

Bilawal leaves for US
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday left for the United States (US), sources said. FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will attend the US national prayer breakfast hosted by US President Joe Biden on February. The FM is expected to meet US president Joe Biden and other higher officials as well, sources added.

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‘Who brought terrorists back?’ asks PM

Shehbaz Sharif calls into question Rs 417 billion security funding to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after fresh terror wave

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday raised serious concern over the resurfacing of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) failed to maintain security despite the availability of special funds.
He said that PTI was in rule in the province for the last 10 years and was responsible to ensure the safety of the lives of innocent people that suffered a new spate of terrorist incidents. In his initial remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister mentioned that Rs 417 billion were provided to KP since the year 2010 under the National Finance Commission Award.
The funding was supposed to be

used for the capacity-building of KP Police and security forces, he said. “Where this money was spent despite the establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD),” he questioned. He said the nation wanted the ruling KP government to be held accountable for the rise of terrorism in the province.
“Who regarded the terrorist as ‘Jihadi’ and let them return,” he said, pointing out the lenient approach that led to the re-emergence of terrorism in the province. Shehbaz Sharif lauded the courage and resilience of the people of KP for bearing the brunt of terrorism. He said several members of the political families in KP and also the former prime minister

Benazir Bhutto lost their life in the wake of terrorist incidents.
“These invaluable sacrifices cannot be forgotten,” he said, adding, it was painful that even minor children were among the dead in the recent suicide blast at a Peshawar mosque. The prime minister warned that if urgent measures were not taken to control terrorism, it could spread to the rest of the country. He vowed to “unitedly” fight the scourge and ensure peace in the country.
He also put aside the routine agenda of the cabinet to solely discuss the issue of terrorism, saying that an in-camera session could be held for further deliberations. Federal cabinet unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the suicide attack in a mosque at Peshawar Police Lines.

The cabinet further stressed upon the need of promotion of national unity, solidarity and the raising of cohesive voice by all the political forces of the country against terrorists.
It called upon all the political forces to shun their political divide and grievances and express unity for the interests of the country and its people and unanimously converge on agenda for elimination of terrorism, so that requirements of the national security, solidarity, peace and economy could be protected in an effective manner. The cabinet representing the people of Pakistan and their elected government, condemned in the strongest terms, the terrorist incident at Peshawar Police Lines of January 30 and expressed condolences and sympathies with the bereaved families.

lies.
“The entire nation shares the grief of the bereaved families,” PM Office Media Wing in a press release said. The cabinet also prayed for the high ranks of the shuhada and for their families to bear the losses with fortitude. It also prayed for the early recovery of the injured people. The federal cabinet also made it clear that those could neither be the Muslims who targeted fellow Muslims at place of worship nor deserved to be called human beings.
Under the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah and the unanimous opinion of the learned religious scholars, derived from these teachings and declared in ‘Paighan e Pakistan’ that such like incidents were openly against the tenets of

Islam and ‘Haram’, the cabinet expressed. The cabinet, in its meeting, also expressed the resolve to eradicate all forms of terrorism and ensure the protection of the lives and properties of the public.
They also expressed that the blood of the Pakistanis would be accounted for. The restructuring of the police force of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and counter-terrorism department would be carried out, besides the provision of quality training, and taking of solid steps for the supply of the latest weapons and necessary related gadgets would be ensured, so as to avert the occurrence of such like incidents in the future. The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to the Chinese president and the premier for expressing solidarity with Pakistan.

COAS, Centcom Chief take up terror issue

F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: During a telephonic conversation with Pakistan’s Army Chief General Asim Munir, the United States (US) Central Command (Centcom) Wednesday expressed condolences over the loss of lives in Peshawar attack.
Centcom Commander General Michael Kurilla held a telephonic conversation with Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, said a tweet. General Kurilla expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Peshawar. The Pakistan-US military leadership also discussed counter-terrorism and border issues.
Army reaffirms Pakistan’s support to Kashmiris’ indigenous freedom struggle: Pakistan Army has reaffirmed its

commitment to Pakistan’s support to indigenous freedom struggle of brave Kashmiris as per relevant UN resolutions and aspirations of the people of Kashmir. The reaffirmation was made during the 255th Corps Commanders’ Conference presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.
The conference took notice of human rights violations by Indian troops in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Indian design to alter the demographic composition of the territory. At the conference, the participants were briefed in detail about prevailing and emerging threats, the situation in IIOJK and ongoing intelligence-based operations being undertaken by Army

and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) for breaking the nexus between terrorists and their support mechanism across the country.
The Army Chief directed all corps commanders to continue to focus on anti-terrorism operations in coordination with intelligence and LEAs with renewed resolve till the time sustainable peace is established.
The forum paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the Peshawar Police Line blast and vowed that perpetrators would be brought to exemplary justice. On the occasion, the COAS emphasised that such immoral and cowardly acts could not shake the resolve of the nation but rather reinvigorate their determination to succeed in the ongoing war against terror with zero tolerance for any terrorist entity.

Nawaz, Shahbaz saved Pakistan from becoming Sri Lanka: Maryam

F.P. Report
BAHAWALPUR: Maryam Nawaz, Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer of Pakistan Muslim League-N, said that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and the sitting prime minister Shahbaz Sharif both had played an important role in saving Pakistan from becoming another Sri Lanka.
She said this while addressing a party workers’ convention here in Bahawalpur. She arrived in Bahawalpur on a two-day visit where she was accorded a warm welcome by the party leaders and activists. She reached the venue with a large procession.
Addressing the workers’ convention of Pakistan Muslim League-N she said that she was aware of the current economic situation. “I am aware that people have been facing price hikes,” she

said, adding that former prime minister and chief of PML-N Nawaz Sharif himself was worried about the situation people are confronted with. She, however, said that due to wrong financial policies introduced by the previous regime headed by the then prime minister Imran Khan the country was forced to face a default-like situation. “Imran-led government is responsible for the current economic situation as he and his government inked a hard agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and later broke it,” Marriam said.
She said that the sitting government was forced to increase the prices of petroleum products due to an agreement between IMF signed during the previous government. She, however, said that the current government had succeeded in saving Pakistan from default. She alleged Imran Khan for damaging the

country’s interest and looting the national exchequer of the country. She said that party chief and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had instructed her to launch the party campaign from Bahawalpur.
“I am thankful to the people of Bahawalpur who showered their love on me,” she said. She said that she was not desirous of any office. “There is a political discussion about my office in the party,” she said adding that she was not desirous of any political office and all she wanted was people’s love.



Tyrian White case: Imran submits reply

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former premier Imran Khan on Wednesday submitted his response in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in the disqualification case against him for not disclosing details about his alleged daughter Tyrian Jade White in his nomination papers.
In 2018, a case was filed against then-premier Imran for not declaring Tyrian White as his daughter in his nomination papers. Through his lawyer Salman Akram Raja, Khan argued that the IHC could not examine his affidavit as he has resigned from his position as a member of the National Assembly. In his reply, he raised preliminary objections over the writ petition, contending that

the IHC could not proceed with the case because he no longer holds a seat in the National Assembly.
“Such examination requires the leading of evidence, examination and cross-examination of witnesses in the course of a trial before a competent forum. Reference is made in this regard to the judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan reported as Allah Dino Khan Bhayo Vs Election Commission of Pakistan & Others (PLD 2020 SC591),” Imran said in his reply. He mentioned that the same issue was raised in Abdul Wahab Baloch case wherein four IHC judges, including incumbent Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, had recused to hear the matter.
“It is established law that

a judge who has once considered it improper to proceed with a matter on account of personal reasons may not then entertain the same matter. The Petitioner has brought the earlier refusal to the attention of this Honourable Court. Imran Khan submitted that consequences prescribed by the principle that justice and due process must not only be carried out but be seen to have been carried out must follow,” the reply stated. In his response, the ex-premier pleaded that the petition “is not maintainable and is liable to be dismissed forthwith”. He added that the preliminary objections raised herein may kindly be decided at the outset of the hearing that is due tomorrow (Thursday).

Khagan resigns from PML-N office

F.P. Report
LAHORE: Former prime minister Shahid Khagan Abbasi has tendered his resignation from the party’s office, sources said on Wednesday.
According to PML-N sources, Shahid Khagan who is among the top leaders of the party and was entrusted for the office of prime minister after Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the court in the Panama Papers scandal, has sent his resignation as the senior vice president of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz to the party’s president.
Sources said that Abbasi was displeased over the party leadership’s decision to appoint Maryam Nawaz as the senior vice president

and chief organizer of the ruling PML-N. “Shahid Khagan had also serious differences with the party’s policies since long time,” sources said.
It is to be mentioned here that Abbasi had opted not to accept a ministry or other office in the Shehbaz Sharif cabinet after Imran Khan’s government was de-seated with a vote of no confidence by the PDM. According to sources, he was also disappointed over the PML-N’s behavior with former finance minister Miftah Ismail.
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is also holding the PML-N President’s office, has received his resignation from the party’s office but not yet accepted it, according to PML-N sources.

I stand by my statement: Imran

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said that he stands by his statement about Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, saying that the former president can file a defamation case against him.
Talking to senior journalists at his residence, the PTI chairman stated that he stands by his statement, wherein he accused former president Asif Ali Zardari of financing a terrorist group to assassinate him. Imran Khan also welcomed the defamation case filed by the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), saying that he stands by his remarks about Asif Ali Zardari.
While answering a question regarding assembly dissolution, PTI chief said that “dissolving assemblies was the best strategy which pushed PDM government to a dead end.” “If the assemblies were not dissolved, the general elections would not have taken place,” he added. He warned that the constitution will be violated if the caretaker governor failed to conduct election within 90 days.
He added that the party’s election campaign will be started with full strength after his last medical check-up. It is pertinent to mention here that PTI chairman alleged that former president Asif Ali Zardari was among four people who were planning to kill him.

DESIRE FOR SAFE AND CONVENIENT TRAVEL



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH



Sindh Mass Transit Authority

UCP media studies delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): Young and vibrant media studies delegation from the university of central Punjab visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority Qurban Lines, here on Wednesday.

Faculty members and 25 Students were part of the delegation which was received and briefed by the Director Public Relations Tauseef Sabih Gondal. They were briefed about the first of its kind Police based web channel in Pakistan, PSCA TV and the overall process of media management and awareness campaigns.

The DPR briefed the delegation about the Women Safety App and its salient features such as secured route mapping, location sharing, one-touch SOS call for immediate security provision and deployment, and other helpline numbers.

The number of people installing apps is growing rapidly and more than 2 lacs women have installed the Women Safety app so far. He further said that the scope of Safe City is being extended by the integration of private cameras.

The delegation appreciated the efforts made by the PSCA. The teachers participating in the delegation expressed their views and said that the role of the Safe Cities Authority is exemplary for the revival of cricket in Pakistan.

Safe city infrastructure should be spread across the country for crime prevention and active police response, they added. The female students said that they will definitely download the Women Safety app and introduce it in their circles as well. The delegation was also briefed about various sections of IC3 for a real-time functional demonstration of the integrated security platform.

Minister for strict action against illegal parking sites

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Minister for Local Government and Community Development Punjab Ibrahim Hasan Murad while taking strict notice of public complaints regarding parking in Lahore city directed the authorities concerned to take stern action against illegal parking mafia in the city.

He stressed the Lahore Parking Company to take legal action against the culprits running illegal parking sites.

Ibrahim Hasan Murad further directed that private parking sites should not be allowed in public places. He directed to develop a digital system to prevent irregularities in Lahore Parking Company and said that the CEO of Parking Company should monitor field operations himself and resolve public complaints regarding parking immediately. The provincial minister further said that monitoring should be tightened to make the company profitable. Earlier, the minister was briefed by CEO Lahore Parking Company about the performance and problems of the company.

LDA anti encroachment operation

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) conducted an anti-encroachment operation in the provincial capital, issued notices to 40 shops and 18 other buildings while a number of shops sealed.

On the order of Lahore High Court and under the supervision of DG LDA Aamir Ahmad Khan, the operations against illegal encroachments on 9 main roads of the city are continued. LDA teams along with a heavy contingent of police conducted an anti-encroachment operation in G-1 Market Johar Town and issued notices to 40 shops and 18 other buildings to remove encroachments from the parking areas and other illegal commercial activities.

Name Correction

My correct name is Saud Khan while written in my BISEP documents as Saud please make the required correction in it as Saud Khan S/o Abdur Rauf

Citing security Punjab Governor refuses to give election date

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman citing economic and security issues in the country has refused to give a date to hold elections across the province. In reply to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Baligh-ur-Rehman asked the commission to consult stakeholders for a date for holding elections in Punjab.

In the letter, the Punjab governor noted that the Punjab Assembly (PA) was dissolved according to the Constitution and Law. Referring to holding polls across the province, he said, the country was currently witnessing economic and security issues. "The Punjab Assembly stood dissolved in terms of Clause (1) of Article 112 of the Constitution by efflux of time stipulated therein, and not by the order of the Governor of Punjab. Therefore, Clause

3 of Article 105 of the Constitution cannot be implemented in the current situation.

"Instead the election process is to now take place in accordance with Article 224 read with Clause (3) of Article 218 of the Constitution and the applicable provisions of the Elections Act, 2017."

The Punjab Governor further added that ECP should consult stakeholders for a date to hold elections across the province.

In separate letters to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) former Parliamentary leader Usman Buzdar and PA Speaker Sibtain Khan, the governor assured that his office would fulfill the constitutional requirements and responsibilities. "The Election Commission will play its role on the issue of polls date", Punjab Governor said, mentioning that he had written a letter to the electoral body in this regard.

No effort to be spared to eliminate terrorists, their facilitators: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that not only the terrorists who attacked the Makarwal police station should be chased, but also no effort should be spared to bring the criminals as well as their facilitators behind the bars.

He expressed these views while talking to police officials and media representatives on the occasion of a visit to Makarwal Mianwali police station, on Wednesday.

The IG Punjab said, "All of us have taken an oath to protect the land and the

lives and property of citizens and will fulfill this pledge till the last drop of blood."

He said that the bravery and steadfastness by which Punjab police personnel have crushed the nasty ambitions of terrorists is really commendable.

Dr. Usman Anwar said, "Every officer and official from the constable to the DPO played their role in thwarting the attack on the Makarwal police station and I hope that no effort shall be spared for elimination of terrorists with the same spirit and bravery."

People's Pink bus service for women launched

F.P Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Transport Department has launched People's Pink bus service for women in the city . The inauguration ceremony of pink bus service was held at the historic Ferrer Hall Karachi.

Exclusive bus service for women was inaugurated by women parliamentarians and women civil society members including MPA Sharmila Farooqui, MPS Marvi Rashidi, MPA Sadia Javed, renowned film maker Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, TV anchor Madiha Nagvi , famous Drama artist Ushna Shah, Rabia Anam, Marvi Mazhar, Najia Mir and other women by cutting the ribbon.

Provincial Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon was also present on this occasion. Provincial Labor Minister Saeed Ghani, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Sindh Qasim Naveed Qamar, MPA Ghanwar Khan Issran, Pakistan Peoples Party Leader Najmi Alam, Salman Abdullah Murad, Secretary Transport Abdul Haleem Shaikh, Secretary

Imran Atta



Soomro, MD Sindh Mass Transit Authority Zubair Chana , Project Director NRTC Sohaib Shafiq and a large number of women from media and civil society also attended the ceremony.

The dedicated pink bus service for women will initially run from Model Colony to Tower via Shahra Faisal . 8 buses will run on this route. A bus has a total capacity of 50 women. The number of seats in the bus is 24 , while 2 seats are reserved for special women in each bus. Female hostesses have been hired for bus service staff. The bus service will run every 20 minutes from 7 am to 11 am and from 4 pm to 9 pm, while the buses

will run every one hour during normal hours.

Addressing the ceremony, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Pakistan People's Party leadership has always made policies to empower women. First prime minister of Islamic World Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had founded First Women Bank and Women Police Stations. President Asif Ali Zardari had launched Benazir Income Support Program during his tenure and gave ownership rights of 25, 25 acres of government land to women farmers so that women could be empowered.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that society can never progress if women are ignored. It is the responsibility of governments to provide a favorable environment for women and provide them facilities so that women can work side by side with men and contribute significantly to the development of the country. He said that the pink bus service has been started today with 8 buses, but this number will be increased further, this service will be extended to the whole of Karachi and major cities of Sindh. He said that it is Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's directive to improve the public transport sector in Sindh.

He added that central president of Pakistan People's Party's women's wing, Faryal Talpur, has taken a keen interest in starting a bus service for women in Sindh. He said that the transport department has been getting the support of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah for executing public transport projects .

TENDER NOTICE - AUCTION

All interested parties are hereby informed that auction of Repairable and Unserviceable Ration Packing Material (Bags Jute Flour/ Dhall, Polypropylene packs Sugar / Dhall, Plastic cans, Ghee Tin 16 kg, etc will be held at Reserve Supply Depot ASC Peshawar on **21 February 2023 at 1000 hrs.** In case of any unforeseen situation, auction will be held on alternate day i.e **28 February 2023.** All policies will adopted according to the law.

Stock Officer RSD ASC Peshawar Cantt
Cell No: 0313-0224499 - 0333-6395833,


NOTICE TO MCB BANK CUSTOMERS

All customers are informed that affairs of MCB Bank Ltd. **Mingora City Branch (8064)** currently located at Hotel Pameer Building, G.T. Road, Mingora Swat, Tehsil Babuzai, District Swat will be merged with our **Mingora Main Branch (0280)** on **10.03.2023** (after close of Business hours). As a sequel of this merger/closure, your account shall be transferred/entertained at the following address.

MCB Bank Limited
Mingora Main Branch (0280)
Main Bazar Mingora, Tehsil Babuzai, District Swat
Contact: 0946-712187, 722957

Letters for the same have dispatched to all account holders.

**MCB**
Bank for Life



OFFICE OF THE TEHSIL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION HARIPUR

Email: tma.haripur@gmail.com, Ph # 0995-920007 / 920010 (FAX # 920014)

E-BIDDING NOTICE

Sealed bids are invited from the registered contractors of Local Government, Elections & Rural Development Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who has renewed their license of various categories for the current financial year (2022-23) for the following developmental works.

S.No.	Name of scheme	A/Cost In (M)	2% E/Money In (M)
ADP No. 1082/210151 (2021-22)			
1.	Construction of streets at Mohallah Qalandar Abad Mohri No.2	3.00	0.060
2.	Construction of street at Thanda Chowa Near Poltry Form.	1.00	0.020
3.	Construction of Road from Maira to Shah Maqsood village.	3.00	0.060
4.	Construction of Road from Malik Bostan House to Mohallah Gujran	3.00	0.060
5.	Construction of Road from Koka to Ding	3.400	0.068
6.	Construction of Road from Rehana Pindan to Ding	3.00	0.060
7.	Construction of streets at village Ding.	1.10	0.220
8.	Construction of streets at Mira Ali Khan.	1.00	0.020
9.	Construction of streets at V/C No.1 Changi Bandi	4.00	0.080
10.	Construction of streets at Talokar Tow n	2.50	0.050
11.	Construction of street at Mohallah Aziz Abad Noor Colony	4.00	0.080
12.	Construction of Path from Raja Aziz to New Afzal Abad	1.50	0.030
13.	Construction of Road Near House of Chudary Qayyoom Sikandepur	1.30	0.026
14.	Construction of street at village Jogi Mohra.	5.00	0.100
15.	Construction of Road from Pathan Colony to Habib Qalandar at Mankarai.	3.00	0.060
16.	Construction of Road From Iqbal Chowk to Mohallah Maskeen Abad.	3.00	0.060
17.	Construction of street at village Jamia.	2.00	0.040
18.	Construction of Road at Mohallah Chioian Chappri.	3.00	0.060
19.	Construction of PCC Road at Mohallah Choi Pharrari.	2.50	0.050
20.	Construction of street at Mohallah Rajgan & Mohallah Nariyan Nartopa.	2.50	0.050
21.	Construction of Road from Mohallah Ghulam Abad to Dheri Mankari.	4.00	0.080
22.	Construction of streets at Nartopa village	2.50	0.050
23.	Construction Road at Mohallah Dheri Bandi Mian Pirdad.	2.00	0.040
24.	Construction of Road / Streets at Mohallah Rakra Bayyan Ahmed Ali Khan.	3.00	0.060
25.	Construction of Road at Mohallah Chari Bandi Mian Pirdad	2.50	0.050
26.	Construction of Road at Mohallah Sher Alioli	5.00	0.100
27.	Construction of streets at village Gandaf	4.50	0.090
28.	Construction of Road / Streets at Mohallah Mughal Abad & Darul Aloom Malkiyar	4.00	0.080
29.	Construction of Janazagah at Banda Muneer Khan.	2.00	0.040
30.	Construction of Road from Pharrari to Bayan	5.00	0.100
31.	Desalting of Nallah Jat TMA Haripur & KTS.	4.00	0.080

Date / Time of Submission
21.02.2023
At 12:00 PM

Date / Time of Opening
21.02.2023
At 02:00 PM

TERMS & CONDITIONS: 01. Tender form and BOQ can be downloaded by the original contractor available on the web site of LG&RDD(LCB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa www.lgkp.gov.pk. 02. Registration of the contractor should be renewed from Local Government Elections & Rural Development Department (LCB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the year 2022-2023. copies of CNIC, National Income Tax certificate and his registration must be attached with tender documents. 03. The original/ duplicate copy of sealed tender documents will be submitted to this office and tender documents must be reached upto the fixed dated and time mentioned above as per letter No CE/LCB/1-1/2016 dated 23-08-2016 was issued by the Chief Engineer LCB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 04. As per KPRA Notification No.S.R.O (14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated 10.05.2022 pertaining to **Additional Security in case of abnormally low bids:** This regulation relates to the matters pertaining to Additional Security submitted by the bidders in procumbent of works. 05. The contractors quoting their bids upto a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @2% only of Engineer Estimate. 06. The Contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimate cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 07. Similarly a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer's Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. 08. In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is in view of the procuring Entity, not convincing the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof. 09. The Procuring Entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procuring opportunity afresh. 10. After commencement of work by the successful bidder, the procuring entity may replace the Additional Security with a bank guarantee of the same amount from the scheduled bank; if the already deposited security is not in the form of bank guarantee. 11. The Additional Security shall be released to the contractor in four installments that is 25% to be released upon completion of 25% of the project, 50% to be released upon completion of 50% project, 75% to be released upon completion of 75% project of the project and the remaining amount to be released after completion of the project. 12. All previous orders, instructions and regulations issued regarding additional security shall stand superseded. 13. As per KPRA notification vide No.S.R.O (15)/Vol:1-25/2022-23/6301-13 dated 22.08.2022 the performance guarantee shall be of an amount not exceeding 10% of the contractor price prescribed in bid solicitation documents / letter of acceptance, such guarantee shall be acceptable in any of the scheduled Bank of Pakistan or located outside Pakistan duly counter guaranteed by scheduled Bank in Pakistan or insurance bond from an insurance company having at least AA rating under Pakistan credit rating agency PACRA/Japan credit rating (JCR-VIS) with provision of indemnity bond on stamp paper of worth RS.500/- or above duly attested by the concerned authority. 14. In case bids become tie, the award of contract shall be decided through E-Toss, which shall be binding and final. 15. As per Provincial Government all the bidders / firms must be to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No.XXI of 2013). 16. All Federal and Provincial duties /stamp duty and taxes including sales tax will be recoverable as per directives of the Government issued from time to time. 17. The work order of all Developmental schemes to be issued on the availability of funds. 18. Other terms and conditions can be obtained in office working hours or from web site mentioned above.

