

FO flays Israel's decision
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned Israel's recent decision to legalize nine settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of West Bank. In a statement released issued here, Foreign Office said "It is a clear and flagrant violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. It further encroaches upon the rights of the people of Palestine.

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

Earthquake felt in Dir
F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A mild earthquake measuring 4.2 on international Richter scale was felt in Dir Lower district during wee hours on Wednesday. The earthquake was felt at 05:43 a.m. and its epicenter was four kilometer from Talash tehsil in Dir Lower district. The Rescue 1122 Dir Lower said its control room did not receive any call regarding harm to human life or property in the earthquake.

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Dar presents Finance (Supply) Bill 2023

— proposes Rs170b additional taxes on luxury items, cigarettes

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar Wednesday introduced the Finance (Supplementary) Bill 2023 or the "mini-budget" in the National Assembly and Senate as the government sought to fulfil the prerequisites for unlocking the \$1.1 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan tranche.

Running against time to pacify the IMF for the revival of the bailout programme, the government last night approved hiking the general sales tax (GST) rate from 17% to 18% and increasing the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes in order to fetch an additional Rs115 billion out of Rs170 billion agreed to by Pakistan in line with the IMF conditions.

Through the "mini-budget", the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government aims to reduce the budget deficit and broaden its tax collection net — in order to meet the conditions laid forth by the Washington-based lender. The National Assembly will not be sending the bill for further deliberations to the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, while the Senate has referred the legislation to the relevant committee.

Proposals: Increase in GST on luxury items from 17% to 25%; FED on business and first-class air tickets be increased to Rs20,000 or 50% — whichever is higher; 10% withholding adjustable advance income tax to be imposed on marriage halls; Increase in FED on cigarettes, soft and sugary drinks; FED on cement to be raised from Rs1.5 kg to Rs2 kg; Increase in GST from standard 17% to 18%; GST to not be imposed on essential goods — wheat, rice, milk, pulses, vegetables, fruits, fish, eggs, meat; BISP stipend to be increased; govt to allocate Rs400 billion for programme.

In his address to the lower house of parliament, Dar said that the "nation is facing unprecedented crises" due to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government's "sub-standard" policies. The country, during the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) previous government, had witnessed economic development and the gross domestic product (GDP) had increased by \$112 billion.

"The PML-N always tries to take fewer loans. Foreign investment had also

increased during the PML-N tenure. In contrast, during the PTI government, the loans hit record highs, and a common man's income also plunged." The finance czar went on to say that apart from overcoming the "challenges that the present government faces due to PTT's policies", last year's floods had also incurred losses worth more than \$8 billion.

"But, we should always prefer the state over politics," he reiterated — the mantra that PDM leaders have time and again propagate as they face an uphill task on the economic front. The finance minister insisted on reforms in the power sector, deeming those as key for the country's economy. "International financial institutions have asked for reforms in the sector," he said.

Senator Dar said the PDM-led administration has fulfilled the promises made to the IMF by the PTI-led government. "We are paying a hefty political price for all this. We consider the state, and not politics, important." The minister said that efforts are being made to impose taxes in such a way that common folk don't have to face difficulties.

Dar informed the parliament that the government has allowed the import of five-year-old tractors and has set a target to install 75,000 solar tube wells. The senator said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will soon take the nation into confidence regarding the mini-budget. He also informed parliamentarians about the prime minister and cabinet to propose a plan reducing its expenses.

"Initially, the economic growth will be slow, but will go up 4% later," the minister said. Dar added that notification to open Letters of Credit (LCs) of medicines, petroleum, and sports have been issued. The present and previous revenue target of Rs170 billion will be met, the minister said.

Speaking about provisions for farmers and the agriculture sector, the politician said that the government has already announced a Rs2,000 billion package for farmers, while Rs1,000 billion have been distributed so far. "Farmers will be given cheap loans for agricultural tools and Rs30 billion will be given for fertilisers," Dar said. He also stated that the government has earmarked Rs30 billion for youth loans.

PM, FM discuss foreign affairs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here.

In the meeting, they discussed the regional and international situation as well as the foreign affairs. Overall political situation in the country was also discussed in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Director General International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi held a meeting with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here in Islamabad on Wednesday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the use of atomic energy in the areas of health, agriculture, industries and electricity. The Director General IAEA commended Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. The IAEA Director General is on a two-day visit to Pakistan. During his stay in Pakistan he will be visiting various nuclear facilities, cancer treatment centers and agricultural research institutions employing nuclear technology for sustainable development. He will also get an opportunity to witness the excellent standards of nuclear safety and security being maintained by Pakistan.

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'First episode of jail-filling movement'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Wednesday termed PTI Chairman Imran Khan's application for protective bail in the Lahore High Court as the first episode of jail-filling movement of the Guru who took undue gains just to stuff his own pockets.

In a tweet, she said that an application had been filed for protective bail in the Lahore High Court by Imran Khan who said that he was a former prime minister and head of a major political party of the country, but he could not appear before the court as he was injured.

She said it may be taken as the first episode of the jail-filling movement by a person who always held his personal interests, supreme. PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb also said that a meeting of the party's youth wings officials of different districts of Punjab will be held today at Model Town, Lahore.

In a statement, she said that party's Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz will preside over the meeting. The meeting would review the organizational structure of the youth wing and the social media section, she added. She said that problems faced by the youth would be discussed and suggestions from them will be taken. Officials of Youth Wings will give suggestions for the preparation of 'Youth Charter', the minister said adding that consultation on youth policy would also be in the meeting. She said that Maryam Nawaz will throw light on the PML-N priorities for youth development policy.



ISLAMABAD: Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Mariano Grossi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Reduction in climate change losses PM stresses collaboration with IAEA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed greater collaboration with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in terms of research on new high-yield and drought resistant varieties of crops.

In a meeting with Director General IAEA Rafael Mariano Grossi, the prime minister emphasized collaboration in view of the impact of climate change on Pakistan and related challenges including water, energy and food security.

Shehbaz Sharif noted the contribution of nuclear power generation to Pakistan's energy mix as a cleaner and more affordable source of energy. The prime minister appreciated the ongoing cooperation between the IAEA and Pakistan in the areas of health, agriculture, indus-

try, nuclear medicine and power generation.

He expressed Pakistan's full support for various projects and programmes of the Agency and conveyed Pakistan's keenness to expand its footprints in the Agency's work both as a recipient and provider of expertise and technical assistance.

Director General Grossi was briefed about the crucial role being played by the 19 cancer hospitals being operated by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) which were bearing the bulk of cancer burden in Pakistan and offering services to the general public at nominal rates.

The IAEA Director General agreed to the need for expanding applications of nuclear technology in countries like Pakistan to address a whole suite of climate-related challenges. He expressed his appreciation

for the good work of the agricultural research institutions in Pakistan, including NIAB which is one of the IAEA Collaborating Centers in Pakistan.

A c k n o w l e d g i n g Pakistan's expertise in nuclear applications in various fields the Director General noted the important role Pakistan can play for supporting the Agency's work including its 'Ray of Hope' initiative for cancer treatment.

The IAEA Director General is on a two-day visit to Pakistan. During his stay in Pakistan he will be visiting various nuclear facilities, cancer treatment centers and agricultural research institutions employing nuclear technology for sustainable development. He will also witness the excellent standards of nuclear safety and security being maintained by Pakistan.

Pak-US naval chiefs take up maritime security coop

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi held a meeting with Commander US Naval Forces Central Command Vice Admiral Brad Cooper on Wednesday.

Both the naval chiefs exchanged views on affairs of mutual interests, maritime security situation, and bilateral naval cooperation. According to the spokesperson for Pak Navy, both leaders have resolved to strengthen the defence and naval cooperation between the two countries. The Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command congratulated CNS Admiral Niazi on the successful conduct of AMAN-23 organized by the Pakistan Navy.

The five-day multinational maritime exercise AMAN-23 was concluded in Karachi on Tuesday. Naval forces of more than 50 countries participated in the joint naval

exercise with their warships, aircraft, Special Operation Forces and a large number of observers. The exercise was aimed at developing an effective joint strategy against pirates, terrorists and smugglers of drugs and arms.

Meanwhile, US Ambassador Donald Blome visited Karachi and observed the AMAN-23 Naval exercises to further strengthen US-Pakistan cooperation and advance a common vision for peace and stability in the region. During his visit to Karachi, Ambassador Blome also met with the Chief Minister of Sindh, Commander of the Pakistan Fleet (COMPAK), and the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS).

"I was pleased to observe the AMAN-23 exercises, which promote a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Pakistan," said Ambassador Blome during his visit. "We want to further strengthen our maritime security cooperation with the Pakistan Navy to secure freedom of

navigation in international waters to facilitate economic activity. The combined patrol between Pakistan Navy, PMSA (Pakistan Maritime Security Agency), and NAVCENT last October bodes well for our future collaborative efforts." AMAN-23 was held concurrently with the Pakistan International Maritime Exhibition and Conference (PIMEC), which hosted trade promotion pavilions relating to the "blue economy." AMAN-23 included two components: the International Maritime Conference (IMC), which was a series of discussion panels about maritime security and trade, and the AMAN-23 naval exercises.

In his meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Ambassador Blome affirmed the importance of the US-Pakistan relationship and discussed opportunities to expand US-Pakistan economic partnership and other shared priorities.

178 papers filed for by-election on 16 NA seats

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A total of 178 nomination papers have been filed in the second phase of by-election on 16 vacant National Assembly constituencies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa scheduled on March 19, 2023, said a spokesman of the Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC) here on Wednesday.

The scrutiny of nomination papers would be completed till February 18. Appeals against rejection and or acceptance of nomination papers could be filed till February 22, 2023 while Appellate Tribunals will dispose of them till February 27, 2023.

The revised list of candidates would be issued on February 28, 2023 and candidates can withdraw their nomination papers till March 1, 2023. The final list of candidates would be issued on March 2, 2023 and election symbols would also be allotted to them on the same day. The seats have become vacant due to the resignations of PTI legislators.

Umar denies apologizing to ECP

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Asad Umar on Wednesday accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of behaving like a political party. He also stated that he had instructed his lawyers to withdraw a reply he had submitted to the ECP.

In a press conference held here, Umar's comments came in response to media reports of his alleged apology to the ECP. He clarified that he had not apologized and stood by his belief that the ECP was acting as a political party. PTI leader said that he had instructed his lawyers to withdraw his response, adding that the ECP was not authorized to impose contempt on anyone.

LHC conditions Imran's protective bail to in-person appearance

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan would be granted protective bail if he appears before the court in person. Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh's remarks came as he heard Khan's plea seeking protective bail in a case lodged against him for protests outside the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) office.

The PTI chief moved the high court after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad rejected his bail in the same case earlier in the day — after Khan failed to appear in person before it. The ousted prime minister, who was removed from power via a no-confidence move, was booked in the case in October last year after the Toshakhana verdict was announced by the ECP, sparking countrywide protests. Khan had been on bail on medical grounds after he was injured in an assassination attempt in

Wazirabad during a rally on November 3.

Not only had the ATC summoned the PTI chief, but a banking court had also asked Khan to appear before it in the prohibited funding case. However, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order the banking court to hold its verdict till February 22 — in a sigh of relief for the ex-prime minister. The LHC said that it would ensure Khan's security and asked his counsel to ensure the PTI chief's presence tomorrow (Thursday) as an in-person appearance was the first rule in a protective bail case.

At the onset of the hearing, Khan's legal counsel contended that according to his medical report, it was difficult for the PTI chief to walk. "Khan wants to appear in the relevant court, he contended, "however, according to the doctor, he will not be able to walk again for three weeks."

Khan's counsel then requested the court to grant him protective bail on

medical grounds. To this, Justice Saleem said, "the appearance of the suspect is necessary even in the case of a protective bail." He further said that in light of the problem, the PTI chief could come to the court in an ambulance. Asserting that the law was the same for all regardless of power is prestige, the justice stated: "In principle, I should dismiss this petition, but I am making a concession."

Khan's lawyer then argued that there were "security concerns." The court then offered to send police to bring Khan to the court to ensure his safety. "The law is set," the justice reiterated, "the suspect must appear before the court. If you so desire, I can ask the Punjab IG to ensure Khan's security."

He then ordered that Khan should be brought before the court by 8pm later on Wednesday, adding that he was habitual of working late. The court then adjourned the hearing for some time. Once the hearing resumed,

PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry appeared before the LHC and sought Justice Sheikh's permission to speak.

In response, the judge said that since Fawad is not in the lawyer's uniform, he cannot speak in the courtroom. Then, Khan's lawyer began his arguments and told the court that the IHC had also granted relief to the PTI chief on medical grounds as the doctors have not yet allowed the ex-prime minister to travel.

The judge then said that the first rule for protective bail is that the suspect should be presented before the court for seeking bail. The lawyer said that he would present his client via video link. "Implement the procedure. However, if you guarantee that you will present your client in the morning, then I will adjourn the hearing till tomorrow," the judge remarked.

"Whether you bring him on a stretcher or an ambulance, it doesn't matter, but without his in-person

appearance, I will not grant bail," Justice Sheikh said. Fawad intervened and asked the court to set tomorrow's date for hearing arguments. The LHC declined and said that if Khan's in-person presence is guaranteed, only then will the hearing be adjourned. The lawyer then asked the court to allow him to consult with his client. The court then adjourned the hearing till 8:15pm.

Upon the resumption of the hearing, as Khan wasn't present in the court, Justice Sheikh asked once again: "Why can't he appear before the court?" The lawyer told the court that doctors had prohibited his client from walking. The judge then asked the lawyer who has asked him to walk. The lawyer argued that not only were there medical restrictions but there were security concerns as well. The judge said that he would ensure that Khan gets the required security. The court then adjourned the hearing till tomorrow.

During the hearing, Khan's lawyer Babar Awan highlighted that the additional sessions judge had granted interim bail to the PTI chief till February 27. Awan requested the court to extend the bail, adding that Khan had tried to come but could not travel. "Imran Khan neither tried running away from the country nor the court," he said. The judge said that other accused should also be given relief if Khan was given relief for a bullet injury. At this, Awan said that the court should give last chance to his client. "I am willing to submit a surety bond of Rs10,000," he added.

"Let me take instructions to withdraw the bail plea," said the lawyer. The ATC judge remarked that the court will announce a verdict if the bail petition is not withdrawn. Later, after waiting for the PTI chief, who was on interim bail, for more than an hour, Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan of the ATC announced the verdict to cancel Khan's bail.



National horse and cattle show to start from March 10

LAHORE (APP): The National Horse and Cattle Show will be held in Lahore from March 10 to 12 and in this regard the Chief Secretary Punjab has assigned the responsibilities to all the relevant departments.

An important meeting presided over by the chief secretary to review the arrangements for the Horse and Cattle Show was held at the Civil Secretariat here on Wednesday.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Senior Member Board of Revenue, administrative secretaries of various departments including local government, finance, livestock, sports, industries, agriculture, and information, Commissioner, CCPO Lahore and officers concerned attended the meeting.

The chief secretary said that the Horse and Cattle Show is a reflection of national solidarity and unity, adding that the event decorated with the colours of regional culture would be organised from March 10 to 12. He directed that the best arrangements be made for the Horse and Cattle Show. He said that there should be no traffic problem during the Horse and Cattle Show and PSL matches, and alternative route must be provided before starting any development work. The Secretary Local Government briefed the meeting that the colours of the culture of all the provinces of Pakistan would be presented.

CM decides to remove DPO Nankana

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has decided to immediately remove DPO Nankana from his position after an inquiry report into the mob lynching incident in Nankana Sahib on Wednesday.

A three-member inquiry committee headed by Additional IG Zulfiqar Hameed conducted hearing of the incident and submitted its report to the Punjab chief minister.

Two DIGs were also part of the committee. The chief minister also directed action against other accused responsible for the incident.

He said all resources will be used to bring the culprits to book.

Meanwhile, Punjab caretaker government has stopped the recruitment and posting of more than 500 officials and officers in the newly-created districts of the province.

The previous government had approved the posting of 549 officers and officials in Gujrat Division and other new districts.

Model graveyards: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has also ordered to immediately make functional all model graveyards across the province including Lahore.

The chief minister chaired a meeting to review affairs of Shehr-e-Khamoshan

Authority. CM Mohsin Naqvi abolished charges of Rs10,000 in model graveyards for the poor. At model graveyards, Rs10,000 were charged for digging the grave, providing slabs and for other services. The chief minister has also ordered that all graveyards of the city should be cleaned and encroachments-free. He issued directions for conducting a survey of the city graveyards.

Projects of Kahna Nau, Raiwind Road, Ahlu and Sue-e-Asal model graveyards will be completed.

825 kanal land will be allocated at Kahna Nau Road model graveyard, whereas 98 kanal land at Ahlu Katcha Road, 127 at Raiwind Road and 276 kanal land will be allocated in Sue-e-Asal Road for model graveyards.

The chief minister also directed that fore walls of model graveyard, Janazgah and construction of place for ablation should be completed at model graveyards.

Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir, Minister for Local Government and Community Development Ibrahim Hassan Murad, secretaries of local government and information, commissioner Lahore division, deputy commissioner, DG Shehr-e-Khamoshan Authority, DGPR and other high ranking officers of the government attended the meeting

Ethiopian ambassador-led trade delegation visits PBIT

LAHORE (APP): A trade delegation, led by Federal Republic of Ethiopia Ambassador to Pakistan Jamal Beker Abdula, visited the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT), here on Wednesday. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer welcomed the delegation. A

meeting was held between the caretaker minister and the Ethiopian ambassador.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Mr. Adama Bictogo, Speaker of the National Assembly of Ivory Coast.

Federal, Sindh govts agree to settle outstanding issues

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Water Syed Khurshed Shah in their high power meeting have agreed to settle all the outstanding issues, including K-IV, RBOD-I and III, and Hub Canal projects amicably.

The meeting was attended by Chairman WAPDA Gen (ret'd) Sajjad Ghani, Secretary Water Resources Hassan Nasir Jami through video link, Joint Secretary Maher Ali Shah, GM North Masood Soomro, PD K-IV Aamir Mughal, Sindh Minister for Local Govt Nasir Shah, Minister for Irrigation Sindh Jam Khan Shoro, Sindh Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput,

Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Finance Sajid Jamal Abro, Secretary LG Najam Shah, Secretary Irrigation Sohail Qureshi and other concerned officers, said a statement issued here on Wednesday.

The meeting was told that the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme K-IV Phase-I (260 MGD) was being constructed in Districts Malir and Thatta with the objective to provide a dependable and sustainable water transmission system from its more than 100 kilometers away source of Keenjhar Lake to three reservoirs around the city to feed Karachi Water Supply and Distribution Network.

The Chief Minister said that the project would enable the water supply system to meet the public needs and requirements of commercial and industrial activities. He said, the water supports economic activities, alleviates poverty by flourishing the existing and future industries in Karachi. He directed to expedite the pace of works on the project.

Federal Minister Khurshed Shah said that his team had told him that there were some cases of land disputes under hearing in courts.

At this, the CM directed the Chief Secretary to get all the issues of land and court cases cleared so that the work on the project could be accelerated.

TENDER NOTICE

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), a body corporate working under the Federal Government is contributing towards poverty alleviation through its various poorest of the poor focused services. "PBM Sweet Home" (PSH) is an important project of PBM for rehabilitation of orphan (male) children. Each PSH has an approved strength of 100 children.

Sealed proposals comprising of a single package & containing two separate envelopes each, for the **Financial and Technical Proposals** separately, are invited from PSRA registered local schools at District **Mansehra** for primary / secondary education to 100 children residing in "PBM Sweet Home" (PSH) at District **Mansehra** for the academic year commencing from **1st April-2023**. The Bidding / Tender document is available for the interested bidders from office of the Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Provincial Office, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Price of the bidding document is **Rs 500/-** Non-Refundable (as per rule 23 (5) of Public Procurement Rules, 2004) which may be deposited in **PBM NIDA Account No. 3011736523** (maintained at NBP Hayatabad Township Branch Peshawar). Bidding document can also be downloaded from website www.pbm.gov.pk and can also be obtained from PBM District Office **Mansehra**, but its price of **Rs 500/-** is to be paid and its original bank deposit slip be attached to the Technical proposal to participate in the bidding process. Sealed Tender (Technical and Financial) proposals shall be submitted before or on **07-03-2023** by 10:30 A.M. Technical Proposals will be opened on the same day at 11:00 A.M. After evaluation and approval of the technical proposals, the financial proposals of the technically accepted bidders will be opened publicly on **16-03-2023** by 11:00 A.M. in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

Call Deposits @ Rs. 01 % of total bid rate in the name of Director PBM, Provincial Office, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar must be attached with the financial proposal. This advertisement is also available on PBM website www.pbm.gov.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk respectively.

PID(P)# 061/2023

Director Pakistan Bait ul Mal,
Provincial Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Qafila Road, near Gora Qabristan, University Road, Peshawar
Phone/Fax: 091-9218021/ 091-9218023



**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG: DIVISION NOWSHERA**
Email: nsrxen@gmail.com Phone & Fax 0923-9220455

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Technical & Financial Proposal through E-bidding on the basis of single stage two envelop system from the pre-qualified firms/companies registered with PHE department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the solar based pumping system.

The works are offered Scheme wise. Detail of schemes are as under:-

S#	Description	No. of Schemes
1	Solarization of Water Supply Scheme Under KFW Program (Balu Shrif Zone-A and B, Shabara Zone B, Yaqoob ghari Zone -A U/C Jaloza and Dag Ismail Khel Zone A+B)	6
2	Solarization of Water Supply Scheme Under ADP 243/220763	05
3	Solarization of Water Supply Scheme/Pressure Pumps Under ADP 265/210473	01
4	Solarization of Water Supply Scheme Under DDP 2021-22	01

Scheme wise list, Technical Specification and the design parameters of pumping machinery for each of the water supply scheme all other terms and condition are given in the bidding documents. Bidders may obtain bidding documents and further information from the office of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Nowshera on any working day before the closing date.

General Terms and Conditions:

- Technical Design should be based on Hydraulic Parameters of the scheme provided in the bidding documents and rates should be quoted accordingly in financial bid.
- Last date for submission technical / financial bid is **6-3-2023 at 12.00 Hours**. Technical Bids will be opened at 2.30 hours on the same day, by the bids evaluation/Procurement committee in the office of Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Nowshera, in the presence of bidders or their representative opted to attend. Date of financial bid opening shall be intimated accordingly.
- Financial bid shall be submitted electronically through e-Bidding not later than **6-3-2023 upto 12:00 Noon**. The envelop mark as "Financial Proposal" must contain bid security @2% of the Estimated cost in shape of call deposit along with the stamp duty in the name of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Nowshera and Nonrefundable Bidding Entry Fee @ 0.03% of Tender Cost in shape of separate Call Deposit may be furnished (in original) to this office.
- Additional Security shall be submitted as per KPPRA Notification No. S.R.O. (14) Vol:1-24/2021-22/6058-21 dated: 10-05-2022.
- Bidders must be registered and active tax payer with KPRA and shall have renewed their registration for current year.
- This tender notice is also available on PHED website www.phedkp.gov.pk

INF(P) 597/23

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PID K No.2364-D/22



CS: Efforts needed to stamp out polio virus from region

PESHAWAR (APP): The newly joined Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Imdadullah Bosal has underlined the need for augmenting efforts by all the stakeholders to ensure stamping out of polio virus from the last endemic region and protect children from permanent disabilities.

He said this while chairing the maiden meeting of the Provincial Task Force (PTF) for polio eradication here Wednesday at his office in Civil Secretariat.

Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs, Secretary Information, Secretary Health, representative of Pak Army and Police Department, Additional Secretary Health for Polio Eradication / Coordinator EOC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Asif Rahim, Deputy Coordinator EOC, Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, Director General Health Services KP, Director EPI, Senior Consultant CDC, Dr Rana Safdar, National N Stop Brig Retd Soomro, Team Leads UNICEF & WHO participated in the meeting. All the divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners joined the forum virtually.

