

CTD foils attack

MIRANSHAH (APP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Tuesday foiled terrorist attack and claimed to kill seven of them in cross-fire in North Waziristan (NW). According to media reports, terrorists attacked CTD team in North Waziristan, when they were moving suspected terrorists to Bannu. Security sources said that the attack took place last night at Mir Ali Bypass.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 30

Regd. No. 241

Rajab 23 1444 -- WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

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AMAN-23 Exercise to pave way for more peaceful, secure region: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that Pakistan Navy's multinational AMAN-23 Exercise would pave the way to make the region more peaceful and secure with combined efforts by all stakeholders.

The prime minister who was chief guest at the culmination ceremony of the Exercise held in the North Arabian Sea, lauded Pakistan Navy for successfully hosting Exercise AMAN-23 for promoting peace and security in the region. He thanked the participating regional and extra-regional navies for displaying their commitment to collaborative maritime security and joining hands for peaceful co-existence. The culmination cer-

emony marked a powerful conduct of International Fleet Review (IFR) followed by spectacular forming up of AMAN Formation comprising Pakistan Navy and foreign naval ships, according to a press release.

Upon arrival onboard Pakistan Navy Ship MOAWIN, the prime minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain, SAPM Syed Fahad Hussain, governor and chief minister of Sindh, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Air Staff were also present.

In addition, the ambassa-

dors, high commissioners, senior military officers, defence and naval attaches of various countries also witnessed the fleet review.

Prime Minister Shehbaz observed various naval operational manoeuvres and drills conducted during the IFR. The Fleet Review also featured an impressive fly-past by Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force and participating foreign aircraft followed by Man & Cheers by participating ships. The mega exercise culminated with the participating ships forming up in traditional 'AMAN Formation' to signify collective resolve 'Together for Peace'.

The Chief of the Naval Staff thanked the prime minister for attending the culmination ceremony and

assured that Pakistan Navy would continue to play a dynamic role in enhancing regional maritime security individually and in collaboration with partner navies.

The naval chief also highlighted that successful conduct of PIMEC 23 held in tandem with Multinational Exercise Aman-23 was a manifestation of Pakistan Navy's resolve to promote maritime potential of Pakistan. During the exhibition, around 20 MoUs, one joint venture and one sale/purchase agreement of export of iron ore were signed. During the Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN 2023, 50 countries participated with their Naval warships, aircraft, Special Operation Forces and a large number of observers.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnessing Pak Navy's Multinational AMAN Exercise 2023 in the Arabian Sea.

US condemns Israeli settlements but calls Israel iron clad partner

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: In his opening remarks at the US State Department press briefing Ned Price, the spokesperson condemned the recent Israeli settlements in West Bank and called them unilateral steps which could endanger peace in the region.

Ned Price also made it clear that Israel is an iron clad partner of the United States and both the countries share the same values. Ned also made it clear that the security of Israel was one of the top most priority of the US government.

When asked what the US is going to do about it, Ned Price said that regional partners are being taken on board to discourage Israel from these settlements.

Ned Price also elaborated on President Biden's two state theory which recognizes both Palestine and Israeli state. The US along with several European and Middle Eastern countries have strongly condemned the recent escalation and violence by Israeli security forces. When asked about Muslims being mistreated in China and the US only raising this issue when relations are sour between US and China, Ned Price said that the US does not compromise on its values and the treatment meted out to Uighur

Special relief fund for earthquake affectees

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the special instructions of Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan, the provincial government as an important initiative, has established special relief fund to help out the earthquake affectees of Turkiye and Syria.

A dedicated account has been opened in Bank of Khyber to receive donations in this regard. Donations can be deposited in Bank of Khyber Account No. 2008992129. The Chief Minister has made an appeal to the well-off segments of society and the general masses to generously to donate in the aforesaid earthquake relief fund so that the earthquake affectees of Turkiye and Syria could be helped to possible extent.

LHC seeks govt's reply

LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought reply from the federal government again in a petition seeking removal of Raja Riaz as the Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Raja Riaz.

The court summoned reply from the government on Feb 28 in the case. Speaker National Assembly had submitted reply of an earlier notice from the court in the case. "Appointment of the opposition leader is the parliamentary proceeding, which could not be challenged," Speaker had said in a reply to previous notice.



Muslims in China has always been condemned by the US. "We have always condemned these detention centers in China where Muslims are languishing in horrific conditions" Ned Price added. Ned Price also denied having information about China involvement in recent Ohio train accident.

Imran tried to make fool of nation by insisting US conspiracy behind ouster: Maryam

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday criticized former prime minister Imran Khan for making a fool of the nation by telling that he was ousted through a conspiracy backed by the US.

During a presser in Lahore, she said that Imran Khan now backed off from the conspiracy narrative. She reiterated that Pakistan would default if they are not going to secure a pact with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Criticizing Imran Khan's party PTI, she said, "They want to see Pakistan

become Sri Lanka." Maryam slammed Imran Khan for disrupting the journey of nation's progress by his long march, saying that it is the time to unite the nation and move towards peaceful Pakistan.

She added that the nation does not need statements over each other's performance but needs economic stability. PTI government promised to provide one million jobs, but the promise was never fulfilled, said Maryam.

Conspirators against Nawaz Sharif revealing truth now: Maryam Nawaz LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League

Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday said Conspirators against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif revealing truth now.

As per details, Maryam Nawaz said that PM Shehbaz Sharif gave scholarships to students in universities and colleges, PML-N government offered easy loan schemes to the youth of Pakistan but the former PM Imran Khan introduced 'Jail bharo' tehreek and asked them to participate in it. She lambasted the PTI chairman Imran and said that they have no economic plan.

Sindh issues release orders of Ali Wazir

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Home Department has issued orders for release of Ali Wazir MNA from Karachi Central Jail. Provincial home department has ordered the jail authorities to ensure release of Ali Wazir.

Paperwork being completed for release of the imprisoned parliamentarian, and he is expected to be released today. The MNA was arrested in Peshawar on Dec 16, 2020, by the local police at the request of Sindh police in connection with an FIR registered against him and others at Sohrah Goth police station of Karachi.

The MNA from South Waziristan's NA-50 Ali Wazir and 10 other accused were arrested over an anti-state speech in Karachi. The police claimed the law-maker's arrest in three other cases registered by the Karachi police. He is currently being kept at Karachi's Central Prison. Ali Wazir was acquitted by a Karachi anti-terrorism court in the first case and was granted bail in the three other cases. The Peshawar High Court had granted bail to Ali Wazir last month in a seditious case registered against him in Charsadda district. The court had also stopped the police from arresting the lawmaker in other cases.

PTI submits reply in ECP contempt case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including party chief Imran Khan submitted their response to a show-cause notice issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in contempt case.

The ECP had initiated contempt proceedings against Imran as well as party leader Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry for issuing statements against the electoral body and the chief election commissioner.

Governor Punjab seeks legal advice on his consultative role

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman presided over a consultative meeting with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) team to discuss orders of the Lahore High Court (LHC) regarding his consultative role on elections in the province.

The meeting concluded that the consultative role of the Governor Punjab in

announcing election schedule in Punjab by the ECP required legal opinion and the honorable court would be approached after consultation with legal experts.

Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhter Zaman, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman, ECP Secretary Umar Hamid Khan, Principal Secretary to Governor Punjab Barrister Nabil Awan, Special

Secretary to Governor Punjab Umar Saeed, Special Secretary ECP, Muhammad Arshad Khan Director General (Law) ECP, Syed Nadeem Haider Additional Director General ECP, Muhammad Nasir Khan Deputy Director (Coordination) ECP, Abdul Hameed Director and Huda Ali Gauhar Deputy Director ECP attended the consultative meeting.

Imran “super corrupt”, filed false cases against rivals via “pressure tactics”: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that if General (Retd) Bajwa was a "super king", Imran Khan was a "super corrupt" person who filed false cases through threats and pressure tactics against the then-opposition leaders in front of "selected judges".

Addressing a press conference here she said, "Not a single evidence has been presented against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in any court inside and outside the country to prove the allegation of corruption. The then opposition leadership appeared in every court and never made any excuse like Imran Khan, wearing a plaster on the leg." She said that the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) including Nawaz Sharif, and Shehbaz Sharif become victorious and Imran Khan got "exposed every day".

She said the political victimization of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif by Imran Khan damaged the county.

The minister said that "Imran Khan had destroyed the economy, and foreign policy and deprived the youth of employment and

pushed the country into a storm of inflation". She asked the Supreme Court of Pakistan to "summon Imran Khan in the fake narrative of cypher and foreign conspiracy against his government as this was a national and public interest issue at present". She said that during Imran Khan's rule, baseless cases were filed against Shehbaz Sharif. The minister said that Shahzad Akbar the head of the Asset Recovery Unit and his team were hired for filing of false cases against Shehbaz Sharif and Imran's other political opponents.

"Shahzad Akbar was installed illegally only to make false cases against Shehbaz Sharif and other political opponents," the minister said. The minister stated that Shahzad Akbar had no work except press conferences daily. She said he used presentations and graphs to provide so-called proof alleging money laundering against political opponents. She said that false witnesses were also made to justify false cases against PML-N leadership and other political opponents. She said the Lahore Development Authority Chief Engineer Israr Saeed was forced to become a witness against Shehbaz Sharif.

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محکمہ اطلاعات و تعلقات عامہ

فیس اشتہار: ابدعات محترم سرجن جن صاحب جن کیلنگ کلرٹ-1 ٹریڈر بھٹو چٹاوار
فیڈرل روڈ پبلیک پیکس فیز 7 حیات آباد ریسارڈ ریگسٹریٹرم مقام بنوں
مقدمہ نمبر 2023، 11/1 آئیڈر ٹریڈر چٹاوار 15/03/2023
TZBL کرکے رائج۔۔۔ نام۔۔۔ فیض خات
اشیاء نام۔ (1)۔ فیض خات ولد علی محمد کھٹکی کے پڑے ہوئے اصل قدرتی ماربل۔۔۔
مقدمہ نمبر میں ایک آپ کے خلاف ایک پٹے نمبر 4488/18 کے مقدمہ ماربل (Mark Up) تجارت میں ایک مل دیکر
کیا، یہ اندازہ کر دیا کہ فیض خات آپ کے خلاف ایک پٹے نمبر 30 کے درجہ برائے پٹے نمبر (21/10) فیض خات
(دیکری آن لائن) آئیڈر ٹریڈر 2001 پر رجسٹرڈ درخواست اطلاق ہوا جوئی اندازہ مقدمہ ماربل کرکے مل گیا آپ
کے خلاف ایک پٹے نمبر 30 کے درجہ برائے پٹے نمبر 30 کے درجہ برائے پٹے نمبر 30 کے درجہ برائے پٹے نمبر 30 کے
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PHC orders ECP to submit reply for suspending LG bodies

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) divisional bench comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit reply in writ against suspension of Local Government (LG) council in wake of by-polls for National Assembly and general election for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab Assembly, on Tuesday.

The writ petition filed Nowshera tehsil Mayor Ishaq Khattak while Nauman Kakakhel and Malik Shahbaz Advocates argue the case before PHC while ECP along with Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were made respondents in the case.

The petition stated Article 140A (2) of the Constitution cast a duty upon the Election Commission to hold elections of local bodies in terms of Art.140A (1) read

Election Act 2017 and Rules made there under, while the Election process has been cited in the Local Councils (Conduct of Election) Rules 2021 which has been made under section 112 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act 2013, however, no political system is considered complete and democratic if it does not have a system of Local Government.

Election Commission of Pakistan under Article 218(3) of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 has constitutional duty to organize and conduct elections but without paralyzing the rights of the people to representation at local levels. That it has not been a strong and a cogent reason that free and fair election of a provincial assembly could not be held without suspending Local Governments however, by this logic, the Federal Government should also be suspended, as it too can use the powers and resources at

its disposal to influence the outcome of the Provincial Assembly's elections if free and fair Local Government Elections can be held in the presence of provincial governments, why is it not possible the other way around, the petition argued.

The writ added that there no justification for disrupting and paralyzing the elected institutions without clear and specific legal grounds, while the suspension of local governments would have a disruptive effect on the functioning of elected councils, development planning, and the delivery of services while on the other hand people would extremely suffering by the suspension, stopped Local Government Functionaries from signing and attesting necessary documents. That suspension of local governments at this time of the year when the budget is prepared and annual planning for the next year taking place is hugely disruptive, and will affect the function-

ing of local governments not only during the current and next financial years.

Local bodies were established under Article 140-A of the Constitution, so their suspension amounted to suspension of the constitutional provision. It is beyond the mind that in any democracy around the world, elected institutions at one tier were suspended to ensure free and fair elections for the other, the petition added.

The petitioner requested that on acceptance of this Writ Petition the Impugned Notification dated 03-02-2023 issued by the respondents may kindly be set aside. The petitioner may be allowed to put forward any other argument/document at the time of hearing of this writ petition.

The divisional of PHC comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered ECP's lawyer Kamran Sadeeq to submit reply in this regard while adjourned further hearing.



PESHAWAR: Candidates submitting nomination papers with Returning Officer for NA seat at District Election Commissioner office.

ANP announces 4 candidates for by-polls

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party (ANP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced the names of four candidates for by-election on four constituencies of the National Assembly from the province on Tuesday.

According to a press release issued here from ANP's headquarters Bacha Khan Markaz, Dr Mohammad Saleem Khan will contest as party candidate on NA-4 Swat while Nawabzada Shah Nawaz on NA-18 Swabi respectively. Similarly, Mian Wajahat and Noor Alam Khan have been allotted party tickets on NA-25 Nowshera-I and NA-26 Nowshera-II respectively.

Chairman, parliamentary board of the party, Aimal Wali Khan in consultation with board members has formally approved the names of candidates.

PTI workers join JUI-F

PESHAWAR (APP): PTI workers of Mashogagar, Village Council Zagali locality quit their party and announced joining JUI-F, the other day, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

In this connection, a public meeting of JUI-F workers was held with former MNA from NA-29 Peshawar, Nasir Khan Musazai in the chair.

Besides, Haji Sighatullah, ameer of the provincial assembly constituency PK-74, Qaiser Khan and general secretary, Qari Fayyaz, other office bearers of JUI were also present on the occasion.

During the public meeting, Haji Gul Jamal and Haji Daud of PTI quit their party and announced joining JUI-F.

208 vehicles fined

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration in a joint operation with traffic police have imposed penalties on the owners of 208 tinted-glass vehicles, said a press release issued on Tuesday.

The officers of district administration carried out a joint operation along with traffic police against tinted-glass vehicles on G.T. Road and imposed fines on 208 vehicles for using tinted-glasses and illegal number plates on their vehicles.

During the operation, block stickers and fake number plates were also removed from the vehicles.

DC, Shafiullah Khan has directed the officers of district administration for launching crackdown against vehicles with tinted-glasses and fake number plates and showing no leniency to anyone in this regard.

74 nomination papers for by-polls accepted

PESHAWAR (APP): Out of the total of 76 nomination papers filed on by-election on 8 vacant National Assembly constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa scheduled on March 16, 2023, 74 nominations have been accepted, said a spokesman of the Provincial Election Commission (PEC) here on Tuesday.

He said that during scrutiny, the nomination papers of Shaikat Bilal Khan, an aspiring candidate from NA-17 Haripur were rejected due to lack of fil-

ing income tax returns while the nominations of another aspiring candidate Abdul Rasheed from NA-43 Khyber were rejected on the grounds of not completing two years of the post retirement.

Appeals against the acceptance or rejection of nominations could be filed with the concerned Appellate Tribunal till February 16, 2023, which will decide them till February 20, 2023.

The revised list of candidates would be issued on

February 21, 2023 while nomination papers could be withdrawn till February 22, 2023, which would be followed by the issuance of the final list of candidates on February 23, 2023 and election symbols would also be allotted to them.

Polling in these 8 National Assembly constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be held on March 16, 2023. These seats were declared vacant due to the resignations of the PTI legislators.

Completion of construction projects: All problems to be resolved timely: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Communication and Works, M. Ali Shah on Tuesday said that negotiation with federal government in the light of due rights of the province was underway and all the hospitals, jails and darulams would be revamped timely.

He expressed these views while addressing a performance review meeting that was attended by all chief engineers and superintendents of C&W, Peshawar division at Communication Room here.

The minister directed

the meeting was briefed about under construction and completed buildings and roads including Bacha Khan Medical College Mardan, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Children Hospital Mardan, Sports Complex Nowshera, Darul Uloom Haqania Akora Khattak, Children Maternity Hospital Bara Road Peshawar, Judicial Complex Charsadda and construction work on the roads of district Khyber.

officers to settle all the problems hindering completion of under construction projects and point out scarcity of funds so that all the problems would be addressed by concerned forum.

Mohammad Ali Shah said that he would inspect all the ongoing construction projects in different districts and would close projects that were being constructed with substandard material and against principle guidelines of construction.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister Shafiullah Khan visiting Directorate of Provincial Housing Authority.

Al-Khidmat Foundation appeals to collect donations

PESHAWAR (APP): Al-Khidmat Foundation KP President Khalid Waqas on Tuesday directed the district presidents of all districts of the province to speed up the process of collecting donations for the relief of Turkey and Syria earthquake victims.

In a statement issued here, Khaliq Waqas directed to accelerate the series of meetings with philanthropists including the

shop-to-shop campaign for obtaining donations and run a special campaign for at least one week.

He said that Mian Abdul Shakoor, the Central Vice President of Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan, is supervising the self-help activities in Turkey and Syria, while our volunteer teams are also engaged in search and rescue activities in the affected areas.

He said that due to the

increase in cold in the affected areas, the affected people need food as well as tents, blankets, warm clothes and medicines.

He said that the government of Turkey and its people always helped Pakistan in such situations so now the Pakistani nation and Al-Khidmat Foundation will not leave the earthquake victims of Turkey alone and all available resources will be used for their rehabilitation.

Pesco notifies power shutdown notice

PESHAWAR (APP): Pesco authorities have notified power shutdown in various areas of provincial metropolis, Jehangeera, Nowshera and Manshera due to necessary maintenance work.

According to Pesco, power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 15 and 19 February from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, resultantly consumer of 11 KV Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, Commercial-1 & 2, University Town, N.C.R, PAF, PAF Base, Saddar Road, Mall Road, M.E.S-2,

Old M.E.S, Warsak Road-1, Marble Industries, C.A.A, Palosi-1 & 2, ICF-1 & 2, Tehkal Payan, Bank of Khyber, Scarp-1, Warsak Road-2 and Warsak Road Express feeders will face inconvenience. Power

supply will remain suspended from 220 KV Nowshera Grid Station on 15 of February from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, resultantly consumers of 132 KV Cherat Cement Factory feeders will face inconvenience. Power supply will remain suspended from 132 KVAMC Abbottabad Grid

Station on 15, 22 and 27 of February from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KVAPS, Jimnah Abad, Mandian, SIE, Comsats University, Anaar, AMC, PMA-2, Repco, Link, Sherwan and Cantt feeders will face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Mansehra Grid Station on 15, 20, 22 and 23 of February from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Ihsan Shaheed, City-1 & 2, Attar Shesha and Shaheen Shaheed feeders will face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Industrial Aman Ghar Grid Station on 15 and 20 of February from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Mankhi Sharif and Armor Colony feeders will face inconvenience. Power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Jehangira Grid Station on 15 and 20 of February from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Jehangira Town, Attock and Khushal Khan Khattak feeders will face inconvenience.

Himayat appointed CM's Advisor

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on the advice of caretaker Chief Minister, Azam Khan on Tuesday appointed Himayat Ullah Khan as Advisor to the Chief Minister.

A notification to this effect said, Himayat Ullah Khan has been appointed Advisor to the caretaker CM on Finance, Energy and Power with immediate effect.

KPRA holds training

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) organized a capacity building workshop for the officials of government departments and representatives of private entities of Kohat, Karak and Hangu to build the capacity of its withholding agents on Tuesday to promote tax culture and also increase tax compliance in the province.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Mobilization (KPRM) assisted the KPRA in conducting the workshop. The participants were including officials of District Administration Kohat, Karak and Hangu, Accounts Offices, Tehsil Municipal Administrations of the three Districts, and Education Department, Local Government Department, Colleges, Universities, OGDCL, FATA University, KUST, WSSK and Kohat Board.

KPRA Additional Collector South Aftab Ahmad in his welcome remarks thanked the participants for attending the workshop.

He shed light on the history of sales tax on services in the province, importance of taxes for the development of the country and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He assured complete support to the participants. "We need your assistance to ensure tax compliance. We have to work in collaboration to generate revenue for the government to be spent on public uplift schemes and my team will be available for your assistance," he said.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister Muhammad Ali presiding over a meeting. — F.P. photo

WSSP's wastewater treatment system opened

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Local Government Election and Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD) Advocate Sawal Nazir on Tuesday inaugurated the first of its kind in the province Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System (Dewats).

Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) constructed the system with financial and technical assistance from UNICEF here at Wazirbagh park Peshawar. Dewats will treat sewerage water of the surrounding locality that will be used for irrigation of the park.