Tehsil Officer (I&S), TMA Haripur
Tehsil Municipal Officer, TMA Haripur

INF(P) 462/23

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Phone/Fax: 091-9211471, 091-9211471 Email: ccd1pwdpsh@gmail.com

INVITATION OF BIDS

(Single Stage Two Envelopes)

Sealed tender/bids on the basis of "Single Stage Two envelopes Procedure" are hereby invited for execution of the following works from eligible contractors/firms duly enlisted/register with Pakistan Engineering council (PEC) in relevant specialization technical category and financial limit Category C-5 & above is required on percentage rates basis on Pak. PWD Schedule of Rate 2022, who Process valid renewal with PEC, having renewal upto 30/06/2023.

S#	Title of Work	NIT Amount	Earnest Money	Tender Cost
DISTRICT MARDAN				
1.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Jalala District Mardan	Rs.38,109,609/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
2.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Takkar District Mardan	Rs.25,405,148/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
3.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Madey Baba District Mardan	Rs.38,162,327/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
4.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Pir Saddu District Mardan	Rs.38,096,271/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
5.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Sher Garh District Mardan	Rs.38,461,504/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
6.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Makori District Mardan	Rs.38,326,946/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
7.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Hatyan District Mardan	Rs.38,217,740/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
8.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Parkho District Mardan	Rs.38,377,962/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
9.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Lund Khawar District Mardan	Rs.38,582,121/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
10.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Jalala Pir Saddu District Mardan	Rs.37,956,351/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
11.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Mian Esa District Mardan	Rs.38,498,998/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
12.	Sanitation Schemes at Union Council Jalala Phase-II District Mardan	Rs.15,735,574/-	4% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-

Terms and Condition for Bidding

- The constructors/firms/companies who will receive bidding documents are required to submit their bid in two separate sealed envelopes, i.e., one envelop containing technical information/data and documents of the contractor/firm required for post qualification, clearly marked as "Technical Bid", while the second envelop containing bid price clearly marked as "Financial Bid". The application must be accompanied with bid security in shape of CDR/deposit at call from any scheduled Bank of Pakistan, in favour of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD, Peshawar, clearly mentioning the name of firm, whereas the difference of the tendered amount must be accompanied with Financial Bid with its sealed envelop.
- Bidders may purchase the Bidding Document from the office of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD Peshawar at cost of Rs. 5,000/- (Non refundable upto 16/02/2023 during office hours).
- Envelopes of Technical Bid & Financial Bid shall be submitted in the office of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD Shami Road Peshawar on 17/02/2023 by 12.30 PM. The envelope containing Technical Bid shall be opened on same day at 01.00 P.M in the presence of Bidders representatives who opt to be present, Bids received after the prescribed date and time shall not be accepted.
- Bidders will be Technically Qualified on the basis of information provided with the Bids as per the criteria prescribed in the Bidding Documents. Once a Technical Bid received and opened in this office, no addition/subtraction/alteration of any sort of document will be acceptable.
- Pay Order / Demand draft will not be acceptable.
- All CDR once received will be credit into the Government Account and will be re-funded through Government Cheque.
- No tender will be entertained without bid security @4% of the bid amount if not found will be declared as non responsive.
- Every firm / contractor must provide the affidavit on stamp paper regarding the non litigation with the department
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules 2004, the under signed reserves the right to accept / reject any or all bids / proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal.
- The documents provided by the bidders will be verified and in case found ambiguous / fake one, the firm will face immediate / appropriate penal action as per rules and law.
- METHOD OF PROCUREMENT**
 - As per PPRA rule 36(b), open competitive Bidding with "Single Stage Two Envelop" Procedure- One envelop containing Technical Proposal and the other Financial Proposal and both sealed in separate envelopes.
 - After conducting evaluation of Technical Bids, qualified firms shall be informed accordingly for opening of their Financial Bids whereas bids of unqualified firms shall be returned unopened.
 - Non-compliance of instructions to bidders in the Tender Documents will lead to disqualification / non-responsiveness of the bid/firm.

Nazir Ahmad, Executive Engineer **PID(P) 031/2023**

Central Civil Division No-II, Pakistan Public Works Department
Shami Road Peshawar



PESHAWAR: Employees of Police Department, relatives and friends of martyred cops chanting slogans during a protest demonstration against brutal suicide bombing at Police Line. — F.P. photo

Police employes stage demo against bombing

PESHAWAR (APP): The employees of police department, relatives and friends of the martyred cops here Wednesday stage protest demonstration against the brutal suicide bombing at Malik Saad Shaheed police lines' mosque and demanded strict punishment of the culprits.

The protestors, including police cops, friends and families of the martyred constables gathered in front of the press club and demanded transparent inquiry of the horrific blast and unmasking the perpetrators behind the attack.

They said attack on unarmed policemen and worshippers was an inhuman act and chanted slogans against terrorism.

On this occasion, the civil society organisations, students, traders and transporters assembled in front of the press club to express solidarity with the Peshawar police.

They strongly condemned the horrific blast that left over 101 people, mostly policemen dead and 221 others injured.

The police cops and relatives of martyres said that such attacks can not shake their morale in fight against terrorism and would continue to give sacrifices for the country.

The employees of Peshawar police and families of the victims demanded an independent and transparent inquiry of the incident that sparked anger and wide spread condemnation.

They said such attacks on police in the red zone were unacceptable and decisive action should be taken against terrorists and their facilitators.

The protest demo under aegis of Pakhtuns students federation of the Islamia College University led by the general secretary, Arya Khan and senior vice president Abid Afghan said the blast in police lines' mosque was a serious security breach and the perpetrators should be arrested soon with award of exemplary punishment.

They said civil society and Pakhtuns Students Federation was standing with the victims families of police force in this hour of grief and sorrow.

They demanded of the KP Government to immediately provide compensation to the victims families.

The civil society and students wings including Jamiat Students Federation of Islamia College Peshawar led by its Nazim Taqveem Ul Haq staged a peace walk to express solidarity with Peshawar police and martyres families.

They were holding placards inscribed with slogans against terrorism.

26 nanbais arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The District Administration Peshawar arrested 26 nanbais (bakers) from various localities of the district for selling under-weight roti on Wednesday.

On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shafiullah Khan, the officers of district administration conducted raids on tandoors in various localities of interior city and Hayatabad and collectively arrested 26 nanbais for selling under-weight roti.

Deputy Commissioner has directed all administrative officers to check the weight of roti at tandoors in their areas of jurisdiction and take action against those selling under-weight roti.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Khalid Khurshed meeting with Commissioner Riaz Mehsood.

KP Minister Amend Act; PHC orders to submit reply

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Rooh-ul-Amin and Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan ordered Advocate General (AG) along with other respondents to submit comments regarding amendments made in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Act, on Wednesday.

Pakistan Muslim League

Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Member Provincial Assembly Sardar Yousaf writ petition seeking suspension of Amendments made to protect illegal users of government's helicopter especially Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan since 2008.

The counsel for petitioner Tariq Afridi Advocate argued that amendments passed is against fundamental rights and requested recovery from irrelevant

persons for using government's helicopter.

He added that the amendments were made to protect PTI's chairman Imran Khan because he has used government's helicopter roughly.

During hearing PHC has inquired from Additional Deputy Prosecutor General National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Muhammad Ali regarding recovery from irrelevant persons for using helicopter.

NAB Additional Deputy Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali informed member parliament Jahan Dad was served with notice for recovery in this regard.

The divisional bench of PHC ordered AG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with other respondents to submit comments and directed NAB to submit record of notices issued to irrelevant persons for recovery while adjourned further hearing.

Setup of Starring Committee for uplift in erstwhile Fata: PHC directs to submit reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Shakeel Ahmad ordered to submit reply in petition regarding establishment of starring committee by federal government for usage of developmental funds in merged districts of erstwhile Fata, on Wednesday.

The writ petition was filed by former Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghazan Jamal, Shafiq Afridi, Anwar Zeb Khan, Ajmal Khan, Syed Iqbal Mian and Nasrullah Khan in which federal government, planning commission, finance division and starring committee were

made respondents in the writ petition.

The writ stated that establishment of starring committee by planning commission 3rd January is unconstitutional and against the spirit of 25th constitutional amendment in which Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa become the subordinate of a bureaucrat.

The petition further added that Governor is a constitutional position while in the starring committee Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Governor become a subordinate to bureaucrat. Federal Government has curtailed constitutional rights of erstwhile Fata's residents through a notification, the writ stated.

The establishment of starring committee has violated Constitution of

Pakistan because development projects are the dominion of provincial government and also contradicting with provincial autonomy.

Deputy Secretary will decide fate of developmental projects while the constitution of starring committee has also demoralized constitutional position of Governor, the petition argued.

The petition requested PHC to declare null and void the notification regarding establishment of starring committee for developmental projects in merged districts of erstwhile Fata.

The divisional has ordered respondents to submit reply in this regard after initial argument and adjourned further hearing till date to be fix.

It is worthy to mention that the former MPAs has also filed another writ regarding release of 3% share for erstwhile Fata in National Finance Commission which also pending before honorable Peshawar High Court.

Although, writ stated that in 2010 NFC award 3% shares were granted for erstwhile Fata while its stoppage has disturbed businesses of duty including salaries of employees.

The petition further argued that awarding of NFC in every five years is constitutional obligation and requested Peshawar High Court to ordered competent for holding NFC meeting while pleaded for provision of funds as per populace ratio of erstwhile Fata district.

Mayor visits martyrs' homes

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali on Wednesday visited the houses of martyrs of Police Lines blast and offered Fateha for the departed souls.

On the occasion, he said we equally share the grief of the bereaved families and will never leave alone the victim families at this critical juncture. The heirs of the bomb blast victims would be provided all possible assistance, the Mayor said, adding the tragic incident has deeply saddened the entire nation.

Such incidents, he said, will not shatter the resolve of the police force to fight the menace of terrorism as our forces have faced such critical situations in the past and will fight with the same passion in future. He said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have rendered matchless sacrifices in the war on terror that will be remembered forever.

The Mayor, Haji Zubair Ali visited the houses of martyrs, constables Muhammad Zakir ul Haq, Muhammad Tariq and Sayyed Atta Ullah Shah in Shah Gai village of Sufaid Sang area and Constable Umair in Mathra.

He met with the heirs of the martyrs and expressed solidarity with them. He also offered Fateha for the departed souls of the martyrs and said the entire nation was proud of the sacrifices offered by our police force.



PESHAWAR: Head of UNHCR Asia Region meeting DG PDMA during his visit to PDMA Headquarter.

Chairman PEC visits UET Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon on Wednesday visited University of Engineering Technology (UET) Peshawar and assured support that PEC will use its organizational potential and resources to the best possible use and further strengthen the engineering community.

He visited the National Center for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) where Dr. Gul Muhammad, Project Director NCAI showed projects of NCAI including safe city project, early warning system for floods and earthquakes and smart metering. During the visit, Chairman PEC inaugurated the Smart Classroom at Department of Industrial Engineering, UET Peshawar.

The ceremony was also marked with a MoU signing between the Center for Intelligent Systems Network and Research (CISNR), NCAI UET Peshawar and PEC. Through this MoU, CISNR and NCAI will offer six month trainings, hands on experience and skills to the fresh engineers as "internees" while PEC will pay Rs. 30,000 to each intern under its 'On Job Training Program'.

Dr. Tariq Khalil, Manager ORIC UET Peshawar and Engr. Nasir Khalili, Member Governing Body, PEC signed the documents in presence of senior officials.

Chairman PEC, Engr. M. Najeeb Haroon while addressing the audience said, Pakistan is hit by economic Covid as we had been hit by the pandemic covid, so this calls for Pakistan's

engineers who now need to take this challenge as opportunity and start making their products with "Made in Pakistan" brand. He assured support that PEC will use its organizational potential and resources to the best possible use and further strengthen the engineering community as they are the backbone for overall socio-economic development of Pakistan.

The Vice chancellor UET Peshawar Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain said, according to the Times Higher Education Impact ranking, UET Peshawar stands first in "Engineering category" in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, fifth in Pakistan while third in "All universities category" in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while it is also ranked between 800-1000 universities in the world.

Dr. Danish defends Ph.D thesis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director Creative Wing Department of Information and Public Relation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Danish Babar defended his Directorate of Philosophy (Ph. D) in Journalism thesis at University of Peshawar, last day.

Director Creative Wing Dr. Danish Babar was supervised by Dr. Amir Hamza Bangash while Dr. Rehman Ullah of University of Kohat was the external examiner. The scholar thesis titled with Ph. D "Representation of the issues of tribal districts

in 2017-18: A comparative analysis of Mashal Radio, Dewa Radio and Radio Pakistan".

During Ph. D Defence Chairman, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Dr. Faiz Ullah Jan, faculty members including Dr. Bakht Zaman along with students were present.

Earlier, Dr. Danish Babar has worked with American, British German and Pakistan's media organization as correspondent, producer and author while he served Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board as Communication Manager.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry senior vice president Shahid Hussain said that issues of business community and journalists fraternity are common, which need to be addressed by joint efforts. The chamber's senior office bearer noted that business community issues were not highlighted properly owing to communication gaps.

Shahid Hussain called for making Torkham gate, Ghulam Khan and other major trade routes easier to improve bilateral trade with central Asian republics.

The SCCI SVP was addressing senior journalists during a luncheon event hosted by him in honour of the newly elected cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Union of Journalists (KPUJs) here at the local hotel, said in a press release issued on Wednesday.

Those who were present during the luncheon include KPUJs president Shams Mohmand, General Secretary Ibrahim Shinwari, writer, and columnists, and noted literary figure Dr

Abaseen Yousafzai, senior journalist Shamim Shahid, Sadder Gul, Fazal Wahid, Abidullah Yousafzai, M. Ishtiaq along with senior members of the SCCI.

Shahid Hussain lauded the formation of KPUJs and called it an important platform for highlighting issues of people belonging to different walks of life, industrialists and traders community. The SCCI's

SVP said the issues of business community and journalists are common, which should be resolved with joint struggle. He urged the government to take pragmatic steps for providing a friendly and peaceful atmosphere to the business community to promote free trade and boost nation-wide industrialisation.

Later, the chamber senior vice president presented

the SCCI's shield to KPUJs president Shams Mohmand.

Earlier, KPUJs president Shams Mohmand, senior journalists and others also spoke on the occasion and highlighted issues of journalists community and vowed to jointly make efforts for amicable resolution of issues that were being faced by business community and journalists fraternity.



PESHAWAR: Central vice president Butt Kashmiri Federation Amjad Saleem Butt presenting souvenir to president PPC Arshad Aziz Malik.





In brief

KP CS, IGP visit Madrassa F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Dr Shahzad Khan Bangash and IGP Muazzam Jah Ansari on Wednesday visited Madrassa Khel and condoled the martyrdom of 51 seminary children in boat capsizing incident in Tanda dam, Kohat. They offered special prayers for the children who were martyred in the incident. Commissioner Kohat Division, RPO Kohat, Deputy Commissioner Kohat, District Police Officer Kohat and local leaders were also present on this occasion.

6 injured in road mishap in Dir F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Six women and children were injured when a motor car and a Suzuki pick up collided head-on at Tarai area on Timergara Peshawar road in the jurisdiction of Timergara police station here on Wednesday, residents and Rescue officials said. They said the Rescue emergency team shifted the injured people to the district headquarter hospital Timergara wherein their condition is stated to be out of danger. The Timergara police registered a case and started further an investigation.

Rescue 1122 releases report F.P. Report

TIMERGARA Rescue 1122 Lower Dir released monthly performance report for January 2023, on Wednesday. Rescue 1122 in-charge Abrar Ali Khan told the media that during the last month, Rescue 1122 control room provided services in more than 538 emergencies. 6215 calls received, including more than 5000 unnecessary and fake calls; Rescue 1122 Dir Lower provided facilities to the injured in 31 traffic accidents during the month of January, 67 medical, 20 emergency and 02 in the last month. During crime incidents, 02 drowning, 1 building collapse and 22 other incidents, facilities were provided to 193 patients referred by doctors under the Ambulance Referral Service including 116 within the district and 77 outside the district. Under the supervision of the trained staff of Rescue 1122, they were transferred to various hospitals, on the orders of Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khateer Ahmed, they provided practical training on fire safety and life saving in the community to reduce the rate of accidents across the district.

Quran Khwani offered F.P. Report

MALAKAND: District administration arranged 'Quran Khwani' at Levies lines Malakand to offer prayer for martyrs of Peshawar's police lines suicide attack. Following 'Quran Khwani' Deputy Commissioner and Commandant Malakand Levies offered prayers for departed souls and showed condolence with the bereaved families. He also offered prayer for early recovery of injured of the incident. During the ceremony special prayers were offered for national stability and unity while Additional Commissioner Zaman Khan was also present at the occasion.

Businessman looted F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Armed robbers snatched three hundred thousand dollars from a businessman here on Wednesday and fled the scene.

Civil society protests against suicide blast in Police Line mosque

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR / MINGORA: People from different walks of life strongly condemned the Peshawar police lines' suicide blast and demanded the government to launch a crackdown against the insurgents without any further delay. The Adenzai Qaumi Jirga in this regard arranged a condolence reference at Chakdara during which the speakers said the incident was not only condemnable but it needed to be resisted with force.

Addressing the condolence reference, the jirga members Khurshid Ali Khan, Sultanatyar Advocate, Amanullah Khan, Malik Wasil Khan, Fakhrul Zaman Khan, Naeemullah Khan, Imtiaz Khan Advocate, Syed Liaquat ul Mulk and others said that no religion allowed the bloodshed of innocent citizens. They said that it was the state responsibility to protect the life and property of the citizens.

The speakers said that those responsible for the Peshawar suicide blast should be brought to justice and punished exemplary so that such acts could be avoided in future. The speakers demanded high-level investigations for the identification of those responsible. "The loss of precious human lives in the ongoing wave and suicide

bombings has become unbearable and if the state is unable to control it, it will have serious consequences," one of the speakers said. A special prayer was offered for the departed souls.

Also, in the day the Dir Chamber of Commerce and Industries condemned the incident and termed it a conspiracy against Islam. Talking to local journalists at Timergara, the chamber president Mian Noor Alam and senior vice president Khalid Iqbal said the enemies were active to destabilize Pakistan.

They said that security agencies and the public should jointly work to curb the terrorism in the region. The traders' leaders said that innocent worshippers had been killed in a holy place that was not allowed in any religion. They said the perpetrators were neither Muslims nor humans and they should be dealt with an iron hand. Several other organizations also held protest demonstrations and offered 'Fateha Khawani' for the departed souls.

Meanwhile, the Civil society in Swat also protests against the Peshawar bomb blast, for the first time, police personnel also participated in the protest in Swat here on Wednesday.

They demanded an investigation into the

Peshawar bomb blast along with the establishment of peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The participants in the protest carried placards with slogans against terrorism and in favor of peace.

Swati tribe Association President Mufti Mohidullah, Speen Khan and Hazrat Ali were leading the demonstration. For the first time in the history of Swat, policemen also participated in this demonstration and shouted slogans. The protesters took out a procession on Saidu Sharif Road and shouted slogans in front of the Swat Press Club.

In their address on this occasion, the speakers said that the Peshawar bomb blast is not only an attack on the police, but it is also an attack on Islam, which is less condemnable. They said that we want to ask how the suicide bombers and explosives entered the police lines, if we don't get the answer, the policemen will be forced to leave the duty.

They said that why terrorism is being done only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while Punjab is safe but we will not tolerate any more terrorism. They clarified that if our questions are not answered, the policemen will be forced to leave the duty and take to the streets to start their own struggle to ensure their safety.

Wall-painting drive launched in Naurang town

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Tehsil Municipal Administration has launched a clean and green initiative in Naurang town of Lakki Marwat district to provide a healthy and pollution free environment to citizens.

An official of the district administration said on Wednesday that the initiative had been launched by the municipal administration in the congested urban locality on the directives of deputy commissioner Fazal Akbar. He said the municipal workers have started cleaning the city premises, roads, bazaars and markets.

The official said that green belts had been set up along roadsides and municipal workers were also engaged in sowing

ornamental trees. He said that wall art was also part of the beautification plan under which the outer side of the walls of government buildings were being restored and renovated with colourful and attractive paintings. He said that the beautification work would bring Naurang city on par with other beautiful and clean cities of the province.