Chief Secretary said that

a lot of effort, coordination and resources go into every round of anti-polio campaign, and it was important to ensure optimal use and benefits of all these efforts by ensuring a strict monitoring and accountability system in place at all levels.

He thanked all the partners and Provincial Emergency Operations Center for the sustained efforts and for containing the spread of the virus to other districts saying that the provincial government will continue to support the polio eradication efforts till the finish line is reached.

Earlier, Additional Secretary Health (polio eradication)/Coordinator EOC, Asif Rahim briefed the forum in detail about the ongoing February round of anti-polio campaign in the province, epidemiology and surveillance updates, updated status of environmental sites, the performance of the campaign in southern KP, intensified extended outreach activities (EOAs), new interventions adopted by provincial EOC to get the desired results in terms of improved reporting from field and coverage of missed children.

He also oriented the

forum about the new interventions including the ring strategy introduced in the Mehsud belt of South Waziristan, new campaign modality three plus two according to the ground situation. Extended outreach activities (EOAs), positive environmental sites, streamlining the reporting, presence and corrective actions by campaign monitors.

The forum discussed the challenges faced in reaching remote and high-risk areas of the province and developed a plan to overcome these challenges.

It was also stressed to build better coordination and collaboration among different stakeholders involved in the polio eradication campaign and develop a plan to strengthen partnerships and communication among them.

In the concluding remarks, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa emphasized the importance of maintaining high vaccination coverage and continuing surveillance activities to ensure the sustained success of the polio eradication program in the province.

PTI announces 14 nominees for Peshawar constituencies by-polls

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday nominated 14 candidates for provincial assembly constituencies from district Peshawar with no fresh face.

According to the final list of candidates, Mahmood Jan Khan would contest the by-election from PK-69, Arbab Waseem Hayat from PK-70, Muhammad Sohaib from PK-71, Syed Muhammad Ishtiaq from PK-72, Fazal Malik from PK-73, Zulfiqar Khan from PK-74, Abdul Jabbar from PK-75, Taimoor Saleem Jaghra from PK-76, Arbab Muhammad Ali PK-77, Malik Wajid Khan from PK-78, Irfan Saleem PK-79, Kamran Bangash from PK-80, Meena Khan Afridi from PK-81, and Fazle Elahi from PK-82.

PHC orders Dean, Chairman to appear today

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Musrt Halali and Justice Abdul Shakoor ordered Dean and Chairman Institutional Disciplinary Committee Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) for terminating doctor despite his reinstatement to appear today (Thursday).

The counsel Habib Anwar Advocate argued that Dr. Kimrat Ullah was dismissed from services under various allegations while FPSC second year exam was cancelled but the petitioner approached High Court and PHC ordered IDC to reconsider the applicant as per law.

The counsel added that Dr. Kiramat Ullah was dismissed for the second time on 31st January which is unfair and argued that IDC issued warning to petitioners while stopping him from appearance from television against LRH narrative.

He added that an Assistant Dean terminated Dr. Kiramat Ullah on nepotism and victimized committee members that how can they reinstated the applicant.

The counsel argued that Dean is disturbing his training and manipulating IDC procedure and court's orders while PHC has ordered Dean and Chairman IDC LRH to appear today before High Court.



PESHAWAR: An old man struggling to push a handcart loaded with blankets in Dabgari area.

City Police evolve anti-street crimes strategy

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police has evolved a new strategy to arrest street-crimes and provide protection to the lives and properties of the people.

The new strategy has been prepared on the instructions of the Chief Capitol Police Officer (CCPO). Peshawar, Mohammad Ijaz Khan, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

In connection with the newly adopted strategy, the

Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations), Kashif Aftab Abbasi along with other officers paid a surprise visit to police checkpoints established at entrances and exits to the district.

The SSP moralized and encouraged police personnel deployed at crucial checkpoints and directed them for continuation of ongoing operations against suspected tinted-glass vehicles and unregistered motorcycles.

The scrutiny of the documents of suspects and illegal Afghan refugees is also continued at checkpoints. Vehicles are also checked through the Vehicles Verification System (VVS) at checkpoints.

In a statement, SSP (Operations), Kashif Aftab Abbasi has said that the purpose of special checkpoints is to ensure a peaceful environment and protection of the lives and properties of the people.

LG decides profiling of all VCs and NCs

PESHAWAR (APP): The Local Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to collect data of existing facilities and particulars of police stations in village and neighborhood councils across the province.

According to the LG Department, secretaries' councils have been directed to compile a complete survey in this regard and send the report within 12 days. The profiling of all village and neighborhood councils would start from Thursday

and the data collected earlier on an experimental basis would be erased.

It said that profiling of those village and neighborhood councils that was earlier made on experimental basis will be re-conducted for correcting the record.

In profile collection process, details of all existing facilities in neighborhood and union councils including details of the limits of the union council, its pictures, details of educational and healthcare

facilities in the area and particulars of the area police stations.

It said in case of filing wrong data of neighborhood and village councils the same could be deleted for entering corrected details. The secretaries union councils have been allotted IDs and passwords for entering detailed data of their areas. The Local Government Department has directed for completing the data entering process by 28th February.

13 officers to be grilled over corruption charges

PESHAWAR (APP): The Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has constituted a two-member committee to probe allegations of misconduct and illegal appointments by two former Directors erstwhile FATA Health Services (FHS) and 13 other high ranking officers.

A notification available with this agency disclosed that the inquiry was ordered by previous Chief Secretary KP Dr Shahzad Khan Bangash on February 08, 2023, into alleged illegal appointments in various projects during the year 2020 and misconduct under Rule-3 of KP Government Servants (efficiency and

Discipline) Rules, 2011 by the former directors.

The inquiry was ordered against Director FHS Dr Jawad Habib Khan (BS-20) now Chief Executive Officer Blood Transfusion Authority and Dr Niaz Muhammad Afridi (BS-19) the then Director FHS and now Director Provincial Health Services Academy Peshawar.

The other officers included Dr Inayat ur Rehman (BS-19), Dr Abbas (BS-19), Dr Nawab Ali (BS-19), Dr Naik Muhammad Sherani (BS-19), Dr Kaleem Ullah (BS-19), Dr Akbar Khan (BS-19), Dr Jamal Nasir (BS-19), Dr Muhammad Israr

(BS-18), Dr Muhammad Sadiq (BS-18), Dr Muhammad Ikram Safi (BS-18), Dr Rahim Nawaz (BS-18), Dr Sher Zali Khan (BS-18), Dr Raza Ullah (BS-18).

The notification mentioned that all the officers were currently serving on important posts in the province.

The two-member inquiry committee included Muhammad Zubair Asghar Qureshi (PAS BS-21), Director General Provincial Services Academy, KP and Dr Abid Hussain, Management Cadre (BS-20) Additional Director General (M&E), Directorate General Health Services, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

UOP's appeal accepted to obtain income of PUTA hall

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Ijaz-ur-Rehman Qazi upheld Senate decision regarding transfer of PUTA's hall income to University of Peshawar (UOP), on Wednesday.

During hearing UOP's lawyer Wasim-u-Din Khattak and Legal Officer Riaz Ali Khan appeared before court and informed that in 133rd meeting of Senate it was decided that income of PUTA hall should be transfer to varsity while separate head will be opened in this regard.

They informed that Civil court has granted status quo against Senate's decision which will increase financial burden on UOP and added that Senate decision can neither challengeable before court.

After conclusion of arguments AD&SJ Ijaz-ur-Rehman turn down civil down decision and admitted University of Peshawar (UOP)'s appeal and declared that senate decision transfer PUTA's hall income to varsity as right and correct.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Adnan Jalil talking to Political Economic Chief of US Embassy Nickolas Katsakis.

Peshawar ATC acquits activist Gulalai Ismail's parents in sedition case

PESHAWAR (INP): An anti-terrorism court in Peshawar on Wednesday acquitted social activist Gulalai Ismail's parents in a case registered by the counter-terrorism department on the charges of sedition, terror financing and facilitation.

Pronouncing the reserved verdict, ATC Judge Fazal Sattar declared that charges against Professor Mohammad Ismail and his wife could not be proven.

Commenting on the development, North Waziristan lawmaker and Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) leader Mohsin Dawar said that Gulalai's parents had been "harassed and persecuted" for far too long.

"Their resolve remains unshaken," he said and

congratulated the activist.

Ahead of the verdict, Gulalai tweeted that her parents were put on a "torturous trial".

The CTD had charged Gulalai and her parents in a first information report (FIR) registered on July 6, 2019. In July last year, ATC had declined to indict Gulalai and her parents on the basis of an interim challan (charge sheet) over the lack of evidence in the case.

It had declared that as no evidence was produced by the prosecution, the charge couldn't be framed against the accused and they were discharged under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The CTD later submitted the complete charge sheet and produced more documents, claiming that the

accused had provided weapons and a car to terrorists that were used in attacks on Peshawar's All Saints Church in 2013 and Hayatabad's Imamia Masjid in 2015.

The court then indicted Gulalai's parents on multiple charges including sedition, waging war against the state, and facilitation of attacks on All Saints Church and Imamia Masjid on September 30, 2020. They had pleaded not guilty to the charges and were later facing trial.

Initially, CTD had registered an FIR under Section 11-N of the Anti-Terrorism Act wherein it had charged Gulalai Ismail and her parents of being sympathisers of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement. Subsequently,

several other provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code and Anti-Terrorism Act were included in the FIR.

The complainant, CTD inspector Mohammad Ilyas, alleged that Gulalai Ismail was the chairperson of an organisation, Aware Girls, and under its cover, she had been working for anti-state elements besides financing terrorist organisations.

Gulalai Ismail had gone into hiding in May 2019 when a case was registered against her in Islamabad for allegedly defaming state institutions and inciting violence through a speech in a demonstration against the killing and sexual abuse of a minor girl. She surfaced in the US in Sept 2019.

Inspector General of Police calls on CM, discusses peace maintenance

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat Khan here on Wednesday called on Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mohammad Azam Khan and discussed maintenance of peace in the province and matters pertaining to police force.

The meeting was held at the CM Secretariat and was briefed by the IGP. He said that KP police was always ready to cope with militancy.

He assured that the police jawans had professional exuberance and "will protect human lives and

property at all cost."

Akhtar Hayat also forwarded recommendations for introducing reform in police force as per requirement of current technology based era and to deal with confronted challenges.

The KP CM on the occasion appreciated the role of police force for maintaining sustainable peace and assured full support of the provincial caretaker government.

IGP reviews security measures at Sarband Police Station

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Inspector General, Akhtar Hayat Khan on

Wednesday visited the Sarband Police Station in Peshawar to review the security measures taken by the police.

The Capital City Police Officer, Muhammad Ijaz Khan also accompanied the IGP on the visit.

During the visit, the IGP inspected various parts of the police station and met with the officials on duty to learn about the problems and difficulties faced by them during duty.

He appreciated the professional spirit of the policemen and encouraged them to keep up the good work.

The IGP also reviewed the monitoring system of CCTV cameras installed in the police station and directed the police to carefully review the security measures taken to thwart any possible attack by miscreants.

The Capital City Police Officer briefed the IGP about the security measures taken at the police station.

The IGP appreciated the high morale and dedication of the police station staff and the senior police officials concerned. He also directed the authorities to provide all possible facilities to the policemen.



PESHAWAR: President All Pakistan Class-IV Employees Association Akbar Khan Mohmand addressing a meeting. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Adnan and Nickolas discuss various issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries and Technical Education Adnan Jalil called on Nickolas Katsakis, Political Economic Chief of the US Embassy, at a local hotel in Peshawar and discussed with him various issues of mutual interest.

The US diplomat offered a comprehensive package of training teachers and students to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Accepting the offer as a courtesy, the caretaker minister said that the provincial government has chalked out a well-conceived and comprehensive plan to upgrade the technical educational institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, train teachers and teach modern skills to the young generation on modern lines, wherein the cooperation of the US government and donors will be considered as a gift for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said it will also inculcate feelings and sentiments of

goodwill amongst both nations.

The minister said that under the program of equipping the youth with modern technical education in the province, the students who have graduated will be enabled to open their shop or workshop by hiring the services of more artisans after meeting the required business requirements including getting a National Tax Number so that our youth can learn meaningful skills as well as to enable earning a decent living and help in eradicating unemployment.

Adnan Jalil said that GIZ, USAID and international donor and aid agencies of so many countries have provided a lot of support to our technical training centers in woodworking and other technologies in the past.

He said various agencies can also play a key role in supporting the provincial government and promoting technical education over

here.

The Political Economic Chief of the US Embassy assured the caretaker minister to seriously review the new technical education plan of the provincial government and provide full financial and technical support and grants in this regard.

PHC rejects writ petitions

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice SM Ateeq Shah rejected writ petitions seeking permission for cutting of forests in Upper Dir, on Wednesday.

Chief Justice remarked that from one side we are giving order to Government institution to stop deforestation and from other side local people filed petition for deforestation. The case was followed by Additional Advocate general Syed Sikander hayat Shah from Provincial government.

The petitioners from Upper Dir said the government banned local people from cutting trees in the upper dir from Last 29 years because of which the people is facing serious problems.

The chief justice Qaiser remarked that we will not allow people to cut the trees we want to control deforestation and instruction have been issues to stop deforestation and the petition is rejected.

Passport and Immigration rejects propaganda: Faiz

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Passport and Immigration argued that a rumor has been propagated regarding increase in fees of the passport which has created rush at the offices. This was argued by Passport and Immigration Director KP Faiz-ul-Hassan and Assistant Director Sharif in their press statement. The statement stated that rush has been increased at passport offices across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which result of propaganda regarding increase in fees. The press statement added that there is no increase is proposed in fees while passport is still providing on old charges. Director General Passport and Immigration has also rejected propaganda regarding increase in charges of the facility. The public requested that normal passport should be available within one month rather 25 days while urgent facility will be provided in 10 days despite 7 days due to mess created by propaganda.



In brief

Seven alleged culprits arrested F.P. Report

KHUSHAB: Police arrested 7 alleged culprits criminals while recovered hashish and weapons with ammunition from their possession, on Wednesday. According to details, police team arrested two accused namely Amjed Javeed and Naveed Hussain while recovered 25 litter liquor from their possession. Likewise, police station sadder also arrested culprits namely Muhammad Hamza and recovered one 30 bore pistol Muhammad Yaqoob 516 grams of chars and the accused Muhammad Kashif 20 liters of liquor from his possession. Moreover, Quidabad city police team arrested one namely Muhammad Ramzan and recovered pistol along with ammunition from their possession cases has been registered in different police station of the khushab district against the accused. Meanwhile, one Muhammad Saleem employ of power company sub Division Quidabad was electrocuted the other day on Sakasar Quidabad road near Gunjial Janubi when he was during a duty on working on main transmission line of the distribution company and died on the spot during a working touching with 11 kv main transmission line. then the chief of the FESCO Faisalabad suspended and ordered the inquiry against the local S D O and the concerned line superintendent due to their negligence.

GHS hands over to District Admn F.P. Report

MINGORA: Govt Girls High School Khwaza Khela, Swat which was being used by military for years, has been handed over to district administration. The building will now be utilised as Govt Girls College in future. Building was completely renovated before being handed over and state of art library has also been gifted for the girls. Locals lauded Pakistan Army for maintaining the building so well for years and handing it back even in better condition.

Stipend distributed F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: District administration of North Waziristan distributed a stipend amounting to Rs.5,220 million among 174 clerics of North Waziristan under a special package announced by the previous PTI government. The stipend was distributed after completion of their qualification degrees. In this connection a ceremony was organized in Jirga Hall at Miran Shah wherein the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Bashir Ahmad distributed the amount at the rate of Rs.30,000/- among 174 clerics. On this occasion, the religious clerics expressed gratitude to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rehan Gul Khattak, ADC Bashir Ahmad and Assistant Commissioner (AC) Khalid Imran for conducting the verification process in a highly transparent manner. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rehan Gul Khattak said that the clerics of North Waziristan are highly respectful and district administration will support them in the provision of more facilities. He pledged to continue his day and night efforts for the resolution of the problems of the residents of North Waziristan.

Comprehensive traffic management plan directed

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand Division Saqib Raza Aslam presided an important meeting held at Regional Police Office Conference Room Saidu Sharif reviewed issues related to traffic management in Swat district.

The meeting was briefed by SP Traffic Warden Swat Arshad Khan. Secretary Regional Transport Authority Muhammad Shah Jamil, Additional Deputy Commissioner Swat Sohail Ahmed and other administrative officers along with President Trade Union Abdul Rahim and Chairman Press Club Swat Shireenzada participated in the meeting. In the meeting, the traffic problems across the district, especially in Mingora, were reviewed and various suggestions were made. In the meeting, some important recommendations were agreed which also included the formation of a sub-committee. To improve road management, it was decided to register the hand carts, allocate space and remove the hand carts from the congested areas.

In view of the increasing number of rickshaws, it was decided to issue special

number plates to the registered rickshaws as per the permit limits and to keep the new registration closed till further recommendations by the sub-committee. In the meeting, it was also decided to ban entry of cut and welded vehicles in Swat and strict enforcement of traffic rules.

In the meeting, it was also decided to speed up the construction of the bridge at Takhta Band, to remove the disruption in the flow of traffic on the Fiza Gut Road and Kalam Road by contacting the relevant provincial and federal institutions. The issue of illegal bus stands was also discussed in the meeting and it was decided that action will be taken as per the court orders and all kinds of illegal activities will be remedied.

While presiding over the meeting, Commissioner Malakand Division Saqib Raza Aslam formed a sub-committee and issued orders to ensure implementation within ten days. While presiding over the meeting, Commissioner Malakand Division Saqib Raza Aslam said that the Swat district administration should provide full support to the traffic police and the Regional Transport

Authority so that a comprehensive and permanent solution to the traffic problems can be found.

DPO Swat pays surprise visit to far-flung Bahar Police Post: On the directives of Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand, Sajjad Khan, the District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Shafiqullah Khan Gandapur paid a surprise visit to far-flung Bahar Police Post, a convergence point of districts Shangla and Swat on Wednesday.

During the visit, the DPO reviewed security situation and arrangements from all sides of the check post. He also met with police personnel deployed at the check post and appropriate directives while keeping in view the prevailing security situation. He further directed the police personnel to keep the movement of anti-social elements, suspects and strangers under strict surveillance.

He urged police personnel for compulsory use of bullet proof jackets and helmets for their own security and stressed on them to remain alert to ensure the security of the general public and their own and perform their duties with honesty and diligence.

Cleanliness of drainage directed

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner directed the officers of Municipal Committee Hafizabad to remove garbage from choked drains and heaps of rubbish from various places in the city while cleanliness of the city be continued on daily basis for providing healthy atmosphere to the citizens.

He issued these directions while visiting Sagar Road, Public Park and Railway Line Road to review standard of cleanliness and arrangements made by the Municipal Committee Hafizabad. AC Munawar Hussain, Chief Officer MC Qazi Abid Qayyum and other officers were also accompanied by him. DC said that any negligence in cleanliness of streets and roads of the city

would not be tolerated at all and officers and sanitary staff focus on keeping the city neat and clean. During the inspection of Sagar Road Park, DC directed the Chief Officer MC to renovate park and construct boundary wall of the park immediately.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner reviewed performance of District Education Authority Hafizabad and arrangements made for promoting standard of education in the schools. Chief Executive Officer Education Wazir Ahmad Agha and other officers attended the meeting. CEO Education briefed the Deputy Commissioner regarding working of the department and arrangements for improving standard of education.

Inter-collegiate festival started: Inter Collegiate

Sports Festival started under auspices of Higher Education Department Hafizabad. Deputy Director Colleges Hafizabad professor Azhar Janjua inaugurated the festival, on Tuesday. District Sports Officer Nabila Cheema, Principal Islamia College for Women Shumaila Yaseen, teachers and students attended the ceremony.

Deputy Director Colleges Professor Azhar Janjua said that boys and girl's colleges are participating in the festival which would be continued till 17, February. He said that sports activities were vital for physical and mental health of students as well as providing positive recreational opportunities to students. Sports teams of different colleges conducted march-past on the eve of inaugural ceremony.

E-Katchery held to redress public grievance

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat held E-Katchery in its Program "Da Oolas Awaz" in which Additional Deputy Commissioner Kohat Bashir Ahmad along AAC Waqas Ahmad addressed the problem grievances, on Wednesday.

He was apprised of the problems being faced by the people through online calls relating to different sectors. Replying to the callers, he said that the district administration was not oblivious of its obligations but have an eye on all sectors as per aspirations of the people. Terming the recent Tanda Dam incident a national incident, he said that responsibilities have been given to the related authorities to stop such incidents in future. He added that Tourism Authority has been approached to develop Tanda Dam a real

Tourist Spot.

Regarding traffic issue in the city, ADC disclosed, more than 200 million rupees have been approved for expansion of Shuhada Chowk to PAF Chowk and work on it would be taken very soon. Answer to a question of the caller regarding subsidized Aata, Bashir Ahmad maintained that sample of Aata were taken after each 15 days to ensure its quality. Similarly distribution points have been established at village council level to ensure just distribution of Aata. Keeping in view the distribution system of Kohat, the Provincial Government directed to replicate the same system throughout the province, he said.

Responding to scarcity of drinking water, the ADC asserted that a water preservation project in collaboration with ADB costing Rs. 6 Billion is underway that

would resolve the drinking water issue on permanent basis. In order to eradicate the menace of narcotics, stern actions were being taken against the drug peddlers with active support of the people, he said. He added, Rehabilitation centers in Kohat had been made functional where 80 drug addicts were under treatment. Referring to issues of health, he said health facilities have been increased in local hospitals due to which refer to Peshawar cases were constantly decreasing.

Talking on developmental initiatives, the ADC said that work on 14 mega projects including expansion in LMH Hospital, gigantic Kohat Sports Complex, establishment of KIMS and Women Business Center and free training to 600 IT related students on AMAZON to make young self-reliant under way at the cost of more than 100 million rupees.



QUETTA: A view of garbage spread alongside Gordai Singh Road, needs attention of authorities concerned.

PPP commits to mobilize public for by-polls F.P. Report

PABB: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to mobilize public on larger scale for success of Abdullah Ishaq on NA-26 by-elections to return political activists to their roots, on Wednesday.

This was claimed that Muhammad Ishaq along with PPP former provincial president Sardar Ali Khan at his residence while finalizing election campaign for NA-26 by-polls. PPP activists Aftab was also present at occasion and assured that public mobilization.

The leadership agreed to hold corner meeting at every union council to ensure maximum propagation party's narrative. The passive workers should be engaged in decision making to overcome difference within the party.

First female Hindu AC assumes charge

HASSANABDAL (INP): The first female assistant commissioner belonging to Hindu community took over charge of her office in Hassanabdal tehsil of Attock district on Wednesday. Dr Sana Ramchand Gulwani, 27, is in her first posting as the AC and administrator of the town after doing CSS.

Dr Sana was the first female from the Hindu community to join the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) after passing the Central Superior Services (CSS) exam 2020. Growing up in the small town of Chak in Shikarpur, Sindh, she got her primary and secondary education from a local government school.

In 2016, she graduated from Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree. She pursued her studies as urologist and after this she started preparing for the CSS exam. According to Dr Sana, her parents did not want her to go to the administration. The family's dream was to see her in the medical profession itself. However, she achieved both the targets. Dr Sana Ramchand said she never had a problem being a member of the minority community.

Compensation cheques among farmers distributed

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB) has distributed Rs24 thousand cheques among 32 farmers in Buner as compensation for furnaces damaged due to fire.

During distribution of compensation Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue Faiz Muhammad Tarakai said that agriculture sector working as backbone of national economy while the farmers are spine for national food security as well as for revenue. He added that Rs24 thousand doesn't compensate the damages of farmers but it is an act of ownership by state towards growers.

