lack of interest in military service.

Previously, the media reported that more than 500

soldiers in the north-east of Nigeria wrote to the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya, wanting to leave the army. Their petition comes at times when the military faces security challenges, fighting terrorists and bandits across the country.

The army responded to the request saying that personnel coming and going as they please "does not augur well" for the military, adding that most soldiers wishing to quit the force offer

'Inimical to the system'

NIGERIA has been experiencing serious security threats for years, as terrorist organizations and various armed gangs have proliferated throughout the country, carrying out crimes and insurgent violence. In consequence, the army is stepping up its operations, and the pressure on military personnel is increasing.

The Nigerian Army will no longer accept lack of interest or low morale as a valid excuse to resign from military service, local

Maria Konokhova

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Govt will have to convince IMF for economic assistance: Shaukat Tareen

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Former finance minister Shaukat Tareen has said that the government will have to convince the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for economic assistance.

Talking exclusively to a private television channel, he said that the IMF wants

fulfillment of promises made with it.

"The government recovery has fallen to 10 percent. The IMF will ask the government to increase the prices of gas, oil and electricity," he added.

He claimed that the performance of the present government is worse

than the previous government. "Pakistan is hopeful of collecting dollars in the Donors' Conference in Geneva," he added.

Shaukat Tareen was of the view that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's press conference is an attempt to divert attention from

the problems being faced by the country.

"Ishaq Dar has failed in giving a credible strategy to save economy. Unprecedented inflation has been imposed on the people due to the negative policies of the imported government," he maintained.

Negative policies, politicking on national issues disappointed masses: President PEW

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said that negative policies, politicking over national issues has increased anxiety of the masses and a large number of countrymen seem to be disappointed about future of the country.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he said that that wrong policies and politicking economic decision despite challenging situation was neither benefiting governor nor supporting public interests.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal was of the view that the economic conditions of the country has remained poor for the past several years, but now the sit-

uation has become alarming and the masses seem to be worried. He said that the country's economy was nose-diving, there were no new jobs and existing jobs were also decreasing in various sectors and the country's default has become the most important issue of discussion among the public.

The agriculture, industrial and service sectors were in decline and the country's population was getting poor day by day, the President PEW added. He said that masses have been forced to cut essential expenses while education and health have become a luxury ending the prospects for future development.

Dr. Mughal said that small

businessmen were worried about the situation while many entrepreneurs were moving their businesses and capital abroad out of desperation which will not be good for Pakistan. Youth are leaving the country in large numbers which has never been seen in the past which indicates that they see no future for themselves in Pakistan.

He said that the majority of local and foreign investors are considering an investment in Pakistan as a high-risk deal while the majority of people believe that politicians lack any solution to the existing problems and they have no desire for it because their attention is focused on politics and serving the elite.

Chicken price soars above beef rate, being sold at Rs700 per kg

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The chicken price has gone above the beef rate, reaching at Rs700 per kg in the twin cities.

In Karachi, chicken is being sold at Rs620 per kg while the per dozen eggs rate has been fixed at Rs295 per kg. Overcharging of the chicken price is being reported in several areas of the twin cities. Social organizations have launched a campaign to boycott chicken.

The increase is said to be an outcome of shortage of poultry feed.

Meanwhile, the prices of vegetables, pulses and fruit have also increased by manifold.

As a result, people are facing difficulties.



LAHORE: A Vendor displaying and selling jackets to attract the customers at his roadside setup in the Provincial Capital.

‘All chambers to raise voice together for economic uplift’

LAHORE (APP): Lahore

Chamber of Commerce Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar on Saturday said that all Chambers should be on the same page and raise voice together for the improvement of economy.

He was addressing the delegation of Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, led by its President Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Awan. LCCI Senior Vice President Chaudhry Zafar Mahmood,

BCCI Senior Vice President Hanif Ahmad, Vice President Adeel Khalid, LCCI Executive Committee members Muhammad Usman Sheikh and Raja Hassan Akhter were also present

on the occasion.

The LCCI President said that problems of all chambers were same like not opening of L/Cs and Chapter 84-85. He said, although the government had said that permission from the State Bank of Pakistan was no longer required but there was no money in the country for the payments of imports. He said that if the machinery would not come, how the industrial advancement would take place. "If there are no raw materials, how the exports can be boosted" he questioned.

Kashif Anwar said: "We have not paid attention towards cotton crop areas. Resultantly, we have to import 10 million cotton bales." He said that

if the industrialization would not take place, there would be no employment opportunities and unemployment always gives birth to the law and order situation. He said that all the chambers should convince the community to file their income tax returns.

The LCCI President said that Lahore Chamber had started one-window operation for its members and most of the government institutions had established their help desks. He said that LCCI had also established Alternative Dispute Resolution Center. He said that LCCI had also signed MOUs with various medical and educational institutions to facilitate its members. He added that the political stabil-

ity was very important for economic stability.

President Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Awan appreciated LCCI one-window operation for the members. He said the objective of chambers should be to provide facilitate its members. He added that the cotton was the backbone of economy what we did not pay attention to it. He said that all of our industry was driven by the agriculture sector but due to lack of attention we have become an import based economy. He said that Bahawalpur Chamber organizes Jeep Rally and Bahawalpur Trade Fair. He invited the LCCI delegation to participate.

KE failed to improve power generation: Chairman NEPRA

KARACHI (PPI) Chairman National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Touseef Hassan Farooqi, while expressing sheer disappointment over the performance of DISCOs across Pakistan, including K-Electric, stated Saturday that KE, being a private entity was better as compared to other DISCOs as KE has drastically brought down Transmission & Distribution (T&D) losses from more than 40 percent to 15.5 percent but the biggest dilemma was that they have failed to improve the power generation.

"Technology and competition were the only way forward. Technology is already there but the competition is missing. As KE's exclusivity would come to end by July 2023 and the CTBCM would allow Karachi's businessmen to make their own choice for fulfilling their electricity needs either by setting up their own power plants or by acquiring from any other power producer", he added while exchanging views at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI).

Chairman Businessmen Group Zubair Motiwala, Vice Chairman BMG Jawed Bilwani, President KCCI Mohammed Tariq Yousuf, Senior Vice President Touseef Ahmed, Vice President Mohammad Haris Agar, Former President Muhammad Idrees and KCCI Managing Committee Members attended the meeting.

Chairman NEPRA informed that Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market (CTBCM) provides

a roadmap for opening the Wholesale Electricity Market of Pakistan, aiming to provide choice to the bulk power consumers to purchase electric power from the DISCOs or a competitive supplier of their choice.

He said that during the last three years and five months, it has been one of his top most priority to ensure that no imported fuel-based project or no take-or-pay based project was given go ahead, hence, neither any new license nor tariffs were issued for imported fuel-based project. "It is my utmost effort to bring in green revolution in Pakistan which was very important for our country as the entire world nowadays seriously looks at how green you are", he added.

He noted that the industrial support package yielded positive results wherein 25 percent discount was offered to Large Scale Manufacturing and 50 percent discount was given to Small & Medium Enterprises compared to their previous consumption which led to accelerating industrial activities and helped in achieving an impressive growth rate of 5.8 percent in first year and 6 percent growth in second year.

Pakistan's power was currently going through worst situation as despite having installed production capacity, the country was unable to produce electricity as no funds were available to buy imported fuel for electricity production, he added.

He was of the view that the overall fuel prices have risen by at least eight times in the international markets whereas PKR has also depreciated to

half against dollar which means the overall impact on electricity tariff should have been 16 times higher as 65 percent of the country's electricity was being produced from imported fuel but NEPRA has neither raised the tariff by 16 times nor by 8 times and not even by 4 times which deserves to be appreciated.