Free medical camp held: More than one thousand patients with eye related complications were examined at a free medical camp organized by Dil Jan Khan foundation in Begukhel area of Lakki Marwat. An official of the foundation said on Wednesday that the two day free eye camp culminated on Tuesday wherein around one hundred eye

surgeries were conducted. Residents of Lakki city and surrounding villages swarmed the Begukhel area to get them examined by health experts.

Meanwhile, commissioner Bannu Matiullah Khan along with Lakki Marwat deputy commissioner Fazal Akbar inaugurated the camp. The foundation's head and former IGP Diljan Khan Marwat and notables of the area were also present. Along with free medical examination and surgery the patients were also provided with glasses and medicines. Diljan Khan also distributed gifts among the poor and serving women of the area and said that the foundation would continue its humanitarian services in health, education and other sectors.

Women protests against injustice in flour's quota

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A protest demonstration against excessive load shedding and unfair distribution of quota flour was held here at Shiekhwil village of subdivision Landi Kotal, district Khyber on Wednesday.

Scores of local female protestors of Shiekhwil village accompanied by a large number of children approached the Pak-Afghan highway and put blockade at the road to suspend it for all kinds of movement. The protestors were of the view that the WAPDA officials decreased supply of electricity from four hours to two hours round the clock beside local management of the grid station officials that was equilent to sprinkle salt on the wounds of them.

Prolonged power off affected routine life and created an artificial problem of scarcity of potable water in the area, they remarked. They also expressed reservation over the distribution of quota flour and said the poor were neglected while the necessary food item was provided to near and dear ones, they blamed.

Remaining closed for two hours, the highway was resumed after assurance of the officials. Due to locking of the route long queues of export and import loaded vehicles could be witnessed at both sides of the road.

Meanwhile a grand meeting of councilors and tribal elders under the head of tehsil chairman Haji Shah Khalid was held at Tehsil Municipal Office (TMO) who expressed their reservation over the new schedule Issued by the WAPDA



officials according to that only two hours electricity would be supplied in 24 hours to the residents.

When the Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Shah Fahad was contacted on the matter he said following assurance of the TESCO chief power supply would be resumed as per old plan (five hours round the clock).

People appreciates Namoos-e-Sahaba & Ahle Bait Bill: People from different walks of life welcomed the Namoos-e-Sahaba and Ahle Bait amendment bill passed by the National assembly aimed to uphold respect for the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and His Wives and family.

Addressing to a crowded press conference held here in Landi Kotal press club on Wednesday Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat Landi Kotal chapter head Maulana Wadan Ullah, City Mayor Haji Shah Khalid, Anjumane Tajeran Landi Kotal Bazaar Haji Jafar Shinwari, Jameat Islami (JI) local head Murad Hussain Afridi, Qari Mussarat of Jamiat ulla

Islam, Fazal Rehman (JUI-F) and others expressed their amusement over the passing of the Namoos-e-Sahaba and Ahle Bait amendment bill and said it would discourage those people who involved in blasphemy.

Due to simple punishment (three years imprisonment and bailable crime) the criminals despite the punishment committed the same again, they added and said in the amendment bill the punishment of the disrespecting of the Sahaba was 10 years and the crime was non bailable would certainly curtain the crime.

Such kinds of legislation would promote peace in the country and would enhance mutual harmony between various sects of the society, they remarked. They appreciated the honorable member of National Assembly (NA) Abdul Akbar Chetrali for presenting the bill and valued the role of the NA members for passing the bill. The participants urged the members of the Senate to pass the bill with majority and be proven true representatives of the people.

Illegal immigration 5 youths reached Swat following release from captivity in Libya



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Anguished youths were sold to bandits in Libya by mafia agents who had showed dreams of taking them to Italy. After three months of continuous brutal violence, the agent himself and the robbers got freedom after receiving a total amount of more than 4 crore rupees through the agent.

The agent had legally asked to be taken to Italy but was later tricked and trapped in Libya. Dozens of people are still being tortured in private prisons of robbers in Libya. Jabran Khan, Khalil Ullah, Rasheed Ahmed, Dawood Bacha of Bara Samy Teh Kabal and Shahid Ali of Charbagh Tehsil, who were released

from a private prison in Libya, said while talking to the media at the Swat Press Club, they said that we 10 desperate youths were assured by a Pakistani-agents to carry to Italy in 15 days at a cost of 18 lakh 15 thousand rupees.

On August 14, 2022, we were taken from Peshawar Airport to Karachi, then to Saudi Arabia, from there to Egypt and later to Libya, and we were asked to submit amount to onboard you to Italy. Compulsively we contacted our families and gave them the money, but these agents named Chaudhry Riasat Ali alias Asif District Gujarati kept us captive in and then we were sold to notorious Libyan Ali mafia Group held hostage by Pakistani agents Imran, Asif of

Lala Musa Punjab and the famous Zamana Ali group of Libya.

They tortured us immensely and kept us in their private prison and contacted our families and demanded another 21.21 lakh rupees per person for our release. Our family members contact their agents namely Imran and Asif in District Lala Musa and give Rs 21, 21 lakh per person they said.

They said that dozens of people from Swat are still being held by the Ali Group mafia. They said that we strongly demand the present government and higher authorities to arrest Pakistani agents of Punjab as soon as possible and bring them to justice and recover our money save more youth from this problem.

Prices of daily use items skyrocket in Badin district

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

BADIN (PPI): After the increase in petrol prices, the prices of daily commodities, including vegetables and fruit, have also risen. The commodities have gone beyond the purchasing power of the poor and middle class people, while millions of people have become mentally ill due to skyrocketing inflation.

The local traders have increased the prices of daily items. The new oil price rise has badly affected millions of people. According to a survey, 30% rise has been witnessed in cooking oil prices, 35% in ghee, 30% in pulses, 25% in flour, 20% in spices, 40% in vegetables and 45% in fruit.

Citizens Sohail Ahmed Memon, Sawan Khaskheli, SM Memon, Fida Hussain Soomro, Iqbal Qambrani and Muhammad Juman have said that the local traders of the Badin district were busy in profiteering. They stated, "The law of the jungle is running throughout the district. The district administration and price control authorities have completely failed to control the rising inflation."

The citizens said that millions of people had been left at the mercy of the businessmen. They demanded of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court to order crackdown on the businessmen involved in black marketing by taking suo motu notices of the increasing inflation.

DPO visits Haripur press club F.P. Report

HARIPUR: District Police Officer (DPO) visited Haripur Press Club and hold meeting cabinet, on Wednesday. DPO along with SSP Investigation Muhammad Sulaiman, SDPO Headquarters Muhammad Fida and SHO Police Station City Inspector Abdul Ghafoor Khan were also present during the visit.

According to details, the press club officials and the cabinet thanked DPO Haripur for coming to the press club and informed about the problems faced by the journalists. DPO Haripur while talking to the officials and members of the press club said that the journalists and the police are working together to identify the anti-social elements and social evils which help the police to maintain the law and order situation. It helps a lot to maintain.

Police is using all the resources to maintain the law and order situation in the whole district. With the support of the media, the law and order situation in the district is excellent. Positive criticism helps in strengthening the institutions.

Teachers transferred against policy procedure

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: District Monitoring Officer, Hafizabad, Ishfaq Ahmad Kohli has transferred seven male and female teachers on temporary basis from their original place of posting of their own choice in the district to violate educational, policy, rules and directions of the School Education Department, Punjab.

According to orders issued by the approval of Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Touqeer Ilyas Cheema, Ms. Sajida Rafique, EST, has transferred from Government Girls Elementary School Shah Jamal to Government Girls High School, No. 1 Hafizabad, Ms. Munaza Kazmi, EST, from Government Girls High School, Kalianwala, to High School, Chak Chattah, Ms. Usma Ejaz, PST, Girls Primary School Lundian Wala to Girl Middle School, Fawara Chowk, Hafizabad, Ms. Rukhsana Kausar SST from Girls High School, Ramke Chattah to High School No. 1 Hafizabad, Ms. Musarrat Begum, EST, Girls Elementary School, Behak Ahmad Yar to Government Girls Higher Secondary

School, Soorianwal, Rana Waqas Haider, PST, MC School No. 1 Hafizabad to District Public Library Hafizabad and Mr. Muhammad Rafique SST High School, Mirza Bangsika to office of the Deputy District Education Officer Pindi Bhattian.

Senior Educationists told that temporary transferred and adjustment of teachers is against policy, rules and directions of the Government of the Punjab and District Monitoring Officer was not authorized to interfere in administrative affairs of the education department. These transferred orders reflected bureaucratic mindset to maintain hegemony and control other departments as well as to provide relief to influential teachers in pretext of needs bases, they added.

The other hand, District Monitoring Officer said that temporary transferred orders were issued on need based to meet shortage of teaching and other staff in the schools and offices whereas DC has discretionary power to shift services of officials to other place to run smoothly affairs of all departments.

Teachers asset of education department: Chief Executive Officer

Education, Hafizabad, Wazir Ahmad Agha said that honest and hardworking teachers and employees are assets of education department and they will be encouraged at all level whereas teachers played pivotal role in progress and prosperity of the nations always. He was addressing farewell party hosted in the honour of Senior Teacher of Government Model Primary School Kaleki Village, Malik Muhammad Zaman.

Malik Muhammad Zaman was retired from service to complete his 35-years service. Deputy Director Budget and Accounts Adnan Dar, Deputy District Education Officer Nargis Arif, Assistant Education Officer Ishtiaq Nazir, teachers and students attended the function.

CEO said that Senior Teacher Malik Zaman has performed his duty with commitment and passion of serving the nation for 35 years, his services would be remembered for ever and he was role model for young teachers. At the end of function, staff of the school and other prominent personalities presented gifts to retired teacher Malik Muhammad Zaman.

DIG visits Abbottabad police lines

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Hazara Tahir Ayub Khan's visited Abbottabad police headquarters and added that best measures for the welfare of policemen are among my first priorities, on Wednesday.

According to details, DIG interested, no one's right will be lost in your promotion and selection of departmental courses and everyone will be given their right according to the rules and regulations, DIG Hazara Region Tahir Ayub Khan's visit to Abbottabad Police Headquarters, Attended Police Martyrs' Memorial, laid wreaths and recited Fatiha, then addressed Police Darbar, visited DPO Office, Investigation Office, Pal Office, Police Line and other departments and met police officers on duty.

According to the details, DIG Hazara Tahir Ayub Khan visited the police headquarters Abbottabad. On reaching the police line, DPO Abbottabad Umar Tufail and other police officers welcomed him. He presented a bouquet of flowers and recited Fatiha for the martyrs. Later, DIG Hazara Tahir Ayub Khan attended the court of Abbottabad police officers and men and Fatiha was recited for the martyred policemen in the Peshawar Police Line Mosque blast. The officers participating in the Police Darbar informed



DIG Hazara about their professional problems.

DIG Hazara while addressing the Darbar said that Hazara Police is brave police and I am also happy that I am the commander of this force. Best measures for the welfare of police personnel are among my first priorities and for this I will raise my voice for you at every forum. We are fortunate that our IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Muazzam Jah Ansari also takes personal interest in the welfare of police personnel. No one's right will be lost in your promotion and selection of departmental courses and everyone is given their right as per the rules and regulations.

DIG claimed that his effort will be to organize a police court in every district of Hazara in 3 months so that you can get aware-

ness of your professional problems. DIG Hazara further said that in view of the current situation, you have to perform your duties more diligently. Perform your professional duties in an efficient manner for the honor of yourself and your department. Take care of police discipline in all circumstances, no negligence will be tolerated and you all have to take special care of this. DIG Hazara said that the participation of policemen in sports is very important and we will form teams of policemen at the district level.

DIG Hazara along with DPO Abbottabad visited Police Lines Abbottabad Investigation Office and other departments and met the police personnel posted on duty and issued instructions to them to perform their duties better.



Austin in Philippines to discuss larger US military presence

MANILA (AP): Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is in the Philippines on Wednesday for talks about deploying US forces and weapons in more Philippine military camps to ramp up deterrence against China's increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan and in the disputed South China Sea.

Austin flew to Manila from South Korea, where he met his counterpart and said the US would increase its deployment of advanced weapons such as fighter jets and bombers to the Korean Peninsula to bolster joint training with South Korean forces in response to North Korea's growing nuclear threat. The Philippines, Washington's oldest treaty ally in Asia, has been a key front in the US battle against terrorism, especially after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Austin was scheduled to meet a small contingent of US counterterrorism forces on Wednesday in the south, where they have provided intelligence and combat advice for years to Filipino troops battling a decadeslong Muslim insurgency, which has considerably eased but remains a key threat.

More recently, US forces have intensified and broadened joint training for combat readiness and disaster response

with Filipino troops in the Southeast Asian nation's western coast, which faces the South China Sea, and in its northern Luzon region across the sea from the Taiwan Strait. American forces have been granted access to five Philippine military camps, where they could stay indefinitely in rotating batches under a 2014 defense pact called the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

In October, the US sought access to a larger number of its forces and weapons to an additional five Philippine military camps, mostly in the main northern Luzon region, under the 2014 EDCA. That request would be high on the agenda for Austin's meetings in the Philippines, according to Philippine officials. "The visit of Secretary Austin definitely, obviously will have to do with many of the ongoing discussions on the EDCA sites," Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Romualdez said at a news briefing in the capital Manila.

Austin would hold talks with his Philippine defense counterpart, Carlito Galvez Jr., and National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano, Romualdez said. Austin would separately call on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who

took office in June and has since taken steps to boost relations with Washington. The US defense chief is the latest American leader to visit the Philippines after Vice President Kamala Harris, who flew to the country in November in a sign of warming ties after a strained period under Marcos's predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

During his time at the country's helm from 2016, Duterte nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia while he threatened to sever ties with Washington, kick visiting American forces out and abrogate a major defense pact that allows thousands of US forces to visit each year for large-scale combat training. Romualdez said the Philippines needed to cooperate with Washington militarily to deter any escalation of tensions between China and Taiwan - not only because of the treaty alliance but to help prevent a major conflict.

"We're in a Catch-22 situation. If China makes a move on Taiwan militarily, we'll be affected - and all ASEAN region, but mostly us, Japan and South Korea," Romualdez told The Associated Press, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the 10-nation regional bloc that includes the Philippines. The

Philippines and ASEAN state members Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam, along with Taiwan, have long been locked in increasingly tense territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea. The US has been regarded as a crucial counterweight to China in the region and has pledged to come to the defense of the Philippines if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under attack in the contested waters.

The Philippines used to host two of the largest US Navy and Air Force bases outside the American mainland. The bases were shut down in the early 1990s after the Philippine Senate rejected an extension, but American forces returned for large-scale combat exercises with Filipino troops under a 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement. In 2014, the allies signed the EDCA, which allows larger numbers of American forces to stay in rotating batches within Philippine military camps, where they can build warehouses, living quarters, joint training facilities and store combat equipment, except nuclear arms. The Philippine Constitution prohibits the permanent basing of foreign troops and their involvement in local combat.



Myanmar junta will seek legitimacy in ‘sham’ vote: UN

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The independent UN special investigator on Myanmar warned that the country's military rulers plan to seek legitimacy by orchestrating a "sham" election this year and urged all countries to reject the illegal and "faracial" vote.

Tom Andrews also called for nations that support human rights and democracy to recognize the underground umbrella organization for opponents of military rule as the legitimate representative of Myanmar's people.

He said in a report to the Human Rights Council released on the eve of the second anniversary of the ouster of Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government that according to the constitution drafted by the military in 2008, its coup on Feb. 1, 2021, "was illegal and its claim as Myanmar's government is illegitimate."

UN member nations, Andrews said, "have an important responsibility and role to play in determining whether Myanmar's military junta will succeed in achieving its goal of being accepted as legitimate and gaining control of a nation in revolt."

"You cannot have a free and fair election when the opposition is arrested, detained, tortured, and executed," journalists are pro-

hibited from doing their job, and it is a crime to criticize the military, Andrews said at a news conference. He noted that most of the international community has refused to accept the military's claim to be the legitimate government of Myanmar. A small minority, including China, Russia, India, Belarus, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka, have taken actions tantamount to recognition such as presenting diplomatic credentials to the junta leaders and strengthening military and economic relations, he said.

Andrews called for recognition and support for the National Unity Government, the main underground group coordinating resistance to the military. It was established by elected legislators who were barred from taking their seats when the military seized power. Andrews said he is encouraged by the increasing engagement of the United States, the European Union and Canada with the National Unity Government. Presenting the report at a news conference, Andrews called Myanmar's situation "the forgotten war" and accused the international community of failing to address the crisis along with "the junta's systematic crimes against humanity

and war crimes."

Since the military came to power, he said, at least 2,900 people and probably many more have died, 17,500 people are political prisoners and at least 38,000 homes, clinics and schools have been burned to the ground. In addition, 1.1 million people have been displaced, more than 4 million children don't have access to formal education, and 17.6 million people are expected to need humanitarian aid in 2023, up from 1 million before the coup, he said. Andrews, a former US congressman who has appointments at the Yale Law School and Harvard's Asia Center, said a new coordinated international response to the crisis in Myanmar is imperative.

The army's ouster of Suu Kyi's elected government was met with widespread public protests that security forces suppressed with lethal force. The futility of nonviolent protest drove opponents to armed resistance, which some UN experts and others have characterized as civil war. According to Andrews' report to the UN Human Rights Council, in the 22 months from the coup through Dec. 31, there were approximately 10,000 attacks or armed clashes between the military and anti-junta, ethnic resistance

Iran jails couple in viral dancing video

TEHRAN (AFP): An Iranian court has handed jail sentences of over 10 years each to a young couple who danced in front of one of Tehran's main landmarks, activists said.

Astiyazh Haghighi and her fiancé Amir Mohammad Ahmadi, both in their early 20s, had been arrested in early November after a video went viral of them dancing romantically in front of the capital's Azadi Tower.

Haghighi did not wear a headscarf in defiance of the Islamic republic's strict rules for women, while women are also not allowed to dance in public in Iran, let alone with a man. A revolutionary court in Tehran sentenced them each to 10 years and six months in prison, as well as bans on using the Internet and leaving Iran, the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said. The couple, who already had a following in Tehran as popular Instagram bloggers, were convicted of "encouraging corruption and public prostitution" as well as "gathering with the intention of disrupting national security", it added. HRANA cited sources close to their families as saying they had been deprived of lawyers during the court proceedings, while attempts to secure their release on bail have been rejected. The group said Haghighi is now in the notorious Qarchak prison for women outside Tehran. Activists regularly condemn conditions in the facility.

Iranian authorities have clamped down severely on all forms of dissent since the death in September of Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly violating the headscarf rules, sparked protests that have turned into a movement against the regime. At least 14,000 people have been arrested, according to the United Nations, ranging from prominent celebrities, journalists and lawyers to ordinary people who took to the streets.

The couple's video had been hailed as a symbol of the freedoms demanded by the protest movement, with Ahmadi at one moment lifting his partner in the air as her long hair flowed behind. One of the main icons of the Iranian capital, the gigantic and futuristic Azadi (Freedom) Tower is a place of huge sensitivity. It opened under the rule of the last shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in the early 1970s when it was known as the Shahyad (In Memory of the Shah) Tower.

It was renamed after the shah was ousted in 1979 with the creation of the Islamic republic. Its architect, a member of the Bahai faith which is not recognized in today's Iran, now lives in exile. HRANA also said that young Iranian woman Armita Abbasi, whose case has prompted international concern, went on trial after she was arrested in October over protests in the city of Karaj outside Tehran.

In November US news outlet CNN, citing leaks and an anonymous medical source, had reported she was rushed to hospital after being raped while in custody. Iranian authorities have denied the allegations.

3 years on, Britain still waits for Brexit dividend

LONDON (Reuters): Three years after its departure from the European Union, Britain is yet to benefit from the Brexit dividend that was promised for its economy as it lags its peers on multiple fronts, including trade and investment.

Britain exited the EU on Jan. 31, 2020, though remained in the bloc's single market and customs union for 11 more months. On that day, then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the country could finally fulfil its potential and that he hoped it would grow in confidence with each passing month.

So far, the opposite has happened, with a range of indicators showing underperformance compared with other economies. Opinion polls show Britons who regret leaving the EU increasingly outnumber those who do not. A survey published by news website UnHerd showed this was now the case in all but three of 632 parliamentary constituencies analysed. The government, led by Brexit-supporting Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, says Britain is prospering with new-found freedoms.

Last week, finance minister Jeremy Hunt challenged the talk of decline and said Brexit offered a brighter future with room for measures that will attract investment in areas such as the green economy and tech. Many economists say leaving the EU is not the sole cause of Britain's woes - the country was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and the surge in gas prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine - but it is a factor that can help explain recent underperformance. "It's been more than a slow burn. It's been a serious reduction in economic performance," said John Springford, deputy director at the Centre for European Reform think tank.

"If you impose barriers to trade, investment and migration with your biggest trading partner (EU), then you're going to have quite a big hit to trade volumes, and to investment and to GDP," he said, pointing to a string of dismal economic data. Britain was the only Group of Seven advanced economy yet to regain its pre-pandemic size of late 2019 at the end of September last year, the most recent period covered by data. The International Monetary Fund said it expected Britain's economy to shrink by 0.6% this year, in contrast to predictions of growth across the rest of the G7.

Springford estimated that Brexit reduced Britain's economic output - compared with what it would have been without leaving the EU - by around 5.5% as of mid-2022, based on a "doppelganger" model in which an algorithm selects countries whose economic performance closely matched pre-Brexit Britain. The government's own forecasting organisation, the Office for Budget Responsibility, and the Bank of England also judge there to be a long-running net cost to leaving the EU. Some economists disagree with the consensus. Brexit-supporting economist Gerard Lyons, an adviser to online wealth management platform NetWealth and who advised Boris Johnson during his years as the mayor of London, said it was wrong to blame Britain's problems on Brexit.

"Our problems pre-date Brexit," Lyons said, pointing to chronically low rates of investment in Britain. "Achieving the benefits of Brexit very much depends on delivering ... a growth plan - how you can use your levers post-Brexit."

