

PM felicitates Iran F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday extended felicitations to Iran and Iranian people on the observance of their National Day and the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. In his felicitation message, the prime minister said Pakistan and Iran enjoyed strong brotherly relations which had been based upon the shared religious, historic and cultural ties.

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Martyred officers laid to rest F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two officers of Pakistan Army were laid to rest with full military honour in their hometowns after they embraced martyrdom in an IED explosion in Kohlu area of Balochistan province. The ISPR, in a statement, said the funeral prayers of Major Muhammad Jawad and Captain Sagheer Abbas were offered at Rawalpindi and Kot Addu, respectively.

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Joint efforts to overcome difficulties: PM

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday that despite hard times, it was his firm conviction that with collective efforts, sacrifices and hard work, they as a nation would overcome these difficulties.

The prime minister said all segments of the society, including the elite class, would have to come forward and support the nation with generosity, adding that there was no other way to reach to destination except adherence to these qualities. Addressing a stone laying ceremony of Bab-e-Pakistan and the expansion and infrastructure upgradation of Walton Road, the prime minister said that they had once again gathered at the historic place for which millions of migrating Muslims from the sub-continent had offered historic sacrifices, and strived under the great leadership of Quaid-e-Azam, for the creation of a separate homeland.

On their way to the newly created homeland, they came across the worst kind of carnage, with thousands of children and women braving the onslaught, he added. Federal Minister Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, parliamentarians and officials were present during the ceremony.

Referring to the Walton road, the prime minister said it was the place where thousands of migrants from India took refuge and the locals supported them which renewed the precedent of Ansar-e-Madina. "The unique precedent would always be remembered," he added. He observed that the Muslims migrated to a newly created country to get rid of the foreign rulers and with the desire to establish a society in which merit, justice and equality would prevail.

About construction of Bab-e-Pakistan, the prime minister said Nawaz Sharif laid its foundation stone in 1991 and then in 1997 when the PML-N came to power work on the project was expedited. He regretted that the project hit snags in 2008 when its contract was awarded during the rule of late Musharraf. About a billion rupees of the nation (money) was buried in its ruins. The contractor was a fraud and

lacked experience who wanted to import granite from Italy at a cost of worth Rs900 million, he added.

The prime minister opined that it would be a shame for a poor country like Pakistan, where the basic necessities of life like health and education were scant, to use costly imported tiles for the construction of the historic monument. With the import of tiles, what message they had to give to the outer world! he said, adding that he refused to allow the import of such material. The contract was awarded to a person without bidding.

The prime minister further said that with such a display of callousness, country's billions of rupees were wasted. He said such cases also raised questions about the performance of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) which targeted the innocent people, but did not summon the people involved in such like cases.

"It was the double standards that had caused harm to Pakistan. The rule of 'might is right' must be buried forever by the 220 million people of the country," he said, adding the country could not move ahead on the path of progress and prosperity unless they collectively resist these tendencies. About Bab-e-Pakistan, the prime minister said it should be a place for the young generations and the visitors to get themselves aware of the history of Pakistan. On the occasion, Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique said they had gathered at a historical place where the people of the sub-continent had shown resolved for the creation of a new homeland.

He said all the development projects across the country had been initiated and accomplished during the PML-N governments. He praised the CBDA for the launch of different projects and observed that with the completion of work, Walton road would also see a vital change. While Bab-e-Pakistan would offer sports facilities for the common man, he added. Earlier, Central Business District Development Authority (CBDA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Imran Nadeem presented an overview of the projects.

Imran's selectors regret bringing him into power

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said Saturday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's "selectors", who brought him into power in 2018, are now "regretting" their decision.

Addressing the PML-N workers' convention in Islamabad, Maryam said: "Your [Khan] selection committee has been dissolved, and the selectors have left for home." Her remarks came after accounts attributed to former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa were published in a column of a local newspaper.

"We kept trying to convince the prime minister [Imran Khan] against appointing Tarin as finance minister. I told the PM that Tarin, who failed to run his bank, will ruin the economy. The premier disagreed," Gen (ret'd) Bajwa was quoted as saying by the journalist. Reacting to the ex-army chief's interview, Khan said that Gen (ret'd) Bajwa had accepted that he was behind the "regime change" move that led to his government's removal.

"General Bajwa told the journalist with much pride how he had our government ousted due to economic



policies and other matters," Khan said during the interview. The PML-N leader vowed that the Bhara Kahu flyover would be completed soon. She urged the people to compare the governance of PML-N and PTI during the past 10 years in Punjab and KP, respectively.

"Whenever the country's economy collapses because of the maladroitness, people look to Nawaz Sharif for rescue," Maryam said. Maryam lashed out at the previous government of PTI and said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar should have made the person, who has restricted himself to Zaman Park, sit before the IMF for talks.

She maintained that Khan would be held

accountable for Toshakhana gifts and concealing information regarding his alleged daughter Tyrian Jade White in his nomination papers for the 2018 elections. The PML-N leader further said that the PTI chief's wife, Bushra Bibi, would also be held accountable for "robbing diamonds". Speaking to her party workers, the PML-N leader vowed that her party would win the next elections in the country.

PML-N initiated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), created jobs, and provided laptops to students, she said, adding, "The future of youth is linked with PML-N." She vowed that her party would steer the country out of the prevailing crisis.

Sh Rashid granted bail in police threatening case

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): A court in Murree Saturday granted post-arrest bail to Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed in a case related to his interference in state affairs by allegedly threatening police personnel.

Judicial magistrate Murree Muhammad Zeeshan presided over the hearing of the case filed against the former interior minister in the Murree Police Station, while Rashid's counsel Advocate Sardar Abdur Razzak Khan

represented him in the court. The judicial magistrate, who had earlier reserved the verdict, issued the decision, approving the AML chief's bail against a surety bond of Rs50,000.

It should be noted that a case is registered against Rashid — a close ally of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan — under the provisions of interfering with state affairs after he attempted to tear a policeman's uniform during his arrest in the wee hours of February 2. The

court, on February 9, rejected Murree Police's plea to grant AML chief's physical remand and sent him to jail on a 14-day judicial remand. A district and sessions court in Islamabad had also on the same day rejected the post-arrest bail plea of the former minister.

Initially, Rashid, according to the police, was arrested in the case of levelling allegations against Zardari on February 2. Just a day later, Murree Police also registered a case against him.

FIA to take action against Shaukat Tarin

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to take action against Former Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin over his controversial audio calls to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab finance ministers regarding the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

Sources said that the FIA completed the investigation against the former finance minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shaukat Tarin over his controversial audio tapes. "The investigation authority is expected to take action against him in the next few days."

Last year, two audio tapes leaked on the social media platform Twitter, in which a man said to be Tarin could be heard guiding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab's finance ministers to inform the federal government and the IMF of their inability to commit to a provincial budget surplus in light of the recent floods that have wreaked havoc in Pakistan.

President calls Senate session F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called the special commemorative session of the Senate in connection with the golden jubilee of the House on March 15.

The commemorative session will be held at 11 am and will continue till March 17, the President House said in a statement.

Gill to be indicted on 27th

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): After rejecting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) senior leader Shahbaz Gill's plea for acquittal in the sedition case, a local court in the federal capital has decided to indict him on February 27.

The former chief of staff to ex-prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan is facing charges of allegedly inciting mutiny within the ranks of the Pakistan Army during a television talk show on a private news channel last August. The decision to formally frame charges against the politician was announced by Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Sipra on Saturday.

Gill was taken into custody on August 9 from Banigala Chowk over charges of inciting mutiny. He was booked in a sedition and arms recovery case in August and stayed in detention for over a month. He, however, secured bail from the IHC in the sedition case on September 15 after repeatedly attempting to get released. The case against Gill is registered at Kohsar Police Station under Sections 34 (common intention), 109 (abetment), 120 (concealing design to commit offence punishable with imprisonment), 121 (waging war against state), 124-A (sedition), 131 (abetting mutiny, or attempt to seduce a soldier, sailor or airman from his duty), 153 (provoking to cause riot), 505 (statement conducting to public mischief) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

The PTI had insisted on demanding the party leader's bail, alleging that he was facing humiliation, torture and sexual abuse in police custody. Last month, the Lahore High Court (LHC) granted protective bail to the PTI leader till January 24 and sought details of cases registered against him from the public prosecutor.

In his petition, Gill pleaded with the court to provide him with the details about the cases lodged against him. LHC Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh heard the case. Upon being asked, the federal government's lawyer apprised the court that no case was registered against the PTI leader with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of Walton Road and inauguration of Baab-e-Pakistan.

Mob lynches alleged blasphemer in Nankana Sahib; PM orders probe

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a bloodcurdling incident in Punjab's Nankana Sahib, a raging mob of hundreds Saturday tortured a man to death after snatching him from a police station, where he was locked up for allegedly committing blasphemy.

As the mob was lynching the man — who was put behind bars for alleged blasphemy — Station House Officer (SHO) Warburton Feroze Bhatti and other police personnel escaped the scene to save their lives. Residents of the area claimed that the man — who had returned after spending two years in jail — used to practice witchcraft by pasting his ex-wife's picture on holy papers.

"The mob stormed the police station and beat the man to death," local

police spokesman Waqas Khalid told AFP. "After killing him they tried to set his body ablaze," he added. Khalid said authorities were working on identifying the attackers responsible for the man's death. Videos shared on social media showed hundreds of youngsters besieging the police compound, with one man scaling a tall gate using a ladder and opening its lock.

The crowd then barged inside and smashed windows. Taking notice of the incident, Punjab Inspector-General Dr Usman Anwar suspended the SHO and Nankana Sahib Circle Deputy Superintendent of Police Nawaz Waraq for their failure in preventing the situation from turning violent. Strict departmental and legal action will be taken against those responsible for the incident and the

perpetrators of negligence, a statement posted by the Punjab police on Twitter read.

Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered an investigation into the Warburton police station incident and asked why the police did not stop the violent mob. "The rule of law should be ensured. No one should be allowed to influence the law," he said. Mohsin Naqvi, the caretaker chief minister of Punjab, has also sought a report from the IG on the incident, directing an investigation from every aspect. He ordered immediate action against the culprits.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has condemned the incident, saying killing and burning someone accused of blasphemy was a cruel act.



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Hafiz Naeem demands ECP to announce LG by-polls schedule

KARACHI (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announce the schedule for local government (LG) elections for the remaining 11 union committees (UCs) in Karachi.

According to details, the JI Karachi chief issued the demand while addressing a protest, staged outside the provincial Election Commission office in Karachi. Hafiz Naeem noted that the local government (LG) elections were held in the city on January 15 but

the ECP is yet to announce the poll schedule for the 11 UCs where elections had been postponed because of the candidates' deaths.

He also reiterated the JI's demand that the ECP decide the cases of six UCs, declaring them open-and-shut cases on the basis of Form 11 and Form 12. "JI has represented the people of Karachi as not a single party was in favour of holding elections at the local level," he said, warning that his party would launch a train march if its demands are not met.

Hafiz Naeem also urged JI's newly elected local rep-

resentatives to start serving the city, adding that his party would continue its struggle in accordance with the Constitution and Law.

Earlier in January, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) released the official results of 229 out of 235 Union Councils (UCs) in the Karachi Division.

According to the latest party position, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) lost one seat each while Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) bagged two more seats after the recounting of votes in different UCs. PPP is still having the highest count of seats, 91, followed by JI possessing 85 and PTI with 42 seats.

Furthermore, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) grabbed 7 seats, three seats by Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI), three by independent candidates and two by Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The commission also released the LG results of 155 UCs of Hyderabad.

PPP is leading with 95 seats, PTI with 40 seats, independent candidates with 15 seats and TLP with 2 seats, whereas, the results of two UCs were held due to the violation of the election code. In Hyderabad, elections were not held in five UCs due to the demise of candidates.

Yesterday, the election commissioner (EC) Sindh said that the election of Karachi mayor is likely to take two to three months as the commission is still compiling the final results of the Sindh local government (LG) polls.

Employee's issues to be resolved: Mandokhail

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Special Committee on Affected Employees Prof Dr Qadir Khan Mandokhail on Saturday said all possible measures would be taken to resolve the issues being confronted by the employees working in different government departments.

Addressing meet the press at National Press Club (NPC), Islamabad, the chairman said no pressure would be tolerated in providing basic rights to the employees. "I have been sort-outing the issues of employees promptly for providing them relief."

He said almost 16,000 employees were forcefully terminated from their services during the tenure of previous governments, adding that the managing directors of various organizations were taking hefty amounts in the shape of salaries and other entertainment allowances but they were not focusing on providing the salaries and pensions of poor employees.

Replying to a question, he stressed the need to revamp and make reforms in the judicial system to streamline it to yield desirous results.

On the occasion, President NPC Anwar Raza and General Secretary NPC Raja Khalil Ahmed thanked Dr Mandokhail for visiting and holding a press conference here and also lauded his sincere efforts for resolving employees' issues.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan chairing a meeting regarding security of Foreign Nationals at Safe city headquarters. —APP Photo

Nine terrorists captured in intelligence-based operation across Punjab

LAHORE (NNI): In an intelligence-based operation in different districts of Punjab, the Counter Terrorism Department has arrested nine militants of proscribed outfits.

The spokesperson for the Punjab CTD informed media that in an intelligence-based operation conducted in various areas of the province, the CTD captured nine terrorists belonging to outlawed organizations.

He said that militants who were arrested included:

Afan, Kashif, Jawad Saeed, Saqib Ilyas, Sabz Ali, Daud Shah and Ahmad Jan. The spokesperson said that 10 cases were registered against the terrorists and the investigation was underway.

He said that the CTD force recovered suicide jackets, explosive material, hand grenades, detonators, remote-controlled devices, and literature on sensitive subjects from their possession. He informed that the captured terrorists belonged to proscribed Tehreek-e-

Taliban Pakistan and different factions of Daesh.

He further revealed that the arrests were made after retrieving information during grilling of another 26 suspected persons. The spokesperson said that as many as 93 suspects were arrested in 564 combing operations conducted this week. He said that the Punjab CTD was determined to leave no stone unturned in sending the anti-state elements behind the bars.

Ch Pervaiz Elahi asks nation to prepare for elections

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab former chief minister Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi has asked the people to prepare for the elections as they will have to defeat the corrupt coterie.

Talking to the media on Saturday, he said that the victory of Imran Khan is sure from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "There should be no delay in the electoral process after the verdict of the Lahore High Court," he maintained.

The former CM said that revenge will be taken from Shehbaz Sharif who destroyed the economy through the power of the vote. "The PML-N has not yet learnt a lesson. It has again turned the country into a hub of revengeful activities," he added.

On the other hand, Punjab Assembly Secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti's wife has filed a petition against the Racecourse police for harassing her. The court has issued the notice to the Lahore CPO and Racecourse SHO, demanding a reply till February 17. Meanwhile, protest rallies were taken out against illegal detention of Muhammad Khan Bhatti in Mandi Bahauddin and Gojra.

PUC condemns mob lynching over blasphemy allegations

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) has strongly condemned the sad incident of lynching of a man over blasphemy allegations in Nankana Sahib. In a statement issued here on Saturday, PUC Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said that the inhuman incident was against Islamic laws and teachings. He said

that violent mob also attacked the police station to take out the accused from the police custody. The chairman said that PUC was demanding strict action against the criminals. He added that the person accused of desecrating the Quran was forcefully taken out of Warburton Police Station in Nankana Sahib and was lynched and torched to death, was inhu-

man act, which was condemnable. If someone had committed a crime, then the court had a right to punish. No group, individual or organisation had the right to take law into their hands, he asserted. Ashrafi said that the sad incident was a clear violation of Islamic laws and it was hoped that Punjab gov't would take immediate steps in this matter.

Anti-polio drive inaugurated

LAHORE (APP): Additional Commissioner (Headquarters) Shahid Abbas Kathia formally inaugurated anti-polio drive by administering polio vaccine to children at the Mian Mir Hospital here on Saturday.

During the seven-day drive starting from February 13, more than 2.8 million children under five years of age will be administered polio vaccine and for this purpose, 6,360 teams had been formed.

Talking on the occasion, ADC Kathia said that union council monitoring officers and area in-charges would perform duties in the field to make polio drive a success. He maintained that all district officers and assistant commissioners would monitor the drive in their respective tehsil.

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

CTD arrests suspect

KARACHI (INP): The counter-terrorism departments' (CTD) investigation department on Saturday arrested a suspect in Karachi.

As per details, the suspect was involved in the targeted killing of a traffic police personnel and he was arrested eight years after the incident.

The CTD has recovered ammunition from the suspect's possession and registered an FIR against him.

The alleged suspect Ijaz Kaala along with other suspects targeted traffic police personnel Muhammad Mansha in 2014, and the bullets also injured a Rikshaw driver.

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Assistant Director IT (EG-01) Oracle Database Administrator	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor / Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at least 02nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education).Minimum 4 Years' Experience in Oracle Database 11g/12c/19c Grid/Cloud infrastructure Enterprise Manager, Active Data guard, ASM, RAC, Installation, configurations, cloning, patching, upgrade and D/R setup in depth knowledge of Backup utilities RMAN, data export and import to perform partial and complete recovery on requirement.Expertise in database performance tuning maintaining high availability of the database environment, evaluate and implement standard and customize security including knowledge of Oracle Linux Operating System.Knowledge of auditing procedure, Oracle AVDF, oracle Golden gate would be preferred.Oracle database Administration Certified Professional (OCP) certification is mandatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeritLump Sum Monthly Pay (Gross): Rs.151,000/- with 05% increment (Negotiable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maximum 35 Years (including all age relaxations)
Assistant Director IT (EG-01) MS SQL Server Administrator	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor/Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at Least 02nd Division (Min. 16 Year Education)Minimum 4 Years Experience in SQL Server 2012 or above including deployment and configuration, Strong knowledge of Data recovery models, Backups, Restores, Clustering, Database mirroring, Data Replication, Performance Tuning and Optimization including database security.Working Knowledge of vulnerability assessment and encryption for SQL server.Microsoft Certified Professional, DBA-MS SQL Certification is mandatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeritLump Sum Monthly Pay (Gross): Rs.151,000/- with 05% increment (Negotiable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maximum 35 Years (including all age relaxations)
Assistant Director IT (EG-01) ERP / Application DBA & WebLogic Administrator	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor / Master Degree from HEC recognized University in Information Technology / Computer Science / Software Engineering with at least 2nd Division /Min.16 Year Education).Minimum (04) Years of Experience in EBS 12.0/12.1/2.2 installation, configurations, cloning, patching, upgrade and D/R setup.Minimum (04) years of Experience in Weblogic, fusion middle ware, installation, configurations, D/R setup, cloning, patching and upgrade.Candidate must have expertise to develop / maintain / support high availability cluster application model configuration, security configurations, patching and D/R setup including Strong troubleshooting skills, performance testing and optimization, load balancing on application tier.Oracle Certified Professional, Oracle WebLogic Server 12c or later is mandatory.Working Knowledge of OS Linux, Oracle IDM MFA, and oracle database technologies will be preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeritLump Sum Monthly Pay (Gross): Rs.151,000/- with 05% increment (Negotiable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maximum 35 Years (including all age relaxations)

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2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

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فرسٹ فکٹر 09 دو کمانڈر	فرسٹ فکٹر 12 دو کمانڈر	فرسٹ فکٹر 07 دو کمانڈر

نئی کمانڈر کی تفصیل:

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آئی ڈی 06 کی تفصیل:

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2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 07 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
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2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 08 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 09 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 10 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 11 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 12 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 13 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 14 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 15 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 16 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 17 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 18 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 19 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 20 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 21 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 22 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 23 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 24 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 25 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 26 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 27 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 28 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 29 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 30 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 31 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 32 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 33 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلازہ کمانڈر	فکر	تعداد	کریہ	ذرائع
1	میونسپل پلازہ	کراؤن فکٹر	27 دو کمانڈر	2500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	3000000/- روپے
2	ایٹا	فرسٹ فکٹر	28 دو کمانڈر	1500/- روپے ماہانہ نکان	200000/- روپے

آئی ڈی 34 کی تفصیل:

نمبر	پلاز
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PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan addressing inaugural session of Eye Conference organized by Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan.

Thousands of classrooms to be constructed to enroll new students

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Primary and Secondary Education Motasim Billah Shah here on Saturday said that the construction of new classrooms in all schools of the province was underway to adjust maximum number of students.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of newly constructed Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center in Govt Girls Primary School, Pawaka, he thanked the Participatory Rural

Development Society and Voluntary Service Overseas—an international NGO for establishing of ECE Center and providing technical help in promotion of quality education.

The first years of early fifty-five years are the most important years of a child's life; therefore, the government has allocated significant funds for equipping ECE rooms with modern facilities and training of teachers, he expressed.

He said that currently

more than 35,000 schools were established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the target of constructing thousands of more rooms was in progress. Last year, more than 800,000 out-of-school boys and girls were brought back to the schools, while this year, efforts will be made to attract more out-of-school children, especially the girls, he added.

He also inspected various sections of the Center and met with boys and girls students.

Minister assures help for setup of complex

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Malik Khushdil Khan visited Tehsil Bar Association Pabbi and promised to pave way for establishment of Judicial Complex.

TBA president Mian Zakir Ullah Advocate along with other lawyers welcomed Caretaker Minister Malik Khushdil Khan and briefed him about legal fraternity problems. The Lawyer community passed resolution for police martyrs at Mosque attack and committed to stand with rule of law in the society.

Caretaker Minister Malik Khushdil Khan claimed that he will uphold the provision of land with irrigation department for establishment of Judicial Complex at Pabbi.

He added that on Monday a meeting should be arranged with Pakistan Railways for redressal parking issue of legal fraternity.

Two-day training program concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Authority in collaboration with Nutrition International organized a two-day training program on the use of spectrophotometers that help measuring micronutrients in flour and food oil.

The training was held at Hayatabad Lab and attended by technical staff of KP Food Authority and representatives of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association.

The resource persons from the University of Peshawar and Qarshi Lab Pakistan briefed the participants about the operation and functions of spectrophotometers.

Speaking at the concluding session, Director Technical KP Food Authority Dr Abdus Sattar Shah said that the machinery imported from foreign such as spectrophotometers and HBL would help technical staff in checking the nutrients in food items.

