

**NAB summons Imran**  
ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned former prime minister Imran Khan in Toshakhana case on March 9. The PTI chairman has been asked to appear before the anti-corruption watchdog on March 9 at 2:30 pm. The development comes shortly after NAB Chairman Aftab Sultan resigned from the post citing personal reasons.

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**ECP to seek guidance**  
ISLAMABAD (INP): A day after President Arif Alvi unilaterally announced Punjab and KP provincial assembly's election date, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) decided on Tuesday to consult the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) and legal experts on the matter. The decision to consult AGP on election date was taken in a meeting of ECP chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on Power Load Management.

## Coalition to abstain from by-polls, says Marriyum

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said the coalition government partners had unanimously decided not to contest the upcoming by-elections on vacant seats of the National Assembly.

Now there would be only the "fascist party" (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf), which would contest the by-polls and return to the National Assembly, the minister said in a statement. She said the "fascist party" was clueless about its political future. On the one hand, it had approached the courts for the approval of the resignations of its members of the National Assembly and on the other against their acceptance.

She questioned why the PTI MNAs had resigned en

bloc, besides dissolving the provincial assemblies, if they wanted to contest the by-elections. The "fascist party" seemed to be in an imbroglio as it was trapped among elections, parliament and courts, she added. Marriyum said Imran Khan would no more be allowed to create chaos in the country.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb also said that the government was aware of the problems being faced by the journalist community and it was taking all possible steps to solve them.

The minister was talking to a delegation of the Murree Press Club which met her here. During the meeting, the importance of tourism in Murree, Murree Press Club and other important issues including

problems faced by journalists came under discussion. The minister said the present coalition government fully believed in freedom of expression. Marriyum said that practical steps were being taken for group insurance of journalists in the country.

Important amendments were being made in the law regarding the payment of salaries of journalists, she assured. The minister listened to the problems of the delegation and assured to solve the problems faced by the working journalists including their safety and training. The delegation comprised Murree Press Club President Abdul Hameed Abbasi, Chairman Shafqat Abbasi, General Secretary Yasir Abbasi, senior members Owaisul Haq and Abuzar Abbasi.

## Pervaiz Elahi, PML-Q MPAs join PTI

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Tuesday announced that he was joining the PTI along with ten other former MPAs of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q).

Addressing a press conference in Lahore alongside PTI Vice President Fawad Chaudhry, Elahi said he had always stood with former prime minister Imran Khan during "hard and testing times". "Parvez Elahi is quitting the PML-Q and is joining the PTI," Chaudhry confirmed. Chaudhry said Elahi also met the PTI chairman in this regard, adding that the party "appreciates" the role played by the PML-Q.

"Parvez Elahi has the support of Moonis Elahi and Hussain Elahi too," he said. "There were two options. Either merge the PML-Q with PTI or they join PTI." Chaudhry welcomed the new PTI members to the party. On the occasion, he also highlighted that no one knew the whereabouts of Zaigham Khan and Muhammad Khan Bhatti so far. "We will stand together with the new PTI members," he said, adding that Elahi's name had been approved for the role of PTI's central president.

Talking to the media, Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi lashed out at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for shutting down the health card. Elahi said no such step would be taken that harms the PTI's reputation, adding that he will work "wherever Imran wishes" for him to. Responding to a question pertaining to if he was given a hint by the establishment to join PTI, Elahi said: "If the establishment has given a hint, it's good. I try that everyone moves along together."

At another point, Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi was more candid in his response, saying his son Moonis Elahi also wanted both parties to merge and proceed in politics with a consensus. "Any such merger will strengthen the party," Elahi had said. On the other hand, the PML-Q electoral college office-bearers had authorised Elahi, the party's provincial president at the time, to take decisions on behalf of the party with regard to its merger with the PTI on Imran's offer. Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi earlier visited and held a meeting with Imran at his Zaman Park residence that was attended by senior party leaders from both sides.

# The Frontier Post

## Shehbaz directs steps for improved power transmission

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to take timely and effective measures to improve the power transmission and load management systems ahead of the summer season.

The prime minister, chairing a review meeting to discuss power transmission and load management, asked the relevant departments to formulate a concrete and comprehensive plan before the onset of summer. He instructed to ensure early finalization of the strategy for better power transmission and load management ahead of summer.

Calling for minimum load shedding during Holy Ramzan, the prime minister said it was pleasing that the proportion of alternate energy and local fuels was increasing for power generation, reducing dependence on imported fuels and ultimately the import bill. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who was given a briefing on power generation and load management, called for urgent measures to fully operationalise the Haveli Bahadur Shah Power Plant.

He instructed the power and petroleum divisions and other relevant departments to improve cohesion and coordination for better power transmission and load management.

During the briefing, the prime minister was told that effective measures were being taken to put a minimum burden of the load shedding on the masses.

Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Engineer Khurram Dastgir and Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to PM Jahanzeb Khan and senior relevant officers attended the meeting.

'**Lawyers Protection Act**' to be tabled in cabinet meeting as PM gives nod: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday gave a nod to the in-principle approval of the Lawyers' Protection Act which would be tabled before the federal cabinet in this next meeting. The matter was discussed in a meeting between the prime minister and a delegation of the newly-elected office bearers of the bar councils from across the country.

The prime minister assured the lawyers that the government would hold consultations with the lawyers regarding the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary. Concerning the demand of the bar council representatives for a right to appeal on suo motu notice of the Supreme Court, the prime minister asked them to present a draft bill in this regard. He assured the bar members that the government would table the said bill in the parliament.

Prime Minister Shehbaz lauding

innumerable sacrifices rendered by the lawyers for the supremacy of constitution and law, said the legal fraternity made a huge struggle for rule of law in the country. He said the incumbent government was striving for the resolution of the issues faced by the bar councils.

He told the delegation that the previous government inflicted a huge loss on every sector and that the violations of constitution and law were also rampant at that time. The prime minister congratulated the newly-elected office bearers of the bar councils and appreciated the sacrifices by the lawyers' community for the supremacy of the constitution and law.

He said the lawyers raised their voices effectively against every unconstitutional step by the previous government for which they deserved applause. The members of the delegation apprised the prime minister of the issues confronting the Pakistan Bar Council, Islamabad High Court Bar Council as well as the provincial bar councils. The prime minister assured them of the immediate resolution of their genuine issues. Federal ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Rana Sanaullah and Rana Tanveer Hussain, special assistants to prime minister Malik Ahmed Khan and Attaullah Tarar attended the meeting.

## Defamation case: SC dismisses Imran appeal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday announced its detailed verdict on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's appeal against striking out his right of defence in a defamation suit filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against him.

The three-member bench had heard the appeal and dismissed it with a 2-1 majority while upholding the trial court orders. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, who was heading the bench, and Justice Amin Uddin Khan dismissed the appeal, whereas Justice Ayesha A Malik dissented with their verdict.

The 28-page judgment authored by Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah stated that before parting with the order, "We find it necessary to observe that interrogatories serve as a useful tool to shorten litigation and reduce litigational expenses. However, the process of interrogatories has unfortunately been abused in the present case and in fact misused to prolong the trial and add to the expenses. Such an abuse of the process of interrogatories has to be curbed with a heavy hand. "The fair use of the process of interrogatories, as said by Justice Walsh, 18 should be encouraged, for it would result in considerable saving of time and money and thus be beneficial to the parties of the case as well as to the administration of justice in general. It is high time that our civil courts prove Justice Walsh right!"

"Having examined the contentions of the parties in the light of the record of the case, we find that the contentions of the learned counsel for the respondent are correct, that the conduct

of the petitioner has remained willfully contumacious and disobedient throughout the proceedings of the case in the trial court, and that the trial court had not committed any illegality or material irregularity in the exercise of its jurisdiction by making the orders dated 20.10.2022 and 24.11.2022, therefore, the High Court has rightly declined to interfere with them in its revisional jurisdiction under Section 115, CPC. "In addition to the said conduct of the petitioner that disintiles him for the indulgence of this Court in its discretionary jurisdiction under Article 185(3) of the Constitution, we find his petitions are without substance on merits as well. The present petitions are, therefore, dismissed and the leave to appeal, declined," read the judgment.

The order further stated, "This Court has observed in the said case that the practice of granting adjournments in this manner amounts to making a mockery of the law and the court orders, and that such practice must be discontinued. We cannot, by accepting the submission, create a double standard: one for this Court and the other for the trial courts." Justice Ayesha A Malik in her dissented note stated that in a case plagued by adjournments since 2017, the court must weigh the balance between a fair trial and the legitimate grounds for the latest request for adjournment.

"The courts are entrusted with the responsibility to dispense justice, for which they are under a duty to ensure a timely trial, which duty may have been overlooked in some of the previous instances of adjourn-

ment where requests were granted mechanically and without due consideration. However, the petitioner's recent public shooting and injury at a political rally justified the grant of an adjournment for a reasonable time under the circumstances. "The right to defence cannot be struck out without considering all relevant factors, and the court must weigh the balance between a fair trial and the circumstances at hand. The order sheet shows that the court proceeded in a mechanical manner with the case, and granted numerous adjournments without so much as imposing cost so as to discourage the same.

"No doubt that the courts are overburdened with work and judges are faced with the daunting task of handling a vast number of cases every day, nevertheless, it is the court's responsibility to manage each case before it diligently by applying the provisions of the procedural law. The striking out of the petitioner's right to defence, at this stage, while ignoring the legitimate factors in play, would be a gross injustice. The balancing act of justice must be upheld, and under these circumstances, the right to a fair defence must prevail." She further stated that accordingly, the impugned order dated 07.12.2022 of the High Court and order dated 24.11.2022 of the trial court are set aside; the case is remanded to the trial court to grant reasonable opportunity to the petitioner to file answers to the interrogatories in compliance with the order of 20.10.2022 and thereafter to proceed with the case in accordance with the law.