In response to concerns expressed over retrospective liabilities, he explained that as the power generation is mostly based on imported fuel, the invoices usually arrive at NEPRA through CGPA after a lapse of two months which leaves no choice but to charge retrospectively, however, efforts will be made to expedite the process and reduce the lapse to one month. Replying to a question regarding fixed charges by KE being charged from closed industries, Chairman NEPRA said that under the relevant rules all such closed industries have the option to apply for disconnection which would save them from fixed charges. KE is liable to reconnect them anytime upon receiving an application from such industry without seeking any security deposit and system development charges.

While referring to NEPRA's Mission Statement, Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala stressed that NEPRA has to bring the affordability of electric power for industries to such an extent that they are able to compete with their regional competitors because the current electricity tariff was exorbitantly high as compared to India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Inflation tsunami breaking the backbone of poor masses

LAHORE (INP): Inflation tsunami is breaking the backbone of poor masses as they have no other option but the purchase the basic necessity of life "Flour" of Rs 145 per kg in Lahore and adjoining areas. With the price of wheat hitting Rs5,000 per maund in the grain markets, the rate of flour has hit Rs150 per kilogramme in Rawalpindi's open market.

A 15-kg bag of flour is being sold for Rs2,250 in the garrison city. An ex-mill red flour bag is available for Rs11,650 in the city while the rate of an ex-mill fine flour bag has

increased to Rs13,000.

The Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) said the official quota of wheat was low and wheat was being sold at Rs5,400 per maund in the open market. The city's Naanbai Association has warned that they would be compelled to increase the rate of a roti by Rs5 again if the prices were not brought under control.

Similarly, the whole-grain chakki flour has jumped up to an all-time high of Rs145 per kg across Lahore. Apart from that, different brands of flour are being sold at a price of

Rs130 per kg in the provincial capital. Flour millers in Lahore blame the reduced wheat releases from the government for the increase in prices.

Chakki owners hold the shortage of grains and high wheat support price responsible for the uptick in the flour rates in Punjab. Former PFMA chairman Khaleeq Arshad told that hardly 21,000-22,000 tonnes of wheat was being released by the Punjab food department. The release of government wheat in Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan was also negli-

gible, he added. "There are insufficient grains in the market in comparison with the demand," he maintained. In addition, he indicated that the government had delayed wheat import despite having complete knowledge of the current market situation.

"Smuggling and black marketing of wheat flour are other factors responsible for the price increase," he pointed out. Besides these local problems and internal mismanagement, Arshad pointed out that the Russia-Ukraine war had also made wheat import difficult.

US stocks rally as market bets on moderating Fed policy

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stocks engineered their first rally of 2023 on Friday after data suggested a slowing US economy, easing the pressure for more Federal Reserve interest rate hikes.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished up 2.1 percent at 33,630.61, a gain of about 700 points.

The broad-based S&P 500 jumped 2.3 percent to 3,895.08, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index surged 2.6 percent to 10,569.29.

All 11 indices of the S&P 500 finished in positive territory, with markets cheering a drop in the yield on

the 10-year US Treasury note, a proxy for US interest rates.

"We're still in a bad news is good news type of market reaction," said Nick Reece, a vice president at Merk Investments.

The much-anticipated monthly government jobs report was solid, with the US economy adding a better-than-expected 223,000 jobs in December and unemployment dipping to 3.5 percent.

But analysts pointed to a tempering of wage growth, which was up 4.6 percent on a 12-month basis through December, compared with the 4.8

percent reading for the prior month.

That was followed by a surprisingly poor services sector report from the Institute for Supply Management.

The report showed the first contraction since spring of 2020, with the gauge of activity hitting 49.6 percent, and its business activity index and new orders index both plunging.

The ISM report was "very weak and supports the idea that the service part of the economy is finally breaking," said trading platform Oanda's Edward Moya.



LAHORE: Shoemakers preparing traditional footwear (Peshawari Chappal) at their workplace.



In brief

Venus out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AP): Venus Williams has withdrawn from the Australian Open for an undisclosed injury she sustained while playing in a tournament in Auckland, New Zealand this week. A seven-time Grand Slam singles champion, Williams received a wild-card entry into the Australian Open last month to compete in what would have been her 22nd major at Melbourne Park. But the Australian Open said on Saturday the 42-year-old Williams had withdrawn from the tournament beginning Jan. 16. It did not provide specifics regarding the injury. It continues a run of misfortunes for Williams, who last played at Melbourne Park in 2021. A two-time Australian Open finalist, Williams injured an ankle and knee in that appearance when stumbling awkwardly at the net in a second-round match against Sara Errani. Her best efforts at Melbourne Park came when she was beaten by her sister Serena Williams in finals in 2003 and 2017. Now ranked 1,003, Williams said when granted the wild card in December that she was excited to be returning to Melbourne. "I've been competing in the country for over 20 years now and the Australian community has always supported me wholeheartedly," she said.

Old statement comes back to haunt Ramiz

KARACHI (Web Desk): Making the comeback in the team after four years, the former captain delivered all he could - the comeback could not have been better. The captain who led the champions trophy winning side in 2017 performed incredibly yet again. Sarfraz Ahmed scored four 50+ scores in as many innings. He neither used twitter for blame game nor did any needless presser when he was out of the team. Instead, he went to perform in the domestic season again and made a signal to the selector for his chance in the team. He got that chance in test match series against New Zealand and by proving that decision right, he saved Pakistan from the jaws of defeat. However, not all had trust on him. When he was out of the team, the then Pakistan Cricket Board chairman said, "Sarfraz's career is over as we had new wicketkeeper in the form of Muhammad Harris." Inevitably Rameez Raja's question propped up at the press conference. "Rameez had said your tenure as a player was over. And under a new darling selector Shahid Afridi you got your chance, what do you have to say?" Direct, loaded with the opportunity to hit back but Sarfraz shoulders arms. He doesn't take Rameez's name, just nods his head when the question was asked, and then said: "I just tried to play whatever cricket I got, domestic ... I moved with people who gave me good guidance, even in media. I got good support from my family and well-wishers," Sarfraz said. Mentioning the incumbent interim selector Shahid Afridi, he added, "I have played cricket with Afridi Bhai. He has been seeing all the things that occurred and I got a phone call from him for my inclusion in the team."



SYDNEY: Australia's Nathan Lyon, center, celebrates bowling out South Africa's Sarel Erwee, left, during the fourth day of their cricket test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Inspired Cummins bowls Australia into contention for series whitewash

SYDNEY (Agencies): Skipper Pat Cummins bowled Australia into contention to pull off a stunning victory with a fiery spell against South Africa in an absorbing third Sydney Test on Saturday. Cummins captured three for 29 in a hostile 14 overs to set up the Australians for a dramatic final day charge for victory to complete a series clean sweep against the hapless Proteas.

At the close on day four, South Africa were batting for survival at 149 for six in reply to Australia's 475 for four declared first innings with Marco Jansen on 10 and Simon Harmer six. The outgunned South Africans have only passed 200 once so far in this series. The Australians need 14 more wickets to pull off an astonishing victory despite so much time lost and cannot be counted out after rocking the tourists in Saturday's two compelling sessions of the rain-marred Test.

"I'm pretty excited about tomorrow," said spinner

Nathan Lyon. "It's going to be an exciting day's cricket, we know what we have to do." Josh Hazlewood made the initial breakthrough, removing Dean Elgar for 15 continuing the Proteas' skipper's wretched series of low scores.

Hazlewood, bowling a lively opening spell, got Elgar with a brutal short-pitched delivery which clipped his glove for a catch by wicketkeeper Alex Carey. Lyon stunned Sarel Elwee who did not play a shot and was bowled out of off-stump for 18 leaving the tourists 37-2 in the 18th over.