He also appreciated the efforts of Nutrition International and expressed their support in future programmes.

Cold winds continue in City

PESHAWAR (APP): Weather will remain cold and dry in most parts of Peshawar in the other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while rain with thunder and lightning is expected in Mansehra, Kohistan and Balakot and snowfall in the mountains.

This was stated by an official of the Met Office while giving detail about the weather.

He said cold and dry weather in the provincial capital is the same in other districts as well.

The official said that Kalam minus 05, Parachinar minus 04, Hunza and Malam Jabba recorded minus 02 degree Celsius.

During the last 24 hours, the weather remained cold and dry in other parts of the province due to rain with thunder and lightning in Upper

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and snowfall on the mountains, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

The official said that Dir Upper 68mm, Dir Lower 19mm, Malam Jabba 39mm, Kalam 22mm, Balakot 12mm, Chitral 10mm, Darosh 08mm, Parachinar 07mm and Takhtbhai 04mm rain was recorded.

IGP visits LRH, inquires after health of jawans

PESHAWAR (APP): The newly posted Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat visited Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) Peshawar on Saturday where he inquired after the health of police jawans injured in the Police Lines Peshawar blast.

The Capital City Police Officer Peshawar accom-

panied the IGP on this occasion.

The IGP went to the bed of each and every injured police jawan admitted in different wards and ICU and inquired after their health.

The IGP also collected first-hand information from the doctors present on the duty about the nature of injuries of the police

jawans and the treatment provided to them so far.

The IGP informed that the injured police jawans are precious assets of the force and directed doctors to take special care of them and ensure best health care facilities to the injured police jawans.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) also met with the relatives of the injured

police jawans present in the hospital and expressed deep sorrow and sympathies with them and assured full support of the force.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) presented floral gifts and financial support to the injured jawans. The IGP also pledged to unearth and take to task the elements involved in this gruesome act.

Students urged to play role in development of country

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Car-taker Minister for Transport and Information Technology, Shahid Khan Khattak Saturday urged youth to utilize their capabilities and play role in

development and progress of the country.

He was talking to a delegation of students belonging to educational institutions of district Nowshera. He said that government is not oblivious to problems

of students and they would be provided needed help and assistance.

He said that all the needed facilities would be provided to students with an aim to prepare them to compete and explore new

opportunities in world markets. He said that government is also prioritizing promotion of contemporary fields of science and technology keeping in view their significance for uplift students.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Prime Minister Engr. Ameer Muqam addressing a public gathering.

Public relations drive to be promoted

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Lower Chitral Police is conducting community meetings in various areas this week to promote public relations campaign and community policing.

On the vision of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur and special orders of RPO Malakand Sajjad Khan, DPO Lower Chitral Nasir Mehmood has set up a special public engagement plan in Lower Chitral. Also, village-to-village meetings are being held.

In this regard, special meetings were held with local people under the leadership of SHOs of all police stations this week.

The bodies were attended by a large number of local elders and youth. The police officers briefed the local people on the importance of public-friendly policing and bridging the gap between the police and the public, and urged cooperation with each other to tackle crime.

Cooperation between the police and the public is very important in keeping Lower Chitral free from the

scourge of drugs and other social crimes.

The local elders vowed to fully cooperate with the police to eradicate drugs and other social crimes.

By reducing the distance between the public and the police and public-friendly policing, not only crime can be solved from the society, but it will also help in identifying drug dealers and other people involved in crimes and bringing them to justice.

The cooperation of the people is indispensable in maintaining the atmosphere of law and order.

Four narcotics dealers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital city police on Saturday recovered three kilograms of hashish and arrested four Afghani narcotics dealers.

Pishtakhara police station on a tip off that the active drug dealers will try to supply drugs at any time, on which the SHO Wajid Khan along with other policemen set up a blockade near the ring road toll plaza.

During that time, after stopping a suspicious motor vehicle and searching the secret compartments of the vehicle, three kilograms of hashish were recovered and the accused involved in a four-member group were arrested.

The vehicle used in drug supply in the possession of the accused has also been taken into police custody. A case has been registered against them and the investigation has been started.

Bodies found in Rahman Baba area identified

PESHAWAR (APP): The bodies found in Rahman Baba's area have been identified, Police said Saturday.

According to detail, the city police recovered two bodies from the Rehman Baba areas a day earlier and now they confirmed that both the bodies were identified as Sadaqat and the other is Adil.

The deceased were friends, aged 28 and Adil was around 25 years old, Police officials said. The Police Official disclosed that an FIR was registered on behalf of the heirs against unknown killers.

Former CM condoles with journalist

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mehmood Khan Saturday visited the house of senior journalist, Azmat Gul at Shergarh, district Mardan and condoled over the death of his father.

He prayed to rest the departed soul in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved family members to bear the loss with patience.

Former provincial ministers including Shoukat Yousafzai and Taimur Salim Jhagra also condoled with Azmat Gul at his home.



PESHAWAR: Former IGP KP Moazzam Jah Ansari talking to journalists during his farewell visit to PPC. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Fake medicine factory busted, says police

PESHAWAR (APP): In a major crackdown against the production and sale of fake medicines, the Charsadda City Police on Saturday conducted a successful operation and seized a fake medicine factory in Atmanzai area.

The operation was carried out under the instructions of District Police Officer Charsadda Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada and the supervision of DSP City Alamzeb Khan, SHO City Alamgir Khan, and In-charge Outpost Atmanzai

Aizaz Khan.

On a tip off, the police arrested two suspects, Tariq and Nauman, who were found operating the fake medicine factory.

A huge quantity of fake medicines of famous multinational brands, along with the manufacturing machinery, packaging material and packing machine were recovered.

The police have referred the recovered fake medicines and machinery to Drug Inspector Sajjad Khan for

further investigation.

The accused have been shifted to police station for further questioning and legal proceedings.

This operation is a significant step towards ensuring the safety of the public and controlling the spread of counterfeit medicines in the region.

The Charsadda City Police have vowed to continue their efforts in cracking down on illegal activities and maintaining the law and order in the city.



PESHAWAR: Worker preparing cotton from making quilts on his workplace.

PML-N to move court to reopen cases: Ikhtiar Wali

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Spokesman of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Ikhtiar Wali on Saturday said that they would write a letter to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to reopen

the 'Malam Jabba land scandal'.

In a statement issued here, he said that they would file an application in NAB regarding alleged Billion Tree Afforestation Project (BTAP) corruption.

The closure of the Provincial Accountability Commission and the recommendations of General Hamid Khan will be brought before the nation to "unveil the corruption of PTI", said Ikhtiar Wali.



In brief

No shortage of petrol at Dir F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: On complaints of people about shortage and hoarding, teams of district administration Saturday visited petrol pumps and inspected stock of petrol. The teams visited eighty petrol pumps situated in four tehsils of the district and checked petrol stocks in filling stations. District administration has said that checking of petrol pumps would continue and there is no shortage of petrol. District administration also advised people to remain patient and ignore any rumors about hoarding and unavailability of petrol. Meanwhile, the residents of Takoro in Jandol have complained that the government primary school Loya Shah presented an ugly look as the building was in a dilapidated condition. Talking to local journalists they said the children were forced to study under the open sky due to the bad condition of the school building. A youth Wahab Khan said the school was established in Takoro Loya Shah years ago, but it was destroyed due to an earthquake some 13 years ago. He said that several written requests were sent to the administration and concerned authorities but to no avail.

Traffic accident claims five lives

DERA GHAZI KHAN (INP): A deadly collision between a vehicle and trailer on Indus Highway in Dera Ghazi Khan on Saturday left five passengers dead. All the injured died on the spot. The collision took place due to the rash driving of the trailer driver, who was driving in the opposite direction. As a result, the car headed towards DG Khan had a head-off collision. The collision was so intense that all five passengers aged between 23 and 30; died on the spot. The bodies had been later handed over to the family after medico-legal formalities.

One killed, another injured F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: One killed and another one injured in the explosion of an old and rusted mortar shell at Sara Tara locality in the mountainous area of the Central Kurram on Saturday. Initially two persons were injured. However, one of them succumbed to his injuries at hospital while the second critically injured has been shifted to Peshawar. According to reports, arriving from Suverli Ali Sherzai locality, a far-flung convergent of district Kurram and District Orakzai, two persons namely Mujahid son of Mir Bashi and Zaira Gul son of Meena Gul of Mamozai tribe have went to forest for cutting wood wherein they found an old and rusted mortar shell. When they were trying to get explosives out, it exploded, resulting in injuring both persons. A team of the Rescue 1122 rushed to the spot and rushed them to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital, Ghaljo Mela, district Orakzai wherein one of them succumbed to his injuries.

Body found

QUETTA (APP): A dead body of a watchman found within the precincts of Jinnah Town PS in Quetta, police said on Saturday. Police said that reacting to information by the area people; they found a dead body of a watchman identified as Jalil Azbak dumped in a house in Arbab Town of Smungli Road.

Balochistan's coldest part Kan Mehtarzai; people brave brutal cold after the devastating floods

Rafiullah Mandokhail

QUETTA: Kan Mehtarzai is the coldest area of Balochistan and winter temperatures drop to minus 16 in winter. Besides, the area has Asia's second highest railway station after Tibet. Due to the elevation of the area, the locals made sturdy mud-stone houses and topped with corrugated iron sheets to avoid freeing of snow on their roofs. This area is also



famous for its high quality apple which is famous all over the country due to its unique taste.

The flood affectees of Kan Mehtarzai area of Balochistan have been waiting for the last several months for government assistance for their losses after the August floods played havoc with their livelihood. Kan Mehtarzai is among coldest areas of Balochistan and located about 100 kilometers from Quetta on Zhob National Highway. The floods affectees have lost their belonging

and livelihood to the floods and now they are forced to put up with the area's extreme cold.

The locals said, no assistance has been provided to them to rehabilitate their mud-stone houses in one of the coldest places of the province so far. They said, the people who are waiting in hope of getting assistance to rebuild their houses were spending their days and nights in partially damaged structures and

tial rains. He said that their village was located on the banks of a stream and waves of 25 to 30 feet high water passed through this during the floods. Nizam said that the floods washed away the mud brick homes, standing crops, protection works and uprooted decades old trees.

"It was particularly hard on women and patients to travel on this road," he said, Muhammad Amin Mehtarzai, a resident of the Asuzai Tallari village, which is located in the foothills of a mountain near the Kan Mehtarzai, said that he was staying at the home at the residence of a relative after the destruction of his home due to floods.

He said that authorities neither addressed their grievances nor extended any financial assistance to them. Muhammad Amin Mehtarzai said that their area was a backward village and lacked basic amenities; however, the recent floods and rains have also taken their toll on it. He said that only government assistance at his juncture could address the locals' sense of deprivations.

"A government-run girls school next to our home was inundated after the floods; however, months after the floods, the school has not been made functional," he lamented. He said that village school girls were waiting for government support to continue their studies.

"An academic year of these girls has been wasted due to the destruction of school," he said. On the other hand, Balochistan government officials said that they were taking all possible steps to address the grievances of the flood affectees. However, the officials said that to address the affectees' woes and compensation, they needed foreign assistance as the province was already hit by extreme poverty and financial crisis.

Decades' old property ownership dispute resolved

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Dir Quami Jirga has resolved a decades' old property ownership dispute between the residents of Shatai Dara and Malakan-e-Ghara after months' long struggle here in Lower Dir. The district administration also facilitated the Jirga in resolving this old dispute that has claimed several precious lives so far. A joint function of the Jirga and district administration in this regard was held in Shatai Dara here the other day.

The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi and district police officer Ikramullah Khan thanked the Jirga members and the warring parties for a peaceful settlement of the decades' old dispute. The land ownership dispute

remained unsolved in courts since 1968 as both the tribes were claiming their ownership over the Shatai Dara lands that stretched over hundreds of acres.

The Dir Quami Jirga led by a former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan a month ago started its efforts to resolve the matter through negotiation and finally succeeded to bring both the warring parties on the negotiating table.

The function was addressed by DC Muhammad Zubair Khan, ADC Abdul Wali Khan, district police officer Ikramullah Khan, SP investigation Mushtaq Khan, former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, former provincial minister Muzafar Syed, former president of district bar Timergara advocate Jehan

Bahadar, JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din and others. The speakers highlighted the importance of the jirga system in Pukhtun society and thanked the elders of both the tribes for admitting the jirga role. They said that durable peace was necessary for prosperity and development.

The speakers said that conflicts and wars were not the solution to any problem. The DC appreciated the Dir Quami Jirga and said that without its help it was not possible to settle this decades old dispute. He said the jirga would also play its active role in maintaining peace and countering terrorism in the district. The DC promised the people of Shatai Dara that every possible step would be taken for their uplift and educational enhancement.

Five of a family die in road accident

HYDERABAD (INP): A couple and their three children died in a road accident in Bulri Shah Karim town of Tando Mohammad Khan district.

Fazal Kubar, 28, and his wife, Hajani Kubar, 25, along with their children - Naheeda, 7, Shahida, 8, and Waheed, 3 - sustained fatal injuries when the motorcycle they were riding was hit by a speeding car near Kapor Mori stop. They were residents of Jhok Sharif, located in Thatta district.

The bodies were transported to the Tando Mohammad Khan Govt Hospital for a post-mortem examination and then handed over to the heirs. The car driver, Sufi Muzammil, who was injured in the accident was arrested and admitted to the hospital. An FIR of the incident was yet to be registered.

Tribesmen forcibly shut down all feeders in local grid station



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Residents of Landi Kotal forcibly shut down all feeders in protest against power off here on Saturday. It is to be mentioned here that 20 feeders have been set up in the grid station and out of it 15 feeders supply electricity to civil population and the rest of five feeders provide power to forces cantonment, administration block and headquarter hospital, Landi Kotal.

A protest rally of all political, social, counselors and common men of tribal society while carrying placards inscribed with slogans for provision of electricity was held in front of the grid station.

Speaking on the occasion those who led the protest including Shakir Afridi, Kaleemullah Shinwari, Azizullah Afridi, Ilyas Shinwari and others said that days back, the officials had promised to provide six hours electricity

round the clock to the people although later on the former refused to materialize their pledge.

Until assurance of power supply as per agreement to the civilians, they would not be allowed to provide electricity to the government building, they opined. They maintained that on the pretext of lack of electricity in national grid station, the locals were compelled for one or another reason to install electricity meters that were unacceptable to them.

Following failure of dialog between the protestors and concerned officials, the former forcibly shut down all the electric feeders to suspend power supply to the whole subdivision of Landi Kotal. When the local grid station crew was contacted on the matter they said that they had been directed to supply four hours electricity to civilians in 24 hours and if the people wanted the additional power supply, they should

discuss it with the high officials.

Forces distribute ration among locals: Food packages among the residents of Loy-Shelman subdivision Landi Kotal were given away here at Ghakhi checkpoint last day. The ration package consisted of flour, sugar, ghee, pulses etc. and was distributed among 400 poor and deserving tribesmen.

Commander Khyber Rifle Col Numanul Haq and officials of Tirah Rifle were present on the occasion. The officials vowed that besides securing borders of the country, they would also contribute in public relief works.

Dwellers of the area appreciated the noble act of the forces and urged the officials to serve the most neglected propel of the district. Loy-Shelman is the remote and bordering area of Landi Kotal and a huge portion of the population serve their life below the poverty line.

Anti-polio campaigning inaugurated in Wana

F.P. Report

WANA: A 5-day anti-polio campaign was inaugurated in Wana, the headquarter of South Waziristan Lower tribal District. According to the details, Additional DC South Waziristan Lower Kashmir Khan (Finance and Planning) and Assistant Commissioner Wana Yasir Salman Kundi formally inaugurated the polio campaign along with tribal elders.

The district administration and the health department say that the five-day anti-polio campaign will continue from February 13 to February 17 in Lower South Waziristan district. A five-

day anti-polio campaign will be started from February 13 in 36 Union Councils of South Waziristan Lower District. During the campaign, 66,332 children under five years of age will be administered polio drops to protect them from infectious diseases like polio. All arrangements have been made to conduct this special polio campaign in the most effective manner.

For this purpose, 365 teams consisting of trained polio workers have been formed, these polio teams include 347 mobile teams, 15 fixed teams, 1 transit team and 2 roaming teams. 37 UPEC Chairman and 101

Area Supervisors have been appointed for effective monitoring of the campaign.

Adequate security arrangements have been made with the help of the police during the anti-polio campaign. Additional DC South Waziristan Lower (Finance and Planning) Kashmir Khan has emphasized on all sections of the society, to save the future of your children from being disabled by polio and take an active part in this polio campaign to create a healthy society. So that polio should pay attention to playing its role in Pakistan so that the future of young children is saved from deadly viruses like polio.

Mohmand: The thirsty district between two rivers

Murad Khan

GHALANAI: Around 40-50 years ago there were springs of water in Mohmand District (Mohmand Agency before FATA Merger-2018), which was sufficient for drinking as well as irrigation purpose, but with the passage of time the water shortage created a crisis and in summer seasons per tanker of water price has been raised up to 4500 rupees in some areas of Mohmand district. The irrigation of fields became a dream here, because the people don't get water for even drinking purposes. Once the elders belonging to this area were giving examples of the beauty and greenery of district Mohmand, but now more than 70% of the population is facing water scarcity and the depletion of water table/level is becoming the most severe issue and according to a report submitted to the standing committee of the National Assembly, Mohmand Tribal District is among those five districts of Pakistan where the water table/level is lowering day by day.

A 70 years old retired teacher Mr. Ghareeb Ullah said "I have been transferred to Haji Yar Jan school on 16th November 1970, there were just two buses for transport from Shabqadar to Mohmand who used to take just 1 rupee, but this area was very much green, as there were springs of water and the people were used to grow wreaths, puppy plants and vegetables. Due to springs and more rainfall the whole Mohmand Agency (Before FATA merger) was looking very beautiful in the spring season, the springs water was so pure, clean and clear that the people were using these water for drinking purposes.

Mr. Ghareeb Ullah shared his life experience about the water level in Mohmand district and

said that once a man was drowned in a water well in Doorba-Khel area of Halimzai Tehsil, in spite of three days continuous pouring of water through special water pumping machines, the water well couldn't make empty, so they decided to take help of special swimmer from Warsak Dam, who brought out the dead body of that man." He added that this was the quantity of underground water in this district.

About the springs of water in this district he said that, there was a spring of water in Ghwanda Khel and the other one was in Round area, 3-4 kilometers away from district headquarter Ghallani, the third one was in Kaankar area of Chanda, three of them used to flow into Halki Gandahab area. He said that in these springs the people were swimming and used these water for irrigation purposes as well.

About the lowering of water table in Mohmand district he said that the very much decrease in the intensity of rains, excessive extraction of groundwater in the form of water wells and dug wells and rise in population are the main three causes of water shortage.

Ijaz-UI-Haq, Executive Engineer PHE (Public Health Engineering) Department Mohmand says "Water depletion is a big issue in Mohmand, as the water table in Mohmand ranges from 300 to 500 feet depending upon area." About the lowering of water level/table he said that the reasons of lowering water table in this district includes the excessive extraction of ground water for irrigation purpose, climate change, very little quantity of rains, lack of water recharge planning and excessive use of pressure pumps through solar panels.

"To overcome this issue the govt. is planning different proj-

ects, which includes Srookalay to Ghallani water scheme, Left Bank Canal from Mohmand Dam to Ghallani and Pandialai, Right Bank Canal from Mohmand Dam to Pranghaar." He added. About the future planning the Executive Engineer Mohmand said that we are planning to do sub-surface water extraction in Mohmand Dam, Jay Dam, and Warsak Dam in Khwaizai Baizai tehsil, for this purpose we are planning to have floating solar panels on the surface of water in Mohmand dam, which will be a unique project of its nature. Apart from this the govt. have a huge special drinking project from Mohmand Dam to Peshawar district.

For permanent solution of the issue he suggested that the govt. should have a ban on excessive use of water pumps, to maintain the ground water recharge the govt. should make small dams. Besides this, we should save rain water and the govt. should have proper policy in order to take ban on extraction of ground water for irrigation purpose.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nafees, Chairman Department of environmental sciences at University of Peshawar says "it has been revealed by environmental scientist in 2015 that there will be severe water shortage in 2025 in the whole country, the water shortage issue will be more severe in cities as compared to villages or rural areas." About the reasons for water table lowering he said that Mohmand tribal district is a dried mountainous area, which has been badly affected due to deforestation and heavily grazing on a large scale, secondly the quantity of rains has been decreased very much, which is directly related to climate change.

About the third reason he said that the Forest department has started a program by the name

"Social Forestry" in Malakand, dir, Swat, Bajure and Mohmand Tribal District, which has been criticized very much, because they have planted Eucalyptus plant. 1st of all, this plant is not the native species of these areas, secondly this plant decreases the underground water level.

Dr M. Nafees added that the lack of proper plantation and increase in population are the other reasons for the decrease of water table/level. Besides this the underground water was extracted badly, as the dug wells have been changed into water pumps, water pumps have been transferred into heavy tube wells and solar machines, we have no such kind of criteria and have no any restrictions for the extraction of underground water.

About the solution of this issue he suggested that we should plant the indigenous plants like Phulai, Sanatha, Ber, Kikar, Chir, Gurgura (Reptonia Buxifolia), Karkanrha (Zizyphus Nummularia) and Palosa (Aesias Modesta) of the same area in huge quantities, for rare water harvesting and storage of rainwater, Check Dams or small dams should be made, which will be a great source for ground water recharge. Secondly for groundwater recharging and irrigation purposes the grey water harvesting should be ensured.