PTB Manager Minthar Ali Kurajo distributed cheques among farmers and added that compensation provided to growers whose furnaces were damaged due to fire. He added that Rs24 thousand doesn't compensate damages of farmers but it will bring perception of responsibility.

While answering to a question PTB Manager claimed that during purchase board collect tobacco



leaves from centers for auction which makes collective revenue for both the board and agriculture's department. He claimed that revenue generated from auction is distributing among farmers whom faces damages in the cultivation.

Director Agriculture Dr. Adalat Khan said that welfare of farmers are the top priority of the department and appreciated distribution of compensation among growers. He argued that PTB itself along with tobacco companies should also provide financial benefits to farmers for larger national interest.

During the compensation distribution ceremony PTB Board of Director Member Haji Rustam Khan, Assistant Development Officer Tufail Ahmad and Field Officer Fahim Akbar were present. Model Farm Services Center general secretary Anwar Sher Khan also demanded compensation for farmers faced damages due to natural calamity and appreciated PTB initiative for provision of compensation to growers.

Int'l moot on Public Policy and Governance held

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: Islamia University of Bahawalpur organized the 3rd international conference on Public Policy and Good Governance in the present era has started. The conference was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan Prof. Dr. Mansoor Akbar Kundi, former Vice Chancellor Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan Prof. Dr. Khawaja Alkama, Director of Faculty of Public Policy Rafa International University Islamabad Dr. Rashid Aftab were present. Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob said in his address that organizing a conference on the most important topic by the Department of Political Science is a good initiative.

He said that the role of academia is very important for good governance which can solve the challenges faced in this regard by formulating principles of governance based on policy.

On this occasion, the presence of political science and governance experts will inform the faculty and students about the latest developments in this field. Dean Faculty of Social Sciences Prof. Dr. Rubina Bhatti said that the subject of governance is very important both nationally and internationally is important and has very important implications in social and economic development.

Chairman Department of Political Science Prof. Dr. Musavir Hussain Bukhari said that 5 international conferences have been organized under the auspices of this department.

On the occasion of this conference, the presence of domestic and foreign delegates and the challenges of governance in the present era, public service delivery, local governments, delays, links in federal units, public policy during the epidemic, regional cooperation and collaboration, gender issues. The importance of innovation in the digital age, human rights, justice and strong institutions are among the most important topics.

The focal person of the

conference, Dr. Shakeel Akhtar, said that nowadays good governance is very important for democratic societies and policies are made based on it. The research papers read in this conference will help in dealing with the challenges faced by governance in the present day. On the first day, Dr. Mehboob Hussain, chairman of the Department of History and Pakistan Studies, discussed Parliament and National Unity and Dr. Usman Abu from Nigeria talked about governance issues in multi-ethnic countries.

Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor Islamia University of Bahawalpur has said that Bahawalpur Trade Fair will soon take the form of an international event. The Vice Chancellor expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the 4th Bahawalpur Trade Fair organized by Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and district administration on the occasion of 18th Cholistan International Desert Jeep Rally.

Eight including three women injured in Dir road accident

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Eight including three women were injured when a pickup van plunged into a deep ravine at Sar Lara area in the jurisdiction of Samarbagh police station here on Wednesday morning, residents and police said.

They said the Samarbagh-bound vehicle went out of the driver's control due to over speeding and fell into a more than hundred feet deep ravine when it reached the Sar Lara top. As a result eight people including three women including Sher Hakim, Hamza Khan, Gul Zada, Rahim Badshah, Husina Bibi, Zaitoon Bibi, Maryam Bibi and Kashar Khan were injured.

The victims belong to the same family and were coming to a relative's house. The volunteers

of the Al-Khidmat Foundation and local residents reached the site and rescued the victims. The injured were brought to the THQ hospital Samarbagh from where two were referred to Peshawar due to their serious condition. The Rescue 1122 emergency team also reached the site from Lal Qila Maidan but by then the AKF volunteers had shifted the injured. The Rescue recovery team later on recovered the vehicle. The Samarbagh police registered a case and started investigations. The local residents demanded of the government to establish a Rescue 1122 unit at Samarbagh.

Fake FIA official: The Talash police on Wednesday arrested a suspect posing as an FIA official identified as Wiqas Ahmad, 26 who was trying to defraud cur-

rency exchange dealers at the Nasafa Talash bazaar. The local traders surrounded his car after he took some money from one Waheed Zada, a currency exchanger at the Nasafa bazaar. The Talash police arrested him for further investigations and kept in its lock up.

Meanwhile the Talash police also arrested two suspects identified as Wahid Gul and Attaulah, residents of Batkhela roaming suspiciously on Tuesday night. Several cases of street robbery during the last few days have been reported in Talash. The accused were presented before a magistrate and sent to jail.

NA By-election: The Pakistan Tehreek Insaf activist Hayatullah Khan has demanded the government and the election commission of Pakistan to postpone the

by-election for the national assembly due to the deteriorating law and order situation in the country. Talking to local journalists at Timergara he said the country was near to bankruptcy and spending of billions of rupees on the by-election for three months was beyond understanding. He said the people were facing record inflation and shortage of edibles while the IMF was imposing strict conditions for a deal. The PTI activist said the government should announce the general election instead of a by-election in the country.

Also in the day the district election commissioner Muhammad Iqbal Tanoli told this reporter on contact that there were 425,946 registered voters in NA 6 and 413,906 in NA 7 Lower Dir. He said that 24702 voters were

recently added to the voters' list. The number of registered voters in the district is now 839,852.

Plantation drive kicks-off at district jail: On the direction of IG Prisons Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, plantation drive was started in District Jail Timergara. In this regard, a ceremony was held in District Jail Timergara. Tariq Hussain, SDFO Muquid Khan and other officials participated on this occasion, under the direction of IG Jails Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, tree planting campaign was formally started in District Jail Timergara and in the first phase of the tree planting campaign, 45 different fruit trees were planted. Planted and more plants will also be planted, which will make the Timergara District Jail green on the one hand, and on the other hand, the beauty of the jail will

also increase.

Fundraising camp established: District administration Dir Lower a series of fundraising for Turkey earthquake victims continues and the administration has set up camps in seven tehsils of Dir Lower to collect funds for Turkish victims. And so far lakhs of rupees have been collected.

In this regard, in the office of Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi, General Secretary of Awami National Party Dir Lower Malik Muhammad Zaib gave one lakh rupees in cash for the relief of Turkish victims, upon which Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi. Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue Lower Tariq Ali thanked to Malik Mohammad Zeib.



Pakistan, US ties moving towards enhanced coop and partnership: Masood



F.P. Report

WASHINGTON: "Over the past seven decades we have built a strong relationship between Pakistan and the United States," said Masood Khan while delving on the history of Pak-US relations, during his talk on Pakistan-US partnership for Regional Peace and Stability organized by the South Asian Study Council at Yale University. "Both countries had cooperation in areas of security, economy and people-to-people exchanges from the early stages that laid the foundations for a strong partnership," he added.

He elaborated that both countries partnered during the cold war and on war against terrorism. While the strategic aspect of the relations still remained important, he noted, both countries were now moving towards a diverse, broad-based partnerships, with a focus on trade and investment, education, climate change, IT and agriculture sectors. He explained that after US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan, there had been some uncertainty regarding the mutual rela-

vance of the relationship.

However, the recent engagements have transformed Pak-US ties and new pathways for cooperation, particularly in the economic realm. He said that the bilateral trade between the two countries had been growing fast and the United States continues to be the largest export market for Pakistan. He noted that about eighty US enterprises such as Procter and Gamble, Abbott and Cargill, to name a few with 1,50,000 employees and supporting around one million households, were doing good business in Pakistan for decades.

Also, Pakistan's thriving tech sector is witnessing a growing interest from Global technology investors and venture capitalists, like Kleiner Perkins and Tiger Global from the US who are taking lead in forging new business linkages for unlocking the potential of tech sector. The Ambassador said that the number of Pakistani students enrolled in the US had increased by 17% to 8,000 this year however it has a lot more potential for growth in particular in the

STEM disciplines, he added.

Also the Ambassador noted that Pakistan is the largest recipient of the Fulbright scholarship with an alumni network of more than 25,000. However, this is small compared to the number of students from other countries of the region hence reiterated increased efforts for enhancing our students enrollments. He noted that Pakistan accords high priority in revising its knowledge corridor programme under which 10,000 Pakistani students and professional would be sent to the US in the next 10 years for high education.

Ambassador also apprised the Dean and other faculty members regarding the embassy's efforts to promote bilateral exchange programs especially enhancing collaboration between agriculture universities and research institutes of the two countries. The Ambassador's talk was followed by an interactive session with the audience where the students asked questions on the future of Pak-US relations and Pakistan's role in the region.

S Africa tour bus crash in 20 kills

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): A head-on collision between a tour bus and an armoured cash-in-transit van has killed 20 people and wounded 68 others in South Africa. The vehicles collided on a motorway bridge and the bus then tumbled into the river below. "Three people were found deceased by the roadside and 16 down by the river," paramedic company ER24 said.

"Most of the fatalities down by the river had been trapped under the bus," it added. One person died later in hospital. AFP news agency reports that police divers were also searching the river that runs along the motorway "for people who might have been swept away". Investigations are under way into what caused crash on the N1 motorway in Makhado in Limpopo province. This region and others in South Africa have been suffering heavy downpours and flooding, prompting the government to declare a national disaster. The identities of the victims of the crash have not yet been revealed.

King Charles expresses sorrow

LONDON (AP): Britain's King Charles III met with Turkish and Syrian communities in London, showing support to those sending aid to their homeland and expressing sorrow for those affected by last week's devastating earthquake. Charles appeared emotional as he visited a temporary "Syria House" set up in central London's Trafalgar Square for the Syrian community in the UK to organize vigils and pay their respects to lost relatives.

The monarch heard from those grieving for their families back home, including Salah Al-Asmar, who told the king he lost his parents, brother and other relatives to the earthquake in Antakya, Turkey. "For seven days, my family were under the rubble. There was no rescue team. No one could support them in this moment. I haven't been able to sleep for days," Al-Asmar said after meeting with Charles.

"The king was showing his support and was saying, 'I can't imagine how hard it has been for you'," said Yazan Douedari, who also attended the event. Earlier, Charles and Umit Yalcin, Turkey's ambassador to Britain, visited a west London charity organizing shipments of tents, blankets, winter clothes and toiletries to help those left homeless by the quake in Turkey.

"He said he was deeply sorry, deeply sad, and he will pray for Turkey, for Syria and the people under that devastating earthquake," Yalcin told reporters. Charles and his wife, Camilla, the queen consort, have donated to an emergency earthquake appeal jointly organized by British aid groups that has raised more than 74 million pounds (\$90 million) in the past few days.

Hackers target Bahrain airport

DUBAI (AP): Hackers said they had taken down the websites of Bahrain's international airport, state news agency and chamber of commerce to mark the 12-year anniversary of an Arab Spring uprising in the small Gulf country. A statement posted online by a group calling itself Al-Toufan, or "The Flood" in Arabic, claimed to have hacked the airport website, which was unavailable for at least a half hour in the middle of the day.

It also claimed to have taken down the websites of the state-run Bahrain News Agency, which was sporadically unavailable midday, and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce, which was taken down in the afternoon before access was later restored. The group posted images showing 504 Gateway Timeout Errors, saying the hacking was "in support of the revolution of our oppressed people of Bahrain." The same group appears to have hacked and changed articles on the website of Akhbar Al Khaleej, a pro-government newspaper in Bahrain.

Rising seas risk 'death sentence' for some nations: UN chief

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The United Nations chief warned that global sea levels have risen faster since 1900 and their relentless increase puts countries like Bangladesh, China, India and the Netherlands at risk and acutely endangers nearly 900 million people living in low-lying coastal areas.

In a grim speech to the Security Council's first-ever meeting on the threat to international peace and security from rising sea levels, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres declared that sea levels will rise significantly even if global warming is "miraculously" limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), the elusive international goal. He warned the Earth is more likely on a path to warming that amounts to "a death sentence" for countries vulnerable to that rise, including many small island nations.

In addition to threatened countries, Guterres said, "mega-cities on every continent will face serious effects, including Cairo, Lagos, Maputo, Bangkok, Dhaka, Jakarta, Mumbai, Shanghai, Copenhagen, London, Los Angeles, New York, Buenos Aires and Santiago." The UN chief stressed that every fraction of a degree in global warming counts, since sea level rise could double if temperatures rise by 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and could increase exponentially with further temperature increases.

The World Meteorological Organization released data spelling out the grave danger of rising seas, Guterres said. "Global average sea levels have risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in the last 3,000 years," he said. "The global ocean has warmed faster over the past century than at any time in the past 11,000 years."

According to the data cited by Guterres, the global mean sea level will rise by about 2 to 3 meters (about 6.5 to 9.8 feet) over the next 2,000 years if warming is limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius. With a 2-degree Celsius increase, seas could rise up to 6 meters (19.7 feet), and with a 5-degree Celsius increase, seas could rise up to 22 meters (72 feet), according to the WMO. "Our world is hurtling past the 1.5-degree warming limit that a livable future requires, and with present policies, is careening towards 2.8 degrees - a death sentence for vulnerable countries," Guterres said.

The consequences are unthinkable, Guterres said. Low-lying communities and entire countries could disappear, the world would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale, and competition would become ever fiercer for fresh water, land and other resources. Guterres has been trying to call the world's attention to the dangers posed by climate change, to spur action. In October, he warned that the world is in "a life-or-death struggle" for survival as "climate chaos gallops ahead" and accused the world's 20 wealthiest countries of failing to do enough to stop the planet from overheating. In November, he said the planet is heading toward irreversible "climate chaos" and urged global leaders to put the world back on track to cut emissions, keep promises on climate financing and help developing countries speed their transition to renewable energy. The landmark Paris agreement adopted in 2015 to address climate change called for global temperatures to rise a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century compared to pre-industrial times, and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Guterres said the world must address the climate crisis as the root cause of rising seas, and the Security Council has a critical role to play in building the political will required. The Security Council meeting, organized by Malta, which holds the council presidency this month, heard speakers from some 75 countries, large and small, endangered and landlocked, all voicing concern about the impact of the continuing rising seas on the future of the world - and for some, the survival of their own countries.

Samoa's UN ambassador, Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States which he chairs, told the council: "There is a litany of new examples of the sudden and slow onset impact of climate change on small islands, from king tides, to super hurricanes to the unstoppable and unprecedented rise in sea levels." The impact on people and the economies of the islands "will continue to be extraordinary," he said, raising issues of their survival and continuation as states. Alliance members "are among the lowest emitters of greenhouse gases that drive climate change and sea level rise. Yet, we face some of the most severe consequences of rising sea levels," Luteru said. "To expect



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small island state to shoulder the burden of sea level rise, without assistance from the international community will be the pinnacle of inequities." He said that cooperation to address rising seas is "a legal obligation" for every country, and that there is an urgent need for nations to fulfill their international commitments on climate change and finance.

Ambassador Amatlain Kabua of the Marshall Islands said many of the tools to address climate change and rising seas are already in from of the Security Council, and "more focused action from the international system can be invited." But she said, "What is needed most in the political will to start the job, supported by a UN special representative" to spur global action. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said that "the threat of sea level rise is real, it is a direct result of our climate crisis, and it is a matter of international peace and security."

"The council must take action," she said, pointing to the threat of hundreds of millions in low-lying coastal areas losing their homes, livelihoods and communities. "Fortunately, the worst impacts can be avoided, but we have to act now, and we have to act together," Thomas-Greenfield said. General Assembly President Csaba Krösi said, "At the current rate, sea levels will be 1 to 1.6 meters higher by 2100, according to the World Climate Research Program."

"In the Nile and Mekong Deltas - some of the richest agricultural regions in the world - ten to twenty percent of arable land will sink beneath the waves," he said. "Climate induced sea-level rise is also provoking new legal questions that are at the very core of national and state identity. What happens to a nation's sovereignty - including UN membership - if it sinks beneath the sea?" he asked. "Science tells us that whether cities or countries disappear depends on whether we as humans counteract the threat," Krösi said.

8,468 perished trying to reach Europe since 2019

CAIRO (AP): More than 8,400 Europe-bound migrants perished at sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean over the past four years, a charity said. Save the Children said in a report that about a half million people crossed or attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Europe since 2019. Of those, 8,468 people died or went missing in the Mediterranean, the charity added.

Analyzing data from the UN refugee agency, the charity said deaths at European borders were partly blamed on "the increasing trend of European governments forcibly, illegally and often violently stopping refugees from entering their territory and even abducting and expelling those who have arrived." The 40-page report cited a 2021 warning by the UN refugee agency

that "asylum was under attack at Europe's borders" and that pushbacks were being "carried out in a violent and apparently systematic way." The report mentioned pushbacks of migrants trying to reach Spain from Morocco; Greece from Turkey; and Italy from Libya and Tunisia.

Pushbacks are unlawful under international and European Union law, as they violate the right to seek asylum and the legal principle that prohibits the return of anyone to a place where they would risk persecution, torture or deadly threat. In its report titled "Safe for Some," the charity accused European countries of having "double standards" in dealing with Middle Eastern and African migrants and those who fled Ukraine over the past year. Save the Children said

over 8 million migrants - 40% of them children - from Ukraine were allowed into Europe since Russia's invasion of the country last February.

"It doesn't need to be this way," said Daniel Gorevan, senior advocacy adviser at the charity and the report's author. "A new European approach - one which puts the rights of all children at the heart of asylum policies - is possible." Tens of thousands have attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Europe from North African countries that have become hubs for migrants fleeing poverty and wars in Africa and the Middle East, seeking better lives in Europe. Libya has been a major transit point for migrants since the country descended into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi

in 2011.

Human traffickers have benefited from the chaos in Libya, smuggling in migrants across the country's lengthy borders with six nations. The migrants are then packed into ill-equipped rubber boats and other vessels and set off on risky sea voyages. European countries have in recent years pushed Libyan authorities and the coast guard to detain and intercept migrants attempting to cross to European shores. More than 24,680 were intercepted and returned to Libya, where they were held in detention centers rife with abuses, according to the UN migration agency. Such abuses include forced labor, beatings, rapes and torture - practices that amount to crimes against humanity, according to UN-commissioned investigators.

Three killed in New Zealand cyclone as clean-up begins

WELLINGTON (Agencies): Three people have been confirmed dead and thousands displaced in New Zealand after Cyclone Gabrielle brought widespread flooding and landslides to the northern part of the country. Gabrielle, which reached New Zealand before making its way down the east coast of the North Island, cut off entire towns, washed away farms, bridges and livestock, and inundated homes, stranding people on rooftops.

It was weakening and moving away on Wednesday. "We thankfully are through the worst of the storm but we're not out of danger yet," Minister for Emergency Management Kieran McAnulty said during a televised media briefing. "This is a significant disaster and is going to take many weeks for those areas most affected to recover ... we are in this for the long haul." Among the dead were two people, including a volunteer fire-

fighter, who were killed in landslides. A third body was found in the badly-affected Hawke's Bay on the east coast but authorities said the circumstances of that death remained unclear.

Residents in the worst-hit areas are being asked to conserve water and food because of fears of shortages. Gabrielle was the second large storm to hit the North Island in as many weeks with Auckland still recovering from torrential rain and floods that left four dead. About three-quarters of New Zealand's 5 million people live on the North Island.

Authorities estimate more than 10,000 people have been displaced so far. A weather station in the Hawke's Bay and Napier region recorded three times more rain over than usually falls during the entire month of February, authorities said. Gusts were reported at 140 km (87 miles) an hour. More than 300 people were rescued from the area, including 60

stranded on a single roof, McAnulty said. Helicopters would help make the final 25 rescues of individuals and family groups on Wednesday. Rivers in Hawke's Bay continue to pose risks and local emergency management ordered further evacuations early on Wednesday. About 225,000 homes across the island are still without electricity.

Mother of four Jennie Perris, who lives on four hectares (10 acres) of land on the outskirts of Whangarei, about 170 km (106 miles) north of Auckland, said her family had been without power. Perris said the roads had cleared and the family had been able to head into the city and shower at her mother's house, charge devices and stock up on bottled water, but was now back to cooking on the barbecue. "We're doing everything on it," she said. New Zealand declared a national emergency over the storm, only the third time it has ever done so.

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JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fp@peshawar.thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Global issues and US’s predilection

THE US State Department spokesperson has condemned the recent Israeli settlements in West Bank and called them unilateral steps which could endanger peace in the region. However, the American Prolocutor further noted that Israel is an iron-clad partner of the United States and both countries share the same values. American Spokesman covered extra mileage in Tel Aviv's favor and declared Israel's security a topmost priority of his nation.

The United States of America, a long-time advocate of human rights and civil liberties, has now become a supporter of apartheid regimes and illegal settlers' colonialism through its soft criticism and unflinching affiliation with the occupiers. Awfully, American leaders condemn the grave human rights violation in one breath and expressed solidarity with the oppressors at the next movement. Over the past decades, the successors of George Washington betrayed the royal legacies of their forerunners through unparalleled support for the racist policies of Israel and India in the occupied territories of Palestine and Kashmir respectively. Thus, Washington's dual principles and haphazard policies fueled violence and put oppressed nations at the mercy of cruel supremacists in contested regions of the world.

The Israeli-occupier regime has ramped up its anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian campaigns by violating the sanctity of Muslim sacred places in East Jerusalem and unleashing fresh military crackdown against unarmed civilians in the west bank and Gaza strip in recent months. The Jewish state announced its plan to legalize its illegal settlements in the west bank along with the construction of additional 10,000 units in the Palestinian land. In fact, the fascist state has systematically increased its boundaries by incorporating Golan rights in its landmass and continuous expansion of its settlers' colonialism in the west bank to push Palestinians out of their homes. Historically, the United States not only supported Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestine but also protected Israeli war crimes from global reprisal and censure at the UN and other international forums including the ICC and the ICJ over the past years. The US also unashamedly used veto status in Israel's favor multiple times at the UN, that not only consolidated the apartheid regime but also undermined global peace and stability.

Although, the United States supports the idea of two states solution, however, Washington categorically placed its weight in the favor of Tel Aviv and endorsed such mechanisms including the Oslo and the camp David accords which further escalated tension and put the Palestinians at the mercy of the brutal Israeli regime. After assuming office, President Joe Biden vowed to uphold human rights and democracy but the self-proclaimed Zionist not only betrayed his voters but also remained highly selective in the implementation of those divine values when it comes to close US allies. Over the decades, the American political elite upheld its political and economic interests vis-a-vis human rights and civil liberties in the world and failed to demonstrate fairness and sincerity in this regard. Presently, the entire Muslim Ummah and disadvantaged societies across the world are concerned about Washington's double standard regarding global disputes, thus Biden must abandon the policy of favoritism and appeasement to restore America's prestige and lordship in the world.

The unmistakable musk of feudalism

EVER since his takeover of Twitter, Elon Musk has been running the social media company like a medieval nobleman lording it over his own personal fiefdom. The tech billionaire clearly believes he knows everything better than everyone else at Twitter, and treats the employees of his new company as though they are modern-day serfs. Anyone who is unlucky enough to work for Musk's Twitter has only two options: submit to his "extremely hardcore" working conditions and accept his passing fancies, or be fired.

Musk's reign at Twitter has been defined by a combination of eccentricity, overconfidence and lack of care for community welfare. Giving the maddest overlords of the past a run for their money, the tech billionaire entered his newly conquered realm carrying a kitchen sink and almost immediately started firing employees for correcting his mistakes or daring to publicly criticise him. He reinstated the account of a former US president, who was banned for "inciting violence", after conducting a poll among the platform's users on whether he should do so. He tried to make the influential microblogging app profitable by putting its blue tick verifications on sale for \$8 per month, with foreseeably disastrous consequences, and by unceremoniously getting rid of employees who he believed were doing superfluous jobs. The arrogant incompetence Musk has displayed since taking the helm of Twitter disproved yet again the myth that billionaires are extraordinary people with extraordinary minds and

extraordinary ideas - that they are "superheroes" a cut above us mortals. In fact, Musk's Twitter antics proved that, much like the feudal lords of the past, today's billionaires are, for large part, nothing other than ordinary people with ordinary shortcomings who have been given extraordinary powers.