Secretary LGE&RDD Syed Zaheerul Islam, Chief Executive Officer WSSP Dr Hassan Nasir, UNICEF Country WASH chief Haile Gawsha, UNICEF Chief Field Office Peshawar Abdullahi Muhammad Yusuf, General Manager Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (PMER) Syed Zamirul Hassan and General manager (Ops) Engr Turab Shah were also present on the occasion.

General Manager PMER briefed the minister on the overall aspects, including cost, environmental impacts and benefits of the project for the community. The minister called the project a step in the right direction that would help in conserving clean drinking water and water pollution. He added it would have a

profound impact on the health and well-being of the community.

He said a clean environment and access to potable water was very important for human health, lamenting that lack of wastewater treatment plants in cities was polluting fresh water resources.

"The government and its relevant departments are aware of the problem and several projects are underway to find a lasting solution to save fresh water resources," he said.

He thanked UNICEF for its financial assistance in different areas and said continuous assistance shows the organisation's trust and confidence in the provincial government and its departments.

He said the project was completed before the deadline and hoped the organization would continue funding low-cost projects with immense health and environmental impacts for the society.

Secretary LG Islam also thanked UNICEF for funding such projects in the province that suffered massive losses during militancy.

WSSP's chief executive officer shed light on the importance of the project and said WSSP was not only striving to supply clean drinking water but taking steps to conserve groundwater resources and prevent them from contam-

ination.

"The project is energy-efficient and environment friendly that has been completed in collaboration with locals to inculcate a sense of ownership among them," Dr Nasir said.

He also shared details of other projects completed recently for improvement in water supply system including installation of water testing devices and SCADA system on 46 tube-wells.

Speaking on the occasion, UNICEF's Abdullahi said Dewats was not a big project but very significant for the city. He said completion of the project was a step towards bigger project in treating wastewater and hoped that a time was not far when the city would have so many systems.

The organization has been funding various projects in Water and Sanitation sector with WSSP including replacement of water supply lines, tube-wells automation, installation of water testing devices on tube-wells and reconstruction of sewerage systems.

Cold and dry weather predicted

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

It said that isolated light rain and drizzle with light snowfall over hills is likely to occur over Chitral, Upper Dir and Upper Swat districts.

During the last 24 hours cold and dry weather occurred over most districts of the province, while very cold in upper districts.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 23/05, Chitral 10/01, Timergara 18/04, Dir 16/-04, Mirkhani 13/-01, Kalam 09/-13, Drosh 11/-01, Saidu Sharif 18/-01, Pattan 16/09, Malam Jabba 07/-05.



PESHAWAR: Women buying flower bouquet from a vendor at Sadar Bazaar.



In brief

Motorcycle lifter gang busted F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Police has busted four members of alleged motorcycle-lifter gang and recovered four stolen bikes along with cash from their possession, on Tuesday. According to details, Deputy Superintendent of Police disclosed that the gang comprising of six members while four have been arrested and added that they were allegedly involved in lifting of eight motorcycles from the premises of Saro Shah and Takhtbhai police stations. The alleged culprits were identified as Muhammad Hanzala resident of Jan Khan Kali, Fazal Amin resident of Rorya Jadeed Mardan, Amir resident of Kohat road Peshawar and Israr resident of Uthmanzai area of Charsadda district. Police has recovered four stolen motorcycles along with Rs1 lakh and 10 thousand from their possession.

Nominations approved Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The stage has been set for the by-election on two national assembly seats in Nowshera district, scheduled to be held on March 16th. 20 aspirants have filed nomination papers to contest by-election on NA-25 and NA-26. The Returning Officer has declared all the 20 nomination papers as cleared. The offices of Returning Officer for NA-25, Election Commissioner Nowshera, Tahir Khan and Returning Officer for NA 26 Hassan Raza remained busy the other day for scrutiny of the nomination papers. From NA-25, the nomination papers of Pervaiz Khattak (PTI), Khan Pervaiz (PPP), Mian Wajahat Kakakhel (ANP), Ikhtiar Wali and Malik Fayyaz (PMLN) and Mehmoed Ahmad of Tehrik e Labbaik while from NA-26, the nomination papers of Imran Khattak, Ashfaq Ahmad Khan and Mia Khaliq of PTI, Muhammad Abdullah Khattak and Ghulam Idrees of PPP, Zahid Khan of ANP, Jan Muhammad of PMLN and Aziz ul Haq of Tehrik e Labbaik were accepted. The final candidates will be allotted election symbols on 23RD February. A tough contest was expected on NA 25 between Pervaiz Khattak of PTI, Khan Pervaiz of PPP and Ikhtiar Wali of PMLN while on NA 26 Imran Khattak of PTI, Abdullah Khattak of PPP and Jan Muhammad of PMLN would also have a close contest.

RTPSC aims to ensure good ensure F.P. Report

SWABI: Chief Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC) Muhammad Salim Khan said that delay in delivery of services causing damages to both time and national exchequer, on Tuesday. This he said while addressing awareness seminar on Right to Services at University of Swabi and added that RTPSC is established to ensure delivery of services in stipulated time while reward and punishment should be served to assure perception of responsibility among public servants. During the seminar Pro Vice Chancellor University of Swabi along with faculty member and students especially from erstwhile Fata were present. The participants appreciated RTPSC for ensuring delivery of services which will ultimately result into good governance.



GHALANAI: IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan being briefed about law and order situation during his visit to Police Headquarters in Mohmand District. — F.P. photo

Tribesmen sacrifices for peace hailed

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Corps Commander Peshawar, Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat visited Mohmand District and interacted with tribal elders and notables during Grand Jirga, on Tuesday.

According to details, Chief Secretary and Inspector General Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also accompanying Corps

Commander.

Corps Commander lauded the sacrifices of local tribesmen and said that unparalleled successes against terrorists were only possible because people fought shoulder to shoulder with security forces.

Corps Commander assured that Pakistan Army will provide all possible assistance in ongoing efforts for socio-economic development in the area. Tribal elders thanked Pakistan Army

for restoration of peace and assured their unflinching support to the Security Forces.

On the occasion of his visit to district Mohmand, the Corps Commander also inaugurated the newly constructed DPO office and the water supply scheme in Ghalanai. The residents of the area thanked the Pakistan Army for inaugurating the long-desired clean water project.

DPO reviews security of PTS

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Shafiullah Khan Gandapur visited Police Training School and reviewed security of the facility on Tuesday. Keeping in view the prevailing situation, the DPO checked security arrangements made at the Police Training School. Director Police, Training School, Noor Jamal Khan was also present on the occasion.

He checked security arrangements and particularly, the police jawans deployed at the main entrance of the training school as well as 13 security posts/pickets at the centre.

On this occasion, he also contracted Deputy Commissioner (DC) Swat and Executive Engineer (EXN) Communication & Works (C&W) for further raise in the height of the boundary wall of the centre.

He has further issued standing directives regarding the security of the trainee police personnel. Later, he also distributed commendation certificates among the best performing police personnel.

seized by the police. The driver informed the police, on which the police immediately reached the spot and processed the crime scene. The dead bandits were identified as Ashfaq son of Dara and Imtiaz alias Imtiaz. The dead bandits were wanted by the police in several cases of robbery, robbery and murder. A case was registered in the police station. All the resources are being used to find and nab the fugitive accused. Police are investigating the incident. And action is being taken according to law.

District Police Officer Syed Muhammad Abbas issued instructions to ensure checking of suspicious persons through smart policing. Checking of persons and passengers through Hotel Eye and Travel Eye software is very important. Movement of criminals will be restricted, DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas.

According to details, DPO Bahawalpur Syed Muhammad Abbas issued instructions to all SHO of the district to restrict the movement of criminals and arrest them under the policy

of IG Punjab regarding the arrest of accused, give So far, Bahawalpur police has kept a series of checks through smart policing. To further improve this, DPO tasked all SHOs to activate Travel Eye and Hotel Eye software in all hotels, inns, bus stands. Any passenger who will travel or purchase a ticket must have their Shamakhti card checked and entered into the software.

Suspects should be closely monitored by using modern technology, all the guests coming to the hotels should be checked through the hotel eye system during checking, so that the accused can be arrested by taking action against criminals and court fugitives. SmartEye software has been made a permanent feature of the security process. If a person with a criminal record checks in, the police are informed and appropriate action is taken. Government of Punjab has made it mandatory for hotels to use Hotel i system for entering details of guests and Travel i system for entering details of passengers.

Several file papers for NA-6 and NA-7 in Lower Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) have announced to boycott the upcoming bye election on the NA-6 Lower Dir I and NA-7 Lower Dir II while rest of the political parties and independent candidates filed their nomination papers with the concerned returning officers here on Tuesday. The JI and JUI-F district chiefs termed the bye election on the vacant NA seats as a waste of time and resources. The JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari told local journalists that the government and the ECP should have announced the general elections instead of it. He said the JI had taken a wise decision not to contest this election throughout the country.

The PML-N fielded its district president Malik Farooq Iqbal to contest election on NA-6 while Rohullah Shakir on NA 7. Both the nominees filed their papers. After submitting the nomination papers the PML-N district president Malik Farooq Iqbal and general secretary advocate Javed Tajik told local journalists that they would contest the bye election with utmost spirit and zeal and would not leave the

field open for their opponents. They said the party had fielded its candidates for both the constituencies and would run the door to door election campaign in parts of the district. They said that the party would decide about a seat adjustment or an alliance with other political parties. They said the PML-N was part of the PDM and would follow the directives from the party provincial chief Ameer Muqam in that regard.

The NA-6 Lower Dir I contains the tehsils of Timergara, Khall and Adenzai and two union councils of Balambat tehsil Rabat and Balambat while NA-7 Lower Dir II constituency contains the tehsils of Lal Qila Maidan, Samar Bagh, Munda and Balambat.

The Awami National Party (ANP) fielded its central vice president Hussain Shah Yousafzai in the NA 6 and district president Haji Bahadar Khan in NA 7. The candidates submitted their nomination papers in the office of district election commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Tanoli who is the returning officer (RO) for both the seats. The ANP candidates reached the office in a workers' procession. Talking to the media they said that it was the directives from the party

command to file nominations. They said they would abide by the party as the party had decided to take part in the bye election.

The Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) has fielded its former MNA Syed Mahboob Shah in NA 6 and former MNA Bashir Khan in NA 7. Both the candidates submitted their nomination papers. Talking to local journalists Bashir Khan said the party chief Imran Khan had announced to field the former MNAs on the vacant seats, so they followed the directives and submitted the nominations. He said the party MNAs had resigned from the assembly on the directives of Imran Khan and were taking part in the bye election on his direction.

The Pakistan Peoples' Party has fielded former minister of state Malik Azmat Khan in NA 6 and Hanif Khan in NA 7. Both the candidates submitted the nominations with the RO at Balambat. Talking to the media they said the party had nominated them so they filed the nomination papers. They said the PPP believed in democracy and would never think to destabilize the country. The PPP candidates said they were ready to take part in the bye election to strengthen the country.

KKKU academic council prepare recommendation

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU), Karak held its 24th Academic Council meeting here Tuesday that prepared recommendations for the Syndicate on academic matters of the University.

According to a Press Release of the University, the Vice Chancellor Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Prof. Dr. Johar Ali presided the meeting. The meeting among others was also attended by Registrar Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Muhammad Rashad Khattak, Controller of Examinations Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Dr. Muhammad Zubair, Deputy Registrar Academics Muhammad Rahim, Communication and Media Studies Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Zoology Dr. Abdul Aziz, Lecturers Geology Department Afrasiab & Fakhruul Islam, Director QEC Muhammad Shah Din, Principal GPQC Karak Muhammad Ajmal Khan and

Principal Chokara Joint College for BS Chokara Miss Nazia Hassan.

The Vice Chancellor Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Prof. Dr. Johar Ali felicitated the new member of Academic Council Miss Nazia Hassan on her membership of the council.

The Academic Council disposed of the Final Semester Examinations matters of affiliated colleges to be taken by the University. The Academic Council finalized its recommendations about Board of Studies meetings of Chemistry, Management Sciences, Psychology, Mathematics and Zoology departments for the approval of Syndicate. The Academic Council nominated one member from the principals of affiliated colleges as member of the University Syndicate. The Vice Chancellor Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Professor Dr. Johar Ali has said that we all should put maximum efforts for bringing excellence in academics of the University.



KARAK: Vice Chancellor Khushal Khan University Professor Dr. Jouhar Ali chairing the 24th Academic Council conference. — F.P. photo

Metal detectors — A health risk for the students

Nusrat Bibi

PAKISTAN is facing extremism since 2000 almost but it increased in 2006-2007 specifically in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the security personnel have been the main target of suicide bombing, followed by other minority sects and the office bearers of the ruling class in that time and then. Then the attack on Army Public School in Peshawar in 2016 and in many other schools in Swat and other tribal areas in the province has forced the school administration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and all across Pakistan to adopt strict policies towards the security of the schools staff and the student's community.

Security scanners or metal detectors were installed in offices and in academic institutions to check the passers for any threat of bomb. But unfortunately, these practices are applied on the innocent student's community where its harmful effects on the health of students were ignored either to make their schools safer or to win the confidence of parents to increase their enrolment. Though these machines are used mainly to detect weapons and bombs but cannot stop the suicide bombers from attacks. No one has evaluated yet about the circumstances and the strategies of the suicide attackers, instead the school's own children and staff is uselessly scanned against these things daily in schools.

In Pakistan no Act for its reg-

istration exists to regularize the frequencies of these machines and its safe use on whom and why? No study or research has been conducted so far about its harmful effects on the body of students because our nation always follows the developed countries and our own laws are weaker in policy and in enforcement.

Security scanners in schools are either metal detectors with non-ionizing radiations or millimeter wave machines with radio frequency radiations and both of them exert force to enter the body and take image of the metals in the internal tissues of the body. For this purpose we will need first to study its mode of work and its structure.

Metal detectors through using nonionizing radiations for product inspection use balanced coil and full loop system in which three coils are wrapped around the aperture or channel through which the product being checked passes. The transmitter coil is placed in the center of the enclosure, while two receiver coils are spaced equally distant from the transmitter. The transmitter coils continuously emit magnetic field and the magnetic field is reflected back to the machine if there are any metal object present even a watch or a belt buckle. The return signal is detected by the machine and a beeping noise is produced to alert the operating agents about the possible threat.

While millimeter wave machines use non-ionizing radiofrequency waves to detect threats. These machines bounce the waves off the body and back

to the machine. If there are no weapons or other potential threat during scanning, the screen turns green and shows an OK sign. If an object is detected, it will appear on the screen along with a generic body outline to show the location.

Electromagnetic radiation is the proliferation/explosion of energy which consists of fluctuating electric and magnetic fields and both of these fields can exert a force. An electric field can affect an electric charge (for example, an electron) and a magnetic field can, in turn, affect a moving charge (current).

Non-ionizing radiations in metal detectors has enough intensity to move atoms in a molecule around or cause them to vibrate, but not enough to remove electrons from atoms unlike x-rays which are ionizing radiations but still pose a considerable health risk to potentially exposed persons on extremely low frequency for long time exposure to the source. In general, there are two primary hazards to non-ionizing radiations; tissue heating (thermal effects) and photochemical reactions to the skin and retina of the eye and can cause fetus death and abortions in female. The hazard is dependent on frequency though.

While radiofrequency energy in millimeter wave machines can produce heat in body tissues, resulting in skin burns, internal burns, and damage to organs and sometime damage the tissues depending on the intensity of its frequency especially the eye and reproductive organs in human beings. The eyes and reproduc-

tive organs are particularly vulnerable to heating by RF because blood circulation in these parts of the body is low and heat therefore, is not dissipated easily.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) have documented significant harmful effects from Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) exposure such as genetic damage, reproductive defects, cancer, neurological degeneration and nervous system dysfunction, immune system dysfunction, gene mutations and DNA fragmentation, which can cause cell mutation and cancer.

Children are particularly at greater risk from EMF exposure because a child's body absorbs 60 % more electromagnetic field effects than adults and according to Stewart report the maximum signal strength of cell phones even penetrates an adult's head up to one inch while it passes completely through a child's head completely.

Dr. Martin Pall's research on Electromagnetic Field reveals, its impacts on our bodies are as following: Nervous system and brain; widespread neurological/neuropsychiatric effects like sleep disturbance/insomnia; fatigue/tiredness; headache; depression/depressive symptoms; lack of concentration/attention/cognitive dysfunction; dizziness/vertigo; memory changes; restlessness/tension/anxiety/stress/agitation; irritability.

Endocrine/hormonal systems: The steroid hormone levels drop with EMF exposure, whereas

other hormone levels increase with initial exposure. The neuroendocrine hormones and insulin levels often drop with prolonged EMF exposure.

Oxidative stress and free radical damage: central roles in essentially all chronic diseases, as well as other body effects.

Cellular DNA attacks: These are related to cancer causation and produce the most important mutational changes in humans and diverse animals, as well as in future generations.

Apoptosis (programmed cell death): This can cause both neurodegenerative diseases and infertility.

Fertility Problems: This can lead to lower sex hormones, lower libido and increased levels of spontaneous abortion and, as already stated, attack the DNA in sperm cells.

Produce excessive intracellular calcium [Ca2+]i and excessive calcium signaling.

Cancer: 15 different mechanisms of EMF radiation's effect on the cell can cause cancer. Brain cancer, salivary cancer, acoustic neuromas and two other types of cancer go up with the exposure of electromagnetic radiations and people living near such source of radiations have increased cancer rates.

These effects can cause many symptoms in our bodies, some which can be felt, and some which we might not know about. In addition to the harmful impacts of metal scanners, it also adds financial and social impacts are as following: It has increased the sense of insecurity among the student's community at large and

has snatched their freedom of mind and creative independent thinking. Our schools became more prison like and it will have drastic impacts on the juvenile personality make up, though more research is needed in this regard on students.

Moreover, Metal detectors required regular attention in terms of its maintenance and in operation during scanning. Its cost is higher both in its purchasing as well as in its maintenance and operation. It has increased our dependence on these devices for security. They do not solve the root issue of defense.

Furthermore, Discourage the use of security scanners on the students and staff, rather use pat down methods and enlarge the size of the student's photo on ID card. Strong and supportive leadership is required to combat the possible threats in time.

Positive alternatives must be adopted to stop un necessary checkup of the students and staff members. The Students voice in the school rules must be incorporated. The school should promote the culture of trust and respect. Place the institute transparency and accountability in school safety practices.

Trained the students to avoid strangers and not to take anything from them. Trained the vehicles drivers for entrance and exit and register every single driver with the school and check their vehicles. Give proper parking to the school vehicles and prevent their parking on road near the school premises in morning and pack up time.



German conservatives hail rare ‘big city’ win in Berlin

BERLIN (AP): Germany's main opposition party celebrated its victory in a Berlin state election re-run made necessary by serious voting glitches in 2021, arguing that the result shows the party can appeal to voters in urban areas with center-right policies that include tough talk on immigration.

The Christian Democratic Union of former Chancellor Angela Merkel has struggled for years with declining support in major cities and last governed the capital in 2001. The party came first with 28.2% of the vote, gaining 10 percentage points as the three parties that made up the leftist regional government all lost supporters. "This re-election result shows that the CDU can win in big German cities," the party's main candidate, Kai Wegner, told reporters.

He planned to hold talks with the center-left Social Democrats and the environmentalist Greens about swiftly forming a new coalition government. Both of those parties received 18.4% of the vote, a particularly grim result for the Social Democrats of Mayor Franziska Giffey, who took much of the blame after the chaotic election failures two years ago. During the election campaign conservatives also attacked her government as being soft on crime following an outburst of violence against first responders during New Year's Eve celebrations.

The Christian Democrats' national leader, Friedrich Merz, claimed the



attacks were the result of a "little Pasha" mentality among youths in some immigrant communities, prompting accusations of racism from the left. Wegner was unapologetic, saying that "we need to name problems in order to solve them together."

But he insisted that his goal now was "to form a successful Berlin coalition that brings this city together again" and tackles some of its many problems, from lack of affordable housing to run-down schools and slow bureaucracy. Doing so successfully could boost the conservatives' chances at the national level, where the CDU came a narrow second behind the Social Democrats in 2021. The Green party's leader in Berlin,

Bettina Jarasch, said she was willing to discuss a coalition with the CDU but made clear her preference for continuing the existing three-party government with the Social Democrats and the ex-communist Left despite their diminished majority.

The Greens, whose strongholds are in Berlin's inner districts, have repeatedly clashed with conservatives on the issue of restricting car access to the city center. Wegner, 50, made clear that he would oppose efforts seen in other cities, such as Paris, London and New York, to promote cycling, walking and public transport at the expense of motorists. "With me there won't be any one-sided politics against cars," he said.

President Kais's critics arrested in crackdown

TUNIS (BBC): Police in Tunisia have detained the head of an independent radio station on the third day of a wave of arrests of opposition politicians and activists. Officers raided the house of Nouredine Boutar of Mosaïque FM, which has criticised President Kais Saied. Numerous public figures - including an opposition politician, a prominent businessman, two judges and a former diplomat - have been held.