Nabi, G. Ali, M., Khan, S. et al. writes different suggestions for the conservation of water in their article named (The crisis of water shortage and pollution in Pakistan: risk to public health, biodiversity, and ecosystem. Environ SciPollut Res 26, 10443-10445 (2019). To overcome the water scarcity in Pakistan they have suggested the following ways: Sound National Water Policy; Building dams; Reforestation; Steam-based car washing; Artificial rain; Glaciers conservation; Restoring lakes; Regulating tube-wells drilling

and awareness.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan ranked third among the countries facing severe water shortage. In May 2018, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) announced that by 2025, there will be very little or no clean water available in the country (Shukla 2018). It must be noted that while per capita availability in the 1950s was approximately 5000 m³ per annum, it has now declined to below 1000 m³, which is an internationally recognized threshold of water scarcity (Aziz et al. 2018). Currently, only 20% of the country's population has access to clean drinking water. The remaining 80% populations depends on polluted water primarily contaminated by sewage (fecal, total coliforms, E. coli colonies), and secondarily by fertilizer, pesticides, and industrial effluents (Daud et al. 2017; Sahoutara 2017).

Zafar Khan, who is working as Sub Divisional Officer in irrigation department Mohmand says "Mohmand Tribal District has two dams (Mohmand and Warsak Dam) and five small dams, (these are Pindiali Small Dam, Jay Dam, Motoshah Small Dam, Khurshid Dam and Abdul Shakoor Small Dam at Ghandahab Ghallani). Similarly the FRD (FATA Rural Development) and so many other NGO's have also made more than 30 check dams in different tehsil of Mohmand District."

About the benefits of these small dams and check dams he said that the Jay and Ghallani small dam have do not actively take part in ground water recharge, but it does not mean that both are waste. He added that after filtration, the rain water of Abdul Shakoorsmall dam will be provided to Halki Ghandahab and Babi Khel areas

for drinking purpose, similarly the water of Jay dam will also be used for drinking purpose as sub-surface water recharge.

SDO Mohmand said that at this time our district is facing through water scarcity, but after the completion of Mohmand dam and other small dams, we are hopeful that the water issues will be solved.

"By making Mohmand Dam, small dams, check dams and the special water scheme from Mohmand's lower sub division to Ghallani, the local administration is hopeful that it will help in going up the water table in Mohmand Tribal district, apart from this a survey has been done by irrigation and PHE Department with the help of EX-MNA SajidMohmand for the establishment of a special canal from river Kabul in Khwaizo Tehsil, which will fulfill the basic water necessities of the people living in tehsil Khwaizo and Baizi." Said Ifitikhar Khan, planning officer with ADC (Additional Deputy Commissioner-Finance). He added that a special canal is being made from the mega project of Mohmand Dam for the people of Burhankhel tehsil, so we are hopeful that the basic necessities of drinking water will be fulfilled by these activities.

Environmental scientists believe that for ground water recharge and for solving the water table issue, if proper precautionary measures were not adopted on time, this will create a complete scarcity, that's why all the stakeholders including Govt. institutions, NGO's, civil society and media should play their role for the solution of the water issues in Mohmand district.

The Writer is Radio producer and freelance Environmental Journalist, who tweets on @Muradonline123



Biden, Lula focus on democracy, climate during visit

WASHINGTON (AP): President Joe Biden and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met at the White House and reflected on how their nations were tested in their respective battles to preserve democracy, with the US president declaring that democracy ultimately “prevailed” over the far-right mobs that stormed their governments’ halls of power in an attempt to overturn election victories.

Biden defeated incumbent Donald Trump in a fraught 2020 race, securing victory with thin margins in several battleground states. In Brazil’s recent election, its tightest since its return to democracy over three decades ago, Lula, the leftist leader of the Workers’ Party, squeaked out a win against right-wing incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, who earned the nickname “Trump of the Tropics” and was an outspoken admirer of the former US president.

Both Trump and Bolsonaro sowed doubts about the vote, without presenting evidence, but their claims nevertheless resonated with their most die-hard supporters. In the US Capitol, Trump supporters staged the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection seeking to prevent Biden’s win from being certified. Last month, thousands of rioters stormed the Brazilian capital aiming to oust the newly-inaugurated Lula.

“Both our nations’ strong democracies have been tested of late ... very much tested,” Biden said at the start of their Oval Office meeting. “But both in the United States and

Brazil, democracy prevailed.” Lula said that he was moving to restore Brazil on the world stage after Bolsonaro’s term.

“Brazil marginalized itself for four years,” Lula said. “His world started and ended with fake news.” Biden joked that Lula’s complaint “sounds familiar,” an apparent knock on Trump. Both Biden and Lula sought to spotlight that Brazil’s democracy remains resilient and that relations between the Americas’ two biggest democracies are back on track.

The leaders also discussed Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, insecurity in Haiti, migration and climate change, including efforts to stem deforestation of the Amazon, according to the White House. During his 2020 run for the White House, Biden proposed working with global partners to create a \$20 billion fund that would encourage Brazil to change its approach to the Amazon, and there was speculation that the US administration would use the visit to announce a major contribution. But following the meeting, the leaders said in joint statement that the Biden administration only “announced its intent to work with Congress to provide funds for programs to protect and conserve the Brazilian Amazon, including initial support for the Amazon Fund.”

The Amazon Fund is the most important international cooperation effort to preserve the rainforest, raising donations for efforts to prevent, monitor and combat deforestation

and promote sustainability. The fund has mostly been financed by Norway, and has received a total \$1.29 billion. In 2019, Bolsonaro dissolved the steering committee that selects sustainable projects to finance. He argued the rainforest is a domestic affair. In response, Germany and Norway froze their donations. After Lula took office, Germany’s government announced a fresh donation. Climate was a prominent topic in two recent phone calls between the leaders since Lula’s October victory, according to the White House. After their meeting, reporters asked Lula whether the US would join the initiative. Lula responded that he believes so and that its participation is necessary.

“I didn’t specifically discuss an Amazon Fund. I discussed the need for rich countries to assume the responsibility of financing all the countries that have forests,” he said, specifically noting Brazil then listing its South American neighbors. But Lula’s biggest objective going into the visit was securing ringing support for the legitimacy of his presidency as unease continues at home. It remains unclear how the animus Bolsonaro generated will be channeled going forward, and some opposition lawmakers allied with the former president are already calling for Lula’s impeachment. Lula sacked the army’s commander, with the defense minister citing “a fracture in the level of trust” in the force’s top levels.

“You have the environment and



other stuff, but Lula sitting down with Biden is an exercise in coup-proofing Brazil’s democracy,” said Oliver Stuenkel, an international relations professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank. “There is still genuine concern in the Brazilian government about the armed forces, and the biggest partner in containing the armed forces is the United States.” Bolsonaro, who is facing several investigations in Brazil, traveled to Florida during the final days of his presidency and has remained there since. He applied late last month for a six-month tourist visa to extend his US stay. A group of Democratic lawmakers urged Biden to expel the former president on the grounds that the US shouldn’t provide safe harbor to would-be authoritarians. The White House and State

Department have declined to comment on Bolsonaro’s visa status, citing privacy concerns. Analysts have noted that Bolsonaro’s absence from Brazil is a welcome change for Lula, and he told CNN that he didn’t plan to discuss the former president with Biden. Lula also met with several lawmakers, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, and union officials before his meeting with Biden.

“It is enormously important for the future of this planet that we stop the deforestation of the Amazon,” Sanders said after his meeting. “Bolsonaro encouraged that in a terrible way. Lula has turned that around, but Brazil is going to need help globally. The issue of the Amazon is not just a Brazilian issue. It’s a global issue.” Ukraine marked a divergence between the Lula and

Biden. Lula previously said the country was as much to blame for the war as Russia, though he more recently clarified that he thought Russia was wrong to invade.

Lula has declined to provide Ukraine with munitions, and he told reporters that he had proposed to Biden the creation of a group of nations to negotiate peace. “I am convinced that we need to find a way out to put an end to this war,” he said. “The first thing is ending the war, then negotiating what will happen.” Asked about Lula’s proposal, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said it is up to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to determine “if and when negotiations are appropriate, and certainly under what circumstances.”

Malaysian leader wants pressure on Myanmar

BANGKOK (AP): Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim issued a strong call for fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to take new measures to pressure the government of military-ruled Myanmar to end what he called “atrocities” against its own people.

Anwar, on a two-day official visit to Thailand, said in a speech to the Malaysian-Thai Chamber of Commerce that ASEAN members “have to be courageous enough to try and resolve” the crisis in Myanmar, which some UN experts have described as a civil war triggered by the army’s seizure of power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021. Security forces have killed thousands of civilians and army sweeps through the countryside have displaced more than 1 million people from their homes. In 2017, a brutal counterinsurgency campaign against the Muslim

Rohingya minority drove more than 740,000 to flee across the border to Bangladesh, where they remain in refugee camps.

Anwar said Myanmar has “every right” to have its own domestic policies and priorities. “But no country in these times should ever continue with discriminatory policies, marginalization of their people or intimidating, or worse, perpetrating violence against your own people,” he said. ASEAN “will have to promote, suggest new mechanisms to make sure that these atrocities committed, perpetrated against their own people must end,” Anwar said. The regional grouping “should be courageous enough to try and resolve this” because it should not tolerate such abuses and because the crisis drives large numbers of refugees to seek safety in other countries in the region, including Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.

“It would be ideal if we have a strong consensus, and give a strong message to the Myanmar regime,” Anwar said. After the army’s takeover, ASEAN came up with a five-point plan to try to help restore peace in Myanmar. It calls for the immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among all parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all sides. The military government initially agreed to it, but has since stymied efforts at its implementation.

ASEAN responded by refusing to let Myanmar’s military leaders attend the group’s main meetings, but that has failed to win their cooperation. Western nations have implemented stronger actions in response to the crisis than has ASEAN, including political and economic sanctions against the generals and their cronies.

UN HRs chief calls for special forces to Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): The UN’s human rights chief urged the international community to consider deploying a specialized armed force to Haiti, warning that violent gangs are creating a “living nightmare” for thousands of people. The appeal from UN Human Rights Commissioner Volker Türk came at the end of a two-day visit to Haiti at the request of a government unable to control gangs that are killing, raping and pillaging in a growing number of neighborhoods. Violence has spiked in the impoverished country since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

“It is time for the international community to help the Haitian authorities regain full control so this suffering can be stopped,” Türk said. He added that since multiple crises around the world are competing for attention, he fears that “the situation in Haiti is not receiving the urgent spotlight that it deserves.”

Hours later, at an Organization of American States meeting in Washington, the US government said it continues to discuss with international partners the possibility of sending a multinational force composed primarily of police. Francisco Mora, US ambassador to the OAS, added that the US is still working with others on a framework with the aim to provide security and stability and that it would also soon implement new sanctions and visa restrictions.

Mora spoke after Haiti’s Foreign Minister, Jean Victor Génésus, requested that a specialized international force “be allowed to stand with us.” “There is a deepening crisis in the country that cries out for humanitarian aid,” he said. The plea came as the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti released a 24-page report on what it described as mass incidents of murder, gang rapes and sniper attacks in Cite Soleil, Haiti’s biggest slum. It is in the capital of Port-au-Prince. “The findings of this report are horrifying,” Türk said. “It paints a picture of how people are being harassed and terrorized by criminal gangs for months without the state being able to stop it.”

The report said that from last July 8 to Dec. 31, at least 263 people were killed and at least 57 women and girls were raped in just one neighborhood within Cite Soleil known as Brooklyn. That area became ground zero for intense fighting between warring gangs. During that time, the report said, residents lived in “an almost permanent climate of terror due to the use of snipers that killed, at random, any person who passed in their field of vision.” Officials added that snipers would stand on schools and other buildings during broad daylight to attack innocent residents, with an average of six people killed or wounded every week.

The rebel-held areas of Syria near Turkey’s border are in a particularly dire situation since they cannot receive aid from government-held parts of Syria without Damascus’s authorization. At the same time, Bab al-Hawa -- the sole border crossing used to shuttle life-saving aid from Turkey into conflict-ravaged Syria -- has seen its operations disrupted by the deadly earthquake. Even before the tremor, the UN had repeatedly stressed the need to open more border crossings to make it easier to get aid through.

council will meet on Syria -- likely early next week -- according to Swiss envoy Pascale Baeriswyl, who initiated the meeting along with Brazil. The two non-permanent members are in charge of the Syria humanitarian file.

At the session, the council will hear from UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths, who is to visit Turkey and Syria this weekend. “He will be conducting an evaluation as to what the effective situation is, where the bottlenecks for the delivery of aid exist, and in how best members the council can address that,” said Brazilian ambassador to the UN Ronaldo Costa Filho said of Griffiths. At least 3,553 people have died in Syria, where more than a decade

of civil war and Syrian-Russian aerial bombardment had already destroyed hospitals, collapsed the economy and prompted electricity, fuel and water shortages.

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Exiled Iran opposition figures urge unity

DUBAI (AFP): A group of prominent exiled Iranian opposition figures pleaded for unity and an end to infighting to help the nationwide protests of recent months to replace Iran’s Islamic theocracy with a secular democracy. The eight figures, who included Reza Pahlavi, the son of the last shah, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, said they were working on a charter for a transition to a new pluralistic system that would be followed by free elections.

Their call was made at a conference in the United States a day before the Islamic republic marks 44 years since the February 11, 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ousted the imperial rule of shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Iran’s theocratic leadership is facing its greatest challenge from nearly five months of protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini who had been arrested for allegedly violating the strict dress code for women.

But the emigre opposition has long been notorious for infighting between

its various factions, some pro-monarchist, others left-wing or based among Iran’s ethnic minority groups. “It’s not a time for infighting. The overthrow of the regime is not possible without unity and empathy,” said Ebadi. “Let’s leave differences for the election. We will move hand-in-hand to a better future,” she said in a video message to the conference at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security in the US. Pahlavi, who has long campaigned for a secular democracy in Iran rather than any restoration of the monarchy, said: “The time has come to consolidate our positions, put aside differences. ‘The time has come to put aside slogans, roll up our sleeves and begin our work,’” he said.

Actor Golshifteh Farahani, who said she was also speaking on behalf of pro-protest footballer Ali Karimi, said the participants shared a common goal to “overthrow and transition from the Islamic republic”, starting with a transitional council and then elections. “When election day comes we won’t all want the same things. But

we will celebrate our differences.” US-based dissident Masih Alinejad said that the group was working on a charter or propositions for a transition that would be ready at the end of the month.

“We must agree on minimal principles,” she said, adding: “The world must prepare itself for a day without the Islamic republic.” The conference was also addressed by Hamed Esmailion, who represents families bereaved by Iran’s shooting down of a Ukrainian airliner in 2020, actor Nazanin Boniadi and Abdullah Mohtadi, secretary general of the Kurdish Komala Party.

Most analysts agree that the protests have lost momentum in recent months in the face of a crackdown that has seen hundreds killed, thousands arrested and four protest-related executions. But the participants insisted that the regime remained under threat. “The next wave will come and it will be heavier,” Esmailion said. “We can organise and plan so, when the next wave comes, all of us are ready and we can transition away from the Islamic republic.”

UN draft resolution: Any peace must keep Ukraine intact

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Ukraine’s supporters have circulated a proposed resolution for adoption by the 193-member UN General Assembly on the eve of the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of its smaller neighbor that would underscore the need for peace ensuring Ukraine’s “sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.”

The draft, obtained by The Associated Press, is entitled “Principles underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.” The proposed resolution is broader and less detailed than the 10-point peace plan that Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced at the November summit of the Group of 20 major economies. This was a deliberate decision by Ukraine and its backers to try to gain maximum support when it is put to a vote, UN diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because discussions have been private.

General Assembly spokesperson Paulina Kubiak said that a reactivated emergency session of the General Assembly on Ukraine will start on the afternoon of Feb. 22. Dozens of speeches are expected to continue through most of Feb. 23 and the vote is expected late that day. Ukraine’s deputy foreign minister said last month that Zelenskyy wants to come to the UN for the anniversary, but diplomats said expectations of a major new Russian offensive may keep him at home.

The General Assembly has become the most important UN body dealing with

Ukraine because the Security Council, which is charged with maintaining international peace and security, is paralyzed because of Russia’s veto power. Unlike the council, there are no vetoes in the assembly, but while its five previous resolutions on Ukraine are important as a reflection of world opinion, they are not legally binding. The Security Council will hold a ministerial meeting on Feb. 24, the anniversary of the invasion. Russian and Ukrainian diplomats will be at the same table, as they have been at dozens of meetings since the invasion — but there will be no outcome.

The Ukrainian-backed draft resolution for the anniversary was circulated to all UN member nations except Russia and its ally Belarus, and negotiations on the text started, the diplomats said. It underscores the need to reach “a comprehensive, just and lasting peace” in Ukraine “as soon as possible” in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The Charter states that all UN member nations “shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state,” and must settle disputes peacefully. The draft calls on UN member states and international organizations “to redouble support for diplomatic efforts” to achieve peace on those terms.

The proposed resolution reiterates the General Assembly’s previous demand that Russia “immediately, completely, and

unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces” from Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders. And it reaffirms that no territory acquired by the threat or use of force will be considered legal.

The draft demands that all prisoners of war, detainees and internees be treated in accordance with the Geneva conventions and calls for the “complete exchange” of prisoners of war, the release of people unlawfully detained, “and the return of all internees and of civilians forcibly transferred and deported, including children.” The proposed resolution urges all countries “to cooperate in the spirit of solidarity to address the global impact of the war on food security, energy, finance, the environment, and nuclear security and safety.”

It would deplore “the dire human rights and humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, including the continuous attacks against critical infrastructure across Ukraine with devastating consequences for civilians.” And it would call for full adherence to international humanitarian law on the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Zelenskyy’s 10-point plan is far more specific, including establishing a special tribunal to prosecute Russian war crimes, building a European-Atlantic security architecture with guarantees for Ukraine, restoring Ukraine’s damaged power infrastructure and ensuring safety around Europe’s largest nuclear power plant at Zaporizhzhia.

‘War in Ukraine will drag on for years’

KYIV (AP): The owner of the Russian Wagner Group private military contractor actively involved in the fighting in Ukraine has predicted that the war could drag on for years. Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a video interview released that it could take 18 months to two years for Russia to fully secure control of Ukraine’s eastern industrial heartland of Donbas. He added that the war could go on for three years if Moscow decides to capture broader territories east of the Dnieper River.

The statement from Prigozhin, a millionaire who has close links to Russian President Vladimir Putin and was dubbed “Putin’s chef” for his lucrative Kremlin catering contracts, marked a recognition of the difficulties that the Kremlin has faced in the campaign, which it initially expected to wrap up within weeks when Russian troops invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. Russia suffered a series of humiliating setbacks in the fall when the Ukrainian military launched successful counteroffensives to reclaim broad swaths of territory in the east and the south. The Kremlin has avoided making forecasts on how long the fighting could continue, saying that what it called the “special military operation” will continue until its goals are fulfilled.

The Russian forces have focused on Ukraine’s Luhansk and Donetsk provinces that make up the Donbas region where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian forces since 2014. Prigozhin said that the Wagner Group mercenaries were continuing fierce battles for control of the Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region. He acknowledged that the Ukrainian troops were mounting fierce resistance.

As Russian troops have pushed their attacks in the Donbas, Moscow has also sought to demoralize Ukrainians by leaving them without heat and water in the bitter winter. Russia launched the 14th round of massive strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities and other vital infrastructure. High-voltage infrastructure facilities were hit in the eastern, western and southern regions, resulting in power outages in some areas.

Ukraine’s energy company, Ukrenergo, said Saturday that the situation was “difficult but controllable,” adding that involved backups to keep up power supplies but noting that power rationing will continue in some areas. Ukraine’s military chief, Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said that Russian forces launched 71 cruise missiles, 35 S-300 missiles and seven Shahed drones, adding that Ukrainian air defenses downed 61 cruise missiles and five drones.

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Rising crimes and Sheriff’s Agitprop

ISLAMABAD police have decided to improve the data sharing mechanism among all divisions in order to effectively curb crime and activities of anti-social elements. According to the details, Police high-ups decided to use modern technical resources to improve further the investigation, coordination, and data-sharing strategy at the departmental level. The IGP directed all police officials to take effective steps to control crime and adopt professional and responsible attitudes to reduce people's suffering.

Islamabad Capital Police is a highly-trained, disciplined, and well-resourced Law Enforce Department in the country. It enjoys tremendous incentives and immunities because of its unique access to power corridors, dealing with delicate parliamentarians' security and ambassadorial assignments in the national capital. However, despite the availability of optimum resources including a safe-city surveillance system, mobile tracking, call records, and citizenry data along with forensic experts and centralized control in a limited territory.

The Police Department could not come up to the expectations of the public as well as the rulers because the lives, property, and respect of the masses are not secured in the national Capital, robbers are roaming freely in the posh areas of Islamabad while theft, kidnappings, rape, and robberies are common in the model city. Unfortunately, a majority of Police Investigators are not used to modern investigative techniques and are still stuck to old methods of crime scene recording and preservation, witness inquiry, and statement illustration as well as delayed and lengthy prosecution of the cases that ultimately benefit the criminals and hurt essentials of justice.

The Police deal with crime as a source of income because investigators receive bribes from both accused and complainants and try to satisfy both parties through vague, inconclusive, and delayed investigations. At the same time, bribes and corruption start from the early stage of filing an FIR to case registration, inquiry, accused apprehension to interrogation as well as court proceedings, thus, every step forward comes with higher bribes rates ranging from 5000 to hundred thousands.

In fact, no modern-day training, service reforms, and incentives had ever changed the behavior of Police officials over the past decades because of no implementation of the law and the lack of accountability in the force. Awfully, the most privileged and resource-rich Islamabad Police is, currently mourning its resource depletion and inadequacy what else could be asked about the rest of the LEAs in the country?

According to experts, the performance of the Security and Intelligence apparatuses and judiciary is not up to par, as those mechanisms could not prove their worth against current-day organized crimes, terrorism, and growing white-collar offenses in the country. Presently, resistance to lodging an FIR, misrepresentation of cases and crimes, bogus achievements diary, and institutional corruption are the major problems of the police force in the country. However, the bureaucrats are well versed in the tact of pointing out the government's shortcomings instead of accepting their institutional drawbacks and weaknesses.

In fact, there is a dire need for joint oversight mechanisms of civil society, Police Highups, and public representatives over Police at the District and Provincial levels to keep a check and cross-examine the self-claimed performance of Police departments that failed to implement the law and provide security. After all, no reforms can bring change in Police Department until and unless Police officials change themselves in a good faith.