## Aftab Sultan steps down as NAB chief

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Accountability Bureau Chairman Aftab Sultan tendered his resignation as the anti-graft watchdog chair.

Mr Sultan said he had presented his resignation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during a meeting two days ago. He claimed the premier asked him to withdraw the resignation but he refused. He said his resignation had been subsequently accepted. "I was being told to do the thing that is unacceptable to me," he said, adding: "I always worked on merit in my professional life". The outgoing NAB chief said it was not possible for him to forcefully make or end corruption cases against anyone.

In July last, the federal cabinet approved his appointment as head of the anti-graft watchdog. He had replaced former NAB chief retired Justice Javed Iqbal. It was worth mentioned here that the outgoing NAB chairman is a law graduate from the Punjab University, who later obtained LLM from the University of Cambridge and also did MSc in jurisprudence/legal studies from the University of Edinburgh. He is also known for refusing to assist the administration as the regional police officer in Sargodha during the referendum called by the late Gen Parvez Musharraf in 2002. He was later made OSD for refusing the orders.

He also investigated the Bank of Punjab case in line with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan that had rejected the NAB's probe report in the case. Mr Sultan had retired as the IB chief on April 3, 2018 after serving since June 7, 2013. He also prepared a 5,000-page report on the directives of the Supreme Court as additional inspector general of police about the famous Bank of Punjab case.

## Balochistan minister denies allegations

### Three bodies found from near his residence

QUETTA (Agencies): Balochistan's Minister for Construction and Communications Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran on Tuesday denied keeping a private jail after bullet-riddled bodies of a woman and her two sons were found from a well near his residence in the Barkhan district area last night.

The victims, a woman and two men, were identified by the police as Giran Naz, age 40-45, wife of Khan Muhammad Marri and her two sons Mohammad Nawaz, aged 20-25, and Abdul Qadir, aged 15-20.

A press release issued by the police said the bodies, which were in sacks, were found yesterday (Feb 20) at around 8pm. The station house officer (SHO) of Barkhan Police Station was informed about the corpses in the well. "As soon as the SHO was informed about the incident, he immediately reached the site with his police party," the statement said. The bodies were then recovered from the well and transported to Civil Hospital Barkhan. They were identified by Abdul Qayoom Bijrani Marri, whom the police described as an heir. The bodies were handed over to him after the completion of legal requirements, the press release stated.

Talking to media, Khan Muhammad — the husband of the slain woman and the father of the brothers — alleged that in 2019, his wife and seven children were imprisoned in Khetran's pri-

vate jail due to not testifying in a case conflict between Khetran and his son, Sardar Inam Khetran. He said that a video of his wife had surfaced on a website after which his family's bodies were found in a well in a far-flung area. Khan Muhammad alleged that his family was killed after being tortured.

A private TV channel was able to verify that the woman in the video was indeed Khan Muhammad's wife — one of the three victims. A first information report (FIR) has so far not been registered.

It added that on November 16, a police party comprising Barkhan superintendent of police (SP), sub-divisional police officer, deputy superintendent of police, SHO and an Anti-Terrorist Force team raided the Haji Kot house of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) spokesperson and Provincial Minister for Construction and Communications Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran but no one was found there. The police statement further said that on January 18, Khan Muhammad Marri had submitted a request to the relevant authorities alleging that his wife and children were kept in captivity in Khetran's private jail and were being tortured. He had appealed for their immediate recovery.

The press release said the Barkhan SP was given directions for the immediate recovery of Khan Muhammad's family, adding that he had tried obtaining information about the

abductees but to no avail. The press release elaborated that the bodies of his family were found in sacks in a well in Somiani on Monday. It added that strict action will be taken against the culprits once the victims' heirs file a case and the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

The police said they were conducting the investigation from every angle. Khan Muhammad said that the funeral prayers for the deceased were offered and the family was now heading to Quetta with the bodies to protest in front of the chief minister house or high court.

Protesters reached Quetta later in the day with the bodies and staged a sit-in outside the Red Zone while chanting slogans against the minister. Khetran, while talking to media, denied the allegation and termed the incident as "propaganda created to tarnish his political reputation". He claimed that his son was behind the "conspiracy" against him and was also responsible for the video of the deceased woman.

The minister said that he would pursue legal action against his opponents on the issue. Later, while speaking to private TV channel, Khetran reiterated that the murders were "a conspiracy against him", saying that he was in Quetta for the past 10 days and attending the assembly sessions, apart from holding meetings with the Balochistan chief minister.

## New tremors add to misery in quake-affected Turkey, Syria

ISTANBUL (Agencies): At least six people have been killed and more than 200 people injured after magnitude 6.3 and 5.8 earthquakes hit southern Turkey and across the border in Syria, two weeks after two powerful quakes killed tens of thousands of people and devastated vast swaths of the region.

Al Jazeera's Rob McBride, reporting from Defne in Turkey's Hatay province — hit by the magnitude 6.3 quake — said the latest quakes were "adding more misery and suffering to an area and people that have already suffered so much". "It happened at a time when people were coming back to buildings that have already been damaged and have been sitting through what used to be their homes looking for possessions," he said.

"People who were once living out

in the streets under tents were again outside reliving, if you like, all of the trauma of living through earthquakes ... so it is an incredible concern for everybody who is here, trying to rebuild their lives." The Hatay provincial governor's building, already damaged in the February 6 quakes, collapsed in the latest tremor that struck at 8:04pm (17:04 GMT), television footage showed. Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) said a magnitude 5.8 quake followed three minutes after the first one.

The head of AFAD said at least 294 people were injured in Monday evening's earthquake that caused panic among people already devastated by the February 6 quakes that killed more than 47,000 people in Turkey and Syria. At least 41,156 peo-

ple were killed in Turkey alone. "We were very scared. We thought the ground would tear apart," Hatay resident Aslan Gracoglu told Al Jazeera.

The earthquake was felt in Syria, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine, according to media reports. Patients were evacuated from some health facilities that had remained in operation after the massive tremors two weeks ago, as cracks had emerged in the buildings, Turkish health minister Fahrettin Koca said on Tuesday. In Hatay's Samandag district — the epicentre of the magnitude 6.3 quake — where AFAD had reported one person dead on Monday, residents said more buildings had collapsed but most of the town's residents had already fled after the initial earthquakes. Mounds of debris and discarded furniture lined the dark, abandoned streets.

Al Jazeera's Sami Zeidan, reporting from Samandag, said that at least 28 buildings had collapsed, according to official figures. Authorities said there had been 90 aftershocks since Monday's quakes, Zeidan added. Meanwhile, Syria's state news agency reported six people were injured in Aleppo from falling debris. More than 100 people have been injured, according to the Syria volunteer group, the White Helmets.

Al Jazeera's Zeina Khodr, reporting from Beirut, said in northwest Syria as well as government-controlled Aleppo, there were reports that some buildings damaged in the February 6 earthquake had collapsed. However, she noted they had yet to receive any reports of "serious injuries".

"Most of the people who were

affected two weeks ago are now living in tents outdoors. In footage or videos emerging from that region you can see people in cars and in the streets, people are frightened, are panicking," Khodr said. Syrian activist Abdul Kafi al-Hamdo, a resident of the rebel-held region of Idlib bordering Turkey, said most people had been staying away from damaged or weak buildings since the February 6 quakes. "All the people here are not safe from anything. They don't trust anything even if their buildings are very strong," he told Al Jazeera from Idlib.

"People are scared by the nights. We will have this problem for a long time." Already devastated by more than a decade of war, the northwest of Syria near the border with Turkey was the scene of the most deaths, with

more than 4,525 people killed. The area is controlled by rebels fighting against President Bashar al-Assad. Syria said 1,414 people were killed in areas under government control.

World Health Organization head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said "WHO teams are supporting health workers and mobile clinics in both countries with medical supplies so they can offer immediate care to everyone in need". The World Food Programme has been pressing the authorities to allow aid to pass from government-controlled areas. Thousands of Syrian refugees in Turkey have returned to their homes in northwest Syria to contact relatives caught up in the disaster or have sent family members back to Syria after their homes in Turkey were destroyed.





## Another fleet of 20 electric buses to be purchased for Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Secretary (CS) Dr. Mohammed Sohail Rajput while informing a delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), said that 15 to 20 more new electric buses would be purchased for Karachi to enhance local transport service. He said that the People's Bus Service (PBS) project remained successful in the city. The ADB delegation was led by Senior Urban Development Specialist Llyod Wright. Secretary Transport Sindh Abdul Haleem Shaikh was also present on the occasion.

The CS and the delegation also reached an agreement to complete the RT Red Line project on time.

Dr. Mohammed Sohail Rajput said that the Pink Bus had got praise at international level. They also discussed biogas in Malir, bus depot in Aladin Park and other issues.

The Chief Secretary gave assurance to the delegation for completion of the project on time.

The delegation also assured that ADB would provide every possible help to Sindh government and its transport department.

## Rangers arrests 5 street criminals

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in joint intelligence-based operations in Orangi Town and Surjani Town arrested 5 accused allegedly involved in street crimes and drug peddling and recovered a dummy pistol, mobile phone, a watch, cash and a motorcycle from their possession.