Four balls later Cummins claimed his first victim with Heinrich Klaasen, caught off a vicious lifter leg-side by Carey for two. Hazlewood broke through again after tea with an inswinger that kissed the edge of Temba Bavuma's bat for Carey to do the rest. Bavuma clouted two sixes off Lyon in his 35 off 74 balls but was a big wicket for the Aussies to leave the visitors 85-4 in the 39th over.

"Reverse swing is in play, with a little bit of variable bounce, the short ball is difficult to play because of how slow it is coming off the wicket," Hazlewood said. "I think Ash (Agar) and Gazza (Lyon), it's a big day tomorrow for them with the ball spinning with lefties and righties for them both to work with, there will be plenty happening tomorrow."

Cummins removed Khaya Zondo with a superb yorker that trapped him leg before wicket for 39 and South Africa's fifth wicket. The skipper charged in to lead the Australian bowling assault with two fearsome deliveries thudding into Marco Jansen's upper body. Cummins quickly got another wicket, with Kyle Verreynne edging to Steve Smith at slip for 19 for Smith's 151st Test catch.

"We've just got to stick to our basics, that's what we've done over the last 10 years or so .. thrilling day tomorrow, do the basics well and see how we go," Lyon said.

Nouman Khan moves into British Junior Open final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Nouman Khan battled back from two games down to outwit Egyptian boy Eyad Walid Youssef Moussa in the semi-final of Boys U-13 category of the British Junior Open Squash Championship in Birmingham, UK on Saturday.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Squash Federation, Nouman lost the first two games 7-11, 9-11 but fought back to clinch the next three games 11-5, 11-9, 11-9 and cruise into the final.

Sania to retire after WTA 1000 event in Dubai in Feb

DUBAI (INP): Sania Mirza, India's former doubles world number one, said she would call time on her career aged 36 after next month's Dubai Tennis Championships after her 2022 retirement plans were delayed due to injury.

Mirza, regarded as her country's greatest women's tennis player, has won six Grand Slam doubles titles and would compete in her final major this month at the Australian Open, where she bagged the women's doubles crown in 2016.

"I was going to stop right after the WTA Finals because we were going to make the WTA Finals, but I tore my tendon in my elbow right before US Open, so I had to pull out of everything," Mirza told the WTA Tour's website in an interview published.

Mirza, who has been dealing with a lingering calf injury, had planned to retire at the end of the 2022 season but an elbow injury in August ruled her out of the US Open. "Honestly, the person that I am, I like to do things on my own terms. So I don't want to be forced out by injury. So I've been training," she added.

The tennis star said in the interview, "I'm 36, and honestly my body is beat, that is the main reason for it. "I really don't have the capacity in my mind to emotionally push that much anymore."

She opined, "I turned pro in 2003. Priorities change, and now my priority is not to push my body to the limit every single day." Mirza became the first Indian to win a WTA singles title when she won her hometown Hyderabad event in 2005. She broke into the top 30 by 2007 and reached her career-high ranking of world number 27.

After being plagued by a recurring, career-threatening wrist injury, Mirza forged a doubles partnership with Swiss great Martina Hingis. The self-styled "Santina" team won 14 titles, including Wimbledon and the US and Australian Opens.

Mirza would compete alongside Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina at the Australian Open, which begins on Jan 16, before bidding farewell to the sport in the United Arab Emirates — where she has resided for more than a decade with her husband, former Pakistan cricketer Shoab Malik.

Djokovic beats Medvedev to reach Adelaide final

ADELAIDE (AP): Novak Djokovic beat Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 6-4 on Saturday to advance to the Adelaide International final despite sustaining a leg injury during the match.

In the seventh game of the first set, Djokovic caught his left foot when sliding for a ball and immediately began stretching out his hamstring. He took a medical timeout.

"Thankfully, it was nothing too serious," Djokovic said later, adding he went off court to take some anti-inflammatory. "Hopefully, tomorrow it will be all fine."

Djokovic will play Sebastian Korda in Sunday's final.

The win was Djokovic's 33rd in a row in Australia since his shock 2018 loss to Hyeon Chung in the Australian Open quarterfinals that year. He did not play last year when he was deported from Australia for

not being vaccinated for COVID-19.

Korda advanced to the final after Yoshihito Nishioka retired hurt midway through their semifinal.

Korda broke Nishioka's serve in the opening game of the second set and the Japanese left-hander called a medical timeout for treatment on an apparent leg injury. Nishioka returned to play a few more points before retiring mid-game, with Korda leading 7-6 (5), 1-0.

Teenage qualifier Linda Noskova advanced to the women's singles final after beating top-seeded Ons Jabeur.

Jabeur, a two-time Grand Slam singles finalist last year, needed a medical timeout for treatment on her back during the opening set and the world No. 2-ranked player looked restricted at times on the way to a 6-3, 1-6, 6-3

defeat on Saturday.

Noskova, an 18-year-old Czech ranked 102, will take on world No. 5 Aryna Sabalenka in Sunday's final. Sabalenka earlier advanced with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Irina-Camelia Begu.

Noskova has won six consecutive matches in only her sixth appearance in the main draw of a WTA event. She had to save match points during qualifying to make it to the main draw.

Sabalenka had five double-faults but finished the match with her sixth ace. She won more than 80% of her points on her first serve and controlled the match from the baseline. She hasn't dropped a set this tournament.

"I'm happy with the level I played," Sabalenka said. "She's playing a little bit different style, so I'm super happy that I was able to win this match."

Babar Azam rues winless home season

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Captain Babar Azam is dejected by the team's winless home season but refuses to blame players' injuries or unresponsive pitches for their lean run.

Pakistan twice returned from the brink of defeat to force a 0-0 stalemate in the two-Test series against New Zealand, which followed a 3-0 whitewash at the hands of England last month.

They have now gone eight Tests at home without a win, which put paid to their hopes of making the World Test Championship final, and

Babar conceded this was not how he expected the season to unfold.

"The Test season hasn't gone according to expectations," Babar told a news conference after Pakistan narrowly avoided a third successive home series defeat. "It's not an excuse but some of our players were unfit which disturbed our combination."

Their bowling unit particularly suffered.

Pace spearhead Shaheen Afridi remains sidelined with a knee injury, while fellow quick Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah missed the bulk of the series against England

with niggles.

The pitches used for the series against England and New Zealand also drew flak for being too batter-friendly and Babar said it did not help their cause either.

"Of course, there's talk about the pitches, but conditions are different at every venue.

"We give our input on pitches, but you get the pitches you get, and after that, you have to execute your plans. You can't just complain about losing a match because of pitches.

"We prepared them according to our plans, but results didn't go our way."



MELBOURNE: Faheem Ashraf of the Hurricanes bats during the Men's Big Bash League match between the Melbourne Renegades and the Hobart Hurricanes.

PCB appeals against ICC's decision to award Rawalpindi pitch demerit point

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The PCB has appealed against the ICC's decision to award a demerit point for the Rawalpindi pitch used for the first Test against England last month.

That surface was eventually declared "Below par" by match referee Andy Pycroft, the second successive Test pitch at that venue to have been given that assessment. At the time, Pycroft said: "It was a very flat pitch which gave almost no assistance to any type of bowler. That was the main reason why batters scored very fast and both sides posted huge totals. The pitch hardly deteriorated during the course of the match."

That was the second demerit point for Rawalpindi in the year, after being given one for the Test against Australia in March. If a ground gets five points in five years, it can face a suspension from hosting international cricket for 12 months.

The appeal was one of the first actions of the new PCB administration, led by Najam Sethi, who replaced Ramiz Raja late last month.