Mr Saied says he wants to save the north African nation from chaos. The country's biggest opposition party Ennahda has described the detentions as the "kidnapping of Saied's opponents". Many Tunisians who supported Mr Saied when he came to power in 2019 have recently turned against the president. In 2021, Mr Saied sacked the prime minister, suspended parliament and pushed through a constitution enshrining his one-man rule.

The new constitution replaced one drafted soon after the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, which saw Tunisia overthrow late dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. It gives the head of state full executive control and supreme command of the army. Last month, thousands of protesters rallied in the capital Tunis, demanding the resignation of Mr Saied's government.

Assad urges UN for help rebuilding after quake

DAMASCUS (AFP): Syrian President Bashar al-Assad called for international aid for reconstruction in the quake-struck country during a meeting with United Nations relief chief Martin Griffiths, the presidency said. After more than a decade of war, Assad's government remains a pariah in the West, complicating international efforts to assist those affected by the quake.

Assad "stressed the importance of international efforts focused on helping to rebuild infrastructure in Syria," the statement said. More than 35,000 people were killed in Syria and Turkey after the tremor struck both nations on February 6, including more than 3,500 in Syria, officials and rescuers said. Damascus often blames its financial woes on Western sanctions imposed in the wake of the 2011 conflict, that began with the brutal repression of peaceful protests and escalated to pull in foreign powers and global jihadists. Despite the sanctions, government-controlled parts of the country receive international aid through UN agencies, many of which have headquarters in Damascus.

Griffiths also met with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad in Damascus after visiting government-controlled Aleppo, where more than 200,000 people have been left homeless by the earthquake, according to the World Health Organization. He told reporters in Aleppo that the UN was looking to raise money for the organisations helping Syrians cope with the disaster. "The appeals that will go out in the next day or so -- one for Syria, one for Turkey -- will cover about three months of the humanitarian needs," he said.

Aid has been slow to arrive in Syria, where nearly 12 years of conflict have ravaged the healthcare system, and parts of the country remain under the control of rebels battling Assad's government. Griffiths admitted that the UN had "so far failed the people in northwest Syria". Before the earthquake struck, almost all of the humanitarian aid for the more than four million people living in rebel-controlled areas of northwestern Syria was being delivered from Turkey through the Bab al-Hawa crossing. Aid delivery through Bab al-Hawa was interrupted by the quake but has since resumed, and calls to open other crossings are multiplying.

The head of the World Health Organization also met Assad and said that he had voiced openness to more border crossings for aid to be brought to quake victims in the country's rebel-held northwest.

US renews warning it'll defend Philippines after China spat

MANILA (AP): The United States renewed a warning that it would defend its treaty ally if Filipino forces come under attack in the disputed South China Sea, after a Chinese coast guard ship allegedly hit a Philippine patrol vessel with military-grade laser that briefly blinded some of its crew.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila sent a strongly worded diplomatic protest to the Chinese Embassy Tuesday that "condemned the shadowing, harassment, dangerous maneuvers, directing of military-grade laser, and illegal radio challenges" by the Chinese ship. The incident took place Feb. 6, when the Chinese coast guard ship beamed high-grade lasers to block the Philippine patrol vessel BRP Malapascua from approaching Second Thomas Shoal on a resupply mission to Filipino forces there, according to Philippine officials.

China claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety, putting it on a collision course with other claimants. Chinese naval forces have been accused of using military-grade lasers previously against Australian military aircraft on patrol in the South China Sea and other spots in the Pacific. Despite friendly overtures to Beijing by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his successor, Ferdinand

Marcos Jr., who met Chinese leader Xi Jinping in January in Beijing, tensions have persisted, drawing in closer military alliance between the Philippines and the US. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that a Philippine coast guard vessel trespassed into Chinese waters without permission. Chinese coast guard vessels responded "professionally and with restraint at the site in accordance with China's law and international law," he said, without elaborating or mentioning the use of laser.

US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said China's "dangerous operational behavior directly threatens regional peace and stability, infringes upon freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as guaranteed under international law and undermines the rules-based international order." "The United States stands with our Philippine allies," Price said in a statement. He said that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft, including those of the coast guard in the South China Sea, would invoke US mutual defense commitments under a 1951 treaty. The treaty obligates the allies to help defend one another in case of an external attack.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and

Brunei also have overlapping claims in the resource-rich and busy waterway, where a bulk of the world's commerce and oil transits. Washington lays no claims to the disputed sea but has deployed forces to patrol the waters to promote freedom of navigation and overflight - moves that have angered Beijing, which has warned Washington to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute. The contested waters have become a volatile front in the broader rivalry between the US and China in Asia and beyond.

Price said the Chinese coast guard's "provocative and unsafe" conduct interfered with the Philippines' "lawful operations" in and around Second Thomas Shoal. In July, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on China to comply with a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated Beijing's vast territorial claims in the South China Sea and warned that Washington was obligated to defend the Philippines under the Mutual Defense Treaty. Price reiterated that the "legally binding decision" underscored that China "has no lawful maritime claims to the Second Thomas Shoal." China has long rejected the ruling and continues to defy it. The Philippines filed nearly 200 diplomatic protests against China's aggressive actions in the disputed waters in 2022 alone.

UK presents evidence against Iran

LONDON (AP): Britain says it has for the first time presented evidence that Iran is supplying advanced weapons to the Houthi rebels in Yemen, after finding images of tests conducted at the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards in Tehran on the hard drive of an unmanned aircraft seized by the Royal Navy.

Personnel from the British ship HMS Montrose seized the unmanned quadcopter along with a shipment of missiles and missile parts in February last year when they stopped and searched a number of fast-moving skiffs in the Gulf of Oman. The weapons and other evidence were presented to the United Nations as linking Iran to violations of Security Council resolutions barring weapons shipments to the Houthis, Britain's Ministry of Defense said in London. "This is the first time we have been able to present evidence to the UN that indicates a direct link between the Iranian state and the supply of these weapons," a ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with departmental policy.

The UN has prohibited weapons transfers to the Houthis since 2014, when the rebels descended from their northern stronghold, toppled the internationally recognized government of Yemen and seized the capital, Sanaa. Iran has long denied arming the rebels. The commercial quadcopter seized by the Royal Navy is designed for reconnaissance flights, the ministry said.

Investigators were able to decrypt the data on the aircraft's internal memory, which hadn't been wiped. That's where they discovered the records of 22 test flights conducted at the Revolutionary Guards' aerospace headquarters in western Tehran, the ministry said. The drone was in the same shipment as a number of surface-to-air missiles and components for Iranian Project 351 land attack cruise missiles.

The discovery adds to a growing body of evidence of Iranian interference in the conflict in Yemen, which has spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Western nations, UN experts and others have traced Houthi weaponry ranging from night-vision scopes, rifles and missiles back to Tehran.

Most recently, French naval forces in the Gulf of Oman in January seized thousands of assault rifles, machine guns and anti-tank missiles coming from Iran and heading to the Houthis. In November, the US Navy announced that it had found 70 tons of a missile fuel component hidden among bags of fertilizer aboard a ship sailing to Yemen from Iran. "Once again the Iranian regime has been exposed for its reckless proliferation of weapons and destabilizing activity in the region," said Tariq Ahmad, Britain's minister of state for the Middle East. "Iran's sustained military support to the Houthis and continued violation of the arms embargo has stoked further conflict and undermined UN-led peace efforts."

cial said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with departmental policy.

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The discovery adds to a growing body of evidence of Iranian interference in

UN says Syria agrees to open two new crossings for quake aid

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Syria's president agreed to open two new crossing points from Turkey to the country's rebel-held northwest to deliver desperately needed aid and equipment to help millions of earthquake victims, the United Nations announced. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the agreement by Syrian leader Bashar Assad to open crossing points at Bab Al-Salam and Al Ra'ee for an initial period of three months. Currently, the UN has only been allowed to deliver aid to the northwest Idlib area through a single crossing at Bab Al-Hawa, at Syrian ally Russia's insistence.

The announcement followed a meeting in Damascus between Assad and UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths, who spent the weekend viewing the devastation caused by the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that ravaged southern Turkey and northwestern Syria. Guterres' official announcement came during a closed meeting of the UN Security Council where diplomats said Griffiths announced Assad's agreement to open the two new crossings during a virtual briefing. Syria's UN ambassador, Bassam Sabbagh, told reporters while the meeting was taking place that Assad held a "positive and constructive meeting" with Griffiths and "confirmed the need for urgent aid to enter all regions in Syria, including those under occupation and under control of the armed terrorist groups."

"Based on that, Syria supports the entry of humanitarian aid into the region through all possible cross points whatever - from inside Syria, or across the borders - for the period of three months to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to our people in ... northwestern Syria," Sabbagh said. Brazil and Switzerland, which oversee Syria cross-border issues in the council, asked for "quick implementation" of the agreement to open the two new crossings. "We certainly hope Assad is serious about this," US State Department spokesman Ned Price said. It would be "a good thing for the Syrian people," he said, noting the Syrian regime's previous opposition to additional humanitarian crossings.

The United Nations has been under intense pressure to get more aid and heavy equipment into Syria's rebel-held northwest since the earthquake struck a week ago, with survivors lacking the means to dig for other survivors and the death toll mounting. The toll in the northwestern rebel-held region has reached 2,166, according to the rescue group the White Helmets, while 1,414 people have died in government-held areas, according to the Syrian Health Ministry in Damascus. The overall death toll in Syria stands at 3,580. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric cited difficulties of operating during Syria's 12-year war.

To criticism that the UN hadn't responded quickly

enough to the quake, he said some aid is getting into the northwest, pointing to 58 trucks that arrived with aid through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing. But he stressed that the United Nations doesn't have heavy equipment or search and rescue teams, "so the international community as a whole needs to step up to get that aid where it is needed." Guterres said in a statement that with the rising death toll "delivering food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, winter supplies and other life-saving supplies to all the millions of people affected is of the utmost urgency."

"Opening these crossing points - along with facilitating humanitarian access, accelerating visa approvals and easing travel between hubs - will allow more aid to go in, faster," the UN chief said. In 2014, the Security Council authorized four border crossings to deliver aid to northwest Syria - two from Turkey, one from Jordan and one from Iraq. In January 2020, Syria's close ally Russia used its veto threat to reduce the number of crossing to the two from Turkey. The following July, China and Russia used their veto power to reduce the number to just a single crossing. France's UN ambassador, Nicolas De Riviere, told reporters before council meeting that the earthquake is "a humanitarian tragedy that should not be politicized."

He said there were two options - either the Syrian government grant additional

access to the northwest or the Security Council would try to adopt a resolution authorizing additional crossing points to the region. Syria's Sabbagh said no council resolution was needed, telling reporters that "it's a decision made by our leadership, and it's an agreement between Syria and the United Nations." De Riviere told reporters after the meeting that UN humanitarian officials said they were ready to send convoys through the three crossings.

If the two new crossings work it will be fine, he said, but "if it doesn't work I think the Security Council should get back to work" and look into a resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter that would be enforceable militarily to ensure aid gets through to the northwest. Asked why it took a week to get this agreement, when time to get to victims is critical, Sabbagh retorted: "Why are you asking me? We are not the ones controlling these borders." He reiterated that Syria said from day one that it was ready to assist humanitarian workers to reach all Syrians "without any discrimination." Dujarric, the UN spokesman, told reporters that the UN has been trying to send a convoy to the northwest across conflict lines within Syria, but is still trying to get a green light from all parties. The convoy reportedly was blocked by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a rebel group with ties to al-Qaida that controls part of the northwest.

Rumors swirl about balloons, UFOs as officials stay mum

WASHINGTON (AP): Maybe they came from China. Maybe from somewhere farther away. A lot farther away. The downing of four aerial devices by US warplanes has touched off rampant misinformation about the objects, their origin and their purpose, showing how complicated world events and a lack of information can quickly create the perfect conditions for unchecked conjecture and misinformation.

The presence of mysterious objects high in the sky doesn't help. "There will be an investigation and we will learn more, but until then this story has created a playground for people interested in speculating or stirring the pot for their own reasons," said Jim Ludes, a former national defense analyst who now leads the Pell Center for International Relations at Salve Regina University. "In part," Ludes added, "because it feeds into so many narratives about government secrecy."

President Joe Biden and other top Washington officials have said little about the repeated shootdowns, which began with a suspected Chinese spy balloon earlier this month. Three more unidentified devices have

been shot down, with the latest over Lake Huron. Pentagon officials said they posed no security threats but have not disclosed their origins or purpose. Many social media sites in the US lit up with theories that Biden had deployed the aerial devices as a way to distract Americans from other, more pressing issues. Those concerns included immigration, inflation, the war in Ukraine and Republican investigations into Hunter Biden, the president's son. While the concentration of claims was highest on fringe sites popular with far-right Americans, the unfounded rumors and conspiracy theories popped up on bigger platforms like Twitter and Facebook, too.

One of the most popular theories suggested the White House and Pentagon are using the airborne devices to divert attention from a chemical spill earlier this month in Ohio. That incident, caused by a train derailment, occurred several days before the most recent devices were shot down, and was covered extensively. Nonetheless, it remained the top subject searched on Google, showing continued public interest in the story. Some com-

menters said Biden's decision to wait until the balloon had reached the East Coast before shooting it down showed he was in league with China. Others, meanwhile, chastised Biden for shooting down foreign aircraft that they imagined could be carrying bioweapons or nuclear weapons.

Misleading claims about the airborne devices have also prompted violent threats, according to an analysis by the SITE Intelligence Group, a firm that tracks extremist rhetoric online. After the White House said earlier surveillance flights went undetected during Donald Trump's presidency, an article circulated on far-right sites urging the execution of any Trump administration officials who may have withheld the information. Trump administration officials have said they knew of no such surveillance craft. Alongside the political conspiracy theories were suggestions that the aerial objects were extraterrestrial in origin. Photos of alleged UFOs were shared online and web searches for the term "UFO" soared around the world, according to Google

Trends. "Don't worry, just some of my friends of mine stopping by," Elon Musk, the CEO of Twitter, Tesla and SpaceX, joked in a tweet. Humor aside, while the details of the different claims vary, they have two things in common: a lack of evidence and a strong distrust of America's elected leaders.

"Maybe Joe built the balloon & had Hunter launch it to scare we the people!" wrote one Facebook user. "How do WE know??? We don't!" The federal government must balance the public's desire to know the details with the need for secrecy regarding national security and defense, Ludes said. That's not likely to satisfy Biden's critics, Ludes said, or prevent misleading explanations from going viral. High-profile news stories and events often precede a spike in false and misleading claims as people turn to the internet for explanations. Conspiracy theories about Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin spread quickly after his dramatic on-field collapse in January. Something similar happened last year when the Nord Stream pipelines in the North Sea were damaged.

Myanmar's military rulers to let 'loyal' citizens carry guns

BANGKOK (AP): Myanmar's military government plans to allow people who are "loyal to the nation," including government employees and retired military personnel, to carry licensed firearms, but they must comply with orders from local authorities to participate in security and law enforcement actions, the military and media reports said.

The announcement fanned fears of even more violence in a country wracked by what some United Nations experts have called a civil war. The military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi two years ago, triggering widespread peaceful protests that turned into armed resistance after security forces used lethal force to suppress all opposition. A 15-page document about the new gun policy attributed to the Ministry of Home Affairs was initially circulated on pro-military Facebook accounts and Telegram channels. It was also published by pro-military and independent news outlets, which stated that it had been issued on Jan. 31 after being approved in December at a Cabinet meeting.

The new policy would allow people over the age of 18 to be licensed to carry several types of guns and ammunition. The document says recipients of gun permits must be "loyal to the nation, of good moral character" and not involved in disturbing state security. It also says license holders must comply when instructed by local authorities to participate in security and law enforcement actions. The military's spokesperson, Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, confirmed the policy to the BBC Burmese-language service, saying it needed to be issued because some people were asking to carry weapons to protect against attacks by anti-military groups. Two pro-military online news media quoted Police Brig.-Gen Kyaw Lin, spokesperson for the Ministry of Home Affairs, as saying that the policy revives and modifies one introduced in 1977 by the government of the late dictator Gen. Ne Win. After a massive but unsuccessful popular pro-democracy uprising in 1988, the military revoked gun licenses for civilians and ordered people to turn in all firearms.

The decision to license

guns is widely seen as a way for the military government to arm its supporters to help state security forces battle pro-democracy opponents. Criminal activity has reportedly increased due to the chaos caused by the fighting and the government's focus on battling its political opponents. Most violence, however, involves fighting between the army and guerrillas belonging to the pro-democracy People's Defense Force, the loosely organized armed wing of the main opposition group, the National Unity Government, and their allies in ethnic minority militias. The NUG was established by elected lawmakers who were prevented from taking their seats when the army seized power and serves as an underground parallel national administration.

Nan Lin, a co-founder of the University Students' Unions Alumni Force, a nonviolent pro-democracy activist group, said the military is taking the action because it is under great political and military pressure. "The military still can't see the situation correctly. I think they are trying to create more conflict and break down society," Nan Lin said.

The Frontier Post

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Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.

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Combative politics and national unity

THE Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has recently booked former Finance Minister and PTI leader Shaukat Tarin in a sedition case under the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) after completing investigations into an alleged audio leak. Last year, an audio tape was leaked in which a voice believed to be that of Tarin was advising the Finance Ministers of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to scupper the IMF deal by refusing to generate extra funds, required by the country's loan deal with the global lender.

Pakistan's political landscapes over the past year and the series of recent events and arrests of politicians from opposition parties had refreshed the memories of Pakistani traditional politics of the 90s. There had been a politics of agitation and clash after the ouster of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, however, it was two-way traffic from the coalition government in the center and the two federating units ruled by the opposition. After the dissolution of the Punjab and KP assemblies, the inter-party tussle heightened because of the opposition campaign for an early general election and the treasury's efforts to delay the provincial polls for this time. Presently, PTI Chairman and opposition's strong candidate for the top slot has announced a Jail Bharo Tahreek in the coming weeks while the government vowed to deal with the opponents in the same coin.

Realistically, Pakistan fell prey to the egoistic policies and selfish politics of its leaders, whereas the nation faced multiple setbacks throughout history and each aspect of our national life witnessed division and degradation over the past seven and a half decades. Currently, Pakistan confronts multiple challenges including a renewed upsurge in terrorism, price hikes, and economic depletion along with continued political unrest and disagreement between the parties that not only divided the entire nation but also worsened the financial crisis. In fact, Pakistan needs no other enemy if our leaders sew seeds of hate, and division among the masses and augment rivalry among the federating units of the country.

Unfortunately, the legacy of using national issues and governance as a tool of politics has always undermined the national growth and foreign policy interest of the nation, similarly, squashing space for criticism and civil liberties including the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly cause frustration and wider agitation in the society. The allegations against the former Finance Minister might be true, however, his arrest and prosecution would further inflame the ongoing tussle between the warring political factions. Apparently, numerous laws can be used for the coercion of opponents but such actions ultimately reduce the scope for negotiation and national unity.

Although the current political trend sufficiently fulfills the needs of the Political elite, it does not comprehend the urgent demands of the country, which is currently under attack by terrorists and faces an imminent risk of economic collapse. The government forgot its agenda for the APC and national consensus in its early stage, as the rulers undertook another adventure through a ramp-up campaign against the opponents. Today's Pakistan needs national unity, Political Stability, and economic stability which could not be realized without a charter of democracy between all stakeholders. As early as our leaders will realize this fact, all political and economic glitches would ease up accordingly.

Apocalyptic quake exploited for cheap propaganda

ONLY someone responsible for the killing and displacement of millions of his own citizens would see an earthquake that has claimed tens-of-thousands of lives as an opportunity for a public-relations blitz. After years hiding away in his palaces, Assad has been out visiting Latakia and Aleppo. Syrian diplomats are meanwhile insisting that all aid be diverted via Damascus.

Yet we have witnessed this scam repeatedly; with aid channeled to pro-regime demographics, while pro-opposition populations are starved and bombed into submission. The regime's first action after the earthquake was to bomb the stricken region of Marea - as if to ensure there were no survivors. Assad officials say that they will block any aid going to "terrorist groups" - the language the regime habitually uses for those in rebel-held areas. There are already anecdotal reports of aid being stolen and resold by this criminal regime.

Lebanese clients of Syria and Iran have meanwhile been staging pilgrimages to Damascus in support of efforts to normalize Assad. How was Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib allowed to embark on a disgraceful visit to Damascus when what was required was a show of solidarity with the victims? Statements from Hezbollah - which controls substantial areas of Syrian ter-

ritory - also exploited the quake to condemn "hypocrisy" for the world's principled refusal to engage with the blood-soaked Assad regime. "It would be quite ironic, if not even counterproductive, for us to reach out to a government that has brutalized its people . . . gassing them, slaughtering them, being responsible for much of

for help, with both sides exploiting the quake for propaganda. There are meanwhile concerns that Iran will capitalize on the US temporary alleviation of sanctions to use aid convoys for transporting arms and other contraband goods. In a related context, I

bend to their will), allowing Lebanon to advance toward an IMF deal.