According to a spokesman for Rangers on Tuesday, the arrested were identified as Muhammad Siddiq alias Kabuli, Faiz, Sharjeel, Danish alias Babar and Muhammad Salman. Arrested accused Muhammad Siddiq alias Kabuli confessed that on February 2nd, this year, along with one of his accomplices, he was involved in selling the motorcycle stolen from MPR Colony in Cheeku Bagh Lasbela, Balochistan in exchange of hashish. The FIR of the incident was registered at the Orangi Town police station.

The accused further revealed that he had sold more than 20 stolen motorcycles from Orangi Town, Pirabad, Qasbah Colony and Shershah in exchange of hashish for three months while he used to sell hashish in different areas of Orangi Town and SITE.

Accused Muhammad Siddiq alias Kabuli was involved in more than 80 incidents of street crimes in different areas of the city during which he snatched 150 mobile phones and cash from citizens while the other 4 arrested accused also confessed their involvement in several street crimes in different areas. The arrested accused along with the recovered dummy pistol and stolen goods had been handed over to the police for further legal action.

# Only ECP can announce election date: Kaira

LAHORE (APP): Advisor to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira said on Tuesday that it was a constitutional duty of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and not of the government or any other institution, to announce the date for elections in the country.

Addressing a press conference at Governor's House, he said that only the ECP could announce the election date, adding that as per the country's parliamentary system, crucial decisions could be taken by the federal government. The role of governors was to implement the decisions, made by the provincial governments, he added.

He said that as per the Constitution, the general election should be held within 90 days after dissolution of the assemblies, but at the same time, it was also a constitutional clause that only caretaker governments would ensure holding of elections.

He mentioned that after dissolution of the provincial assembly of Punjab, no consensus was reached on appointment of a caretaker chief minister; therefore, the ECP had to appoint the caretaker CM. Now it was a responsibility of the ECP, being a constitutional body, to take other relevant decisions, he added.

The advisor said that transparent electoral process could not be ensured if elections were held only in two provinces, and there were no elections for the National Assembly and two other provinces. He said that the ECP or courts had complete authority to take any decision on elections in the country.

Qamar Zaman Kaira said that it was a need of the hour to bring about reforms in various sectors, including the political system, electoral process and the mechanism for appointment of judges, to bridge loopholes and end anomalies in the law. He said that courts' decisions should be respected, but criticism could be done on the judicial decisions.

Regarding PTI chief's bail, Kaira said that Imran Khan had appeared before the court after a long drama and creating chaos. Later on, he got the protective bail.

However, he added, his behaviour was questionable, as to how come an accused could appear before a court in the form of a rally. The advisor said that Imran Khan's Jail Bhao Tehreek [court arrest movement] would prove to be a failure, as leaders like Imran Khan could not run such sort of campaigns.

The advisor said that fascism sort of attitude should be discouraged in politics, adding that it was time for politicians to look into their mistakes and bring reforms in political system as the country was passing through difficult times.

He also stressed the need for rooting out the causes of terrorism, saying that the people of Pakistan, along with the security forces, had rendered great sacrifices in the war against terrorism. He said the issue should not be politicised by anyone. "We are proud of our martyrs who laid down their lives in the war against terrorism," he asserted. To a question, Qamar Zaman Kaira said that general election should not be delayed and held during the current year 2023. But if there was any anomaly or issue, it should be addressed first for holding transparent elections. He said that population census would be completed within next two months, which could help identify proper representation of people in the electoral process.

To another query, the advisor said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition government was aware of inflation, but it had to take difficult decisions to steer the country out of crises and fulfill the commitments, made by the previous PTI government with the International Monetary Fund. He said structural reforms would soon be in place to provide relief to the common man and target those who either did not pay or pay less taxes. Kaira said that the PDM government had sacrificed its political capital for betterment of the country, as it took difficult decisions for the future of coming generations, adding that all-out efforts were being made to provide maximum relief to masses.

PPP senior leader Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmad was also present.

## Minister visits Mian Mir Shrine

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Minister for Aqaf and Religious Affairs, Zakat and Ushr Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir visited the shrine of eminent Sufi Hazrat Mian Mir (RA), here on Tuesday.

Secretary Aqaf and Religious Affairs Punjab Dr. Tahir Raza Bukhari was also present on the occasion.

The Minister laid floral wreath on the grave of Hazrat Mian Mir (RA) and recited Fataha. He visited different parts of the shrine and reviewed the provision of facilities to the devotees under the management of Aqaf department.

The Minister was briefed by the Aqaf authorities on the renovation of Darbar Hazrat Mian Mir. Barrister Syed Azfar Ali

Nasir while speaking on this occasion said that the mission of harmony and brotherhood of a great spiritual figure like Hazrat Mian Mir should be carried forward, adding, "The country is in dire need of solidarity and unity at this time." The message of inter-faith harmony must be spread from the 'mihrab and minber', he added.

He said that the entire Pakistani nation was united to help the earthquake victims of Türkiye and Syria. Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir appealed that the nation should step up and help their Turkish brothers in difficult time. "The Punjab government will ensure the provision of maximum facilities to the public during Ramadan," he said.

# Lands retrieved on orders of the ombudsman Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Following the Ombudsman Punjab Maj (r) Azam Suleman Khan's directions, in response to public grievances, about the illegal occupancy of government lands, three properties worth Rs. 13.6 million reclaimed in different districts.

According to a spokesman of Ombudsman Punjab office here on Tuesday, seven kanal 10 marla plot in Sargodha valued at Rs.3.5 million, 11-marla plot in Jhang worth Rs. 7 million, and a six-kanal four-marla plot in Burewala tehsil with a market value of Rs.3.1 million were retrieved.

While giving details of the relief provided to the plaintiffs, the spokesperson added that the Sialkot administration has given possession of a 20-marla plot of 14 million rupees to its legitimate owner after on Farnaz Jillani approached the ombuds-

man office.

Meanwhile, the spokesman informed that the ombudsman office moderated to ensure that the ownership of a 21.1 kanal land of Muhammad Maqsood of Pasrur tehsil was accurately documented in the revenue record. The market value of this land was assessed to be over Rs. 5.5 million.

Alongside, Assistant Commissioner Pasrur has initiated a departmental inquiry against patwari under the PEEDA Act, 2006 for issuing the wrong fard and sought a report from the tehsildar within 60 days.

In addition, the Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) has granted possession of a three-marla plot in DG Khan to Sobia Iqbal, a complainant based in Multan, following the intervention of the ombudsman office, concluded the spokesperson.



LAHORE: Children participates in a ceremony outside the Press Club on the occasion of Punjabi Day.

# CM holds follow-up meeting for Jashan-e-Baharan arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi convened a follow-up meeting at his office to review the arrangements for the coming Jashan-e-Baharan festivities. Provincial ministers- Dr Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Bilal Afzal, Ibrahim Murad, Amir Mir, ACS, secretaries of local government, housing, higher education, school

education, information and tourism departments, commissioner and deputy commissioner Lahore, DG local government, DG PHA, DGPR, CEO of Lahore Waste Management Company and others attended the meeting.

The chief minister emphasized the importance of ensuring top-notch arrangements for the coming spring festival in various cities, including Lahore. He announced that marathon race in the city which hadn't been held for a long time, would be organized and made a permanent feature of the Jashan-e-Baharan festival.

Additionally, citizens would be treated to exceptional entertainment through the horse and cattle show, which would include spectacular fireworks and javelin competitions.

Moreover, a 7-day long Mehfil-e-Sama would be organized at the Data

Darbar Complex during Jashan-e-Baharan to provide a cultural and spiritual experience for everyone.

Furthermore, the CM announced that canal and main city roads would be decorated tastefully and an exciting food festival would be held at Jilani Park, while a thrilling circus would be organized at Greater Iqbal Park. To add to the festivities, well-known singers would also be invited to perform at music and Sufi nights during Jashan-e-Baharan.

The CM emphasized the importance of projecting the celebrations in their best light to attract maximum number of visitors.

# 'Bachat bazaars' to be set up in different areas of Karachi ahead of Ramazan

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman on Tuesday said that before the holy month of Ramzan, 'Bachat bazars' will be set up in different areas of the city providing food and utility items at X-mill prices to facilitate the citizens. He said this in his office during the briefing of the departments related to the revenue collection of KMC.

He said that the Bureau of Supply and Prices and other relevant institutions will also be contacted in this regard, and steps will be taken to facilitate and improve such markets in the city.

Senior Director Enterprise and Investment Promotion (E&IP) Department Mohammad Saleem, Senior Director Culture and Sports Saif Abbas Hasni and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman was briefed about the recovery situation of the KMC, he directed the KMC revenue departments to further improve the recovery.

In the briefing presented by the E&IP department, it was stated that 155 bachat bazaars are being set up in different districts of the city, of which 42 bazaars are in Korangi district, 30 bazaars in Malir, 28 bazaars in Central, 25 in Kemari, 23 bazaars in West, Five in East and two in South district where a large number of citizens come to buy food items and other necessities of life. For these bazaars, permission is obtained from the Bureau of Supply and Prices, the concerned SSP and the Deputy Commissioner of the area.

Dr. Syed Saif directed the department that steps should be taken to increase the rent of these bazaars with the coordination of bachat bazaars association. He said every possible effort should be made to achieve the objectives under which these markets are established and citizens should be facilitated in purchasing necessities at reasonable rates in a neat and clean environment.

He said that the majority of the cit-

izens use these markets and since they are close to their residences, they are also easy to access.