And it underlines the stark contrast of this new management with the assessment of Ramiz, who was PCB chairman at that time of the Test, of that surface. He told reporters then: "It is embarrassing for us, espe-

cially when you have a cricketer as chairman. This is not a good advert for cricket. We're a better cricketing nation than this."

Sethi took over as the head of an interim management committee now running the board on December 22, nine days after the ICC announced the sanction. On December 26, the PCB officially appealed the decision.

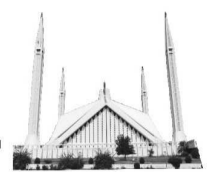
Ramiz and the ICC were not the only ones critical of the Rawalpindi wicket. Former England batters Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton, on the broadcast commentary team, both criticised it and after the match, the Pakistan captain Babar Azam expressed his unhappiness with the pitch as well.

"Yes my input was there in the preparation of the pitch and we made it clear what we wanted but we didn't get that because of the weather or whatever reason... we wanted a track with some turn for the spinners," Babar had said.

The Test ultimately produced a thrilling result - and likely one of the greatest wins in England's history - after the visitors scored a record-breaking 506 runs on the first day. Their 657 in the first innings came from 101 overs, and in reply, Pakistan made 579 runs from 155



LONDON: Tottenham's Harry Kane, left, shoots to score his side's opening goal during the English FA Cup soccer match.



In brief

IRSA releases 24,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 24,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 37,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1494.00 feet and was 96.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 15,800 cusecs while outflow was 5,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.35 feet, which was 69.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 6,300 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded at 8,200, 16,200, 4,600, and 7,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 6,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Eagle squad playing its effective role

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Eagle Squad of Islamabad Capital Police is playing a vital role in crime prevention from the city and checked more than 1765 suspicious persons, motorcycles and vehicles during the last 24 hours, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Eagle Squad is working under the safe city Islamabad which is deployed in different areas of the city for patrolling and crime prevention. During the last 24 hours, the Eagle Squad checked 53 pedestrians, 1264 motorcycles and 448 vehicles during special and snap checking out of which 14 suspicious persons, 632 suspicious motorcycles and 11 vehicles were impounded at various police stations. Eagle Squad also ensured the arrest of the numerous accused involved in mobile snatching and heinous crimes. The Eagle squad also removed tinted glasses from 188 vehicles which are not allowed in the federal capital. SSP Operations safe city Dr Khurram Rasheed appreciated the performance of the eagle squad and said that Islamabad Capital Police is taking all out efforts to curb the crime from the city. "Safety and security of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no stone would be unturned to save the lives and property of the citizens" He maintained.

UN News Urdu version

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Welcoming the United Nations on launching the Urdu version of UN News, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Ambassador Munir Akram has said the launch of the UN Version of Urdu News will expand the UN's outreach to a wide range of Urdu speaking audience and promote the diversity of its communications in multiplicity of languages. In a statement, Ambassador Munir Akram also deeply appreciated the Department of Global Communication for supporting Pakistan's pioneering efforts towards promoting multilingualism and the diversity of UN's communities in order to maximize UN's noble objectives and priorities all across the world especially those related to human rights, climate change and development.



ISLAMABAD: An artist paints the portrait of Quaid e Azam on the wall of IMCG F-6 for maintaining beautification of the city.

Sanaullah hands over Rs10m cheque to family of martyred cop Adeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Wednesday handed over a cheque amounting to Rs10 million as compensation to the family of Police Head Constable Syed Adeel Hussain, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty by intercepting a suicide bomber in the Federal Capital's I-10/4 Sector on December 23.

"Besides, the government will provide a housing unit to the family of its own choice, worth Rs 12.5 million, a full pension coupled with allowances to the martyr's widow and bear educational expenses of the children, under the Prime Minister's package," the minister said while paying tribute to the martyred policeman at a news conference here Saturday.

He said that the incumbent government had fully acknowledged the services and sacrifices of Islamabad Police, which was evident from the fact that it had paid arrears amounting to Rs 1.22 billion in 'one go' to the heirs/families of the martyrs, pending for many years. In addition, the minister said that the government had brought salaries, allowances and other facilities of the Islamabad Police personnel at par with the Punjab Police so that they could perform their duties in a more conducive environment with professional dedication.

"Now the Islamabad

Police are performing their duties in a more professional way than ever. The timely and effective action of police officials did avert the Federal Capital from an eventual disaster on December 23."

Rana Sanaullah said that he had issued directives that a Superintendent of Police (SP) would hold a weekly sitting with the heirs of martyrs to solve their problems on priority.

He said it was unfortunate that some elements wanted to fan terror in society by spreading fake security-related threats like the attack on the Parliament House through media. Such accused had been apprehended and were being investigated.

"Details of the investigation will be shared with the media after its completion in due course of time."

The minister said that Shehbaz Sharif, as Punjab's chief minister, had initiated the process to set up the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in the province, which had been proven effective in controlling terror incidents in the country. While condemning the recent attack on CTD officers in Khanewal, the minister said martyr Naveed Sadiq Sial had completed several daunting tasks during his duty. "All the personnel of law enforcement agencies are playing their role in foiling terrorist attacks and their sacrifices for the mother-

land will not go in vain," he added.

Rana Sanaullah said that it was decided in the National Security Council (NSC) meeting that there would be zero tolerance against the terrorists who wanted to destabilize the country.

All the institutions, he added, are working effectively to root out terrorism from the country and the nation should rest assured that terrorists will be dealt with iron hands.

Regarding the terrorist attacks during the last year, the minister said that around 67 percent incidents of terror had occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 31 percent in Balochistan, while only one percent took place in Punjab and two percent in Sindh. Rana Sanaullah appreciated the role of CTD Punjab and said that all the CTDs of other provinces should put maximum efforts to prevent terrorist attacks.

The minister assured that the Federal Government would provide maximum support and training especially to the CTDs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan so that they could play their due role in curbing terrorism. He said that the Afghan Government was a reality, adding that Pakistan wanted the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to surrender and efforts were underway to bring them on the negotiating table for the purpose.

Five outlaws held; weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police apprehended five outlaws from different areas and recovered weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directives, the Karachi Company police arrested two accused namely Rizwan and Khuram Shahzad involved in aerial firing and recovered two Kalashnikov's with ammunition from their possession. Shalimar police arrested an accused namely Nasir Ali involved in a theft case.

During the crackdown against proclaimed offenders and court absconders police teams arrested two absconders from different areas of the city. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. IGP Islamabad directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis, he maintained.

Officers of Islamabad Police reshuffled

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Inspector General Police Islamabad Capital Police Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan issued transfer posting orders of seven Police officers.

According to the details SSP Maria Mehmood posted as SSP Law and order with additional charge of AIG General and Development.

SSP Syeda Zahida Bukhari is transferred and posted as AIG Establishment. Awaiting posting Gulfam Nasir is posted as SSP Special Protection Unit. Dr. Muhammad Sami Malik awaiting posting who was recently transferred in ICP is posted as SP plan and patrolling with additional charge of SP Anti-terrorist squad. Farhat Abbas Kazmi is transferred and posted as AIG Operations. SP Zaheer Arshad awaiting posting is posted as SP DPD. Iqbal Hussain is transferred and posted as SP SSG Lines.

Punjab introduces new policy for local purchase of medicines

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Punjab Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid has said that the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Punjab has introduced a new policy on local purchase of medicines.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, she said the new policy would set a new standard of transparency in the health department.

She said that Secretary Health Punjab

Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi and his team deserved congratulations. She said the new policy of local purchase would increase the trend of competition.

She said that the provision of free medicines to patients would be improved. She said the entire system had been computerized under the new policy.

She said that providing free and quality medicines to patients in hospitals was the top priority of the government.