Of course, there are some significant differences between the likes of Musk and the suzerains of the past. Our 21st-century overlords possess more wealth, in absolute terms, than anyone who came before them but must submit, at least in theory, to greater democratic checks and balances. Nevertheless, the power they exercise is not confined to a manor or even a state - their fiefdoms are their global corporations and unregulated or under-regulated areas of the globe. Thus, today's billionaires have a much larger influence over our collective future, and the future of our planet, than any of their medieval counterparts. The likes of Musk not only have near complete control over the fates of their employees, but unmatched indirect influence over all our lives. They can, for example, decide whose voice gets amplified and who is banned from the commercialised end of the public sphere, which is rapidly expanding. They exercise a disproportionate influence over where humanity's attention and resources are directed - towards a commercialised space race and colonising Mars rather than feeding the poor and combating the climate and ecological crises.

Our current social order - where inequality is rife and billionaires have absolute power over corporations that are chal-

lenging the authority of states, where our collective ability to keep the powerful in check resides - has led some academics to dub our current system of governance dominated by the likes of Musk "neo-feudalism". The neo-feudal arrangement we have found ourselves in became more obvious and much more extreme than ever before in the past few years, when the majority of humans on the planet have been hit by several interconnected crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency to devastating conflicts and disruptions to the energy market. While all these, and the consequent global economic downturn, made most of us significantly poorer, they somehow added to the wealth and power of the modern overlords - the superrich.

Indeed, according to Oxfam's recent report "Survival of the richest", the richest 1 percent gobbled up some two-thirds of the \$42 trillion in wealth created around the world since 2020. "A billionaire gained roughly \$1.7 million for every \$1 of new global wealth earned by a person in the bottom 90 percent," the report found. "Billionaire fortunes have increased by \$2.7 billion a day."

And all this came on top of decades of historic gains for billionaires. For instance, in Britain, billionaire wealth mushroomed by a jaw-dropping 1,000 percent in the three decades between 1990 and 2022, according to an estimate by the UK's Equality Trust. The dramatic nature of this upward redistribution becomes apparent when you consider that, in the space of a few short decades, we went from

Khaled Diab

one of the more egalitarian periods of recorded human civilisation to one of its most unequal.

Despite getting off to a highly unequal first decade and finishing with an increasingly unequal last decade, the 20th century was, in many parts of the world, one of the most egalitarian periods we know of, with some countries experiencing a narrowing of inequalities on a scale never seen, or at least measured, before. Part of the reason for this growing equality was the devastation wrought by two world wars and the desire to build a better world these global conflicts invoked. Other factors include political empowerment, the rise in mass democratic political participation, egalitarian political ideologies entering the mainstream, including social democracy and socialism, as well as communism and the reaction to it by affluent societies. In many developing states, economic equality initially improved in the early years of independence, in part inspired by a quest for postcolonial justice and development, but the situation worsened significantly in many countries as new elites emerged or old ones returned and consolidated their privileged status.

So what caused the fortunes of everyone but the most fortunate to take such a relative battering in recent decades and how did the wealth gap become a chasm? One major factor was the neoliberal economic model that has conquered much of the world. This eroded social safety nets, reversed or reduced the rate of progressive taxation, deregulated markets and weakened labour

protections. In this deregulated Wild West phase of globalisation, unscrupulous corporations are able to locate their production facilities where labour is cheapest and workers most abused and underpaid, while selling their wares in markets where profits are highest and headquartering themselves where taxes are lowest or non-existent.

But there are other causes too. One is the quasi-feudal rentier economies that have emerged, which extract their income from the rent they impose on the assets they control. A prime example of this is petrostates, which are not reliant on the labour of their populations for their revenues, and fossil fuel companies, which can extract enormous value with relatively little need for labour. This helps explain why some studies have found, in spite of the paucity of accurate data, the oil-rich Middle East to be the most unequal region in the world.

Despite its sleek, empowering and futuristic image, Big Tech has also developed its own version of the rentier model: many apps and platforms - Amazon, Apple and Uber, for example - produce no real products themselves but extract hefty rents from suppliers. Automation is another major factor in wealth inequality, as computers, robots and apps make up what functions as the new slave or serf underclass - which works relentlessly, accurately and obediently without needing sleep, paid holidays, health insurance or organised unions - upon whose back so many billionaires have built their empires.

Tackling this gross inequality and bringing us back to the heyday of

the mid-to-late 20th century, or even better, requires tackling all these myriad issues. We need progressive taxation, global regulation to tackle the tax avoidance of multinationals and the superrich. We also need to rethink how wealth is distributed at source by, for example, giving workers a fair slice of profits in highly profitable sectors and by distributing the huge gains from rising productivity to workers not just shareholders and top executives. We also need to ensure that automation serves to liberalise and enrich everyone by distributing the gains more fairly and evenly, through higher salaries, shorter working weeks and universal basic incomes. Despite what some claim, there is nothing natural, inevitable, let alone desirable, in the massive inequalities the world currently suffers. Throughout most of human pre-history, egalitarianism was actually the normal order.

And this quest for egalitarianism has never gone away and will never go away, even at the most unequal of times. Moreover, egalitarianism is not just a question of high principles, it is also a pragmatic choice. Given the instability and conflict that is triggered in times of extreme inequality, it is in everyone's interest to build a fairer and more equal world. Just as we reject and resist the tyranny of political autocrats, we do not have to, and must not agree to, live in the modern-day corporate-dominated fiefdoms of the likes of Musk. Feudalism belongs in the dustbin of history, and we should work to dump its latest iteration there as soon as possible.

Aljazeera

Macron and Blinken have shown Netanyahu a yellow card

Yossi Mekelberg

FOR those who observe how Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu operates, the impression he gives is one of a political chameleon, rather than a person with a well-established system of beliefs and values. He will argue with great conviction and passion for the same cause and policies that he will later argue against with equal fervor and zeal, and this matches the instrumental manner in which he treats his political allies and advisers, whom he discards unceremoniously and with venom whenever their services are no longer required or they are believed to have become a threat to his position.

These are not remotely endearing qualities and they should have seen Netanyahu confined to the history books a long time ago, but instead he is still in power, and has served for more years as Israel's prime minister than any other.

A further aspect of his striking chameleon-like behavior is the remarkable difference between how he operates as a politician at home, and how he handles himself on the world stage, helped by marshalling the English language skills that he acquired while spending most of his formative

years in the US. While internationally he has put a great deal of effort into building himself an image, albeit with scant justification, as a statesman and a strategic thinker, domestically he is one of the most manipulative, heavy-handed, immoral, stop-at-nothing petty politicians.

These traits have become even more distinct ever since the police embarked on investigating his alleged corrupt behavior, and were exacerbated by the indictments that have led him to be currently standing trial for three cases of fraud, bribery and breach of trust. This has tied his survival in power with seeking to stop his trial, which threatens to conclude by putting him behind bars. However, like all self-proclaimed Houdinis, he has had to up his game (while sinking lower and lower) and come up with new tricks to cover his personal flaws and save his career, and he has done this by employing a relentless populism as, with the help of his dangerous acolytes and sycophants, he seeks to weaken Israel's judiciary beyond recognition and destroy what may be the last bastion of Israeli democracy.

To his surprise, however, his brutal attacks on the checks-and-balances

of the democratic system have awoken from their apathy ordinary Israelis, who are flocking to the streets in their tens of thousands every Saturday evening to protest Netanyahu's actions and intentions, and whose calls have more recently been echoed by some of Israel's close democratic friends in the international community.

This was very clearly expressed in the space of a very few days by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his recent visit to Israel and Palestine, as well as by France's President Emmanuel Macron when Netanyahu visited him.

Blinken departed from diplomatic protocol, and in what was a combination of a rebuke and a warning, as part of a joint statement with Netanyahu he listed a host of democratic values and principles that both countries share, at least supposedly, such as respect for human rights, the equal administration of justice for all, the equal rights of minority groups, the rule of law, a free press, and a robust civil society. All of these are under threat from the current Israeli government.

Blinken went on to state that there is "a recognition (in both countries) that building consensus

for new proposals is the most effective way to ensure they're embraced and that they endure," praising the vibrancy of Israel's civil society as it has "been on full display of late" - the very civil society that is taking to the streets every week to protest against the government's proposals to cripple the judiciary. What Blinken did not offer Netanyahu was something much coveted by all Israeli prime ministers: An invitation to visit the White House. This was a clear indication of Washington keeping the current Israeli government at arm's length. Similarly, it was reported by the French daily Le Monde that Macron told Netanyahu that if the proposed legislation passes, "France will assume that Israel has disconnected from the two countries' democratic perception."

This took place during a visit to a major capital, one where the Israeli ambassador had already resigned as soon as the current Israeli government was formed, in protest against what she called a violation of the principles of Israel's Declaration of Independence and the vision of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

All this should have

been rather uncomfortable for Netanyahu, but in his mind, which is becoming increasingly detached from reality, he believes that he can fend off any international criticism, as he has done throughout his time in office. Moreover, he believes that such global criticism enhances his reputation as standing up for Israel's interests and independence in the face of a hostile international environment. At this stage of his career, he prefers to grapple daily with challenges abroad rather than dealing with some of the unsavory characters in his government, with whom he shares a mutual contempt, while it is only the thirst for power that holds this coalition together.

In the past he has found international criticism quite useful as long as it was not followed by punitive policies.

It served to boost his image of a tough, patriotic leader who does what is right for the country and its people regardless of what the world is saying, but also as a pretext to drag his feet on policies he is pressed to pursue by more hawkish and belligerent partners in government, including expanding the settlements, annexing the West Bank or even sanctioning massive ground operations in Gaza, hindering such pro-

posals on the grounds that Israel wouldn't like to fall out with its friends and allies in the world, especially the US.

To an extent, this doublespeak approach has worked for him quite well in the past, but with his new partners and their unquenched anti-democratic and anti-Palestinian appetites, this old trick might not work anymore, particularly as Netanyahu is personally tainted by his corruption trial. In compromising the very democratic, though shaky foundations that helped to forge a strong bond between Israel and the US and Europe, he risks his country's relations with them.

Netanyahu's main challenge, one that many of his coalition partners are utterly tone-deaf to, is the intensity with which Israel's major allies are watching the current situation, fearing what will happen to its society and how it is going to impact relations with the Palestinians and regional stability. Netanyahu could exploit the slap on the wrist he has received from both Blinken and Macron, to dampen his partners' enthusiasm for sliding down the slippery slope to destroying Israel's democracy, but he might be too weak a leader to do that.

Arab News

Need to invest in health and nutrition to boost education

Ranvir S. Nayyar

A report by three UN bodies - UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO - has warned that countries around the world, notably in the developing-world nations in Africa and South Asia, need to invest significantly more in school health and nutrition programs to boost their education levels.

The report says that there is a direct link between tremendous gains in the quality of learning in schools if the children are not only well-fed but also healthy, which brings key economic and social gains by building human capital. The report says that school feeding programs bring \$9 in benefit for every \$1 invested, while investment in overall health of the child at school brings even higher gains, \$21.5 for every \$1 invested in mental health, for instance.

Even small, seemingly simple interventions in health and nutrition go a long way to promoting education and attendance at schools. For instance,

school-based deworming and micronutrient supplementation programs lead to 2.5 years of additional schooling, with a more than 20 per cent reduction in anaemia in adolescent girls. Provision of school meals leads to 9 per cent higher enrolment and 8 per cent higher attendance. Even providing free vision screening and glasses can see a 5 per cent higher probability of passing tests in reading and mathematics, or a 62 per cent drop in absenteeism by implementing malaria prevention programs. Handwashing in schools can see a drop of 61 per cent in absenteeism in low-income countries.

Thus, a series of these small, seemingly isolated interventions and investments can not only promote education but also go a long way in moving the countries along the route to meet their commitments as part of the sustainable development goals that have to be met by 2030.

Unfortunately, even though there has been ade-

quate awareness about the need to take a comprehensive approach toward education, health and nutrition, governments in most countries, and more so in developing world nations in Africa and Asia, continue to allocate significantly lower budgets for these programs than what is needed.

The need to invest in the overall development of a child became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the long closures of schools affected almost every child with the biggest consequences for the socio-economically vulnerable children, mainly those in the poor countries where more than 370 million schoolchildren lost access to school meals, often the only balanced and nutritious meal of the day for most of these children. The situation has been made worse by the food crisis and high inflation that followed the pandemic, leading to a significant rise in child poverty and malnu-

trition in poor countries around the world.

Even though the exact extent of these crises is still emerging through various reports, there have been adequate warnings issued by many leading global organizations and NGOs engaged in child development around the world about the pressing need for the governments to significantly enhance investments in health and nutrition, along with education. The need, obviously, is far higher in countries, mainly the developing and least developed countries, that have been under-investing in these sectors.

Not only are the countries guilty of underinvesting in education, but also of even allocating a small pitance for health and nutrition. At \$210 billion collectively, the annual budget of education for low- and lower-middle-income countries is clearly inadequate to enable every child to receive quality basic education. But even this

sum looks like royal extravagance when compared to the amounts invested in the health of school-going children in these countries, which totals barely \$2 billion.

The challenge here is not at all a lack of awareness among the governments or policy makers, as almost every country in the world has a policy to promote school health and nutrition as an integrated program. The sole challenge is a serious mismatch between the amounts of funds needed to cater to the children and what is being provided in national budgets.

And even in countries where school meals are being provided, in an overwhelming 89 per cent of these countries, the policy intervention stopped at public schools, with private schools left to decide for themselves on provision of school meals. This has a serious impact on a large chunk of school-going children, as in many countries, including large ones like India, private schools account for anywhere

between 30-50 per cent of all school children.

While checking their annual budgets, most governments in poor countries continue to direct their spending on big-ticket items such as bridges, roads and rails, which are visible physically but whose impact on the society, especially the children, is relatively negligible, compared to investment in the long-term and overall development of children, as the impact of these programs becomes visible years or even decades later.

But it is not just governments that are guilty of ignoring these vital investments in the future of these societies. International aid organizations, rich countries and of course the private-sector businesses in the developing world, all have a role to play in building a society that is not just well-educated but also healthy in body and mind. Only a collaborative and global effort can help to ensure that every child is well-fed, healthy and well-educated.

We’re ready to talk covertly about Brexit failure - but still far from ready to fix it

IN a life-enhancing essay that confirms, if nothing else, that he would have been the all-time ideal dinner party guest, Robert Louis Stevenson writes that to talk with others about the affairs of the day is to "bear our part in that great international congress, always sitting, where public wrongs are first declared, public errors first corrected, and the course of public opinion shaped, day by day, a little nearer to the right".

The written word, to which Stevenson himself brought such a gifted hand, will always fall short of the richness of the talk that precedes it, he argues. Literature itself "is no other than the shadow of good talk" in which "the imitation falls far short of the original in life, freedom and effect". Indeed, no legislative measure ever comes before parliament, Stevenson suggests, unless "it has been long ago prepared by the grand jury of the talkers".

Modern Britain should honour the good sense of this grand jury of talkers more attentively than it does. Disturbingly, this is not a view to which everyone now subscribes. Brexiters such as Nigel Farage, David Frost or the Daily Mail certainly do not. For them, to even mention Brexit in any terms other than a dragooned and uncritical celebration of Britain's departure from the EU is anathema and dangerous.

In their near-hysterical responses to news that a group of all-party politicians and assorted experts had met to discuss how Brexit could "work better with our neighbours in Europe" last week, the critics went straight to ramming speed. The meeting at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire was variously condemned as a "full sell-out" (Farage), a "plot" (Frost) and "a smug assemblage of arrogant establishment figures who think they know best" (a Mail editorial).

In reality, there is no evidence

that last week's meeting was any of these things. Ditchley Park conferences are not secret summits. They are off-the-record conversations attended by senior politicians, officials, academics, business figures and - yes - journalists. There are normally 30 or more people around the table. Full disclosure: I have been to Ditchley events too, though not last week's, more's the pity.

There is a list of the kind of things they discuss on the Ditchley Foundation's website. It is a wide-ranging agenda. There is a conference next week on AI. In March, there is one on Germany's new direction. Yes, the Ditchley director tends to be a retired Foreign Office grandee. Yes, they are select gatherings, possibly too much so. And no, their contents are not reported. But perhaps, as Stevenson puts it in his essay, "the profit is in the exercise, and above all in the experience; for when we reason at large on any subject, we review our state and history in life".

All of that said, the Brexit event, which two journalists attended, appears to have been unusually carefully choreographed, even for Ditchley. Yet given Ditchley's role and purpose, surely it had to be so, as the overreactions have confirmed. It was essential that this was not, contrary to Frost's claims, a remainder event, and essential that non-isolationist leavers would agree to take part in it.

That is why it was important that leavers such as Michael Gove, Michael Howard, Norman Lamont and Gisela Stuart attended, along with Alex Hickman, who served as Boris Johnson's business adviser between 2020 and last summer. It was significant that they came. But it was equally important that remainers including David Lammy, John Healey and Peter Mandelson came from the Labour side, along

Martin Kettle

with the Tory remainers Jonathan Hill and David Lidington, and former officials including Oly Robbins and Tom Scholar, who was fired from the Treasury last autumn. No current officials were invited.

They all went to the event, from their different starting points, because they all grasp that there is an issue worth solving that cannot be wished away, blamed on betrayal by Brexit fainthearts, or concealed by airy talk about Brexit freedoms. The negative impact of Brexit on the UK economy in 2023 is not a matter of opinion but of fact, as analysis from the Office for Budget Responsibility makes clear. That fact confronts Rishi Sunak's government today. That is why Sunak is so keen to get a reformed Northern Ireland protocol over the line, while characteristically flinching from telling his party the truth about Brexit. But the same fact would still confront a Keir Starmer government in the future, too.

The economic cost was underscored this week by the comments from Jonathan Haskel, a member of the Bank of England's rates setting committee, that Brexit has wiped out £29bn in business investment and exacerbated the UK's productivity slowdown. It is already responsible for a 1.3% loss of GDP - a loss of £1,000 a household - and will more than double to 2.8% of GDP by 2026.

On Tuesday, the work and pensions secretary Mel Stride agreed as much. There is a much larger point here, too. British politics has a void where a public conversation should be between people with opposing views on Brexit. That conversation has to focus on the economic facts and political options as they actually exist, rather than as the protagonists from 2016 might want them to be. It is not an easy conversation, but it is beginning to take place all

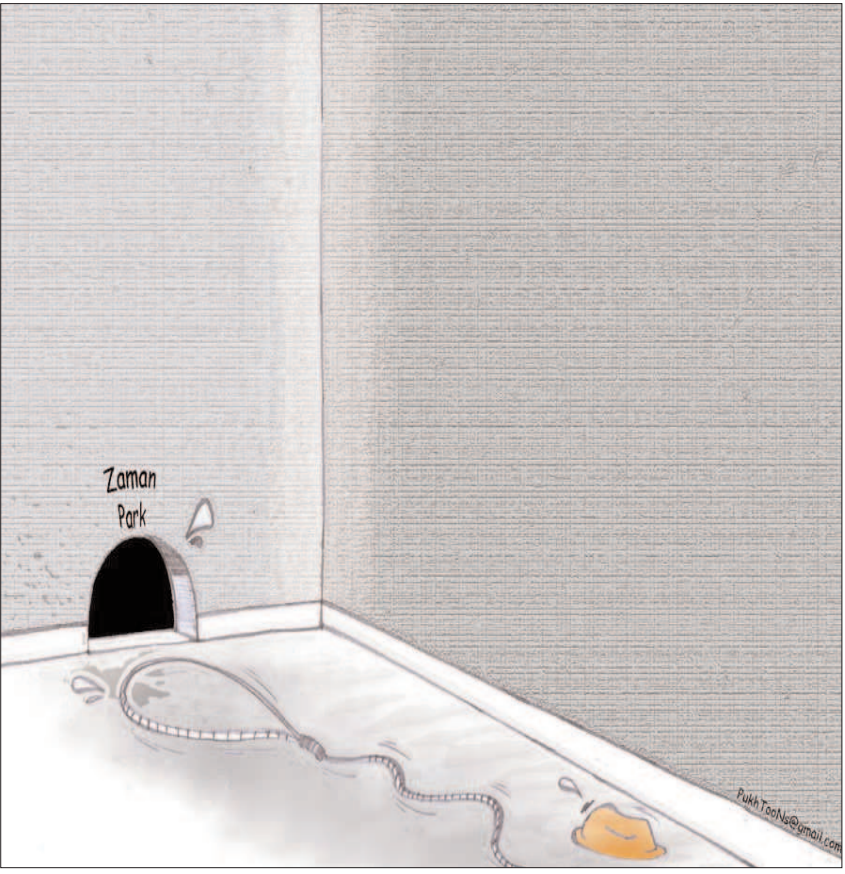
the same.

Overwhelmingly the most sensible response to the revelation about the Ditchley discussion should be to say, "About time, too". This meeting was not an outrage. The participants are not, as some leavers want them to be, a latterday Cliveden set of influential aristocrats. For this was a meeting that ought to have taken place a long time ago. UK governance has been and still is immobilised over Brexit. For anyone who believes in trying to solve problems, the mature response to such a meeting is: "Good. Now, what's the next step?"

It needs making clear that neither the conversation that we need, nor the conversation that I assume took place at Ditchley, is about re-running 2016. There are more layers of meaning bound up in the Brexit referendum than merely a profit-and-loss calculation, important though that is too. It is striking that the leavers at the meeting were clear that there is an economic problem that justified their attendance, even though they do not believe this invalidates the UK's separation from the EU. Several of those whom I approached for comment on the Ditchley meeting were irritated that the news had come out. They are wrong to take this view. Stevenson's grand jury of talkers has been on the case for ages. It was time that political leaders caught up and opened up, and time they confronted the true believers.

Yet Brexit is a problem that the current government is incapable of solving. Conservative divisions remain too fundamental, as the upcoming confrontations over reform of the Northern Ireland protocol are likely to show, perhaps very damagingly. Sunak knows that Brexit is a problem, not a liberation, but he cannot say so. In the end, though, it is action that will be needed, not talk.

The Guardian



Nikki Haley is a poor 2024 GOP candidate

Ifirst met Nikki Haley during her initial run for governor of South Carolina in 2010 at a luncheon at Magnolia's, a Myrtle Beach buffet-style restaurant popular with the locals. Though she had served in the state's House of Representatives for several years, I didn't know her well - and neither did most people in the state. The luncheon was being hosted in the aftermath of the scandal plaguing South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford, who had snuck out of the country to see his mistress but told his staff he was hiking on the Appalachian Trail. After listening to Haley give a fairly routine stump speech, I asked Haley, if she won, would she resign as governor if she made as big a misstep as Sanford had.

"I won't mess up like him," she said without hesitation. As governor of South Carolina, she never messed up like Sanford, who also had strong presidential prospects before his escapades. But she messed up when she decided to embrace Donald Trump - rather than keeping him at arm's length - providing further proof that even the most talented Republicans were willing to bend the knee to the former president.

Though she released a video on Tuesday announcing her intention to run against Trump for president in 2024, Haley has lost the moral high ground she once had over him. To be clear, Haley never really had the moral high ground; she just created the illusion of having it. She is as politically ambitious as any man or woman who has considered themselves qualified enough to lead the world's most powerful nation. However, her principles have often seemed an afterthought or conditional on circumstance.