In the briefing by the Culture and Sports department, the administrator was informed about the details regarding the cultural programmes, and enhancement of sports facilities at KMC Sports Complex and Women's Sports Complex.

While reviewing the events organized there Administrator Karachi directed that sports facilities should be improved by restoring the Landhi Sports Complex, he said that it is important to provide opportunities for positive and healthy activities to the youth, and for this, there is a need to work at all levels, the main work of KMC is municipal services, however, measures should also be taken for recreational activities. He said that measures should be suggested to improve the revenue condition and the staff responsible for recovery should be activated so as to achieve the targets given in the budget of KMC.

# Killing of any non-Muslim cannot be justified under any circumstances: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan had clearly determined the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims therefore, no individual, group, or organization should cross their constitutional parameters, he added.

He said killing of any non-Muslim could not be justified under any circumstances nor such action could be supported or endorsed in anyway.

He said it was not lawful to build or demolish any worship place without seeking legal permission, adding that some incidents publicized in a section of media were meant to defame Pakistan in the comity of nations.

Ashrafi proposed the government to take immediate action against those individuals, groups or organizations that challenged the writ of the state.

He said the PUC leadership strongly condemned the killing of a minority person in Sarai Alamgir (Jhelum) in recent days and urged the Punjab government to fulfil its constitutional responsibility in bringing out the facts into the matter.

He said harassment of an individual or minority group could not be allowed as the Constitution and Islamic teachings were clear in this regard.

Ashrafi, during the joint

statement, was flanked by Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hasher, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Ubaidullah Gormani, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Patafi, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awam, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Allama Tahir Al Hasan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Abdul Sattar, Maulana Aslam Siddiqui, and Maulana Saad Ullah Shafiq.

## Consultancy study for running 30 electric buses in city completed

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport Company has completed a consultancy study regarding public transport in different cities of Punjab, and in the initial phase, 25 to 30 electric buses will run on an important route in the provincial capital. Punjab Transport Company will also build quality infrastructure along with eco-friendly buses to provide international quality travel facilities in other cities of Punjab, said Chief Executive Officer Punjab Transport Company Faig Ahmed in a press statement issued here on Tuesday.

# Practical steps under way to make edu institutes drug-free: commissioner

LAHORE (APP): Consultant Anti-Narcotics Campaign Syed Zulfiqar Hussain and a large number of teachers and students attended the seminar.

The commissioner highlighted that narcotics were being used as a weapon against the youth in the modern hybrid warfare, and it was the individual responsibility of everyone to fight the war and protect students from drugs use.

Randhawa said that organised anti-narcotics campaign would be con-

ducted in the educational institutes across the division to make the universities and colleges smoke-free and drugs-free. Female students and teachers could play effective role to create awareness among the public about menace of drug-addiction.

Principal Prof Dr Naima Khurshid said that an awareness campaign about the drug addiction had been started from the college and would be extended to other colleges of the city.



LAHORE: Visitors viewing the displayed stuff during exhibition related to Sufi Tabassum and Faiz Ahmed Faiz at Lahore Museum.





## Afridi assures payment of compensation to traders

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement, Taj Mohammad Afridi has assured the trading community of Waziristan regarding resolution of their problems especially of ensuring timely payment of compensation to them.

He was talking to a delegation of the Waziristan Trade Union, which called on him here at the Civil Secretariat on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the problems relating to the rehabilitation of the trade centres in North Waziristan and delay in the payment of compensation to redress their financial losses.

The provincial minister said that he is making all-out efforts for promotion of business activities and resolution of the problems of the trading community of the newly merged districts. He also stressed on the people to play their due role beside the efforts of the provincial government.

## HERA issues notices to 2 law colleges

PESHAWAR (APP): Higher Education Regulatory Authority (HERA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued notices to Ayub Law College, Safdar Building Hazara Highway, Haripur and Frontier Law College, Peshawar Cantonment on Tuesday to register themselves with the authority under the concerned law within a period of two weeks.

The notices further said that these institutions were already issued directives. But, they were not followed. Therefore, they have been issued last notice with the warning that in case of failure, legal proceedings would be initiated against them, which beside imposition of cash penalty and closure of these colleges also include sending their cases to investigative agencies for conducting investigation against them for inflicting loss to the public exchequer.

Through the notice, parents of the students have also been warned against enrollment in such unregistered institutions.

## Price-list of vegetable, fruit issued

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar issued price-list of vegetable and fruit after supervision of bidding in fruit and vegetable markets here on Tuesday morning.

AAC, Engineer Mishbah Waheed visited the fruit and vegetable markets during the wee hours and supervised the bidding process. DC Peshawar has said that the purpose of the monitoring of bidding is to control artificial price-hike and directed stern action against profiteers.

# Countering violent extremism: CoE CVE hold scholarly dialogue

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CoE CVE) in collaboration with community resilience activity north (CRA-North) on Tuesday organized a two-day scholarly dialogue on countering violent extremism.

Caretaker minister for higher education Justice retired Irshad Qaisar and Secretary for higher education Muhammad Daud Khan participated in the dialogues.

The experts representing different sectors of society including political figures, religious leaders, media persons, civil society organizations (CSOs), academic researchers, Scholars, and Legal Experts have also participated in the event.

Terming this dialogue, the first of its kind, the Chief Coordination Officer

of the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Dr. Ayaz Khan said that this dialogue primarily aims to facilitate the participants' discussions on the recent legislation forming the 'Research-Based Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism in KP' and related components such as CVE research activities, CVE strategies, and action plans.

Secretary for higher education Muhammad Daud Khan in his opening remarks told that in the dialogue discussions on Violent Extremism drivers and causes of Extremist trends; counter violent extremism (CVE) policy framework and implementation mechanism including its communications management approaches, countering violent extremism practices in Pakistan, roles of different

sectors of KP society for CVE, CVE engagement within educational institutions, and other relevant topics such as peace, inter-faith harmony, social cohesion, and civic engagement was held."

Caretaker Minister Irshad Qaisar in her concluding remarks added that the session assisted the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism in gathering baseline information regarding the aforementioned issues and better understanding of areas of collaboration that it can pursue as a future engagement with these experts.

The center will also compile a report by consolidating the experts' opinions on how the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism can plan and develop counter-violent extremism activities in the KP Province, he added.



PESHAWAR: PTI's Regional Secretary and former provincial minister Kamran Bangash leading a rally.

## PIC and PID to host documentary filmmaking workshop for journalists

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Information Center and Press Information Department Peshawar to host documentary filmmaking workshop for journalists on 22nd 23rd February 2023 in which prominent trainers including Muhammad Fahim (Senior anchor person Mashriq TV), Safi Ullah Gul (Bureau Chief Suno TV), and Tahir Mahmood (Controller International Relation PTV Headquarter Islamabad) will provide their services as trainers in this workshop.

Pakistan Information Center and Press Information Department Peshawar have organized a "Documentary Film Making" workshop at Peshawar Press Club on February 22 and 23, 2023. In this training workshop, media personnel will learn technical skills required for producing a 5 to 10-minute video project using a camera, including

different aspects of documentary filmmaking such as production, direction, and storytelling.

Pakistan Information Center is a subsidiary of Press Information Department. It works under the administration of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan. Pakistan Information Centers have been established in seven different cities in Pakistan, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Muzaffarabad, Quetta and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan Information Center aims to bring the journalism industry at par with the demands of the modern era. In order to achieve this goal, Pakistan Information Center will organize training workshops to refine the skills of journalists and make efforts to bring their qualifications up to international standards; so that the country's journalists can compete with the rest of the world in

the field of journalism. In this regard, Pakistan Information Center and Press Information Department Peshawar have organized training workshops under three different titles, including "Mobile Journalism," "Investigative Reporting," and "Digital Media Reporting and Verification" in the first phase.

Training workshops on various topics are being organized in other cities, including mobile journalism, important national issues and challenging situations such as security, war/conflict, hybrid warfare, foreign affairs, terrorism, climate change, national disasters, gender issues, special training on children's issues, health, education, election reporting, news authenticity and tools to counter fake news and anti-state propaganda.

More than 250 journalists will be trained in these trainings. Pakistan Information Center has conducted about twenty two (22) training workshops since its inception, in which more than 850 journalists have been trained.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting to review law and order situation.

## Mayor inaugurates plantation campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): The Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali on Tuesday formally inaugurated the plantation campaign by planting saplings in Shalimar Garden.

A ceremony was held which was attended by Director East Syed Waqas Ali Shah, Assistant Director Administration Muhammad Owais Khan, Director Garden Rehman Khattak, Garden Supervisor Muhammad Ali, Chairman Imran Naveed, Chairman Saeed Ahmed, Chairman Shah Faisal and others.

Haji Zubair Ali while planting the sapling said that trees make the environment beautiful and pleasing. He said that trees are valuable asset because it provide us oxygen.

On this occasion, he said that a plantation drive will be conducted in all the public gardens of the metropolitan.

He urged upon people to actively participate in the plantation drive and make the environment good.

The Mayor also issued directives for the renovation of the Mosque in the Shalimar garden.

## Stock of forbidden syringes recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal and provincial drug control teams and district administration conducted a joint raid in a pharmaceutical factory in Hayatabad and recovered huge stock of 3ml and 5 ml syringes that were being declared unsuitable for sale.

According to details, teams of drug control task force led by Chief Drug Inspector Peshawar recovered stock of 3ml and 5 ml syringes from S/M Frontier Pharmaceuticals Private Limited Hayatabad industrial Estate.