Moldova, new stop of EU-Russo tussle

RECENTLY, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the European leaders that his country has intercepted a plan by the Russian secret service to destroy Moldova, and Moldovan intelligence confirmed the claim. According to the details, the intercepted document revealed how Russian Intelligence planned to break the democracy of Moldoa and intended to establish control over Moldova in the coming months. Zelenskyy claimed that he informed the Moldovan President Maia Sandu and Moldovan Intelligence confirmed the alleged scheme.

The Republic of Moldova, a former Soviet Republic is currently experiencing political unrest and confrontation between pro-west democratic groups and a pro-Russia Political faction, while both warring blocs consistently back their front groups to ultimately install their henchmen in East European nation. Presently, Moldova is a strong candidate for NATO and the European Union (EU), while the Moldovan government is actively undertaking various legislations and other legal measures to urgently transformed its economy and social system according to the EU standard to join the 27-member bloc. Thus, Kremlin is utmostly frustrated over Moldova's bid for the EU and North Atlantic Military Alliance and taking all-out measures to fail Chinisau in its plan.

Previously a pro-west politician Natalia Gavrilita gained a landslide victory in the 2021 Election on her anti-corruption and pro-west agenda. However, days after Zelenskyy echoed his concerns regarding Russia's proposed plan for a regime change in neighboring Moldova, the pro-western Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita announced his resignation amid severe economic and energy crises along with a months-long diplomatic tussle with Moscow.

Natalia Gavrilita, 41 years old revolutionary leader contested the parliamentary election on an anti-corruption and pro-European manifesto, but she was struck by Moscow's hostility in the shape of reduced energy supply, continuous diplomatic and military coercion of tiny democracy that caused great economic challenges for pro-west leader over the past 18 months, that not only failed Gavrilita in its anti-corruption and pro-western narrative but compelled her to step down abruptly after she snubbed Russian government over an airspace violation in recent days. Although the Moldovan government vowed to carry forward its EU and NATO bids despite the resignation of its leader, however, the future events would illustrate the fate of the East European Nation.

Britain was sick before Brexit. Until left accepts that, likes of Liz Truss won’t give up

Nesrine Malik

THERE is no joy in it for those who always knew Brexit was a con, but it is finally dawning on more and more people that leaving the EU was a colossal mistake. Those who led the project still talk the same old nonsense about the purported benefits of Brexit, but they, like most government assertions these days, sound like echoes of a bygone time.

In reality, Brexit's arrival has caused supply chain disruptions, staffing shortages, higher food prices and extra red tape for business. Public opinion is shifting towards remorse. Instead of hurtling away from the EU into the swaggering prosperity promised by the Leave campaign, Britain is instead receding into a dark timeline of recession, strikes, and political instability. Last week, it was forecast that Britain will be the only G7 economy to shrink in 2023.

When it comes to questioning why Britain is in such trouble, leaving the EU is now given as one of the standard reasons - as though it were an exogenous event that struck the country like an asteroid and smashed it out of orbit. Around the world, Britain is now twinned with Brexit as an identity, an island plagued by its hubris. "Brexit has cracked Britain's economic foundations", a CNN headline declared late last year. "Blankets, Food Banks, and Shuttered Pubs: Brexit Has Delivered a Broken Britain", said Foreign Policy last week.

It's understandable that such a huge event should become the only lens through which the country is seen, both internally and externally. But the truth is that Britain was broken way before Brexit. Brexit did not break the housing market, so that stock is low and housing so unaffordable that the average first-

time buyer in London had a deposit of £150,000 last year, and recent rises in interest rates will be passed on from buy-to-let landlords to tenants. Brexit did not create the need for food banks, the use of which increased by more than 10 times between 2010 and 2014. Brexit did not weaken the regulators' hand so that energy companies could make their largest profits in over a century, and not even be taxed prop-

two huge events - the war in Ukraine and the pandemic - have happened since Brexit, and contribute in their own ways to economic pain and the strain on public services. But they both arrived in a country already compromised in its ability to deal with price shocks, supply chain disruptions and widespread illness.

Brexit also did not make

about immigrants and Muslims. And Brexit did not make our left-of-centre politicians mealy mouthed-when it came to challenging xenophobia. Their punishment was to be devoured by it. It is because Britain was breaking that Brexit happened in the first place. It was a necessary, phantom new road to prosperity when all other roads had reached a dead end. In that

shady foreign influence. The feelings Brexit inspires are understandably strong. But they are also broadly wasted when their purpose is merely to reverse Brexit, to fixate on Brexit as a uniquely calamitous event that is bringing about Britain's decline, rather than a secondary cause of that decline.

Think of those angry years between 2016 and 2019, when People's Vote marches swelled the streets

both the result of Britain's failings and a smokescreen for them. It has become an obsession of two extremes: those who believe we will not prosper until Brexit is allowed to flourish, and those who believe will never prosper unless Brexit is vanquished somehow, even if that is just to extract a political expression of the fact through urging Keir Starmer to admit that it has been a failure. In the middle, another feeling - fatigue - dominates, which forecloses any more examination of why Brexit came about.

Brexit was always the wrong answer to the right question that millions across the country were asking. How do we regain a sense of identity, community, prosperity and security in our future? Or, to put it in the cynical language of Brexiters (and now Starmer): how to take back control? The less cynical subtext to that question is this: how do we regain control at a time when employment, healthcare and housing are increasingly uncertain, when industries have been shuttered and community organisations defunded? These are the questions that the right still seeks to exploit. See Liz Truss's statement, even after epic failure, that she merely wasn't given enough of a chance because "the general consensus is that Covid-19, Brexit and the Russian invasion of Ukraine are the only factors that have influenced our economy" making "departure from the status quo" not "politically feasible".

Starmer can try to flip and reclaim "Take back control", if he likes. It's cute. But if it doesn't provide its own departure from the status quo, then we have learned nothing, and the uncertainties that brought about Brexit will endure, to be exploited again.

The Guardian

I thought knowing I had ‘cancer gene’ would cast a shadow over my life. Now I have it, I realise how wrong I was

Hilary Osborne

THE results of the genetic test didn't really come as a surprise. My mum died of breast cancer in her mid-30s, and I'd recently had it confirmed that my great-grandma on her side had it on her death certificate too. Yet when I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer last year - the most likely to be linked to a gene mutation - I hoped against hope that it wasn't inherited. In part because of what it means for my relatives, in part because of what it means for my children and their children, and in part because I didn't like to think that what I was going through now had been pretty much inevitable from the minute I'd been conceived, and I'd made no effort to find out about it.

Only between 5% and 10% of breast cancers are believed to be hereditary, but if you have a mutation in either the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, your chance of developing the illness involves some much bigger percentages. With the BRCA2 mutation that I

have, the chance of developing breast cancer by the age of 80 is about 70%; in the general population of women, the chance is just 12-13%. With the mutation I carry, I have a 50% chance of passing it on to my children. Until last year, I had no idea of this. I could have known - the information is out there. But, despite what happened to my mum, I'd not really looked into it. And no one had really suggested I should - except my grandma. She insisted I got checked out after suffering a breast abscess when I had my son in 2010. I had a mammogram and met someone who asked me about my family history. At that point I only knew for sure that my mum had died of it; my grandma and her sister were still fighting fit, and it was decided there was nothing to worry about.

Three years later came Angelina Jolie's revelation that she had the BRCA1 gene, and had decided to have a double mastectomy. The story topped the news, and was written about for days afterwards.

I thought about it fleet-

ingly. Should I ask a doctor if I could, or should, have a test? But I was more concerned about what I would do with the information. Would I have to declare it to insurers? Currently you don't need to disclose a positive test result, but I wondered if this might change. Would I ever want to have preventive surgery (the double mastectomy that Jolie chose was, and still is, the only option)? And, I suppose, I was concerned about what the information would do to me. If I didn't have surgery, would I panic at the first sign of a twinge? Would I live under the shadow of the worry? Would I make myself ill in some other way as a result? Would it make the decision to have more children more stressful?

So I carried on, blithely ignorant. And by the time I saw the stats, there was a 100% chance I'd got it. Now, of course, I look back and wonder why I didn't do things differently. Given my mum's age when she died, I should have qualified for NHS testing, but I

didn't know that. Even having experienced cancer, I'm not sure I would have wanted a mastectomy at first. If I'd found out I had the gene in my 20s, I'd have wanted to know the chance of getting cancer in my 30s and 40s, not just by the time I was 80. Luckily, that type of information is available to people being tested now. If I had found out in 2010, when I had the mammogram, I would not have wanted preventive surgery because I hoped to have another child, and I wanted to breastfeed again.

But I could have accessed regular screening. During Covid, there was a chance of it being cancelled, so I could have ended up in the same position I am in now. But there's also a chance I would have had my cancer picked up earlier, and that would have meant less of the worry and pain it has caused. I was in physical discomfort by the time I went to the doctor, and when I was diagnosed, my immediate thought was that it had spread. For more than two weeks, while tests

were carried out, I was convinced it had travelled to my brain, and that I was going to be told that I had just months to live. I could have avoided that heartache by knowing it had been caught early. I'm suddenly relieved to not have a daughter, but I know that my son has a 50% chance of having inherited the gene. If he has, it raises the chance of him having breast, prostate and pancreatic cancer in later life, and will no doubt bring him his own worries. But treatment is progressing at speed, so I hope that it won't mean difficult decisions for him. So, too, is the support structure for people with the mutation. Before and after my test, I had phone appointments with the genetics team at Great Ormond Street hospital in London, and they talked me through what it all meant and offered referrals if I wanted to find out more. The cancer charities have lots of information for those affected, and around the country there are groups of people with the mutation who support each other. I haven't joined one yet, but I plan to.

Finding out about the mutation has been a blow, despite all the reasons I had to suspect it was there. But knowing has empowered me to make decisions about what happens next. After the genetic test results came back, I was offered a calculation of my chance of getting breast cancer again. The software said my risk of getting it again by the age of 80 was 81%, while the risk of it happening again in the next 10 years was put at 35%. With those odds, it's no surprise that the doctors have recommended a double mastectomy.

And, although it has still been a daunting thing to sign up for, the statistics suggest to me that it's the right thing to do. I don't want to put myself or my family through this again if I can help it, and 35% is too high for me. And it has empowered the people treating me - there are new, targeted drugs coming on track for people who carry the mutation and aim to stop the cancer coming back. Now that I know how powerful the knowledge is, and that there is support, I wish I hadn't waited.

Zimbabwe is losing doctors, teachers to British hypocrisy

Ashley Simango

THE United Kingdom, which is buckling under a deepening shortage of nurses and teachers after exiting the European Union, is raiding, among other countries, its former colony Zimbabwe for key public sector workers: nurses, doctors and teachers. This is cruel. It appears unstoppable. Yet it also captures a vicious cycle in which foreign aid meant to help countries like Zimbabwe strengthen their education and health systems is undermined by migration of trained talent to those very same donor nations.

More than 4,000 nurses and doctors have left Zimbabwe since February 2021. The UK is by far the destination of choice: data from the British Home Office in 2022 reveals that Zimbabwe is now in the top five skilled worker visa recipient countries. This is a big drain. According to

the Zimbabwe Medical Association, the country has a paltry 3,500 doctors for a population of 15 million people. Access to nurses is poor, too - just 2.6 per 1,000 people as of 2017, reveals the World Bank. In a key 1,000-bed public hospital, managers told reporters that services were crippled when dozens of nurses and doctors left for the UK in 2021. Of course, the UK - like any other country - must look after its interests first. But the imbalance between a \$3.2 trillion economy (the UK) and a \$28bn economy (Zimbabwe) is such that the scramble for medical personnel isn't a fair contest.

Consider this: despite the woes of the National Health Service (NHS), the UK still has 8.5 nurses per 1,000 people - more than three times the number in Zimbabwe. And poaching talent from a country like Zimbabwe comes cheap. The UK spends £230,000

(\$281,000) in training each doctor - much of which it saves when it imports trained and skilled medical professionals. Simply put, at a time when healthcare workers are leaving the NHS in droves because of poor pay and conditions, the British government - instead of addressing their concerns - is plundering doctors and nurses from former colonies like Zimbabwe. If that's not alarming enough, the UK is now wooing Zimbabwean teachers, too. From February 2023, Zimbabwe will join a select group of nations and territories whose educators will be eligible to get Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which would allow them to work long-term as teachers in the UK.

Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa are the only other African nations on the list. Teacher unions fear

that many of the country's 135,000 public school teachers might be tempted to take up posts in the UK. For the last four decades, Zimbabwe has boasted one of Africa's most impressive post-colonial educational outcomes with the World Economic Forum ranking it fourth-best on the continent in 2016. Yet it is futile to blame the UK when Zimbabwe bears the lion's share of responsibility for the crisis it now stares at. The country's inability to pay doctors, nurses and teachers living wages is a key reason why they're seeking greener pastures. According to the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency, a state body, a quarterly survey in April 2022 showed that most workers in the country were earning an equivalent of \$120 a month. Wages have fallen far behind skyrocketing inflation.

Zimbabwe's government has demanded "compensation" from the UK for luring the nation's healthcare workers. Zimbabwe reportedly spends \$70,000 to train each doctor. But if the government was paying its doctors, teachers and nurses better in the first place, the temptation for them to move abroad would have been much lower. In addition to unsatisfactory salaries, medical professionals and teachers complain that the basic tools they need to do their jobs are in shortage - the result of the underfunding of schools and hospitals, and costly corruption and leakages highlighted by Zimbabwe's auditor general.

Still, this outflow of skilled professionals from a struggling nation like Zimbabwe to the UK sets up an ironic dynamic. Last November, the UK was winning applause from the Global Fund, which is dedicated to fighting HIV, tuberculosis and malaria,

for doling out a £1bn (\$1.23bn) tranche of support to the initiative. The UK has set aside £35m (\$45m) in aid specifically for "a resilient health system in Zimbabwe" from 2021 to 2025. Yet, how can lavishing aid money on a poor country's healthcare while raiding its most precious assets - nurses, paramedics, social workers and doctors - make it resilient? In June last year, peers in the UK's own House of Lords described this practice as "immoral and wrong".

Admittedly, morality hasn't ever been a priority for the UK in its relations with African nations. And there's little that's right about the way Zimbabwe's governments treat its healthcare workers, teachers or indeed, citizens in general. Nevertheless, the results of the brain drain from Zimbabwe are clear: A sick system is getting even sicker.

Wide gaps between Republican priorities and broader US public

US politics has had a rocky start to the year. Republicans, newly in charge of the House of Representatives, struggled to elect a speaker - taking 15 votes to do so, the most since the Civil War. This political spectacle highlighted the reality that Republicans have a narrow margin of control in the House, potentially allowing small groups of lawmakers to derail the legislative process.

With Democrats maintaining a majority in the Senate and holding the presidency, while Republicans control the House, it is not surprising that about three-quarters of Americans lack faith in the federal government's ability to address important problems, according to a December AP-NORC poll. This political contentiousness raises a bigger question: What do voters want from Congress and, in particular, what do Republican voters want from their leaders? Any analysis of US politics should take into account the reality that it is a country with more than 330 million people, several regions and multiple subcultures. Representing this large and widely diverse population in national politics are only two viable political parties. It is, therefore, nearly impossible for either party to be internally unified.

Both parties are struggling to respond to the interests of constituencies with widely different experiences, needs, values and views. However, much of the political focus is currently on the Republican Party, as it now leads the House and is beginning to see competition for its next presidential candidate. Donald Trump is officially running again and Nikki Haley, a former governor of South Carolina and ambassador to the UN under Trump, is expected to announce her candidacy this month. Others might enter the race later. Republican voters will play a crucial role in influencing the House and in determining who will be their next presidential candidate. Republican members of the House will be far more influenced

by Republican voters than by the broader voting public; this is particularly true for Republicans from "red" districts who do not face serious competition from Democrats, while Republicans from more competitive districts are less able to ignore independent or swing voters.

So far, Americans do not have an optimistic view of the new

Kerry Boyd Anderson

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A recent Pew Research Center poll found that 64 percent of Republicans want House leaders to "stand up" to President Joe Biden, even at the cost of progress in addressing the country's problems. House leaders have expressed an interest in launching multiple

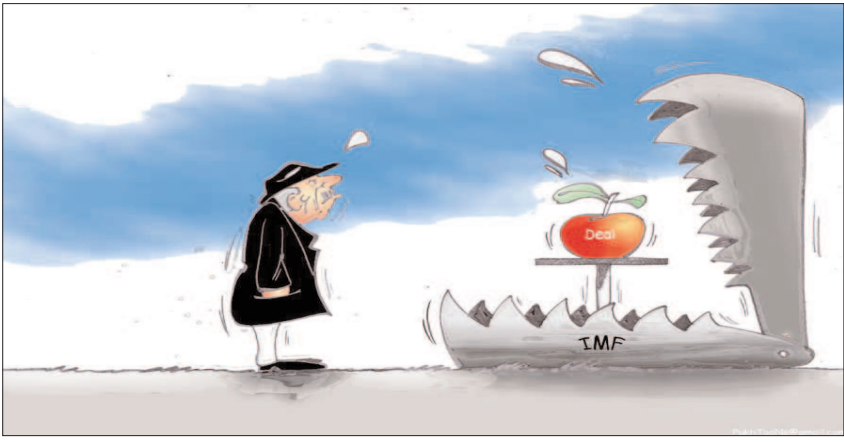
investigations into the Biden administration and have already started some, including the "Biden Family Investigation" and an investigation into the southern border. Some have also called for impeaching Biden. Polling suggests that these ideas are generally popular with Republican voters but not with the broader electorate. Pew found that 65 percent of the

public are concerned that Republicans will spend too much effort investigating the administration, while 56 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning voters are concerned that the House will not focus enough on investigations - a major clash in priorities between Republicans and other voters. Similarly, only 28 percent of the broader electorate wants the House to look into impeaching Biden, compared with 55 percent of Republicans, according to a November Morning Consult-Politico survey.

Polls also suggest that there are significant gaps between policy priorities for Republicans and the broader public. For example, the Morning Consult-Politico poll found that border security is a pri-

ority for 76 percent of Republicans compared to 45 percent of overall voters, while banning schools from teaching about LGBTQ issues in younger grades is a priority for 61 percent of Republicans compared to 35 percent of the electorate. Multiple polls have found that Republicans and Democrats share concerns about the economy, though they tend to emphasize different economic problems. The Morning Consult-Politico poll found that Republican voters are much more willing to demand spending cuts before raising the debt limit; however, most Republicans and other voters agree that they do not support cutting Medicare and social security, which are major contributors to the debt.

In addition to disagreement over priorities between Republicans and other voters, there are also divisions within the Republican Party. Polls have shown that Republicans have varying ideas about what makes a good Republican and how to prioritize policies. The upcoming competition for the Republican Party's nomination for president will place additional pressure on internal party fault lines. Over the next year, House leaders are more likely to prioritize the concerns of Republican voters. The result is likely to be many investigations into the Biden administration and into Biden and his family. Although many Republicans will welcome this, it risks frustrating independent and swing voters. The House is also likely to focus on border security and cultural issues around gender and sexuality. Raising the debt limit will be deeply contentious and riskier than usual, given Republican views on the issue and the ability of a few House members to block legislation. Overall, Congress will struggle to pass significant legislation, as the House leadership pursues Republicans' goals while the Senate leadership pursues Democrats' goals. Meanwhile, the presidential primary will determine the future shape of the Republican Party.



Stability key to Iraq's future and its ties with Saudi Arabia

MANY people that believed Hassan Al-Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's exit as Iraqi prime minister would negatively affect Saudi-Iraqi relations. Al-Kadhimi worked hard to strengthen the relations of his government with Riyadh, while adopting a policy aimed at reducing regional tensions, keeping Iraq neutral in conflicts, drawing it closer to its Arab environment, and liberating Iraqi decision-making - as much as possible - from external pressures, specifically Iran.

Al-Kadhimi's efforts were positively received in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, as the trust between him and the region's leaders had built from the days when he headed the intelligence service in the government of former Prime Minister Haider Abadi, which led Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to praise his actions.

It is normal to believe that a big vacuum will be created if a man of Al-Kadhimi's stature leaves his position, which is relatively correct, but what limited the damage in his case is the fact that Saudi Arabia had built its relations with Iraq based on the cooperation between state agencies and civil society institutions, rather than personal relationships with individuals.

Although current Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani is the candidate of the Coordination Framework, which includes some parties that are allied with Iran and hostile to Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom did not close the door on him. Instead, it has sought to ameliorate and develop the relationship as much as possible, without high expectations but also without any withdrawal. The policy adopted was realistic and practical, aiming to build on the achievements of the previous years and monitor the performance of the new

Hassan Al-Mustafa

Iraqi government.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, during his visit to Iraq last week, renewed the Kingdom's support for all the efforts made by the Iraqi government aimed at promoting prosperity and stability in Iraq. "Saudi Arabia and Iraq are working closely to continue the momentum in bilateral relations and to deepen coordination and cooperation, especially in the economic and development fields," Prince Faisal stressed during a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart.

He also noted that the Kingdom strongly believes that any imbalance in Iraqi-Arab relations will have negative effects on the entire Gulf and will strengthen Iranian interference in Iraqi affairs, empowering its armed militia allies. Riyadh does not intend to leave Iraq as a playground for Iran, so cooperation between the two countries is key to building trust and stability. These constants were agreed upon not only during the government of Al-Kadhimi, but they began with the Saudi openness when Abadi was prime minister.

Prince Faisal stressed Iraq's pivotal role in the region, saying: "Iraq plays an essential and important role in enhancing the region's stability. We will work together to advance the stability process in the region through dialogue, promoting common interests and addressing any disagreements." He added: "Without stability, we will not be able to achieve the prosperity we seek." By establishing a firm understanding with Baghdad, Riyadh can form a regional safety net in cooperation with its allies. This is a difficult task, but absolutely necessary. Al-Sudani can play a role in supporting the positions of realistic and pragmatic figures within the Coordination Framework. He can also pressure the group's radical allies into

postponing any hostile acts against Saudi Arabia as a first step toward eliminating such actions permanently.

A very critical task awaits Al-Sudani. If he can take advantage of Iran's preoccupation with its social and economic crises, he can free Iraq from the pressures of groups such as Asa'ib Ahl Al-Haq, Kata'ib Hezbollah and other armed factions that ironically have representatives in the Iraqi parliament.