However, they also sketched out a scenario without consensus on a president or a government, in which the country descended into anarchy. They noted that with the

They expressed hope for a scenario where Hezbollah had no option but to sign onto a consensus candidate (who in any case the group would seek to bend to their will), allowing Lebanon to advance toward an IMF deal. However, they also sketched out a scenario without consensus on a president or a government, in which the country descended into anarchy. They noted that with the cessation of nuclear negotiations, it could be a matter of time before Netanyahu took military action to neutralize Iran's nuclear program.

the suffering that they have endured," a US State Department spokesperson said - and for once, I find myself agreeing with US diplomats.

While aid is belatedly entering northern Syria via the single, badly damaged Bab Al-Hawa crossing route, Russia and China have repeatedly vetoed opening other crossings. With so many Syrian refugees having previously fled to quake-epicenter areas of southern Türkiye, we now see lorryloads of body-bags returning toward Syria, repatriating these poor souls. Assad has denied Netanyahu's claim that Damascus asked Israel

had a conversation last week with several senior European Middle East diplomats who sketched out various scenarios for electing a Lebanese president and containing Iran. They noted that Hezbollah was coming under increasing pressure as its grassroots support weakened, the broader population became awakened to the threats it poses, and the group's alliance with the FPM's Michel Aoun and Gibran Bassil became ever-more fragile. They expressed hope for a scenario where Hezbollah had no option but to sign onto a consensus candidate (who in any case the group would seek to

cessation of nuclear negotiations, it could be a matter of time before Netanyahu took military action to neutralize Iran's nuclear program. Hezbollah may not be in a position to refuse embarking on a war with Israel at Tehran's behest, which would quickly become regionalized and highly destructive. While many Lebanese Shiites still see Hezbollah as their nominal representative, they don't buy into the hard-line anti-national elements of its agenda. They are also sick of poverty and the degradation of the country's situation, and they experienced more than enough of the 2006 conflict to embrace

Hezbollah's readiness to take on the "Zionist enemy" again.

People who regularly engage with Lebanese leadership figures remark on their complete disregard for the suffering of ordinary Lebanese and their reluctance to be drawn into conversations on such themes, while obsessing over regional rivalries and forcibly repatriating Syrian refugees. The earthquake, the 2020 port explosion, IMF negotiations and the presidential standoff consequently become negotiating cards to exploit in a broader jostling for position. Decisions currently being taken, or indefinitely postponed, impact the lives of millions and will ultimately influence whether or not the region teeters into renewed conflict. My Western interlocutors noted that the increased animosity toward Tehran was ironically more due to its arming of Moscow, rather than its continuing crimes in the region. They also noted that increased vigilance along national borders had reined in Hezbollah and Assad's ambitions of fulfilling their coffers by dominating the narcotics trade, particularly with little prospect of their Iranian benefactors reaping windfalls from sanctions relief following a nuclear deal. After months of protests, this is a period of exceptional weakness for Iran, and hence also its proxies.

Hezbollah's tanking of the economy means that within Lebanon itself there

is "nothing left to steal," hence Hassan Nasrallah's uncanny flexibility on lucrative issues of borders and gas exploitation, as he perceives the opportunity for profit. Assad will never be fully rehabilitated: His tenuous grip on a portion of Syria is only thanks to a fateful alliance with Iran, Russia and Hezbollah. The families of millions of people whose lives he destroyed will never forget. In the context of growing global animosity toward Moscow and Tehran, as Iran-made drones are used in new onslaughts against Ukraine, Assad is likely to remain permanently frozen out from the international community.

The earthquake temporarily returns Syria to the top of the global agenda, while serving as a reminder of Assad's fundamental inhumanity. He and his Lebanese and Iranian allies can spin for all they are worth, but the passing of time does not render Assad any less of a war criminal. Syrians impacted by the earthquake are no less deserving of global support than the tragic victims in Türkiye. It is not their fault that the world abandoned this conflict and left Syria frozen as a handful of dysfunctional cantons. The onus therefore lies heavily on the international community to atone for its accumulated failings of the Syrian people, and move heaven and earth to heed their cries in their latest hour of need.

Arab News

Why was northwest Syria abandoned?

ON February 6, yet another catastrophe hit northwest Syria. The series of earthquakes with an epicentre in southern Turkey devastated the region, home to four million Syrians, displaced and traumatised by a decade of war. Thousands of buildings collapsed, burying thousands of people. The White Helmets, a local rescue organisation, along with local volunteers and family members, started digging through the rubble immediately, often with their bare hands, to try to get to the survivors.

They pleaded to the world for help, asking for heavy machinery, rescue teams, and equipment to help them save as many lives as possible during the crucial 72-hour window following the earthquake. But the cries of the trapped slowly died down in the harsh cold winter nights, as no assistance arrived.

In the first three days, at least two dozen shipments of disaster relief aid were sent to the Syrian regime in Damascus. None reached areas under the opposition control in northwest Syria. The only rescue teams that

crossed into the Idlib area were a small group of volunteers from Egypt and a team from Spain. A prescheduled United Nations convoy carrying not emergency aid, not heavy equipment or disaster relief, but blankets and basic supplies, came on the fourth day. The pleas of White Helmets and other Syrians desperate to save the lives of their loved ones echoed around the world without response, unheard and unheeded.

Why? Why were Syrians trapped in opposition-controlled areas abandoned like this at a time of great need, at a time when the world came together in solidarity with victims of this disaster in Turkey and regime-controlled Syria; when rescue crews and disaster relief was dispatched in a matter of hours from places as distant as Venezuela, Canada, and Iceland? Why were these people, already displaced and brutalised for almost 12 years, suffering in unlivable conditions even before the earthquake struck, left to their terrible fate with little more than promises of help that never arrived?

The explanation you are

likely to hear from the United Nations is that there were "logistical issues" and damage inflicted by the earthquake on the infrastructure at Bab al-Hawa, the only border crossing used for aid delivery. And the reason why there is only one border crossing serving the humanitarian needs of more than four million people is Russian blackmail at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). For years now, Moscow has de-authorised all other border crossings for humanitarian aid deliveries through the UN at the threat of vetoing them altogether.

There are several border crossings between Turkey and Syria that are close to the areas affected by the earthquake and that are already used to bring in humanitarian aid by state and non-state actors. Saudi Arabia, for example, sent a humanitarian convoy through Al-Hamam crossing near Jindires, while the Kurdistan Region of Iraq used Bab al-Salama crossing to send its aid to Afrin. Can the UN use these crossings? Yes, it can. Syrian organisations, such

Refik Hodzic

as the Syrian Association for Citizens' Dignity (SACD), the Free Syrian Lawyers Association and others, have been vocal for more than two years about the legal basis that allows for the delivery of aid to Idlib without UNSC approval. Their position is based on international law and has been adopted by Amnesty International and a number of international legal experts.

Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has called for opening all border crossings to aid, while former US envoy to Syria Joel Rayburn has argued that a new US-Turkey-European Union mechanism should be created to deliver aid directly to the region without the redundant UNSC approval. The UN has not acted. Why? As the SACD has pointed out, the UNSC decision has been used as a "smokescreen" to cover up the real reason why emergency aid is not reaching northwest Syria: "It is about the brutality of the Syrian regime and its allies. It is about appeasement."

Steven Heydemann, a

senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy, has explained further: "UN humanitarian operations on the ground in regime-held areas - which receive 90% of assistance flowing to Syria - remain cowed by the regime into complying with its heavy-handed insistence that it serve as the sole recipient and distributor of assistance coming into the country - a cynical gesture to force donors to acknowledge its sovereignty, while giving one of the most corrupt regimes in the world, with a track record of abuse and theft of humanitarian aid and a refusal to deliver aid across conflict lines into northern Syria, control over critical humanitarian resources." In other words, the UN allows the Syrian regime to weaponise aid for its benefit instead of acting in accordance with its mandate to protect Syrian civilians. And this is where we come to the real reasons for the failure to deliver life-saving emergency aid to Syrians in Idlib: the normalisation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's brutality and the dehumanisation of Syrians.

For years I have witnessed first hand how displaced Syrians in Europe, Lebanon, Turkey, and especially in northwest Syria have been dehumanised. The four million people living there have been written off by a large majority of the world in line with the Syrian regime and Russia's narrative that the region is a hotbed of "Islamic fanatics" and "terrorists". Children who die in Idlib province under regime bombardment or from the cold or lack of medical care do not make headlines. They are not even footnotes anymore. Their stories no longer seem to count.

This is why the calls of Syrian organisations to accept the alternative legal basis for aid delivery to northwest Syria have been ignored by the UN and key powers. This is why the pleas of the White Helmets and Syrian activists for heavy equipment and rescue assistance have fallen on deaf ears. This is why the cries for help from under the rubble across northwest Syria - in Jindires, Idlib, Azmarin and Harem - were not answered.

Aljazeera

International law and accountability lacking when it comes to Israel

A hundred days after the Nov. 1 election in Israel that led to the formation of the most far-right extremist coalition in the country's history, it would be hard to impossible to detect the faintest alteration in the international community's approach to Israel. It leaves many pondering just how extreme, how bigoted, how racist and supremacist an Israeli government would have to be to elicit a change.

To recap for those who have not been following, this coalition contains senior ministers with a history of violence. The likes of Itamar Ben-Gvir, the national security minister, was convicted in Israel of supporting a terrorist organization. Added to this propensity for violence and promoting violence against "Arabs" (they do not typically accept the existence of the Palestinians) is a range of racist quotes against Arabs and support for the transfer or expulsion of Arabs. A major party in this Netanyahu led-coalition is called Jewish Power. Its policies are explicitly Jewish supremacist.

Plenty of Israeli politicians have historically made anti-Arab racist comments and have pushed for transfer. It just seems this latest batch is itching to do

so. Even if there is an unwillingness to call out this Israeli bevy of reproaches, an understanding is clear that the risks of a third intifada and major bloodshed are high. CIA Director William Burns said: "I was a senior US diplomat 20 years ago during the second intifada, and I'm concerned - as are my colleagues in the intelligence community - that a lot of what we're seeing today has a very unhappy resemblance to some of those realities that we saw then too."

The rate of Israeli killings of Palestinians has been averaging more than one a day in 2023, following a record year in 2022. Palestinian attacks on Israelis, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem, have also kicked off.

Demolitions are also on the rise. Yes, not demolitions of Israeli Jewish homes but of Palestinians. In East Jerusalem, Ben-Gvir is embarking on another demolition derby. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the rate of demolitions from Jan. 1 to Feb. 7 was double the rate last year. Many thousands of Palestinian homes are at risk.

How have major international actors reacted? Whether any American or

European politician of standing would meet some of the more toxic ministers such as Ben-Gvir or Bezalel Smotrich is unknown. These two may not care too much. Their passion is not about adulation in the White House but the transformation of Israel to a state founded on their supremacist chauvinist dreams. If this coalition lasts for long, we may see what sort of government, politicians and diplomats are prepared to rub shoulders with open racists.

Most international politicians have veered away from how they might describe this government. Perhaps wisely. What exactly is the appropriate word? A British Labour MP was censored for calling it "fascist," a term that some felt was inappropriate given the association between fascism and Nazism. Yet as one member of the Israeli group Peace Now confirmed to me, fascism was a term he would use, and was often used among the protesters in Israel. One Likud minister, Miri Regev, boasted: "I am happy to be a fascist." Condemnation for overzealous language but zero condemnation from the Labour leadership when it comes to Israeli war crimes.

Israeli protesters have led the charge for six

straight weeks in crowds 50,000 strong. The challenge is that although they number in their thousands, only a small percentage protest against the coalition because of its treatment of Palestinians. The driver for these protests has been the coalition's attempt to disempower the Israeli judiciary, in particular the Supreme Court. It undermines the claims of Israeli democracy, something that was already challenged with the human rights community charging Israel with the crime of apartheid. The protesters may win but the war crimes against Palestinians will continue.

A few international figures are prepared to comment, if only indirectly. US President Joe Biden made a pointed comment: "American democracy and Israeli democracy" are both "built on strong institutions, checks and balances, on an independent judiciary." The message was clear. Destroy that and Biden's US may not be talking about shared values with Israel anymore. President Emmanuel Macron of France weighed in at a dinner with Netanyahu in Paris. The treatment of Palestinians was not a suitable dinner table conversation it seems.

But how do international powers view Israeli policies

against Palestinians? The trouble here is the new coalition is continuing the existing sets of policies, just with bells on. The previous coalition was heavily involved in major violations of international law and oppression, when the international community said close to zero, seduced by the smiles and charm of the likes of Yair Lapid. He and his partners were advancing forced disposessions and a crackdown on civil society just as this government is. Many forget that Netanyahu's lifelong political agenda has been a "Greater Israel" with exclusive rights for Jews. Netanyahu brought the Kahanists (followers of the ideology of the late extremist rabbi Meir Kahane) into the Knesset and into his coalition, and shares more of their views than he might wish to admit on CNN.

Call the Israeli government what you want, but forcible evictions, or colonial settlement in the Occupied Territories, are war crimes. These, unlike fascism, are very specific and defined legal terms. As of yet, no major international statesman has ventured a valid legal critique of Israeli actions.

In some ways the US administration has been bolder than many European powers. Clutching at very

short straws, the Biden administration has made some discreet noises and issued some red lines, even if this falls significantly short of what constitutes a genuine position of principle. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a special visit aimed at reducing tensions. His private remonstrations may have postponed some of the Israeli coalition criminal plans, but not all of them.

The international community should not meekly normalize an Israeli government hellbent on Jewish supremacy. A basket of policy consequences must be developed in the likely event that major forced evictions and war crimes ensue. Leaders should be hailing the importance of international law and accountability, just as they have with Russia and Ukraine.

The stick cannot be kept in the closet. The US has not used punitive measures since 1992, when President George H.W. Bush withheld US loan guarantees on account of Israeli settlement expansion. The EU has plenty of tools in its kit as well. Viciously, warning shots should be fired now. It would be far preferable to ward off further war crimes than moan about them afterward. The next 100 days could be telling.

Jerusalem’s Palestinians need more than Arab condemnations

ON February 12, the Arab League is holding a conference on Jerusalem to demonstrate Arab support for the occupied city. The Palestinian Authority (PA) seems to have high hopes for it. President Mahmoud Abbas spoke about the suffering of the Palestinian people of Jerusalem, their rights and their steadfastness.

Ahead of the event, Fadi al-Hidmi, the PA's minister of Jerusalem affairs, declared that this conference would be "different" from previous ones and that it would produce interventions that would be felt on the ground. The event would put the occupied city at the top of the "Arab agenda", he maintained.

But for many of us Jerusalemites, this new Arab League initiative is invoking more scepticism than anything else. The last time Jerusalem was included in the title of an Arab League get-together - the so-called Jerusalem Summit of 2018 - not much changed for us on the ground. The summit issued a strongly worded communique, rejecting United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of its embassy to the occupied city. Just two years later, however, several Arab nations signed normalisation deals with that same Israel, sponsored by that same US.

These so-called "Abraham Accords" irrevocably hurt the Palestinian cause - and by extension Jerusalem. With the firm support of the US and the confidence of normalisation with Arab states, successive Israeli governments have accelerated the Judaisation of the occupied city over the past five years. Some of the most brutal tools of the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem have been the forced evictions and house demolitions perpetrated against Palestinian residents in violation of international law. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are close to 1,000 Palestinians facing the imminent threat of eviction under various legal pretences. Their homes will be either taken over by Israeli settlers or demolished.

In January alone, 39 Palestinian homes and other civilian buildings

were bulldozed by the Israeli authorities, dispossessing some 50 people. The argument the Israeli government most often gives for these criminal acts is that Palestinian buildings do not have permits issued by the Israeli state. According to the UN, a third of Palestinian homes do not have such permits, which puts some 100,000 residents at risk of being forcibly displaced at any given moment.

Needless to say, the Jerusalem municipality rarely issues permits to Palestinians, but it readily does so for Israeli Jews and Jewish settlers. Since 1967, more than 55,000 housing units were built for Jews in occupied East Jerusalem. Last year, the local authorities approved the construction of a new illegal settlement of 1,400 housing units between two Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, Beit Safafa and Sur Baher, cutting them off from each other. This is one of many examples of how Israel is purposefully breaking up Palestinian territorial contiguity and eliminating any possibility of carrying out the so-called two-state solution, which the Arab League continues to call for. The Israeli state has also accelerated the expansion of infrastructure servicing illegal Jewish settlements in Jerusalem at the expense of the Palestinians.

Take, for example, the so-called American Road, a highway project that is set to link illegal settlements in south, east and north of occupied East Jerusalem. It will cut through several Palestinian neighbourhoods, such as Jabal Al-Mukabber, and lead to the demolition of dozens of Palestinian houses. While ramping up the forced displacement of Palestinians from occupied Jerusalem, Israel is also doing everything to make life unliveable for those who remain. As an occupying power, the Israeli state has the obligation under both international humanitarian law and human rights law to ensure the welfare of the population, but it is not doing that. Although Palestinians pay taxes to the Israeli state, just like Israelis, they do not get the same level of services. Basic infrastructure and utilities in Palestinian neighbourhoods are neg-

lected, as the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem allocates less than 10 per cent of its budget to Palestinian residents, who represent more than 37 per cent of the population of the city.

In 2001, the Israeli Supreme Court found that Israeli authorities were violating their legal obligations to provide proper access to education to Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Unsurprisingly, the problem only got worse over the following two decades, and today there is a deficit of 3,517 classrooms in Palestinian schools due to Israel's systematic negligence. Palestinians, of course, have no legal means to hold the Israeli authorities accountable for violations. They are not allowed to vote in Israeli general elections and choose who to represent them. At the same time, the Israeli government is trying to bar them from participating in Palestinian politics. In 2021, when Palestinian legislative elections were supposed to be held, Israel made it clear it would not allow Palestinian residents of Jerusalem to vote. Palestinian political parties are also unable to operate freely in Jerusalem. Any event that is suspected of links to the PA is raided and shut down. In early January, for example, the Israeli police raided a meeting of a parents' committee in the neighbourhood of Issawiya, where parents had gathered to discuss the shortage of teachers. Israeli officers informed them they were closing the meeting because it was a "terror summit".

Worse still, the Israeli government has also made it clear that it is in no way committed to the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem. Recently, the Jordanian ambassador was violently expelled from Al-Aqsa compound by Israeli police who decided he cannot visit. This is despite the fact that Jordan holds the rights to administer that same compound and other holy sites in Jerusalem under an internationally recognised agreement. Under the rules of the Jordan-run Jerusalem Waqf Department, non-Muslims are allowed to visit Al-Aqsa only during certain visitation hours and only if they respect the holy place. But in the past few years, we have seen more and more Jewish

worshippers allowed by the Israeli police to pray in Al-Aqsa, in violation of these rules. Meanwhile, Palestinian Muslims from outside Jerusalem are regularly barred from visiting their holy place and praying. It should also come as no surprise that while dispossessing the Palestinians of their homes, proper services, and even access to their holy places, Israel is also ramping up the economic oppression of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem.

Palestinian Jerusalemites suffer from high poverty rates and economic insecurity, which is only getting worse. In East Jerusalem, an estimated 77 percent of Palestinians live under the poverty line, compared to 23 percent of Jewish residents of West Jerusalem. Palestinian businesses in Jerusalem are being suffocated, as Israel deepens our isolation from the rest of Palestine. A system of walls and military checkpoints deny access to Jerusalem to visitors and shoppers from nearby Jerusalemite towns like Abu Dis, Al-Ram, and Hizma, as well as from the West Bank and Gaza. This isolation has been detrimental to the local economy. In addition, Palestinian business owners face exorbitant taxes without any support from the Israeli state or the PA. This has led to the closure of at least 250 Palestinian-owned shops in recent years, according to local media.

Indeed, Jerusalem does need assistance, including financial support. The PA is hoping that the conference in Cairo will help raise much-needed funds to support the educational and healthcare sectors and give the local economy a much-needed boost of foreign investment. But any such support - if it indeed materialises - would only bring limited, temporary relief to Jerusalemites. Our city suffers from occupation and apartheid. We need action on the political front and we need it immediately. Strongly-worded condemnation and communiqués will not do. Indeed, we Jerusalemites are known for our "sumoud" (steadfastness) and it should be celebrated at international forums like the Arab League. But under the oppression of a merciless occupier, we are getting near the limits of our resilience.



Humanity at work

DAY after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, the death toll in tattered and bleeding Turkey and Syria surges. By the time this piece is published, that figure will have, no doubt, spiked again. The halting number of the dead and injured shocks the heart and soul. It is a blunt measure of the sad scope of this catastrophe triggered by nature and compounded, it appears, by greed and negligence.

The necessary hunt to hold accountable the craven, delinquent politicians, businessmen and institutions that may have played a role in making the broad, unfolding pain, suffering and loss much worse has begun. But today we must remember that every one of the thousands who have been killed by an earthquake of such disfiguring magnitude was a human being with a name and a history. Some were old; some, young. Some were fathers; some, mothers. Some were brothers; some, sisters. Some were sons; some, daughters. Some were friends; some, strangers.