ANF seizes over 507 kg drugs; arrests eight

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting five counter-narcotics operations seized over 507 kg of drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed in an operation on the main RCD Highway near Hub, ANF recovered 306 kg charras from a container and arrested two drug smugglers including an Afghan national.

In another raid, ANF seized 150 kg charras and 9.6 kg opium from a car intercepted on Karachi Main Super Highway. An accused was also rounded up during the operation.

In an operation near Islamabad Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 20.4 kg charras and 9.6 kg opium from secret cavities of two cars while three drug smugglers were also netted.

In the fourth operation conducted on Islamabad Srinagar Highway, ANF

seized 8.4 kg charras and six kg opium besides arresting an accused resident of Mardan.

In the fifth operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 76 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger resident of North Waziristan.

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

Railways to replace old, obsolete signal gear from Lodhran-Shahdara

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan Railways has worked out a plan to replace old and obsolete signal gear from Lodhran-Multan-Khanewal-Shahdara Bagh mainline section during the current fiscal year.

According to an official, the Pakistan Railways had allocated Rs 1 billion for the project titled 'Replacement of old and obsolete signal gear from Lodhran-Multan-Khanewal-Shahdara Bagh mainline section.' He told a state run news agency on the other day that the signaling system of 44 stations was automated by Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) over Shandadpur-Mirpur Mathelo and Lodhran-Shahdara Bagh section.

The initiative, he said, had considerably improved the arrival and departure timing of trains owing to swift operation in the automated section. The engineer-

ing restrictions on tracks were being removed to curtail the running time of passenger trains. "Pakistan Railways is rigorously pursuing Main Line-I project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to upgrade its track which faced delay during the last four years," he said. He said Rs 5 billion were already allocated for the ML-I project in current fiscal year 2022-23. The project would increase trains speed from 120 to 160 km per hour, he added.

The official said the journey time would be reduced by half after the implementation of the project. He said that the Pakistan Railways had procured 230 new passenger coaches from China and the modern coaches would provide comfortable journey to the passengers as per international standards.

Art, Craft Bazaar kicks off at Pak-China Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two-day art and craft Bazaar kicked off here on Saturday at Pakistan China Friendship Center featuring a variety of handmade products and colorful fun activities. The event is open for fun lovers and families carrying stalls of various products, games for kids, traditional food, live music and fun for the whole family also providing opportunity to meet the artisans from all over the Pakistan.

The organizers said while talking to APP that Behbud Art and Craft Bazaar 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.

"Its aim is 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. Resultantly, Behbud has enabled thousands of women and their families, spanning over four generations to improve their quality of life."

"We give lifelong skills to women and the products made by them are not only for income generation but they focus on maintaining identity of dying crafts and unique embroidery."

A number of stalls were displayed to engage youngsters in healthy activities in cultural environment. These stalls also exhibited a variety of items related to women and children including dresses, handbags, home textiles and garments to provide the buyers with an opportunity to get perfect extravaganza as well as source for respectful earning to the rural women.

Behbud is working for the support and strength for

women in order to empower them through direct investment in the total socio-economic development of marginalized communities living in densely populated urban slums and various rural areas via educational programs and Behbud home and model schools, vocational training and health development programs.

This initiative strengthens the socio-economic empowerment of women enabling them to play a more constructive role. Behbud trains the women and then employs them, which in turn generates income for them and uplifts them financially, resulting in greater self-esteem and a skill in hand which can sustain them for life. Behbud Association of Pakistan organize Behbud Art and Craft bazaar a famous family festival every year in Islamabad, thousands of people from Rawalpindi / Islamabad and other cities of Pakistan participate in it.

Koral police have arrested 793 accused during the last six month

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Koral police arrested 793 outlaws including 08 gangs during the last six month involved in a series of criminal activities, a Police Public Relations Officer said. He said that, Koral police teams also recovered looted items worth 74.7 million including gold ornaments, mobile phones, vehicles, motorcycles, drugs, liquor and weapons from their possession while six blind murder traced and killers were arrested.

According to the details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, CPO Operations Sohail Zafar Chatha had assigned special tasks to the zonal DPOs and Police teams to arrest those involved in heinous crime and recover the looted items.

While sharing the performance of Koral police for the last six month, DPO Rural said that the Koral police teams conducted a

massive crackdown against the criminal elements and succeeded in apprehending 793 criminals during the ongoing month. Police teams also recovered gold ornaments, 16 vehicles, 55 motorbikes, 18 mobile phones, 43817 gram hashish, 1435 gram heroin, 658 gram Ice, 250 liters alcohol 517 bottles liquor, 53 pistols with ammunition and 03 dagger from their possession. While six blind murders were traced and killers arrested.

Tourists advised to adopt precautions while visiting Murree

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Rawalpindi administration has advised the tourists visiting Murree and adjoining areas to take precautionary measures.

The advisory was issued to avoid an unfortunate event that happened last year due to excessive vehicles entered in Murree, in which at least 22 people died in cars stranded in snow amid an excessive amount of tourist influx.

According to the Rawalpindi Commissioner Office spokesman, the administration has directed the authorities concerned to utilize all available resources to facilitate the tourists in Murree.

All snow removal machinery should be kept operational, besides arranging salt sprinkler machines and ensuring presence of the required staff, the commissioner said. The spokesperson said that a control room had also been established at Jinnah Hall Murree, on the special directives of the commissioner. "The tourists, in case of any emergency, can contact the control room on 051-9269015, 051-9269016, 051-

9269018", he added. The representatives of all the departments concerned would remain present in the control room.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Murree, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, the district administration has set up special facilitation centers at 13 sensitive points to assist tourists and respond to any emergency. He said that strict action would be taken against the violators.

Due to the huge influx of tourists towards Murree, the district administration and the City Traffic Police, Rawalpindi had issued an advisory, appealing to the citizens to observe lane discipline.

According to the advisory, the tourists are requested to use petrol-based vehicles and strictly prohibited to use CNG-based vehicles which may cause problems in cars due to extreme cold in the snow.

Families with infants and asthma patients are also advised to avoid travelling to Murree. The visitors are advised to wear warm clothes and avoid unnecessary travel after 8:00 pm.



ISLAMABAD: A view of construction work on IJP Road during development work in the city.

1,18,000 tons of transportation

KABUL (BNA) The Afghan Railway Authority says that in the last week, 118,139 tons of transfers have been made through the Afghanistan Railway. According to the sources, 87,623 tons were transferred through the Haritaran railway line, 3,551 tons through Aghina, and 26,965 tons through Torgandi, which is a total of 116,391 tons, including oil, non-oil, and other materials, have been imported into the country.

Mansoor left for Turkey

KABUL (BNA) Leading a high-ranking delegation, the Acting Energy and Water Minister, Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, traveled to Turkey. On the trip, the CEO of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat, Mohammad Hanif Hamza, and some other officials accompanied Minister Mansoor. The Afghan delegation will discuss with the electricity officials of Tajikistan in Turkey the extension of the import electricity contract for the year 2023 and will also hold a number of meetings.

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

Biden aides struggle to respond to new restrictions on Afghan women



KABUL (ToloNews): The Biden administration is grappling with how to respond to new restrictions by the Islamic Emirate on women's rights in Afghanistan, knowing that punishing the ruling administration risks rupturing the limited relationship the United States has with them, Politico reported on Saturday.

The discussion among administration officials is fluid and positions have varied depending on the proposed penalties, Politico reported, quoting a current administration official and a former US official familiar with the talks.

"Those proposals include new economic sanctions and tighter bans on Taliban leaders' travels abroad, as well as limiting certain types of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan," the report said.