And despite Haley's ambitions, former President Donald Trump is still the top contender for the nomination. His most loyal supporters, which still number in the millions, won't abandon him just because of a loss in 2020 - which many of them falsely believe was stolen from him - and a bad 2022 midterm cycle for Trump-backed candidates. But if, for some reason, he stumbles or gets embroiled in too many legal battles, Haley should be considered a serious contender. After all, you don't get elected twice as governor of Deep South, Bible Belt South Carolina as a woman with dark skin and a Sikh background by happenstance.

And though Haley's embrace of Trumpism was undoubtedly a mistake, there were early indications from her time as governor that her priority was not always the people of South Carolina, but her own political aspirations. In 2013, then-Gov. Haley and a Republican-dominated General Assembly denied the expansion of Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act to hundreds of thousands of low-income South Carolinians. She even opposed creating a statewide health care exchange under that law.

Health officials in her administration told me at

Issac J. Bailey

the time that there were simply better options, but it was clear to close observers in the state it was primarily about political expedience - especially when Haley declared that she would not expand Medicaid on President Barack Obama's watch. About 40% of the state's uninsured adults would have received health coverage under an expansion, as well as low-wage workers in retail and hospitality who are concentrated in Horry County, home to resort destination Myrtle Beach, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

A White House study said expansion could have saved about 200 lives in the state every year through early detection and treatment. And a University of South Carolina study estimated the state could have seen an additional 44,000 jobs added by 2020 with the multibillion dollar federal investment from a Medicaid expansion. Indeed, Haley, a self-avowed "pro-life" advocate, stood in the way of life-saving Obamacare - exposing her hypocrisy on an issue that has come to define the modern-day Republican Party.

Her stance on taxes wasn't much better. Haley adhered to the tax cuts today, tax cuts tomorrow, tax cuts forever boilerplate conservative talking point while in the governor's mansion. She wanted to cut income taxes in the state, even when fellow Republicans said the cuts would be too steep. Haley proposed a tax swap, a lowering of the top marginal income tax rate for the wealthiest South Carolinians in exchange for an increase in the gas fee that everyone pays. And she kept pushing for tax cuts even in her final budget proposal. She did not get her way often.

Of course, many of her supporters point to her handling of the Confederate flag as a sign of her sincere commitment to the people of South Carolina, and particularly the Black community. But even that is questionable at best. The blood of Black South Carolinians had to be spilled before that flag would be removed.

After White supremacist Dylann Roof massacred innocent Black churchgoers at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston in 2015, Haley took the lead on the decision to take the Confederate battle flag off the South Carolina State House. But for years prior to the mass shooting, Haley had dodged the issue, claiming - falsely - that there was no push in South Carolina for the flag to come down.

"What I can tell you is over the last three and a half years, I spent a lot of my days on the phones with CEOs and recruiting jobs to this state," she said during a debate as she ran for reelection in 2014 against Democratic challenger Vincent Sheheen. "I can honestly say I have not had one conversation with a single CEO about the Confederate flag." Haley had not taken any steps to get the flag lowered, or even hinted that she would try, before that ugly night in

Charleston. And just a few years ago, she claimed Roof had "hijacked" the meaning of the flag that some South Carolinians embraced as part of a proud heritage.

Still, by making the decision to remove the flag at the time she did, Haley successfully sold the idea that she cared. That decision, paired with her actions on key GOP priorities - from health care to taxes - positioned her well within the party. Haley was even tasked with giving the response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union in 2016, a sign of the party's faith in her abilities and ambitions. But when Trump first declared, Haley was an early critic. In February 2016, she said she would not endorse Trump, explaining that he is "everything a governor doesn't want in a president." She continued to criticize him as she campaigned with Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, whom she had endorsed for president.

Then Haley reversed course when Trump became the nominee, and she landed the type of position in his administration that would provide her with the foreign policy experience she'd need for a presidential run: US ambassador to the United Nations. She could plausibly claim to have taken the position to serve her country - not Trump. Her approach seemed to work. She had good standing among staunch Trump supporters but had not alienated those who considered themselves moderates and Never Trumpers when she left her position at the UN. As a South Carolina voter who had sworn off the Republican Party, I was even intrigued by what she had pulled off.

All of these strategic decisions make her a contender worth watching in the primary season. But they are also an important reminder of where so many of the leaders of the Republican Party are today - comfortable with embracing leaders who traffic in bigotry and racism when it's beneficial in an election cycle, but equally comfortable using race and gender to protect the GOP against barbs from Democrats and others about White supremacy and misogyny. That's precisely how Haley defended South Carolina against accusations that the flying of the flag of traitors who tried to establish a new country built on the premise of permanent black enslavement was harming the state's image. It's a heads I win-tails you lose version of identity politics.

"But we really kind of fixed all that when you elected the first Indian-American female governor," Haley said during that 2014 debate in South Carolina. "When we appointed the first African-American US senator [Tim Scott], that sent a huge message." On that count, Haley is in a strong position. She embodies the party well. But her embrace of Trump made him look stronger and her weaker. She'll have to climb a mountain of her own making to win the nomination against him.

CNN

West must reconsider sanctions that only hurt civilians

THE human toll of the devastating earthquake that hit southwestern Turkey and northwestern Syria last week continues to unfold. By Monday noon the death toll in both regions had reached a horrific 36,000 deaths with more than 100,000 injured. An unknown number of victims are still trapped under the rubble. The extraction period will take time and effort. Millions have been affected by the disaster and hundreds of thousands of survivors are now in desperate need of shelter, food and medicines. This is a humanitarian catastrophe whose full dimensions will take many years to understand as both countries move from salvaging operations to reconstruction.

While almost 100 countries stepped in to help Turkey deal with the disaster, by sending search-and-rescue teams, medical supplies and sophisticated sensor equipment, less than 20 states, most of them Arab, responded to the calamity in Syria. The situation there remains uncertain, complicated by years of civil war, economic sanctions against the Syrian government and logistical hurdles. It took four to five days before aid convoys began trickling through the border crossing between southern Turkey and the beleaguered rebel-held province of Idlib. No one knows how many lives were lost there because of delays result-

ing from cautious political calculations and internal squabbling.

Certainly many lives would have been saved if it wasn't for Western-imposed sanctions against Damascus and the complex situation in rebel-held areas. On Saturday, Martin Griffiths, the under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs at the United Nations and emergency relief coordinator, tweeted after visiting the Turkey-Syria border: "We have so far failed the people in northwest Syria. They rightly feel abandoned. Looking for international help that hasn't arrived."

It took until Thursday for the US embassy in Damascus to announce that "Our sanctions programs do not target humanitarian assistance and permit activities in support of humanitarian assistance, including in regime-held areas. The US is committed to providing immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance to help all affected communities recover."

Still political squabbling has hindered the flow of aid convoys to rebel-held areas. The Syrian government is hesitant to allow aid to move from its territory to that of the opposition. Likewise, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, which is in control of most of Idlib, said that allowing aid to come from the regime-held areas would be tantamount to recognition of its legitimacy. It would only accept aid moving

Osama Al-Sharif

through the border, but then that also raised objections from outside parties. Moscow and Damascus want aid from Turkey to go through one recognized border point, while the US demanded that all border crossings between southern Turkey and northern Syria be open for aid convoys. By late Monday, Griffiths announced that some of these objections had been resolved. The UN Security Council was to meet on Monday to discuss the situation in northwestern Syria, while EU officials were debating ways to override some of the sanctions in order to deliver humanitarian help to Damascus. The failure by the international community in delivering life-saving aid to the Syrian people has exposed the serious shortcomings of sanctions as an economic weapon deployed to achieve political goals. The debate has renewed over the efficacy of sanctions and whether they do deliver.

Sanctions almost never work in achieving their objectives, whether it is altering regime behavior or effecting regime change. They never worked in Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela and Iran. They never worked in Iraq, even though then US ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, told an interviewer in 1996 that "the price is worth it" when asked about the death of half a million Iraqi children as a result of her country's

sanctions. In the end the US invaded Iraq in 2003, after falsifying evidence, and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Sanctions never hurt the leaders of the targeted country. But they do harm the civilian population and undermine the civilian infrastructure, as is the case of Syria, Iran and Afghanistan. The earthquake disaster has exposed how the government in Syria was ill-prepared to deal with the humanitarian crisis there. The US Caesar Act of 2019, ironically titled the Syria Civilian Protection Act, has failed the Syrian people and did nothing to advance a political process to end the civil war or rid the country of foreign intervention. Writing in Foreign Policy in January of last year, geopolitical expert, Anchal Vohra, said: "Western sanctions that banned reconstruction of any sort, including of power plants and pulverized cities, certainly exacerbated Syrians' miseries and eliminated any chance of recovery."

The catastrophic event that hit Syria's population must present an opportunity to revisit sanctions as a blunt tool that hurts the very people it claims to support, while pushing state actors to revive efforts to kick-start a political process that would end the unpardonable suffering of millions of Syrians. The shameful response by the international community to the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria is a stain on humanity.

Time to act to save saline lakes

Anew study published last month inspired headlines declaring that the Great Salt Lake in the US is at risk of drying up within five years. The famous lake is not the only saline lake facing disaster; many such bodies of water around the world are disappearing, with severe potential consequences. Saline lakes play important ecological, economic and cultural roles. Saline lakes are formed through a variety of means, but they usually lack an outlet to the sea and depend on a balance between incoming water and evaporation. This makes them particularly vulnerable to water diversion or changes in climate.

The January report warned that, if the Great Salt Lake's current "rate of water loss continues, the lake would be on track to disappear in the next five years." Some other US saline lakes, such as the Salton Sea, are at risk of disappearing, and others, such as Owens Lake, have already mostly vanished. Perhaps the most famous saline lake is the Aral Sea; previously the world's fourth-largest lake, the Soviet Union's massive water diversion for agriculture began to diminish the lake in the mid-20th century. Today, the Aral Sea is mostly gone, though efforts in Kazakhstan have helped to revive a section. Lake Urmia in Iran is a more recent example of another once-large lake disappearing; in the past 20-25 years, the lake has declined precipitously and faces potential extinction. In Iraq, Laka Sawa completely dried up in 2022;

while some water has returned, the lake might not survive. Other lakes - including the famous Dead Sea, the enormous Caspian Sea and Turkey's Lake Van - are shrinking. While each lake is unique, there are similarities in the risks to their survival. In most cases, experts say that the main cause is overuse and poor management of water. One major factor is diverting water for agriculture; poorly planned agriculture can be particularly devastating, such as when it involves growing thirsty crops in arid regions and wasteful forms of irrigation. Water demands from growing populations is another problem for many lakes. Corruption and power struggles over water rights further complicate solutions.

Climate change plays a secondary but increasingly important role, as it threatens to decrease precipitation and increase heat and evaporation. The recent report on the Great Salt Lake noted that anthropogenic climate change has created "4°F of warming in northern Utah since 1900" and estimated that climate change accounts for about 9 percent of the lake's shrinkage. Iranian studies have suggested that 18 percent of Lake Urmia's decline is due to climate change. When saline lakes shrink or disappear, the impacts can be enormous. Large saline lakes are critical components of their local climates. The Aral Sea was large enough to have a moderating impact on the region's climate; since

most of it disappeared, temperatures in the region have become more extreme. The Great Salt Lake's evaporation contributes to precipitation in the region, including the snow that drives Utah's winter tourism industry.

All of the lakes are important to ecosystems. Many of them support brine shrimp that some bird species rely on; some saline lakes are home to fish and other animals. As the lakes shrink and their salinity increases, many of the animals can no longer survive. Saline lakes are a part of local geology as well; in one example, the shrinking of the Dead Sea has created multiple sink holes in the region. The impacts on climate, ecology and geology affect the people who live around the lakes. Many lakes are the center of local economies, supporting fishing, aquaculture, tourism and sometimes mining. When they shrink or disappear, livelihoods go with them. Lakes often provide food directly through fishing and indirectly through water used for irrigation, so shrinking lakes can also reduce food supplies. Wind can spread salt, damaging soil. Communities also lose much of their recreation and cultural traditions when they lose lakes.

One of the most worrying impacts is on health. As saline lakes dry up, they expose lake beds that contain salt, other minerals and often pollutants from agricultural or industrial run-off. Winds lift those

particles into the air. Multiple studies have shown that populations around such lakes see significant increases in respiratory illnesses, hypertension and other health problems. Some lakes contain additional dangers; for example, windstorms off the Great Salt Lake can contain arsenic. Many saline lakes can still be saved, but several - including the Great Salt Lake and Lake Urmia - require immediate action. Improving monitoring and studying of the lakes is important, but fundamentally the lakes need more water. There are many ideas for bringing more water to the lakes, and some have potential. However, transporting water from elsewhere often is very expensive and even impractical. Water conservation must be a part of saving saline lakes, which requires difficult decisions about reducing water to agriculture and a population centers and sometimes negotiating with upstream authorities. For example, the recent report on the Great Salt Lake said that "30-50 percent reductions in water use may be required" - and quickly.

Residents around saline lakes and governments are increasingly aware of the problem. Some governments are taking action; for example, the US recently enacted a bipartisan bill to fund research into saline lake ecosystems, and Iran is working to implement plans to transfer water to Lake Urmia. However, in these and other cases, water conservation must also be quickly pursued, or the lakes could pass a tipping point and disappear.

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SCCI calls for revamping institutions to promote industrialisation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Muhammad Ishaq stressed the need for revamping of relevant public sector institutions to promote industrialization in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The chamber president asked the government to take pragmatic steps toward resolution of issues that were creating hurdles in industrialisation in the province.

Muhammad Ishaq made these remarks while talking to secretary industries, commerce and technical education, government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Sultan Tareen during his visit to the chamber house here on Wednesday.

Apart of SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Smeda provincial chief Rashid Aman, the senior officials of the industries

department including AD M. Jamil Khan, Economic Advisor Munir Gul, Director General Itfikhah Ahmad, and Deputy Director IC&T Peshawar Wajid Aman were present during the meeting.

Industrial sector is reeling owing to negligence of the government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, says SCCI chief. He called for taking proactive steps to resolve industrialists' problems on priority grounds.

Furthermore, he demanded special incentives and facilities to be extended to the business community/manufacturers in order to make the dream of industrialization come true with real spirit and sense in the province.

Ishaq apprised that secretary industries that industrialists have highly perturbed because of 'unnecessary' actions and issuance of notices by authorities

concerned, which has forced them to shift the production units to other provinces.

He urged the government to avoid imposing 'industries-hostile' policies and take practical measures to grow the industrial sector at an optimal level.

Amir Sultan Tareen while giving full assurance to resolve business community/industrialists issues on priority basis said that practical steps have been taken for industrialisation and bringing reforms in the relevant subordinate institutions of the industries department in the province.

The senior official said the government is providing all facilities and incentives to boost up industrialisation. He went on to say that the business community has played a pivotal role in economic prosperity and development in the country.

Amir Sultan, on the

occasion asked the business community to generously extend donations into funds which have been set up for devastating earthquake victims of Türkiye.

Ishaq said the chamber will make full efforts to convince members to extend maximum donations in the funds, which is being established for quake victims Türkiye and Syria.

Earlier, the SCCI chief apprised the secretary industries about business community/industrialists reservations about 'unwarranted' actions, issuance of notices and enforcement of 'anti-industries' policies by authorities concerned.

The chamber president asked for prioritizing revival of industries, trade, businesses and export to bring economic stability and get rid of Pakistan from depending on foreign aid and make it an economical 'self-reliant' country.



RAWALPINDI: People purchasing second hand clothes from vendor at Raja Bazaar.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, MSC Lisbon, Fairchem Sword, Star Jeanette, MilahaRas Laffan and Hafnia Shanghai carrying containers, palm oil, canola seed, LNG and Mogas, berthed at Qasim International Containers Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, Grain & Fertilizer Terminal, Pakistan Gasport Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively the other day.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Irenes Ray and Sea Power-II carrying containers and wheat also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port on the same day.

A total of 08 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them 02 ships, Yihai and Santa Rosa left the Port on Wednesday morning while a gas carrier 'Maran Gas Asclepius' is expected to sail later today.

A cargo volume of 172,888 tonnes, comprising 142,183 tonnes of imports cargo and 30,705 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,012 containers (2,218 TEUs Imports and 1,794 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are 05 ships at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 02 ships, Maersk Brooklyn and Wide Juliet carrying containers are expected to take berths at QICT today.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 176 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 176.70 points, a positive change of 0.43 percent, closing at 41,326.86 points against 41,150.16 points the previous day.

A total of 137,377,503 shares were traded during the day as compared to 187,532,224 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs6.115 billion against Rs7.858 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 321 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 149 of them recorded gains and 156 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 16 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 12,584,506 shares at Rs1.24 per share; Cnergyico PK with 7,819,856 shares at Rs3.71 per share, and Hub Power Company with 7,228,483 shares at Rs67.15 per share.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum increase of Rs80.00 per share price, closing at Rs1,880.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Tex. with a

Rs79.91 rise in its per share price to Rs1,179.90.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs1,574.50 per share closing at Rs19,426.00; followed by Pak Services with Rs134.44 decline to close at Rs1,658.21.

Rupee recovers Rs1.96 against dollar

Pakistan rupee appreciated by Rs1.96 against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs265.38, against the previous day's closing of Rs267.34.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs266.5 and Rs269 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs2.80 and closed at Rs284.19 against the last day's closing of Rs286.99.

The Japanese Yen lost four paise to close at Rs1.98, whereas a decrease of Rs4.14 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs320.66 as compared to its last closing of Rs324.80.

The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 53 paise

each to close at Rs72.25 and Rs70.72 respectively.

Tokyo shares end lower

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks gave up early gains and ended down Wednesday, with investors cautious about pushing share prices up too far, although many also began bargain-hunting.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index lost 0.37 percent, or 100.91 points, to 27,501.86, while the broader Topix index lost 0.27 percent, or 5.35 points, to 1,987.74.

Japanese shares started in the positive region, as the dollar's appreciation buoyed exporters and a US tech rally encouraged buying in early trade, analysts said.

But once the early gains subsided, the market came under pressure.

"Investors are getting wary of a rising sense of short-term overheating," and speculations for continued US rate hikes weighed on the market, IwaiCosmo Securities said.

Daiwa Securities said "caution that US rate hikes will become prolonged" also fuelled selling.

The dollar bought 133.25 yen in Asian trade, against 133.07 yen in New York and 131.89 yen in Tokyo late Tuesday.

Sony Group gave up early gains and ended down 0.64 percent to 11,705. SoftBank Group fell 1.01 percent to 5,791 yen.

Tech-related shares were also mixed. Advantest, which makes tests for semiconductors, added 1.00 percent to 10,130 yen.

Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to build semiconductors, fell 0.47 percent to 46,570 yen. Industrial robot maker Fanuc lost 0.30 percent to 22,910.

Banks rose. Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group advanced 0.87 percent to 981 yen and Mizuho Financial Group added 1.42 percent to 2,147 yen.

Chinese yuan weakens to 6.8183 against USD

BEIJING (APP): The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 47 pips to 6.8183 against the US dollar Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

ICMA Pakistan organised a momentous Job Fair

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The ICMA Pakistan organised a momentous Job Fair at Imran Khan Cricket Ground, Block - 6, Gulshan-e-Iqbal. Aiming to connect the industry and the students of ICMA, this event provided a platform for the over 200 organizations to offer career guidance to students. Furthermore, this Job Fair hosted distinguished guests from the political, business and administrative sectors of the city.

Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh who was the Chief Guest on occasion appreciated the role of ICMA in organizing the Job Fair.

Shaham Ahmed, Honorary Secretary offered his gratitude to all dignitaries and event partners for their efforts to make this



event successful. He further appreciated the efforts of Job Placements and Industry Linkages Department of ICMA for successful event organization. He also

reiterated the importance of such events in bringing industry on board.

Furthermore, Aamir Ijaz Khan, Executive Director, while mentioning the

remarkable services of ICMA, said that ICMA can offer all possible services in the economic and educational affairs of the Government of Pakistan.

LCCI wants immediate removal of MDI fixed charges

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Wednesday urged the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to remove immediately the fixed MDI (Maximum Demand Indicator) charges.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that present economic situation was concerning for the industry and these MDI charges were causing closure of the industry. He was talking to the LESCO CEO Chaudhry Muhammad Amin, who visited the Lahore Cham-

ber. Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and Executive Committee members were also present.

The LESCO chief explained that MDI fixed charges were imposed by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). Since LESCO was a beneficiary in the case of MDI as it brought revenue for the Discos (distribution companies), the LESCO itself could not oppose the initiative, he added.

He said that this has also resulted in setbacks to LESCO as many users have

gone off-net and disconnected their connections due to MDI. The reason was that the bill had to be paid even in case of non-use of electricity and the tariff was also increased. He said that as a beneficiary, LESCO cannot oppose MDI. "However, we will favour the decision to remove MDI fixed charges as LESCO has suffered a lot due to MDI. We try to keep the consumer with us because even if the industry is closed, it has to restart sometime," he maintained.

Chaudhry Muhammad Amin said that there were rumors regarding solar net metering, in which it is being said that the rate of net metering was being reduced but the rate was not being reduced at all.

He said that government was currently focusing on

solar. He said that four acres of land was being allocated with 11KV feeders of all the DISCOS in collaboration with the private sector. 100 feeders have been selected in this regard with the investment of Rs 170 million.

The LCCI president said that line losses and power theft were also contributing to energy shortfalls. Although LESCO's line losses had come up to 11.52 per cent in 2021-22, it should be further brought down to less than 10pc.