Drug control authorities confiscated stock of syringes and all the relative record. Factory has also been sealed under DRAP Act 1976 and case has been registered against owners of the factory.

It is worth mentioning that registration of 3ml and 5ml syringes has been cancelled by Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan forbidding its manufacturing and sale in market.

Directorate General Drug Control has also warned strict action against those involved in selling and manufacturing unregistered medicines and syringes.

## Foreign Self Finance: PHC directs KMU to decide within 10 days

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Musht Hilali and Justice Abdul Shakoor ordered Khyber Medical University decide application of student on foreign seat within 10 days, on Tuesday.

The counsel Tariq Afghan Advocate informed PHC that petitioner is citizen of United States of America while appeared

Medical and Dental College Aptitude Test while applied under Foreign Self Finance Scheme at KMU.

The counsel argued that petitioner was excluded from final merit list because petitioner didn't submitted Inter Boards Chairmen Committee equivalency certificate.

He added that petitioner submitted IBCC certificate laterally because he obtained it late but KMU didn't entertained it.

The counsel Tariq Afghan Advocate argued that petitioner has also submitted application to KMU committee but to no veil and requested that court should direct varsity administration to decide the case.

The divisional bench of PHC comprised of Justice Musht Hilali and Justice Abdul Shakoor ordered KMU to decide the applicant on Foreign Finance Scheme within 10 days.

## PDMA releases Rs.352.2m for operation affectees

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released a fund of Rs.352.4 million in head of cash financial assistance and provision of ratio to the affectees of operation zarb-azb in North Waziristan, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The fund would be distributed amongst about 18000 registered and verified affected families through message on their

mobile SIMs.

According to the DG PDMA Sharif Hussain, it is 102th installment of the funds regularly released for the operation affected people of North Waziristan on a monthly basis.

Those affectees also include about 11000 those families, who have recently repatriated from Afghanistan through Ghulam Khan Border. NADRA has already completed their verification.

Each affected family is being paid an amount of Rs.12000/- in head of cash financial assistance and another amount of Rs.8000/- in head of ratio to mitigate their financial woes.

DG PDMA has said that about 18000 affected families are still awaiting repatriation to their native localities and most of them hail from Data Khel area of North Waziristan while about 0.1 million families have been returned to their homes.

## Model status given to Ghazi Street



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Water Supply and Sanitation Company Peshawar (WSSP) has given the model status to Ghazi Street in Peshawar Neighborhood Council-1 Afridi Garhi.

In this regard, WSSP's Field Officer Izzatullah Khan and Community Development Officer Qaiser Ali along with other officials handed over flower racks and other decoration stuff on behalf of WSSP and UNICEF during a ceremony at Ghazi Street on Tuesday.

The goods were given to Neighborhood Chairman

Haji Kamran Nazir and the elders of the area who were also made aware of social responsibilities on health and cleanliness.

Haji Kamran Nazir thanked the WSSP officials for awarding the status of Model Street to a street of his Neighborhood Council for the first time and assured that he would endeavor his level best to convert all the streets of this neighborhood into model streets with the active support of the locals wherein all civic facilities including the sanitation and clean drinking water would be made available in there.

On this occasion, it was revealed that in view of frequent power outages in Afridi Garhi Neighborhood Council, the construction of a overhead water tank adjacent to the tubewell is also indispensable to ensure uninterrupted supply of hygienic water to the dense population of the area.

It was further told that due to meager financial resources of the WSSP, this scheme will be included in the next ADP through the KP City Improvement Project being executed for uplifting of 14 major cities of the province including Peshawar city.

## Pesco notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Pesco on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 220 KV Bannu Grid Station on 22nd and 23rd February from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. resultantly consumers of 132 KV Gurguri, Tall, Parachinar, Guljoo, Sadda and Alizai feeders will face partial load-shedding.

It said the power supply will also remain suspended from 500KV Sheikh Muha-

mmadi grid station on 22nd and 23rd February from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of 132 KV Peshawar City, Pabbi, Peshawar Industrial, Jamrud, Peshawar University, Peshawar Cantt, Kohat and KDA feeders will face partial load-shedding. The power supply will also remain suspended from 220KV Mardan Grid Station on 22nd to 23rd February from 11 a.m. to 01 p.m. resultantly consumer of 132KV

Dhobian, Hussain, Daggar, Swabi, Gadoon Amazai Mardan-3, Charsadda, Rajjar, Tangi, Shahqadar and Shahibagh feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended on 132 KV Kohat Grid Station on 22nd February from 09 a.m. to 02 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11KV KDA, City-1, City-5, Hangu Road, Usterzai and Auxiliary feeders will face inconvenience.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Commissioner Pakistan Boys Scouts Association Sardar Waqar Shahzad welcomed United Nations resident Coordinator humanitarian aid with dignitaries for visiting flood's victims, on Tuesday.

UN humanitarian assistance resident Coordinator Julien Hameis along with dignitaries visited Swat. Commissioner Pakistan Boys Scouts Association said the visit was much needed and looked forward.

The devastating flood has just passed last year from these beautiful valleys, and the fear of earthquake in our areas is renewed in mind of people of Swat due to the current earthquake in Turkiya and Syria.

The Commissioner claimed that we need to be prepared for emergencies, before they strike. Your visit today to Swat is a great step forward towards

emergency preparedness of this area and people which are many times effected by the natural disasters.

This time when the flood hit our area and people, most of our people realized that the best way to deal with emergency is to get ready for it, months and years before it strikes. We have sympathy towards Syria and Turkiya and we need to learn from the difficulties they face today, which can happen to anyone anytime.

During the flood and earthquake we realized and I have mentioned it at concerned forums and to the concerned authorities, that starting from the north most remote hills of swat where the River Swat Starts to the end of Malakand division, we need resources properly allocated and get our people trained to deal with upcoming emergencies. We need to stock dry packed food, tents, first aid packages, life saving drugs, access rope systems, com-

munication systems, earth moving equipment etc at strategically impotent safe places that can be used during such emergencies.

We need to train people in first aid, rope access in every disaster hit union council of swat to provide helping hand during emergencies. Swat needs to make flood plans for Swat on historical data, and advise people make flood and earthquake resistant homes and infrastructure in future to protect them and the area.

An early flood warning system can save thousands of lives and billions of rupees of property.

I would like to ensure, the collaboration, and participation from the community and our people to get trained, store and supply emergency resources at different locations.

These people and material stocks can be great help to Swat, and we can help other neighboring districts Malakand, Buner, other



province. We can also give helping hand to UN inter-

nationally and can volunteer upon capacity building.



PESHAWAR: Activates of All Pakistan PTCL Pension Trust hold protest in favour of their demands.





## In brief

### Man kills wife in Abbottabad F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: A man shot dead his wife in the village of Kukmang, in the limits of Nawashahr police station and managed to escape after committing the crime on Tuesday. According to the police spokesman, the accused, identified as Muhammad Iqbal Qureshi, shot dead his 21-year-old wife over a domestic dispute and managed to flee the scene. The Nawanshar police reached the spot and shifted the body of the woman to Ayub Medical Complex (AMC) Abbottabad for medical examination. After completion of medico-legal formalities, the body was then handed over to the heirs. Police registered a case under section 302. Muhammad Iqbal Qureshi is still at large.

### Annual Parent's Day held F.P. Report

KOHAT: A colorful ceremony of the 27th Annual Parent's Day was held at Garrison Cadet College Kohat on Tuesday. Major General Muhammad Ahsan Khattak, General officer Commander Kohat graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Cadets displayed splendour performance in military drills, Gymnastics and Taekwondo. GOC distributed medals and shields amongst the outstanding cadets. Garrison Cadet College was established in 1993 and remains a prime institution to impart quality education to student from across the country. The ceremony was attended by parents of the cadets, civil and military officials.

### Two including woman killed F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: At least two persons including a woman were killed in separate incidents in Charsadda district, police said on Tuesday. In the first incident, a 65-year-old man identified as Ahmad Shah, son of Kiramat Shan, resident of Gudbana, Otmanzai was killed over a property dispute. Son of the deceased, Musaddiq Shah told police that his father was allegedly shot dead by Muhammad Ayaz, Adnan and their father Humayun over a dispute related to property ownership. In the second incident, a man poisoned his wife to death in Dosara area. The complainant, Farman Ali, brother of the deceased woman, told police that his sister died after taking some medicines. He said when he took his sister to the hospital, it was confirmed that she was poisoned. He alleged that his brother-in-law, Abdul Khaliq gave poison to his sister. Police have registered both the cases and started investigation.

### Food security seminar held Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Kohat Nutrition International (KNI) organized seminar on National Food Security in which delegation from different associations were present. During the seminar members of Flour Mill Association, dealers, Kohat chamber of Commerce, Nutrition International Professional addressed the participants. Programs Manager Intiaz Ali Shah thanked all the participants for attending the seminar. On that occasion Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mill Association Muhammad Iqbal said that KP need iron flour. He more said if Government or Nutrition International support than the flour mill will start fortification in Punjan or in all Pakistan.

# Parliament has become a club of landlords and capitalists: JI

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has said that democracy in Pakistan has become a joke and the parliament is unfortunately a club of feudal and capitalists. The country cannot progress until intervention of judges, generals and bureaucrats in politics is ended. The JI chief expressed these views while addressing a lawyers' function at the district bar Timergara as chief guest here on Tuesday. The function attended by members of the bar was also addressed by the bar president Tariq Khan, general secretary Asadullah Khan and others.