They loved and were loved. Now, they are gone - suddenly and violently. And the lucky others - who escaped being consumed by an avalanche of stone and concrete - are left to mourn and search for their kin and neighbours they may have embraced and acknowledged with a smile or a wave only days ago. Still, there have been moments when hope has prevailed over horror. In this humbling regard, we have had the privilege to witness scenes where humanity has, for once, prevailed over inhumanity; where kindness has, for once, prevailed over indifference; where sacrifice has, for once, prevailed over selfishness; where a kind of beauty has, for once, prevailed over ugliness.

We have also been moved and amazed by example after example of how the will to live - mysterious and indefatigable - is a powerful antidote to resignation and despair. Throughout Turkey, rescuers have volunteered to

Andrew Mitrovica

try to find and save the buried. Their bravery and persistence were rewarded when, almost a week after the first mammoth earthquake struck, they unearthed a 64-year-old mother - alive. Under a pristine blue sky, the fragile survivor was carried from the rubble on a stretcher wrapped in blankets. Her son was among the rescuers. He reassured her: "Mum, we are here."

People, who had gathered nearby to watch quietly as she was ferried to a waiting ambulance, began to applaud. They clapped, I suspect, not only to honour her saviours, but to offer their respect and admiration to a determined woman who had defied death. In Turkey's Hatay province, a battered girl emerged whole after being entombed for more than 150 hours. Her still face, dark hair and blue sweater were caked in dust. There was a small, bloody cut on her brow. She was silent, her tiny arms frozen and outstretched - perhaps the residue of the trauma she endured alone. Her family's fate is unknown. Someone, close by, was weeping at the sight of what can only be described as a miracle. "Mashallah," a rescuer said. Then there is the remarkable story of the unlikely reunion of a Syrian father with his lost 18-month-old son.

Rescuers had taken the toddler, Ibrahim, to hospital and posted images of the bruised, lonely boy devouring a banana on social media, hoping to find his parents. That's how Ibrahim's father, Jomaa Biazid, discovered that his son was alive. Later, spent, disheveled and crying, Jomaa greeted Ibrahim with a father's gentle kiss. It was a sliver of unexpected joy that, for a little while, replaced the grief. Jomaa's other son, Mustafa, is missing, while his wife and daughter were killed. Of course, not all stories of rescue among the ruins have had a happy ending.

German search and rescue teams - prompted by imperative to help - dug out

40-year-old Zeynep Kahraman earlier this week in Turkey. They wept after having saved a life. The following day, the German rescuers learned that Zeynep had succumbed to injuries she had sustained to her body and spirit. She was exhausted. She had been trapped for 104 hours with loved ones who had not survived. So, the German rescuers wept and hugged each other again. This time, for comfort and to lament Zeynep's death. Their solace was knowing that they had made it possible for her to die among family.

"[Zeynep] just didn't die there, all alone miserably without any contact," one rescuer said. "In the end, her family was able to hold her in their arms." It is this video, above all, that encouraged me to write this column about the goodness and charity that we too often forget exists when the world and the ordinary people who populate it become extraordinary while tested by tragedy and disaster. It shows the instant a Syrian child with a thick mat of black hair, wearing a yellow coat, is pulled from the debris. He looks pale and briefly confused as he is handed from one delighted rescuer to another.

Precisely how long he was imprisoned beneath the rubble and who he belongs to is unclear. A big smile that confirms he is not only alive, but well, flashes across his chalk-white face. His rescuers cheer like a glad choir. The boy responds by laughing and playfully slapping at his rescuers as they plant kisses of gratitude and relief on his cheeks. It is a wondrous sight which, at once, is a lovely expression of the innocence and resiliency of youth and the obligation most of us feel to aid others in dire distress. As the hours and days inevitably pass, the prospect of finding more survivors - young or old - dwindles. This fact, I am convinced, will not deter or prevent dogged Syrians, Turks and foreign volunteers from risking their lives to save others at risk. This is, after all, humanity at work.

Brexit is finally dead

Sherelle Jacobs

THE cliché goes that "time is running out" to make something of Brexit. But on Thursday Feb 9, the last speck of sand in the hourglass finally fell. It really is all over. And how fitting that Brexit was finally condemned to death in the gilded splendour of Ditchley Park - a discreet yet decadent retreat for this country's most powerful since the reign of Elizabeth I. Of course, the status-quo order is trying to be subtle, even polite, about its magnificent triumph over Leaver populism. Last week's gathering - which saw executives of major banks commune with senior political figures on both sides of the Brexit debate, including Michael Gove and David Lammy - wasn't particularly secret, despite some attempts to hype it up as so. It also took place under a fairly bland working title: "How can we make Brexit work better with our neighbours in Europe?"

But let's not be naive. The exchange dwelled heavily on the fact that "Brexit is not delivering", and there was broad support for a closer relationship with the EU. In other words, both sides agreed that the dream of meaningful divergence had fallen into a deep coma. A proverbial contract to switch off the project's life-support machine was subsequently signed. Not that Brexit's demise was all part of some elaborate plot; the project has been mortally wounded for some time, and there simply wasn't the political will to save it. We could dwell at length on who exactly killed Brexit. But in truth, as on Agatha Christie's Orient Express, everybody wielded

the knife. It was Theresa May who squandered her parliamentary majority and thus gravely weakened Britain's negotiating position against Brussels. It was the political class who could never see the project as more than a damage limitation exercise. And it was the Brexiters who failed to muster a compellingly modern vision - preferring to glory in buccaneering fantasies of free trade than focus on regulatory divergence to jump-start science and tech.

Regardless, the fact remains that Brexit is dead. The only thing left to do is the political equivalent of disposing of the body. This may start with furtive steps nobody can contest: reviving the Erasmus exchange program and co-operating with Brussels in new areas like energy. Meanwhile, Parliament will likely drop works in progress, such as the Bill to take thousands of Brussels laws off the statute books by 2023. Then, under pressure from big business, the Government might well seek to relieve labour market shortages by, for example, expanding the agricultural workers scheme. It may even introduce primary legislation to automatically update UK standards in line with EU changes.

Put bluntly, even before there is another referendum, we will most probably reach a point which feels a lot like being back in the Single Market. And ultimately, as support for Brexit plummets, we can expect a fresh vote within five to seven years. But here's the hitch. There is no way that the ruling class can get away with terminating Brexit without seismic consequences. For one

thing, it is highly unlikely that the Tories would be able to survive.

In order for the country to heal, the Conservative Party would have to be permanently destroyed through the ballot box. Fair or not, this is merely the way of history and the logic of populism. In a cleansing, cathartic act, the masses must find a way to acknowledge the revolution's betrayals and perversions, while keeping the purity of the people's will intact. The second explosive effect of Brexit's death is that it has put the ruling class back on a collision course with the masses. People voted to Leave for two reasons. The first was to exercise control over who comes into the country. The second was out of frustration that the economic status quo is failing, to the point where millions were willing to take a massive gamble on Schumpeterian disruption.

Therein lies the nub of the problem with returning to business as usual. Such a bid would run roughshod over popular appetite for greater sovereignty and radical change. And it wouldn't even solve the country's economic problems. Remainers may think that reversing Brexit will stir the economy out of the doldrums. It won't. Even before we left the EU, signs of the economic crisis were all around, from stagnant wages and corporate addiction to cheap labour and the worst productivity slump since the 19th century. The reality, so often missed, is that our current economic woes are not rooted in issues of trade or "business uncertainty", but rather a profound global slowdown in technological innovation.

Macron seeks allies

Zaid M. Belbagi

increasing the number of years that people must make contributions to receive a full state pension.

The president has said that this "balancing of the system" is urgent as the current age is dragging on public finances. His chief opponents, France's vigorous left, spearheaded by its restive unions, have called the reforms "dangerous for democracy." The reforms not having not waned, French unions and major political figures protested in their hundreds and thousands on Saturday (Feb. 11). Though the Interior Ministry and the government have been keen to highlight that the weekend protests in place of further strikes show decreased resolve, in reality they were planned by the unions to allow a larger section of the population who cannot usually join weekday strike action to attend. With as many attendees as the first three days of action, this weekend's disruption on the streets is likely to be replicated in parliament where the government lacks the numbers to proceed.

Macron's government is facing a harsh political battle in parliament that could last weeks or months. France's pensions - widely considered to take up to a staggering 13.64 percent of gross domestic product in a country that already has the largest government expen-

ditures in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - are unsustainable. As a reform-minded president, the proposed changes are an opportunity to get his agenda back on track. However, as the lower house began debating the reforms, it is clear that Macron is risking his presidency with a highly unpopular campaign pledge that his public accounts minister is calling a stark choice between "reform or bankruptcy."

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has yet to assemble the necessary support to give her a majority to pass the draft law. Not only was the debate suspended as the labor minister was shouted down, more than 20,000 amendments have been proposed by opposition lawmakers to stall proceedings. With the president's centrist alliance only holding 250 seats, Borne needs to win over opposition politicians, or convince them to abstain, to reach the necessary 289 votes. If she cannot assemble the votes, she can use the government's emergency power under Article 49.3 to impose legislation without a vote, though it is highly unlikely she would, given that pension reform is such a sensitive subject.

The most likely quarter to come to the government's aid is France's erstwhile party of government, Les

Republicains. A shadow of its former electoral self, the party is split between two factions, each looking to outdo the other in their representation of middle- and low-income voters who they have lost to the far left and right in recent elections. One group has all but signed up to the reforms, albeit that Borne agree to some changes, another rebel faction is seeking changes that would protect those who started working at younger ages. Their leader, MP Aurelien Pradie, has been intransigent on the issue, saying "if they do not accept our amendment without changing a single comma, they will not get the votes they need."

The very public struggle of Macron's party to hold the centrist coalition together is intentional. The presidential ambitions of his allies and opponents are superseding his reform agenda as they jockey to replace him in 2027. Nevertheless, Macron has too much riding on pension reform to abandon it quietly - though should he succeed, his reforms will only serve to embolden the extremists of French politics who have grown in importance in recent years. The reforms will not be seen as a crucial 18 billion euros (\$19.5 billion) in annual savings for the French treasury but rather the work of a small elite that compromises the circumstances of the working many.

The strange objects in US airspace

Peter Bergen

LAST month, the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a report "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena" - in plain English, unidentified flying objects or UFOs. The US military on February 4 shot down a Chinese spy balloon (which Beijing said was a weather balloon), followed by the downing of two unidentified flying objects on Friday and Saturday in US and Canadian airspace, which Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told ABC were likely also balloons.

Then on Sunday, the US military shot down a fourth flying object, this time over Lake Huron in Michigan. In the wake of those actions, the report by America's intelligence community is worth examining since it may shed some light on what is happening here. January's UFO report had a striking finding: The number of UFO sightings significantly increased between March 2021 and August 2022, during which time 247 new sightings were reported, mostly by US Navy and Air Force pilots and personnel.

That's almost double the 144 UFO sightings reported in the 17-year period between 2004 to 2021.

The report suggested that the increase may be because there is less "stigma" associated with reporting UFO sightings, now that the Pentagon is actively pushing service personnel to report any "anomalies" seen in the sky. Indeed, in July, the Pentagon established a new entity, the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, to investigate credible sightings of UFOs by the US military and intelligence community. This is part of a relatively new push by Congress and the Pentagon to make sense of more than 500 credible UFO sightings over the past couple of decades.

The report by the US intelligence community found that a large number of those sightings, 163, were balloons or "balloon-like entities," while 26 were unmanned aircraft systems, i.e., drones. An unspecified number of sightings were "attributable to sensor irregularities or variances, such as operator or equip-

ment error." There were 171 unidentified object sightings, however, for which no explanation was found, and some of those objects "demonstrated unusual flight characteristics or performance capabilities." The report also noted that UFO sightings "continue to occur in restricted or sensitive airspace, highlighting possible concerns for safety of flight." It added that the sightings could point to "adversary collection activity," suggesting that UFOs found around sensitive US military installations could be a foreign power spying on them.

There is undoubtedly much more to learn about those 171 UFO sightings, which still have no good explanations. Are they the work of a foreign power probing US air defenses? Are they relatively innocuous, such as errant balloons? Congress should convene hearings to get to the bottom of this. The public has a right to understand why objects are flying around in American airspace that the Pentagon and the US intelligence community can't identify.

CNN

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PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 566 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) lost 566.79 points on Tuesday, a negative change of 1.36 percent, closing at 41,150.16 points against 41,716.95 points the previous day.

A total of 187,532,224 shares were traded during the day as compared to 192,412,200 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.7.858 billion against Rs. 7.661 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 316 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 79 of them recorded gains and 208 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Sui North Gas with 16,099,686 shares at Rs 44.03 per share;

WorldCall Telecom with 14,918,645 shares at Rs 1.23 per share, and Oil & Gas Dev with 12,752,194 shares at Rs.93.94 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.382.50 per share price, closing at Rs.8,450.00, whereas the runner-up was Goodluck Ind. with a Rs. 50.00 rise in its per share price to Rs.900.00.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 1,499.50 per share closing at Rs.21,000.50; followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs.51.00 decline to close at Rs.5,399.00.

Rupee gains Rs 2.10 against US dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee strengthened by Rs 2.10 against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday and

closed at Rs 267.34 against the previous day's closing of Rs 269.44.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs. 271 and Rs. 274 respectively.

The price of the euro depreciated by 42 paisa and closed at Rs 286.99 against the previous day's closing of Rs 287.41, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 2.03, whereas an increase of 47 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British pound, which was traded at Rs 324.80 as compared to its last closing of Rs 324.33.

The exchange rates of the Emirates dirham and Saudi riyal increased by 57 paisa each to close at Rs

72.78 and Rs 71.24 respectively.

Gold prices decline by Rs1,700 to Rs.195,900 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,700 on Tuesday and was traded at Rs. 195,900 against sale at Rs.197,600 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,457 to Rs. 167,953 against Rs. 169,410, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat went down to Rs. 153,957 from Rs. 155,293, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of one tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,130 and Rs.1,826.13 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market declined by \$5 to \$1,855 from US\$1,860, the association reported.



KARACHI: Former Governor State Bank of Pakistan Dr. Ishrat Hussain presenting a memento to President and CEO UBL Shazad G. Dada accompanied by CEO Terrabiz Hamza Hashmi at 4th Digital Banking and Payments Summit and Expo - DigiBAP2023.

SCCI chief participates in All-Pakistan Chambers conference

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik represented the business community of his city at the All-Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference, organised by the Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

He highlighted the importance for export-led growth of the country and shared proposals for prioritising exports as a policy matter.

The SCCI president thanked the management and leadership of the Rahim Yar Khan Chamber of Commerce & Industry for arranging the event.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, MSC Ines, Santa Rosa and Maran Gas Ascleos carrying Containers and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile a gas carrier 'Milaha Ras Laffan' carrying 'LNG' also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them MSC Ines and Golden Violet left the Port on Tuesday morning while 03 more ships, Vitus Bering, Yihai and Global Falcon are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A Cargo volume of 74,965 tonnes, comprising 53,051 tonnes imports cargo and 21,914 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,187 Containers (32 TEUs Imports and 1,155 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, Fairchem Sword, Hafnia Shanghai, Milaha Ras Laffan and Star Jeannette & another ship 'MSC Lisbon' carrying Palm oil, Mogas, LNG, Canola Seed and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT, FOTCO, PGPCL, FAP and QICT on Tuesday.

Public Notice

It is Published Through This Notice That I Muhammad Luqman Son of Wajeed Gul R/o Village Merozai Tehsil District Kohat Is The owner of Plot no 126 Size 5 Marla Sector C-4 Phase II KDA Kohat He Has Requested That The Original Transfer Deed of The said Plot Has Been Lost Somewhere and Now Issuance of Duplicate Transfer Deed is Desired The Plot is not Mortgaged There Has Been Appointed no Attorney and not Sold to Anybody if any Bank /Institution/ Firm or Person Has Any objections He /She Should Contact The Housing Officer UADA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of This Notice. In Writing With Proof otherwise Duplicate Transfer Deed Will be issued and no objection Will be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).

PBBC eyes 10b pounds bilateral trade potential between Pakistan, UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Pakistan-Britain Business Council (PBBC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation for promoting bilateral trade between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and Rashid Iqbal, CEO PBBC signed the MoU during the visit of a PBBC delegation to ICCI, said a press release.

Speaking at the occasion, Julian Hamilton Barns, Chairman PBBC and Honorary Consul General of Pakistan in UK said that the bilateral trade of around 3 billion pounds between UK and Pakistan is not in commensurate with their actual potential and stressed that the business community of both countries should work together to take the bilateral trade to at least 10 billion pounds as they have poten-

tial for it. He said that Pakistan's blue economy has tremendous potential to generate business of billions of dollars and emphasized that the Pakistani business community should reach out to international counterparts to exploit the untapped potential of its blue economy.

He said that PBBC is working to promote networking and connectivity between private sectors of Britain and Pakistan to further improve business and investment relations.

Rashid Iqbal, CEO, PBBC stressed for more interaction and events between ICCI and PBBC to increase bilateral trade ties. He said that the business community of both countries should participate in trade fairs and exhibitions in each other country to introduce their products that would help in boosting trade between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI said that Pakistan and Britain are doing trade in limited items and urged to diversify trade to achieve better results. He urged the investors of Britain to explore joint ventures and investment in various sectors of Pakistan's economy including CPEC and assured that ICCI would help in connecting them with right partners in Pakistan.

He hoped that close cooperation between ICCI and PBBC would help in further improving trade and economic ties between Pakistan and UK.

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry underlined the need of promoting close cooperation between the women entrepreneurs of Pakistan and UK for their better economic empowerment.

ICAP, LCCI to collaborate for developing document on charter of economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) and Pakistan Institute of Public Finance Accountants (PIPFA) Tuesday announced for collaborating to develop a comprehensive document on charter of economy.

In this regard Minister of State and Chairman Reforms and Resource Mobilization Committee Ashfaq Yousaf Tola led an economic briefing session, which was organized by LCCI, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashfaq Tola said that charter of economy was a dream that will soon be realized and suggested that

stakeholders should sit with ICAP, suggest solutions, bring up issues one by one, and work to resolve them.

President ICAP M. Ali Latif addressing the event said that political stability is important for economic stability and then growth, adding that country is currently suffering from severe political instability which is having a direct impact on our economy.

It is imperative that efforts be made to bring together all stakeholders through sectoral consultative sessions for framing this charter of economy, he said adding that the most important stakeholders are the political parties as without their express commitment to implement the

charter, it would only reduce to a piece of paper.

The sectoral policies of tariff and taxation would be developed with an aim for Import substitution after obtaining comments from FBR & Ministry of Finance and urged political parties to share their economic manifestos and engage in debates on important economic issues, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, President LCCI said that Pakistan has been facing economic crisis for many years. The country has suffered from low growth rates, high levels of debt, inflation, low productivity, and poor competitiveness, which has led to widespread poverty and slow development.

London stocks hit record peak, dollar drops before US inflation

LONDON (AFP/APP): The London stock market struck a record peak close to 8,000 points Tuesday on a wave of European optimism before vital US inflation data.

The dollar slid against main rivals on expectations that the rate of price rises has slowed in the world's biggest economy -- data that could ease the pace of more US interest rate rises. Oil prices retreated, after recent gains fuelled by key producer Russia's decision to curb output following more Western sanctions over Ukraine.

In London, the benchmark FTSE 100 shares index struck an all-time high 7,996.35 points in morning deals after reaching new heights in recent sessions.

"The tailwinds from another decent market performance in the US overnight have given the FTSE another boost, propelling it to a new record high and towards the psy-

chologically important 8,000 barrier," Interactive Investor analyst Richard Hunter told AFP.

"The index continues to attract investment interest with its exposure to banks and energy companies still seeing the benefits of rising interest rates and a recovering Chinese economy respectively."

Shares in Vodafone won four percent after US telecoms giant Liberty Global snapped up a near five-percent stake in its British rival but ruled out a takeover.

Eurozone equities also climbed after bumper Wall Street gains Monday.

US consumer price index inflation, due 1330 GMT, was forecast to have dipped to 6.2 percent last month from 6.5 percent in December, according to Bloomberg.

That is still well above the Fed's target of two percent, and analysts said a higher read on the CPI could spark a hefty sell-off on markets, with traders

already worried the United States could tip into recession.

"There is a surprising amount of optimism in the markets again today considering we are just hours away from a hugely significant inflation report," noted Oanda analyst Craig Erlam.

"The CPI data will need to over-deliver if the Fed is going to be convinced to stop tightening over the next couple of months, given the labour market remains red hot."

Asian equity indices ended on a mixed note after a shaky couple of weeks, while the yen won support also as Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida nominated respected economics professor Kazuo Ueda to take the helm at the Bank of Japan.

Ueda will be tasked with kickstarting the torpid Japanese economy while also facing pressure to join international peers in tightening monetary policy.

Cars' sale decreases 43 per cent in seven months: PAMA

ISLAMABAD (INP): The sale of cars during the first seven months of the current fiscal year 2022-23, has dropped by 43.12% as compared to the same months of last year, the latest data released by the Pakistan automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

According to the data, as many as 74,933 cars were sold during July-January 2022-23 as opposed to 131,759 units during July-

January 2021-22.