He criticised the doppelganger method of analysis on the basis that some smaller countries selected by the models were inappropriate comparators for a large economy like Britain. Trade and investment data point to other Brexit problems.

Exports, especially in goods, have disappointed over the last three years - despite high hopes for a "Global Britain" rebalancing of the economy after Brexit. Total exports, including services, have grown by less than those of any other G7 country since late 2019. Boris Glass, senior economist at ratings agency S&P Global, said increased red tape in UK-EU trade had damaged the competitiveness of smaller British manufacturers especially, since they have fewer resources to deal with it. "It's worth noting that the UK has more small exporters than for example, France or Germany. So in that respect they are disadvantaged," Glass said. "If you are an exporter with 20 employees, then the burden of filling out these forms is very costly. Some of them can't compete at all." Business investment too has grown by less since the June 2016 Brexit referendum than in the United States, France or Germany, according to a Reuters analysis of data from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. Some pro-Brexit economists say such statistics ignore the fact that British corporate investment was unusually strong in the years leading up to mid-2016 and was bound to slow. But business survey evidence overwhelmingly points to Brexit as a factor behind weak investment in recent years.

"It's concerning that there doesn't seem to be any kind of pickup in investment."

In Haiti, gangs take control as democracy withers

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): Jimmy Cherizier zips through Haiti's capital on the back of a motorcycle, flanked by young men wielding black and leopard print masks and automatic weapons. As the pack of bikes flies by graffiti reading "Mafia boss" in Creole, street vendors selling vegetables, meats and old clothes on the curb cast their eyes to the ground or peer curiously. Cherizier, best known by his childhood nickname Barbecue, has become the most recognized name in Haiti.

And here in his territory, enveloped by the tin-roofed homes and bustling streets of the informal settlement La Saline, he is the law. Internationally, he's known as Haiti's most powerful and feared gang leader, sanctioned by the United Nations for "serious human rights abuses," and the man behind a fuel blockade that brought the Caribbean nation to its knees late last year. But if you ask the former police officer with gun tattoos running up his arm, he's a "revolutionary," advocating against a corrupt government that has left a nation of 12 million people in the dust.

"I'm not a thief. I'm not involved in kidnapping. I'm not a rapist. I'm just carrying out a social fight," Cherizier, leader of "G9 Family and Allies," told The Associated Press while sitting in a chair in the middle of an empty road in the shadow of a home with windows shattered by bullets. "I'm a threat to the system." At a time when democracy has withered in Haiti and gang violence has spiraled out of control, it's armed men like Cherizier that are filling the power vacuum left by a crumbling government. In December, the UN estimated that

gangs controlled 60% of Haiti's capital, but nowadays most on the streets of Port-au-Prince say that number is closer to 100%. "There is, democratically speaking, little-to-no legitimacy" for Haiti's government, said Jeremy McDermott, a head of InSight Crime, a research center focused on organized crime. "This gives the gangs a stronger political voice and more justification to their claims to be the true representatives of the communities." It's something that conflict victims, politicians, analysts, aid organizations, security forces and international observers fear will only get worse. Civilians, they worry, will face the brunt of the consequences.

Haiti's history has long been tragic. Home of the largest slave uprising in the Western Hemisphere, the country achieved independence from France in 1804, ahead of other countries in the region. But it's long been the poorest country in the hemisphere, and Haiti in the 20th century endured a bloody dictatorship that lasted until 1986 and brought about the mass execution of tens of thousands of Haitians. The country has been plagued by political turmoil since, while suffering waves of devastating earthquakes, hurricanes and cholera outbreaks. The latest crisis entered full throttle following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise.

In his absence, current Prime Minister Ariel Henry emerged in a power struggle as the country's leader.

Haiti's nearly 200 gangs have taken advantage of the chaos, warring for control. Tension hums in Port-au-Prince. Police checkpoints dot busy intersections, and graffiti tags reading "down

with Henry" can be spotted in every part of the city. Haitians walk through the streets with a restlessness that comes from knowing that anything could happen at any moment. An ambulance driver returning from carrying a patient told the AP he was kidnapped, held for days and asked to pay \$1 million to be set free. Such ransoms are now commonplace, used by gangs to fund their warfare.

An average of four people are kidnapped a day in Haiti, according to UN estimates. The UN registered nearly 2,200 murders in 2022, double the year before. Women in the country describe brutal gang rapes in areas controlled by gangs. Patients in trauma units are caught in the crossfire, ravaged by gunshots from either gangs or police. "No one is safe," said Peterson Pean, a man with a bullet lodged in his face from being shot by police after failing to stop at a police checkpoint on his way home from work. Meanwhile, a wave of grisly killings of police officers by gangs has spurred outrage and protests by Haitians. Following the slaying of six officers, video circulating on social media - likely filmed by gangs - showed six naked bodies stretched out on the dirt with guns on their chests. Another shows two masked men using officers' dismembered limbs to hold their cigarettes while they smoke.

"Gang-related violence has reached levels not seen in years ... touching near all segments of society," said Helen La Lime, UN special envoy for Haiti, in a late January Security Council meeting. Henry, the prime minister, has asked the UN to lead a military intervention, but many

Haitians insist that's not the solution, citing past consequences of foreign intervention in Haiti. So far, no country has been willing to put boots on the ground. The warfare has extended past historically violence-torn areas, now consuming mansion-lined streets previously considered relatively safe.

La Lime highlighted turf wars between Cherizier's group, G9, and another, G-Pep, as one of the key drivers. In October, the UN slammed Cherizier with sanctions, including an arms embargo, an asset freeze and a travel ban. The body accused him of carrying out a bloody massacre in La Saline, economically paralyzing the country, and using armed violence and rape to threaten "the peace, security, and stability of Haiti." At the same time, despite not being elected into power and his mandate timing out, Henry, whose administration declined a request for comment, has continued at the helm of a skeleton government. He has pledged for a year and a half to hold general elections, but has failed to do so.

In early January, the country lost its final democratically elected institution when the terms of 10 senators symbolically holding office ended their term. It has turned Haiti into a de facto "dictatorship," said Patrice Dumont, one of the senators. He said even if the current government was willing to hold elections, he doesn't know if it would be possible due to gangs' firm grip on the city. "Citizens are losing trust in their country. (Haiti) is facing social degradation," Dumont said. "We were already a poor country, and we became poorer because of this political crisis."

Deaths of Bangladeshi migrants should be probed: UN

DHAKA (AP): The countries where Bangladeshi migrant workers are employed, including former World Cup host Qatar, should thoroughly investigate all cases of deaths and human rights violations, a United Nations expert said. Asked about the reported deaths of at least 450 Bangladeshi workers involved in construction projects in Qatar including stadiums used for the World Cup, UN special rapporteur for the human rights of migrants Felipe Gonzalez Morales said the destination country should deal with any deaths to uphold the rights of workers.

"The deaths connected to (the) World Cup, well, the situation in Qatar has been addressed by my mandate, my office. We have sent a number of communications to Qatar. This is, of course, not the matter at stake here to assess the behavior of Qatar in a specific manner," he said at a news conference in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. As a general matter, he said, the destination countries for Bangladeshis "should investigate and prevent, investigate and sanction all the human rights violations, particularly deaths that have occurred in many cases."

Separately, Bangladesh's High Court asked the government to provide a list of about 450 Bangladeshi workers who reportedly died in Qatar between 2010 and 2022 while they were engaged in building infrastructure, including stadiums. The High Court ruled in response to a petition that the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates' Welfare must submit a report within four weeks about the dead workers and whether their families have been compensated. The petition said the workers who died were treated "inhumanely" in Qatar and sought the court's intervention.

Morales said he had met with some people during his visit to Bangladesh whose relatives had died abroad. "It's not entirely clear in each and every case how the deaths occurred. So it's indispensable that the countries of destination conduct thorough investigations of the killings or the deaths," he said. Morales also recommended that Bangladesh do more to ensure the rights of its migrant workers.

More than 10 million Bangladeshis live abroad, most of them employed in Middle Eastern nations including Saudi Arabia. Morales said he also visited refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district which house more than 1 million minority Rohingya who fled from persecution in neighboring Myanmar. "It's true that there are security concerns. I think it is a tremendous challenge to address the situation of almost 1 million people living in those overcrowded conditions. And it's very important to enhance the coordination between the UN agencies and the government in this regard," he said.

He said the situation could improve if the refugees receive training. "I think it's very important to have advances in terms of having different type of initiatives for the Rohingya there, including the provision of training of different skills to improve their education so they can have more normal lives, as far as the conditions of the environment allow of course," he said. Of the more than 1 million Rohingya refugees, about 740,000 crossed the border starting in August 2017 when Myanmar's military launched a "clearance operation" against them following attacks by a rebel group. Safety in Myanmar has worsened since a military takeover in 2021 and attempts to send them back have failed.

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Palestine issue and US’s masked diplomacy

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has called out Israeli policies, including settlement expansion and home demolitions, as detrimental to the two-state solution. According to Blinken, the United States will continue to oppose anything that puts that goal further from reach, including but not limited to settlement expansion and the legalization of illegal outposts, moves towards the annexation of the West Bank, disruption to the historic status quo on Jerusalem’s holy sites, demolitions and evictions and incitement and acquiescence to violence. Interestingly, after having said all that Blinken returned to America’s traditional policy regarding the Palestine dispute and reiterated Washington’s ironclad commitment to Israel.

The recent hazy criticism of Israeli policies by the Chief Diplomat of the Biden administration is only a smoke screen to satisfy Palestinians and draw a parallel between Israeli atrocities and settlements in the west bank and Gaza vis-a-vis a trivial Palestinian armed resistance to divert global pressure from Tel Aviv. Otherwise, President Joe Biden, a self-proclaimed Zionist had largely betrayed his Arab and Muslim voters by notwithstanding his pledges regarding upholding human rights, not allowing annexation and settlements, reversal of the US Embassy to Tel Aviv, and reopening the US Consulate in East Jerusalem, etc. Unfortunately, the vocal supporter of human rights across the world had turned a blind eye to mass religious and human rights violations by the Israeli regime during his term in the White House over the past two years.

Historically, America had been a vocal supporter of the Jewish state and categorically put its weight on Tel Aviv’s side since the early 1960s, after John F. Kennedy revoked the arms embargo on Israel in 1961 and boost security and trade ties with the Jewish state. The US’s substantial support for Israel remained crucial for Israel in garnering diplomatic and security assistance from the west over the past decades. Similarly, the UN was a hot arena for Israel because of its recurrent violations of UN resolutions and global laws but America practically rendered this most effective global forum into a void tool by regular use of the veto power to bulldoze anti-Israel UNSC legislation. America’s unlawful, unhindered, and biased support to Israel did not limit only to the UN, but Washington blindly favored Tel Aviv at the International Human Rights Council and International Criminal Court (ICC) by restricting investigations into Israel’s war crimes and human rights abuses along with sanctioning of ICC executives for their work against the Jewish state. Although, US’s unjust support for Israel damaged American interests globally, but American leaders did not alter their course because of the influential Jewish lobby in the US.

The reports suggest that the Biden administration not only carry on with Trump’s biased, unilateral, and pro-Israel policies but also enhanced US’s aid to Israel along with cosmetic measures to satisfy Palestinians and Arab League. In fact, the State of Israel has ever violated the historic status quo, intensified its ethnic cleansing and apartheid policies, and blatantly breached the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in recent months. Whereas, the guarantors of global peace downplayed Israel’s misconduct and tried to integrate the Jewish state into the middle East through muffled criticism and masked diplomacy. How global peace can be ensured through tinted postulations and designed wandering.

Pakistan-IMF talks

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan have kicked off their long-awaited discussions regarding the review of the economic and fiscal policies as well as the reforms agenda to accomplish the 9th review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), which has become a lifeline program for the trembling South Asian Economy. According to the details, the two sides will discuss the current issues facing the national economy and government strategies to implement the IMF program along with reforms to accomplish the unyielding requirements of the global lender.

Pakistan’s economy is a hot topic for discussion at the global level as the country’s foreign reserves had reduced to below \$ 4 billion, the national currency had sunk to the deepest level in history and the energy crisis, inflation, and political stability are sharply worsening every single day. Thus, the rivals are regularly spreading rumors of a potential collapse while sympathizers hope for the best amid fear and apprehensions. The talks for the ninth review had remained stalled over the past months because the coalition government was reluctant to raise prices of electricity, oil, and gas along with taking other harsh measures to top-up the national exchequer. Finally, the government bowed down before the global lender as no friendly country was agree to provide monetary assistance to Pakistan prior to the Country’s deal with the Washington-based borrower.

After the coalition government unrestricted the dollar, raised energy prices, and set the stage to fully implement the IMF agenda, the loaners reached Islamabad to further press Pakistani economists. Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders always failed to rationalize the worth and effectiveness of our national policies thus ad-hocism led the nation to this day that no sector of our national economy including agriculture, industry, real estate, IT, exports, banking, trade, housing, poultry, farming, energy production, and others all faces a failure, and noncompetitiveness, while circular debt has become an incurable dilemma.

As Pakistani Strategists could not recognize the causes of their economic weaknesses and the requisites of the global lender thus they fell prey to their politics once more. The bulk of the work Pakistanis could not accomplish for themselves now someone else would steer them through the horns.

Retained EU Law Bill: UK’s worrying approach to discarding EU regulation

If those behind Brexit meant to disrupt the system, they did a better job than they could have ever imagined, but not for the benefit of the country and, as it emerges, it has not exactly healed the rifts within the Conservative Party either. Nearly seven years have passed since the Brexit referendum and this disastrous unfinished business is still lingering on and negatively affecting almost all aspects of life in the UK. In the midst of one of the deepest political, social and economic crises of the postwar era, even a half-witted government like the present one could have at least slowed down whatever was left of the legacy of EU membership and salvaged whatever was possible. Instead, with the appetite of a gang of accomplished pyromaniacs, Rishi Sunak’s government is torching the last vestiges of EU presence in British lives.

In the latest installment of this obsessive saga of self-destruction, British legislators have now voted in favor of the controversial Retained EU Law Bill, which proposes eliminating all EU-based laws that remain on the statute books by the end of 2023. In the regulatory maze of EU membership, such legislation touches upon all facets of society and it is estimated that this move by the British government means removing an estimated 3,800 items of "retained EU law," but without allowing enough time for parliament to deliberate on replacement laws with the necessary consideration and thoughtfulness. Instead, the bill, as was voted on, gives ministers the powers to preserve retained EU law or repeal it as they "consider

appropriate."

Since 1990, more than 52,000 laws have been introduced in the UK as a result of EU legislation. This is an enormous body of legislation that transformed the country when it came to trade, agriculture, financial services, human rights, employment, immigration, and environmental laws. To hand the power to ministers to retain or revoke laws as they "consider appropriate," rather than parliament, relegates democratic parliamentary scrutiny to the very margins of politics. From the outset, Brexiters were led by populists with no plan or strategy and the various shades of their desire to leave the EU ranged from a very primitive nativism and nationalism to riding a wave aimed at serving their own political ambitions, which in Boris Johnson’s case propelled him to his failed stint as prime minister.

Yet, the damage caused by leaving the EU is already evident wherever one looks. Only last week, projections from the Department for International Trade revealed that the value of UK exports will not reach £1 trillion (\$1.24 trillion) until 2035 on the basis of the current trajectory, with the total due to fall to £707 billion next year. In 2012, then-Prime Minister David Cameron promised that this figure would be reached in 2020 and Johnson - along with one of his hollow Brexit slogans, "Made in the UK, sold to the world" - stated confidently that it would be achieved by 2030. Brexit might not be the only reason for this decline, but the post-Brexit slump in exports to EU countries has been a major contributor. A plethora of pledges before and after the referendum were not backed up by any

Yossi Mekelberg

in-depth research or data. Despite the bravado of its claims of having reached trade agreements with the rest of the world, allegedly "free from the chains" of Brussels’ bureaucracy, London has been unable to achieve favorable agreements with major world economies, including the

same reasons. Some are worried about laws that they approve of being ditched by what they call ministerial diktat, while others are concerned that ministers would actually leave EU legislation they oppose untouched without allowing a debate in parliament. After all, EU legisla-

are already witnessing attempts by the British government to clamp down on the right to take industrial action - a move that could be facilitated by Brexit. The EU adopted a diverse range of treaty provisions and directives to provide important employment protections, safeguard health and safety, and promote equality in the workplace. And

climate change, might be affected too. There are about 1,100 environmental laws that require reviewing after Brexit and green groups have expressed their deep concern that regulatory standards may be lowered as a result of leaving the EU and exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis (a crisis that Brexit has clearly played a part in creating). Many of the laws under review are within the purview of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the impact of the direction the post-Brexit UK takes on food standards and the environment, at this crucial time of tackling climate change, could depend on how EU legislation is retained or unfortunately discarded. The UK’s departure from the EU is unlikely to be reconsidered in the foreseeable future, mainly because those who supported it will not admit their mistake and those who opposed it - particularly the Labour Party - are too afraid that reopening the case will compromise their chances of regaining power. What they cannot escape, however, are the consequences of Brexit and the fact that removing the country’s EU-sourced legislation could pose practical challenges for all aspects of British society, including on the constitutional arrangements, good governance and accountability.

The least this government of hard-boiled Brexiters owes the country is a longer review of each of the thousands of pieces of legislation - through the scrutiny of parliament and with the active involvement of civil society - to ensure that the mess left by Brexit is somewhat mitigated, and through a process that respects democratic traditions.

It is not only the opposition parties, led by Labour, that are concerned about plans to "sunset" thousands of laws in less than a year, but also a group of rebel Conservative MPs, even if not necessarily for the same reasons. Some are worried about laws that they approve of being ditched by what they call ministerial diktat, while others are concerned that ministers would actually leave EU legislation they oppose untouched without allowing a debate in parliament. After all, EU legislation affected every aspect of Britain’s social and economic life, setting new and, in most cases, improved standards. Another area that might be affected is employment rights, including maternity protections, pension rights and holiday entitlements, which were insufficiently protected before the introduction of EU legislation. Before such laws were incorporated, part-time workers were not, for instance, entitled to holiday pay or pension rights.

US and India.

Equally worrying is the nonchalant approach to discarding items of EU legislation without a proper process or mechanisms that ensure that the government

is not circumventing the elected representatives of the British citizens in parliament. It is not only the opposition parties, led by Labour, that are concerned about plans to "sunset" thousands of laws in less than a year, but also a group of rebel Conservative MPs, even if not necessarily for

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even where UK laws were already in place concerning issues such as equal pay, maternity rights, and gender, disability and race discrimination, EU laws forced the UK government to improve its provisions on these issues, including those regarding maximum working hours and the right to paternity leave. Who would guarantee now that these rights will be protected?

And there is the danger that the most important issue of our times, that of

Dangerous times ahead for Palestinians as Israel aims to break their will

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s tour of Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Territories this week was turned into a salvaging mission, coming just days after a spate of violence erupted in Jenin refugee camp and in East Jerusalem, during which tens of Palestinians and Israelis were killed. So explosive has the situation between Israel and the Palestinians become that, as Blinken called for de-escalation on Monday, clashes were taking place all over the West Bank.

Blinken’s visit was scheduled before Israeli soldiers stormed Jenin camp last week, killing nine Palestinians. A day later, a lone Palestinian youth from East Jerusalem attacked and killed seven Israelis, apparently in retaliation. On Saturday, a 13-year-old Palestinian resident of Silwan shot and injured two Israeli settlers in the Arab neighborhood. Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right ministers were quick to promise harsher

measures against Palestinians, even those who are citizens of Israel.

Blinken’s attempt to convince Netanyahu to contain his far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who is waging open war on the Palestinians, will be short-lived. Ben-Gvir is calling for the arming of all Jewish settlers; an easing of the army’s rules of engagement when confronting Palestinian protests; the death penalty for those convicted of killing Israelis; the sealing off of houses of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and expanding the policy of demolitions; and the withdrawal of citizenship from the families of those associated with "terror" attacks. He also wants to pass a law allowing the expulsion of Arab Knesset members who support the resistance against occupation. He has the support of other Cabinet ministers and a majority of Knesset members.

So, it was ironic that, while Blinken was telling

Netanyahu that there is a need to improve the lives of Palestinians and take steps toward implementing the two-state solution, Israeli soldiers were storming Nablus, Hebron, Shuafat and Mukaber, and blockading Jericho, while Jewish settlers were carrying out revenge attacks. Thirty-five had been reported by noon on Monday, including torching Palestinians’ cars and homes and cutting off roads.

If Blinken is unable to put pressure on the Israelis, he must do so with the Palestinians. Before he met President Mahmoud Abbas, CIA Director William Burns was in Ramallah on Sunday, apparently to convince the Palestinians to restore security coordination with Israel - the only thing left of the Oslo Accords that Israel recognizes - and to warn Abbas not to pursue the path of applying for membership of additional international organizations.

Osama Al-Sharif

Blinken’s visit to Israel, the first since Netanyahu formed the most extremist government in Israel’s history, was supposed to preempt any escalation between Israel and the Palestinians, especially before the holy month of Ramadan. But Netanyahu’s far-right partners had other plans. For Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, escalation was an immediate goal in order to implement their election promises. These included expanding settlements, ending the historical status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque and the complete Judaization of East Jerusalem by getting rid of the city’s indigenous Arab residents. Naturally, there is no room for a Palestinian state in their view or that of those who voted for them.

The question is for how long can Netanyahu - who is facing an unprecedented popular backlash for backing controversial judicial reforms that are seen as undemocratic - keep his

far-right ministers under control? He needs the coalition to stay intact until the reforms, which will end judicial oversight and bring his trial for corruption to a close, are passed. To deflect attention from the growing public opposition to his government, an opportunistic Netanyahu has no qualms about allowing his maverick ministers to instigate a crisis with the Palestinians in the West Bank or even Gaza. Surely, following last weekend’s bloody events, the number of Israelis protesting his government on Saturday dropped by more than half.

While the Biden administration can only pay lip service to the cause of peace and a two-state solution, the reality is that it has no stomach to push for a resumption of political talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The White House is focused on the war in Ukraine and containing Russia, while it will allow Israel to engage the Iranians through clandestine operations. Besides, in

a few months, the US will become embroiled in next year’s presidential election and the White House will become indifferent to whatever Netanyahu and his goons end up doing.