Siraj said the holding of by-election was not the solution to the problems. He suggested the government should hold fresh elections for the national and provincial assemblies on the same day. He said the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf had made the elections as a joke because its members voluntarily resigned from the assemblies but now they wanted to contest the elections. He said that billions would be wasted on the conduction of by-elections in the country that was a wasteful exercise.

The JI chief said that 18 personalities in Pakistan including Mian Nawaz Sharif, Imran Khan, Asif Ali Zardari, Malik Riaz etc had more than Rs 4000 billion declared assets which were enough for the nation if spent honestly. He regretted that having such wealthy people in the country the rulers had been begging from others which was a shame. He said those rich persons should come forward and make a sacrifice for the nation. Siraj alleged the country was being ruled by the servants of the East India Company. He said the world was progressing while Pakistan faced a downfall for the last 76 years.

The JI chief said the nation had lost trust over the judicial system. He



said that justice had never been in courts and the judges had been appealing to the former premier to appear before the court that showed the weakness of courts in the country. He alleged the parliament, judiciary and media were enslaved. He said that political and economic instability was on its peak while the institutions failed to overcome the crises. He said the public defenders felt insecurity and the influential were roaming in their bullet proof vehicles due to deteriorating law and order situation.

The JI chief asked the legal fraternity to play their active role in the establishment of rule of law and national integrity. He said the country needed a true and sincere leadership as the previous ones had put it at stake. He said that the JI could steer the country out of crises if it was given a chance to rule. He said they

would never depend on the IMF and World Bank if they came into power.

Addressing a workers' convention at the famous Qila Masjid in Munda the JI chief asked the party workers to speed up their efforts for conveying the message of his party. He said that it was the JI that would rid the nation from the IMF grabs and put the country on the path of development and prosperity due to its honest and Pakistan-made leadership. He said the poor people were being taxed while billions were spent on ministers' luxuries. The JI chief alleged that government jobs were sold from Rs 1 million to Rs 1.6 million during the PTI government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the last five years. He said the inflation and devaluation of Pakistani currency had forced the poor to commit suicide while the rulers did nothing to provide relief to them.

## Police arrests alleged murderer of transgender

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Police arrested alleged murder involved killing of transgender Mah Noor in Mingora last night within 10 hours of the offense. When the relatives refused to take the dead body of the eunuch and was buried in Swat. Mah Noor was shot by his friend for dancing.

According to the spokesperson of Malakand Region Police, a special team was formed under the supervision of RPO Sajjad Khan and DPO Shafiullah Gandapur, who arrested the accused Nawab ten hours after the murder. DPO Swat Shafiullah Gandapur says that Transgenders are part of our community, and full justice will be provided to them.

Transgender Osama alias Mah Noor was shot on Sunday along with other associates in Taj Chowk of Mingora, as a result of which Mah Noor was killed while Gulalai was injured. The funeral prayer of the deceased transgender was performed at Mingora. It was the first time that the funeral prayers of a trans-

gender were attended in large numbers by the people of the area, including police officers.

Others from the transgender community say that we have full faith in the police to get them justice. "If justice is neglected, we will come out on strong protest", they added. Transgender Saba while speaking said that Mah Noor and the accused Nawab were friends, the accused had forbidden Mah Noor from dancing, when Mah Noor was returning after attending a function when this incident took place. According to Saba, Mah Noor's relatives living in Karachi were informed that they refused to participate in the funeral and said that the deceased should not be sent to Karachi but should be buried there. After which we arranged the burial here.

According to Transgender Alliance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this is the second incident of this year in which a transgender has been killed, while 100 transgenders have been killed since 2015. Farzana Riaz, said

that the police have fully cooperated with us in this incident and we hope that the accused will be brought to justice.

"People from the area also participated in our funeral and people are also coming to recite Fatiha, while the imam of the mosque also performed the funeral without any hesitation". Farzana added. According to Farzana Riaz, Syed Waliullah Shah, Zahoor Ahmad, Fida Muhammad, Pir Taj Mir Shah, Muhammad Shahid and Nasir Khan passed resolution for registration of the press club. The registration procedure was concluded by former president NPC Mushtaq Paracha while the cabinet along with governing body paid thank to him for his services to the community.

NPC paid thanks to Secretary information and Secretary Industries for concluding registration procedure on priority basis. Registrar granted registration certificate to former president Mushtaq Paracha of NPC. In the previous cases also, the relatives of transgenders did not accept their dead bodies, while later the family members of transgender make agreements with the accused in exchange for money and make us enemies of the accused. "We do the FIR, we do the burial, but we are not included in the agreements." The civil society of Swat has also condemned the killing of the transgender and has demanded from the top police officials that the arrested accused should be severely punished so that such actions can be prevented in the future.

## Mother Language Day observes in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: In connection with International Mother Language Day, a walk was conducted here in Landi Kotal bazaar on Tuesday aimed to approve mother language as a medium of education in schools.

It is to be mentioned here that the Day was chosen by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1999 to commemorate the killing of four students in Dhaka on Feb 21, 1952. Under the banner of Khyber Adabi Malgari, Landi

Kotal chapter, local poets and writers participated in the awareness walk carried out from Bacha Khan Square to local press club.

Addressing on the occasion speakers including Dr Kaleem, Dr Atif Parhar and others shed light on different aspects of the importance of mother language and said the government had ignored the importance of the mother tongue that had created a sense of deprivation among the speakers of various local languages. Mother languages were the identity of communities and reflected the culture and traditions of the natives.

They urged the private educational institutions to implement the Pashto subject as compulsory one and stressed the local traders and shopkeepers to write their sign boards in their mother language. They maintained that celebration of the language day was aimed to develop better understanding among different ethnic groups in the country. The speakers said that the adoption of the mother languages as medium of instruction in schools would develop the local languages and would also help increase literacy rate in the country.

## Women with disability to be promoted

F.P. Report

LODHARAN: The uplift project for women with disability which was undertaken under the auspices of Bedari and CBM, public interest organizations working for the rights of women and children. Divisional Director of Social Welfare Multan Saleem Raza stated in his address that Bedari and CBM had provided valuable services over the past three years by facilitating women and girls with in getting their disability certificates and special identity cards, which has resulted in hundreds of women with disabilities receiving national ID cards.

He also commended the provision of wheelchairs in Multan and Muzaffargarh for girls and women coming for medical board

appointments, as it has greatly improved their mobility. Previously, people had to carry their female disabled relatives in their arms and go around the hospital. Sabin Gul, a former Member of the Provincial Assembly, spoke about how Bedari in Multan and Muzaffargarh had brought the issue of disability to the Provincial Assembly, which motivated the members of the Assembly to make better legislation for these important members of society. Dr. Iram Batul Awan, the Head of the Gender Department at Bahauddin Zakariya University, expressed her happiness that seminars for women with disabilities were being held in the university in collaboration with CBM, and she had been working with Bedari since she was a student.

## NPC get registered under Society Act 1860 Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Nowshera Press Club (NPC) has been registered under Society Act 1860 which has made mandatory by government and international organization for cooperation.

According to details, the newly elected cabinet of NPC president Jahanzeb Khattak, Syed Qasim Shah, Syed Waliullah Shah, Zahoor Ahmad, Fida Muhammad, Pir Taj Mir Shah, Muhammad Shahid and Nasir Khan passed resolution for registration of the press club. The registration procedure was concluded by former president NPC Mushtaq Paracha while the cabinet along with governing body paid thank to him for his services to the community.

NPC paid thanks to Secretary information and Secretary Industries for concluding registration procedure on priority basis. Registrar granted registration certificate to former president Mushtaq Paracha of NPC.

## Arrangements for Digital Census 2023 discussed F.P. Report

MALAKAND: Additional Deputy Commissioner Malakand, Abdul Wali Khan Tuesday chaired a meeting to discuss security arrangements for Digital Census 2023. The meeting was also attended by concerned officials of district administration and representatives of health and police department.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Wali Khan directed assistant commissioners to provide needed assistance to staff of Bureau of Statistics highlighting significance of completing the task with professionalism and dedication. He said that census would provide a base to conduct all the future development work and allocation of funds.

Coordinator Census Lower Dir told the meeting that process would start from 1st of March for which all the arrangements have been finalized. The meeting also directed District Education Officer to ensure distribution of tablets till 24th February while NADRA was stressed to timely update maps and applications. Police authorities also assured full cooperation and security cover to staff deputed to work in Census 2023.

## Muqam inaugurates provision of gas facility in Katlang

F.P. Report

KATLANG: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage & Culture Division and President of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Emir Muqam has said that Muslim League (N) had approved the inaugurated project during its last government to solve this long-standing issue of Katlang. He said that PTI, while in power, interrupted work on most of such development projects across the province; but under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Muslim League (N) puts the welfare of the public as its first priority and today has brought this gift to the people of Katlang.

The adviser said that this project was approved by Quaid Nawaz Sharif himself as a result of the efforts of Rahimullah Yousafzai (Late) and started work on it, but PTI stopped progress on the project and deprived the people of this gift. He said that the people of Katlang will soon benefit from this project. He further said that there should be same law for all in the country, frustration has spread amongst the prisoners that are in jails and it is regrettable that the highest courts are opened for the attendance of a single per-



son at 8 pm.

The advisor added that it is regrettable to have a separate law for a lawbreaking president, prime minister, speaker and deputy speaker and a separate law for the common man.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that the inflation burdening the people of Pakistan today speaks volumes of the performance of Imran and his incompetent team. He further added that Imran will have to account for his false statements, who once used to talk about American conspiracy and today denies it blatantly. The adviser said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should now put PML-N to test who has fought their case without any mandate. He said that

Maryam Nawaz will address a public gathering in Takhtbhai, Mardan in the mid of March.