The breakup figures showed that 10,526 units of Honda Civic and City were sold during the corresponding period of the year 2022-23 as compared to the sale of 21,266 units last year, thus showing a dip of 50.50 percent.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars sales also decreased by 60.22 percent as it went down to 13,784 units the current

year from 34,654 units in the same period of the previous year.

However, Suzuki Swift's sales went up by 1437.22 percent as sales increased to 7,640 units from 497 units last year.

Sale of Suzuki Cultus decreased to 5,686 units during the current year, whereas during the same period last year, the sale was recorded at 15,688 units while the sale of

Suzuki WagonR also decreased to 4,440 units from 13,166 units in the same period of last year.

Suzuki Alto's sales also witnessed a sharp decline of 23.70 percent from 36,252 units to 27,658 units during the months under review, whereas the sale of Suzuki Bolan decreased to 2,992 units as opposed to the sale of 7,197 units in the same period of last year.

FPCCI urges to agree on economic development agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Irfan Iqbal Sheikh Tuesday urged all the stakeholders to agree on economic development agenda, which was the only way to improve and develop the national economy for social uplift and prosperity.

Addressing traders at Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI), he said that being an apex trade body, FPCCI would make all efforts to help in resolving grievances of the business community across the country.

He reiterated that full cooperation and support will be extended to ICSTSI to pursue their business interests.

He said that Pakistan's economy be restored and developed by promoting small trade and small industry, adding that local population was increasing every year for which more employment opportunities and other facilities were also required.

Tokyo stocks end higher despite lacklustre GDP

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares ended higher on Tuesday following Wall Street gains, despite a lacklustre Japanese GDP report and a wait-and-see mood ahead of US consumer price data.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 0.64 percent, or 175.45 points, to end at 27,602.77, while the broader Topix index rose 0.78 percent, or 15.42 points, to 1,993.09.

The dollar stood at 131.89 yen, against 132.39 yen in New York on Monday.

Japanese traders initially took heart from Wall Street,

where stocks rallied ahead of key inflation data that will influence US monetary policy.

But gains gradually slowed with more investors opting to straddle the fence before sizing up the US consumer price index for January, to be released later on Tuesday.

"The waiting game goes on as investors jockey for positions ahead of US inflation data," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

Further "chilling the sentiment" of Japanese investors, IwaiCosmo Securities said, was the Tuesday

release of government data that showed Japan's economy grew just 0.2 percent in the last quarter of 2022.

It was a smaller rebound than expected, even after Japan's much-awaited opening to tourists, falling shy of the 0.5 percent growth forecast by analysts surveyed by Bloomberg.

Among major shares in Tokyo, SoftBank Group grew 0.65 percent to 5,850 yen, Sony Group added 0.59 percent to 11,780 yen and Toyota was up 0.31 percent to 1,882.5 yen.

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing firmed 1.04 percent to 81,540 yen.



KARACHI: Sanofi Pakistan and Diabetic Association of Pakistan organized Basal Summit 2023.

Asian markets mixed in nervous trade ahead of US inflation data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian equities were mixed Tuesday as investors geared up for the release of crucial US inflation data later in the day.

After a bright January, traders have endured a shaky couple of weeks as they contemplate the prospect of more Federal Reserve interest rate hikes aimed at cooling a still-robust US economy.

The main blow came from a blockbuster jobs report earlier in the month that led several central bank officials to insist they will keep tightening monetary policy until they have brought prices under control. The consumer price index is forecast to have dipped to 6.2 percent last month from 6.5 percent in December, according to Bloomberg.

That is still well above the Fed's target of two percent, and analysts said a higher read on the CPI could spark a hefty sell-off on markets, with traders already worried the United States could tip into recession. "I would expect to see

a little more apprehension, even anxiety, in the run-up to the release after the jobs report left investors on edge," said OANDA's Craig Erlam.

"In an ideal world, slack would be gradually appearing in the labour market as inflation steadily fell to two percent, allowing the Fed to take its foot off the (brake). As soon as one of these isn't playing ball, the other has to up its game."

"A slight setback could be a major blow and leave at least two more hikes, maybe more, on the cards."

Tokyo rose along with Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Taipei, Mumbai and Jakarta. But Hong Kong was dragged down by another drop in Chinese tech firms, while there were also losses in Singapore, Manila and Bangkok.

Wellington was barely moved as traders tracked developments after New Zealand was pounded by a strong cyclone that forced the government to declare a national state of emergency.

Wall Street provided a healthy lead with all three

main indexes ending more than one percent higher.

Strategists at Morgan Stanley warned equities could suffer sharp losses this year, however.

"While the recent move higher in front-end rates is supportive of the notion that the Fed may remain restrictive for longer than appreciated, the equity market is refusing to accept this reality," the group, led by Michael Wilson, wrote in a note.

They saw the S&P 500 suffering a rollercoaster ride before ending the year almost five percent below Friday's close.

"The risk-reward is as poor as it's been at any time during this bear market," Wilson said. "The reality for equities is that monetary policy remains in restrictive territory in the context of an earnings recession that has now begun in earnest."

The yen ticked up slightly against the dollar Tuesday as Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida nominated respected economics professor Kazuo Ueda to take the helm at the

Bank of Japan.

Ueda will be tasked with kickstarting the torpid economy while also facing pressure to join international peers in tightening monetary policy after years of ultra-loose measures.

The bank last year made small adjustments that allowed the yield of government bonds to move in a wider band, which sent the yen surging, though it has made no more changes since then.

The nomination came as data showed Japan's gross domestic product expanded at a lower-than-expected 0.2 percent in the last quarter of 2022.

Saori N. Katada, an international relations professor at the University of Southern California, told AFP: "This is probably the hardest job at the worst time to take up. Professor Ueda is very brave to accept it."

Japan's easy-money policies have become "extreme... and no one knows how to get out of it", as sudden policy pivots could "jeopardise fiscal sustainability", she said.

**In brief****Dahani likely to be ruled out of PSL 8**

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Multan Sultans' young pacer Shahnawaz Dahani is likely to be ruled out of the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight, due to an injury. According to the details, the pacer fractured his right-hand finger after he was hit by a shot from Sikandar Raza, amid his side's match against Lahore Qalandars on Monday. Following the injury, Dahani is likely to be ruled out of the entirety of the PSL 8, while the Sultans may replace him with West Indian all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite. It is pertinent to mention that the Sultans, who started their PSL 8 campaign with a defeat, will take on Quetta Gladiators on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Karachi Kings will take on Babar Azam-led Peshawar Zalmi today.

DG, felicitates Pak squash team

LAHORE (APP): Director General sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on Tuesday felicitated Pakistan squash team on defeating India in the final of 21st Asian Junior Team Squash Championship 2023 in Indian city Chennai. In his greeting message, he praised the impressive performance of talented duo of Noor Zaman and Hamza Khan, who helped Pakistan emerge victorious against their arch-rivals India by a big margin of 2-0. He said that Pakistan junior squash team has made the entire nation proud with its exceptional gold medal winning performance against India. He expressed his hope that Pakistan squashteam will maintain the title winning performance in their future international squash competitions.

Salah sees fresh start

LIVERPOOL (Agencies): Mohamed Salah said Liverpool's 2-0 win over Everton in the Merseyside derby on Monday is just the start of a revival for the Reds. Salah scored for the first time in the Premier League since Boxing Day as Jurgen Klopp's men snapped a four-game winless streak. Cody Gakpo then grabbed his first goal for the club in the second half. A positive night for Liverpool was rounded off by the return of Diogo Jota and Roberto Firmino from injury, while Virgil van Dijk made the bench after six weeks on the sidelines. "It's a huge win for us," said Salah. "We had a perfect week to train and the players were so excited and we couldn't wait for the game to turn everything around. Hopefully it was a start." Liverpool are still nine points off the top four in ninth. But that gap to fourth-placed Newcastle could be cut to six points when they travel to St. James' Park next weekend. That clash comes just days before Real Madrid's trip to Anfield in the Champions League last 16 and Klopp will be hoping he has finally stumbled upon a solution to some of his side's woes in time for another tilt at the European Cup. "Tonight we were there and that has to be the sign now for us for what we have to do," said Klopp. "The performance for the full 96 minutes was the best for a while." Liverpool's optimism has to be put in the context of facing an Everton side with just one win in 12 games. That victory came last weekend in Sean Dyche's first match in charge as league leaders Arsenal were shocked 1-0 at Goodison Park.

Britain to boycott women's world c'ships in New Delhi

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Boxers from Britain will not participate at the women's world championships in New Delhi next month, the governing body said on Tuesday, citing concerns about the sport's Olympic future.

The International Boxing Association (IBA) was stripped of involvement in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and boxing is not on the initial programme for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, pending reforms demanded by the Int'l Olympic Committee (IOC).

In December, the IOC raised the possibility of boxing being excluded from the 2024 Paris Games, accusing the IBA of having "no real interest" in the sport or its athletes. Qualifying for Paris is being organised by the IOC. The IBA, backed by Russian energy firm Gazprom, has also reversed bans on boxers from Russia and Belarus competing with national flags and anthems despite the war in Ukraine.

"The decision reflects ongoing concerns about the future of boxing's place on the Olympic programme and the recent move by IBA to allow boxers from Russia and Belarus to compete under their national flags, which contravenes

resolutions passed by the IOC..." GB Boxing said in a statement.

"This has put further distance between IBA and the Olympic movement in addition to the significant, longstanding issues over sporting integrity, governance, transparency and financial management which the IOC has asked IBA to address to protect boxing's place on the Olympic programme.

"GB Boxing condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has solidarity with the people, boxers, coaches and officials of Ukraine." The British governing body added that their participation at the men's tournament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in May, was "under review". The announcement follows USA Boxing and the Irish Athletic Boxing Association's (IABA) decision to boycott this year's world championships. Following the boycotts, the IBA offered to fund U.S. and Irish boxers wanting to compete in this year's world championships.

The IBA also warned that it would pursue "strong sanctions against those who initiate and join the participation boycott". The Boxing Federation of India could not immediately be reached for comment.

Frontier College for Women won girls inter-collegiate kabaddi tournament

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Frontier College for Women Peshawar won the girls inter-collegiate kabaddi tournament organized by Provincial Kabaddi Association.

In the final match, the team of Frontier College defeated the team of City Girls College Gulbehar after a tough and thorny contest and bagged the winner's trophy, Girls College Nahaqi won the third position. The chief guest of the closing ceremony, Principal of City College Prof. Tahira Dar gave away trophies to the players of the teams who took prominent positions.

In the final of the girls inter-collegiate kabaddi tournament organized by Provincial Kabaddi Association at Government

City Girls Degree College Gulbehar, the host team City Girls College Gulbehar won 30-32 score points thanks to the excellent performance of the students of Frontier College. won the honor by defeating While in the match organized for the third position, Girls Degree College Nahaqi defeated the rival Girls College Bacha Khan's team by 16-26 points.

The chief guest of the closing ceremony was Professor Tahira Dar, Principal of City Girls College College, who presented trophies to the players of both teams.

On this occasion, Secretary General of Provincial Kabaddi Association Syed Sultan Bari, Director Sports of City Girls College Najma Naz Qazi, Director of

Sports Miss Sadia of Girls College Nahaqi and Director of Sports Miss Sadaf Sher of Frontier College were also present.

Addressing the ceremony, the chief guest Prof. Tahira Dar thanked Provincial Kabaddi Association Secretary Syed Sultanbari and other officials for bringing women kabaddi in the province.

He said that by the grace of Allah, our girls are very talented, they have proved themselves in the field of sports at the provincial and national level. She advised the female students of various colleges to actively participate in sports activities along with education, because by participating in sports, one can keep one's self fit, but it also increases one's abilities.

Army, Wapda bag National Netball C'ship titles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army and Wapda clinched the National Netball Championship titles here at Liaquat Gymnasium in the Pakistan sports Complex on Tuesday.

In the men's final match, Army defeated Wapda by 27-30 points and won the title. Both teams were tied at 25, 25 points at the end of scheduled time. Later six minutes were given on which Pakistan Army won by 27-30 points. Iqbal and Wasim scored 17 and 13 points for Pakistan Army while Zain Hussain scored 27 points for Wapda.

In the women's final,

Wapda defeated Sindh by 16-7 points. Nisha Sultan scored 11 points for Wapda and Quratul Ain scored 7 points for Sindh.

Before the finals, 3rd position matches were played in which Pakistan Air Force outplayed Pakistan Navy by 13-23 points in the men's event. Akhtar scored 23 points for Pakistan Air Force while Babar Manan scored 13 points for Pakistan Navy.

In the women's third position match, Pakistan Army downed Higher Education Commission by 18-30 points. Ayesha got 24 points for Pakistan Army while Khadija

got 12 points for Higher Education Commission.

Chairman, Pakistan Netball Federation and former IG Police (R), Zafar Iqbal Awan who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the championship distributed trophies, medals and certificates to the winning players.

President, Pakistan Netball Federation, Mudassar Arain, Senior Vice President Sameen Malik, Secretary General, Syed Gohar Raza, Directors, PSB Saeed Akhtar and Muhammad Waheed Khan and a large number of peoples were also present on the occasion.

Mahatir shines in ITF World Junior Tennis C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mahatir Muhammad of Pakistan was the only Pakistani, who registered victory in the pre-quarterfinal stage of the boys' singles of ITF Pakistan PPL-S. Dilawar Abbas World Junior Tennis Championships Leg-2 at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Tuesday.

Mahatir lost the first set to compatriot Nadir Mirza 1-6, but fought back to take the next two sets 6-4, 6-3 and emerge triumphant.

In other pre-quarterfinal matches, Turkiye's Bugra Ozkoc beat Boda Zheng of China 0-6, 6-3, 6-0, while Dogan Can Sipahioğlu of Turkiye's defeated Mikhail Khodorchenko Russia 4-6, 7-3(3), 6-3.

Canada's Edward Kruppe outclassed Pakistan's Bilal Asim 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, whereas K a m o n p a n y a k o r n Thadpong of Thailand overpowered Pakistan's M. Huzafa Khan 6-2, 7-6(3).

Similarly, Cem Atlamis

of Turkiye saw off Huzaima Abdul Rehman of Pakistan 4-6, 6-0, 6-1, and Yuan Lu of China edged passed Malaysia's Keagan Jonathan 6-3, 6-1.

In girls singles pre-quarterfinals, Yejun Lee of Korea trounced Kazakhstan's Taira Abildyeva 6-0, 6-3, while Phitcayapak Srimuk of Thailand's Seun Baeg of Korea 0-6, 6-3, 7-5 and Zeynep Erbakan of Turkiye outwitted Anastasiya Kim of Kazakhstan 6-1, 6-2.



BULAWAYO: West Indies players celebrate after winning the trophy at the end of the second Test cricket match between Zimbabwe and West Indies.



KARACHI: Babar Azam drives through the covers, Karachi Kings vs Peshawar Zalmi, PSL.

Women's T20 WC Ireland ready for Pakistan spin test - Ed Joyce

NEWLANDS (Agencies): Ireland coach Ed Joyce says countering Pakistan's spin attack will be key to success in the Women's T20 World Cup game at Newlands on Wednesday.

Joyce's side, beaten by England in Monday's group opener, beat Pakistan 2-1 in a T20 series in November.

"We know we're going to come up against a spin-heavy attack, so we've got to be prepared for that," said Joyce. "We had some success there in the T20 series and that'll give us some confidence that we can turn them over."

He added: "I think the fact that we've played them very recently is a good thing. "We could have played the English spinners better, so that's something we're talking about and focusing on for Wednesday. Pakistan are a very good team - I think it'll be a good competitive game."

Pakistan also lost their opening Group B match, going down to a seven-wicket defeat by India. Ireland stunned Australia in the build-up to the tournament and they made a good start with the bat against England in Paarl.

But from 80-2 they slumped to 105 all out and England were charging towards the target before losing five late wickets, with spinner Cara Murray taking an impressive 3-15.

"There were some things in the England game that we can definitely take confidence from, so we'll be looking to bring that in against Pakistan try to put in an all-around performance," Joyce said. "I think England would have been impressed with what they saw on Monday. Certainly I was really happy with the intent we showed with the bat all the way through."

"I think we could have been a little bit smarter with maybe some of the shots that we played, but I think the intent to score from ball one is something that we've really stressed and I'd like to see us keep doing. "And then with the ball, again there was some untidy stuff, but there was some really, really high quality bowling in there as well."

Jinnah Gold Polo Cup: DS Polo, Master Paints win openers

LAHORE (APP): DS Polo and Master Paints emerged victorious in the opening day matches of the Jinnah Gold Polo Cup 2023 sponsored by Al Rehman Developers and Town Planners here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Tuesday.

Bautista Garcia guided DS Polo to a thrilling 8-7 triumph over Diamond Paints in the first match of the day. DS Polo were 5-7 down when they made a tremendous comeback in the last one and a half minute by thrashing in three back-to-back goals to snatch victory from Diamond Paints.

Bautista Garcia emerged as hero of the match with a convincing contribution of five fabulous goals while displaying high-quality polo and mallet skills. He was ably assisted by another top performer of the day Javier Guerrero, who hammered three tremendous goals including two dying moments' match-winning goals, that steered DS Polo to a well-deserving 8-7 victory. From Diamond Paints, which had a half goal handicap advantage, Chulo Corti fired in four fantastic goals while Nico Roberts hammered a hat-trick.

Both the sides started the match well and converted two goals each to finish the first chukker at 2-2. DS Polo played better polo in the second chukker as they slammed in two goals against one goal by Diamond Paints to take a slight 4-3 lead. The third chukker was fully dominated by Diamond Paints as they hammered a hat-trick of goals to gain a 6-4 lead.

DS Polo started the fourth and decisive chukker with an impressive goal to reduce the margin to 6-5 but Diamond Paints struck one more to stretch their lead to 7-5. In the last one and a half minute, DS Polo played outstanding polo and thrashed in three back-to-back goals to win the match by 8-7, as Diamond Paints also had a half goal handicap advantage.

Manuel Crespo's heroics helped Master Paints register a close 8-7 win over Remounts in the second match of the day. Manuel Crespo, the hero of the day from Master Paints, did magic with mallet and polo pony and pumped in splendid five goals. Pelagio Balazaldi, Agha Musa Ali Khan and Sufi Muhammad

Haroon also played well and contributed with one goal each. For team Remounts, the major contribution came from Manuel Sundblad, who slammed in four goals while Jota Chavanne banged in a brace and Imran Shahid converted one goal.

The first chukker saw both the sides scoring two goals each to level the score at 2-2. Master Paints played well in the second chukker by converting two goals against one by Remounts to earn a slight 4-3 lead. Remounts started the highly-charged third chukker with two back-to-back goals to take 5-4 lead but Master Paints then started playing aggressive polo and succeeded in cracking a classic quartet to gain a healthy 8-5 lead.

Remounts, which had a half goal handicap advantage, though dominated the fourth and last chukker by banging in a brace yet they lost the opening day match by a close margin of 7-8. John Fisher and Chris Hyde supervised both the matches as field umpires. Two important matches of the prestigious tournament will be played tomorrow (Wednesday).

Security measures for PSL, other events discussed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Law enforcers on Tuesday planned security measures in the capital, especially for upcoming cricket matches of Pakistan Super League (PSL) and Women Premier League.

The security-related issues were discussed in the second high-level joint security coordination meeting held at Safe City Islamabad. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Commissioner Rawalpindi, DG Rangers, RPO Rawalpindi, officers of the Pakistan Army and other officers were present.

The meeting reviewed all the security arrangements of the twin cities, Pakistan Super League and

Women Premier League.

It was decided in the meeting that during the matches, information would be exchanged and complete coordination would be ensured among all law enforcement agencies while the route would be monitored through CCTV cameras and smart cars during PSL matches.

All cameras should be equipped with thermal imaging capability, and all players and guests associated with matches would be provided security on a modern technical basis.

It was decided that all law enforcement agencies would conduct joint security visits and traffic plans to be issued in advance to

ensure traffic flow during the movement of players so that citizens did not face any kind of inconvenience.

During the meeting, it was decided that the security of citizens as well as foreigners would be ensured on a priority basis, for which the security at the entry and exit points of the twin cities would be made more effective.

All law enforcement agencies will conduct joint operations and share data.

It was decided that security coordination meetings would be held on a daily basis during the PSL event, besides all these security measures as well as the regular work of the police will not be affected.

West Indies beats Zimbabwe inside 3 days to clinch series

BULAWAYO (AP): Left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie's six wickets helped West Indies defeat Zimbabwe by an innings and four runs inside three days to clinch the two-match test series 1-0 Tuesday.

Motie, who took seven wickets in Zimbabwe's first innings, was again the chief tormentor with 6-62 as the hosts collapsed to 173 all out in a wobbly effort to make West Indies bat again. The first test ended in a draw last week. West Indies put up a lead of 177 runs at the Queens Sports Club after Zimbabwe had been skittled for 115 before the Caribbean side finished 292 all out on day three.