For his part, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said that Iraq and Saudi Arabia are continuously cooperating in the field of security and in the fight against drug gangs. "We are working together to reduce tensions in the region," he indicated, adding that "Saudi Arabia, as a prominent leader of the Islamic world, has a role to play in this process."

This explicit recognition of Saudi Arabia's leadership of the Muslim world is a position that Riyadh's critics in Iraq do not like and they consider it a very soft statement from Hussein, because they consider that this role rests within the hands of the regime in Iran. The Iraqi foreign minister is aware that Saudi Arabia is an economic and political heavyweight and that Riyadh is the key if Iraq wants to advance in terms of development and modernization through foreign investments. Therefore, he pointed to the necessity of "reducing tension," while prioritizing "dialogue" and "security enhancement" as the basis of building relationships not only between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, but also between Riyadh and Tehran. These good intentions and diplomatic steps will keep on improving if the Iraqi militias refrain from creating problems and the government is able to neutralize their negative impact on external relations. Should Al-Sudani succeed in this endeavor, he will have achieved successes for his homeland where his predecessors have failed.

Arab News

NATO's attempts to extend tentacle into Asia not welcomed by most Asia countries

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg concluded his trip to Asia last week, which is widely seen as a trip helping Washington rope in Tokyo and Seoul by hyping up the so-called threats from China and Russia.

Through the trip, NATO wants its close partners in the region to completely take side with the bloc in terms of the ongoing Ukraine crisis. This notably includes South Korea, which does not satisfy the US, as the country's stance in this regard seems ambiguous and the Russia-Ukraine crisis has fueled a rapid growth in South Korea's arms exports as countries supporting Kiev turn to Seoul to replenish their supplies. NATO hopes Seoul and Tokyo and can provide more military aid to Ukraine, to display its position - at daggers drawn with Russia.

Another purpose of Stoltenberg's Asia trip is to coordinate the US' strategy to contain China. The NATO has listed China as one of its strategic priorities for next decade, saying Beijing's policies challenge its security. This is actually due to the US' global strategy targeting China as its top rival. After all, the bloc is merely a military tool of Washington.

Washington has two paths to achieve the bloc's expansion into the Asia Pacific and even the rest of the world, although it is difficult to directly absorb Asian countries into the North Atlantic military alliance, one means is to create a new military bloc by expanding AUKUS, a trilateral agreement between Australia, the UK, and the US, attracting more countries to join the pact.

Another is to absorb more regional countries to the NATO Plus arrangement. NATO's strategy of expansion to the Indo-Pacific via the NATO Plus approach can be seen as an Octopus strategy. Although the bloc itself will not directly engage in regional affairs, its tentacles can Today, apart from Japan and South Korea, New Zealand and Australia has already been absorbed into this arrangement. The US is seeking to add India to the plan. That is to say that the military alliance's tentacles have extended into the Indo-Pacific region, coinciding with the US' Indo-Pacific Strategy.

As this strategy mainly targets China, NATO's cooperation with Japan and South Korea can help turn its strategic determination into action. When the bloc is tied up with the Ukraine crisis in Europe, it believes that it will be easier to exploit the two NATO Plus countries, especially China's close neighboring countries, to stir up ten-

Song Zhongping

sions in the Indo-Pacific. As for whether the "Ukrainian model" will repeat itself in the Indo-Pacific, the key lies in whether there is a country in Asia willing to follow the US' lead like Ukraine, playing the role as a proxy to sustain the US' hegemony and contain China.

Among all Asian countries, Japan is a special case. In both World War I and II, Japan was a country advocating power politics, and its aggression in the past had brought countless suffering to regional countries. The country also considers itself a Western country. China and Japan has not only geopolitical tension, but also historical conflict. All these will be fully taken advantage of by Washington. Japan may become a "Ukraine of Asia" if continuing follow the US' strategy to contain China closely.

Most of the rest of the Asian countries, including China, have historical memories of being invaded. And they understand China's intent in pursuing strength and autonomy as well as many other stances and practices. As a result, as long as China clarifies its purpose of its policy and moves, it is believed that the majority of regional countries, will not follow the US' lead, at least they will not take side between Beijing and Washington.

The Global Times

The world is falling behind on early childhood education

Manos Antoninis & Silvia Montoya

PRE-PRIMARY school is fun - serious fun. Music, storytelling, movement, outdoor play, role play and drama give children basic literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. These are the building blocks of a child's education that put them on the right track for a life of learning. They give them the solid foundations needed to succeed in school and life. Children who do not have the chance to start their education early are put at a serious disadvantage before they even start school. The importance of early childhood learning was highlighted in Born to Learn, a Spotlight report from UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report focusing on Africa released last year.

One study showed that students who attended some form of organised early childhood education in 13 African countries scored 66 points higher in reading, on average, than those who did not, which is equivalent to more than a year of learning. The gap reached about 100 points, or more than two years of learning, in Burkina Faso and Guinea. But despite the importance of starting school early, barely one in three countries is on track with its own national targets for early childhood education, as illustrated in the new SDG4 Scorecard report by UNESCO. Several coun-

tries, including Algeria, Armenia, Liberia, Nepal and Bahrain, are not progressing at all.

One core factor explaining this slow progress is that policies and finances are not in place to support countries' education targets. When an inadequate amount of a state budget is allocated to early childhood education, the quality of public provision is clearly going to suffer. This has led parents to opt for private options, which are too costly. Today, almost four out of 10 children around the world enrolled in pre-primary education are in private schools.

The importance of finance cannot be denied. In Ghana, for instance, those who choose to put their child in a private pre-primary school have to pay on average six percent of annual earnings, if they are rich, and 17 percent if they are poor; the equivalents in Ethiopia are four percent and 21 percent respectively. In countries that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the net childcare cost for a two-earner family with two children aged two and three is 17 percent of women's average earnings, ranging from zero in Germany and Italy to one-third in Ireland and Slovakia, to half in Japan and the United Kingdom. Therefore, it should not be a surprise, that the richest are far more likely to privately educate their child, while the poorest either opt for the lower quality public option or don't invest in that education level at all. And so, disadvantages deepen.

The only way we can move forward is to share lessons between countries on what works. We did just this in our latest report, assessing what the policies were that had enabled countries to achieve fast progress. Three recommendations emerged from this analysis and they all related to the cost barriers to access. First, there is a clear correlation between how much was spent on public education and the rise in participation rates as a result. Doubling spending from 0.25 to 0.50 of GDP, we found, triples participation rates in public preschools from 20 percent to 60 percent on average and is a clear win for improving progress on this issue. Second, given the predominance of private providers in pre-primary education, we found that government regulations of these providers matter. UNESCO's 2021-2022 Global Education Monitoring Report analysed 211 education systems and found that, while 97 percent of countries regulate approval, licensing and the establishment of private pre-primary education providers, only 26

percent of countries support specific vulnerable populations' tuition fees. And countries that have such equity provisions in place are doing better in terms of access to early childhood education.

Lastly, the rules count. It is important to legislate and offer free and compulsory pre-primary education. But only about half of the countries in the world have done this so far. While one policy change cannot be assessed out of context, there is a clear jump in children's early education access across countries that put such legislation in place. Since 2015, for example, the introduction of three years of free education in Armenia, four years in Uzbekistan and three - and later five - years in Azerbaijan has been associated with a large increase in participation rates.

In Azerbaijan, for instance, participation rates soared from just over 30 percent in 2012 to more than 80 percent in 2020. While there is no magic wand to overcome all educational challenges, there are clear lessons we can draw from looking at existing policies. These can help drastically improve education outcomes globally. Education can and should start early. If they legislate, regulate and finance appropriately, countries can certainly reach their early education goals.

Sweden will need to find much goodwill to win over Turkiye

Yasar Yakis

SWEDEN and Finland's accession to NATO was perceived at the outset as a single package, but they may now follow different paths. Back in June last year, the foreign ministers of Türkiye, Sweden and Finland signed an agreement in Madrid, in the presence of their respective heads of state and the NATO secretary-general, addressing Ankara's legitimate security concerns.

However, it turned out that Türkiye and Sweden, in particular, were not on the same wavelength regarding the measures required to address these concerns. Divergences emerged as soon as Ankara listed the actions to be taken by Sweden. Stockholm said it could not implement all the measures Türkiye was asking for.

The strong Kurdish community living in Sweden was one of the difficulties. This community resisted Türkiye's demand to extradite several Turkish citizens living in Sweden who were accused by Ankara of various offenses. They were journalists, intellectuals and individuals close to the Fethullah Gulen community living in Sweden. Some had already taken Swedish citizenship, while others had not committed any offense according to Swedish legislation or were not extraditable according to EU laws.

Sweden last year made a constitutional amendment, but it needed

time to adjust its legislation to fight terror. Ankara commented that, if anti-Turkish activities in Sweden were controlled, it would definitely respond positively to this attitude. If, on the other hand, things went wrong, Ankara would of course adjust its position accordingly. As a result, the talks have been postponed.

Türkiye remains faithful to its support for the principle of NATO's enlargement policy, but it wants to see that Sweden's promises do not remain on paper. While the debates between the Turkish and Swedish authorities on the extradition negotiations were underway despite various ups and downs, the tension was brought to another level by the act of Swedish-Danish dual citizen Rasmus Paludan, who last month burned pages of the Holy Qur'an close to the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm.

In an open society like Sweden's, it is only natural to find all sorts of opinions and religious affiliations. There may be disbelievers, devout Christians and adherents of other religions. However, a sophisticated country like Sweden could have handled this incident much more skillfully. The Swedish police could have refused Paludan's request to burn the pages of a holy book on the grounds that it would hurt the feelings of Muslims in Sweden. Rather

than doing this, it took measures to protect the perpetrator.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance mentioned in its report that those who commit such a hate crime benefit, in Denmark, from police protection under the guise of freedom of expression.

Finland rightly adopted a different attitude. The Finnish police authority has said that it would not allow the burning of pages of the Holy Qur'an and that it would punish such an act.

At the root of the Turkish-Swedish controversy lies Türkiye's security concerns. Members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK, organize demonstrations in Sweden, collect money for their cause and recruit terrorists to be sent to Türkiye or the Qandil Mountains in Iraq, where the PKK is nestled and carries out persistent attacks against Türkiye.

Now that there is a difference between Sweden, which Türkiye views as a more problematic country, and Finland, which is less problematic, Ankara is more inclined to leave the solution of this problem to the directly interested countries and to NATO.

On the question of Sweden's NATO membership, there is a difference in Türkiye between the attitude of state officials and those of individual political figures. People

making statements on behalf of the state use a careful narrative that leaves the door open for a future accommodation, while individual political figures and opinion leaders say whatever they want. This leaves Türkiye's options open to all sorts of interpretations.

Xenophobia - and, more specifically, Islamophobia - are vices that every state has an obligation to prevent in order to secure public order. One can hardly claim that the Swedish authorities have assumed the responsibility to fulfill this important task.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that the cases of Sweden and Finland may be assessed separately, but that it was up to NATO and these two countries to decide. Ankara will probably make its autonomous decision according to how events unfold. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was less ambivalent. He said: "Those who allowed such violence to take place in front of our embassy can no longer expect any charity from us regarding their NATO membership." However, he has proved to be a pragmatic leader and can deny his words if the circumstances warrant it. If wisdom prevails, an accommodation is likely to be made to allow Sweden to become a member of NATO in the foreseeable future, but a lot of goodwill and positive action will be needed from Stockholm.

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Bulgarian investors to take benefit of CPEC project: Irfan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Irfan Iqbal Shaikh on Saturday stressed the need for enhancing bilateral trade and investment relations between Pakistan and Bulgaria.

In a meeting with Bulgarian Ambassador Irena Gancheva at FPCCI, he said the multi-billion dollars China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project was also offering investment opportunities and called the Bulgarian investors to take benefit from it, said a press release issued here.

Pakistan and Bulgaria are enjoying cordial traditional relations based on a high level of understanding in the political and commercial fields and on effective cooperation, however, the existing bilateral trade between both countries is lower than the existing potential.

He highlighted various sectors for investment in Pakistan including minerals, mining, oil and gas exploration, tourism, agriculture and energy generation. "This would further strengthen our existing bilateral trade and diplomatic relations and the people of both countries will be mutually benefited."

The FPCCI head urged the need to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture as the large livestock potential was existing in the country and it was ranked among the top milk-producing countries, adding that Bulgaria has the world's best expertise in yoghurt production and collaboration in the field of agriculture and dairy development would further promote the output of agriculture added products.

He suggested that frequent exchange of trade delegations will establish a business-to-business contact that will lead to joint

ventures and experience sharing in different fields including agriculture development, environment, education and tourism.

FPCCI Vice President Umar Masood Ur Rehman emphasized that there are a number of opportunities for investments in Pakistan and the commodities which Pakistan exports to other countries are imported by Bulgaria from other countries but both countries do not trade these with each other.

He mentioned various sectors including meat and edible offal, raw hides and skins, leather footwear and other articles of leather as Pakistan has a large livestock sector. The tobacco industry is another booming industry here, manufacturing of tobacco and tobacco substitutes and homogenized or reconstituted are also available in Pakistan, he added.

These are some potential items and commodities that may be considered for establishing trade between

the two countries, Umar suggested.

Speaking on the occasion, the ambassador reiterated her resolve to further cement bilateral trade and diplomatic relations between both countries.

She said that a Joint Economic Commission of both countries was also established in 2015 to explore opportunities for enhancing trade and investment between both countries.

The ambassador also stressed the need to diversify the trade and investment cooperation in areas of agriculture cooperation and dairy development.

The meeting was also attended by the members of FPCCI prominently by Qurban Ali, President Nagar Chamber, Sher Nabi President Ghizar Chamber, Saqib Taj Abbasi GB Member FPCCI, Farukh Alvi, Mining Association, M Badar Haroon SVC Pakistan Coating Association and other.



FAISALABAD: Vendors busy bidding of oranges bags at fruit market.

Gold prices up by Rs.400 to Rs.198,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 400 on Saturday and was traded at Rs 198,400 against sale at Rs 198,000 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 343 to Rs 170,096 against Rs 169,753, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat went up to Rs. 155,921 from Rs 155,607. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of one tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,160 and Rs 1,851.85 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market witnessed no change and was traded at US\$ 1865, the association reported.

SCCI grieved over casualties

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik has expressed grief and sorrow over the casualties in devastating earthquake in Turkiye and Syria.

In press statement issued here on Saturday, he said the business community of Sialkot extended solidarity with the people of Turkiye and Syria during this time of trial. He said the business community stood by the families and loved ones of Turkish and Syrian brethren and offers their support in any way possible and wished for speedy rehabilitation.

Malik said, they hoped that the Turkish and Syrian governments and the international community, including Pakistan, would come together to provide relief to the people of affected areas. Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir and Vice President Amer Majid Sheikh also expressed their solidarity with the people of Turkiye and Syria.

New block at SCCI inaugurated

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry President Abdul Ghafoor Malik inaugurated newly built Riazuddin Sheikh Block at the Chamber here on Saturday. Local business community and executive committee members participated in the inaugural ceremony.

The new and modern block would provide state-of-the-art facilities to the members.

PBF: Minibudget to hit exports, agriculture sector, increase inflation

KARACHI (INP): President Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Mian Usman Zulfiqar criticizing the government for massive increase in power and gas tariffs to meet the IMF condition, has said that the minibudget would unleash a new wave of high inflation, further increasing the cost of doing business, making Pakistani exports uncompetitive in the international markets.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he said that the already decline of 34 rupees in the value of local currency against dollar and 35 rupees hike in the prices of petroleum would create a ripple effect as it would badly squeeze the purchasing power, reduce growth of business activities making it more difficult to revive the dwindling economy.

Mian Usman Zulfiqar observed that it is unfortunate that the government has approved the passing of around Rs240 billion additional burdens on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters and farmers. He said that the government

liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around its ability to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years.

The PBF President also said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry. He asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers.

Usman Zulfiqar condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment, as the ECC has also given the go-ahead to the recovery of pending fuel cost adjustment from consumers to collect Rs68 billion.

According to reports, the ECC has approved the withdrawal of electricity subsidies for farmers to save Rs14 billion in four months. The effective increase for the farmers will be around Rs3.30 per

unit but they will still be paying subsidized rates.

The ECC has also approved the imposition of three separate quarterly surcharges in the range of Rs0.69 to Rs3.21 per unit. Industrial consumers will also be impacted by the debt surcharge of Rs3.39 per unit, which pushes the total increase for them to Rs15.52 per unit. The industrial tariff will now go up to Rs36 per unit.

Moreover, there will be an additional increase of Rs3.62 per unit in the cost of electricity on account of quarterly surcharge to collect Rs73 billion, excluding the impact of the pending fuel cost adjustments.

The government has also imposed a debt servicing surcharge of Rs3.39 per unit, taking the net additional increase to Rs7 per unit for the domestic consumers. These consumers are already paying a cost of up to Rs32.7 per unit, excluding taxes. The government approved the withdrawal of electricity subsidy of Rs12.13 per unit, given to the exporters, with effect from March 2023 to pass on another burden of Rs51 billion.

China encourages Pakistani new energy companies for collaboration

BEIJING (APP): Haining city has a number of advanced photovoltaic energy storage and other new energy enterprises, looking forward to strengthening technical exchanges and cooperation with Pakistani and other Belt and Road Initiative countries in the field of commerce and new energy.

These views were expressed by Jin Hongxian, Deputy Director of Economic Development Office of Zhouwangmiao, Haining City, Zhejiang province, China in a recent business matchmaking between Haining and Pakistani technology companies.

With a GDP of RMB 119.63 billion in 2021, Haining has forged a new energy emerging manufacturing cluster with an industrial output value of RMB 50 billion above scale. Located in the Yangtze River Delta integrated development core area, Zhouwangmiao is the birthplace of Haining leather, and was once named "China's No. 1

Leather Town" by the Chinese Ministry of Light Industry. The town's economy is guided by electronic information, high-end equipment manufacturing, and biomedicine.

Jin added that in the past 10 years, as the backbone of the emerging manufacturing industry and the traditional foreign trade strong city, Haining's foreign trade partners have gradually expanded from North America, Europe, Japan and South Korea to Thailand, Pakistan and other emerging economies such as the Belt and Road countries, and the proportion has been rising year by year. Haining encourages more Pakistani solar and leather companies for win-win cooperation.

It is not a hidden secret that China excels in the solar and photovoltaic industry, contributing more than 50 percent of the world's electricity and photovoltaic power generation, said Sami Iqbal, founder of Nanjing Enfinity Tech Development Co., Ltd, who

is also engaged in solar cell materials research at the School of Materials at Southeast University.

He hopes to find companies that understand the demand for solar energy and related equipment manufacturing in developing countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

"Pakistan has enormous advantages and opportunities to develop the photovoltaic industries, including transportation, agriculture, small and medium industry, commercial and public services, etc. We would like to form partnerships with quality PV companies in Haining to enhance the manufacturing and operational maintenance capabilities of the PV industry in Pakistan," added Sami. On the occasion, Yu Linjie, General Manager of Zhejiang Chuanda New Energy Co., Ltd expressed his interest in working with Pakistani PV companies in the investment plan, after sales services and equipment upgrades.

FCCI dispatches construction material

FAISALABAD (APP): Construction material for one hundred damaged houses has been dispatched to Kot Addu on the special directive of Dr Khurram Tariq, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

FCCI spokesman said that the construction material including bamboo and reeds etc have been sent for the immediate repair of the damaged roofs of the flood victims.

After detailed deliberations it was decided in principle that instead of constructing new houses at comparatively safe sites, the residents prefer to live in their own environment and were not ready to shift to other places, he said adding, hence, FCCI had decided that the affected families may be resettled at the same site by providing them material for the repair of their damaged houses.

In line with this policy, the material has been dispatched to the Kot Addu, so that, the displaced persons could reconstruct their damaged houses on the same place.

It would help them to settle down at the place of their own choice and restart their normal life, he added.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.8/6. Institution 9/2/2022. Date of hearing. 25/2/2023. Rozi Khan VS Mst Kulsom etc. Notice no.1/1/3.Fared Khan son of Rishad resident of Daggar Kalay tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the

ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 25/2/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.370/1. Institution 22/11/2023. Date of hearing. 18/2/2023. Abdur Rashid VS Mohammad Rashed Notice no.1.Mohammad Rashed son.3.Mst Nasten daughter of Gul Rashed resident of Ghazikhanay tehsel Gadezai district Buner.

Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 18/2/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte.

Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Hike in power, gas tariffs not acceptable: PIAF

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) while strongly rejecting the significant jump in electricity prices up to Rs15 per unit for exporters and farmers and hike in gas tariffs for Rs110 per mmbtu to meet the IMF ninth review prior condition has said that it will put additional burden of over Rs240 billion. It said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Chairman PIAF Faheem ur Rehman Saigol observed that it is unfortunate that the government has approved the passing of Rs237 billion additional burden on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters and farmers. But the move will not solve the issue of circular debt, as it has still shown Rs335 billion in additional subsidies in the revised Circular Debt Management Plan, taking them to Rs2.34 trillion, he added.

He said that the government liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around it's ability to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years.

Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that constant hike in power tariff has

pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry.

The PIAF chairman asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. PIAF Chairman condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment, as the ECC has also given the go-ahead to the recovery of pending fuel cost adjustment from consumers to collect Rs68 billion.

It is to be noted that the government has pledged to stop any further rise in circular debt adding that around Rs 170 to Rs 270 billion is added to the gas circular debt annually though the actual figures are available with Petroleum Division. However, if 11.5 percent price hike for SNGPL and 11 percent tariff for SSGC is not implemented then the circular debt will rise to Rs 740 billion by end-June 2023. At present, the gas tariff for residential consumers is Rs 450 per mmbtu in the Sui Southern Gas Company system against the prescribed price of Rs 850 per mmbtu and Rs 400 per mmbtu in the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited system against the prescribed price of Rs

1,007 per mmbtu, showing a significant gap between sale price and actual cost of gas.