He said that LESCO should also conduct a campaign to raise public awareness about saving electricity and encourage consumers to use electrical appliances that use less electricity. In this regard, Lahore Chamber would help the LESCO.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Aliaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.
Case No.259/1. Institution: 24/2/2022. Date of hearing: 28/2/2023. Mst. Hatay VS Shujaal Mulk. Notice no. 40.Salar Khan.31.Misal Khan.32.Nisar Khan sons.33.Mst. Gaha.40. Mst Bakht Ranra.34. Basnia.35.Mer Shed. 36.Bashar Ahmed. 37.Zubair sons.38.Mst Bakht Zeba.39.Rasheda daughters of Mst Khabro.40.Sher Akbar.41.Khan Ghalib.43.Mst Sheren Rokhan.44. Fatma. 45.Zenab daughters of Taj Mohammad Khan son of Mst Dambara.14/1.Miraj Khan.177/2.Ghani.231/2.Mohammad Lawar. 60.Biland.67.Saifur Rehman.68.Amer Rehman.49.Gul Rehman sons.Mst Nasreen Nisa. 71.Jama.72.Mehrurisa.73.Roshan daughters of Mst Wakela daughters of Mst Bakhtawara.74.Said Charli.75.Mohammad Imran.76.Saed Anwar sons.77.Msts Hidayat. 78.Nagena.79.Aysa Bibi.80.Naeem daughters of Mst Mahi daughter of Mst Bakhtawara.81.Amer Sultan. 82.Wiqar. 83.ZainulAbiden sons of Mst Darbara daughter of Mst Bakhtawara resident of Elai Buner.84.Abdul Hamed sons of Talizar. 85.Qadri Gul son of Charli.86.Rahem Dad.87.Haleem Dad.88.Khalid Dad sons of Sawab Khan.89.Feroz Khan son of Qadar Khan.90.Mohammad Slam son of Mohammad Alam.91.Rahem Khan. 92.Said Ghafor Khan sons of Feroz Khan.93.Fazal Alem.94. Bakht/Alem sons of Mohamidistan.95.Dowlat Zay son of Nawab.96. Bakhti.97. Bahramand. 98.Aqalmand.99.Amjad.100.Showren sons of Jowharen.101.Said Ghafor Khan.102.Jamrez Khan.103.Saifur Rehman.104.Rahem Zada sons of Shad Khan.105.Said Hasan son of Amer Hasan.106. Mer Hamad Khan son of Mehtab Khan.107.Amer Ahmed Shah son of Nor Ahmed Shah.108.Abdul Shakor son of Mohamad Rasol. 109.Badar Gul. 110.Nor Gul sons of Charli.111.Mst Panday widow 112.Hazrat Husain.118.Shamsol son of Rehmat Shah. 121.Amer Bahadure son of Fazal Nor.123. Abdullah Khan. 124.Sher Bahadure Khan sons of Hamesh Gul. 126.Gul Bahadure son of Biladar.127.Ghulam Husain son of Ali Hasan. 128.Abdul Kareem son of Sultan. 129.Mst Masrofa Bibi wife of Bawar Khan.130.Mohamad Karim.131.Imran Khan sons of Jaben. 134. Inayatullah. 135.Rehmatullah. 136.Faredullah Kgan.137.Uzman Ghani sons of Dheranay resident of Elai Buner. 140.Gul Hasan son of Qurasan. 141.Abdur Rehman son of Abdul Kareem.142.Norullah son of Manjab Khan.143.Sher Nawab Khan son of Sherullah Khan.145.Karm Shah. 146.Ghareb Shah sons of Mohammad Shah.147.Rasol Khan.148.Fujon sons of Abdullah Khan. 149. Sarfaraz Khan son of Baz Khan.150.Merdad Khan. 151.Karem Dad. 152.Umer Dad sons of Mian Dad.153.Abdul Ghafor son of Ghafor Khan.154.Nawar Khan son of Akbar Kgan. 158.Moza Khan son of Said Ali Khan.159. Arghamesh son of Asim Khan. 160.Mst Sharifa widow. 166.Usemanzy daughter of Manjjevar resident of Anghapur Buner. 171.Ashfaqun/Rehman.175.Mst. Bibi Zarijan widow.176.Mst. Bidara daughter of Ramdad.177.Mst Shamiroza widow.178. Ashlar Khan.182.Mst Begum Nasem Akhtar.185.Raj Khan son of Muqarab Khan. 186.Salar Khan son of Sar Khan.187.Merajan son of Hashim Khan. 188.Sultan Mehmod. 189.Sultani Rom. 193.Baharuden son of Rahim Shah.194. Mohamad Zaren son of Khaista Mohamad. 195.Rafullah son of Nor Ali.196.Mohammad Ghafor son of Saifur Tehman.197.Mst Naseba widow.198.Said Zaren. 199.Abaduden. 200.Mohammad Zaren sons of Sahib Den.201.Bakht Zaren.202. Sirajuden. 206.Mst Umerkheila widow. 207.Sawab Shah son.208.Msts Bakht Afsara. 209.Palwasja.210.Taj Bibi daughters of Karem Shah.211.Mst Marazay widow 212.Zahir Shah.213.Said Ali Shah sons.214.Mst Husan Zaba.216.Nusrat. 216.Nasema daughters of Yeacub Shah.217.Mst Ranezzy widow. 218.Roidad.219.Alem Dad.220. Baharmen. Khan sons of Merdad Khan.222.Rehmatullah Khan.223.Sher Afzal Khan.224.Sherzada.225.Akbar Khan sons.228. Mst s Husankheila. 230.Maamaro daughters of Norullah Khan.231. Fazal Wahab.232.Fazal Salar sons of Munawaruden. 233. Basherullah son of Habibullah resident of Torwaras Buner.235. Said Karem.236.said Jaben.240.Said Rahum. 242.Naseb Gul.253.Mian Gul son of Talib.259. Ahmed Said. 260.Norsaid sons of Mian Umer resident of Nawaw Kalay Ashezhi tehsel Gadezai Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 28/2/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the court of Fazal Gul ADJ-IV Kohat, Appeal No. CA-73/13 date of hearing 21-02-2023.

Titled: - Riaz-Ud-Din S/o Taj-Ud-Din R/o Pir Khel Jungle Khel Kohat. Notice against: - Abdal Khan Surname Abdullah S/o Arab Shan Surname Dat R/o Chakhar Mila Jungle Khel Kohat, presently R/o Godi Chak Dabori District Orakzai (Respondent) whereas the above plaintiff has Civil Appeal of against you Respondent in which date of hearing 21-02-2023 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Respondent is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 21-02-2023. Otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order issued on 25-01-2023 (Court of ADJ-IV Kohat).

Lost & Found

I have lost my file of 10 Marla plot at Block BWC17Q77U63 in Blue World City Islamabad.

Naseer Khan son of Muhammad Haleem resident of Zorband post office Loy Sam, Tehsil Khar, District Bajaur. If anyone found please contact: 0300-2171073.

Stock markets diverge as traders react to inflation numbers

LONDON (AFP/APP): Europe stock markets climbed Wednesday after Asian counterparts finished lower, with traders digesting news of cooler UK and US inflation.

The dollar jumped on expectations of more rises to US interest rates as the pace of price rises in the world's biggest economy was less than hoped.

Analysts said the bigger-than-expected drop in UK inflation could see the Bank of England pause its rate-

tightening cycle.

"After a US inflation number which proved a mild disappointment to the market..., the UK's own inflation reading came in lower than expected," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

The much-anticipated US inflation update Tuesday showed a slight slowdown in January from the previous month -- but the 6.4-percent reading was higher than forecast.

On Wednesday, official

data showed UK annual inflation has eased to 10.1 percent last month from 10.5 percent to December.

Central banks have massively hiked interest rates over the past year in a bid to cool decades-high inflation.

"Investors are trying to work out how the US Federal Reserve might react as they desperately look towards the milestone of the final rate hike in this cycle," said Mould.

"For now, markets are

retaining some confidence that this pivot isn't too far away."

Focus now turns to the release of US retail sales figures on Wednesday.

Wall Street ended mixed Tuesday, having fluctuated after the data release.

In Asia Wednesday, Hong Kong led losses with a drop of 1.4 percent -- the recent boost from China's reopening from zero-Covid running out of steam.

London just about stayed in positive territory, despite

a 10-percent plunge in the share price of Barclays bank.

Barclays missed its earnings target in the final quarter of last year after heavily increasing provisions for loans it expects to turn sour on fallout from high inflation.

Elsewhere, Dutch brewer Heineken on Wednesday reported a jump in 2022 sales after it passed increased costs onto consumers -- but its net profit fell.



In brief

Mir Hamza ruled out of PSL 8

K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): Karachi Kings' left-arm pacer Mir Hamza has been ruled out of the remainder of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) eight due to an injury. According to the details, Hamza fractured one of his fingers amid his side's opening clash against Peshawar Zalmi on Tuesday which resulted in him ruling out of the ongoing marquee league. The Kings are yet to announce Hamza's replacement for the remainder of the league. Taking to Twitter, Hamza's PSL franchise Kings confirmed that the pacer fractured one of his fingers due to which he has been ruled out of the ongoing season. "Fast bowler Mir Hamza has been ruled out of [PSL 8] due to a fractured finger," wrote Kings. "Our thoughts are with him, and we wish him a speedy recovery. The Karachi Kings family is with you, Mir!" Kings added, Hamza was part of the Kings' Playing XI during their two-run defeat against Zalmi in their opening match of PSL 8 on Tuesday. The left-arm pacer could bowl two overs in the thriller against Zalmi and picked up a wicket for 13 runs. It is pertinent to mention that the Kings will lock horns with Islamabad United in their second PSL 8 fixture on Thursday.

Sania joins RCB as team mentor

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Sania Mirza has been roped in as mentor of Royal Challengers Bangalore for the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL), to be played in Mumbai from March 4 to 26. On Wednesday, the franchise also announced the signing of Australian Ben Sawyer as head coach. Sawyer is the head coach of New Zealand Women and was part of the Women's World Cup-winning side with Australia last year as the assistant coach. Malolan Rangarajan, the former Tamil Nadu offspinner and lead talent scout, has been named assistant coach, while VR Vanitha, the former India batter, will come onboard as fielding coach. They have also brought on board RX Murali as a power-hitting coach. Murali has built up an excellent body of work locally in Bengaluru, having helped train several Karnataka players, Mayank Agarwal among the more prominent names in recent times. Mirza 'excited' to work on the mental aspects with young Indian talent Mirza, the first Indian woman to win a major title - she finished with six across women's doubles and mixed doubles - is expected to join the squad following the conclusion of the ATP Dubai Open, which is likely to be her last professional tournament. Mirza, 36, announced her decision to retire from professional tennis prior to the Australian Open, where she and her partner Rohan Bopanna finished runners-up in the mixed doubles. "I was a little surprised [at being offered a mentorship role], but I was really excited," Mirza told RCB TV. "I want to make young girls believe sport can be one of the first career choices for them. I want to help the next generation into believing in themselves no matter how much the odds are against you, you can achieve your goals." Mirza was particularly enthused about working with the younger Indian players and helping them deal with pressure. "The mental aspect of it is something I look forward to working with the younger girls," she said.

Ihsanullah tears up Quetta Gladiators



MULTAN: Ihsanullah celebrates another dismissal, Multan Sultans vs Quetta Gladiators, PSL.

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Multan Sultans made a strong comeback in the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 as Ihsanullah scythed through Quetta Gladiators batting order to help them to a thumping nine-wicket win at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Ihsanullah's superlative pace bowling garnered him incredible figures of five for 12 in four overs with 16 of his 24 deliveries being dots. These are the second best figures for a Multan Sultans bowler, behind Umar Gul's six for 24 against the same opposition in the 2018 edition of the tournament.

The 20-year-old right-arm fast was incredibly quick and hit the good length regularly, keeping the batters guessing whether to commit on the front or the back foot. He bowled with such menace that he had taken all five wickets in 16 balls.

Hailing from Khyber Agency in the north west of Pakistan, Ihsanullah entered the HBL PSL 8 at the back of decent form. The fast bowler was the best fast bowler in the Pakistan Cup 2022-23 (and second best overall), taking 25 wickets in 11 matches at a shade below 20.

Quetta Gladiators had a poor start with Martin Gupill

falling to Sameen Gul in the second over and Abdul Wahid Bangalzai becoming Abbas Afridi's victim in the fifth. Their woes amplified with the introduction of Ihsanullah, who bowled Sarfaraz Ahmed in his first over, the sixth of the innings.

The highlight of the match came in the eighth over when Ihsanullah accounted for Jason Roy, the highest run getter in the innings with 27 off 18, and Iftikhar Ahmed on back-to-back deliveries that put the visitors at a precarious 46 for five.

Mohammad Nawaz and Umar Akmal tried to steady the ship with a 20-run stand from 4.3 overs, but as the former was trapped LBW by the leg-spin of Usama Mir, who was the best bowler of the aforementioned Pakistan Cup and recently debuted for Pakistan in the ODI series against New Zealand, the floodgates opened again.

Ihsanullah had Umar walking back to the pavilion the next ball – first of the 13th – and three balls later, he rattled Naseem Shah's stumps to record his maiden five-fer in the format.

Quetta Gladiators could manage 110 as they were bowled out with seven balls spare. Their second best score came from Mohammad

Hasnain, who made 22, while Sameen and Abbas picked up two wickets each.

The run chase proved to be a cakewalk for the home side as they crossed the line in just 13.3 overs. There was an early hiccup, however, when Nuwan Thushara, at the start of the second over, hit Shan Masood on pads in front of stumps, but after that, it was a smooth sailing for Multan Sultans.

Rilee Rossouw, playing his first match of the season, took the game away in the fourth over, smacking Thushara for four consecutive fours. He scored his eighth HBL PSL half-century and finished with 78 not out off 42 and Multan Sultans' captain Mohammad Rizwan made 28 off 34 as the two stitched 108-run undefeated partnership.

This was Multan Sultans' sixth win over Quetta Gladiators in 10 matches.

Scores in brief: Quetta Gladiators 110 all out, 18.5 overs (Jason Roy 27, Mohammad Hasnain 22; Ihsanullah 5-12, Sameen Gul 2-20, Abbas Afridi 2-27)

Multan Sultans 111-1, 13.3 overs (Rilee Rossouw 78 not out, Mohammad Rizwan 28 not out)

Player of the match – Ihsanullah (Multan Sultans).

Top seeds move to semi-finals of ITF World Junior Tennis C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the seeded players moved into the semi-finals of both Boys Singles and Girls Singles events of ITF Pakistan PPL – Syed Dilawar Abbas World Junior Tennis Championships 2023 after beating their respective opponents in the quarter-final stage at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad on Wednesday.

Only one upset was caused by unseeded Yejun Lee of Korea when she eliminated the 7th seed of Maia Visan of Romania in the Girl's Singles quarter-final 6-1 6-0. Yerzhan Kistafin Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan visited PTF Complex to witness some of the matches. He appreciated the high standard of tennis and also interacted with players and parents from his home country as well as other countries.

Senator Taj Haider also visited PTF Complex and interacted with the play-

ers, coaches and parents and appreciated the efforts of PTF for conducting International tournaments in a highly befitting manner.

The following are the results: Boys Singles Quarter-Finals: Cem Atlamis (TUR) bt Jihwan KIM (KOR) 6-0,6-4; Yuan Lu (CHN) bt Dogan Can Sipahioğlu (TUR) 6-0,6-2; Bugra Ozkoc (TUR) bt Edward Kruppe (CAN) 6-0,7-5; Kamonpanyakorn Thadpong (THA) bt Mahatir Muhammad (PAK) 5-7,7-6(3),6-2.

Girls Singles Quarter-Finals: Yejun Lee (KOR) bt Maia Visan (ROU) 6-1,6-0; Vlada Guryleva (RUS) bt Jinshu Xia (CHN) 5-7,6-0,6-4; Zeynep Erbakan (TUR) bt Pitchayapak Srimuk (THA) 6-2,6-2; Defne Erbakan (TUR) bt Lilya Piskun (RUS) 3-6 6-1 6-3.

Boys Doubles Quarter-Finals: Keagan Jonathan (MAS) / Jihwan Kim (KOR) bt Ahmad Nael Qureshi

(PAK) / Krittaeta Thammakun (THA) 6-3,7-5; Cem Atlamis (TUR) / Mikhail Khodorchenko (RUS) 1-6,7-5(10-6); Mahatir Muhammad Khan (PAK) / Nadir Mirza (PAK) bt Asad Zaman (PAK) / Boda Zheng (CHN) 6-2, 6-2; Yash Bahalkar (GBR) / Hamid Israr Gul (PAK) Vs Teetawat Tavachphongsri (THA) / Kamonpanyakorn Thadpong (THA) (in progress).

Girls Doubles Quarter-Finals: Taira Abildayeva (KAZ) / Vlada Guryleva (RUS) bt Se Yeong Jang (KOR) / Yejun Lee (KOR) 6-3,6-3; Anastasiya Kim (KAZ) / Jinshu Xia (CHN) bt Sheeza Sajid (PAK) / Phitchayapak Srimuk (THA) 6-1, 6-1; Defne Erbakan (TUR) / Zeynep Erbakan (TUR) bt Seun Baeg (KOR) / Maia Visan (ROU) 6-0, 6-0; Polina Bershteyn (RUS) / Lilya Piskun (RUS) Vs Soha Ali (PAK) / Amna Ali Qayyum (PAK) (in progress).

Jinnah Gold Polo Cup BN Polo, FG Polo triumphant

LAHORE (APP): BN Polo and FG Polo emerged victorious on the second day of the Jinnah Gold Polo Cup 2023 sponsored by Al Rehman Developers and Town Planners here at the Pakistan Park Cavalry Ground on Wednesday.

Hamza Mawaz Khan's shone in the BN Polo's majestic 7-2 triumph over Master Paints/Newage Cables in the first match of the day. Hamza was in sublime form and displayed outstanding mallet and pony skills and fired in four fantabulous goals. The remaining contribution came from Tito Ruiz, Roberto Iturriz Arias and Baber Naseem, who struck one goal each. For Master Paints/Newage Cables, Simon Prada scored both goals.

The match began with a successful conversion of 30-yard penalty by Master Paints/Newage but BN Polo then showed their aggression and class and hammered three back-to-back goals to take a 3-1 lead. They dominated the second

chukker as well by adding two more goals in their tally, stretching it to 5-1.

BN Polo maintained their supremacy in the third chukker as well and slammed in one goal to make it 6-1 but Master Paints/Newage made their presence felt by firing in a field goal to reduce the margin to 6-2.

BN Polo then smashed in a field goal in the fourth and last chukker to win the match by 7-2.

Raul Laplacette excelled in FG Polo's thrilling 10-8 victory over HN Polo in the second match of the day. Raul Laplacette showed great form and polo skills while converting superb seven goals for FG Polo while Mian Abbas Mukhtar also played well and contributed with two tremendous goals. For HN Polo, which had two goals handicap advantage, Raja Samiullah pumped in three goals while Raja Jalal Arsalan banged in a brace and Raja Mikayial Sami converted one.

FG Polo were off to a fly-

ing start as they hammered a hat-trick of goals to gain a 3-0 lead but HN Polo made a comeback by banging in a brace to reduce the deficit to 2-3. FG Polo players shone again in second chukker by firing in four goals against two by HN Polo to stretch their lead to 7-4. FG Polo fully dominated the third chukker by hammering a hat-trick of goals to enhance their lead to 10-4 while HN Polo thrashed in two back-to-back goals to make it 610 before the end of the fourth and last chukker, thus FG Polo winning the encounter by 10-8, as HN Polo had a two-goal handicap advantage.

A good number of spectators including polo players, their families, were present on the occasion to witness and enjoy the enthralling and entertaining encounters. Jinnah Polo Fields President Lt Col Shoaib Aftab (R), Secretary Maj Ali Taimur (R) and others were also present there. Tomorrow (Thursday), two important matches will be played at Jinnah Polo Fields.

Deepti Sharma sets up second World Cup win for India

CAPE TOWN (APP): Off-spinner Deepti Sharma set up a second successive win for India in the Women's T20 World Cup with a match-changing spell against the West Indies at Newlands in Cape Town on Wednesday.

India won by seven wickets to join England at the top of Group Two. West Indies were restricted to 118 for six with Sharma taking three for 15, in the process becoming the first Indian player to take 100 wickets in T20 internationals.

India had slipped to 43 for three in reply but captain Harmanpreet Kaur (33) and rising star Richa Ghosh (44 not out) took India to the brink victory with a partnership of 72 for the fourth wicket. Sharma made two crucial breakthroughs after West Indies reached 78 for one, dismissing former captain Stafanie Taylor and Shemaine Campbell in the space of four balls after the pair had put on 74 for the second wicket.

Campbell (30) attempted a reverse sweep and Smriti Mandhana, back in action after missing India's win against Pakistan on Sunday because of a finger injury, took a good catch diving forward at backward point. Taylor, in her second match since suffering a back injury last September, scored 42 from 40 balls before falling leg before on review three balls after Campbell's dismissal.

There was concern for the West Indies later when Taylor was stretched off eight overs into India's innings after going down in pain after bending to field a ball. Shafali Verma hit four boundaries as she and Mandhana scored 28 off the first two overs of India's reply. But a switch to spin paid off as Karishma Ramharack and fellow off-spinner, captain Hayley Matthews, slowed the scoring and took three wickets for 15 runs in the next 5.1 overs. Ramharack, who did not play in her team's defeat against England on Saturday, took two for 14 in four accurate overs.

7th National Road Cycling C'ship from 17

PESHAWAR (APP): The 7th edition of the National Road Cycling Championship Men/Women, Elite/Junior competitions are going to start from February 17 under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association and with the collaboration Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) on Northern Bypass here.

This was stated by President Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) and South Asian Federation Syed Azhar Ali Shah here at the Conference Room of the Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. President KP Cycling Association Nisar Ahmad, international technical official Sarmad Khan were also present.

The championship will continue up till February 20 in which more than 110 national and international cyclists from all 12 unites including Pakistan Army, Wapda, Pakistan Railways, Crank Addicts, SSGC, PCF Technical Official team, POF Wah, Bikestan Cycling academy, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Syed Azhar Ali Shah said that these races in different categories including Road Time Trials Individual and Team events of both Women and Men would start on the Northern Bypass Road (Motorway) Peshawar for which all preparations and

arrangements have been completed.

The arrival of the teams will be completed by Wednesday and on February 16 a practice round would be held before the opening of the races in the morning at 8 a.m. This is a circuit race which is being played under Asian and UCI rules, Azhar Ali Shah said.

There will be a loop of 13.5 km, PCF President Syed Azhar Ali Shah said. Cycle races were organized in which DUCI changed the rules and separated the road and track races. Now it is our 7th year that we are organizing a separate national road race, he said. "We have not got any special sponsors from other organizations and only Pakistan Sports board (PSB) has extended a support to the federation."

He said that races are being organized under different categories. He said that this race is also very important for the International Road Cycle Race to be held in Thailand in June because out of the race, a team of Pakistan would be short-listed purely looking after the performance of the cyclists.

Athletes from all over the country will be judged and a team will be prepared consisting of athletes who give the best performance in this competition, Shah said.

PCF President said that no progress has been made yet regarding the velodrome to be built in Peshawar. The

velodrome should be prepared with the help and consultation of the international technical officials of the world body. Shah said that there are thirty-five velodromes in India and unfortunately, we have only velodrome in Lahore.

He said that due to lack of funds and politics, the construction of the velodrome could not be started yet, which is very regrettable. In the sports in which we are ahead, the infrastructure should be all over the country. He said that some people are still a hindrance in the development of cycling.

Shah said that even before the international cycle race in Pakistan, tourism had been greatly promoted and now the proposals for the international cycle race have been sent to the government. He said that there are more problems in the current economic crisis. Provincial Cycling Association President Nisar Ahmad said that this time the winners of each event have been kept separate in the national competitions and the winners of all the events will be declared champions in their respective category.

He said that regular cycling events are organized throughout the year, which has greatly promoted cycling and our technical officials have also received training from different countries and awarded them with certificates at the international level.

Saudi Arabia to host FIFA Club World Cup 2023

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia has been chosen to host the next edition of the FIFA Club World Cup with the football tournament due to kick off in December.

The intercontinental competition, to be staged from Dec. 12 to 22, becomes the latest major international sporting event to be held in the Kingdom and will add further momentum to the development of the men's and women's game in the country at all levels.

The decision was made at a FIFA Council meeting on Tuesday and came just days after Al-Hilal faced Real Madrid having become the first winner of the AFC Champions League and first Saudi club to reach the final of the tournament. Saudi Arabia will be only the sixth host of the competition since its inception in 2000.

Minister of Sport Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal said: "We are honored and extremely excited to be given the opportunity to welcome the world's leading football clubs and their fans to Saudi Arabia."

"Many fans will have recently witnessed our ability as a nation to compete at the highest possible level on the pitch. Now we have the chance to prove we are also world-class hosts off it. We look forward to show-

casing our genuine love of the game and our desire to be a force for good.

"Today is another important step forward on our journey of transformation in football and as a country and I trust all involved will see for themselves the undeniable progress being made by many different levels.

"We host international sports for the simple reason that we truly believe in the power of sport to inspire our boys and girls, to create new connections, and build new relationships.

"This will mean so much to our people where 70 per cent are under the age of 35 and are absolutely obsessed with football," the prince added. Football is the national sport of Saudi Arabia, rooted in communities in all corners of country, where 80 per cent of the population play, attend, or follow the game.

The awarding of the FIFA Club World Cup 2023 represents the latest chapter of Saudi football's development. The Kingdom was also recently confirmed as host of the 2027 AFC Asian Cup and has an active bid in place to host the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup.

President of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation and newly elected FIFA Council member, Yasser Al-Mishehal, said: "The FIFA Club World Cup is a special

competition that has delivered incredible moments.

"Not only has it gifted many memories to millions across the globe, but the tournament has also created new international rivalries and forged new friendships within the game. We thank FIFA for their trust in us to deliver an exceptional edition of the event.