Adviser to the Prime Minister expressed these views while addressing workers convention held in Katlang. During the workers' convention, Sahibzada Ifikhar Bacha from Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam, Mr. Rafiullah and Dr. Bahadur Syed from Awami National Party joined Muslim League (N) along with thousands of comrades. Before his address, Engineer Amir Muqam inaugurated the SNGPL distribution network and supply projects to 26 villages of Tehsil Katlang, including Shamuzu, Babuzai, Mian Khan/Singao, Alamganj and others.

## DPO visits injured student, provided cash assistance

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: District Police Officer (DPO) Syed Muhammad Abbas visited injured student and provided cash to his family, on Tuesday. According to the details, DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas visited the student who was injured by the firing of the accused NPC president Jahanzeb Khattak, Syed Qasim Shah, Syed Waliullah Shah, Zahoor Ahmad, Fida Muhammad, Pir Taj Mir Shah, Muhammad Shahid and Nasir Khan passed resolution for registration of the press club. The registration procedure was concluded by former president NPC Mushtaq Paracha while the cabinet along with governing body paid thank to him for his services to the community.

All your medical expenses are borne by us. An officer from Bahawalpur police is stationed here. Which is available round the clock to help you, DPO You are not alone. Bahawalpur Police is with you all the time. If you have any problem or problem, feel free to contact me or tell my officer. It is our responsibility to facilitate and take care of you. The DPO appreciated the courage of the youth. He further said that you are the future of this country, I appreciate your courage.

DPO grant prizes to Dolphin Squad: District Police Officer (DPO) distributed cash prizes and shields among Dolphin force for best performance at Police Lines Bahawalpur, on Tuesday. According to the details, DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas addressed Dolphin Force in Bahawalpur Police Line, boosted the morale of Dolphin Squad and paid tribute to them. DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas announced and encouraged the youth of Dolphin Squad to give cash rewards and certificates of appreciation, DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas said you are our family, we cannot leave you alone, we are always with you.

Bahawalpur Police is working day and night to suppress the crimes, those who deprive the citizens of their peace and precious basics cannot escape the grip of the law. Bahawalpur Police is always busy playing its role in providing maximum relief to the citizens and it is being accelerated to maintain the peace

of Bahawalpur. DPO Syed Mohammad Abbas said that you all are very close to my heart and I am personally responsible for your welfare. You all have my mobile number



anytime you call me any personal or departmental problem it will be solved on priority basis. DPO Syed Muhammad Abbas and the slogans of the force filled the sky with the slogans of Pakistan Zindabad, Punjab Police Zindabad. During the visit of DPO Bahawalpur Syed Muhammad Abbas to Bahawal Victoria Hospital, he met and visited the injured student Ilyan Abbas and presented gifts.

## Mini budget to bring fresh storm of inflation: Traders

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The business community on Tuesday totally rejected the 'mini-budget' and warned that the imposition of Rs 170 billion taxes worth billions of rupees would unleash a "storm of inflation" to the misery of the poor people besides slowing down the national economy.

Representatives of business community held a meeting at the Mardan chamber of commerce and industry (MCCI) here said new taxes would lead the economy to a complete destruction. MCCI president Zahir shah khan told reporters that the federal government was set to make people's life extremely miserable through the mini-budget. He said the move would escalate the cost of industrial production and lead to a total collapse of the economy.

Zahir shah said the business community would take "aggressive steps" if policies were made against its interests and in that case the government would be responsible for any untoward incident he said it had become quite difficult and instead impossible to run industries and businesses after a whopping increase in the price of electricity,

gas and petroleum products. He said Businessmen are in great trouble due to the anti-business policies of the government.

He also complained about the unavailability of raw material to industry due to the refusal of commercial banks to open letters of credit and said the situation had aggravated. He said unilateral policies of the government had added to difficulties of the business community on a daily basis, which is highly condemnable.

MCCI President Zahir shah said those who claimed to put the economy on the right track and bring down the value of the US dollar had let the country to bankruptcy. He said on one hand, the government claimed to be taking austerity measures but on the other, it had created a large cabinet.

He Further said the appointment of a brigade of ministers, advisers and special assistants is a sheer injustice to the country's poor people. He said on one hand, the country was sinking into foreign debts but on the other, the rulers were increasing their unnecessary expenditure. We the business community totally reject this unfriendly mini budget as the poor masses are already overburden due to heavy taxes.

## Cops directed to treat teachers with dignity F.P. Report

MINGORA: The Regional Police Officer Malakand Division, Sajjad Khan on Tuesday directed all the DPOs of the division to treat teachers of all grades and scales with extra honor and dignity as they play pivotal role in shaping a society.

A notification issued by the office of RPO Malakand said on Tuesday that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping and establishing a stable society. They are the backbone of society and torchbearers of knowledge. They nurture and inspire future generations.

Islam also considers the profession of teaching as noble and sacred. No spiritual or material development without them is possible. To give them the much-deserved respect is the duty of every civilized member of the society. However, they do not get the heed they are entitled to.

The notification directed that all the police personnel deployed in police stations, police posts and check posts to treat teachers of all grades and scales with honor, dignity, decency and utmost politeness and give them the reverence they deserve.





Wednesday, February 22, 2023

## Brazil rescue efforts continue as Lula visits areas hit by floods



BRASILIA (Agencies): Hundreds of emergency rescue workers continue to search for survivors amid the devastation of flooding and landslides that have killed at least 40 people and displaced several hundred in Brazil. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva visited impacted areas in the southeastern state of Sao Paulo, where dozens of people remain missing. The city of Sao Sebastiao, about 200 kilometers (120 miles) southeast of Sao Paulo, appears to have been hit the hardest, accounting for 39 of the 40 victims.

"We heard this terrifying noise of trees falling and glass breaking. The water swept right through the bathroom window - it just exploded," Vanesa Cristina Caetano, a 41-year-old domestic worker who escaped with her husband and two children in San Sebastiao, told the news agency AFP.

"We heard the water rushing down, along with lots of trees and rocks. It nearly swept the house away. We ended up with water up to my shoulders." Lula flew over Sao Sebastiao in a helicopter to survey the damage prior to a meeting with local offi-

cials, who said that some areas were cut off after landslides blocked the roads.

"United we will be much stronger and Sao Sebastiao will recover much faster," Lula said in a Twitter post. "Count on the federal government." The president promised to help rebuild the town of some 91,000 people by constructing new houses in safer places, while also saying the government must work to restore key infrastructure facilities such as roads also hit by landslides.

"Sometimes nature takes us by surprise, but sometimes we also tempt nature," Lula said in a speech after meeting with Sao Paulo Governor Tarcisio de Freitas and Sao Sebastiao Mayor Felipe Augusto to coordinate their response to the tragedy. The flooding was triggered by a large downpour of rain over the weekend, and has prompted many cities in the region to cancel Carnival festivities.

In a social media post, Augusto described a "chaotic situation" after 600mm (24 inches) of rain washed over the town in less than 24 hours. Augusto said that 50 homes in the

city had collapsed from flooding and landslides, and photos of the area show homes inundated with debris. Authorities said that those rescued from the torrent of mud include a two-year-old boy and a woman giving birth. Seeking shelter on higher ground, some residents used boats to ferry goods and people to elevated areas.

While Sao Sebastiao was at the centre of the disaster, surrounding towns such as Ilhabela and Caraguatatuba have also been impacted, and a seven-year-old girl was killed in the neighbouring town of Ubatuba, the Sao Paolo state government said.

De Freitas declared an 18-day state of calamity for six towns in impacted areas, and a press release from the state government said that nearly 800 people had lost their homes. In recent years, flooding and landslides have been a persistent and deadly phenomenon in Brazil. In February 2022, more than 200 people were killed as the city of Petropolis near Rio de Janeiro was inundated with flooding and landslides, and torrential rains resulted in flooding that killed 100 in the state or Pernambuco in May 2022.

## Taiwan bolstering military exchanges with US

TAIPEI (Agencies): Taiwan is bolstering its military ties with the United States and will cooperate even more closely with it and other friendly nations to deal with "authoritarian expansionism", President Tsai Ing-wen has told a group of visiting lawmakers from the United States. The bipartisan delegation including Ro Khanna from California and Tony Gonzales from Texas arrived on the self-ruled island amid heightened tensions between the US and China over an alleged Chinese spy balloon.

The US, like most countries, has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but is the island's most important international backer and arms supplier. "Taiwan and the United States continue to bolster military exchanges, and going forward Taiwan will cooperate even more actively with the United States and other democratic partners to confront such global challenges as authoritarian expansionism and climate change," Tsai told the five lawmakers at her office in Taipei. No further details were given. While the United States no longer maintains military bases in Taiwan, the countries' military ties have deepened as China has stepped up pressure on the island, which it claims as its own.

Illustrating the strength of ties with the United States, the delegation is on the island after a sensitive visit by a senior Pentagon official that was reported by the Financial Times. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it had no information about any such visit. China opposes any form of exchange between Taiwan and foreign governments. Nor has it ruled out the use of force to take control of the island. Khanna, a member of the US House China Select Committee, told Tsai the group, which met the founder of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC), was there to boost security and economic ties. TSMC is the world's largest contract chipmaker.