The ECC approved the imposition of three separate quarterly surcharges in the range of Rs0.69 to Rs3.21 per unit. Industrial consumers will also be impacted by the debt surcharge of Rs3.39 per unit, which pushes the total increase for them to Rs15.52 per unit. The industrial tariff will now go up to Rs36 per unit. Moreover, there will be an additional increase of Rs3.62 per unit in the cost of electricity on account of quarterly surcharge to collect Rs73 billion, excluding the impact of the pending fuel cost adjustments.

The government has also imposed a debt servicing surcharge of Rs3.39 per unit, taking the net additional increase to Rs7 per unit for the domestic consumers. These consumers are already paying a cost of up to Rs32.7 per unit, excluding taxes. The government approved the withdrawal of electricity subsidy of Rs12.13 per unit, given to the exporters, with effect from March 2023 to pass on another burden of Rs51 billion.

The ECC also approved the withdrawal of electricity subsidies for farmers to save Rs14 billion in four months. The effective increase for the farmers will be around Rs3.30 per unit but they will still be paying subsidised rates.

Oil rises as Russia cuts output after Western price cap

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Oil contracts rebounded after Russia announced it would slash its crude output in response to a Western price cap that was imposed on exports after Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Brent, the international benchmark, and its US counterpart WTI, which had been down earlier in the day, jumped more than two percent after Russian deputy prime minister Alexander Novak said production would be cut by 500,000 barrels per day, or five percent of output, in March.

"Crude prices reacted positively to the news, considering that so far Russian oil production has been relatively resilient," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo.

"The move... aims to improve oil revenues by narrowing the discount of Russian oil to Brent."

An EU-wide ban on Russia oil products -- like diesel, gasoline and jet fuel -- came into effect Sunday alongside a Group of Seven price cap on the same items.

That expanded on the EU embargo on seaborne oil deliveries introduced two months ago -- when it also established with G7 partners a \$60-dollar-per-barrel cap for Russian exports.

Oil, already bolstered by the reopening of top con-

sumer China after lengthy pandemic restrictions, rebounded further on the news from Novak, who in charge of Moscow's energy policy.

Russia is part of a 23-nation alliance with the OPEC crude cartel that already agreed in October to reduce output by two million barrels per day until the end of this year.

Elsewhere, Wall Street extended losses at the opening bell, but both the Dow and S&P 500 finished higher, lifted in part by a surge in petroleum-linked shares like Chevron and oil services company Halliburton.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare said investors are in "wait and see" mode ahead of next week's consumer price index report, which will influence the outlook for future Fed interest rate hikes.

Having spent January optimistic that the days of central bank tightening would soon come to an end, traders have been brought back down to earth this month as they contemplate borrowing costs going higher and staying there longer than previously expected.

Government data showed Britain registered zero growth in the final quarter of last year, in line with expectations after

shrinking 0.3 percent in the previous three months, according to the Office for National Statistics.

The report means the British economy skirted a technical recession, defined as two straight quarters of negative growth. But the FTSE 100 still slipped 0.5 percent after having hit record highs earlier this week.

"In reality, the nuances of whether the UK is or isn't in a recession are likely to be lost on the majority of people, many of whom are struggling with their finances on a day-to-day basis," said market analyst Michael Hewson at CMC Markets.

Bucking the downward stock markets trend, Tokyo rose Friday on a weaker yen, though the currency rallied after the market closed on reports that the Japanese government would nominate Kazuo Ueda to replace Haruhiko Kuroda as head of the country's central bank.

Ueda is an economist and former member of the Band of Japan policy board. But analysts said the yen's advance may be more to do with the fact deputy governor Masayoshi Amamiya would not take the post, which would have likely seen a continuation of the current dovish approach.



In brief

Sameer, Faisal win on 2nd day of Jeep Rally

BAHAWALPUR (Monitoring Desk): A category of Truck race Saturday was added to the International Cholistan Jeep rally for the first time and Sameer Ahmed from Karachi won the race while Faisal Shadikhel won the title of fastest jeep driver. A large number of Fans from all over the country reached the Cholistan desert as the second day of the action-packed event International Cholistan Jeep Rally continues in full swing. In the truck race category, Sameer Ahmed was crowned the fastest in his category after he completed the track in two minutes and 58 seconds while Ahmed Shah Marchi from Peshawar took second after completing the track in three minutes and three seconds. 45 cars took part in the first round of the jeep race on the second day and Faisal Shadikhel was crowned the fastest driver while all the drivers showed excellent skills of high speed driving. Jam Waheed won the race in the Quad bikes category while Muhammad Ayaz stood second. Jam Muzaffar was disqualified as his Quad bike faced a technical malfunction. Unimog Trucks from Mercedes were also used in the truck race category. The Unimog has a 5700cc engine. The truck racers said that they are very thankful to the administration for adding the category in the rally. Various entertainment opportunities including Paragliding have been provided done for the fans to enjoy the event and the aerial scenes of the desert even more. The fans said that they wait the whole year for this mega event in Cholistan. Another fan, appreciating the paragliding said that he got to see the Derawar fort from midair which is mesmerizing and the beauty of this desert and the fort cannot be described in words.

Bucks beat Clippers for 10th win in a row

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): The Milwaukee Bucks extended their winning streak to 10 matches with a Giannis Antetokounmpo-inspired 116-109 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. Antetokounmpo top scored with 35 points, including eight rebounds, to help the Bucks secure a 12th victory in 13 matches. Brook Lopez added 22 points as the Bucks registered their first double-figure run of victories in three years. "We're all playing confidently together and clicking," Lopez said. It was a tight affair with barely five points in it by the third quarter until Antetokounmpo began to dominate, netting three straight baskets and assisting MarJon Beauchamp to extend Milwaukee's lead to 76-68. Brandon Boston Jr and Paul George starred for the Clippers with 20 and 19 point respectively. Victory meant the Bucks completed the double over the LA sides after beating the Lakers a night earlier, thanks to Antetokounmpo's 38-point haul. Elsewhere on Friday, the Detroit Pistons beat the San Antonio Spurs 138-131 in double overtime. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 32 points and rookie Jalen Duren registered 30 to help the Pistons win. Despite missing Jaylen Brown with a facial fracture, the Boston Celtics saw off the Charlotte Hornets 127-116. Jayson Tatum threw five three-pointers, including the 1,000th of his career, to condemn the Hornets to a sixth straight defeat and a seventh in succession on the road.

Spinners shine as India crush Australia by an innings

NAGPUR (Agencies): India beat Australia by an innings and 132 runs inside three days in the first Test of their four-match series.

Spinner Ravichandran Ashwin took 5-37 as the tourists, needing 223 to make India bat again, were bowled out for 91 in their second innings in Nagpur.

Steve Smith was left unbeaten on 25 as Australian wickets tumbled around him. India, who began the day on 321-7, were eventually bowled out for 400, debutant Aussie spinner Todd Murphy taking two more wickets to finish with 7-124.

It was Australia's lowest Test total in India - their previous worst was 93, made in a 13-run defeat in Mumbai in 2004. Opener Usman Khawaja was caught by Virat Kohli for five off Ashwin in only the second over of Australia's second innings, which quickly unravelled from there.

Marnus Labuschagne was trapped lbw by Ravindra

Jadeja for 17 in the 11th over, while David Warner made it to 10 before falling the same way to Ashwin to leave Australia 34-3. The tourists lost their final seven wickets for 57 runs as the innings was wrapped up in just under two hours.

Ashwin, who picked up his 31st five-wicket haul in 89 Tests, finished with match figures of 8-79.

Slow left-arm Jadeja, who took 2-34 in the second innings, was later fined 25% of his match fee and had one demerit point added to his disciplinary record after admitting a breach of the International Cricket Council's (ICC) code of conduct during Australia's first innings.

The 34-year-old was punished for applying a soothing cream to swelling on the index finger of his bowling hand without asking for permission from the on-field umpires.

An ICC statement read: "The match referee was satisfied that the cream was

applied to the finger purely for medical purposes.

"The cream was not applied as an artificial substance to the ball and consequently it did not change the condition of the ball."

The series will help determine qualification for the final of the World Test Championship, which will be held at The Oval this summer. Australia and India are the top two sides in the rankings and the World Test Championship standings with India needing at least a 3-1 victory to guarantee qualification for the showpiece final.

Cummins' side, who are currently top of the standings, only need to draw one of the four Tests to guarantee their place. India captain Rohit Sharma, whose 120 helped set up the win, said: "When playing a series like this, it's important to start well. I'm happy I could put up a performance which could help the team." The second Test begins on Friday, 17 February, in New Delhi.

National Ski and Snowboarding Championship 2023

F.P. Report

SWAT: Two-day National Ski and Snowboarding Championship concluded in Malam Jabba. Commander Peshawar Corps was the chief guest of the event.

The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the championship with zeal and enthusiasm.

More than 100 players, including foreign players, participated in the championship. The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa appreciated the organiza-



tion of the championship and said that such games should be continued in future as well.

TikTok returns as official entertainment partner for HBL PSL 8

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): After a hugely successful HBL Pakistan Super League 7, having achieved more than 2.5 billion views, TikTok has returned for another year as the official entertainment Partner for HBL PSL 8.

The world's most-loved entertainment platform has partnered with the world's most sought-after T20 league to bring the cricket community in Pakistan together again to engage with the tournament and their favourite cricketers like never before.

During the HBL PSL 8 that will be staged in Multan, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore, the TikTok community will get the opportunity to engage with and generate content on the platform that now has more than one billion people across the globe.

The month-long (34-match) festival of cricket will begin at the picturesque Multan Cricket Stadium on Monday, 13 February, and end at the iconic Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, with the 19 March final.

The two-season long partnership between the PCB and TikTok - now in its second year - has allowed fans to celebrate the tournament's unforgettable moments together.

With everything from pre and post match content and highlights, to cricket-related challenges, TikTok has become a home for the spirit and passion of the HBL PSL fan base that has been an integral reason for the league's success and growth over the course of the last seven seasons.

This partnership continues to cement TikTok's position as the perfect platform for cricket fandom in Pakistan, with the last collaboration with the HBL PSL 7 racking up an incredible 2.5 billion views and 2.3 million video creations on the platform, using the hashtag #KhelegaPakistan.

This is proof that Pakistan fans love cricket content on the platform, and create great content while also participating in fun-filled challenges. This year's partnership promises to be even bigger and better as the platform gears up for an exciting month of thrilling content under the hashtags #HoJaJazbaati and #SabSitarayHumaray.

Saif Mujahid, TikTok Head of Content Operations and Marketing, Pakistan said: "As the official Entertainment Partner of the HBL PSL 8, we are excited to bring the spirit and passion of this great

tournament to our TikTok community for another season. TikTok has become a vibrant hub of sports content in the last two years. It nurtures incredible, never-before-seen sporting content, while enabling creators to relive and remix some of the best moments in sports. "Cricket is the most popular sport in Pakistan and we are happy to have partnered with cricket's most celebrated event in the country. We look forward to TikTok fast becoming the home of fandom for not just cricket but other sports in Pakistan as well."

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Najam Sethi said: "We're happy to have TikTok on board as our official Entertainment Partner for a second year running. Following the success of last year's collaboration, this year this partnership will help reach an even larger audience and engage more authentically with a very interactive and diverse online community that has backed the league from the onset, helping it become one of the most popular and sought after T20 leagues in the world." TikTok has redefined the sports and entertainment experience for fans all over the world.



ISLAMABAD: Yellow and Pink women team in action during "Save Tomorrow 6 Volley Ball Show Match" at Liaquat Gymnasium Pakistan Sports Board.



NAGPUR: The players greet each other after India's innings victory.

Johan Botha previews HBL PSL 8 for Karachi Kings

LAHORE (APP): Karachi Kings could win a solitary game in the last edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League and the champions of the 2020 season are eager to bring out their A game when the HBL PSL 8 kicks off in Multan on Monday.

Johan Botha will take up their head coach duties after serving in the similar role for Multan Sultans (2019) and Islamabad United (2021). He was the assistant coach at Karachi Kings in HBL PSL 5, the edition when they lifted the title.

He spoke to PCB Digital about how Karachi Kings can turn around their fortunes, how they will replace Babar Azam, the most successful batter in the tournament, and what makes the HBL PSL one of the best leagues in the world. Below are the excerpts from the interview, while the full interview is available at the HBL PSL YouTube channel.

This is your third HBL PSL franchise as a head coach. How has your experience been so far in the tournament? I have had some great experiences in the past and I think it is a great tournament. It is probably one of the best two or three tournaments in the world and obviously great to work in it.

I love coming here. It gave me my first break as a coach when I was still playing. Dean Jones asked me to come and join him at Islamabad United. It is just a good tournament for me to be involved in.

What makes the HBL PSL one of the top leagues in the world? It is the quality of the cricket. There are high scores and most nights the wickets are really good, but I think it's the bowling quality of all teams. Every team has outstanding bowling and that is why a lot of teams go to the draft to pick international batters.

It is a good match-up as it is top international batters versus top local bowlers and not to throw at the local batters, you know, there are obviously some world-class players in there. Every night is high quality cricket it is a great tournament, high quality, and many international players that I have spoken to want to be involved in it. This is a good tournament for international batters to come and enhance their batting skills against fast bowling.

Yeah, I would agree. I think Alex Hales would say the same thing. Paul Stirling is another one. Usman Khawaja was with us at Islamabad for a tournament and he agreed. He obviously is a very good player of pace bowling growing up in Australia.

All of these guys have said you've got to be playing well every night because every night a different pace bowler comes at you and every team's got a quality pace attack.

Every team probably has one or two spinners that sort of complement those quicks. A lot has been said about the bowling, but the wickets are good and you have to bowl well otherwise you do go for plenty of runs.

What are the areas Karachi Kings need to work on and what are your expectations from the team? For starters, we need to get back to the playoffs and give ourselves a chance to play those final games, because the last two years, Karachi has not even been close to that.

'Special feeling' says Sana on T20 World Cup debut against India

CAPE TOWN (Agencies): As Pakistan Women's team kicks off its ICC Women's T20 World Cup campaign on Sunday, pacer Fatima Sana has expressed her excitement about leading the Green Shirt's bowling attack against the arch-rivals India, that too on her World Cup debut.

"I am very excited to play my first T20I match in the World Cup and lead our bowling attack. Obviously playing against India is a special feeling, but we will take it as a normal game and try to give our best shot in the match. She said in a video shared by the PCB on Saturday.

ICC Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2021 Sana has been a mainstay of the national team's bowling department and will represent Pakistan for the first time in a World Cup.

Bismah Maroof will lead

Pakistan in the event for the second time, after captaining the side in the previous edition held in Australia in 2020. She along with opening batter Javeria Khan will be featuring in their eighth edition of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

A positive outcome in Sunday's blockbuster clash against India will give Pakistan women's team perfect momentum for their later matches in Group B and bolster their chances to qualify for the tournament's semifinal for the very first time.

The World Cup provides veteran all-rounder Nida Dar an opportunity to become the highest wicket-taker in this format in women's cricket as requires only five more wickets to go past West Indies' Anisa Mohammad's tally of 125 wickets.

"I don't want to take any extra pressure on the record coming my way of becom-

ing the highest wicket-taker in the T20I format. I just love playing this game and I just want to enjoy the moment and give my best for the team," told Dar to PCB Digital.

Talking about the hype of the India-Pakistan contest, Dar said: "(It) is such that it does not require any Sunday, fans will be there to witness the contest any day provided the two sides are playing against each other. It is all about controlling the nerves, it is also exciting to play such matches as people watch you play."

Pakistan squad for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup: Bismah Maroof (c), Aimen Anwar, Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Naseem, Fatima Sana, Javeria Khan, Muneeba Ali (wk), Nashra Sandhu, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Sidra Nawaz (wk) and Tuba Hassan.

Century 99 Punjab Cup Polo finals on Sunday

LAHORE, (APP): FG Polo Team will take on Newage Cables/ Master Paints in the final of the Century 99 Punjab Cup Polo Tournament on Sunday, Feb 12, at 3pm here at the historic Lahore Polo Club.

President Lahore Polo Club Umar Sadiq said that a large number of spectators are expected to watch the enthralling and entertaining final of the oldest polo tournament in the history of Asia. "A lot of celebrities are also expected to attend the finale."

Umar Sadiq expressed his special thanks to Directors of Century Ventures Pvt Ltd Ayaz Lakhani, Kamran Afzal, Wasim Mazhar and Nazia Wasim for sponsoring the game of kings and knights.

FG Polo team, one of the finalists, consists of Mian Abbas Mukhtar, Saqib Khan Khakwani, Ramiro Zavaleta and Raul Laplacette while the other finalist team, Newage Cables/Master Paints, comprises Adnan Jalil

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Azam, Raja Temur Nadeem, Juan Cruz Greguol and Simon Prada. Before the main final, the subsidiary final will be played between Master Paints and Remounts at 1:30pm.

Master Paints team includes Sufi Muhammad Haroon, Agha Musa Ali Khan, Manuel Carranza and Manuel Crespo while Remounts team has Muhammad Naem, Ahmad Zubair Butt, Jota Chavanne and Manuel Sandblad.

Joao Felix scores first Chelsea goal in frustrating draw against West Ham

LONDON (Agencies): Joao Felix netted his first Chelsea goal as Graham Potter's side were held to a 1-1 draw at West Ham United in the Premier League on Saturday.

The Atletico Madrid loanee opened the scoring early at the London Stadium before former Chelsea defender Emerson drew the hosts level midway through the first half. West Ham thought they had snatched a late win when Tomas Soucek scored a header with just minutes remaining but it was disallowed for offside. The result means Chelsea remain winless away from home since Oct. 16.

Felix was immediately reinstated to Graham Potter's side after serving a three-match suspension for the straight red card he received in his side's 2-1 defeat at Fulham in January and was instrumental in Chelsea's high-tempo start against West Ham, stretching the hosts' defence on multiple occasions.

"First half, we were positive and we started the game well, scored a good goal. More opportunities as well, good attacking intent. We lost a little bit of control for five to 10 minutes and then conceded which we can do better with," Chelsea boss Potter said after the match. "Second half was probably more a reflection of where we are as



a group, as a team in terms of players coming up to speed, returning from injury and players adapting to the Premier League." Goalscorer Felix said to BT Sport: "I think we did a great game and controlled the game. They scored when we were good but that is football. We had chances to score but we go strong for the game."

"We fought for the three points but I think we are strong for the next match. I feel comfortable playing in that team. There is so much quality it is unbelievable and now we need to fight together and we have everything to do a big rest of the season." The Portugal international looked to have opened the scoring on 10 minutes as he pounced on a mistake by Nayef Aguerd to race through and eventually tap into an empty net after his initial chip was thwarted by the face of the right post.

However, the effort was ruled out after a delayed offside flag.

Felix, though, wasn't stifled for long and put his side ahead six minutes later. A series of Chelsea attacks culminated in record signing Enzo Fernandez floating a sumptuous ball in, which the 23-year-old met to tap home after freeing himself from Aguerd in the box.

David Moyes' side tested their luck further when Kai Havertz was found in behind by Mykhailo Mudryk and slotted beyond Lukasz Fabianski, but an offside flag and subsequent VAR check put pay to striker's ill-timed run. Despite dominating most of the match, the visitor's lead was lost with West Ham's second effort on goal as Emerson, who signed for Moyes' side from Chelsea last summer, restored parity on 28 minutes.



In brief

NHMP display diligence in lost valuables incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Saturday received information that a passenger had lost a valuable bag containing jewelry, important documents, and other items while traveling on a bus from Balkasar towards Lahore. According to the spokesperson, NHMP responded with remarkable speed and efficiency, dispatching a team of officers to the spot and staying in constant communication with the owner. Through their tireless efforts, the missing bag was safely located and returned to its owner. The spokesperson emphasized that the NHMP is dedicated to serving the public and praised the actions of the officers involved in this recent incident. The owner expressed his thanks to the National Highways and Motorway Police, who once again showed that they are dedicated to serving the people of Pakistan with honesty and integrity. The National Highways and Motorway Police have a well-deserved reputation for maintaining law and order on the highways and motorways of Pakistan, and this recent act further strengthens that reputation.

Six injured in cylinder blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least six persons were injured in a cylinder blast incident in Rawalpindi on Saturday. According to the rescue 1122, the cylinder blast occurred at a home in Shah Khalid Colony as a result six people were injured. On receiving the information, Rescue-1122 vehicles reached the site and started rescue operation. The rescuers provided the first aid to the injured and shifted them to a nearby hospital.

11 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police apprehended 11 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directives, the Golra police team arrested three accused namely Muhammad Usama, Muhammad Aslam, and Shamil Messiah involved in possessing drug and illegal weapons and recovered two 30 bore pistols and 515 gram heroin from their possession. Likewise, the Sabzi Mandi police arrested an accused Muhammad Muteeb involved in possessing illegal weapons and recovered one 30 bore pistols from his possession. Similarly, the Noon police team arrested two accused namely Suliman Khan and Zahid Mehmood involved in possessing drug and recovered 1670 gram hashish from their possession. During the crackdown against proclaimed offenders and court absconders, the Islamabad capital police team arrested five absconders and proclaimed offenders 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.



ISLAMABAD: Newly constructed flyover open for traffic at IJP road. —APP Photo

Maqbool Butt's execution was murder of justice: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick paid glowing tributes to Shaheed-e-Azam Shaheed Maqbool Ahmed Butt and said that he rekindled the flame of freedom struggle by happily touching the glows, whose execution was the murder of justice.

Speaking as a chief guest at an event to mark the 39th martyrdom anniversary of Muhammad Maqbool Butt on Saturday, Mushaal said that Maqbool Butt was a versatile personality, who always led from the front to liberate the Kashmiris from the Indian brutal subjugation, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Maqbool Butt was sent to the gallows on February 11 in 1984 in notorious New Delhi's Tihar Jail for his crime to spearheaded Kashmir freedom movement. She said that martyrs were the real asset of Kashmiris' freedom struggle and Kashmiri people could not forget the sacri-

fices of their martyrs come what may.

The event was organized by Government Associate College (W) F-Block, which was attended by Principal Mrs Erum Asher, the Co-Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation Rehana Hussein Mullick and Daughter of Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader, Yasin Malik, Raziyah Sultana.