"Saudi football is going through an unprecedented period of growth, there is fresh energy and sense of optimism thanks to a clear strategy across all areas of the game. "Currently we've more players registered at all age groups for boys and girls than ever before. We have more qualified coaches, more qualified referees, better governance, and stronger domestic leagues, including the SPL (Saudi Pro League).

"The future is bright, and this tournament is another highlight to look forward to especially when you consider some of the mouth-watering fixtures, and players who might take part," Al-Mishehal added.

The Saudi men's first team marked their sixth FIFA World Cup appearance last year following a best-ever qualification campaign and captured global headlines in Qatar following their victory over eventual champions Argentina.



CAPE TOWN: Muneeba Ali steers one behind square, Pakistan vs Ireland, Women T20 World Cup.



In brief

IRSA releases 95,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 95,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 49,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1479.58 feet which was 81.58 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 17,600 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1124.10 feet, which was 74.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 11500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 54,200, 41,900, 29,900 and 6,600 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 12,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Anti-encroachment drive in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) continued its anti-encroachment drive on Wednesday, demolishing several illegal structures from the state land across the city. Today, the operation was started from the IJP road under the supervision of Director General Enforcement where several cemented structures, dozens of illegal stalls and bus stands were razed down using heavy machinery, said a press release. Similarly, in another operation in F-6/4, the civic body demolished the garage, fences, additional gate and boundary walls outside the government residencies with the collaboration of the housing ministry and retrieved the government land. During the operation, the authorities concerned also removed different encroachments from Jaba Tali, Khana Pull, Sinyari and F-12 sector. The mega operation against the land mafia was launched in line with directives of CDA Chairman Noor-ul-Amin Mengal to purge the city of encroachers.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Bari Imam, Abpara, Mahfooz Shaheed, Kohsar Market, G-8/2, Waheedabad, Lohi Bhir, Sharifabad, Tufail Shaheed, Margala Tower, EOBI, GOR, I-10/2, G-11/2, Railway Road, Bahra Kahu, Bahra Kahu-2, Company Bagh, Ghariyal, MCM, TDCP, PAF, Pir Sohawa, Angori, NCP, Mangayal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khayal Bin Iqbal, Q u a i d - e - A z a m University, Punjab House, Bari Imam, Mandla, Hathal, Suhadran Road, Tufail Shaheed, Kirpa Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mall Road, Tipu Road, Jail Park, PWD-2, Mehboob Shaheed, Murree Brewery, Askari-14 Sector-D, Defense Road, Moorat, Shah Jeevan, Jawarah, Dhoke Awan, Sparco, Chowk Pandori, Hanif Shaheed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairperson BISP Ms. Shazia Marri offering fateha with Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mr. Mehmet Pacaci for victims of recent earthquake in Turkiye at Turkish Embassy.

Shazia commiserates with Turkish, Syrian ambassadors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) Shazia Marri visited the Turkish and Syrian Embassy in Islamabad on Wednesday to offer heartfelt condolences and sympathies to peoples of both the countries on the devastating earthquake that struck Turkiye and Syria. Shazia Marri, who is also Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson, expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the ambassadors and said "there are no words that can console and soothe the anguish of peoples of both the countries."

She said that her heart "goes out to all the victims of this natural calamity."

She conveyed the solidarity of the government

and people of Pakistan to their brothers and sisters in Turkiye and Syria.

The minister stated that in this hour of need, the people of Pakistan standing by their Turkish and Syrian brothers and sisters.

Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) Shazia Marri prayed for those who were injured in the devastating earthquake.

Shazia noted her thoughts in the visitor's book at both embassies. She commended the resilience of Syrian people who stood tall in face of overwhelming odds in recent years.

She hoped that the Syrian people and leadership would show the same resilience in this difficult hour.

Shazia Marri said that people of Syria, especially women and children were facing gargantuan difficulties already.

Turkish and Syrian ambassadors expressed their gratitude towards the people and government of Pakistan for their outpouring support and sympathies. They took the opportunity to thank Shazia Marri for her profound condolences and sympathies. The minister also visited the home of Peace Activist Samana Malaika Raza to offer condolences on the death of her mother.

Samana's brothers Syed Ahsen Raza Kazmi, Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan and Mohsin Raza Kazmi received Shazia Marri at the house. She prayed for the higher ranks of the departed soul.

Pak-Libya enjoying strong ties: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira met the Libyan Ambassador to Pakistan Muammar Abdul Muttalib. A detailed discussion about the relations between the two countries was held in the meeting, said a press release.

Both countries are connected to each other on the basis of religion and culture, said Qamar Zaman Kaira, adding that relations between Pakistan and Libya had always been very cordial.

Libyan Ambassador to Pakistan Muammar Abdul Muttalib said that mutual relations between Pakistan and Libya were of great importance. Qamar Zaman Kaira informed the Libyan ambassador about the problems of Pakistanis living in Libya. The Pakistani community living in Libya is playing an important role in the development of Libya, Qamar Zaman Kaira added.

The problems of Pakistanis living in Libya will be solved on a priority basis, Muammar Abdul Muttalib said.

Qadir inaugurates basic health centre at Golra Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Wednesday inaugurated the state-of-the-art Basic Health Centre at Golra Sharif to serve the local community.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister said that a large number of people living in surrounding areas will get direct benefit from this unit with having all necessary medical services. He said that an amount of Rs 60 million has been utilized for the construction of this modern health centre, where all necessary services will be provided including mother and child healthcare and vaccination besides family planning.

He said that daily several hundred patients can visit this center for the treatment of various diseases and added that more such modern centres will be established in the federal capital. He said that the aim of the government was to provide all basic health services in every place and village so that citizens have all such services at their doorsteps.

‘Qatar always played pivotal role for unity in Muslim Ummah’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor on Wednesday said that Qatar had always played a pivotal role for the unity of Muslim Ummah.

In a meeting with the Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Faisal Al-Thani who called on him here at the Ministry, he said Qatar amazingly hosted the Fédération Internationale De Football Association (FIFA) World Cup and presented a beautiful introduction of Islam to the world.

Abdul Shakoor said that the Ministry was grateful to the distinguished guest for the visit and expressed the hope that it would further promote relations at the

government and public level.

He said that Qatar was a good friend of Pakistan and Pakistanis had deep love for Arabs and Arabic language.

The Qatari Ambassador said that Pakistan was a unique and beautiful land with rich in natural resources.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman was a valuable friend of Qatar and a wise Islamic leader, he added.

The envoy said that Qatar was ready to cooperate with Pakistan on high-quality printed interpretations of the Holy Quran and books of Hadith.

The Ambassador said that it was planned to start Sehr and Iftar programmes in different areas of Pakistan in the upcoming holy month of Ramazan.

ANF recovers over 667 kg drugs; arrests seven

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six different operations recovered over 667 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Wednesday.

He said that the ANF foiled a bid to smuggle narcotics from Balochistan to Rawalpindi/Islamabad via Dera Ismail Khan and recovered over 546 kg hashish from secret cavities of a truck intercepted near D I Khan Yarik toll plaza. A drug smuggler resident of Khyber was also rounded up during the operation.

In another raid, the ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Mansehra to Haripur and recovered 2.5 kg hashish from the possession of an accused resident of Mansehra.

In third operation, the ANF conducted a raid near Karachi Etihad Town and recovered four kg hashish from the possession of two drug traffickers.

Over 2.3 kg hashish was also recovered at Islamabad International Airport from the possession of a Dubai-bound female passenger, resident of Faisalabad, going on

flight no. ER-701.

In the fifth operation conducted near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, the ANF seized 9.6 kg hashish from secret cavities of a car and arrested an accused resident of Charsada.

In sixth operation, the ANF recovered 2.4 kg hashish from the possession of an alleged drug pusher resident of Abbottabad intercepted near Islamabad F-8/1 area.

He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused arrested while further investigations are under process.

74,524 vehicles registered in ICT during last 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Excise and Taxation Department Islamabad has registered a total of 74,524 vehicles during the last seven months from July 2022 to February 2023. Talking to APP, Director Excise and Taxation Department, Bilal Azam said during the last seven months (July 2022 to February 15, 2023) 74,524 public and private vehicles were registered in four main categories. "A total number of 72,432 vehicles were registered in private category, which includes 40,726 motorcycles and 23,011 motorcars."

"Moreover, 6078 jeeps, 1791 vans, 815 pick-up vans, 7 ambulances, 3 wagons and a bus is registered in the E&T office during the last seven months," he said. He said a total of 714 commercial vehicles were registered which includes 605 pick-ups, 33 wagons, 26 trucks/dumpers, 30 mini trucks, 04 trucks, 8 coasters and

seven tractors.

"Meanwhile, in the government vehicles category, a total of 1377 vehicles were registered which includes 346 motor cars, 382 motorcycles, 305 pick-up vans, 138 vans, 12 buses, 61 jeeps, 34 tractors, 63 trucks, 12 wagons, 08 ambulances, 10 minibuses, 3 forklifters, 2 tankers and one crane. Whereas, only one tractor was registered in the agriculture category," he said. Azam said that Excise teams are conducting raids against agent mafia on regular basis, he urged the public not to approach agents, and directly visit his office if they have any issues regarding the transfer and registration process. He added that one window operation, Qmatic system installed in Excise office for public facilitation and suggested public to register vehicles in the same city where they live or drive in routine.

‘PML-N workers to counter PTI’s bid to browbeat ECP’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry Wednesday said that party workers would vociferously counter the ongoing dirty campaign of a coterie of political minnows to browbeat and intimidate Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for getting favorable decisions.

Addressing a protest demonstration outside the ECP headquarters here, he said that the smear campaign was aimed at influencing the ECP to help advance PTI's agenda. The efforts of PTI to spread anarchy and chaos in the society and intimidate ECP will be foiled, he said.

Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said former Prime Minister Imran Khan was trying to make ECP controversial. No institution was saved from the systemic smear campaign launched by PTI leadership. Referring to a recent interview of Imran Khan in which Khan termed Gen Bajwa, who got retirement in November last year, 'super king' and admitted that his three-and-a-half-year stint in the Prime Minister's Office was more like of a puppet.

Imran said former Chief of Army Staff General (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa was running the show during PTI's three and half years of rule as 'super king.'

Tariq wondered "If Bajwa was the 'super king' at that time, what were you, donkey king?"

Imran was making mockery of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He said PTI supports only favorable decisions of ECP and up its arms against the Commission whenever ECP decides against their interests. "The selected Imran Khan government had destroyed the country's thriving economy and plunged it into quagmire. The present government is making sincere efforts to drive the country out of crisis".

Castigating Imran Khan, he said the PTI chief has made fun of electoral process as he participates in the elections and at the same time was not ready to sit in the assembly.

US embassy delegation visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Regional Deputy Security Officer from the US embassy in Pakistan, Kevin Sisbarro along with his team visited the Safe City Islamabad, the police said on Wednesday.

He met with Capital Police Officer Safe City Syed Fareed Shah who also welcomed the delegation along with senior officials and briefed about various sections of Safe City.

According to police statement, it was informed that the coverage of Safe City had been

extended to different areas of the city while various private buildings, toll plazas and metro buses had also been linked with it.

The delegation conducted a complete tour of Safe City Islamabad including the command and control center and the centralized system of the project including emergency control center, dispatch center, e-challan system and "Pukar-15" helpline.

They were also briefed about modern cameras,

smart cars and monitoring systems.

He further told the delegation that various emergency services of Islamabad Capital Police had also been brought together under one roof in Safe City so that all kinds of facilities could be provided to the citizens on time.

IGP Islamabad gave a police shield to the ambassador on behalf of Islamabad capital police.

The delegation highly appreciated the efforts of IGP Islamabad and his team.

Pakistan for nurturing ties with African countries under ‘Engage Africa’ policy: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): On Wednesday, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said Pakistan wanted to nurture its ties with the African countries under the "Engage Africa" policy.

In a meeting with a Parliamentary delegation of Ivory Coast, headed by the President of the National Assembly of Cote D'Ivoire, Adama Bictogo, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has emphasized that parliamentary diplomacy plays a key role in fostering relations between the nations, and both Pakistan and Cote D'Ivoire needs to effectively utilize this conduit to improve collaboration, a news release said.

An Ivorian delegation, headed by Adama Bictogo had called on Chairman Senate here at International Parliamentarian Congress (IPC) in Islamabad.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to enrich cooperation in the fields of agriculture, trade, and investment and promote people-to-people contacts through high-level exchanges between the two countries. The Chairman welcomed the delegation and said that Pakistan considered Ivory Coast an important country and wanted to promote ties with African countries under its "Engage Africa" policy.

Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani stated that both countries enjoyed good relations in various fields and need to help each other in the development process.

Sanjrani remarked that both countries have great potential for promoting political and economic cooperation, and urged the need for the businessmen of the Ivory Coast to visit and invest in

Pakistan, particularly in Gwadar.

The chairman underscored that the business community of Ivory Coast should work together with the Pakistani business community to promote trade and economic ties that will benefit the economy of both countries.

Adama Bictogo underlined that the leadership of his country wanted to improve relations with Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest. He briefed the Chairman Senate about the steps taken by his country for the transformation of its economy.

Chairman Senate while briefing the delegation about the business and functions of the Senate of Pakistan extended legislative assistance to the Parliament of Ivory Coast, adding that Parliamentarians from Ivory Coast can be trained at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Adama Bictogo said that Ivory Coast faces security challenges, adding that his country wanted to increase cooperation with Pakistan forces to counter security challenges.

"The policy of Ivory Coast is now open to all countries, Pakistan can also benefit from investment opportunities in Ivory Coast", he added.

Adama Bictogo on behalf of the President of Ivory Coast expressed condolences over the sad demise of the former president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf.

Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Senators Naseebullah Bazai, Fida Muhammad, Fawzia Arshad, MNA Naz Baloch and officers of the Senate Secretariat accompanied the Chairman during the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister of national health services Abdul Qadir Patel visited at new model state of art BHU Golra Sharif in Federal Capital.

IEA defeats world powers
KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Minister for Labor and Social Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Salam Sadat said taht Mujahideen of Afghanistan defeated the world's major powers with little to no resources in their access. Afghanistan is a landlocked country and is a connection bridge between eastern and western regions; countries who think to invade Afghanistan are looking for natural resources of our country and its strategic location.

Two children killed in blast
BADGHIS (Agencies): Local officials of Badghis province of Afghanista said that two children lost their in the Aeb kamri district of Badghis in an incident of a hand grenade explosion. The incident happened in a destroyed security checkpoint in the Aeb Kamri district of Badghis when two children were busy collecting scraps of iron in the place, the Badghis Province Police Spokesman Sediquallah said to this news agency.

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

Afghanistan marks 34th anniversary of Soviet Union’s withdrawal

KABUL (Khaama Press): Thirty-four years ago, on February 15, 1989, the last Soviet Soldier crossed the Afghan-Soviet border ending one of the bloodiest wars in the history of Afghanistan.

Today, 15 February, has been declared a holiday to mark the anniversary of the withdrawal of former Soviet forces from the country.

The former Soviet Union sent thousands of troops into Afghanistan, controlling the country politically and militarily. The invasion of Afghanistan longed almost nine years, from December 1979 to 15 Feb 1989. The presence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan is considered one of the lasting legacies of the Cold War.

On the other hand, the United States and its regional allies, launched a containment policy to compel Moscow to withdraw from the country. After nine years of war in the country with the direct financial support of the US and Saudi Arabia, the former Soviet Union withdrew from the country. It finally led to the collapse of the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the killing of nearly two million Afghans and left other thousands disabled in the war. After the withdrawal of the Soviets, the US left the country in a dire humanitarian crisis and civil war, along with the interference of the regional powers till 2001.

The September 11 attacks on the United States and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan led to the newly established government in the country. The US and its allies both economically and militarily backed the government.

The Doha agreement on February 2020 between the US and the Taliban negotiation team undermined the Kabul government and led to the collapse of the system in the country.

On August 2021, the Taliban retook control of the country and established its Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The international community and organizations have not recognized the caretaker till now.

Since the collapse of the previous regime, the country has faced several economic, humanitarian, and legitimacy crises. The US and its allies left the people alone in a dire humanitarian crisis that once had been claimed as the strategic partner.

On the 34th anniversary of the Soviet Union, the caretaker government in Kabul called for a positive interaction with the world on occasion. The present government in Kabul said, “If the countries have a clear and good interaction with us, we are also ready to have a positive interaction, keeping in mind our religious and national interests.”

On February 15 1989, 34 years ago, the former Soviet Union announced the complete withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, thus ending a nine-year war that took a heavy toll on Afghan life.

Minister: Ruling regime should pay attention to people’s demands

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan’s Minister of Mines and Petroleum Shahabuddin Delawar in a ceremony held to commemorate the withdrawal of the Soviet Union said that the current regime should pay attention to the legitimate demands of the people, in order to sustain itself.

Shahabuddin Delawar said that all Taliban senior leaders including ministers, deputy ministers, and other officials should pay extra attention to the legitimate demands of the common people.

Minister Delawar’s remarks indicate that Taliban officials are criticizing the group’s leadership and the latest decisions which violated the rights of women and girls to get an education, work, or appear in public places.

Addressing a crowd, Mr. Delawar on Wednesday reiterated that freedom is achieved through the power of the general public and lost by leaders. Maintaining freedom is equally important as gaining it, Delawar said.

This comes as the ongoing criticisms from the Taliban leadership’s decisions are increasingly growing within the group in the recent past. Previously, Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Acting Interior Minister in a gathering in Khost province criticized the group’s leadership and said, “monopolizing power” is not good for the ruling regime.

Haqqani criticized the members of the group and said that they have forgotten the interests of the people. Taliban members do not think about “what service they can provide to the people” after they get appointed to positions in the current regime.

“We reached our goals with many sacrifices. Now, the responsibility has been placed on our shoulders and it requires patience, morals, and proper behavior and engagement with the people,” Haqqani said.

The intergroup criticism has increased among the top-ranking Taliban officials over the latest decisions. Apparently, a large majority of the group is not happy with the repressive policies the Islamic regime is pursuing.



Zabul residents decry meat price hike

QALAT (Pajhwok): Residents of southern Zabul province have strongly reacted to a 30 afghanis increase in meat and mutton prices amid extreme poverty, asking the municipality to rein in the price hike.

However, the mayor of Qalat, the provincial capital, says he had discussed the issue with butchers.

Ajmal, a resident of Qalat city, told Pajhwok the price of meat was recently increased by 30 afghanis per kilogram in Zabul province.

He said previously 444 grams of mutton was sold for 160 to 170 afghanis, but now its price had soared to 180 afghanis and in some areas to 190 afghanis. He said people were unable to buy meat and mutton after the hike in their prices.

However, butchers said meat price depended on the price of animals and as the prices of animals had increased, they were forced to increase the meat price.

Mohammad Qahir, a butcher in Qalat city, told Pajhwok the number of animals in Zabul had decreased due to the drought this year and they had to bring animals from other provinces and it ended up expensive for them.

Laloon, a livestock seller, told Pajhwok that due to drought and cold winter, they struggled with finding grass for their animals.

He said the situation had forced livestock owners to buy corn and other grains from the market and feed their animals. “That’s why the prices of animals have increased.”

He said previously they brought animals from neighboring Helmand province, but now they had to bring them from Kabul, which was expensive.

Qalat mayor Maulvi Lotfullah Latif said a special committee had been formed to control the meat prices. In this regard, he said he had held a meeting with animal sellers and butchers.

The mayor said the special committee was tasked with evaluating the prices of animals first and then determining the meat price.

He said they monitored the prices of commodities including meat and no one was allowed to arbitrarily increase prices.

Ban on female NGO workers cut off women from receiving aid

KABUL (Khaama Press): Following the ban issued by the Taliban regime nearly two months ago restricting women from working for NGOs, a considerable number of women and children are mission out on life-saving aid during these difficult times, according to Save the Children.

On December 24, 2022, the Islamic Emirate authorities of Afghanistan issued a decree which restricted women from working with non-governmental aid organizations. Besides the move being criticized by the people of Afghanistan, humanitarian aid organizations, and the international community, it has adversely affected the living conditions of women and children, the most vulnerable segments of society.

In response to the gender-based restrictions, many aid organizations immediately ceased their life-saving operations across the country. Save the Children, for instance, in a statement said that without female employees, the delivery of its much-needed services to communities is impossible because it’s women who can truly understand the difficulties of women, not men.

Similarly, other humanitarian aid organizations took even stronger stances regarding the ban on women staff of NGOs, however, nothing has changed for the better so far.

A new assessment by the United Nations Women indicates that 93% of surveyed organizations working in Afghanistan said the ban is impacting their ability to access women with humanitarian assistance.

Many widowed women who lost their husbands and daily breadwinners in the prolonged instability in Afghanistan over the past years now face serious problems to receive aid.

They are rejected simply for not having a male guardian “Mahram” to escort them when leaving home – a requirement now widely enforced by the Taliban regime.

“Humanitarian aid is now mainly delivered by men. If we go and ask for assistance, community elders ask us to send a man to collect the aid. They won’t let us take it because we are women. I don’t know why they won’t give us the aid. We have tried several times,” a widowed woman said.



Minister meets Japan envoy

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Higher Education Minister, Mawlawi Nada Mohammad Nadeem met with Takashi Okada Japan’s Ambassador to Afghanistan.

In a meeting, with Japan ambassador the country’s Higher Education Minister, stressed on good educational relations between the two countries and sharing scientific and research experiences with each other, said a statement. The Islamic Emirate is committed to good relations with the international community and wants good relations and positive interaction with all countries, including Japan, Minister Madeem said.

For his part, ambassador Okada, said that his country will continue its humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Nadeem asked the Ambassador of Japan to cooperate in the sector of training of professional teachers in addition to construction works in educational institutions and hospitals in Afghanistan.

According to the ministry’s statement, both sides further talked about better educational relations, creating facilities in the field of scholarships for youths and sharing scientific experiences.

Usurped state land reclaimed

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): Government land measuring 575 acres has been wrested back from usurpers in Pul-i-Alam, the capital of central Logar province, the Land Grab Prevention Commission said.

A member of the commission, Shahidullah Hamraz, told Pajhwok the government land was freed in ‘Huni Safali’ and ‘Sherwazi’ areas of Pul-i-Alam. He said dozens of people were involved in the usurpation.

He added the Logar chapter of the Land Grab Prevention Commission jerked into action six months ago and was preventing government land from being usurped in all districts, including Pul-i-Alam.

Hamraz said they had so far reclaimed about 25,000 acres of government land from usurpers in Baraki Barak, Chark districts and Pul-i-Alam.

He said dozens of people had been arrested for usurping the state land, but they were released after assurances that they would not usurp government land in future.

He said the commission was working fast to recover all grabbed land and this week they reclaimed about 575 acres of government land in Pul-i-Alam.

He said the illegal occupants had built some structures including boundary walls on the reclaimed land, which would be demolished in the next few days.

Residents of Pul-i-Alam and some districts also hailed the recovery of usurped government land.

Pul-i-Alam residents said powerful individuals and former government officials had usurped large swaths of government land and had constructed buildings on it.

Ebad met Ain Elahi

KABUL (Agencies): Country’s Public Health Minister, Dr. Qalandar Ebad, met with Ain Elahi, Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on his visits to that country.

A meeting held between two sides focused discussion on bilateral cooperation in the health sector, discussing specialized hospital for heart patients in Bamyan, a specialized cancer treatment center in Kabul, training of health personnel, cooperation in the sector of health, Afghan immigrants and the treatment of eye diseases, according to the country’s public health ministry.

The Iran side stressed on the cooperation in the health sector between the two neighboring countries, further said the statement.

He said that the work of the 200-bed heart disease hospital in Bamyan has been completed and the equipment will be delivered to the hospital shortly.

Acting Public Health Minister, Dr. Qalandar Abad, invited the Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Iran to visit Kabul for the strengthening of bilateral ties in the health sector.