The fact is that the coming months will be the most dangerous for the Palestinians in a long time. A hawkish Israeli government will be bent on breaking the Palestinian will in any way it can. It will trample on international law and cast aside any criticism or rebuke from any side. The Palestinians, on the other hand, will have no one to turn to. Ironically, after more than 55 years of brutal occupation, Israel has failed to subjugate the Palestinian people or force them to surrender. This time will be no different. It is a zero-sum formula whose results will never change. All that is happening in reality is that Israel itself is changing from the inside and is shedding its democratic facade to reveal its real soul.

Courtesy Arab News

How Russia outmaneuvered the US in Africa

Russia seems to be outmaneuvering the United States in Africa. In recent days, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov underscored that stark reality as he winned and dined his way through a tour of four African capitals. As much as President Joe Biden would like African countries to join the Western alliance in isolating Russia over its brutality in Ukraine, Russia is making a show of bolstering ties with some powerful players on the continent.

Instead of being treated like a global pariah as the US wants, leaders in South Africa, Eritrea, Angola and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) treated Lavrov like a cherished friend during his visit. In South Africa, Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor greeted Lavrov with open arms. She didn’t use the meeting in Pretoria last Monday to repeat calls for Russia to stop killing Ukrainians. And she brushed off criticism, saying it would be "simplistic and infantile" to do so.

To make matters worse, Pandor also announced South Africa will soon conduct joint naval drills with

Russia and China, calling it "exercises with friends." The US and Europe were not amused. But South Africa has historically strong ties with Russia, dating back to the days of apartheid when the Soviet Union stood with the then-banned ANC when it most needed support. It’s likely Lavrov reminded South Africans of that history during his visit.

Now the West is having to face the fact that a good swath of Africa appears to consider Russian President Vladimir Putin a friend - or at the very least, strategically important enough to keep on side. South Africa was one of 17 African nations which abstained against condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, at the United Nations in March. Eight others didn’t submit a vote.

It was a significant - though just shy of a majority - portion of the continent. In total, 28 African nations - including Nigeria and Egypt - voted to condemn Russia. Eritrea was one of only four countries globally - the others being Belarus, North Korea and Syria - to openly side with Russia, which has a history of military co-operation with these decidedly undemocratic,

authoritarian regimes. It’s easy to understand why. Putin sends weapons to prop up authoritarian regimes. He sends mercenaries to fight Islamic insurgents; and he doesn’t care a whit about democracy, corruption or human rights.

Putin doesn’t care that Amnesty International says Eswatini’s government has launched a brutal crackdown on pro-democracy activists in the country. He doesn’t care that Eritrea’s president Isaias Afewerki has been untested since 1993 and that Human Rights Watch says the country has no legislature, no independent civil society organizations, and no independent judiciary. Putin doesn’t care that the Human Rights Watch World Report 2022 says Eritrean forces have carried out large-scale massacres, summary executions, and widespread sexual violence, including gang rape and sexual slavery.

He doesn’t even care that Human Rights Watch says Mali’s government security forces are responsible for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and detentions of suspected

armed fighters. Putin is not only deepening military ties with these governments, he’s a key figure behind the Wagner Group helping to carry out their brutality. (A charge the Kremlin denies). Russia’s private military group is bolstering authoritarian regimes throughout Africa, including in Mali, Sudan, Central African Republic, Mozambique and Libya. And human rights organizations say Wagner is guilty of its own atrocities on the continent.

There are numerous reports of Russian mercenaries massacring miners in the Central African Republic to plunder the region’s gold. None of these horrors matter to Putin. He has none of the constraints Western democracies are expected to honor in international relations. He is willing to deal with whoever is in power and help them stay there, as long as they remain his friend.

Putin is the best friend any brutal dictator could have. But his lack of scruples presents a major problem for US efforts to exclude Russia and strengthen its own ties in Africa. And Putin’s influence in Africa has had a

dramatic impact on the world stage during a time of crisis when the US sought unified condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine. Just look at voting at the United Nations. It is true, America has also been guilty of propping up authoritarian regimes and ignoring human rights abuses. Let’s not forget American atrocities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere in Africa.

But democracies can hold their leaders accountable and do. Western democracies are supposed to care about human rights and rule of law. Putin simply does not. And no one holds him accountable for anything. Despite the constraints of international law and respect for democracy, the US has a few powerful tools to help counter Russian influence in Africa: chief among them - money. President Biden’s pledge of \$55 billion in economic, health, and security aid over three years not only helps counter Russia’s influence but China’s, as well.

Also in Africa last week, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen used her trip to promise even more money. She announced American

plans to expand partnerships with Africa on conservation, climate change, and access to clean energy. And she said the United States will provide over \$1 billion to support African-led efforts to combat climate change. It’s harder for Russia to do that. International sanctions and its war in Ukraine will keep Putin financially crippled for a while. And as Russia focuses its efforts on controlling Africa’s despots, the US would do well to focus on the African people, especially on its youth. As they soon take over the seats of power, there are signs young people want more responsible and accountable governments. According to the 2022 African Youth Survey, 74% of young Africans say democracy is preferable to any other form of government, even if they don’t want to be carbon copies of the West.

So, while Putin thinks he’s outmaneuvering the West, he may find himself alienating Africa’s youth. Unlike Pandor, there is hope these emerging leaders will not see Russia as their friend but as it really is - an obstacle to stability, democracy, and African prosperity.

Courtesy CNN

Israel must ask itself some difficult questions before engaging with Palestinians

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

FOLLOWING the attack that killed seven Israelis in a settlement in East Jerusalem last week, Gideon Levy stated in an opinion piece in Haaretz newspaper on Sunday: "What were you thinking? That the killing of 146 Palestinians in the West Bank in 2022, according to B'Tselem, most of them noncombatants, would be meekly accepted? That the killing of about 30 people in the month to date would pass quietly?"

What was Itamar Ben-Gvir thinking? Was he thinking that the Palestinians would just leave; that he could instigate another Nakba and people would just leave? Actually, people will not leave. They will respond. They will resist a plan to displace them and their reaction will be violent.

The information the Benjamin Netanyahu-led government has tried to take out of the attack is out of context. They try to show it as a terrorist act that is disconnected from what is happening on the ground. They try to disconnect it from the killings that happened in Jenin. The attack was unanimously condemned at the UN Security Council, while world leaders rushed to express condemnation and express solidarity with the Israeli people. Netanyahu said that he would strengthen the settlements, give more gun licenses to settlers and, of course, more houses would be demolished. But does this solve the problem?

Peace activist Daniel Seidemann posted a video of a certain Hananya Naftali responding to the attack by saying that the Palestinians have to know that "this is our land not yours." Seidemann, in his tweet, said that this person scares him because of the "zeitgeist" he represents, the mentality of people like Ben-Gvir that want to forcefully kick Palestinians out of their homes. The UN reported 849 settler attacks on Palestinians in the West

Bank in 2022. Facing those attacks, what should be the Palestinians' reaction? It is very ironic, however, that the young boy who committed the attack was the grandson of a Palestinian who was stabbed to death by a Jewish settler in 1998. Does that tell you anything?

Condemning the attack in the East Jerusalem settlement is not enough. Actually, it has no meaning beyond a futile narrative. Solving the roots of the problem is what is needed. Will that be possible with the current government, which has as one of its primary goals extending settlements?

As has been said before, all those pogroms will only increase the Palestinians' tenacity and attachment to their land. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is on a trip trying to revive the defunct two-state solution. However, he does not have any interlocutors. The Palestinian Authority is incapacitated, hence is not an interlocutor. On the Israeli side, there is a prime minister whose main objective is to remain out of prison.

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Ben-Gvir is doing his best to provoke Palestinians. What does he want? What is his endgame? To annex the West Bank and kick out the Palestinians to Jordan? The Palestinians will not leave. They learned their lesson in 1948 and 1967. As has been said before, all those pogroms will only increase the Palestinians' tenacity and attachment to their land.

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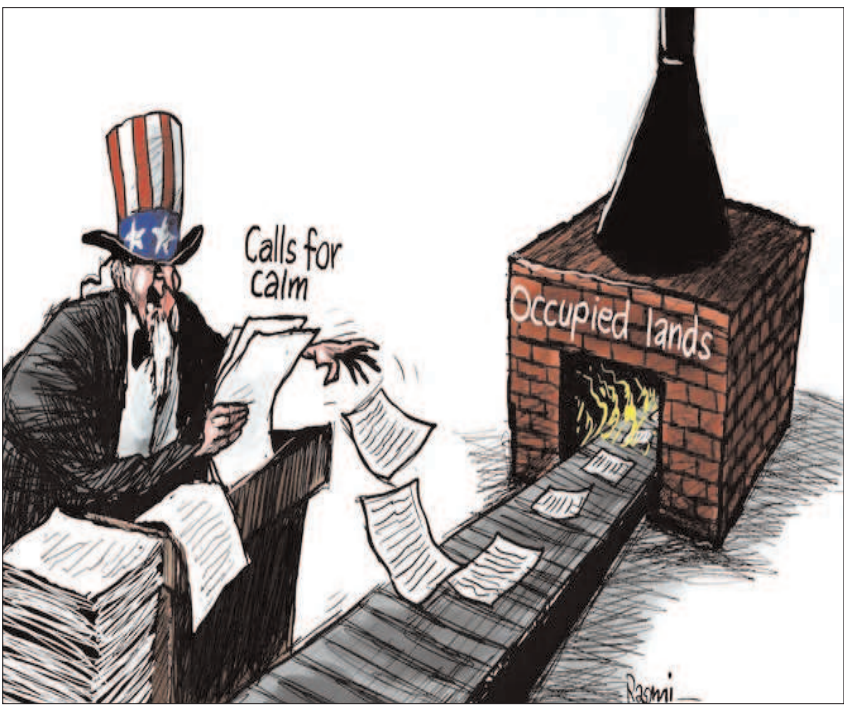
not an interlocutor. On the Israeli side, there is a prime minister whose main objective is to remain out of prison. Hence, he himself is hostage to the extremists like Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

On the other hand, the Abraham Accords have proven to be ineffective in deterring Israel from its unjust policies toward the Palestinians. Israel will increase its transgressions in the Occupied Territories and try to use its information machinery to portray any

the Middle East. Their best option was to freeze the conflict while paying lip service to the international community, insisting that Israel wants a two-state solution. At the same time, Israel has the Palestinian Authority, which has no authority of its own, to help it keep the Palestinians under control. That seemed like the best solution to evade or postpone the important question that the Israelis have to one day ask themselves: Who are we and what do we want to be? As simple as it seems, this is a very difficult question to answer.

In order to stop this escalation and before addressing the Palestinians, Israel should ask itself: What do we as Israelis want? Once they answer this question, they should ask another one. Does demolishing Palestinian homes and kicking people out in order to build settlements achieve this goal? So far, the Palestinians have not shown any intention of leaving their land.

They will stay and they will persist. So, what will Israel gain? More bloodshed, a more militarized society and then what? Also, Israel should be careful that public opinion is changing. Let them look at the coverage of The New York Times to predict the trend. It might be difficult to use this reasoning with ideologues like Ben-Gvir. However, even those who sounded reasonable and pragmatic, like Yair Lapid, did not have the courage to take any decisions while they were in power. Where does this leave the Israelis? It leaves them in the midst of an escalation that will only postpone their need to ask this existential question: Who are we? Before facing the Palestinians, the Israelis should face themselves and decide who they want to be. Without collectively making up their minds on who they want to be, they cannot have any discussions with the Palestinians.



Why did England veto a Scottish gender reform bill?

Jamie Maxwell

LATE last year, Pope Francis was asked by a Spanish newspaper what role, if any, the Catholic Church should play in ending the constitutional standoff in Catalonia. "Los ingleses resolvieron 'a la inglesa' las solicitudes de Escocia," he replied. "The English resolved the requests of Scotland 'in an English way.'" As well as being cryptic, the remark was, I think, meant to be comparative: if the British authorities could facilitate a peaceful referendum on Scottish independence in 2014, surely the Spanish authorities could find a similar solution for Catalonia.

I used to spend a lot of time in Catalonia as a reporter and this was a common refrain among the independence supporters there. Britain is a democracy, they would tell me; Spain is not. In 2023, however, that contrast - between British constitutional tolerance and Spanish intransigence - is becoming harder to sustain. On January 16, the United

professor of Scottish politics at Aberdeen University, calls this trend "muscular unionism". Another name for it might be Anglo-British nationalism: the belief that the UK is a unitary state, not a union, and that sovereignty in the British system lies exclusively with London. Brexit turbocharged this "Anglo-British nationalism" because the vote to leave the EU was fuelled, in the first instance, by English eurosceptic sentiment and, in the second, by the rhetoric of "global Britishness".

The conflation of "English" with "British" in the language of Brexiters was partly unconscious: England is by far the largest country in the UK and its interests have historically overshadowed those of the smaller Celtic nations. But it was also compensatory. Voters in Scotland did not in 2016, and do not today, want to be outside the EU. Yet the centralising logic of Brexit, rooted in a predominantly English desire to escape the continent's "oppressive" political

Brexit beginning to wear off, the party is flailing. It has burned through three leaders in the space of six months and is now staring down the barrel of a 20-point polling deficit. Meanwhile, the next UK general election hovers menacingly on the horizon. The right's full-blown embrace of transphobia should, then, be seen as a cynical attempt to excite a demoralised Tory base.

The twinning in Tory politics of culture war paranoia with a belligerent form of post-Brexit nationalism bears worrying implications for British democracy. Alister Jack justified his decision to annul the SNP's gender bill on the grounds that, once enacted, the new law could have unwanted spillover effects in England. Yet, almost immediately, one of his Conservative colleagues gave the game away. The Scots have "the right to pass their own laws", the Member of the Scottish Parliament, Rachael Hamilton, told Channel 4 News on January 17, but only if those laws are "good". Needless to say,

Sturgeon, the leader of the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), isn't exactly neutral in this debate, but she may have a point. In recent years, and specifically since Brexit, Tory politicians have become increasingly hostile to any institution that challenges the traditional pillars of power - Westminster, Whitehall, the monarchy - in British public life. Michael Keating, a professor of Scottish politics at Aberdeen University, calls this trend "muscular unionism". Another name for it might be Anglo-British nationalism: the belief that the UK is a unitary state, not a union, and that sovereignty in the British system lies exclusively with London.

Kingdom government did something it had never previously done in the 24-year history of Scottish home rule: it unilaterally vetoed a law that fell explicitly within Scotland's devolved jurisdiction.

The law in question - which enjoyed cross-party support among Scottish parliamentarians - was aimed at making life easier for trans people by streamlining the otherwise stressful bureaucratic process of gender transition. Speaking in the House of Commons, Alister Jack, the Conservative secretary of state for Scotland, argued that the bill risked violating aspects of UK-wide equality legislation, although he struggled to explain which aspects it would violate and why. Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, hit back. Jack's decision to trigger a so-called "section 35 order" signalled a "full-frontal attack" on Scottish autonomy, she said, and underscored the Conservative Party's "contempt for devolution".

Sturgeon, the leader of the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), isn't exactly neutral in this debate, but she may have a point. In recent years, and specifically since Brexit, Tory politicians have become increasingly hostile to any institution that challenges the traditional pillars of power - Westminster, Whitehall, the monarchy - in British public life. Michael Keating, a

norms, dictates that they must. Jack's intervention dovetailed with another ongoing development on the British right: the rise of a reactionary cultural populism that has selected as its latest target the UK trans community.

Britain's conservative media is in the midst of an incessant campaign against "gender extremism". "Trans law 'could turn parents into criminals'," screamed one recent headline in The Daily Telegraph; "Why teenage girls are on the front line of the trans war," screamed another. This campaign has been stoked by Conservative policymakers. Last October, during her brief tenure as prime minister, Liz Truss railed against the "absurdity" of gender self-identification laws for trans people. On January 21, Kemi Badenoch, the current Tory minister for women and equalities, said she thought "predatory" men would exploit Scotland's gender recognition reforms to secure access to women-only spaces. Neither Truss nor Badenoch produced any evidence to support their assertions - because there is no evidence that gender reforms of the sort being proposed by the SNP raise the risk of violence towards women and girls.

But for the British Tories, rational discourse is not the goal here. After 14 years in power, and with the adrenaline surge of

this is not how devolution was meant to work when the Scottish Parliament was first established in 1999. Nor should the Tories - who haven't won an election in Scotland for 70 years - act as sole adjudicators on the quality of Scottish legislation.

The problem for supporters of the Union is that Jack's intervention has made Britishness itself synonymous with social intolerance - a sure-fire repellent for the liberal voters unionists need to stave off the SNP. The UK once functioned, or was supposed to function, as a plurinational state composed of multiple territorial narratives and demands. Now, under a radicalised Tory party, when the peripheries step out of line, the centre stands ready to set them straight again. Unfortunately, faced with this tightening constitutional trap, Scotland's broader political options are limited. In 2021, Boris Johnson summarily dismissed the SNP's request for a second independence referendum. In 2022, the British Supreme Court ruled that only Westminster could legislate for a "legitimate" plebiscite on the breakup of Britain - Sturgeon's central objective as Scotland's first minister. Pope Francis's formulation makes more sense if inverted. For the time being, at least, the Scots will just have to learn how to live in a more English way.

Courtesy Aljazeera

Turkiye's trio of preelection foreign policy challenges

Sinem Cengiz

IN the past few months, much of the focus in terms of Turkish foreign policy was on the Middle East, as Ankara engaged in normalization efforts with key regional actors such as Egypt, Israel, the Gulf states and, most recently, Syria. However, given its proximity to the Caucasus and Europe, Türkiye cannot avoid the challenges that are also emanating from these regions. In recent weeks, the developments taking place in the Caucasus and Europe are likely to not only affect Türkiye's foreign policy, but also its domestic politics ahead of the critical elections that the Turkish presidency has announced will take place on May 14.

Türkiye is a significant player in the geopolitics of the South Caucasus. In particular, it played a crucial role in the 44-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020, supporting the former both militarily and politically. The recent relatively calm atmosphere in the Caucasus is seemingly changing due to the latest developments taking place in one of the hottest confrontation zones in the world.

Political tensions between Baku and Yerevan have resurfaced after Azerbaijani activists began protesting along the Lachin road, aka the Lachin corridor - a vital land link in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. They are rallying against

what they call the illegal exploitation of the area's natural resources by neighboring Armenia. However, Yerevan complains that the demonstration has led to the closure of the road since Dec. 12, and the situation is now threatening to derail the Russian-mediated talks between the two former Soviet states.

Amid these tensions, the first move came from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. He held a phone call with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev to urge an immediate reopening of the Lachin corridor. It is most likely that, following Washington's move, Russia and Iran will also get involved in this issue if it continues to escalate. Meanwhile, a deadly gun attack took place at the Azerbaijan Embassy in Tehran on Friday. Tensions between Baku and Tehran were already high due to several disagreements on diplomatic and regional issues, including Azerbaijan's support for Israel and Iran's backing of Armenia in the dispute over the Armenian-majority breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

Within this context, while approaching critical elections and tidying up the issues at home, Ankara will not be able to avoid being dragged into the Caucasus imbroglio, as one of its closest allies, Baku, is seeing tensions rise with both Yerevan and Tehran. The

second area where Turkish foreign policymakers' eyes should be fixed is the Middle East. Nechirvan Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, on Thursday paid an unannounced visit to Ankara and held a meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During a visit to Türkiye by Barzani last year, the possibility of a natural gas pipeline and supply agreement between Türkiye and Iraqi Kurdistan was discussed, according to a statement from Erdogan's office. However, most of the gas fields are located in areas controlled by the rival left-leaning Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, where Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party has no authority.

Ankara is obviously with Barzani rather than the leader of the PUK, Bafel Talabani, whom Türkiye has accused of supporting the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK, and its wings in Syria. A few weeks before Barzani's Ankara trip, Talabani paid a visit to Rojava - the de facto autonomous region in northeastern Syria, consisting of PKK extension groups in Afrin, Raqqa, Manbij and Deir Ezzor. It is not hard to guess that Talabani's meetings with groups Türkiye considers to be terrorist must have raised eyebrows in Ankara, meaning that Barzani's unexpected visit now makes more sense. Lastly, the

situation is also heating up in the Tukey-EU-NATO zone. Türkiye has canceled indefinitely a trilateral mechanism meeting with Sweden and Finland scheduled for February, saying it would be "meaningless" to hold such a dialogue to discuss these countries' NATO bids. The move followed an anti-Muslim provocateur burning a copy of the Qur'an in front of the Turkish Embassy in the Swedish capital. Erdogan said that, if Sweden "does not show respect to the religious beliefs" of Muslims in Türkiye and around the world, it would not receive any support from Ankara for its NATO bid.

As long as Türkiye - a NATO member for more than 70 years - voices objections to Sweden and Finland's bids to join the alliance, the issue will remain on top of the Turkish foreign policy agenda in the coming months. NATO's enlargement process is one of the hottest topics and it became even more relevant after Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. It is not difficult to guess that the recent tension between Türkiye and Sweden, which blocks NATO's enlargement process, is most likely playing into the hands of Russia. Thus, the tensions in the Caucasus, the developments related to Kurds in the Iraq-Syria zone and the process regarding NATO enlargement are likely to dominate the government's foreign policy agenda and test Ankara's hard and soft power alike.

Japan's new security posture is Abe's legacy

Taniguchi Tomohiko

THE gusto with which Japan has embraced rearmament has surprised its allies and international partners. Last month, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida unveiled detailed plans to double defense spending over the next five years, leaving no doubt about the country's determination to expand its military capabilities to deter China's expansionist ambitions.

Japan's new strategic vision represents the culmination of a long-term shift that began under one of Kishida's predecessors, Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated last July. During Abe's tenure, which lasted from his return to power in December 2012 until his resignation in September 2020, Japan revamped its military doctrine and significantly increased defense expenditure. Abe also created a Cabinet-level National Security Council, established the National Security Secretariat to support it, streamlined military procurement by forming the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency and, last but not least, sought to amend Japan's pacifist constitution, though in vain.