On the occasion, Kashmir tableau were presented to mark Kashmir Martyrdom Day. Mushaal, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, said that it was time to remember and pay tribute to Shaheed Maqbool Ahmed Butt, who was an icon of Kashmir resistance movement and sacrificed his life for the noble cause of freedom from Indian yoke.

The Hurriyat leader said that although the fascist Indian government silenced him by sending him to the gallows but failed to silence his ultimate desire—the struggle for the people of Kashmir for the right to

self-determination.

She made it clear that the spirit of freedom of Kashmiris can never be suppressed through executions, illegal detentions and other brutal tactics by Indian fascist authorities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) rather these fascist tendencies further ignite the fire of freedom struggle.

The chairperson said that the martyrs were the symbols of the Kashmiris' freedom struggle against Indian yoke. Mushaal reiterated that the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs would not be allowed to go waste as Kashmiri people were duty-bound to safeguard the martyrs' sacrifices by taking the mission of their martyrs to logical ends at all costs.

The chairperson urged notorious India government to accept the bitter reality and the Kashmiri people and decide their own fate, as the hindutva regime could not achieve the desired results by these brutal tactics for the last seven decades.

IRSA releases 91,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 91,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 58,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1484.65 feet and was 86.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet.

Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,400 cusecs while outflow as 45,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1127.77 feet, which was 77.77 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 15,700 cusecs and 25,300 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 56,100, 38,200, 34,200 and 6,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and zero cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

IGP reviews security arrangements at police line HQs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan on Saturday visited the check posts at police line headquarters and main gate to review the security arrangements there and directed to make them more effective.

He said that strict security measures should be ensured at police lines headquarters and effective checking of people coming in and out should be made. IGP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed the deployed staff to stay alert during duty hours as the police line

headquarters was a sensitive area.

He directed the officers to ensure foolproof security of police lines headquarters and other important government buildings. All the officers and Jawans on duty must wear bulletproof jackets and helmets to avoid any untoward situation, he added. "No negligence will be tolerated in this regard," the IGP warned.

Capital Police accelerates efforts against traffic violators: Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) has accelerated its efforts against those involved in

violation of traffic laws especially against those bikers driving bikes without helmet and Driving License.

ICP is working on hastening actions against traffic violators under special directives of Inspector General Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan to reduce accidents and to facilitate the smooth flow of traffic.

Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad has advised all zonal DSPs and inspectors to take strict action against all the motorists violating traffic rules especially

against those bikers who drive their bikes without helmet and Driving License.

Islamabad capital police has constituted special squads to conduct operations throughout the city, and its education wing will work to improve road safety awareness for the public on several highways of the capital.

CTO Islamabad has instructed officers to deal with the citizens in a courteous manner as disrespect will not be tolerated and to take unbiased action against rule violators.

Ashrafi terms Quran desecrator's murder in Nankana Sahib un-Islamic

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Saturday termed the murder of an accused who desecrated the Holy Qauran in Warburton Nankana Sahib unconstitutional and un-Islamic.

He, in a video message, said as per media reports, desecrator of the Holy Quran who was under police custody of Warburton, Nankana Sahib,

had been killed after attacking the police station by a group of unruly mob.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council condemned the brutal incident in the strongest terms and said taking law into one's hand was not acceptable anyway in the presence of certain laws pertaining to the desecration and blasphemy of Islamic sanctities and values to punish the accused in the country.

He said if someone had committed a crime, it was court's jurisdiction to

penalize the accused, it was none of the group, party or individual's discretion power to announce sentence against anyone.

He urged the Punjab government to put culprits involved in this heinous crime behind the bars and proposed that their trials should be conducted in the Anti-Terrorism Court.

He said it was a shameful act in the eyes of Ulema and Mashaykh of all schools of thought as it had brought a bad name for the country in the comity of nations.

Parliament House to commemorate unsung heroes of democracy on Monday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Parliament House is going to host a ceremony to commemorate the 50 years of unsung heroes of democracy in the country on Monday.

The ceremony will be attended by prominent political leaders, including Minister for Foreign Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, National Assembly Speaker Raja Parvaiz Ashraf, and Senator Mian Raza Rabbani.

The speaker, in a state-

ment, said, "The unsung heroes of democracy in Pakistan are the backbone of our country's democratic movement. Their sacrifices and tireless efforts have laid the foundation for the democratic system that we enjoy today. We are honoured to pay tribute to these brave individuals and remember their contributions to the nation."

The ceremony will begin with the laying of a floral wreath on the monument of unsung heroes of democra-

cy installed on the lawn of the Parliament House followed by speeches from parliamentarians.

This ceremony will serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by these individuals and their important role in the establishment and maintenance of democracy in the country. By honouring these unsung heroes, the Parliament aims to inspire future generations to continue their legacy and strive for a better and more equal society.

Call for donations at ICT schools to help victims of quake hit countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): All educational institutions in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) launched a mega-campaign to collect donations for the earthquake victims of Türkiye and Syria, death toll from devastating quake took at least 24,000 lives so far.

The campaign was launched after the appeal of the prime minister to help victims and survivors and show solidarity with the people Türkiye and Syria, following the disastrous situation the quake hit countries.

Students expressed their commitment and determination to lend a helping hand to the Government of Pakistan in helping earthquake affected people in Türkiye and Syria, who lost their families, home and livelihoods in the earthquake. This is high time that we all rise up to

help our brethren in need, in every possible way.

The students and administration set up a donation box to collect donations and teachers and students had awareness and motivational sessions for students to encourage them in taking part in this activity.

Schools administration asked students to contribute to the funds, with as little as Rs. 10. Together they can make the difference in the lives of affected people.

Earlier, Federal Directorate of Education under Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training has instructed educational institutions to raise funds to help earthquake victims.

The amount will go to the 'Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Earthquake Victims', to generate funds for Türkiye, which was

rocked by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on Monday.

The fundraising activity started in 5 schools including Islamabad College for Girls, F-6/2, Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3, Islamabad Model College for Girls F-7/4, Islamabad Model College for Girls F-10/2 and Islamabad Model College for Boys F-8/4.

As per reports, the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria have resulted in endless suffering and angst with the death toll over 24 thousand people at the time of writing. With over 82,987 people suffering from non-fatal injuries, at least 391,000 displaced people, around 6,589 structures reduced to rubble, and over 24 million people affected in total so far; this is the worst natural tragedy to hit the region in recent history.

Desilting of Khanpur dam to be started from Feb 15

RAWALPINDI (APP): The annual canal cleanliness work of Khanpur dam from mud, silt and other obstacles would commence from February 15 to February 25.

Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) urged the citizen to use water carefully as there would be a disruption in the supply of water.

In the light of the special instructions of DG Military Lands and Cantonments Major General Tariq Zameer, the fourth open court hearing was held in the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, in which Cantonment Executive

Officer (CEO), Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Imran Gulzar heard the problems of the citizens and issued on spot instructions to the relevant departments for its resolution.

He was accompanied by Vice President Rawalpindi Cantt Board Malik Munir, Deputy CEO Muhammad Tanveer, elected members and heads of all departments.

On the occasion, CEO Imran Gulzar issued strict instructions to the relevant departments that sanitation, tax collection, water supply, including the maintenance of street lights should be completed as soon as possible.

He said that it was the administration's effort to solve the problems of the people at their doorsteps, and in this regard, negligence would not be tolerated.

He said that all the facilities were available to the patients in the Cantonment Hospital, the hospital fee was very less as compared to all the hospitals in Rawalpindi, as the Cantonment Board was giving a subsidy of Rs30 to 40 crore to the hospital from its own funds.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters carrying a bundle of dry woods on his head for domestic use at Federal Capital. —APP Photo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Human Rights hosted the Mission of the Government of Nepal with the support of the United Nations Development Programme on a peer learning session on National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

The session was held to share the experiences of the Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan while drafting and implementing its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2021 – 2026) (NAP-BHR). The Government of Nepal is in the process of drafting its own National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights; therefore, UNDP Nepal and Pakistan arranged for a peer-learning exercise between the relevant departments of the two governments so the Government of Pakistan could share its takeaways with the Government of Nepal.

The Nepalese Mission comprised senior-level officials from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security; Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies; Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Office of Prime Minister and Council of Minister; National Human Rights Commission of Nepal and UNDP Nepal.

Opening the session, the Secretary, the Ministry of Human Rights, Mr Ali Raza Bhutta welcomed the Nepalese

delegation to Pakistan and stated that such exchanges should be frequent and that South Asian countries have a lot to learn from each other in the context of development, human rights and other policies because of their regional proximity and shared values.

Director General, the Ministry of Human Rights, Mr Muhammad Arshad, stated that the Ministry of Human Rights is dedicated to implementing NAP-BHR. He further said that the Ministry is focusing on the areas of anti-discrimination, provision of equal opportunity and adherence to human rights due diligence in businesses for the current year.

During the session, the Director Ministry of Human Rights, Mr Shahzad Ahmed Khan, gave a comprehensive presentation on the development and implementation of the NAP-BHR and shared key takeaways with the officials. The Government of Nepal also gave a presentation highlighting major areas of the first draft of their action plan detailing thematic and priority areas, issues faced and implementation mechanisms.

The Joint Secretary, Mr Jhakka Prasad Acharya, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Government of Nepal stated that he was thankful for the warm welcome extended by the Ministry of Human Rights.

He further stated that the structure

of the Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Provincial Steering Committee for implementation of National Action Plan on Business and Human rights and the objective of formalizing the informal sector were two key takeaways from this peer learning visit.

Furthermore, he extended the invitation to the Ministry of Human Rights to attend the 4th UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights which will be held in March 2023 to further learn from each other in the context of BHR.

Closing the session, the Secretary, the Ministry of Human Rights, stated that the Government of Pakistan is willing to extend its support in the form of experiences with the Government of Nepal to develop their Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and expressed well-wishes to the Nepalese delegation in this regard.

National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (2021 – 2026) Pakistan is a policy document developed by the Ministry of Human Rights. It pertains to 08 priority areas and 69 action points that reinforce following the "Protect-Respect-Remedy" framework of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to safeguard human rights in the business sector of Pakistan. NAP-BHR can be viewed at: www.bhrpak.org.

DAB to auction 17m USD by today
KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank will auction 17 million USA dollars today (Sunday) to keep the local currency rate stable in the market. DAB in a statement asked all eligible commercial banks, and money exchangers to participate in the auction. It is mentioned in the newsletter that partial transaction is not allowed and the winner of the auction is obligated to deliver the amount in cash at a specific time to the Central Bank.

New package of aid arrived
KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank announced that an aid package of 40 million USD in cash arrived in Kabul. DAB welcomed the humanitarian aid of the international community and called for more cooperation in the field. The bank hailed the entry of currencies into the country through principled and legal manners. This is the 56th aid package that reaches Kabul in the form of cash and is delivered to one of the commercial banks in the country.

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

Russia, Afghanistan have room for cooperation: Envoy

KABUL (Khaama Press): There is room for cooperation between Russia and Afghanistan; however, there is still uncertainty over the priorities of the Afghan government and local businesses, said Dmitry Zhironov, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan. Zhironov stated while interviewing with Rossiya 24 TV Channel, "There is room for cooperation; the question is what are the priorities of the Afghan side itself, what are the authorities and Afghan business ready to invest in the first place," TASS News Agency reported. The envoy also insisted that cooperation between the countries "should be mutually beneficial and projects should be profitable." "Our business is still testing those Islamic financial



principles that the officials of the de facto government in Afghanistan are introducing," the ambassador said. He also recalled numerous agreements and projects that Russia and Afghanistan have signed, such as an agreement for the construction of a thermal power plant in northern Afghanistan, the readiness of Russian pipe manufacturers to join the construction of the Afghan section of the

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI), and Russia's eagerness to participate in the renovations of the Salang tunnel, which cannot cope with the increased traffic flow. Earlier this week, Russia hosted the 5th Moscow format meeting on Afghanistan in which representatives from India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were invited to the Meeting to discuss various Afghanistan-related topics, including security and humanitarian crisis. The fifth round of the Moscow Format Meeting comes as Afghanistan's security situation is quickly deteriorating and has already forced the closure of several foreign embassies in Kabul.

Agriculture, Livestock Ministry seeks to build fish industry



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) said efforts are being made to improve the nation's fish

farming industry and to raise fish production. According to officials of MAIL, due to low domestic fish production, traders import up to 120 metric tons of fish from neighboring countries in winter and spring. "We import 40 to 120 metric tons of fish each day from abroad during the winter. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock is working to promote the fish farming industry and is taking action to address the issues

facing businessmen in this sector," said Misbahuddin Mustaeen, the spokesperson of MAIL. The fish market in Kabul has reportedly been more profitable this winter than it was last year, according to some fish vendors and chefs. Fish sellers said that their sales had increased as a result of the nation's low cost of domestically produced fish. "Our highest cost fish is 300 Afghanis per kg. Fish worth 250 afghani are also

available. Likewise, we charge 280 afghani for a kilogram of flounder. This fish does not have a spine," said Habibullah, the chefs. "Each day, I sell two cartons of raw fish. I make roughly 500 Afghanis every day selling this fish," fish vendor Ziarat Gul told TOLONews. Meanwhile, the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock asked the government to invest more to increase fish production in the country and to increase fish farming. "The bulk of the fish we eat is produced in Pakistan. My suggestion is that as more farms are created around the nation, more employment opportunities will arise, increasing both government and citizen revenue as well as our ability to consume domestically produced goods," said Mirwais Hajizada, the deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, there are over 3,000 fish farms in Afghanistan, but only 13,000 tons of fish are produced there each year, which is insufficient to meet the needs of the nation.

Hundreds of Military Graduatee

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of National Defense announced saying that 500 military personnel from the 207th Al-Farooq Army Corps received their graduation certificate from a three-month training course. The soldiers have trained the necessary ideological training, combat tactics, how to deal with enemies and defend themselves, said officials at the Al-Farooq 207th Army Corps. The chief commander of the 207th Al-Farooq Army Corps, Mawlawi Mohammad Ayoub Khalidi, told said that recruitment in different parts of this army corps continued adding that ensuring the security of the borders is one of their priorities. The governor of Herat, Mawlana Noor Ahmad Islam Jar says that the security forces are the patron of the security of the residents and must be fully familiar with various war tactics.

Dozens of ill Afghan children to be treated in Germany

KABUL (TOLONews): A delegation of Germany's Peace Village International arrived in Kabul to assess children who need to be taken to Germany for medical treatment. A member of the delegation told TOLONews that less than 100 children can be helped by the service. 20 out of 120 children were selected by the organization for medical treatment in Germany. TOLONews reached out to some of the vulnerable children who were suffering from severe diseases. Habibullah, 2, has burns from hot water. The affects

of burning are visible on his chest and one of his hands. He was selected by Germany's Peace Village International to be taken for medical treatment to Germany. "I brought my son here last year to the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society. We were told to bring him here after one year. He is now being taken by Germany's Peace Village International for treatment in Germany," said Ghulam Haidar, father of Habib. Around 500 children were brought to Afghanistan Red Crescent Society.

A spokesman for the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society, Irfanullah Sharafzoi, said that the medical documents of some of the children will also be sent to Germany for medical examination. "The treatment of the patients has begun and it will last for seven-days. Nearly 1,000 citizens are referred at this level. But only the patients who are eligible are being selected," he said. Germany's Peace Village International has treated more than 4,000 Afghan children in Germany since 1988.

More than 300 birds of threatened species released

FARAH (TOLONews): The National Environmental Protection Agency in Farah said that a trader from Qatar has released more than 300 MacQueen's bustards into the wild in Farah province.

According to the officials of this department, Arab countries are busy breeding rare animals and birds in this province. Ali Bin Abdullah, an Arab trader, has a farm for breeding MacQueen's bustards in Farah and currently more than 1500 MacQueen's bustards are on the farm. "The MacQueen's is in the state of extinction in Afghanistan, and we are interested to breed these rare birds in Farah province," said an Arab trader. "They said today they will release 300 birds in this province," said Hamid Safi, head of the natural heritage protection at the National Environmental Protection Agency in Farah. According to the agency, some traders from Arab countries signed an agreement for breeding and hunting animals and rare birds. "Some Arab traders or others come here to hunt," said Hafiz Azizulrahman, head of the National Environmental Protection Agency in Farah. Meanwhile, some Farah residents asked for a stop to hunting in the province. "We ask to prevent the hunting of animals, our birds must be free in our province," said Rahmat Ullah, a Farah resident. MacQueen's bustard is a migratory bird that go from one country to another country, and these birds in winter come to Farah province.

World countries to open their embassies

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Justice Minister Mawlawi Abdul Hakeem Sharai met with Mrs. Roza Otunbayeva, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in his office in Kabul. According to the Ministry of Justice's statement, a meeting mainly concentrated discussion on Afghanistan's judicial system, laws and the issue of lawyers, held among two sides. "Afghanistan's judicial regulation is moving ahead with strength" said Justice Minister, adding that many work has been done in line with the laws and the laws of most government bodies are being completed. International community should interact with the IE instead of enmity, said quoting Supreme leader, he added saying that the global media and Westerners seek to put negative pressure on the Islamic Emirate.

Japan to complete Dr. Tetsu projects



KABUL (Agencies): Acting State for Natural Disaster Management Minister, Mullah Mohammad Abbass Akhund, met with Takashi Okada, Ambassador of Japan in Kabul. Minister of State for Natural Disaster Management, Mohammad Abbass Akhund, praised Japan government's assistance for Afghanistan. He reminded of Dr.

Tetsu Nakamura's contribution to Afghan society, said that Dr. Nakamura is an example of the goodwill of the Japanese people with the people of Afghanistan. For his part, the Japanese ambassador in Kabul expressed satisfaction over maintaining security in the country, saying the people of Afghanistan deserve a dignified life, and not only Japan but also the interna-

tional community, is on the side of the Afghan people. He mentioned providing \$3 million in humanitarian aid of that country for the victims of Paktika and Khost, adding that the country's aid will continue so. The Ambassador of Japan reaffirms saying that the people and the government of Japan have ready to complete the projects of Dr. Nakamura.

Kunduz residents complain of losses

KUNDUZ CITY (Pajhwok): Some residents of the Imam Sahib district of northern Kunduz province complain about the destruction of their agricultural lands and homes by flooding in Amur River. They say frequent flooding in the river massively damage their crops and houses. If the river's banks were not fortified, they feared, all their properties would be washed away. Mohammad Mir, a resident of Sher Khan Port area, said they had thrice left their homes and had witnessed

the destruction of thousands of acres of agricultural land due to flooding. He urged the government to establish retaining walls and put an end to the erosion of farmlands and prevent the displacement of locals. He warned if immediate action was not taken, most of the land would be eroded by the river. Ghulam Sakhi, hailing from the same neighbourhood, said: "600 acres of land, including mosques, houses have already been

damaged by floods. The destruction must be stopped." Hamidullah Walizada, technical advisor, said: "I want to inform the people that a team recently conducted a preliminary survey of the vulnerable points. We have shared this problem with the Ministry of Energy and Water." Flooding in Amu River, Afghanistan's formal border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, affects several provinces of the country every year.

Residents want Shahi Canal's construction

MEHTARLAM (Pajhwok): Some tribal elders and local residents in eastern Laghman province have demanded authorities to launch the construction of Shahi Canal project in Alingar district. They said the construction of Shahi canal will facilitate the irrigation of thousands of hectares of barren land. Mohammad Nader, a tribal elder from Alingar district, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "The construction of Shahi Canal which starts from Alingar River will help irrigate thousands hectares of barren desert". Mohammad Qasem Sahibulhaq, another tribal elder of Badiul Ebad area of Mehtarlam, the provincial capital, told Pajhwok, the project will generate



work opportunities to many residents and urged the acting government to launch the Shahi Canal project as soon as possible. While some provincial officials said, Shahi Canal was first built by local people about 100 years ago which currently has the capacity of irrigating 300

hectares of land. The second part of this project which will facilitate the flow of water from the older canal in Alingar district to Mehtarlam was back during the government of former President Mohammad Dawood Khan, but has never been implemented, the officials added.

Kabul residents: All security personnel should wear uniform



KABUL (Pajhwok): A number of residents of Kabul say some security personnel carrying weapons will move in the city without uniform, but police say they are "mujahideen" who come from provinces to Kabul for registration in the system. Rahimullah, a resident of Bagrami district of Kabul, said in early days of the Islamic Emirate's return to power, about 90 percent of security forces had no uniform, but currently most of them were equipped with

uniforms and were gradually making progress. In addition to stressing that all security personnel must be equipped with uniforms, he said: "We can better know a security officer wearing a proper uniform that he is a mujahid. But we cannot recognize those carrying weapons without wearing a proper uniform." Nabiullah, another Kabul resident, said: "Our demand is that every security officer must wear uniform, we often ignore secu-

rity personnel in plain clothes, it sometimes led to misunderstanding." **Analysts: uniform necessary for better security, order** Mohammad Sadiq Shinwari, a military affairs expert, said security forces equipped with special uniform and professional training showed order and discipline in society. According to him, citizens feel secure when they see security personnel in uniform and this can prevent illegal gunmen and

reduce crimes. Shinwari also said the Ministry of Interior should inform the people that security personnel in uniform doing searches were government personnel and if anyone was stopped by individuals without uniform, they were irresponsible gunmen and the security institutions should be informed about them. Mohammad Yousaf Amin Zazai, another military affairs' analyst, said wearing uniform actually meant obeying the law and could help the people differentiate between security personnel and irresponsible individuals. He said uniform had a positive role in stability of society and opportunists took advantage if security forces lacked uniform. Aziz Stanikzai, another military affairs' expert, said uniform was necessary for security personnel and people should also know the uniforms of all security organs so they could differentiate between security forces and irresponsible individuals. **Zadran: Equipping all**

security personnel a priority Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran said uniform was considered important for order and discipline and identification of personnel of different security organs. He said the Islamic Emirate was giving priority to this matter and special uniforms had been distributed to all the police in Kabul. Responding to a query if some security forces have not received uniform in Kabul, he replied: "One thing I have to say is that for now every policeman is given a single uniform, so it needs to be washed or they don't wear for some reasons in official occasions." He added: "We have a follow-up team at the Kabul police headquarters, a person who does not wear uniform in official time, he will be introduced to the police headquarters or relevant station and will be asked for it." The IEA ununiformed military personnel who had not been registered at any government institution are stopped at a check point in

Kabul, questioned asked for weapon registration card. When asked that is there any state security organization in Kabul that had not received uniform for its personnel, Zadran said: "According to my information all official security institutions had been sent their uniforms, intelligence personnel also have a special uniform, our interior ministry personnel also have a specific uniform. I don't have enough information about defence ministry but I think they use the previous uniform at this stage." When asked about some armed personnel not clad in the uniform but walk through Kabul streets and roads, he said: "There are official employees of the MoI such as police, our officers who received uniform and they are bound to be clad in the uniform in official time. In addition, there are some of our Mujahideen who are still unregistered and they can serve the people after their registration. Some Mujahidin from villages come here for their work

and they have permission to carry weapon from their local commanders but these individuals have no right to interfere in any matter on their own. They carry weapon for their own security, these unregistered Mujahideen will be registered in specific government institutions and they will avail the uniform of that specific organization." He added in the future certain rules will be introduced regarding the possession of weapon and its time and how many security persons would be required for a senior officials. When asked that some people clad in uniform may commit a crime introducing them as security personnel, he said that security forces during operation are clad in uniform and all security institutions coordinate through the Coordination Commission. He said people should information police station through police station's number or by dialing 100. Zadran added: "At least 30 personnel are available for 100 call. They convey the message to the closest

personnel to the area in a proper manner and they take action. They check the intruders, if there are senior are not informed then these individuals are caught by security personnel and sent to police station, later investigation is conducted to identify if they are criminals or not." Referring to the distribution of uniform to all security personnel he said when all Mujahidin are registered and the registration process is over then the uniform issue will be also resolved. "We hope and efforts are underway to resolve the registration issue in the short time, initially the uniform issue was very simple to us believing that in one day the uniform will be ready and the next day it will be distributed, it was the demand of public as well but there was conflict over the past 40 years. System is like an injured person whose wounds will take time to repair." It is pertinent to mention that the uniform distribution process is ongoing in capital Kabul and some provinces.