In broad terms, according to the current and former officials, the debate has pitted Tom West, the US special representative for Afghanistan, against Rina Amiri, the US special envoy for Afghan women, girls and human rights, the report added. The report said that the West is "wary of going too far in isolating the Taliban, with whom the US tries to

cooperate on counter-terrorism, while Amiri wants to get tougher on them as they try to erase women from public life."

But the Islamic Emirate said the international community should engage in talks with Kabul.

"It is better to pursue engagement and negotiations to take us to the solution of the issues. Based on the bitter experience of the past, Washington should consider engagement," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate.

Analysts said that there will be some changes in the Islamic Emirate's policies if there is pressure on it from the international community. "If they really impose sanctions and put pressure, it is possible that the Taliban will bring changes in their policies, particularly in the field of human rights, women's rights and education," said Aziz Maarij, a former diplomat.

This comes as the USAID Afghanistan Mission Director, Sean Callahan, said on Twitter that "women are central to our work in Afghanistan."

"Afghan women must be able to earn an income, freely work, and fully participate in society," Callahan said, adding that in cooperation with Roots of Peace, the USAID trained 150 women potato farmers.

Prince Harry's remarks on killings in Afghanistan face reactions



KABUL (ToloNews): Prince Harry has disclosed that he killed 25 people in his role as an Apache helicopter pilot during his second tour of duty in Afghanistan.

His remarks triggered widespread reactions.

Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex described the killing of 25 people as "chess pieces taken off the board." The deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, Bilal Karimi, said it is a "small example" of humanitarian crimes committed by foreign troops in Afghanistan.

"This cannot be limited to the crime which is committed by one individual. The troops of every invader country have a brutal past in our country," Karimi said.

Colonel Richard Kemp, a former British Army commander in Afghanistan, said that Harry's remarks "undermines" the good work he did in the country.

"He is suggesting the British Army trains people, including him, not to see the enemy as human beings, which is very far from the truth," he said. "The Army is extremely

careful to differentiate between innocent civilians and fighters on the battlefield," Harry has served two tours in Afghanistan. His first tour was from 2007 to 2008 and the second from 2012 to 2013.

The British troops were mostly stationed in the south of Afghanistan during their military presence.

"All the atrocities that have happened here have been kept secret. Even 95 percent of atrocities are committed by the foreigners in Sangin district and as long as we know, these

atrocities have remained hidden," said Esmatullah, a resident of Helmand.

"I was wounded three times. I was about to die during these three times of being wounded," said Taaj Mohammad, a resident of Helmand.

Earlier, a senior member of the Islamic Emirate, Anas Haqqani said in reaction to Harry on Twitter that he doesn't expect the International Criminal Court would summon Harry but "hopefully, these atrocities will be remembered in the history of humanity."

Kandahar women-only market closed, hundreds lose jobs

KANDAHAR (Pajhwok): Hundreds of women are rendered jobless after their only business and handicrafts market was shut in Aino Mena township of southern Kandahar province.

The women's only business market was established with one million US dollars financial assistance of the international community in 2020 and some \$250,000 was invested in 37 shops where women ran their businesses. In the market, 250 businesswomen were directly and hundreds of other women indirectly involved in producing and selling handicrafts and most of them were guardians of their families. The market was recently closed by the authorities after banning women from working in non-governmental organizations, attending university and high schools.

Feroza, a tailor at the market, told Pajhwok Afghan News the market was their only place where they could produce and sell handicrafts, but unfortunately it was also closed.

"A group of Taliban came on Saturday and told us to collect your items and not to come to the market again, we did not know from where they came and on whose orders they closed the market," Ferroza said.

Feroza was annoyed by this decision and said the market was like their house where only ladies were doing their business and their customers were also females and males were not allowed to enter the market, but still it was closed for them.

These businesswomen supported their families by producing women's clothes, hijabs, curtains and other decoration items.

Another shopkeeper of the market on the condition of anonymity told Pajhwok Afghan News that her husband was killed in the war four years ago. A mother of four daughters, she had to work and find food for her family. "I would find some food for my family here and run our life with it, what should we do now? There is no job opportunity at the houses of the people, I searched a lot, I don't know what to do?" she said.

Zarmina is another woman who



had created work opportunities for 30 other women in tailoring shops and she was selling their tailored handicrafts. Zarmina told Pajhwok: "The women's market was the only place from where our handicrafts were sent to other provinces or abroad, but now the women are sewing and embroidering items at their houses and shopkeepers buy their products at throw-away prices".

Besides these women, girls deprived of education were also busy learning tailoring and embroidery work and working in beauty parlor shops and some other businesses in the market.

Aziza, a 12th grade student whose school has been closed since March, was learning tailoring in the women only market.

"My school was closed when I was studying in grade 12, so I wanted to learn tailoring as a profession because I lost my hope for the school to be opened again, now the market is also closed."

These women asked the officials to rethink about their decision and reopen their market, so they could work and find some food for their families. Meanwhile, Kandahar chamber of commerce and industries officials said there were multiple eco-

nomie problems in the country, therefore legal businesses must be allowed that played a positive role in the economy of the country.

Sayed Sarwar Amani, head of the chamber, told Pajhwok all legal businesses where widows and orphans earned legitimate bread must be allowed. "The big problem we face is economic problem, we must support businesses where widows and orphaned children win their daily bread," Amani said.

Pajhwok tried to seek the comment of officials of the Public Works and Social Affairs Department, but did not succeed.

Haji Zaid, spokesperson for the provincial governor, told Pajhwok he would get information about how the market was closed.

Zaid did not provide information who closed the market and who prevented the women from working in the market. After banning them from high schools and universities, restrictions on women to work have increased, drawing reactions on domestic and international levels.

The people say women comprise half of the Afghan society and depriving them of their right to education and work has confronted many families with various problems.

Drug addicts deported from Iran face hardships in Nimroz

KABUL (ToloNews): Dozens of drug addicts who have been deported from Iran said they are facing a challenging situation in Nimroz province in the west of the country amid the freezing winter.

Abdul Ahad, 35, said he was addicted to drugs 15 years ago and that he is deported from Iran recently but is faced with severe health conditions.

"It has been 15 years since I have been married. Since I went to Iran, I got addicted to drugs and still suffer from being a drug addict," Ahad said.

"No one would treat us or do anything for us. Everyone comes and beats us. We were faced with a challenging life in Iran and it is the same here," said Sulaiman, a drug addict.

Local officials said they are making efforts to provide treatment to drug



addicts.

"The Islamic Emirate has a major short-term plan to provide them with rehabilitation facilities to save their lives," said Gul Mohammad Qudrat, a

spokesman for the Nimroz department of security.

"These individuals are an extra burden on society because they cannot be active. They need treatment," said Ishaq Noorzai,

a psychologist.

According to figures from local officials, at least 13,000 drug addicts are living in Nimroz, with most of them having been deported from Iran.

World food prices hit record high in 2022

KABUL (Reuters): A surge in the cost of most food commodities last year, as the disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine raised concerns of shortages, sent the U.N. food agency's average price index to the highest level on record.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, which tracks international prices of the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 143.7 points in 2022, up 14.3% from 2021, and the highest since records started in 1990, the agency said on Friday.

The index had already gained 28% in 2021 from the previous year as the world economy recovered from the impact of the pandemic. Food prices surged after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February last year on fears of disruptions to Black Sea trade. They have pared some of their gains since, in part because of a U.N.-backed grain export channel from Ukraine and the prospect of



improved supplies in producing countries.

In December the benchmark index fell for the ninth consecutive month to 132.4 points, compared with a revised 135.00 points for November. The November figure was previously given as 135.7 points. "Calmer food commodity prices are welcome after two very volatile years," FAO Chief

Economist Maximo Torero said. The decline in the index in December was driven by a drop in the international price of vegetable oils, together with some declines in cereal and meat prices, but mitigated by slight increases in those of sugar and dairy, the FAO said.