Taken together, Abe's policies marked a historic shift in Japan's defense policy and regional standing. No longer would Japanese security be a matter of wishful thinking, willful blindness and

dependence on the US. Before Abe, if China had attacked a US warship near Japan's territorial waters, the Japanese military would not have gotten involved. Abe rejected this absurd approach and pushed Japan to assume a central role in the Indo-Pacific. Now, if the US and China were to go to war over Taiwan, Japan could cooperate with the US military. In a role reversal of sorts, the Japanese military is now protecting US ships and planes in the region.

Kishida's ambitious defense policies, which include increasing military spending to 43 trillion yen (\$330 billion) by 2027 and revising Japan's national security strategy to allow for counterstrike capabilities, implement many of Abe's ideas. They also expand on them in four meaningful ways.

First, the new security doctrine calls a spade a spade. When Japan published its first ever national security strategy in 2013, China's incursions into Japanese waters and airspace near the Senkaku Islands were described as "an issue of concern to the international community, including Japan." The revised strategy, however, refers to China - in line with US rhetoric - as "an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge" to Japan. As this change makes clear, Japan's

military buildup aims, first and foremost, to deter Chinese expansionism.

Second, the new strategy seeks to build up fuel and ammunition supplies, thereby addressing a problem that Abe repeatedly warned about. While Japan has purchased many fighter jets, ships and combat vehicles over the past decade, it still lacks the strategic stockpiles and secure storage facilities needed to sustain a long war. To be sure, stocking up on munitions and fuel is far less glamorous than purchasing F-35 fighter jets or long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles from the US. But while massive arms purchases will certainly help Japan face the triple threat of Russia, China and North Korea, the truth is that its strategic position is far more precarious than that of any other G7 member. Unless it builds and maintains adequate strategic reserves, Japan will not be able to defend itself.

Third, the US-Japanese defense pact used to have an unwritten rule that all new military assets should be under the Americans' control. Recently, however, Japan, the UK and Italy announced a joint effort to develop a next-generation fighter jet. The US Department of Defense immediately put out a statement in support of the new

partnership, reflecting the growing military cooperation between the US, Japan, European countries, Australia and India. Lastly, the revised national security strategy states that "Japan will actively accept displaced people due to war." This allusion to a possible Chinese invasion of Taiwan, together with the implied willingness to accept the many Taiwanese citizens who would surely flee if that happened, did not attract much attention, but it is groundbreaking.

Had Abe lived, he would have been pleased that Kishida's government is pursuing many of the goals he wanted to achieve. While the new national security agenda stops short of amending the existing restrictions on the deployment of offensive weapons, it does emphasize the need to develop counterstrike capabilities that would enable Japan to hit targets in other countries in the event of an attack. But while the proposed increase in military spending seems to enjoy broad public support, the question of how to pay for it will most likely be the subject of fierce parliamentary debate. Kishida's plan to fund the additional expenditures by raising taxes has already provoked strong opposition, even within his own party. Kishida's competence will undoubtedly be put to the test over the coming months, as will Japan's newfound strategic resolve.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Pak-Afghan businessmen assured for expediting goods clearance

PESHAWAR (APP): Collector Customs Appraisal Peshawar, Ashfaq Ahmad has assured the businessmen involved in Pak-Afghan Transit Trade about taking measures to resolve the problems being faced by them and expediting the clearance of goods at border posts. He said this while speaking at the stakeholders' meeting arranged by Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) held here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by businessmen from both the countries wherein marathon discussions were held on issues causing hindrances in smooth sailing of trade between the two neighboring countries.

The delegation of businessmen from Pakistan was headed by Director PAJCCI, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi and Kahlid Shahzad, Senior Vice President PAJCCI. While the Afghan businessmen delegation was headed by Dr. Muklis Younas.

Collector Custom was accompanied by Additional Collector Headquarters, Afnan Khan and Assistant Collector Custom Station Torkem, Yawar Hayat.

Ashfaq Ahmad said Custom Department officials will do their best for resolution of all the problems

faced by the business community. However, he continued, if an issue does not come into their purview, they will take it up with relevant authorities in different departments including State Bank of Pakistan, Federal Board of Revenue, NLC, Railways etc.

The trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan is centuries old and is benefiting thousands of people in both sides of the border, Ashfaq observed, adding that our endeavor was the continuity of this ancient practice and for bringing improvement in it for tapping its full potential of bringing economic prosperity in the region. The Collector Customs said he is also concentrating on other border posts including in South Waziristan's Angoor Ada for providing facilities to the trading community.

He said at Angoor Ada, there are issues in facilities including internet, electricity, scanning of goods, infrastructure and communication which needs to be resolved at early basis.

In reply to a point raised by an Afghan businessman about delay in clearance of goods, Ashfaq Ahmad informed the participants that purchase of a modern scanner is in process and

soon physical checking will stop at Torkhem causing delay in clearance of goods.

He also asked businessmen from both the countries to approach them freely for raising of any issue and said the doors of his office are always open for them for any time.

Earlier both sides shared the issues and potential of economic relationship between the two countries. The problems raised included high labour charges, mishandling of cargo while loading and unloading issues on Afghan Side including tax on transit goods, slow clearance rate of empty containers, restricted hours at border crossing for clearance and movement, delay & high rejection of visa processing for Afghan businessmen, pendency of 47000 TI forms by Afghan side since a year despite several reminders and communication.

Another significant issue was of slow processing at Karachi for goods which previously took a day or 2 but now 5-6 days on minimum, leading to increased time and cost of doing business as delayed returns are affected by detention and demurrage charged further aggravated by rising fuel prices and dollar parity.

Afghan businessmen

showed concern on high level visa rejection despite providing all relevant documents, they mentioned that from traders, investment documents are sought which is uncalled for.

In response to recent complaint raised by PAJCCI of slow cross border clearance of empty containers, Assistant Director DTT informed that in last couple of days, it has been tackled and all congestion or back log is cleared.

The house jointly agreed that bilateral efforts are required including visa facilitation, 24 hours border operations, mutually agreed future procedures & rules to ensure trade continues.

In the welcome address, Director PAJCCI, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi apprised participants that the objective of the gathering is to hold discussion on issues faced by them in doing business.

He said the stakeholders' meetings being held under the platform of PAJCCI have helped a lot in resolution of different issues and provided ease to people involved in Pak-Afghan commerce and trade. He also thanked Chairman PAJCCI, Zubair Motiwala for supervising these whole activities and taking up the issues with relevant departments and officials for resolution.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque addressing at seminar on "Awareness for Internet Governance & Internet Resources Share for Pakistan 2023".

PSX loses 53 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) lost 53.11 points on Wednesday, a negative change of 0.13 percent, closing at 40,619.95 against 40,673.06 points the previous day.

A total of 130,973,488 shares were traded during the day as compared to 153,324,094 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 8.877 billion against Rs 7.441 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 323 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 158 of them recorded gains and 133 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Petroleum with 9,469,438 shares at Rs.76.63 per share, PIAC(A) with 8,353,500 shares at Rs 3.99 per share, and Gul Ahmed with 8,350,767 shares at Rs.21.13 per share.

Sanofi-Aventis witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.24.50 per share price, closing at Rs.870.00, whereas the runner-up was Pak Engineering with a Rs.21.11 rise in its per share price to Rs302.70.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.325.00 per share closing at Rs 8,000.00 followed by Pak Services with Rs 169.87 decline to close at Rs2,095.13.

Business community with security forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): The business community across the country on Wednesday expressed solidarity with valiant security forces to frustrate the evil designs of anti-state elements and stamp out the menace of terrorism.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Muslim Khan Buner, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan is facing gigantic and myriad challenges including terrorism and the country is passing through a critical period of

history since its inception.

He said that with the proverbial resilience of our people, we were destined to overcome this challenge and would soon emerge as a stronger country.

He said the government, the armed forces and the people are on one page to defend the geographical frontiers and flush out terrorism from the motherland. The patriotic business community will help thwart such targeted specific anti state stances by a section of disgruntled and unscrupulous elements, he added.

Ifitikhar Malik said that

better law and order was the pre-requisite for strengthening of national economy and promotion of democratic system besides inflow of foreign investors in every sphere of life. He further said our armed forces are our greatest asset as they not only offer their precious lives for fighting in the battlefields but also always remain in a state of preparedness to undertake the responsibility of working as a cohesive force in a very challenging situation, may it be horrifying earthquakes or the devastating floods.

BOP, PMIC sign MOU to promote financial inclusion in Pakistan

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) signed an MoU with Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC) under which BOP will become the first commercial bank to use PMIC's Credit Enhancement Facility (CEF) for lending to micro-finance institutions. Under CEF, PMIC will provide credit guarantee to BOP for lending to MFIs across the country. Both entities will also jointly work on product development, syndication and offering advisory services to microfinance providers in the quest for improving financial inclusion across Pakistan.

Mr. Yasir Ashfaq (CEO -

PMIC) and Mr. Farid Ahmed Khan (Group Chief Corporate and Investment Banking - BOP) signed the MoU. Senior leadership from both institutions witnessed the signing.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Yasir Ashfaq said "We have a long history of relationship with BOP and this MOU is part of our efforts to crowd in financing for the microfinance sector. The demand for credit is high as the clients are seeking funds to expand and re-establish their livelihoods after floods and the current economic slowdown. Together we can structure and execute innovative financing mechanisms to fulfil the unmet demand for financial serv-

ices at the bottom of the pyramid."

Mr. Farid Ahmed Khan said, "Financial inclusion and socially responsible banking make up the core of BOP's vision. We are looking forward to expanding our coverage to micro-finance sector through CEF-like joint offerings.



The timing is critical as tough economic conditions are driving demand for financing, and liquidity is becoming scarce for the industry."

The meeting ended with the resolve to further strengthen the relationship between the two institutions.

Best foam mattress in Pakistan: Top mattresses of 2023 reviewed

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Are you looking for the best foam mattress to offer you a good night's sleep? Let's review some of the best foam mattresses in Pakistan. Given the importance of foam in producing a comfortable and supportive mattress, Pakistan has a wide variety of foam options. The quality of foam is an essential component that helps determine your sleep quality.

If your mattress doesn't meet the quality standards, it can cause you a lot of issues, including back aches, insomnia, neck strains, and so much more. That is why it is imperative to get your hands on the best foam mattress that meets your sleeping needs and is of the utmost quality. Wondering where to find the best mattress?

Following is the list of the best foam brands in

Pakistan:

Master MoltyFoam
Master Celeste
BE by MoltyFoam
DuraFoam

Master MoltyFoam:

It is the first one on our list here. MoltyFoam is one of the most best foam brands in Pakistan, known for its high-quality products and reasonable prices. The company is the most well reputed one in Pakistan.

It is because of the exceptional quality and benefits it offers and also due to the fact that it provides very competitive pricing. These are all made utilizing high-quality components throughout the products' manufacturing.

As they are available in such a wide variety of densities and levels of firmness, it is easy to choose one that functions admirably as a solution to the problems you are trying to solve.

Master Celeste:

The Master Group has unveiled a brand-new assortment of products under Master Celeste. These products are developed with the specific goal of satisfying the criteria of premium customers. This firm is well-known for providing high-quality items like spring mattresses, pillows, and other sleeping accessories.

Moreover, each of these products will offer you the highest possible degree of comfort and the necessary support. Made using the premium quality materials, these mattresses are an epitome of luxury and comfort alike.

Be by MoltyFoam: MoltyFoam has just unveiled another brand, under the name "BE by MoltyFoam." It was developed with the modern consumer in mind and by considering their needs and

preferences. It offers a modern, uniquely crafted foam mattress that comes rolled up in a box. BE by MoltyFoam is also considered as best mattress in a box in Pakistan.

In addition, BE is widely known as Pakistan's most versatile mattress-in-a-box alternative. You can easily unroll it, let it expand on your bed or frame and enjoy a restful night's sleep without any hassle.

DuraFoam:

In the Pakistani foam sector, another highly-respected firm is DuraFoam. It is well-known for making resilient products. In the production process, the company uses cutting-edge technology to produce high-density foam that is incredibly supportive and pleasant.

In addition, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and antimite treatments are included in the manufacturing

process of these.

Final Word

In conclusion, there are many options of foam brands in Pakistan that offer high-quality and durable products, such as MoltyFoam, Master Celeste, BE by MoltyFoam, and DuraFoam. Pakistan is home to a large number of foam manufacturers.

Additionally, it is easy to choose the kind suitable for your needs since each offers a vast assortment of products. These may include a range of densities and degrees of firmness. Moreover, you can easily find the one that suits your needs.

It is vital to do research and perform side-by-side comparisons of a number of different brands and products to choose the one that fulfills your criteria and preferences to the most significant degree possible.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, At Middle Bridge, MSC Diya-F, Nothern Magnitude, Silver Joan, Umm Al-Amad and Hafnia Excel scheduled to load/offload rice, containers, palm oil, LNG and gas oil, berthed at Grain & Fertilizer Terminal, Qasim International Containers Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, EngroElengy Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile a containers ship 'Irenes Ray' carrying containers also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of 11 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them 02 ships, MSC Diya-F and Chem Guard left the Port on Wednesday morning, while 03 more ships, Northern Magnitude, Maria Topic and Hafnia Excel are expected to sail on today in the afternoon.

A cargo volume of 122,833 tonnes, comprising 104,396 tonnes imports cargo and 18,437 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,012 containers (2,006 TEUs Imports and 1,006 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 12 ships at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, 02 ships, Rigel and Irenes Ray and another ship 'Clemens Schulte' carrying palm oil and containers are expected to take berths at LCT and QICT on Wednesday.

IMARAT Group launches Bavylon - the new icon of Multan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The IMARAT Group has launched Bavylon, a landmark real estate development project that will be a corporate, retail, and hospitality powerhouse in Southern Punjab. Bavylon - the future of Multan - is a perfect fusion of the contemporary and the traditional.

The inauguration was graced by the presence of Chairman IMARAT Group Shafiq Akbar, Director Graana.com & Hospitality Farhan Javed, Director Agency21 International Sharjeel A. Ehmer, Group Director Arslan Javed, and President Advisory Board General Haroon Aslam.

Bavylon is a state-of-

the-art development that will feature a wide range of amenities and facilities, including high-end corporate offices, luxury retail outlets, and a five-star hotel.

The project is designed to cater to the needs of both local and international visitors, making it a premier destination for business and leisure.

"We are thrilled to bring this project to fruition and are confident that Bavylon will be a catalyst for economic growth in the region by creating jobs, attracting tourism, and increasing the overall economic activity in the region," said Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group. "The launch of Bavylon in

Multan and previously our record of delivering 5 projects in 5 years signifies that this is the year of transformation and we are a step closer to Vision 2047."

Speaking at the occasion, Director Graana.com & Hospitality Farhan Javed said, "Without a doubt, Bavylon will act as a spark that will help to ignite economic development in Multan. We believe that this prestigious icon will not only be a landmark development for Multan but for the entire southern Punjab region as well."

Expressing his views during the event, Director Agency21 International Sharjeel A. Ehmer stated, "Today marks the beginning of a new chapter, as

we officially inaugurate this project. It represents a culmination of hard work, determination and a vision for a brighter future. Let us work together to make this project a success and leave a lasting impact on Multan."

Director PropSure Taimoor-ul-Haq Abbasi furthered by saying, "The Bavylon symbolises a new standard in the hospitality and luxury industry. With its launch, we are demonstrating our dedication to the progress and advancement of the city of Multan."

The Bavylon is a symbol of both heritage and modernity. The name is derived from the ancient Babylonian Empire's capital, which was the holy city

of the area and had the name "The Gate of God." The engineering marvel was inspired by the ancient hanging gardens of Babylon. As you approach the hotel, you will be greeted by terraced gardens cascading down the finely layered brick facade.

Bavylon, the flagship project of IMARAT Group, is set to be a major development in Pakistan's 5th most populous city. The project will consist of four key components: a retail mall, a builders' mall, corporate space, and a Courtyard by Marriott hotel. The combination of these elements is expected to create a dynamic and diverse destination for residents and visitors alike, providing a range of



shopping, dining, and business opportunities. The Courtyard by Marriott hotel will also add to the city's growing tourism industry, offering a high-quality accommodation option for travellers. Overall, the Bavylon IMARAT project is

poised to be a major contributor to the city's economy and development.

The IMARAT Group is renowned for their dedication to crafting exceptional, environmentally conscious, and aesthetically pleasing real estate projects. The

organisation's Vision 2047 is an ambitious, long-term plan that aims to design sustainable and cutting-edge developments that will boost economic prosperity and enhance the quality of life for Pakistan's citizens.



In brief

BISE Inter-College Hockey

PESHAWAR (APP): Islamia College University Peshawar upset Government College Peshawar in the final of the board of Intermediate and Secondary education (BISE) Inter-College Boys Hockey Championship played here at Islamia College Hockey Ground on Wednesday. The final was played between the host team Islamia College University and Government College Peshawar in connection with the Peshawar Board Inter-College Hockey Tournament organized by the Board of International and Secondary Education Peshawar (BISE) at the Hockey Stadium of Islamia College University. By playing the best game, the rival team defeated the Government College team by a 2-1 goal and reached the next round match. On this occasion, Director sports Ali Hoti praised the performance of the players of Islamia College and gave a cash prize to the entire team. He said due to the efforts of the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Majeed, the performance of the student athletes has improved. On this occasion, Government College Peshawar Sports Director Hassan Khan along with Muhammad Nawaz hockey coach and Firdous Afridi, international hockey player Waqas Khan were also present.

James moves close to breaking record

NEW YORK (Agencies): LeBron James moved closer to breaking the NBA's all-time scoring record as he produced his first triple-double of the season in the Los Angeles Lakers' 129-123 win over the New York Knicks. The 38-year-old is just 89 points shy of breaking the record of 38,387 points held by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. James made 28 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds in the Lakers' overtime win. He is now fourth on the NBA's assists list with 10,338, still way behind all-time leader John Stockton's 15,806. Victory ended the Lakers' two-game losing streak, while the Knicks - led by Jalen Brunson on a game-high 37 points - have lost six of their last eight games. While James got his first, Nikola Jokic made his NBA-leading 16th triple-double of the season as the Denver Nuggets beat the New Orleans Pelicans 122-113. Jokic recorded 26 points, 18 rebounds and 15 assists while Jamal Murray added 32 points to consign the Pelicans to their ninth successive defeat. The Milwaukee Bucks made it five wins in a row with a 124-115 victory over the Charlotte Hornets, with Bucks' star Giannis Antetokounmpo scoring 34 points, while there were wins too for the Los Angeles Clippers and the Miami Heat.

Saudi Arabia wins bid

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia has won a bid to host the 2027 Asian Cup, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said on Wednesday. The announcement was made at the AFC Congress in the Bahraini capital of Manama. Saudi Arabia was the sole bidder after India withdrew in December. "We are excited to deliver the greatest tournament in the competition's history," the kingdom's sports minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal said after the announcement. "The kingdom is transforming before our eyes and we are filled with excitement for what it will look like in 2027."

Pakistan won 15th West Asia Baseball cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Baseball team won the 15th West Asia Baseball cup after thrashing their Palestinian counterpart in the final by a leading margin of 11-03 at Pakistan Sports Complex here on Wednesday.

Pakistan has also qualified for Asian Games and Asian Championship after lifting the title.

Pakistani captain Faqir Hussain stood as the top scorer (03 runs) of the match, Arsalan Jamshaid, Muhammad Hussain, and Fazil Khan scored 02 runs each, while Shahzad Ahmad and Muhammad Younas scored 01 runs each.

The Palestine team only managed to get 03 runs and was declared the runner-up of the championship. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan-re-Rehman Mazari and US ambassador Donald Blome witnessed the final and distributed medals and trophies among the winners.

Both teams have qualified for the Asian Baseball Championship in Taiwan, a qualifying tournament for the Baseball World Cup.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by 3-1 for the third position in the championship. Amila, Sindon and Roshan scored one run each for Sri Lanka, while Muhammad Musabbbar scored the only run from Bangladesh.



Visa issues delay Usman Khawaja's travel to India

SYDNEY (Agencies): Usman Khawaja's departure for Australia's tour of India has been delayed because of issues in acquiring a visa.

On Wednesday afternoon, shortly after a second group of players and support staff had left from Sydney, Khawaja posted on social media: "Me waiting for my Indian Visa like... #stranded #dontleave #standard #anytimenow." ESPNcricinfo understands that a number of visas were late being returned, although it's unclear if any other travel plans have had to be changed.

It's understood that Khawaja is now scheduled to fly out to Bengaluru on Thursday.

The Australia Test squad left in two groups across Tuesday and Wednesday, following the Cricket Australia awards in Sydney on Monday night, where Khawaja was named Shane Warne Men's Test Player of the Year.

Khawaja, who was born in Pakistan and is an Australian citizen, has toured India numerous times - including for the 2013 and 2017 Test visits - but has had difficulty getting a visa previously too. In 2011, he was initially denied a visa to play in the T20 Champions League for New South Wales before representations to the Indian high commission resolved the situation.

Khawaja shapes as a pivotal member of Australia's top order even though he has yet to play a Test in India. Since his recall against England in early 2022, he has scored 1275 runs at 79.68 including five centuries.

Australia are set to spend four days training in Bengaluru before relocating to Nagpur for the first Test, which begins on February 9.

A number of the squad members, although not Khawaja and other batters involved in the BBL, underwent a two-day camp in Sydney last week. Australia will not have a tour match before the series, preferring to prepare at home in conditions they could control, and then the centre-wicket time in Bengaluru where they have been assured the pitches would be a fair representation of what is expected for the Tests.



Palestinian baseball team visits HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The baseball team of the State of Palestine, currently in Pakistan for the 15th West Asia Baseball Cup, visited the Higher education Commission (HEC) and held a meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed.