Turkiye-Syria earthquake toll passes 25,000

ISTANBUL (Agencies): Rescuers pulled a two-month-old baby and an elderly woman from the rubble on Saturday, five days after an earthquake devastated Türkiye and Syria, leaving more than 25,000 dead. Tens of thousands of local and international rescue workers are still scouring through flattened neighbourhoods despite freezing weather that has compounded the misery of millions now in desperate need of aid.

However, Austrian soldiers and German rescue workers called off their searches in southern Hatay, citing a difficult security situation and clashes between local groups, without giving further details. In the midst of overwhelming destruction and despair, miraculous tales of survival continue to emerge. "Is the world there?" asked 70-year-old Menekşe Tabak as she was pulled out from the rubble in the southern city of Kahramanmaraş — the epicentre of Monday's 7.8-magnitude tremor — to applause and cries praising God, according to a video shared on state broadcaster TRT Haber.

In the city of Antakya, a two-month-old baby was found alive 128 hours after the quake, state news agency Anadolu reported. A two-year-old girl, a six-month pregnant woman, plus a four-year-old and her father, were among those rescued five days after the quake, Turkish media reported. Meanwhile, in southern Türkiye, families clutched each other in grief at a cotton field transformed into a cemetery, with an endless stream of bodies arriving for swift burial.

Compounding the anguish, the United Nations has warned that at least 870,000 people urgently need hot meals across Türkiye and Syria. In Syria alone, up to 5.3 million people may have been made homeless. A border crossing between Armenia and Türkiye opened for the first time in 35 years on Saturday to allow five trucks carrying food and water into the quake-hit region. Türkiye's disaster agency on Saturday said nearly 32,000 people from Turkish bodies are working on search and rescue efforts. In addition, there are 8,294 international rescuers.

However, Austrian soldiers on Saturday suspended rescue operations in Hatay over a "worsening security situation", an army spokesman told AFP. Two dog handlers later resumed work under the protection of the Turkish army. A similar decision to halt rescue operations was taken in Germany by the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (TSW) and an NGO specialising in helping victims of natural disasters, ISAR

Germany, according to an NGO spokesman.

"There are more and more reports of clashes between different factions, shots have also been fired," said ISAR spokesman Stefan Heine. The UN rights office had on Friday urged all actors in the affected area — where Kurdish militants and Syrian rebels operate — to allow humanitarian access. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, which is considered a terrorist group by Ankara and its Western allies, announced a temporary halt in fighting to ease recovery work.

In Syria, where years of conflict have ravaged the healthcare system and parts of the country remain under the control of rebels, aid has been slow to arrive. World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus arrived on Saturday in the quake-stricken city of Aleppo, state media reported. Tedros said he was accompanying "emergency medical supplies of around 37 metric tonnes".

The Syrian government said it had approved the delivery of humanitarian assistance to quake-hit areas outside its control. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged the Security Council to authorise the opening of new cross-border humanitarian aid points between Türkiye and Syria. The council will meet to discuss Syria, possibly early next week. Türkiye said it was working on opening two new routes into rebel-held parts of Syria.

The winter freeze has left thousands of people either spending nights in their cars or huddling around makeshift fires that have become ubiquitous across the quake-hit region. Five days of grief and anguish have been slowly building into a rage at the poor quality of buildings as well as the Turkish government's response to the country's worst disaster in nearly a century. Officials in the country say 12,141 buildings were either destroyed or seriously damaged in the earthquake.

"Damage was to be expected, but not the type of damage that you are seeing now," said Mustafa Erdik, a professor at Istanbul-based Bogazici University. Turkish police on Saturday detained 12 people, including contractors, over collapsed buildings in the southeastern provinces of Gaziantep and Sanliurfa, local media reported. Türkiye's justice ministry has ordered prosecutors in the 10 provinces to establish special "earthquake crimes investigation offices". Officials and medics said 21,848 people had died in Türkiye and 3,553 in Syria. The confirmed total now stands at 25,401.

Iran marks 44th anniversary of revolution

TEHRAN (Agencies): The Islamic Republic of Iran marked the 44th anniversary of the Iranian revolution on Saturday with state-organised rallies, as anti-government hackers briefly interrupted a televised speech by President Ebrahim Raisi. Raisi, whose headline government faces one of the boldest challenges from young protesters calling for its ouster, appealed to the deceived youth to repent so they can be pardoned by Iran's supreme leader.

In that case, he told a crowd congregated at Tehran's expansive Azadi Square that "the Iranian people will embrace them with open arms." His live televised speech was interrupted on the internet for about a minute, with a logo appearing on the screen of a group of anti-Iranian government hackers that goes by the name of Edalat Ali (Justice of Ali). A voice shouted: "Death to the Islamic Republic."

Nationwide protests swept Iran following the death in September of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the country's morality police. Security forces have responded with a deadly crackdown on the protests, among the strongest challenges to the

Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution ousted 2,500 years of monarchy. On Sunday, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued an amnesty covering a large number of prisoners including some arrested in recent anti-government protests.

Rights group HRANA said that as of Friday, 528 protesters had been killed, including 71 minors. It said 70 government security forces had also been killed. As many as 19,763 protesters are believed to have been arrested. Iranian leaders and state media have for weeks appealed for a strong turnout at Saturday's rallies as a show of solidarity and popularity in an apparent response to the protests. On the anniversary's eve on Friday night, state media showed fireworks as part of government-sponsored celebrations, and people chanted "God is Greatest!"

However, many could be heard shouting "Death to the dictator!" and "Death to the Islamic Republic" in videos posted on social media. Reuters could not verify the social media posts independently. Government television on Saturday aired live footage of the state rallies around the country.

Adelkhah, who had been in prison since 2019, was one of seven French nationals detained in Iran, a factor that has worsened relations between Paris and Tehran in recent months. She was sentenced in 2020 to five years in prison on national security charges.

In Tehran, domestic-made anti-ballistic missiles, a drone, an anti-submarine cruiser, and other military equipment were on display as part of the celebrations. "People have realised that the enemy's problem is not women, life, or freedom," Raisi said in a live televised speech at Azadi Square, referring to the protesters' signature slogan. "Rather, they want to take our independence," he said.

His speech was frequently interrupted by chants of "Death to America" — a trademark slogan at state rallies. The crowd also chanted "Death to Israel." Raisi accused the "enemies" of promoting the "worst kind of vulgarity, which is homosexuality". As part of the amnesty marking the revolution's anniversary, Iranian authorities on Friday released jailed dissident Farhad Meysami, who had been on a hunger strike, and Iranian-French academic Fariba Adelkhah.

Adelkhah, who had been in prison since 2019, was one of seven French nationals detained in Iran, a factor that has worsened relations between Paris and Tehran in recent months. She was sentenced in 2020 to five years in prison on national security charges.

PAF's aircraft carrying relief goods reach Türkiye

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: IL-78 aircraft of Pakistan Air Force carrying tents and relief goods from PAF base, Lahore has reached Adana, Türkiye.

According to detail, the ilyushin-78 aircraft is carrying 16.5 tons of humanitarian assistance relief goods from people of Pakistan for the earthquake affected brethren of Türkiye.

Pakistan Air Force is also making all out efforts to repatriate stranded Pakistanis in coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Pakistan Embassy in Türkiye. 08 Pakistani passengers will be evacuated on the PAF IL-78 aircraft on its way back to Pakistan.

Meanwhile, in line with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's directive, about 200.7 tons of relief assistance including 18 tons of winterized tents had been sent to the quake-affected people of the brotherly country Türkiye.

The request for tents was made by the Turkish government to save hundreds of thousands of the quake-affected people who were bracing the severe cold. So far, different flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Pakistan Air Force (PAF) have delivered 200.7 tons of relief goods including winterized blankets to the quake-affected populace of Türkiye.

Sharing the latest details of the quake, the Turkish health minister informed media that more than 20,213 people had lost their lives in the 10 affected provinces while 80,052 others were injured. A total of 67 survivors were also rescued from the rubble in the last 24 hours. 1666 aftershocks were recorded so far in the aftermath of two massive tremors that brought unprecedented destruction in Türkiye.

According to experts, Türkiye lies on two fault lines. The recent double earthquake was far more intense than anything seen since 1939. The first quake registered a magnitude 7.8, followed by another of 7.5 tremor.

MQM-P's sit-in put

KARACHI (NNI): After reaching a deal with the PPP on new demarcations of constituencies in Karachi, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Saturday postponed its Sunday's sit-in. However, on the other hand, too, had confirmed its contacts with the MQM-P, while the latter's delegation would visit the Chief Minister House soon. As per the agreement reached between the two parties, Karachi's constituencies will be delineated afresh after the next national census. Addressing a press conference along with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, MQM-P Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui announced that his party was postponing the Karachi sit-in until the peace exercises were underway.

"We are always ready to sacrifice our political interests for national security," Khalid Maqbool said, pointing out that the country's stability was associated with the peace and stability of Karachi. He further said that not a single party denied 'malpractices' in delimitation of constituencies.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi along with Indonesian Ambassador and ship's crew onboard Indonesian Ship during ongoing Multinational Exercise Aman-2023.

Naval Chief highlights Pakistan contribution for peace

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi visited foreign ships of navies participating in 8th Multinational Naval Exercise AMAN-23. Upon his arrival on board foreign visiting ships, the Naval Chief was warmly welcomed by Senior Officers/Commanding Officers and was presented Guard of Honour by smartly dressed out contingents.

During the visits, the Naval Chief interacted with Senior Officers/Commanding Officers and was given briefings on board ships. The Naval Chief highlighted that Pakistan is effectively contributing in peace and stability in the region. AMAN Exercise demonstrates Pakistan's commitment to peace, reinforce regional maritime security and enhance interoperability between regional and extra regional navies. The Admiral appreciated their participation in AMAN Exercise to fulfill common resolve of "Together for Peace". The Senior Officers/Commanding Officers of the respective ships highly acknowledged the persistent efforts of Pakistan Navy to bring global navies towards shared commitment of maritime peace, stability and lawful order at sea.

Besides, the Naval Chief also called on Cdr DJIBOUTI Navy and Coast Guard separately, Cdr Lebanese Navy, Flag Officer Commanding Naval Doctrine

Command Nigerian Navy, Flag Officer Commanding Sri Lankan Naval Fleet and Cdr Tanzanian Navy. On the side line of PIMEC, the three days International Maritime Conference (IMC) was organized on the theme of 'Embracing Blue Economy – Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Countries' by National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) under the auspices of Pakistan Navy. The conference is being held in tandem with Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) and 8th Multinational Naval Exercise AMAN 2023.

Eminent international and national scholars from China, Germany, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UK and USA are participating in the three days conference and will share their thoughts on the dynamic theme. Additionally, majority of international scholars are also joining the Conference online.

The second day of the IMC was divided into two Sessions (four sub-sessions). In the First Session, Dr. Anwar Liporadi Bin Abdullah from Ocean Quest Global Malaysia, Dr. Zafar Ullah Jattak from LUAWMS Baluchistan, Engr Faisal Iftikhar, CEO Deep Blue Sea Food and Mr. Saeed Sarparah, CEO Baluchistan Board of Investment & Trade emphasized over various topics under the theme of 'Impact of Innovation on Sustainable Blue Economy'. While, Dr. David Middlemiss from

Wallingford Group UK, Mr. Jawed Iqbal CEO Shuib Shipping Agency, Mr. Usman Munir from KOTUG, Dr. Jian Ling from Southern University of Science & Technology China and Engr Captain (Retd) Ibrahim from AKSU deliberated on the theme 'Challenges to Marine Industries & Contemporary Scientific Developments'.

During the Second Session, Mr. Muhammad Irfan Tariq Former DG MoCC, Mr. Muhammad Amjad from Global Climate Change Impact Studies Centre, Mr. Mahmood Akhtar Cheema from Country Rep IUCM and Dr. Asif Inam from BUKC pondered upon the theme of 'Impact of Climate Change on the Marine Environment'. Besides, Dr. Josh L Breithaupt from Florida University USA, Dr. Abed El Rahman Hassoun from Germany, Dr. Ying Wu from China and Dr. Samina Kidwai DG NIO contemplated upon various aspects of 'Ocean Bio-Geo Sciences and Marine Technologies'.

The second day of International Maritime Conference was attended by a large number of dignitaries from across the globe, Officers from Defence Forces of Pakistan and friendly countries, academia, media representatives and researchers from local and international think tanks. International Maritime Conference will continue till 12 Feb 23 and would cover the thoughts of distinguished International and National scholars.

KP CM stresses promotion of good quality eyecare

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has termed ophthalmology as an important speciality of medical field and said that promoting good quality eyecare is, no doubt, of utmost value and importance which needs to be paid special attention.

He was addressing as chief guest the inaugural session of a 3-day conference titled "Khyber EyeCon 2023" organized by Pakistan Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan (OSP), KP chapter here the other day. The conference was attended by renowned ophthalmologists and healthcare professionals from across the country and abroad in large numbers.

In his address the Chief Minister appreciated the role of OSP for organizing the event, and said that the conference is, no doubt, a great initiative which will

go a long way to achieve further excellence in the field of ophthalmology for which the organizers and OSP deserves full appreciation.

"Its encouraging that the OSP is doing research to advance the art and science of ophthalmology, and arranging academic activities for promotion of good quality eyecare in the larger public interest", Muhammad Azam Khan remarked and added that there is still along way to go to eradicate eye diseases and blindness in Pakistan which needs coordinated and sustained efforts. Prof. Dr. Nazir Ahmad Laghari, Prof. Dr. Abdul Qayum, Prof. Dr. Shafatullah Marwat and other speakers also addressed the inaugural session and shed light on the objectives of the conference. In the end, the Chief Minister gave away awards and shields to renowned ophthalmologists for their remarkable achievements in the field of ophthalmology.

The Chief Minister maintained that the government was wholeheartedly trying to provide eyecare services to people at gross root level in order to facilitate and provide ease to them at their door steps adding that it is our duty to provide affordable care,

and to ensure availability and affordability of medicines required for treatment.

"It is encouraging to know that number of ophthalmologists in the country has increased considerably over the years and many subspecialties are being established which will bring ease and relief to our people" Muhammad Azam Khan remarked and added that there is still along way to go to eradicate eye diseases and blindness in Pakistan which needs coordinated and sustained efforts. Prof. Dr. Nazir Ahmad Laghari, Prof. Dr. Abdul Qayum, Prof. Dr. Shafatullah Marwat and other speakers also addressed the inaugural session and shed light on the objectives of the conference. In the end, the Chief Minister gave away awards and shields to renowned ophthalmologists for their remarkable achievements in the field of ophthalmology.

PM offers all possible support in Syrian quake relief efforts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday called Syrian Arab Republic Prime Minister Hussein Arnous to extend heartfelt sympathies to the brotherly Syrian people on the human and material loss in the wake of recent devastating earthquake.

The prime minister offered all possible support in the relief efforts, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Offering condolences to the Syrian prime minister on his personal loss of family members in the horrific natural calamity, Prime Minister Sharif expressed concern with regard to the reports emanating from the region of severe aftershocks.

He shared that Pakistan had already dispatched the first batch of humanitarian assistance which was being followed up with more relief goods sent via air and land routes.

Earthquake compounds Turkish leader's woes as election nears

ANKARA (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan came to power 20 years ago riding a wave of public outrage toward the previous government's handling of a deadly earthquake. Now, three months away from an election, Erdogan's political future could hinge on how the public perceives his government's response to a similarly devastating natural disaster.

"It is going to be a big challenge for Erdogan, who has established a brand for himself as an autocratic figure but an efficient one that gets the job done," said Soner Cagaptay, a Turkey expert at the Washington Institute and the author of several books on Erdogan. The aftermath of a massive earthquake isn't the only parallel to the election of 2002. Back then, Turkey was in the midst of a financial crisis that was punishing its economy.

Today, Turkey's economy is being hammered by skyrocketing inflation, and Erdogan has faced widespread criticism for his handling of the problem, which has left millions of poor and middle class people struggling to make ends meet. Erdogan's political rivals have already begun criticizing

his government's response to the earthquake, saying that over the course of two decades he failed to prepare the country for the inevitable. Experts point to lax enforcement of building codes as a major reason why this week's quakes were so deadly. But with less than 100 days before the election, Erdogan's rivals have yet to put forth a candidate to run against him. The memory of how Bulent Ecevit, the late prime minister, was undone by his poor handling of financial and natural disasters two decades ago must be on Erdogan's mind as he tries to contain the twin problems he faces today, analysts say.

The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck on Feb. 6 was followed nine hours later by another powerful quake, killing more than 24,000 people in both Turkey and Syria. The devastation spreads across a wide swath of Turkey, affecting 10 provinces in the country's southeast, and it has strained the ability of domestic and foreign crews to quickly execute rescue efforts. In the first few days after the quake, Turkish television and social media showed people waiting helplessly beside piles of debris in frigid conditions, or using

their bare hands to claw through rubble.

"We'll still have to see the outcome of the relief efforts, whether subzero temperatures continue, casualties increase, whether international assistance which is flowing could make a difference," said Cagaptay. Erdogan, who toured the region this week, conceded shortcomings in the initial stages of the response but insisted that everything was now under control. "If the disaster response is strong, the ruling administration will be rewarded, likely in the polls—if it is poor, the opposite," Timothy Ash, an analyst at BlueBay Asset Management in London, wrote in an email.

Ecevit blamed the poor response after the 1999 quake that killed some 18,000 people on the vastness of the destruction. Similarly, Erdogan said the response to this week's quake — which he described as the "strongest in the history of this geography" — has been hampered by winter weather and the destruction of a key airport, making it difficult to quickly reach people trapped in the rubble. "It is not possible to be prepared for such a disaster," Erdogan said, promising that

"we will not leave any of our citizens uncared for."

While the bumpy quake response so far hasn't been great for Erdogan's reputation, analysts say there is time for him to turn things around before the election set for May 14. "He has the levers of state at his command and Turkish politics was hardly a level playing field before the earthquake," Hamish Kinnear, Middle East and North Africa analyst for risk-intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, said in an email.

Right after the quake, Erdogan declared a three-month state of emergency, giving him the power to "lavish public spending" in those areas, said Kinnear, who believes an Erdogan victory is still likely. Erdogan has promised to donate 10,000 Turkish lira (\$530) to people affected by the quake and to subsidize their rent. He said an additional 100 billion lira (\$5.3 billion) would be allocated for post-quake efforts. In the last presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018, Erdogan and his alliance for parliament overwhelmingly won in seven of the 10 provinces devastated by this week's earthquakes. And in recent years he

has pushed through changes that eliminated checks and balances between different branches of government, concentrating more power within the presidency.

In Turkey, freedom of expression is limited and the government largely controls the media, which has meant television stations mostly show scenes of "miracle rescues," while appearing to censor scenes of hardship. In the face of crushing inflation, Erdogan has increased the minimum wage, pensions and civil-servant salaries. While these steps may have been popular with voters, others have earned him severe criticism. For example, he has insisted on fighting inflation by repeatedly lowering interest rates to stimulate growth — a strategy that mainstream economists around the world have said only makes the problem worse.

For now, all eyes are on the earthquake response. In the hard-hit city of Adiyaman, Ahmet Aydin, a resident who lost six relatives as well as his home, his shop and his car in the earthquake, complained about the slow emergency response. But he said he would never stop supporting

Erdogan — highlighting the Turkish leader's potentially lasting appeal. "We trust our president," Aydin said. "He would never leave us alone, he would never leave us hungry or thirsty. May Allah protect him." Erdogan's political rivals tell a different story.

This week, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of Turkey's main opposition party, blamed the devastation on Erdogan's two-decade rule. "Let me be very clear; if there one person responsible for this process, it is Erdogan," Kilicdaroglu said in a video address. "For 20 years, this government has not prepared the country for an earthquake." He also accused the government of mis-spending taxes imposed in the wake of the 1999 quakes that were intended to prepare the country for future disasters.

As the death toll continues to rise with each passing day, Erdogan says the country's leaders should strive to be above the political fray. "This time is one of unity and standing together," he said. "I cannot tolerate how in a time like this such filthy and negative campaigns are led for the sake of basic, political interests."