Still over the whole of 2022, four of the FAO's five food sub-indexes -

cereals, meat, dairy and vegetable oils - had reached record highs, while the fifth one, sugar, was at a 10-year high. The FAO Cereal Price Index index rose 17.9% in 2022 due to factors including significant market disruptions, higher energy and input costs, adverse weather and continued strong global food demand, the FAO said.

Caretaker govt slams Harry remarks on killing Afghans

KABUL (Pajhwok): Several officials the caretaker government have angrily reacted to British Prince Harry's statement that he killed 25 fighters during his deployment to Afghanistan.

Interior Minister Anas Haqqani tweeted: "Mr. Harry! The ones you killed were not chess pieces, they were humans. They had families waiting for their return. "Not many killers of Afghans have your decency to reveal their conscience and confess to their war crimes," Haqqani wrote, insisting: "Our innocent people were chess pieces to your soldiers, military and political leaders. Still, you were defeated in that game..."

Haqqani went on to pan the International Criminal Court (ICC) and human rights defenders as deaf and blind. Addressing the



British prince, he said: "I don't expect the ICC will summon you or the human rights activists will condemn you, because they are deaf and blind. But, hopefully, these atrocities will be remembered in human history."

Meanwhile, the caretaker government's deputy spokesman Bilal Karimi wrote on his Twitter handle: "Afghans as independent and Muslim people will never forget the



atrocities of the occupation forces."

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi slammed the western occupation of Afghanistan as an odious moment in human history.

Harry's remarks were a microcosm of the trauma experienced by Afghans at the hands of invaders, who massacred innocent people with impunity, Balkhi alleged. Apart from UK monarchy sup-

porters, television commentators and ordinary British people also lashed out at the early release of Harry's memoir Spare. The controversial book, authored in the years after Harry and his spouse Meghan Markle gave up their roles in the British royal family, was accidentally put on sale in Spain several days before the date for its official release. In his memoir, Harry reveals he, during his deployment in Afghanistan, killed 25 Taliban rebels. The prince said he viewed the fighters as "chess pieces" that he was eradicating from the board.

The prince served two tours of duty in Afghanistan, the first in 2007-2008 as a forward air controller and the second in 2012-2013 as a helicopter pilot.

Protest for peace in S Waziristan continue

F.P. Report

WANA: The second day of "Waziristan Aman Olasi Pasoon" (Waziristan Peace People's Movement) protests against unrest, target killings, robbery and kidnapping for ransom continues in Wana, district headquarter of South Waziristan Lower Tribal District, and Wana Shakai Road closed for traffic, on the second day, a large number of people were present at the peace protest.

On the other hand, after the negotiations with the protesters, Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi gave his stance and said that their demands are legitimate and the protesters have a ten-point agenda, work is already underway on it. The district administration is making every effort to resolve the legitimate demands of the protesters and the problems faced by them as soon as possible, and all possible steps are being taken to establish peace.

Local leaders of all political parties, PPP, ANP, JUI, PTI, NDM, Pakhtunkhwa Map, business community, tribal elders and youths for establishing peace at the local level, A large number of

people participated in the demonstration. Local leaders of various political parties expressed their views. And presented these demands to the government on behalf of "Waziristan Aman Olasi Pasoon" (Waziristan Peace People's Movement).

Peace is the responsibility of the civil government, if the police is required to conduct a search operation or action on wanted persons or in a place, then action should be taken according to the law. If the police need the FC or the army, the police can take help under Article 126 of the Order 2002;

The erstwhile FATA has been merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all the provisions of the 1973 Constitution are applicable to the areas of erstwhile FATA. Therefore, apart from the constitution and law, peace committee, national army or 2007 agreement are not acceptable to us in any case;

Peace in South Waziristan Lower is subject to the restoration of the government writ, for the restoration of the government writ, a separate DPO, judges including all line departments offices should be shifted to Lower

Waziristan; Jamshed Wazir should be released immediately;

Police checkpoints should be established in small and big bazaars located at Spin, Azam Warsak, Shakai, Angoor Adda, Zarmelan, Ragzai police stations. To give legal powers and privileges to the police, to restore the closed jobs of the special force and to ensure the attendance of the existing police force; FC should be deployed on emergency basis for the protection of police stations, police posts and police during patrolling;

Indiscriminate ban and strict action should be taken against government/non-government vehicles with black glass, violators should be arrested and presented in courts for legal action; Indiscriminate action should be taken against drugs; All types of armed organizations and miscreants should be banned;

To remove obstacles to trade on the Pak-Afghan border at Angoradah, and to allow Pakistani identity card holders to enter Angoradah Gate; The negotiation team of the protesters said that if our demands are not accepted, the protest will continue.

Hazara Motorway gift of Nawaz for people: Muqam

F.P. Report

BATAGRAM: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs and Culture Division, Engr Amir Muqam here Saturday said that Pakistan Muslim League (N) believed in practical work and Hazara Motorway was the gift of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for people of Hazara.

He was addressing a big public gathering after formally inaugurated upgradation of Thakot Grid from KVA 3300 to 132000KV and transmission line from Aalai Khwar Power House to Thakot grid here at Thakot. Engr Amir Muqam said these mega projects were the long awaited demand of people that was fulfilled today by the PML-N.

Muqam said his party strongly believed in practical works rather hallow slogans, and that established a network of motorways including Hazara Motorway by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that benefits all districts of Hazara division including Batagram. Amir Muqam said that PML-N stood with the people of Batagram in every difficult situation whether it was earthquakes, floods or terrorism and urged people of the district to now extend full support to Nawaz Sharif and PML-N.

He said Imran Khan was a big liar and people of Batagram would reject him in the upcoming general election. Muqam said that people were fed up with the negative politics of Imran Khan and poor performance of PTI and pinned high hopes from PML-N.

Amir Muqam said that Imran Niazi had started politics from lies and his lies based politics continued even today. He said that Imran Khan had destroyed the economy and institutions. He said that PML-N was the only party that can address problems of the country and Batagram. Engr Amir Muqam also inaugurated Thakot-Aalai Khwar 132000KVA transmission line, Thakot Pesco office and reconducting of Chakasar feeder.

Former members of the assemblies Nawabzada Wali Muhammad, Muhammad Rushad Khan, Niaz Muhammad, Tehsil Chairman Chakasar Bakht Alam and District President Mahajrin Khan also addressed.

The speakers said that Pakistan Tahrir Insaf had failed to address problems of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Batagram despite its nine years rule in the province and was now looking towards PML-N for addressing their issues. On this occasion, people raised slogans in favour of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Bawaz Nawaz Sharif and Amir Muqam.

Migrants boat sinks off, 5 dead

TUNIS (Agencies): At least five people have died and 10 are missing after an overcrowded boat carrying migrants and refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean from Tunisia to Italy sank. The boat sank off of Louata, in the Sfax region, a Tunisian judicial official said on Saturday. Another 20 people were rescued by the Tunisian coastguard.

The coastline of Sfax has become a major departure point for people fleeing poverty in Africa and the Middle East for a shot at a better life in Europe. More than 25,000 people have died or went missing trying to cross the Mediterranean since 2014, according to data collected by the IOM's Missing Migrants Project.

In recent months, hundreds have drowned off the Tunisian coast, with an increase in the frequency of attempted crossings from Tunisia and Libya towards Italy. In light of an unprecedented economic and financial crisis in Tunisia, more than 18,000 Tunisians travelled by boats to Europe in 2022, according to rights group Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights. Soaring inflation and food shortages have compounded unrest amid the North African country's continuing political crisis. Tunisia's President Kais Saied has been threatening democratic institutions, sending the economy into a tailspin.