The visiting team was accompanied by the First Secretary Embassy of the State of Palestine in Islamabad Mr. Nader al-Turk, while Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and other senior HEC officers were also present in the meeting.

Addressing the team, the Chairman HEC referred to the 15th West Asia Baseball Cup final between Pakistan and Palestine and underlined the importance of sports activities for youth. He said that HEC/Pakistan University Sports board is committed to providing all possible sports facilities to student players.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed informed the dignitaries that an international Vice Chancellors conference of the Islamic world universities will be held in the near future. He added that Islamic countries are considering launching a fully-funded scholarship programme for Muslim youth.

He said, "We feel the pain of Palestinian brethren and our leadership always does whatever possible for the Palestinians." In his remarks on this occasion, Mr. Nader al-Turk appreciated the Pakistani nation for extending support to the Palestinian cause. "We acknowledge Pakistan's continuous support to the State of Palestine," he underscored.

He said that the Palestinians in Pakistan do not feel like foreigners, but that they feel at home thanks to the affection and respect they receive from the Pakistanis.

He appreciated the Palestinian team for qualifying for the final.

Kohat Sports Festival 2023 games competitions of Tehsil Lachi concludes

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Tehsil Lachi level Games Competitions of Kohat Sports Festival 2023 organized by the Kohat Sports Office in collaboration with the District Administration Kohat and MOL Company concluded at Lachi on Tuesday evening. Former MPA Amjad Khan Afridi was the chief guest on this occasion. The Festival includes Football, Volleyball, Cricket, Tug of War, Athletics, Konaly and Badminton Games. The concluding ceremony besides others was also attended by the District Sports Officer Kohat Sajid Afridi, and sports lovers in large number.

Competitions of the above mentioned games played at Tehsil Lachi level concluded while in next stage the said games would also be played in other Tehsils of the district. Winner teams of the Festival would play finals at Kohat Sports Complex.



The chief guest on this occasion also distributed trophies and individual awards among the players.

The chief guest stressed upon the locals to take full advantage of this golden chance and participate in the Festival games by proving themselves best players of their respective games. He added, the Festival was aimed to discover the talent at grass roots level. He assured that he would fully support and encourage the talented players at all levels.

Shaheen Afridi raring for comeback in HBL PSL 2023

LAHORE (APP): It was at the start of April in 2018 when a lanky teenager by the name of Shaheen Shah Afridi received international cap from Pakistan legend Wasim Akram at Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena.

He had showed glimpses of brilliance in the last two months - during what was his maiden HBL Pakistan Super League season - that catapulted him to the national side. The highlight was his five-wicket haul at Dubai against Multan Sultans, which saw him become one of the only two bowlers that season to bag five wickets in an innings.

Shaheen never looked back from that moment, establishing himself as an all-format bowler for Pakistan and, subsequently, the leader of the Pakistan bowling attack. Such was his utility for Pakistan that before the first Galle Test in which he injured his right knee by landing awkwardly while attempting a dive at the boundary in July last year, he had taken the most wickets (204) behind Australia's Pat Cummins' 209 across all three international formats. He was so lethal that his strike rate of 35.4 was the best in international cricket amongst the fast bowlers with at least a thousand overs.

The fourth morning of

that Test, however, put a halt on an ever-progressing career. Shaheen was back in Pakistan colours in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia last year and his bowling form grew proportionally with the matches he played, before a freak twist while completing that famous Harry Brook catch at Melbourne in the final sent him back to rehabilitation.

While the sight of Shaheen limping off the field broke millions of Pakistani hearts, it was the beginning of a struggle for a bowler who since his Pakistan debut had done nothing but bowl in heaps.

"There were times when I wanted to give up," Shaheen, who now has checked all the requisites for his return to competitive cricket, said on Wednesday. "I was working on only one muscle and it was not improving. Often during the rehabilitation sessions, I used to say to myself 'this is enough, I cannot do this anymore'." "But then I used to watch my bowling on YouTube and see how well I had done and that motivated me and I told myself 'to push a little more' ... It is frustrating for a fast bowler to miss cricket because of an injury."

While there is no good time to be injured, Shaheen's had come at a time when Pakistan were

scheduled for their biggest home season in over a decade with seven T20Is and three Tests against England followed by two Tests and three One-Day Internationals against New Zealand. Shaheen missed all 15 games.

"It is tough when you miss your home games because of the injury," he says. "Before our Test home season, I even missed the seven England T20Is. I was more distressed for missing the Tests, because I like Test cricket more. A bowler is measured on how he performs in Test cricket and I wanted to take wickets against England."

Was there any moment during the 2022-23 home season that made him want to get in the Pakistan colours? "It came when I was watching the [Multan Test] match and our tailenders were not able to finish the game. I wanted to hit a few sixes there and finish the match for Pakistan," he chuckles. "Also, when they [England] were scoring a lot of runs, I wanted to give my input with the ball."

Shaheen made sure to remain in touch with the bowlers. "It is tough to switch from the white ball cricket to red ball cricket as the demands of the Test format are totally different from the limited overs.

3rd Allama Iqbal Polo Tournament: Semifinalists decided

LAHORE (APP): Diamond Paints and SQ Seagold from Pool A, while Remington Pharma and Master Paints/Newage Cables from Pool B qualified for the semifinals of the 3rd Allama Iqbal Polo Tournament sponsored by Lahore Smart City here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Wednesday.

On February 3, the first semifinal will be played between Diamond Paints and SQ Seagold, while the second semifinal will be played between Remington Pharma and Master

Paints/Newage Cables on the same day.

In the first match of the day, Remington Pharma qualified for the semifinals by defeating 4 Corps polo team 6-5. For Remington Pharma, Hamza Mawaz Khan and Ahmed Bilal Riaz scored two goals each while Ahmed Zubair Butt and Basel Faisal Khokhar converted one goal apiece.

From the losing side, Raja Muhammad Mikayial Sami fired in four goals while Ibrahim Khalil struck one.

In the second match of

the day, Master Paints/Newage Cables defeated Inara Polo/Black Horse Paints by 8-4. Raja Temur Nadeem smashed in six goals while Adnan Jalil Azam and Farooq Amin Sufi hit one goal each from Master Paints/Newage Cables while they had a handicap advantage of a half goal.

Hissam Ali Haider hammered all four goals for the losing side. Tomorrow (Thursday), four teams will fight each other for the subsidiary finals.

Peshawar Zalmi announces its partnership with GTR Tyre

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Zalmi announces its partnership with GTR Tyre as its Official Tyre Partner for HBLPSL 8. In partnership, the GTR Tyre logo will be placed on Peshawar Zalmi's helmets and caps for HBLPSL 8.

The MOU signed between GTR and Peshawar Zalmi for the PSL Season 8 which is set to kick off in February 2023 will be a manifestation of two dynamic partners coming together to celebrate and showcase their support and love for the globally celebrated sport itself.

Cricket is a passion point of Pakistani audiences and with the two coming together for the eighth season of the HBLPSL, they are all set to celebrate the cricket season together.

Chief Executive officer of GTR Hussain Kuli Khan commented that the sponsorship is to highlight GTR's Manifesto 'The Generation of Achievers'.

"We are pleased to announce this partnership. This partnership will reflect the unique journey of both the team and the company," he said. He added that GTR Tyre has been the partner of so many young achievers and this partnership is to create the same winning spirit for the achievers of Peshawar Zalmi.

As one of the first and oldest tyre manufacturers in Pakistan, GTR has come a long way in delivering the finest tyres countrywide ensuring road safety and comfortable journeys. Since its founding in 1963, General Tyre has earned a reputation for producing some of the most adaptable tyres for a variety of vehicles. Mr. Nausherwan Effandi, Chief Commercial Officer Peshawar Zalmi said, "With an ever-growing fanbase, Peshawar Zalmi aims to partner with the industry leaders in each category and we believe in working with organizations that share our brand ethos and compliments our marketing strategy. GTR Tyre complements what Zalmi stands for, and we are looking forward to another exciting cricket season ahead." GTR has vowed to continue supporting efforts to promote sports and athletes who deserve recognition as Peshawar Zalmi continues to win hearts and excite cricket fans all around the world.

After Hales, more England players prefer PSL over national duty

LONDON (Agencies): More England players are looking to follow Alex Hales' example, who has decided to skip England's upcoming tour to Bangladesh, in order to honour his £145,000 contract with Islamabad United for the upcoming edition of HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL), reported The Telegraph.

England is scheduled to square off against Bangladesh in three T20Is and as many ODIs, which will be played between March 1 to 14. Whereas, HBL PSL 8 will take place from February 13 to March 19.

Sam Billings, Liam Dawson and James Vince, are also expected to turn up for their respective PSL franchises instead of making themselves available for Bangladesh tour.

"Alex Hales will not be included in the squad for Bangladesh as he is set to remain at the Pakistan Super League where he has a lucrative deal. It is understood Sam Billings, Liam Dawson and James Vince will do the same," the aforementioned report stated.

Sam Billings was recently selected in the PSL replacement draft by Lahore Qalandars as partial replacement of Rashid Khan, whereas Dawson is already part of the franchise. Vince is also likely to turn up for Karachi Kings for the entire edition.

Tymal Mills and Richard Gleeson, who were recently picked in the replacement for Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi respectively, are also considering their availability for the T20I leg of the Bangladesh tour.

England is expected to name the squad for the Bangladesh tour this week.

Islamabad won Inter-Divisional Basketball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Reds won the Quaid-e-Azam cup Inter-Divisional Basketball tournament after defeating Faisalabad Division in a nerve-wracking match by 52-49 points here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan sports Complex.

In the decisive finale, a tough competition between Islamabad Reds and Faisalabad Division until half-time, Faisalabad was in the lead with 26 points to 24.

Islamabad Red players Yasir Abbas and Attique Khan took four consecutive points in the last minute of the final to turn the game for Islamabad. Yasir Abbas scored 22, Attique Khan 14 and Rizwan Khurshed scored 12 points for Islamabad.

Six teams including Islamabad Reds, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Hazara, Islamabad Blues and Faisalabad Division participated in the tournament based on pool round matches organised by the Federal Basketball Association (FBBA).

Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan Mazari distributed prizes, trophies and medals among the players in the closing ceremony, he appreciated the efforts by the Pakistan Basketball Federation and Association for the promotion of basketball in the country.

Earlier, in the semi-final round, Faisalabad Division defeated Peshawar Division after a tough competition by 54 points against 50, while Islamabad Reds won against Islamabad Blues by 41-49 points.

Commander North Rear Admiral Masood Khurshid, Acting Director General Pakistan Sports board Mohammad Abrar, Secretary General of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Khalid Bashir, Secretary Organizing Committee Ouj e Zahoor, President of Federal Basketball Association Ejaz Butt also witnessed the final match.

Olympics 2024: Latvia could join Ukraine in boycott of Paris Games

PARIS (Agencies): Latvia could join Ukraine in boycotting the 2024 Paris Olympics if Russian and Belarusian athletes are allowed to compete.

Ukraine's sports minister said last week they would boycott the competition "as long as there is a war in Ukraine".

Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics agreed on Tuesday that Russia and Belarus' participation in the Olympics would be "unacceptable". Latvia, which borders Russia, has been a strong supporter of Ukraine.

The International Olympic Committee said last Wednesday it would "explore a pathway" for athletes from the two countries to take part as neutrals.

But the UK Government has condemned the plan as a "world away from the reality of war" while Latvia's National Olympic Committee said the presence of the athletes would be an "encouragement for further escalation of warfare, and normalisation of war crimes and brutal violence".

The NOC added: "For as long as there is an ongoing war in Ukraine, participation of the Russian and Belarusian athletes in the Olympic Games under any flag is unacceptable."

The Baltic ministers of sport - from Estonia and Lithuania, as well as Latvia - will meet on Thursday to discuss a joint appeal to the IOC to ban Russian and Belarusian sportsmen from all international competition.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky has said Russian athletes should have "no place" at the Paris Games. The IOC previously asked sporting federations to exclude athletes from the countries following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

However, the IOC's statement last week said "no athlete should be prevented from competing just because of their passport". Last month, president of the IOC Thomas Bach spoke of not wishing to punish individual athletes for the actions of their governments and Russia has said a campaign to exclude it from international sport will fail.



In brief

IHC again serves notice to Nadra

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday again served notices to the respondents in a case challenging the exclusion of 'pothohari' from the languages list by Nadra. Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani heard the petition filed by a citizen Farzand Ali Sarwar through his lawyer Raja Sajjad Ahmed. The Nadra officials told the court that neither they had received the petition's copy nor the court notices. The court served the notice again and adjourned the hearing of the case till February 20. The petition stated that the exclusion of 'pothohari' from the list was a violation of basic human rights. He prayed the court to turn down the notification of Nadra regarding the matter.

HEC for joint work

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Hult Prize Foundation, an international entity empowering youth to solve the world's most pressing issues through social entrepreneurship, have expressed a desire to jointly work for the promotion of entrepreneurship in Pakistan. In this connection, the two sides held a virtual meeting to discuss potential of bilateral collaboration to strengthen a startup culture in the country. They agreed to formally sign a Letter of Intent and extend support to the Pakistani youth and entrepreneurs. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed addressed the participants and shed light on the HEC efforts and initiatives to support academia-industry linkages and finance the Pakistani youth in their entrepreneurial endeavours. He assured that HEC will extend all-out support to Hult Prize Foundation in its intent to exploit the potential of Pakistani youth. Director Research & Innovation Division, HEC, Noshaba Awais said that Pakistan's population comprises over 60% of youth and HEC is committed to utilising the youth bulge in supporting the country's economy. Promoting entrepreneurship is the major step forward towards utilising the youth bulge, she affirmed.

AIOU announces schedule

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the schedule of face-to-face workshops on the teaching practice of MA Education and M.Ed./M.Ed. programs offered in the autumn semester of 2022. These workshops will start on February 8 and will be held in the regional offices/workshop centers of AIOU from 1:30 p.m to 6:30 p.m. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan said as per the instructions of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mehmood, all the regional directors have been directed to provide all possible facilities to the students in the workshop centers. AIOU has already sent letters to the students to attend the workshops. The schedule of these workshops is uploaded on student LMS portals and is also available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Students are advised to contact the nearest Regional Campus for further information and details.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Ulema Mashaikh Yakjehti Council of Pakistan called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Exchange of interfaith delegations positive move for promotion of religious harmony: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor on Wednesday said the exchange of interfaith delegations would be a positive move for the promotion of religious harmony. In a meeting with a delegation led by the Bishop of Europe, Robert Neil Anas here at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, he said there was no room for coercion in Islam.

The minister said in the Peshawar terrorist incident, Muslims engaged in worship were martyred. Islam and the constitution had equal rights for people belonging to all religions and in the spirit of the teachings of Islam, killing an innocent person was tantamount to killing all

humanity, he added.

He said in order to prevent terrorism and extremism, there was a mutual decision among Pakistani scholars that terrorism was forbidden and had nothing to do with Islam. "Paigham-e-Pakistan was a unique document signed by thousands of local and international scholars," he added.

The Bishop of Europe expressed his heartfelt regret and sorrow over the Peshawar tragedy and offered his thoughts to the martyrs and their families.

He also condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and said such incidents could not be tolerated as they hurt the religious sentiments of all Muslims. Such incidents would cause hatred among societies and religions, he

added. Bishop Samuel Robert Azaria, who was also a part of the delegation, described the Paigham-e-Pakistan as useful and said such initiatives would yield positive results for interfaith harmony.

He said all religions, including Islam and Christianity, taught peace and brotherhood. The teachings of Islam taught respect for all religions and reverence for all prophets, he added.

The minister of religious affairs said the real problem was ignorance and lack of education which misled people. External forces especially the Research and Analysis Wing of India were involved in recent terrorist incidents in Pakistan as it did not want to see peace in Pakistan, he added.

CDA launches operation against encroachments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) launched operations in different parts of Islamabad to remove encroachments at the development sites.

Following the directions of the CDA Chairman Noor-ul-Amin, the concerned authorities launched an operation at Bara Kahu on Tuesday night to avoid any traffic hindrance and removed several illegal sign boards, stalls and counters. Similarly, another operation was carried out at the GT road, Chungi 26 under the supervision of DG enforcement Shah Jahan who removed hundreds of fruit stalls across both sides of the road and seized the goods of seven trucks as well.

After that, the encroachments at Kandhara Enclave, under the supervision of DG Enforcement and Assistant Commissioner Saniyah Hamid Pasha, 15 rooms, 2 kitchens, 5 washrooms and 20 shops, including a tire shop and 13 heavy machineries were also demolished. On the other hand, one truckload of goods was seized by removing the encroachments from both sides of the road at Lehrtar Road.

Potohari musical night mesmerizes audience

ISLAMABAD (APP): A colorful Potohari musical night was organized here late Wednesday as part of Gandhara Festival by Punjab Arts Council.

Naeem Hazarvi, popular singer of Potohar, enthralled the audience by singing his beautiful songs. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad on the occasion said the government is playing its role in bringing the cultural heritage of the Punjab province to the people. Fairs are being organized to bring the culture of Gandhara, Sindh, Harappa and Cholistan to the people of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

On the fourth day of Gandhara festival Mehfil-e-Mushaira was also organized, which was chaired by the Presidential award-winning poet Dr. Abdul Waheed, while other poets included Anjum Salimi, Nasir Ali Nasir, Rukhsana Sahar, Asima Tahir, Rashida Mahin Malik, Afzal Khan.

During the proceedings, the Chief Information Commissioner also directed the Ministry of Housing and Works officials to take due care while making any statement before the Commission as it was made part of the official record.

In another appeal related to the Cabinet Division for seeking an exemption under the Act to disclose inquiry details demanded by the applicant, the Commission advised the respondent to be fully cognizant of the 'Right of Access to Information Act 2017' and marked its reply unsatisfactory. However, the respondent was granted time to submit the reply to the Commission before February 21.

The PIC also adjourned other hearings in order to provide an opportunity to file proper replies to the respondent of different public departments.

During the hearing, Shoaib Ahmed Siddiqui assured the citizens that their right to get access to information by federal public bodies under the 'Right of Access to Information Act 2017' would be ensured completely.

He said that the PIC would hold hearings on regular basis. It was focused and determined to provide a fair opportunity to both the applicants and respondents, he added. Siddiqui said that decisions were given on the applications received as per law, whereas the applicants have expressed their satisfaction over the proceedings.

President emphasises Ulema's role in social reform, discouraging extremism

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called upon the Ulema and Mashaikh of the country to play their role in bringing positive social change, discouraging extremism, terrorism, and sectarianism.

The president, talking to a delegation of the Ulema Mashaikh Yakjehti Council of Pakistan (UMYC), that called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, urged their role for inculcating ethical and moral values in society, promoting the conservation of resources, national solidarity, religious tolerance, and inter-faith harmony and peace.

He urged Ulema to play their role to eliminate extremism, terrorism and sectarianism by highlighting the true teachings of Islam in the light of the Quran, Sunnah and Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

He said the challenges of terrorism and militancy in Pakistan required a comprehensive action plan, coupled with concerted efforts on the part of the Ulema in the areas of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism. President Alvi said that it was the responsibility of religious scholars to disseminate the true teachings of Islam among the people, especially youth, to bring in social reforms, and promote virtues, ethics, and morality in society.

He said that Pakistan could achieve progress and its rightful place in the comity of nations through discipline, persistence, moral righteousness, and promoting social justice.

The president said that Ulema should make concerted efforts to remove divisions from society, and should promote unity and solidarity within the country.

He said that youth should be educated on tolerance, forgiveness, and peace as these were the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The president said that Islam emphasized the conservation of resources and avoiding wastage. The Ulema should also help promote moderate, responsible and sustainable consumption of resources, especially fuel and energy, through their Friday sermons in the mosques.

The delegation was led by Chairman UMYC, Qari Hidayat Ullah Mirani, and consisted of Muhammad Younas Qureshi, Molana Gul Wali, Major Ehtasham Uddin Kiyani, Prof Abdul Ghaffar Shah Bukhari, Abdul Rahim Abbasi, Noor Elahi, Fahad Maqsood, Hameed Ullah Khan, Sheikh Mazhar Hussain, Sheikh Zia ur Rehman, Alama Mufti Mehmood Ahmed Tabasam, and Jamal Khan.

Digital census to be completed in March, no general polls before October 2023: Amin

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Federal Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque on Wednesday said that the digital census would continue till March, after which the Election Commission would need four months for de-limitations, that made it clear that General Elections in the country were not possible before October 2023.

He stated this while addressing the Internet Governance and Internet Resources Share for Pakistan event organised by Number Resource Society (NRS) here, a news release said. The Federal Minister said that if the former prime minister Imran Khan crossed the red line for his political gains transcending the scope of the constitution and law then the country and the nation would suffer. Syed Amin-ul-Haque said that the political unrest was increasing with each passing day and this political unrest was leading the country to an economic crisis. "As a political party, we want stability in the country. In any case,

democracy should remain permanent."

"Law and order should be closely monitored, attempts are being made to destroy law and order in Pakistan in the name of Talibanisation," he added.

He said that the Ministry of Energy & Power did not contact the Ministry of IT regarding any possible cyberattack on the power blackout, but the ministry had already explained that it was a technical fault.

Haque further said there was a non-binding offer regarding Telenor, the Ministry of IT was looking into all these matters, it was its responsibility to protect the rights of the consumers and there would be no compromise on the employment of the company's employees and the quality of service. Talking about Internet Governance, the federal minister said the awareness event on Internet Governance and Internet Resources Share was of great importance for developing economies like Pakistan. He added that as per his understanding, Number Resource Society (NRS) was doing great

work in the public interest that was the distribution of IP addresses, working as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO). "It will help raise the voice of countries like Pakistan in the global and regional digital arena as well as in the internet governance forums."

He added that the ministry expected NRS-like organisations to play their role in the multi-stakeholder process to discuss and contribute towards making a mechanism to address internet governance issues. "NRS can also help us to get right voice from Pakistan in APNIC by supporting Pakistani candidate so that the Pakistan internet community has their voice to get what we need in terms of internet resources like IP v4, IP v6 allocation." "IT Ministry is fully cognizant of the significance of internet governance and to this effect, we have already established a specialized vertical on Internet Governance at the Ministry," Ministry's IG Strategy builds upon inclusiveness to address new and continuously evolving challenges and opportunities within the Internet Governance landscape.