Travelling on Ghazni City-Nawa road a nightmare: Residents

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): The dusty, bumpy and pot-holes-ridden road between Nawa district and Ghazni city, the capital of southern Ghazni province, not only poses threat to commuters but also takes a toll on vehicles in terms of damage, residents say.

Nawa district is 170 kilometers south-west of Ghazni City. The district has more than 300 villages where thousands of families live.

A tribal elder of the district, Mohibullah Khpalwak, told Pajhwok the road from Nawa district to the center of Ghazni had been in bad condition for years.

He said children, women and elderly people daily travelled on the road to reach their destinations, but the run-down condition of the road had prolonged their journey for several hours.

The elder said vehicles playing the road often developed technical faults and got stuck in mud during rainy days.

He said Nawa residents had complained to the previous government and also to the incumbent government about the road’s bad condition and demanded its construction, but no one listened to them.

A driver on the route, Akhtar Muhammad, told Pajhwok the road’s condition worsens in winter and it becomes very challenging for drivers to transport goods and patients.

“Vehicles often develop technical faults or get stuck in mud and they remain there for days as there is no facility along the road.”

These residents urged the government to construct the road in order they could get rid of the situation.

Local officials in Ghazni confirmed the issue and said they had shared with the relevant ministry which had assured to construct the road.

Public Works Director Maulvi Muhibullah Abbas told Pajhwok he had shared the road issue of Nawa district residents with the relevant ministry.

However, he said the road’s construction needed budget and the Ministry of Public Works currently faced a shortage of fund.

“Nawa residents have lodged complaints with us, which we have sent to the Ministry of Public Works. Currently, we have the plan to gravel the road and construct some culverts, on which work will be launched soon.”

Roads of many other districts of the province are also in a dilapidated condition and their residents are asking for their construction.

‘ISIS common enemy of Afghanistan and world community’

KABUL (Khaama Press): Zalmay Khalilzad, Former US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation says that ISIS is the common enemy of Afghanistan and the International Community.

The Afghan-American diplomat on Twitter said that cooperation against ISIS (Daesh) can be an important part of future relations.

Khalilzad said the full implementation of the Doha Agreement is the best way forward to bring peace and stability to war-torn Afghanistan and fight the growing threats of terrorism in the country. “The execution of the Doha Agreement addresses all the concerns of Afghans and the international community,” he added.

Many Afghan politicians believe that Doha Agreement signed between the Taliban and the United States in February 2020 was the main factor in the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Certain Afghan politicians believe that some key elements of the Doha Agreements were kept hidden from the public, and the people of Afghanistan still do not know the full context of the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban.

Previously, high-ranking Afghan politicians including President Ashraf Ghani, and Former Vice President Amrullah Saleh had asked for publications of the hidden annexes of the Doha Agreement.

Khalilzad talks about the cooperation of the Taliban against ISIS as the terror activities of the militant group have rapidly increased since the Taliban’s return to power.

The militant group has carried out deadly attacks in different parts of Afghanistan in the last year and a half, which resulted in the dead the injury of scores of innocent civilians.

Over the past couple of months, IS-Khorsan has carried out brutal attacks on the Russian Embassy, Pakistani Diplomatic Mission, and a Chinese-run hotel in the heart of Kabul, which claimed the lives of local and foreign nationals.



IEA ban celebration of ‘Valentine’s Day’

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has banned the celebration of “Valentine’s Day” in the country, according to reports circulating among the Afghans on social media.

The Taliban Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has warned the general public in Kabul to avoid celebrating Valentine’s Day. According to the Taliban officials, this is a foreign culture, therefore, embracing western culture is not compatible with a Muslim community.

Prior to the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021, people used to celebrate Valentine’s Day like every other occasion in large numbers. Shopping malls and stores in downtown Kabul would be decorated with red balloons and roses of all kinds.

Couples and lovers used to hang out and enjoy one another’s company in a relatively peaceful environment and exchanged gifts and sweets. However, now it is all gone, complete silence has come to the ghosted-like city, with no signs of such jubilation and celebrations.

The Taliban officials did not show much opposition to the celebration of this occasion last year. However, this year, they warned the public and showed serious opposition to the celebration of this event.

“The general public does not have a choice but obey the Islamic regime in all walks of life. We have already forgotten such celebrations and events – creating jobs, bringing peace and stability is more important for the people than banning the celebrations of such occasions,” a Kabul resident said.

Similar to Valentine’s Day, the Taliban-run administration has banned the celebration of “Navroz” (New Year), describing it as an outside tradition, though this major event has been celebrated in Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, and Central Asian countries for centuries.

Women complain lack of handicraft markets

KABUL (TOLONews): Some businesswomen have complained of a lack of markets for selling their handicrafts and said that due to lack of work they face economic challenges.

Wahida is a woman who has worked in handicrafts for the past 4 years and she is the only breadwinner in her 7-member family.

Wahida said that for the lack of markets to sell handicrafts, she faced economic challenges.

“It has been two years that our work has not been going well, and we have reduced our number of students at home, now we have two students instead of 15 students at home,” said Wahida Sultani.

Meanwhile, some businesswomen called on the Islamic Emirate to provide facilities for selling their products.

“We call on the Islamic Emirate to allow people to work, especially women who are the breadwinners for their houses,” said Nargis, a businesswomen.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Women said that handicrafts are in decline due to a lack of domestic and foreign markets, and if the Islamic Emirate paid attention to this area, work would be provided for hundreds of people.

“if the private sector helped them, each company could employ more than 100 people,” said Mumtaz Usifi, a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Meanwhile, the spokesman for the Mines and Industry Ministry said that the Islamic Emirate seeks to create domestic and foreign markets for industrial women.

“We support our sisters making handicrafts, and we facilitate the marketing field for the sale of their handicrafts inside and outside the country,” said Akhonzada AbdulSalam Jawad, spokesman for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

According to the statistics of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Women, in Afghanistan, 4,000 women have obtained an official license for commercial activity.



Contempt plea for not announcing vote date

LHC seeks replies from governor Punjab, ECP

LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought the replies from Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and others over the current progress on a plea seeking contempt proceedings against them for not complying with the court's order of holding elections within 90 days.

The petitioner's counsel, advocate Azhar Siddique, implored the court that governor Punjab, chief election commissioner, members ECP, secretary ECP and others have completely failed in complying with the court's order issued on February 10, 2023.

During the hearing, Justice Jawad Hassan asked whether the ECP had filed an appeal. Siddique also read out the press release of the ECP saying the governor has refused to announce the election date. To this, Justice Hassan remarked the court does not believe in press releases. Advocate Siddique implored the court that the provision of Article 204 of the Constitution clearly states that the high court can punish any officer if he or she abuses, interferes, obstructs or disobeys its order.

To this, the additional attorney general argued that following the LHC's judgment, the ECP is convening meetings on a day-to-day basis for consultation with the governor and in this regard, a meeting is also being held today (February 15). Responding to the remark, Siddique stated that the law officer should obtain fresh instructions from his client to further assist the court.

He argued that the CEC failed to adhere to the aforementioned judgment by not announcing the election date even after having consulting with the governor. "It is dire violation of Articles 4 and 5 of the Constitution as well as the oaths, as had been, respectively, taken by the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan and the Governor, Punjab

as it is the constitutional mandate of their respective offices to set a date for the 'Election' and work alongside each other for conducting a fair and transparent election," he added. Justice Hassan issued notices to respondents and sought their replies by February 23 about progress made thus far in the matter on or before the next date of hearing.

Court directs federal, provincial govts to submit replies in plea against custodial torture: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought replies from federal and provincial governments and others on a plea against custodial torture and the conduct of humiliating citizens and politicians in custody while depriving them of their basic fundamental rights.

Justice Jawad Hassan presided over the hearing in which the court was requested to pass directions to the concerned quarters to promulgate the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022 and devise policies, mechanisms and regulations in order to safeguard the lives of the citizens of Pakistan including those who are in the custody of the authorities and are suffering torture at their hands.

During the hearing, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry made remarks and said that it "depends upon the mood of the institutions whether or not and when they will act upon the Constitution". He implored the court that although Pakistan is a party to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishments 1984, it is imperative to make laws for its effective implementation.

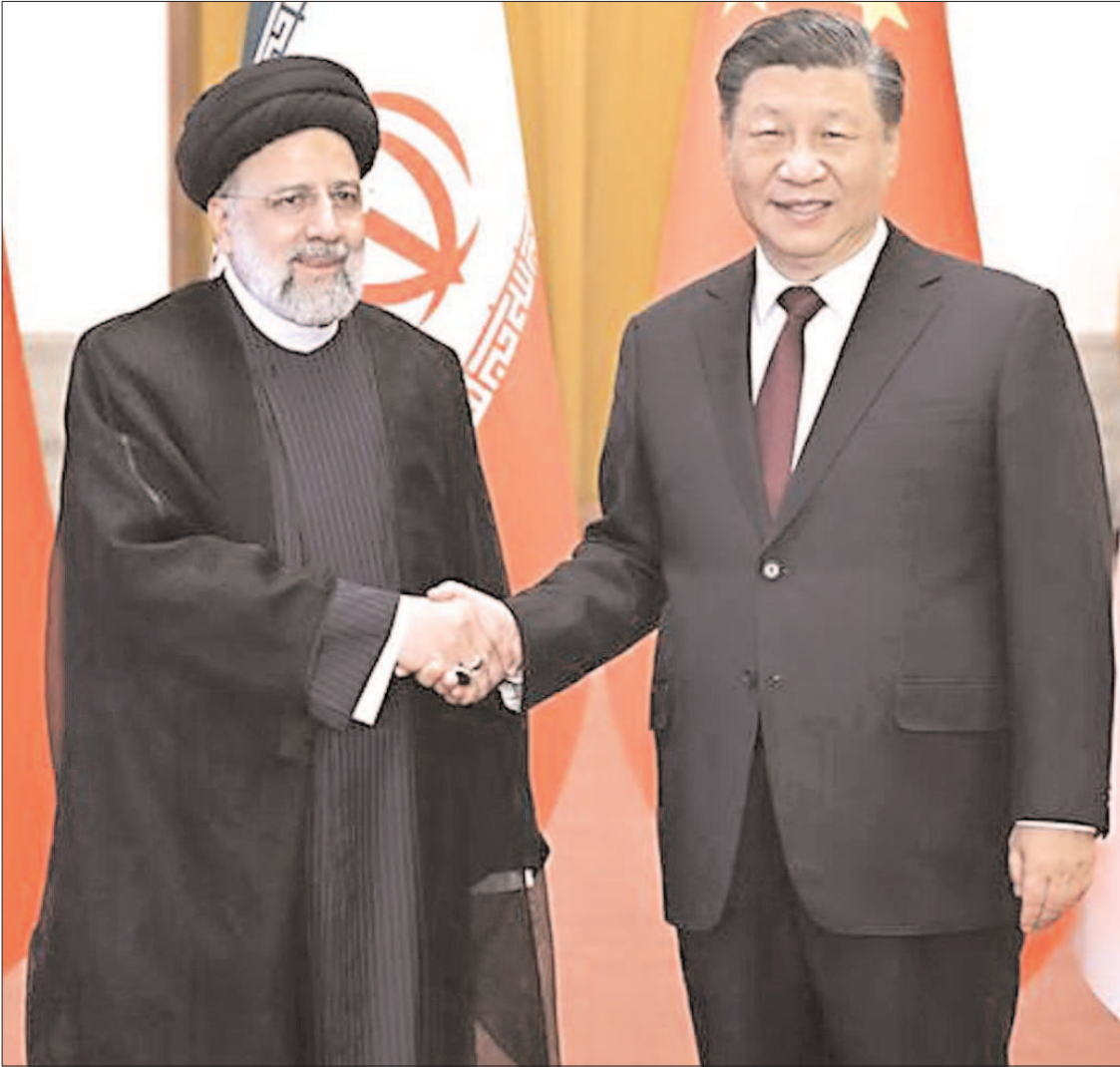
The additional attorney general remarked during the hearing that there is a "need to look into the criminal procedure with a constitutional eye". The petitioner's counsel, advocate Azhar Siddique, implored the

court that the Constitution does not allow such treatment, arguing that "it is an inhuman act through which they [politicians] are being treated". Advocate Siddique added that the enforcement of fundamental rights is required as the executive has utterly failed to perform its duty.

He added, "It is an admitted fact that it has taken 75 years for Pakistan to enact legislation that comprehensively criminalise custodial torture. With the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022, awaiting only presidential assent, Pakistan is on the verge of a milestone representing a seismic shift away from decades of indifference to torture committed by public officials."

Siddique furthered that a look at Pakistan's fragmented domestic framework on custodial torture prior to the new law reflects a muddled situation. Articles 10A and 14 of the Constitution provide only a rudimentary legal structure enshrining the right to a fair trial and the dignity of man. Article 14(2) provides the only explicit mention of torture in the Constitution but prohibits such an act when committed "for the purpose of extracting a confession" only. He also contended to the court that there had been no definition of torture under Pakistani law.

"Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) criminalises specific acts that are ancillary to torture such as assault, murder and wrongful restraint. While this means that certain acts overlapping with some aspects of torture could be triable, there remained a disjointed framework bereft of a torture-centric lens: one that was scattered, inaccessible and prone to incompletely recognising all forms of torture," added Siddique. He further said that many of these offences under the PPC were compoundable, and that is a compromise could be affected, adding that this allows officials to escape accountability.



BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping hold reception for Iranian President Ibrahim Raeesi at Great People Hall.

Imran's daughter case: PHC provides last chance

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Attique Shah provided last chance to senior lawyer of former Prime Minister Imran Khan for concluding of arguments in his undisclosed daughter Tarian case, on Wednesday.

The counsel argued that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan has contested election from NA-31 while latently hold identity of his daughter Tarian in 2018 nomination forms.

The petition was filed by Inam Ullah while stated that PTI chairman Imran Khan had submitted affidavit before Election Commission of Pakistan stated that he has declared all his assets but didn't disclose his daughter Tarian from Seta White in the nomination forms.

Election Commission of Pakistan lawyer argued that Imran Khan has resigned from NA-31 and requested to turn down the petition. While PTI's chairman lawyer informed that senior lawyer in the petition cannot able appear before due to health condition and requested for adjournment. In the meantime, Chief Justice remarked that PHC cannot provides further times because already several chances were provided to PTI's chairman Imran Khan and adjourned further hearing till 18th May.

Khagannot in favour of putting Imran in jail

ISLAMABAD (INP): Insisting on his views against political vengeance, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Wednesday opposed putting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan behind the bars immediately.

"Even if Imran Khan has done something, I'm not in favour of putting anyone in jail," the former premier said while speaking with journalists in Islamabad. As allegations are made on a daily basis, he said, trials should also be conducted simultaneously.

Earlier, Abbasi had also opposed the plans to arrest former finance minister Shaukat Tarin for allegedly attempting to obstruct Pakistan's talks with the IMF — International Monetary Fund. Commenting on the ongoing cases against the PTI chief, the former PML-N's senior vice-president said: "After completing this matter, punish Imran Khan if he has done anything."

Abbasi added that Khan has done several wrong things and admitted the mistakes himself. "Imran Khan has himself spoken without any limits. I'm not referring to hearsay, but talking about his own confessions." The PML-N stalwart said that the PTI chief himself admitted to putting people in jail and apprehending them.

Asif Ali Zardari - The protector of democracy

Mustajab Nazir Dhoki

ASIF Ali Zardari, a man who changed the Politics of Pakistan with his mind and honesty. People call him a dishonest person, a killer, and corrupt. Well, people should know if he would've been praising Taliban, favouring armed powers, if he was a murderer he wouldn't be living in Pakistan and he would've got married again. If he was a corrupt then he wouldn't make Sindh a developed state. People have misjudged him a lot. Sooner or later they will realise their mistake.

Asif Ali Zardari is a man of words. His political decisions are fruitful for this nation. Not only opposition but foreign countries praise his political decisions, too. A few weeks ago, Imran Niazi blamed him that President Zardari want to kill him. This is a funny thing because he said, President Zardari is giving money to terrorists to kill Niazi. How can it be? Imran Niazi is a terrorist. He always supported Taliban. Every time he tried his best to bring terrorists in this country, forever.

Who can forget the incident of APS 2014 attack by Talibans. Imran didn't care much about the martyrs. Just like a few days ago, the bomb blast that happened in Peshawar. Imran didn't visit them. He said, 'it's a usual thing. We can't visit every time.' Imran Niazi is a coward, a dictator, a liar, a manipulator. He use Islam for his benefits. He trick people to follow him. He accused President Asif Ali Zardari so many times. Look at the audacity of Imran Niazi, he said President Asif Ali Zardari wants to kill him, he blamed him for the fall of his government, he blamed him for every worst thing that happened to him. In his selected government, he made sure that President Zardari should go to jail for lifetime. He blamed him of being a corrupt and many more.

A few years ago, Reham Khan wrote a book. That book has many dark secrets about Imran and his puppets. I would say Reham Khan is a strong woman and she got the courage to tell the truth of Niazi to the world. We can read any book about President Asif Ali Zardari and we will see no flaws in his actions and character. He is a flawless

person. Asif Ali Zardari is not against him. He is not against anyone. President Asif Ali Zardari just do politics in his own way.

I met him in 2011 and he called me 'daughter'. President Asif Ali Zardari respects everyone. Unlike Niazi, he is just abusing and character defaming everyone. If Niazi doesn't find any negative thing about someone he blame him for being a corrupt or he just say he wants to kill me. Alright, why does America wants to kill him? Why will America threat him? America is a super power, who are you Imran Niazi?

From Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, every leader of PPP is very courageous and determined towards Pakistan. After the murder of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Pakistani people were angry that why President Zardari is leading the party. Well, he is her husband. He got every right to follow the footsteps of his wife. If a woman is allowed to follow her husband then there is no shame that a husband is helping his wife. President Asif Ali Zardari is a respectful man, a brave person, he is a gentleman.

Rupee hammers US dollar hard

ISLAMABAD (INP): There appeared to be no looking back for the Pakistani rupee as it hammered the US dollar massively in the inter-bank trading on Wednesday amid flurry of government activities aimed at finalizing a loan programme with the IMF.

According to the information provided by the forex dealers, the rupee shot up by healthy Rs2.34 in the morning session against the greenback and was currently exchanging hands at Rs265. On Tuesday, the Pakistani rupee was up against the US dollar, appreciating 0.79% in the inter-bank market. As per the State Bank of Pakistan, the local currency had closed at 267.34 against the US dollar, an increase of Rs2.1.

In a key development, talks between the IMF and Pakistan government were set to resume virtually on Monday, as the two sides looked to reach a deal to unlock funding critical to keep the cash-strapped South Asian country afloat. However, there was no word from the government about the talks yet. The two could not reach a deal last week and a visiting IMF delegation departed Islamabad after 10 days of talks, but said negotiations would continue. Pakistan is in dire need of funds as it battles a wrenching economic crisis.

Meanwhile, the federal government has undertaken a stray of steps including its plan to table the Finance Amendment Bill 2023 containing new taxes of Rs170 billion in the parliament today. The federal cabinet has given approval to the finance bill.

Sugarcane crop will be Rs400 per maund next year: Zardari

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari has said that the price of the sugarcane crop per maund will be Rs. 400 next year.

President Zardari said that with this price for sugarcane crop, the farmers and growers will help the country's agricultural sector progress. The country will prosper when the farmers and growers are encouraged and provided the fruits of their labour. Only when a farmer is content, he will be able to work hard and pay attention to his crop. With a fair price for the sugarcane crop, the country will be self-sufficient in sugar production.

Imran warns of skyrocketing inflation after mini-budget

LAHORE (INP): Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday warned of skyrocketing inflation after the federal government tabled Finance Bill to the National Assembly (NA), which is also called mini-budget, for imposing new taxes.

While addressing the PTI workers via video link today, Imran Khan said that a mini-budget was presented in the NA which will increase the financial burden on the nation. He warned the nation of bracing for another wave of inflation after the mini-budget.

Khan said that he has already warned about the situation the country is facing today. He continued that he has asked everyone that elections are the only solution to all issues after the ouster of the PTI government. "Only a govern-

ment holding public mandate can take difficult decisions to end crises. The new government cannot resolve the issues. Economic stability is impossible without political stability."

He criticised that the 'gang of thieves' were imposed on the country which prioritised the dissolution of their corruption cases and targeted PTI leaders. Khan said that the economic woes will intensify even if Pakistan manages to sign an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said that the default risk was only 5% during the PTI government. He added that the Fitch rating agency downgraded Pakistan's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating (IDR) to "CCC-" from "CCC+" and compared the economic situation of Pakistan with Sri Lanka. Khan slammed the ruling Pakistan

Democratic Movement (PDM) parties for doing nothing to control inflation. He said that PDM parties had organised massive anti-inflation rallies against the PTI government but they are now failed to stop the skyrocketing inflation.

He said that gas and electricity prices will further increase after the mini-budget. Moreover, the government also hiked the sales tax which will increase the prices of all commodities. He said that farmers should brace for more financial hardships as the government ends subsidies on power tariffs for tube wells. He said that the inflation rate was standing at 12% during the PTI government which is now soared to 30% and is hiking day-by-day. Imran Khan said that the current rulers do not have any plan which led the country to more crises.

NAB summons Buzdar with property details

LAHORE (INP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Wednesday summoned former Punjab chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on February 16. The NAB Lahore chapter has asked the former chief minister to attend the anti-corruption watchdog office with documentary evidence of property detail and sources of income.

Earlier, the NAB had apprised the Lahore High Court that it had decided to close the inquiry against Usman Buzdar in a case involving issuance of a

liquor licence. The development came when a two-member bench of the LHC, headed by Ali Baqar Najafi, was hearing a petition filed by a private hotel.

NAB's prosecutor apprised the bench that the anti-graft watchdog's regional board had sent its recommendation to the body's chairman to end the inquiry against the former chief minister. Ajaz Awan, the counsel of the private hotel informed the judges that a high court's single-judge bench had declared issuance of the license in accordance with the law.

The lawyer was of the view that an inquiry without any aim has been carried out for the past three years and pleaded with the court to close the investigations.

"Under the NAB amendment law, this inquiry cannot continue," argued the lawyer. In light of the NAB's response, the court wrapped up the case. It is pertinent to mention here that the former Punjab chief minister was facing NAB investigations for issuing a liquor licence to an under-construction hotel in violation of the law.

LHC seeks govt reply in petition challenging sedition law

LAHORE (Agencies): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought replies from the federal government and others in a petition praying to declare the sedition law null and void.

The high court also sought the assistance of the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Shehzad Ata Elahi and the Advocate General of Punjab Ahmad Awaiz by the next hearing. The petitioner's counsel argued that the sedition law was a relic of British colonialism, which was used to enslave people.

The petition submitted that sections 124-A, 153-A and 505 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) were inconsistent with the fundamental rights as citizens were being exploited through the aforementioned

laws for political interests. It further said that the Indian Supreme Court had also stopped the implementation of the sedition law, calling it a product of the British era, while also staying sedition cases and trials by granting interim relief.

The petition maintained that under the Constitution of Pakistan, citizens could not be subjected to state oppression by depriving them of their fundamental rights, and asked the court to annul the British-era sedition law as it was "unconstitutional". Though politicians and journalists are the main victims of sedition charges, the federal government has defended Section 124-A of the Pakistan Penal Code-1860 and said that "the section imposed a valid restriction to free speech as long as

any spoken or written words have the intention or tendency to create disorder or disturb public peace by resorting to violence against the respective governments".

Advocate Abuzar Salman Niazi argued the case on behalf of the petitioner. Interestingly, a similar provision was suspended by the Supreme Court of India. According to Niazi, Section 124-A is opposed to the preamble of the Constitution, which commands that sovereignty over Pakistan on behalf of Allah belongs to the people of Pakistan. "This notion asserts the paramountcy of the people's will over everything. The elected representatives are nothing but the mediums through which the collective will of the people is expressed, asserted and executed.