WANA: Residents of South Waziristan sitting during the second day of protest for acceptance of their demands.

In no-trust vote, it was PTI versus military: Fawad

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry said that in the no-confidence motion against party chief Imran Khan, it was actually the PTI versus the military; otherwise, stable governments are not topped the way the PTI rule was wrapped up.

Khan was removed from premiership through a vote of no-confidence in the National Assembly in April last year by an alliance of 13 political parties — the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) helmed by JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman. Speaking on BBC programme 'HARDtalk', Fawad said that everyone knew who controlled these allied parties and from whom they were taking directions.

He stressed that everyone knows that the establishment controls political parties. However, politics should have been left to politicians alone, he said. According to Imran Khan, General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa was involved in overthrowing the PTI government, Fawad said. Fawad Chaudhry said that political crisis leads to an economic crisis. The economic crisis was kicked up by unnecessarily sending Imran Khan's government home, he said.

To a question that the economic crisis facing the sitting government is actually the legacy of the PTI government, Fawad claimed the country was

in a shambles when the PTI formed government and the country's growth rate went up to 6% under the PTI rule, and that happened despite the Covid pandemic. He said Pakistan's economic crisis emanated from the unconstitutional removal of Imran Khan's government.

Programme host Stephen Sackur said Pakistan's debt stood at \$116 billion when the PTI took over in 2018, but it rose to \$230 billion when the party left government. Fawad responded saying his party's government had to borrow funds to return the loans taken by the previous government. He maintained that his party's government worked to restructure the loans and did as far as economy is concerned. He said Zardari and Sharifs had put Pakistan into a vicious debt cycle. Sackur said figures did not bear out his claim, referring to promises made by the PTI before elections, especially those about corruption. He said that Pakistan fell by 20 points on the corruption perception index (CPI). Fawad disagreed, arguing that these were the departments related to rule of law, for example judiciary, not the political side, that had contributed to that index. He said Imran gave the country one of the cleanest governments in 75 years of history.

The PTI leader said it is not possi-

ble to create economic stability without political stability as [political uncertainty in the country is such that] no one knows who will rule the country three or five months from now. Fawad Chaudhry said that Pakistan's ambassador in the United States dispatched a cipher after his meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu and Imran Khan presented the same cipher. He said that the US official had said in the cipher that Pak-US relations will be hinged on the success or failure of the no-confidence motion.

The PTI government, he said, sent the cipher to President Dr Arif Alvi and requested him to form a judicial inquiry over the issue. "The PTI never said it seeks a war with the US. Instead, it wants good bilateral ties. No party wants confrontation with the US," Fawad noted. However, at the same time the PTI doesn't want any country including the US to dictate Pakistan.

Saying bygones are bygones, Fawad said his party looks forward to having good relations with the US, and hopes the superpower too would like to collaborate with Pakistan's most popular political party. Imran Khan never called Osama bin Laden a martyr, Fawad said, adding it was just a slip of the tongue, a clarification of which had been issued by the party.



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DEADLINE
April 12, 2023

Steps afoot to develop health sector: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has said that the incumbent provincial government has taken pragmatic steps to develop health sector on modern lines and to ensure easy access of common citizens to quality health services. A number of initiatives have been taken to align the health system with the needs and expectations of public which include setting up of state of the art clinical skills lab in HMC, establishment of modular operation theaters in tertiary health care facilities and revamping of non-teaching District Headquarter Hospitals across the province.

In a statement issued here from the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Mahmood Khan said that

the incumbent provincial government is striving for the establishment of a welfare state for which various reforms and uplift schemes have been introduced. Upgradation of basic health care facilities, provision of medical equipment to health care centers, recruitment of doctors, uplifting of tertiary hospitals, extension of sebat card to cent percent population of the province and many other reforms have resulted in uniform access to efficient health care services.

He said that a project has been initiated to revamp the non-teaching district headquarter hospitals across the province which will ensure quality treatment facilities to people at local level. Besides, Rural Health Centers and Basic Health Units are also being converted to 24/7

health facilities. The Chief Minister stated that the incumbent provincial government has planned development projects keeping in view the requirements of people.

It is pertinent to mention here that a total of 132 projects including 41 new projects have been included in the current provincial annual development program in the healthcare sector. Rs. 25 billion have been earmarked for health card plus and 10 billion rupees for the provision of free medicines including OPD medicine for the first time in the history of the province. During the last four years, the provincial government has made remarkable achievements in health sector. Over three thousand doctors, including specialists, have been recruited during the last four years.

Will not let 'rulers' run away from polls: Imran

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister and Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan has reiterated that they would not let the 'incumbent imported rulers' run away from holding elections in the country. The former premier

made these remarks while chairing a meeting of Punjab ministers. During the meeting, Imran Khan instructed the lawmakers to start preparations for vote of confidence in Punjab Assembly and subsequent general polls.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, the PTI Chief said they would not let the 'incumbent imported rulers' run away from holding elections in the country. "After Islamabad, the incumbent government was trying to run away from Karachi's local government (LG) elections", he added.

Restoration of constitutional status of Malakand sought

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Elders and political leaders of all the parties " Loya Jarga " on Saturday demanded the government to restore the constitutional status of Malakand Division and extend the tax exemption for 10 years.

They were speaking in a Loya Jirga, organized by Jamaat-e-Islami in Swat. The Loya Jirga was held at the Jamaat-e-Islami centre at Sangota Swat. It was presided over by Jamaat-e-Islami provincial deputy Amir and Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Inayatullah Khan. Leaders of all political parties, including lawyers, businessmen, civil society, leaders and elders from different schools of thought, participated in the meeting and discussed in detail the problems faced by the people of Malakand division.

They said that the people of Malakand Division could not afford any more unrest and military operations on their land and if any elements tried to sabotage the peace in Malakand division, all the people would stand united against them. The jirga members discussed various problems in detail, including peace and the region's special status. After the meeting, a joint declaration was issued stating that despite being independent states till 1969, the people of all the states in the Malakand divi-

sion fought wars for the survival and security of Pakistan. "The people of Malakand division also accepted the merger with Pakistan with an open heart and by accepting the integration in 1969 with Pakistan, the region was given a separate status under Article 246-247 and was declared a tax free zone in the constitution," they said.

They said that despite all these favours and sacrifices with Pakistan, the government, without taking the people and representatives of the area into confidence, the separate and special constitutional status of the Malakand Division was abolished. "We are not ready to accept this move of the government in any case and we demand that Malakand Division must be declared a tax free zone for the next 10 years," they said.

They said in the statement that Malakand Division generated 312 megawatts of electricity while work on 318 megawatts projects was underway, and another 1500 megawatts of electricity could be generated. "Despite 100% payment of the electricity bills, we are facing load shedding, which is unacceptable. Under the Forest Act 2022, the people of Malakand division have been deprived of their ownership rights, but we make it clear to the government that we

will not accept it in any case," they said. The declaration further stated that the people of Malakand Division were severely affected by the flood, earthquakes and militancy and we could not afford any more operations and unrest. Therefore the government must ensure law and order in any case.

They said that some elements were involved in ruthlessly cutting forests and destroying the rivers through illegal gravel mining. "Indiscriminate action must be taken against those who are cutting trees illegally and destroying the beauty of the rivers by illegal mining," they said. They also demanded that for the people of the Malakand Division's relief, the government must announce a special package for the people of the Malakand Division.

"The cruel Forest Ordinance should also be withdrawn while practical measures should be taken for resettlement of flood affected people otherwise, all political parties and social organizations will be forced to start protest movement along with civil society," they said. It was also clarified in the declaration that if the government did not accept the demands of the Loya Jirga, a large-scale protest movement would be launched, and the responsibility for the seriousness of the situation would fall on the government.