'Cultural, Folk night' enthralls audience

ISLAMABAD (APP): 'Mausikaar', a music organisation for the preservation of traditional music and welfare of the artists of Pakistan, arranged a Cultural and Folk Night here on Wednesday to entertain the fun lovers of the twin cities.

The event showcased cultural and sufi dances by a dance group that presented folk dances of all four provinces and Gilgit Baltistan and concluded on Dhamaal, instrumental performances, including Rubab and Flute represented all provinces of

Pakistan. Students from Quaid e Azam University presented the folk culture of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The event was an effort to engage the young generation in healthy activities and give a boost to their talent through a platform to bring positivity in them," said the organizers.

Mausikaar was established in 2007 for the preservation and promotion of the traditional music of Pakistan and the welfare of the artists. Mausikaar organizes concerts with well-known artists as well as relatively unknown artists to promote them.

Mausikaar includes helping the artists and bringing them to the attention of the media. Dr Seema Khan, President Mausikaar told APP that the event was about promoting the folk heritage of Pakistan through music and showing its cultural diversity.

This is to promote the true image of Pakistan. It's vibrant colours through music and regional dance. Mausikaar is a group of music lovers that got together about 15 years ago to promote the traditional music of Pakistan ranging from classical to Ghazals including folk and sufi music.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of China National Nuclear Corporation calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

No bans on carpets export

KABUL (Agencies): Ministry of Finance (MoF) has rejected reports about banning carpet exports abroad. Ministry announcement said that recently, some media have published reports that the IEA has banned the export of national carpets to abroad. IEA, especially GD Customs and MoF, to support domestic production, has provided more facilities for the export of other domestic products, including national carpets, and has priority given to the customs procedures of this export item.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rajab 10, 1444 — Thursday, February 02, 2023

Dam inaugurated Qalat

QALAT (Agencies): Afghan authorities have inaugurated a dam in Afghanistan's southern Zabul province to irrigate more than 700 hectares of land, provincial governor Mawlawi Qudratullah Abu Hamza said on Wednesday. Built at a cost of nearly \$100,000 in Tana Sah area at the outskirts of the provincial capital Qalat city, the dam would benefit thousands of families including farmers to bring more land with water to increase their agricultural products, Hamza said.

Iran considers establishing a trade center in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Mohammad Mousavi, Iran's Deputy Minister of Trade on Tuesday in a meeting said that Tehran is planning to set up a trade center in Afghanistan in the coming future.

The establishment of the trade center is aimed at strengthening trade relations between Tehran and Kabul, Mousavi stated to Mehr New Agency.

While addressing to meeting Mousavi said that Tehran wanted to invest in Afghanistan and actively participate in the country's sustainable growth.

Iran serves as one of the key trading partners in Afghanistan for decades. The two neighboring Islamic countries share a lot in common, from culture to

food, lifestyle, and more.

Meanwhile, Afghan officials have said that the volume of imports from Iran, such as food and fuel, has totaled more than \$1 billion so far this year. Whereas, Afghanistan's export volume to Iran was much lower and totaled only \$20.

Iran is one of the few countries which maintained close ties with Afghanistan's Taliban regime. Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, Iran has continued trading with Afghanistan, kept issuing visas to Afghans, and continued delivering humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan during these difficult times.

With the US, Iran's arch-rival and enemy gone, the situation is perfectly suit-

able for Iran to strengthen its economic and political relations with the Taliban, exploit the country's resources, and turn Afghanistan into a lucrative market for its products and commercial goods.

Prior to this, Iranian business officials had visited Afghanistan and met with the Taliban authorities aimed at discussing potential investment in the war-torn country. Despite all the odds, Afghanistan can still become a potential business hub for Iran.

Meanwhile, Taliban authorities are desperately looking for potential foreign investments as the country is going through the worst economic, humanitarian, and power crises.

171 victims of deadly Afghanistan winter

KABUL (Agencies): Shamila doesn't have a photo of the baby son who died in her arms in freezing temperatures at their home in Kabul this month, but she remembers his face perfectly. "He had a white and bright face, big eyes, a small nose and black hair," she said.

Three-month old Amrullah was one of at least 171 people who have died due to the cold weather in Afghanistan in recent weeks, in a bitter freezing snap that has hit just as the country is experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations has said 28 million Afghans, many of them children, are in need of urgent assistance during the coldest winter in 15 years, which has seen temperatures dip as low as -29.2 degrees Fahrenheit.

Many aid groups have partially suspended operations in recent weeks due to a Taliban administration ruling that most female NGO workers are forbidden from working, leaving agencies unable to operate many programmes in the conservative country.

Amrullah's father, Nek Mohammad, 40, lost his income a few months ago when health problems stopped his work as a labourer.

With no money for heating, little food besides bread and tea, and drafty windows in their mountain-side home, several of their eight children quickly fell sick.

They took baby Amrullah to hospital around two weeks ago for coughing and congested lungs.

Afghanistan's hospital wards have been filling up in recent months with children suffering from pneumonia and other respiratory diseases as many families face stark choices between being able heat their homes or afford food.

Shamila, 35, clutched her baby and covered herself in a quilt. But around midnight she woke to find his face was cold.

"The night that I lost my baby it was terribly cold, I was trying to... warm my baby boy, but I couldn't succeed," she said.

Without money to host funeral guests, they quietly buried their baby without informing family.

A family friend has since given them a basic charcoal heating system to take the edge off the deadly cold, but unable to afford much food other than bread, Shamila is worried about several of her surviving children who have heavy coughs.

"I am... always thinking of my baby boy and my two other small children, they are also sick, I don't want to lose them as well," she said. She asked for more international aid for Afghanistan.

Without a camera phone, the family did not manage to get a photo of Amrullah. But his mother keeps the clothes she made for him before he was born wrapped up in a small bundle.

On Tuesday, they visited the cemetery, blanketed in snow, and said prayers for their son.

Humanitarian assistance should not be politicized



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation in a meeting with the Vice President of International Rescue Committee (IRC) for Asia

The source said that the two sides discussed the distribution of winter assistance to the destitute people and the current problems of families suffering from poverty.

Mr. Haqqani thanked charitable organizations provided help to the people of Afghanistan in difficult

Repatriation Minister, met with Adnan bin Junaid, Vice President of IRC for Asia.

The source said that the two sides discussed the distribution of winter assistance to the destitute people and the current problems of families suffering from poverty.

Mr. Haqqani thanked charitable organizations provided help to the people of Afghanistan in difficult

situations and said that helping the needy and deserving people is a responsibility which should not be politicized.

He added that the ministry is ready to cooperate with institutions in providing conditions for the survey and distribution of aid, but the aid delivery should not be subject to conditions and religious issues, culture and traditions of the people

should be respected.

All the activities of the institutions should be in coordination with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and based on transparency, he said.

Adnan bin Junaid, vice president of IRC for Asia, said that they will observe the mentioned points and will continue their cooperation during surveys and distribution of aid.

Islamic Emirate to begin construction on banks of Amu River

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate is considering construction on the banks of the Amu River.

A delegation comprised of officials of several ministries traveled to the north of the country to assess the situation alongside the Amu river. Mujeeb Rahman Omar, acting Minister of Agriculture, Water, and Livestock said that due to lack of walls on the banks of the

river, thousands of houses, which are located near the river, have been destroyed in five northern provinces.

"We call on the charity and aid organizations--this is the time and place for attention. The plans and goals that you consider can be implemented here," he said. The deputy Minister of Energy and Water, Ataullah Omari, said that implementation of the project will cost two billion

Afs in the short term.

"Our technical and professional teams have conducted an estimation. We have short-term and long-term plans. In the long term, we estimated a cost of six billion Afs and in the short term it costs two billion," said the acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

The findings of the delegations show that a gold mine is endangered by the

river bank's erosion.

"There is a gold mine alongside the river, which approximately has 30 tons of gold. This mine is in danger of the river," said Zia Rahman Aryoubi, deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum. The Amu River starts in Badakhshan province. It is 2,400 kilometers long, and 1,200 kilometers of it are along Afghanistan's shared borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Commerce ministry supports traders, industrialists: Jamal

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry Mawlawi Qudaratullah Jamal during a meeting with traders and industrialists said that the ministry supports businesspeople in the country.

During the meeting, the traders discussed to building an advanced health center for treatment of cancer diseases in the country with the investment of a joint stock company.

The businesspeople also shared their problems regarding visas and asked for finding solutions to them.

They also asked for prevention of copying their products by other companies.



Mr. Jamal said that the Supreme Leader of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and

the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are supporting the traders and industrialists.

The deputy minister assured them to resolve their problems and told traders.

Herat's regional hospital gains CT scan capability

HERAT (TOLOnews): Local officials of the regional hospital of Herat said that to improve service for the people they are adding new sections to the hospital.

They said patients used to go outside the hospital for tests but now they do tests in the hospital for free.

CT scans are now available at this hospital, and according to officials,

around 25 patients come for CT scans each day.

"Before, we didn't have these services, but now we have them for 24 hours especially we do laboratory tests 24 hours a day," said Jalil Ahmad Rasuli, head of Herat's regional hospital.

Officials and doctors at this hospital said that due to the many patients, the hospital needs more equipment.

"Before, the patient goes out of the hospital for more tests and now, we do tests here daily, we did 20 or 25 CT scan tests," said Bahram Diyanat, the head of the radiology department of Herat's regional hospital.

Meanwhile, some Herat residents asked for more facilities and equipment in governmental hospitals in Herat. "The service has improved,

the condition of the hospital, the treatment of patients has improved," said Juma Gul Asil, a Herat resident.

"Outside, each test costs a thousand or 1500 Afghani but now it is here for us," said Nazir Ahmad, a Herat resident. Herat regional hospital is the largest hospital in the west of the country, with more than 2000 patients coming every day.

Special guards to be appointed to protect relics in Herat

HERAT (Agencies): The Ministry of National Defense, delegation visiting, says that the Ministry will appoint special guards to protect the historical sites of the province.

An official of the Ministry of Defense, Mullah Habib, in a meeting with Mawlawi Naeem-ul Haq Haqqani, the head of Herat's information and culture, said that he has visited all the historical sites in this province and guards will be appointed for the portion of the sites.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan pays special attention to the preservation of historical sites in the country he said.

Meanwhile, the head of Herat's information and



culture, welcoming the ministry of defense for protecting Herat's historical sites demanded more atten-

tion from the central authorities to preserve the historical sites of Herat.

According to the depart-

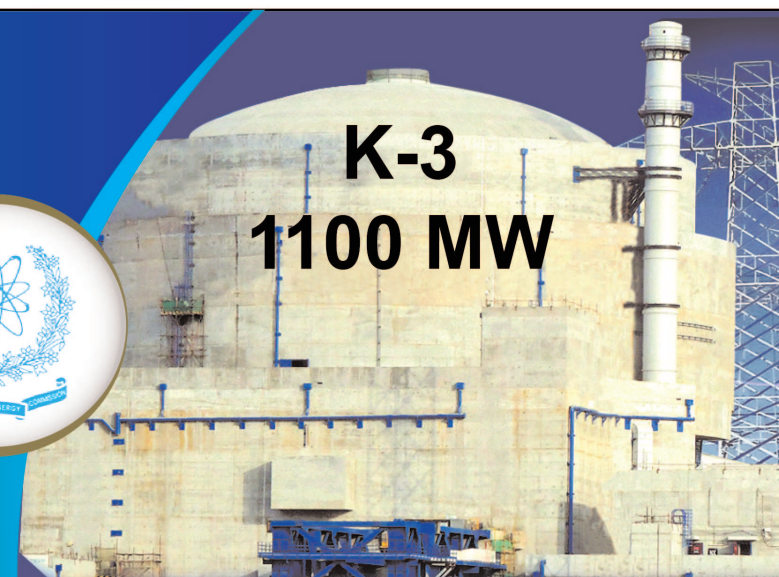
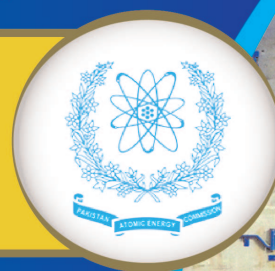
ment, currently, there are a handful of guards to protect more than 700 historical sites in Herat.

NUCLEAR POWER

Environment Friendly, Reliable and Cost Effective

Inauguration of 1100 MW Karachi Nuclear
Power Plant Unit-3 (K-3) by

Prime Minister of Pakistan Today

K-3
1100 MWClimate-friendly, Reliable & Cost-effective
PAEC pours another 1100 MWs in national grid

by Muhammad Aftab Alam

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) is all set to gift the nation with yet another 1100 megawatts (MWs) of clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity by inaugurating the much-awaited Karachi Nuclear Power Plant Unit-3 (K-3) today. Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will be the chief guest on this occasion.

PAEC Chairman Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar has congratulated Member Power PAEC and his team of diligent scientists, engineers and technicians for taking this giant leap to revolutionize the energy sector of the country.

K-3 is the second Generation-III nuclear power plant (NPP) in Pakistan with generation capacity of 1100 MWs and its addition to the national grid will surely help reduce load shedding especially during summers.

Inauguration of K-3 is a memorable moment for Pakistan and its civil nuclear power program. It is the result of collaborated and continuous efforts of PAEC and China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), which culminated in a successful nuclear power program for Pakistan. The history of Pakistan's civil nuclear power program goes back to 1965 when construction of the first Nuclear Power Plant namely KANUPP of 137 MW capacity commenced in Karachi. Since then, PAEC has constructed four Nuclear Power Plants at Chashma with the assistance of China. These plants have total generation capacity of 1330MW. The first plant of Generation-III technology, Karachi Nuclear Power Plant Unit-2 (K-2) went into commercial operation on 21st May, 2021. Both K-2 and K-3 are based on evolutionary design with improvements based on rich experience and extensive Tests and Analyses satisfying National and International Safety Codes, Standards and Practices.

It is to mention here that the groundbreaking of K-3 was performed on November 26, 2013 by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. With the addition of this unit, Karachi Nuclear Power Generating Station (KNPGS) alone has started providing 2200 MW of electricity to the national grid and as a whole the nuclear power generation capacity of Pakistan has reached about 3600 MW. In addition to usual project exigencies, COVID-19 pandemic was an unforeseen challenge which was tackled by the brave workforce of PAEC in such a manner that delay in the project's completion was insignificant.

PAEC is making a steady progress to meet the target set by the government of producing 8,800 MWs of nuclear power by 2030 and 40,000 MWs by the year 2050 for the county. Pakistan's nuclear power plants, including K-2 and K-3, are under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

As far as efficiency of the PAEC operated NPPs is concerned, Pakistan's Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-2 made a national record in the country's history in 2020 by running for a year continuously, becoming the second electricity generation plant of

the country to achieve this milestone. Previously, Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-4, had made the record of running for continuous 365 days, on July 1, 2020. These records of efficient and safe operations speak volumes of the acumen and hard work of PAEC's teams of technicians, scientists and engineers. Currently, Chashma Power Plants (C-1 to C-4) are producing electricity at an average tariff of Rs. 11.16/kWh, while operating at above 95% of Capacity Factor. Whereas the total energy production from Nuclear Power Plants in Pakistan had reached 125,147 GWh till March 2022.

PAEC gives highest priority to the Safety and Security of its nuclear installations and that is why it has adopted "Safety First" as a slogan for the nuclear power plants. PAEC is cognizant of the fact that a country requires affordable and reliable energy to prosper. Pakistan's Nuclear Power Program is an important component of our quest for reliable, cost-effective and clean energy with zero carbon emission. Nuclear Power Program can also contribute significantly in mitigating effects of the climate change.

Furthermore, PAEC power plants also play an important role in the uplift of surrounding areas by improving infrastructure, creating jobs, imparting education and providing modern health facilities. Nearly 75% employees working in Chashma are locals. Similarly, K-2/K-3 projects have given employment to over 2,000 skilled local workers.

The successful coming online of K-3 would not be possible without cooperation from brotherly China especially its China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), China National Nuclear Corporation Overseas Ltd. (CNOS), China Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation (CNEIC), and Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of China. Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) also deserves appreciation for their efforts in ensuring the nuclear safety of these projects. On national level, kind patronage from Government of Pakistan, especially Strategic Plans Division (SPD), Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Power and all relevant government departments from Sindh deserves a standing ovation.

We have to realize that nuclear Power is the future of Pakistan for being second most cost-effective base-load energy source after hydel power. It is environmentally less harmful because of nearly zero emission levels and most importantly, the nuclear fuel is strategically viable for long-term storage as fuel for over one-year operation of nuclear power plants can be stored at the site, unlike furnace oil. It is therefore a reliable option in terms of securing energy security for a country. It is high time we embrace nuclear power with open arms because in Pakistan's energy mix, nuclear option deserves a far better and prominent place than it currently occupies. PAEC management also deserves nation's tribute for its untiring efforts to bring about socio-economic development of the country and successfully pursuing Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) in line with IAEA and the United Nations.

Nation's largest nuclear power generating station kicks off

by Saima Durrani



Karachi nuclear power generation station KNPGS showing K2&K3 plants

Pakistan's existing energy mix is highly dependent on expensive fuels, like oil and gas and a disproportionate reliance on the imported fuels is exerting a strain on the balance of payments besides making the energy mix unfavourable.

In this scenario who would not be relieved in Pakistan to know that on the quiet shore of Arabian sea, not far from paradise point in the mega city of Karachi, surely but steadily, a momentous project has been completed successfully i.e Pakistan's largest nuclear power producing entity, the Karachi Nuclear Power Generating Station KNPGS. With the inauguration of the Karachi nuclear power plant unit-3 K3 to the national grid and its twin K2 already operational on this station, together will add 2200 Megawatts of electricity for national consumption.

Energy, being lifeline of socio-economic development of a country, occupies a dominant position as ensuring energy security is one of the important prerequisites of national development along with water and food supply. Pakistan is facing a formidable challenge of energy shortages with the demand outweighing its supply. The energy shortage has adversely affected all sectors of the economy resulting in an annual loss of up to three per cent of the GDP. Addition of 22.00 megawatts to nation's energy mix would be a welcome and much needed step indeed.

Nuclear energy is clean and environmental friendly. Nuclear power is not only low carbon; it is also reliable when compared to other low carbon options. Compared with wind power, solar power and other energy sources, nuclear power plants operate for longer stretches for at least 12 to 18 months after a single refueling and have a relatively small footprint, making it an important part of base load energy for a country. It is estimated that K-2 & K-3 will generate about 18 billion kWh of electricity annually and meet the annual electricity demand of more than 8 million households in Pakistan which is equivalent to reducing coal use by 3.12 million tonnes annually and avoiding the emission of 8.16 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Construction of K2 and 3 has also driven the development of Pakistan's economy and related industries. The local supply of equipment in Pakistan has increased significantly. During the peak period of the project construction, it has directly provided more than 10,000 jobs for Pakistan, and indirectly created more than 40,000 jobs through the industrial chain. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission signed the contract for these two 1100 Megawatt each Generation-III nuclear power plants with China on 18th February, 2013.

The cooperation on nuclear technology between Pakistan and China spans more than three decades. China is a big player in nuclear industry and is currently building more new nuclear reactors than any other country with plans for as many as 150 by 2030. Long before this, in this decade, China will overtake the US as the operator of world's largest nuclear energy systems. The nuclear energy production cooperation between Pakistan and China hence seems not only the best possible and timely arrangement for country's energy needs but speaks volumes about the sagacity of Commission's early decision makers for their far sightedness.

These plants are based on the Generation-III technology also known as ACP-1000 or Hualong-1. This new design has incorporated the feedback from Fukushima incident. These plants are equipped with the double-wall containment design to bear the pressure from inside and can withstand the crash from large commercial aircraft from the outside. The plant life of K-2/K-3 is 60 years.

Ground breaking ceremony of this project took place in November, 2013 marking the formal start of the project leading to first concrete pour on 20th August 2014. Construction on both K-2 and K-3 units began in a sequential manner 10 months apart. Dome placement of K-3 containment building was done on September 2018, which marked the completion of construction phase and project entered the installation and commissioning phase.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, both Pakistan and China ensured that important milestone of fuel loading for K-2 was accomplished in December 2020 after getting the fuel load license from Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority. K-2 nuclear power plant started its commercial operation on 21st May, 2021. Consequently after completing the installation, the nuclear fuel for K-3 was loaded in December 2021 and it got connected to the national grid on 4th March 2022. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) with the help of China has already established a series of Nuclear power plants at Chashma, Mianwali. The Chashma Nuclear Power Generating Station (CNPGS) now comprises of four units with a total production capacity of over 1300 MW.

Nuclear power is indispensable when we think about how we can ensure a stable, affordable electricity supply while addressing climate change. All over the world stakeholders are coming to terms with nuclear new identity as clean power deserving of the same economic incentives as wind and solar.

For the world to mitigate climate change in the next 20 to 30 years, the energy sector needs to fundamentally transform into a low carbon energy supply system," says an energy systems analyst of the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA. Nuclear power's resilience and safety records make it well positioned to help the global community overcome these challenges. According to many scientists and famous philanthropist Bill Gates — nuclear energy is part of the answer to the world's climate-change problem. The market for nuclear power could triple by 2050 across the world, according to a recent study.

Foregoing this scenario, it is heartening that through aegis of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, a milestone has been achieved in the form 22, 00 Megawatt addition to country's electricity system paving the way for national development for years to come.

Nuclear Power - Environment Friendly, Reliable and Cost Effective

KANUPP 50 Years of safe operation



CNPGS (C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4)

Inauguration of 1100 MW Karachi Nuclear
Power Plant Unit- 3 (K-3) by
Prime Minister of Pakistan
TodayK-2
1100 MWK-3
1100 MWContribution of
PAEC towards
Socio-Economic
Development of
PakistanPakistan Atomic Energy Commission
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