The touring side added just two runs to its overnight score, allowing Zimbabwe seamer Victor Nyauchi (5-56) to remove Jason Holder (3) and Gudakesh Motie for 12 to complete his maiden test cricket five-for. Roston Chase (70) held together West Indies' innings with a well measured knock to put the tourists in command on the second day.

Right-hander Chase had put on 60 for the fifth wicket with Kyle Mayers (30), and then shared a partnership of 85 for the sixth wicket alongside wicketkeeper Joshua Silva (44). Raymon Reifer (53) was the other West Indies batsman in the runs with a workmanlike half-century of his own. Zimbabwe was then unable to make West Indies bat again, falling four runs short of the target to bring the West Indies back to the crease.

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite said the success in Zimbabwe is crucial for momentum when his team crosses into South Africa for a multiple format tour, beginning with two tests starting on Feb. 28 at SuperSport Park. "It's a good feeling, I think winning any game is always a habit, winning is a habit," Brathwaite told reporters. "So this is very important. It will be a tougher South Africa team, and we will see when we get there. ... The more test cricket you play, the better. It's good to have these two back-to-

back series, we don't take it lightly."

Craig Ervine, Zimbabwe's stand-in captain, acknowledged it was frustrating that Zimbabwe's in-form players haven't been able to convert their promising starts to put the African side in good positions. Ervine himself top-scored with 72 for Zimbabwe in a relatively comfortable innings before being trapped lbw by Motie.

The second highest scorer, opener Innocent Kaia (43) was out when he had looked well set, faintly edging to the keeper a Motie delivery that moved through the air. "It could be a number of factors, it could be a question of lack of application," Ervine said. "And as you know in test cricket, 50s, 60s don't win you matches. And as you saw Gary (Ballance) in that first test, getting a big hundred. Those hundreds make a big difference. That partnership between himself and Brandon Mavuta (who scored a maiden half-century) got us back into the game. So guys really need to work on their application."



In brief

NA panel summons in-camera meeting

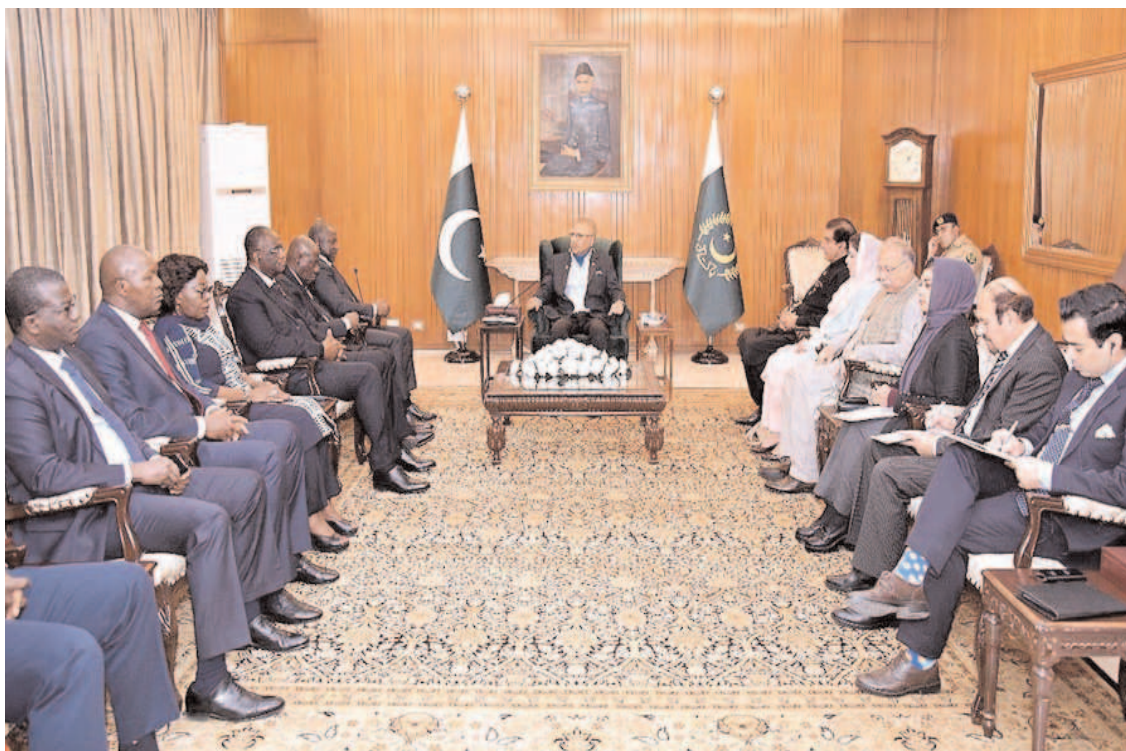
ISLAMABAD (INP): National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs summons in-camera meeting on Arshad Sharif murder case. As per details, the committee will be briefed on the Arshad Sharif murder case. The committee will also be informed about the progress in the case. The standing committee asked the joint investigation team (JIT) to inform about the investigation proceedings in Kenya, Dubai and Pakistan. The committee also called the JIT head and other members in the in-camera session that will take place after today's meeting. Earlier, the Supreme Court (SC) rejected the report of the Special Joint Investigation Team (JIT) formed to probe the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif.

Gill challenges in IHC rejection

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former SAPM Shahbaz Gill has challenged in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) the sessions court decision to reject his acquittal plea in sedition case. In the petition, the PTI leader pleaded the court to declare Islamabad district and sessions court ruling null and void and acquit him in the sedition case. Gill has made the federation respondent in the case. A district and sessions court in Islamabad fixed February 27 for the indictment of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former SAPM Shahbaz Gill in a sedition case. Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Supra rejected Gill's acquittal plea and decided to indict him in sedition case on February 27. It is pertinent to mention here that a case was registered against Gill at the Kohsar police station, Islamabad. He was accused of creating a divide in the state institution.

Ombudsman takes notice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Taking notice of the media reports and a large number of complaints received from Karachi and other cities against the unilateral increase in prices of automobiles by the manufacturers and assemblers, the federal ombudsman has called for a detailed report from the Ministry of Industries and Production. It was noticed that the increase in the prices of vehicles unilaterally by the manufacturers, without any oversight mechanism amounts to "maladministration". He had also asked the ministry to ascertain the fact that auto manufacturers were charging above prices at the time of delivery of vehicles, to the detriment of the customers, who had initially deposited due price, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. "It is clear that it was an important responsibility of the Ministry of Industries and Production to regulate and monitor the prices. It was further revealed that the Engineering Development Board (EDB) when asked about this matter stated that the EDB does not have any mechanism to monitor or regulate the prices of vehicles," the release added. Accordingly, the federal ombudsman has in public interest asked for a comprehensive report on the matter within fortnight from the Ministry of Industries and Production & EDB.



ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary delegation of Ivory Coast, led by the President of the National Assembly of Ivory Coast, Mr. Adama Bictogo, call on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Chitral Tahafuz movement ended its 30-day dharna and hunger strike camp

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On the assurance of Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, the 30-day sit-in and hunger strike camp of the Chitral Tahafuz Movement in front of the National Press Club Islamabad was ended.

Addressing the sit-in participants in front of the National Press Club, the Advisor to the Prime Minister said that all the mega projects of Chitral were built by former Prime Minister Quaid Nawaz Sharif. He said that PTI is the party that snatches all the development projects from the people of Chitral.

Advisor to the Prime Minister said that there is no example of the number of projects done in Chitral during the tenure of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He said that the network of gas projects, expressways and roads were built by Prime Minister Nawaz

Sharif which was taken away by PTI. He said that we also have complaints that we did a lot for the people of Chitral but they did not give the same response during 2018 general elections.

Advisor to Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam while addressing the participants said that on their request former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif constructed the Lowari Tunnel to facilitate people of Chitral.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that even during the later floods, he was in the forefront to serve the people of Chitral. He said that Golan Gol project was also gifted by Nawaz Sharif. Despite doing all this, however the results of Chitral elections in 2018 were disappointing.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that cruel PTI people came in power and they had taken away what they got. He said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

approved the electricity projects for the areas of Chitral. Engineer Amir Muqam said that the people of Chitral are peace-loving and sincere people.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that he was participating in the sit-in here today as a Chitrali, adding that "We are your representatives and your voice". He said that PML N have done a lot for you in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Engineer Ameer Muqam said that PML-N has given a lot to Chitral and we hope you also don't let us down. He said that I am an advocate for Chitral people and I hope you too stand with me. He said that the future belongs to Muslim League-N and Quaid Nawaz Sharif.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that I will also talk to the Prime Minister and the government regarding your demands and reservation. The protesters ended a hunger strike lasting more than 30 days after assurance of Advisor to PM Engr Amir Muqam.

IHC fixes April 4 as date for hearing of NAB plea against Tarin, Pervez Ashraf

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) appeals against the acquittal of former finance minister Shaukat Tarin and National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in the rental power case, for hearing on April 4. Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Amir Farooq and Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan will hear the cases. NAB's appeals against Shaukat Tarin's acquittal in Sahiwal Rental Power Project and Pira Ghaib Rental Power Plant references are pending.

The court has issued notices on the appeal against the acquittal of Tarin, Ashraf and others accused in the case. NAB has challenged the accountability court's June 2020 acquittal of the accused. The accountability court had acquitted Tarin, Ashraf and others.

Govt approves summary to reduce prices of 20 medicines: Qadir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Tuesday said that the government has decided to fix the prices of 18 medicines. The minister, in a statement, said the federal cabinet has also approved the summary for a reduction in the prices of 20 medicines.

He said that effective measures were being taken to ensure an uninterrupted supply of medicines in the country. In this regard, all necessary arrangements had been made and strategy had also been chalked out for the availability of medicines. He said that there would be no compromise on the pricing of medicines keeping in view its burden on patients. The government was well aware of the problems of the citizens and was taking sincere steps to give maximum relief to them.

A meeting was held in Karachi between the officials of the Ministry of National Health Services and the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Association (PPMA). The objective of the meeting was to make sure that all medicines are available in the market.

Govt working for betterment of relations with all international partners: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said the government is arduously working for the betterment of relations with all international partners.

Addressing the 42nd Specialized Diplomatic Course for the officers of Foreign Service of Pakistan at Foreign Service Academy in Islamabad on Tuesday, he said our foreign policy has been guided by national interests, pragmatism, constructive engagement and amicably managing divergences and maximizing commonalities of interests.

He said the success of this policy is evident by the recently held Resilient Pakistan Conference in Geneva where China, the US, Islamic world and other countries expressed full support to Pakistan.

Referring to the changes taking place at the international level, the Foreign Minister said this necessitates a foreign service equipped more with the skills and capacities to comprehend and adapt to the current day geo political and geo economic realities.

He said it is imperative to adopt new tools and technologies which can act as a force multiplier for shaping and disseminating narratives, identifying

opportunities for economic linkages and markets for exports as well as improving services for Pakistanis residing abroad.

He said Pakistani diplomats are expected to be skilled navigators of electronic, print and social media in order to protect, promote and sustain national narratives. He said the diplomats have a great responsibility to enhance Pakistan's strategic space in the international arena.

The Foreign Minister was confident that the Foreign Service Academy will continue to produce outstanding diplomats who will uphold the tradition of excellence in representing Pakistan on the global stage.

FM Bilawal visits Syrian Embassy in Islamabad: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited the Syrian Embassy in Islamabad on Tuesday and condoled with the Syrian Ambassador the death and destruction caused by the recent earthquake.

In his remarks, the Foreign Minister said Pakistan stands with the government and people of Syria in this hour of difficulty.

On the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also jotted down his impressions in the guestbook.

IHCBA moves SC for early hearing of Punjab, KP elections case

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) has filed a miscellaneous petition in the Supreme Court (SC) seeking an early hearing for a case related to the elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In its application, the IHCBA stated that as the case is of an emergency nature, the bar requested for it to be fixed for hearing

on Wednesday (today). The registrar's office did not object to the application, and the SC has formally received the plea from the bar. This is the first petition under Article 184 sub-clause 3 of the Constitution filed this year which received no objection.

Meanwhile, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) has sought a written response from the provin-

cial governor and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the election date case already under adjudication in the high court. The court remarked that the governor did not submit a reply, and it inquired the governor for an explanation as to why a response was not submitted. The hearing of the case has been adjourned until Thursday.

MNAs to donate one-month salary to quake victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Members of National Assembly (MNAs) on Tuesday decided to donate one-month salary to the earthquake victims in Turkiye and Syria.

Talking on a point of order during the Joint Session of Parliament, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon proposed the National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to donate the one-month salary of all the respective members of lower house of parliament to the earthquake victims in the brotherly countries.

Seconding the proposal of Qasim Noon, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) MNA Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk said the quake affected people were facing a diffi-

cult time, therefore "we must help them at this hour of trials and tribulations".

PTI's MNA Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said "we must go beyond one-month salary and support the marooned people with a huge financial assistance individually". He went on to say that all the respective members of this august house were well off and they could support this noble cause by donating millions of rupees in their personal capacity.

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz Ahmad said it was a positive move as both the treasury and opposition benches had mutually agreed to donate their one-month salary to the earthquake victims.

Pakistan has become a banana republic: Fawad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader (PTI)'s leader and ex-finance minister Shaukat Tarin is ridiculous and reprehensible which indicates that Pakistan has become a banana republic.

He started "if someone says that the agreement with the IMF is wrong in respect of Pakistan's interest and we should prevent it from happening in every possible way, then the question is how it treason

or rebellion"? It was worth mentioned here that earlier Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that after completing the inquiry against Tarin, FIA had sought permission to arrest Tarin and the government has given permission to arrest him. On the other hand, Tehreek-e-Insaf leader (PTI) leaders are reacting strongly to the filing of a sedition case against Shaukat Tarin.

It was worth mentioned here that earlier Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that after completing the inquiry against Tarin, FIA had sought permission to arrest Tarin and the government has given permission to arrest him. On the other hand, Tehreek-e-Insaf leader (PTI) leaders are reacting strongly to the filing of a sedition case against Shaukat Tarin.



ISLAMABAD: On the assurance of Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Heritage and Culture Division, Engr. Amir Muqam, Chitral Tahafuz movement ended its 30-day sit-in & hunger strike camp.

UK vows to support Pakistan's efforts to fight climate change

ISLAMABAD (INP): The United Kingdom has expressed its commitment to support Pakistan's efforts to fight climate change and build climate resilience.

The assurance was given by Acting British High Commissioner Martin Dawson while addressing a Climate Finance Accelerator's investors

Road Show that started in Karachi on Tuesday. The two-day show has been organized by Climate Finance Accelerator Pakistan programme and is funded by UK government.

The Acting British High Commissioner expressed the hope that seven selected projects under the programme will

help to reduce pollution and create job opportunities in Pakistan. Seven innovative low carbon projects from energy, transport, agriculture, forestry, waste management, e-mobility, and industrial and manufacturing sectors will be presented before the investors in the show tomorrow.

NDMA held Gender-Responsive Implementation of SFDRR Pilot Training

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in partnership with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and UNICEF Pakistan, held Pilot Training on Gender-Responsive Implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), in Islamabad, on February 14, 2023 which shall continue till 16 February 2023.

In line with the multi-sector approach outlined in the Sendai Framework, the key target audience were government officials and representatives from National and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities, (NDMA and PDMA); Federal & provincial chapters of Commission on the Status of Women Planning and Development (P&D), Women Development and Social Welfares Departments, Rescue 1122, NESPAK, Geological Survey of Pakistan, Federal Flood Commission, Planning Commission and SUPARCO.

The SFDRR is the global blueprint for Disaster Risk Reduction and reinforces the shift from managing disasters to managing risk, and also establishes resilience-building as a shared vision of the 2030 Agenda. The overarching objective of the Pilot Training was to strengthen Pakistan's ability to implement the SFDRR, in a way that promotes and supports gender equality. The training was organized by NDMA, recognizing that effective DRR requires meaningful and diverse participation, engagement and leadership, through an inclusive and accessible, all-of-society approach.

Addressing the participants at the Opening Ceremony of the training work-

shop, Chief Guest Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Convener of the Parliamentary SDG Task Force, highlighted the fact that Pakistan was the first country to adopt SDGs 2030 agenda through a unanimous resolution of the Parliament of Pakistan. She further mentioned that the SDG Secretariat was established in the National Assembly of Pakistan in 2016 and since then the Parliamentary Task Force for SDGs is working on achieving 17 sustainable development goals in the country, including Goal number 5: Gender Equality. Speaking about the importance of law and policy, she stressed on embedding gender equality across all institutional processes and legal systems in the country to prevent gender discrimination in disasters. Chairman, NDMA, Lt. General Haider Inam Malik thanked UNDRR, and NDMA's long-standing partner UNICEF for their whole-hearted support in executing the Pilot Training in Pakistan. He thanked the international trainers for their commitment to build the capacities of government officials in Pakistan.

Moreover, he urged the participants and officials from Federal and Provincial Government Departments to take full benefit of the platform to develop their understanding in adopting an all-inclusive approach in disaster risk reduction and management for the vulnerable segments of the society. Underscoring the context of growing climate change inequalities that adversely impact vulnerable groups, Chairman NDMA, said that building the resilience of communities through an all-inclusive, participatory approach is key to effectively manage disaster risk.

28,000 beggars gahtered

KABUL (Agencies): From the beginning of this program, the beggar collecting committee has gathered 28,433 beggars from different sites of Kabul so far. The committee said, among the gathered beggars, 12,272 are women, after evaluation, 5,677 of them are eligible and 6,655 are identified as professional beggars. Among the mentioned beggars there are 12,445 children, of which 4,395 are eligible, 8,16 are professional beggars, and 70 are orphans, that were introduced to social affairs.

Sadat meets Chinese team

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan's Chargé d'affaires in China Sayed Mohiuddin Sadat, met with a top delegation of the State Energy Company of China. The company expressed interest in investing in the construction of cement factories in Afghanistan, said a statement issued on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the embassy of Afghanistan in China's Capital Beijing assured of cooperation with the company.

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

Reactions to ban on women taking medical school ‘exit exam’

KABUL (TOLONews): Many graduate medical students throughout the nation have reacted to the decision to no longer allow female students to take the “exit exam,” the final medical exam.

They said that the years they spent studying medicine would be wasted if they were denied the opportunity to take this exam.

Noria, a graduate student of Kabul University’s medical faculty, said that she registered for the final exam a month and a half ago. “The seven years we spent studying medicine were not simple years. Hearing this news is quite

upsetting because we passed several challenging tests,” Noria said.

According to female graduate students, they are unable to enroll in the specialty course unless they pass this test.

“We cannot join the specialized exam without passing the exit exam, and we are not allowed to work,” Noria added.

The National Examination Authority of Afghanistan suspended the final exam for female students until further notice on Sunday, February 12, and scheduled the exam for male students for February 18.

A number of male stu-

dents asked the Islamic Emirate to allow female students to participate in the exam. “They should as quickly as possible clear the exam time for our sisters, so that those of our sisters that have been shocked get rid of stress,” said Jamshid, a student.

Meanwhile, many medical professionals believe that the medical field has a critical need for educated women. “There is a great need for more female physicians in Afghan society since maternal and child mortality in Afghanistan is among the highest in Asia,” said Najm Sama Shafa, a doctor.

“Any delay in the education of female physicians and female students is a tragedy for the country,” said Azizullah Amir, a specialist in heart disease.

The National Examination Authority did not comment on the issue. Some graduates of Kabul University’s medical school in a letter made a request that the exam be administered first to female students.

Earlier, the Ministry of Higher Education banned women from taking the entrance exam for the 1402 (solar year) for admission to universities and private higher education institutions.

ISIS to take lead in conducting terror attacks

KABUL (TOLONews): Dr. Mahmut Cengiz, an assistant professor at George Mason University in an analytical report claims that ISIS is rapidly growing, and will take the lead in conducting terror attacks in Afghanistan.

Dr. Changis believes that the Islamic Emirate has not been successful in establishing a strong government and the Daesh (ISIS) is trying to fill the vacuum.

He has written on the ‘Home Security Today’ website that prior to the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, ISIS presence was not tangible in Kabul – they were mainly based in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces.

With the return of the Taliban to power, ISIS expanded its domain to Kabul and has been behind many brutal attacks in 2022. Cengiz believes ISIS appeared stronger in 2022, as the terrorist group conducted brutal attacks in Mali, Kango, Niger, Nigeria, Yemen, Philippines, Somalia, and Burkina Faso.

However, the terror group’s dominance in Afghanistan has been substantial in the past year. Although Al-Qaida has also gotten momentum with the return of the Taliban to power, they do not pose threats to the Taliban-run administration, because they have deep ties with the Afghan Taliban.

The author strongly believes that IS-Khorasan will fill the vacuum left by the Taliban in conducting terror attacks. IS-K has the potential and capability the conduct complicated attacks, including motor-bombing, suicide attacks, and placing explosives, as the group employs all the techniques the Taliban fighter used to apply while fighting the US-backed Kabul regime.

He warns that the terror group will intensify their attacks in the coming future in Afghanistan. He further adds that IS-K targeted different groups including the Taliban’s Haqqani branch last year. IS-K also targeted Hazaras and Shias, Sufis, and the diplomatic mission in Kabul.

The terrorist fighters have killed Hazaras in scores in mosques, entertainment venues, schools, and other places.

Forces destroyed ISIS hideout in Kabul: Mujahid



KABUL (TOLONews): Taliban senior spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said that Islamic Emirate security forces destroyed an important ISIS hideout in the capital Kabul late Monday night.

According to Zabiullah Mujahid, Taliban security personnel stormed an important Daesh (ISIS) hideout during a special operation in provincial district 8th of Kabul late Monday night, which resulted in the death of some key members of Daesh, which included some foreign nationals as well.

“Daesh fighters have been behind many brutal terror attacks in Kabul, which claimed the lives of hundreds of innocent civil-

ians and injured many others,” Mujahid said.

Dr. Mahmut Cengiz has written on the ‘Home Security Today’ website that prior to the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, ISIS presence was not tangible in Kabul – they were mainly based in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. With the return of the Taliban to power, ISIS expanded its domain to Kabul and has been behind many brutal attacks in 2022.

The terror group’s dominance in Afghanistan has been substantial in the past year. Although other militant groups including Al-Qaida has also gotten momentum with the return of the Taliban to power, they do not pose threats to the

Taliban-run administration, because they have deep ties with the Afghan Taliban.

Besides other challenges, security remains a major problem for Afghanistan’s de facto regime. Although Taliban authorities claim to be fulfilling their obligations to the international community by not allowing Afghan soil to be used against other states, it has not been so on the ground.

Islamic State Khorasan militants have launched separate terror attacks on the Russian Embassy, Pakistani Diplomatic Mission, and a Chinese-run hotel among others in the heart of Kabul, resulting in the death and injuries of scores of people.

More than 4000 Afghans returned to country from Iran



KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan’s Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation on Tuesday announced that 4,297 Afghan nationals returned to the country from Iran.

The returnees entered Afghanistan through the ‘Abrishum’ land route in Nimruz province and ‘Islamqala’ in western

Herat province on Tuesday.

The ministry of refugees and repatriation has also reported on the detention of some 400 Afghan citizens in Iran.

The Taliban authorities have still not confirmed whether the fresh returnees were forcefully deported or they left Iran willingly.

After the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan seized power, thousands of

Afghans migrated to the neighboring countries including Iran and Pakistan, mostly without having legal documents including a stay permit and visa.

Meanwhile, the Iranian government forcefully extradites those Afghan refugees who fail to provide legal stay documents.

In response to the recent deportation, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation

signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a private organization called ‘Osta’ to create employment opportunities for more than a thousand needy families in the recent past.

Some experts have described the main reason for the migration of Afghan nationals to the neighboring countries as extreme poverty, unemployment, lack of job security, and political instability.

Prior to this, the authorities of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation reported the return of some 3,000 Afghan migrants, a majority of who were forced to leave, while others left Iran of their own will.

Over the past couple of weeks, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan have extradited thousands of Afghan refugees for failing to provide legal stay permits (visas). While in Afghanistan, under the Taliban regime, a large majority of the Afghan populace suffers dire poverty, hunger, unemployment, instability, and isolation.

Qadis residents lament lack of health services

QALA-I-NAW (Pajhwok): Residents of the Qadis district western Badghis province complain about what they call the lack of hospitals and substandard health services.

Resident Habibullah Qadisi told Pajhwok Afghan News Qadis had a large population, but there was no standard health facility in the district.

According to him, the absence of a hospital in the district had created difficulties for the people who had to go to the provincial hospital for the treatment of even a minor illness.

Mohammad Yousaf, another inhabitant, said only a single clinic existed in the district with only one doctor. The clinic cannot serve all residents of the district.

He added: “unfortunately, we have a single clinic in this district with inadequate facilities. We have to take our patients to Qala-i-Naw for treatment.”

But Dr. Zamanuddin Hazeq, manager of the CFC clinic in the district, said about three hundred people visited the facility daily for medical treatment.

Hazeq confirmed he was the only doctor working at the health center and examining and treating patients. “We receive 250 to 300 patients daily and strive to treat as many of them as possible. A female doctor is also needed.”

With limited facilities and insufficient staff, they were trying to treat visitors and obviate the need for them going to the main provincial hospital, he continued.

Mohammad Himmatt, acting director of public health, called the issue a common one. All districts, except Bala Murghab did not have hospitals, he explained.

Poor traffic management continues to plague Kabul

KABUL (Pajhwok): A number of Kabul residents are complaining about disarrayed and poorly managed traffic, but officials say there is complete order in the city.

Ahmad Naveed, a resident of the 5th police district of Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News that most Kabul roads and intersec-

tions remained jammed up due to unruly traffic, causing great inconvenience for the people.

“Drivers disregard traffic rules, they stop cars in the middle of the road to pick passengers anywhere they want and it causes traffic jams and disorder in every place,” he added.

Mustafa, a resident of the

12th police district of Kabul, also complained about disorderly traffic movement, saying: “Traffic snarls have increased in the city due to the growing number of vehicles, lack of traffic signals in squares and recklessness of drivers.”

Tawab, a resident of 12th police district, blamed traffic blockades and jams at squares on carelessness of drivers.

Maulvi Khyal Mohammad, traffic manager of Kabul, said orderly traffic flow had been ensured compared to the past.

He added: “The complaints of Kabul residents in this regard are baseless and there has been a complete order.”

According to him, traffic signals would be reactivated in the entire city in near future.



Eight drug dealers held

KABUL (Agencies): Counter-narcotics police says that 8 people were arrested on charges of dealing drugs, and more than two acres of land were cleared of poppy cultivation.

The counter-narcotics police in four provinces of the country cleared more than two acres of land from poppy cultivation and arrested 8 people on charges of dealing drugs, said the Ministry’s statement.

3 arrested from Khost, 2 from Badakhshan, and 1 from Herat, added to the statement. The counter-narcotics police cleared more than two acres of poppy cultivation in Farah said the Ministry.

200 Radio stations on air, 44 shut down

KABUL (TOLONews): On World Radio Day, the Ministry of Information and Culture reported that 200 radio stations are now operating across the country.

According to this ministry, 44 radio stations have stopped operating due to economic problems in the past 18 months.

“There are now more than 200 operating radio stations in Afghanistan. After the Islamic Emirate came to power, 44 radio stations ceased operations,” said Abdulhaq Hemad, director of Publications of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

However, the Afghan Independent Journalists Union said in a statement

that 1,900 journalists and media workers have lost their jobs since the Islamic Emirate came to power, over 1000 of them are women.

“1,900 employees, including 1,075 women, lost their employment,” said Hujatullah Mujaddidi, head of the Afghan Independent Journalists Union.

Meanwhile, some media representatives requested that the Islamic Emirate assist journalists in getting access to information.

“We might have faced some issues when we wanted to cooperate with the government on some issues, and we need particular information to make accessible to the people,”

said Mansour Muwaded, the director of Arman Radio.

“Radio is the best medium. We hear about an earthquake and know what is happening in the nation,” said Namatullah, a Kabul resident.

The radio first started airing in Afghanistan in 1926 under the name Kabul Radio. Later, the name was changed to Afghanistan Radio.

“The daughter of Mahmud Tarzi was one of the first girls who came to Afghanistan Radio with her burqa and covered the program,” said Faqir Miwand, the former senior adviser of the Ministry of Information and Culture.



The organization provided cash assistance to 110 families in Moqar Badghis of the district.

Afghanistan and UAE; “they are happy to help us more”

KABUL (TOLONews): The United Arab Emirates is one of the wealthiest countries in the Persian Gulf region. The caretaker government of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan stated that they are hoping for a good ecopolitical relationship with the UAE.

“The United Arab Emirates’ relations with Afghanistan have been tied to economic issues since the relatively distant past,” said Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, head of the Afghan business council in the UAE, in an exclusive interview with TOLONews.

“They’ve been involved in several infrastructural projects in Afghanistan and made several hospitals, universities, schools, and residential buildings across Afghanistan in the Past. They carried on with their projects inside Afghanistan

since the new establishment took over,” he added.

After the republic government’s collapse and the Islamic Emirate’s establishment in Afghanistan, Turkey and Qatar entered a competition to take over the management of Kabul International Airport. Although Qatar is known to influence the new Afghan authorities and tried hard to take over the country’s market, according to Obaidullah Sader Khail, it was the United Arab Emirates that finally signed the contract to rebuild and run the international Kabul airport and “they delivered 80 per cent of what they’ve promised”.

According to Mr Sader Khail, the UAE has never tried to take a side in empowering a specific ethnic group based on cultural or linguistic similarity.

“They don’t have any border with us like Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan do to base their relations on supporting specific agendas,” Mr Sader Khail added, “the interests of the United Arab Emirates in Afghanistan are mostly based on common economic interests.”

Some economic experts believe if the caretaker government of Afghanistan pave the way to establish a solid financial relationship at the macro level with the United Arab Emirates, it will gain sustainable economic benefits.

“The UAE is working with different sectors of the acting government of the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan to build 200 hospitals across the country, make roads, publish schools’ books, build water channels, improve our saf-

from production to replace the harvest of opium poppies and carpet industry but they are happy to do more,” Mr Sader Khail said in his interview with TOLONews.

“The UAE could even help us extract Afghanistan’s rich mines,” said Mr Sader Khail pointing to the rich natural wealth of Afghanistan.

The UAE is a vital ally of the west and is known for its extensive diplomatic and commercial relations with most countries worldwide. This country plays an essential role in OPEC and is one of the founding members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. According to Mr Sader Khail, “they represent the international community in Afghanistan”.

However, the non-recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan by

the international community, including the UAE, has caused uncertainty in the relations between Afghanistan and the UAE.

For this reason, the high-ranking delegations of the United Arab Emirates government have shown interest in investing in Afghanistan in their recent trip to Afghanistan and meeting with the caretaker government officials. But the internal policies of the current government of Afghanistan, especially the restrictions imposed on women’s work and education, have prevented the establishment of such relations between Afghanistan and the world.

“Girls cannot go to school. Universities are closed. Girls’ schools are closed. Women are not allowed to work. Afghan people themselves are not

happy with this situation. I even think many caretaker government members are against these decisions. No one will recognise us when we do not solve these problems,” said Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail in his interview with TOLONews. He also mentioned the roles women held in the UAE’s government. “Now, in the world and the UAE, half of the government employees are women. Women are half of humanity. Who will recognise you when schools and universities are closed, and women are not allowed to work? The United Arab Emirates is also an Islamic country, and Saudi Arabia is also an Islamic country, but which of these countries has closed girls’ schools?”

According to Mr Sader Khail, the UAE hosts the largest Afghan business

community in the diaspora. More than 300,000 Afghans are living and working in the UAE. “Now, the majority of Afghan businessmen living in the United Arab Emirates hope that the situation in Afghanistan will develop in such a way that the way for the establishment of extensive trade relations between this country and other countries of the world will be opened.”

Although the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan called the current government a caretaker government and promised to remove the restrictions imposed on women according to Islamic orders, it is not clear when these measures will be taken and whether they can satisfy the international community and, specifically, the UAE to recognise it or not.

Pakistan-IAEA Partnership: Nuclear Technology for Sustainable Development**By: Maryam Siddiq Baba**

Nuclear technology with its inherent efficiency is moving headlong in developing smart and sustainable solutions to global environmental and socio-economic challenges. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with its mandate of 'Atoms for Peace and Development' has a unique portfolio of over 60 years in employment of nuclear technology for varied sectors of peaceful applications. These applications vary from health to climate and from agriculture to industrial applications and safety. Pakistan has been a long-term partner and beneficiary of IAEA's Technical Cooperation (TC) programme which is aimed to assist and coordinate with Member States in utilization of peaceful nuclear technology for the best probable and efficient solutions.

Pakistan, in cooperation with IAEA is working systematically to achieve goals set by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These SDGs have identified seventeen (17) areas in immediate need of long-term and consistent action and planning against food insecurity, challenges to health, lack of access to quality education, gender inequality, inaccessibility to clean water and sanitation, unavailability of affordable and clean energy, dearth of decent work and challenges to achieve economic goals, climate action and dangers to the preservation of marine life. IAEA supports countries through specialized technical and development competencies of nuclear applications to the achievement of some nine (9) specific SDGs.

During the last six decades, Pakistan has built its capabilities in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and has expanded its usage in the fields of health (specifically cancer care), clean energy, agriculture, industrial applications and environmental protection. Its technical cooperation with IAEA is manifested through the work of its specialized agencies like research centres, cancer hospitals, power and research reactors and education and training institutes. Pakistan-TC partnership has remained consistent in formulating real-time research and development solutions and capacity building. Ongoing projects in this partnership include enhancing and strengthening Pakistan's national capabilities in climate resistant crops, animal productivity, soil management, water and nutrient resources using nuclear related techniques.

PAEC has so far developed 132 crops varieties through use of state-of-the-art nuclear technology under institutions like Nuclear Institute of Agriculture (NIA), Nuclear Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE) and Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB). These institutes are involved in innovative use of nuclear techniques in agricultural production through research in soil fertility, disease resistant and time efficient crop varieties, insect and pest control, chemical pollution, animal health and food preservation. In the face of growing threat of food security, the work of these institutes will pave the way to provide better options to the lives and necessities of Pakistan's population.

In the way of achieving the goal of 'good health', nuclear medicine is playing an integral role. Specifically, in Pakistan, 19 cancer hospitals across the country have been established by Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), providing sizable support to most advanced treatment and care to its patients. State-of-the-art treatment is provided in these facilities including, SPECT-CT, PET-CT, Medical LINAC, IGRT, IMRT, VMAT and Cyber-knife. Furthermore, Pakistan, by dint of the IAEA's TC programme continues to maintain upgradation and capacity building of its work force in cancer care which contributes towards cancer treatment and prevention.

The goal of 'affordable and clean energy' in Pakistan is envisioned through inclusion of 8800 MW electricity by 2030 through the use of nuclear power. There are currently 06 operational nuclear power plants in Pakistan which are contributing towards clean, reliable and sustainable energy, necessary for continued socio-economic development of the country. Each one of these power plants is operating under the umbrella of IAEA safeguards, thereby ensuring its safe and sustainable operations.

Education is the key as it holds the way to acquisition of necessary skills and capabilities for the achievement of any sustainable goal for development. In the context of addressing the goal of 'quality education' and 'industry, innovation and infrastructure', Pakistan has focused its efforts on building strong institutions. IAEA has also focused its efforts on seeking gender parity and supports in increasing opportunities for women to participate in the nuclear field, leading to the approach of an inclusive workforce. IAEA's Marie Curie Fellowship Programme aims at inspiring and supporting young women to pursue a career in the field of nuclear science and technology. Pakistan, in support of this initiative, has provided scholarships for female students enabling them to complete a funded Master's degree at Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS).

Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science & Technology (PINSTECH), Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS), Karachi Institute of Power Engineering (KINPOE) and CHASNUPP Centre of Nuclear Training (CHASCENT) are established for a long-term and systematic human-resource building and expert-level education. Furthermore, PIEAS and NISAS are also designated as a part of IAEA Collaborating Centres for education and training in advanced and innovative nuclear technologies and nuclear security education, training and technical support. Being a part of IAEA collaborating centres network, these institutes contribute to IAEA's goal of promoting practical use of nuclear techniques worldwide and help in implementation of its own programmatic activities.

Following the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, IAEA has raised international concerns to the potential dangers associated with zoonotic diseases. IAEA facilitated Member States and in case of Pakistan provided real-time PCR machines for time-sensitive detection during the height of its spread. In order to find new solutions to this threat using nuclear techniques, IAEA's Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative aims to facilitate early detection and prevention of future Zoonotic outbreaks. Pakistan is also striving to contribute to the success of this initiative through its laboratories established at NIAB and NIBGE.

Pakistan understands the potential value of nuclear technology in the socio-economic development. Nuclear technology can further make remarkable contribution for the well-being of people and the environment. It has remained cognizant of IAEA's specialized work and continues to commit to a long-term partnership for the joint goals of advancement of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for the betterment of humanity and their commitment to UN SDGs. – The writer is PhD scholar at School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad.

A PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY**By: Syed Muhammad Irteza Imam**

Pakistan is amongst the founding members of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The agency was setup as a global promoter and monitor for the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology. Over the years, IAEA has helped its Members States in applying nuclear sciences for the betterment of mankind and improving the lives of millions through reliable power generation, higher production of food, advanced healthcare techniques and much more.

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) is leading the application of nuclear science and technology in Pakistan. IAEA and PAEC have benefitted immensely from each other's experiences. PAEC has also helped other IAEA Member States in the fields of agriculture and biotechnology, medicine and nuclear education.

In the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant social and economic pandemonium, PAEC provided the country with all means available to it to combat this disease. This effort to contain the spread of the disease was actively supported by IAEA through the provision of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machine, biohazard safety cabinets, test kits and related paraphernalia to help contain the pandemic through the use of nuclear derived techniques.

The equipment was placed in PAEC General Hospital in Islamabad and extended testing facilities not only to PAEC employees but also the general public, at large. PAEC General Hospital in Islamabad was also configured in record time to handle and operate all aspects of pandemic control from testing, treatment and post-treatment follow-ups. Due to a combination of preventive measures, vast scale testing and treatment, the hospital played a pivotal role in the early detection and hence the curtailing of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

IAEA and PAEC also benefit from each other's experience in application of nuclear technology and techniques in the medical sphere. The most prominent among these collaborations is fight against cancer. PAEC operates nineteen (19) cancer hospitals around the country with another under construction in Muzaffarabad. Nuclear technologies and techniques such as radiography and radiotherapy are essential for the detection and treatment of cancer patients. PAEC is also capable of training manpower in the application of nuclear technology for cancer control and treatment.

The avenues of IAEA-PAEC cooperation are vast. Over the years, IAEA has helped PAEC in training its human resource in various different fields of nuclear science and technology. This, in turn, favours other IAEA Member States as Pakistan trains their personnel. In 2019, IAEA signed a cooperation agreement with Pakistan and designated Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) as a Collaborating Centre to support Member States on research, development and capacity building in the application of advanced and innovative nuclear technologies.

PAEC, through its four agriculture centres namely Nuclear Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA-Peshawar), Nuclear Institute of Agriculture (NIA-Tando Jam), National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE-Faisalabad) and Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB-Faisalabad) has not only been successful in developing one hundred and thirty two (132) varieties of cash crops and pulses but also in imparting trainings to scientists from other countries in an effort to ensure food and thus human security. These exchanges are arranged in coordination with IAEA in order to spread the experience and knowledge gained by the research and development work of these centres.

Further to the IAEA's COVID-19 response, the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative was established in June 2020 to help countries prevent pandemics caused by bacteria, parasites, fungi or viruses that originate in animals and can be transmitted to humans. Using a systematic and integrated approach, ZODIAC will strengthen the preparedness and capabilities of Member States to rapidly detect and timely respond to outbreaks of such diseases.

Under ZODIAC, veterinary and public health officials from Member States can benefit from joint research and development activities and from expert guidance as well as from the technical, scientific and laboratory support of the IAEA and its partners. This includes access to coordinated joint research, training, know-how, expertise and technology packages to enhance pathogen surveillance and disease diagnostics, along with prevention and response actions. Furthermore, it will provide access to scientific and diagnostic data and a decision-making support system that can enable authorities to take timely science- and results-based decisions.

In line with IAEA's ZODIAC initiative, PAEC has recently established a ZODIAC laboratory at NIAB Faisalabad.

The partnership between IAEA and PAEC is not just confined to technical issues but rather extends to undertaking various political and administrative steps to ensure safety, security and efficient use of nuclear technology. These include several steps such as placing all of Pakistan's civil nuclear reactors under stringent IAEA Safeguards.

Both PAEC and IAEA are working together to create opportunities that ensure possibilities of applying nuclear technologies to human security through reliable, safe and carbon free energy, food security through crops that are resistant to pests, climate changes and require less water and by using radiological sciences to detect and treat deadly diseases such as cancer. All these efforts combined would ensure peace, progress and prosperity not only for Pakistan but also for other Member States of IAEA, in particular, and the humanity, in general. – The writer is a graduate from QAU, Islamabad.



H.E. Rafael Mariano Grossi, DG IAEA

Welcome to Pakistan

65 years of Pakistan - IAEA Collaboration

**Striving together to achieve**
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Young PAEC Agriculture Scientist
Awardee with DG IAEA



Chairman PAEC with DG IAEA

By

Introducing over **132**
Crop Varieties through
4
Agriculture & Biotechnology
Centres



Providing about
3600MW Electricity
through
6 Nuclear Power
Plants



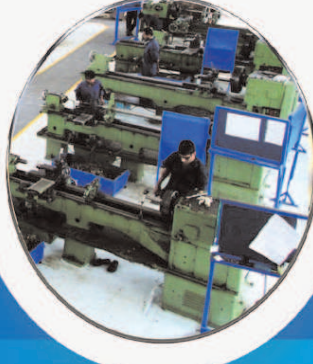
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