## Syrian leader visits Oman

DAMASCUS (AP): Syrian President Bashar Assad visited the Gulf nation of Oman on his first official visit since the deadly Feb. 6 earthquake, his office said. Oman is one of a few Arab countries that kept normal relations with Damascus after Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011 over its crackdown on Arab Spring protests.

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake which struck on Feb. 6 has killed nearly 45,000 people in Turkey and Syria and has brought a further thawing in relations between Assad and other Arab states. Assad's office said that during the visit, the president was received by Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Oman's leader. It quoted Assad as saying that Oman preserved "its balanced policies and credibility" adding that the region needs the role of Oman to strengthen relations between Arab countries based on "mutual respect and noninterference in other countries' affairs."

In the past few years, Assad has visited Russia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Since the quake, United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan met with Assad, while other Arab countries that had cut relations with Syria during the war - most notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt - have delivered aid to Damascus. Jordan's foreign minister met last week with Assad in Damascus, the first Jordanian official to visit since the start of the conflict.

In 2020, Oman sent an ambassador to Syria after an eight-year hiatus making Oman the first Gulf Arab state to reinstate its ambassador to Syria since the eruption of the country's conflict. In 2012, Oman and other Gulf Arab countries withdrew their ambassadors in protest of the Syrian government's violent suppression of a year-old uprising. Other Arab states shuttered their embassies but Oman, known for its neutrality and diplomacy between regional foes, kept its open throughout the years of conflict. Syria was expelled from the 22-member Arab League in 2011, and Arab countries have sanctioned Damascus and condemned its use of military force against the opposition.

## US urges UN to condemn North Korea; China, Russia blame US

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The United States and its allies urged the UN Security Council to condemn North Korea's unlawful ballistic missile launches, but China and Russia blamed the US for escalating tensions with stepped-up military exercises targeting Pyongyang.

At the emergency meeting, US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council that the United States will propose a presidential statement, saying at a minimum all 15 members should be agreeable to condemning the North's unprecedented missile launches, to urging Pyongyang to comply with UN Security Council sanctions resolutions, and "to engage in meaningful dialogue."

A presidential statement from the Security Council requires the support of all its members, including North Korea's closest allies, China and Russia. Thomas-Greenfield said the United States condemns North Korea's firing of two short-range ballistic missiles following the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile "in the strongest terms" as "flagrant violations" of the council's ban on the country's ballistic missile launches.

The launches and North Korea's threatening rhetoric are undermining international peace and security, Thomas-Greenfield said. And she warned the council that its silence and failure to condemn the North's missile activities "leads to irrelevance." But Pyongyang's allies China and Russia countered that what's needed now is dialogue between

North Korea and the Biden administration, a de-escalation of military exercises, an easing of sanctions on North Korea, and approval of a resolution they circulated in November 2021 aimed at resolving the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

That resolution urges the Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea and calls on the US and North Korea to resume dialogue and consider taking steps to reduce tensions and the risk of military confrontation including by adopting a declaration or peace treaty formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War. The war ended with an armistice, leaving the peninsula technically in a state of war. China's Deputy UN Ambassador Dai Bing said joint US-South Korean military exercises "on a higher level and a bigger scale," the deployment of US strategic assets, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's high-profile visit to Seoul and Tokyo two weeks ago, are "highly provocative" to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "and aggravate a sense of insecurity."

"Since the US has repeatedly expressed its willingness to unconditionally engage in dialogue with the DPRK, it should take tangible steps to start and maintain a dialogue," he said. "Exclusively pursuing and piling on sanctions will only lead to a dead end." Russia's deputy ambassador Dmitry Polyansky told the council North Korea is responding with missile tests to "the unprecedented military maneuvers in the region under the United States umbrella

which are clearly anti-Pyongyang in nature."

Japan's UN Ambassador Kimihiro Ishikane, whose country called the emergency meeting, told the council that ICBM fell in the Japan's exclusive economic zone just 200 kilometers (124 miles) from Hokkaido, where people could see it falling from the sky. "I assume we can all imagine how terrifying it must have been to see a missile flying to you," he said, stressing that it endangered vessels and aircraft and was "an act of intimidation and threatening by force."

To those who contend that Security Council meetings provoke North Korea "and hence we should remain silent," Ishikane retorted that remaining silent "will only encourage rule-breakers to write the playbook as they like." After the council meeting, Thomas-Greenfield, read a statement on behalf of 10 council nations and South Korea, surrounded by their ambassadors, strongly condemning the latest missile launches and urging the other five council nations to join in condemning "the DPRK's irresponsible behavior." The 11 countries - Albania, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, US and South Korea - "remain fully committed to diplomacy and continue to call on the DPRK to return to dialogue," the statement said. "But we will not stay silent as the DPRK advances its unlawful nuclear and missile capabilities, threatening international peace and security," their statement said.

## Suspected rebels kill 8 police officers in Nigeria

ABUJA (Agencies): At least eight Nigerian police officers have been killed in separate attacks by suspected rebels in the country's southeast just days ahead of presidential elections. The killings come as more than 90 million people are registered to vote to elect a successor to Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari, who is stepping down after two terms in office.

Four officers were killed in an attack on a police station in Anambra state, local police spokesperson Tochukwu Ikenga said, while authorities are searching for suspects in the killing of four other police officers in two separate attacks over the weekend. The rebels "attacked Awada police station in Idemilli North ... using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and automatic firearms," Ikenga said of the police death toll from attack. "Four police operatives paid the supreme price while a section of the station, one police patrol vehicle and three exhibit vehicles parked in the premises were set ablaze," he said in a statement.

Three of the attackers were also "fatally wounded", and two others were arrested, he added. Police have blamed the attacks on a rebel group known as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which is fighting for the independence of the ethnic Igbo people in southeast Nigeria. The IPOB and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network, have denied responsibility for the frequent attacks in the region. The violence has stoked fears about the ability of Nigeria's security forces to protect voters at the polls this weekend.

Festus Okoye, an official with Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), said the commission might not be able to deploy to some polling stations because of security concerns. "The security agencies have promised that they have the capacity to secure our communities to make it possible for people to vote," he said. "[But] for people in zones that are still in conflict, there is absolutely nothing we can do." Nigeria faces multiple security threats, including separate armed groups fighting for different causes in the southeast and northeast and kidnapping gangs involved in criminality in the northwest.

Gunmen attacked a police station in the Ogidi area of Anambra state, killing three officers. One police officer was killed in an attack on the Nkwelle-Ezunaka police station in the Oyi district. The attackers used "guns, IEDs and petrol bombs" but

did not gain entrance to the police station, Ikenga said. "One police operative attached to the station was fatally wounded," he said, and six gunmen were "neutralised". There have also been unclaimed attacks on INEC offices in the region. Despite the violence, the electoral body has said that the election will go ahead as planned.

Local news outlet The Nation wrote that "all eyes" were on the IPOB and the southeast of the country following calls for a boycott of the election, with people in the restive region called on to participate in a sit-in at home instead of voting. The Nation called on Nigerian authorities to use "strong action" to uphold law and order across the country. "This is no time to beg IPOB. This is time for the authorities to declare and enforce zero tolerance for lawlessness during the elections," the newspaper wrote.

As Africa's largest economy and top oil producer, Nigeria has resources and wealth, but armed attacks, the global pandemic and the economic fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine have hit the country hard. Scheduled election has developed into a tight three-way race for the presidency, with the frontrunners all touting their past government experience and business acumen for the country's top job. Ex-Lagos Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress is facing former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party and Peter Obi of the Labour Party, a surprise third-party candidate with high youth appeal.

Although Nigeria's economy rebounded after the COVID-19 pandemic, growing three percent in 2022, critics say the recovery has not trickled down to improve conditions for most Nigerians. Falling oil revenues, growing insecurity from criminal gangs, heavy flooding that hit farming land and the effect of Russia's war in Ukraine have combined to make things worse. Nigeria's unemployment rate is about 33 percent, while the number of Nigerians living in poverty rose to 133 million or 63 percent of the population in 2022, according to the national statistics bureau. Youth unemployment now stands at 43 percent, compared with 10 percent prior to President Buhari's first administration in 2015. The naira currency has also fallen from an average of 200 naira to a US dollar in 2015 to approximately 750 on the parallel market.

## Russian pranksters call Merkel

BERLIN (AP): Russian pranksters posing as Ukraine's ex-President Petro Poroshenko managed to contact Angela Merkel by phone to discuss developments in Ukraine and Belarus, although the former German chancellor was wary about the entire call, Merkel's office said. Merkel's office said the former German leader received a call Jan. 12 from someone claiming to be Poroshenko. The conversation was assisted by a German-Ukrainian interpreter from the German Foreign Ministry's language service.

In an emailed statement, the office said Merkel informed the ministry afterward about the "impression that she gained of the caller during the call," but didn't elaborate on what that was. Vladimir Kuznetsov and Alexei Stolyarov, known as Vovan and Lexus, posted on their Telegram channel what they said were excerpts from the call. The pair have previously embarrassed European politicians including French President Emmanuel Macron, Polish President Andrzej Duda and then-British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, as well as Elton John and Prince Harry, with similar hoax calls. The recording features Merkel saying - as she has done publicly before - that the much-criticized Minsk peace agreement had bought precious time for Ukraine. Merkel and former French President Francois Hollande had brokered the peace agreement with Poroshenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2015. She also criticizes repression in autocratic Belarus. Poroshenko was Ukraine's president from 2014 until 2019. Merkel led Germany from 2005 until the end of 2021.

## Leopard tanks like a Mercedes: Kyiv soldier

MUNSTER (Reuters): A Ukrainian soldier compared Germany's Leopard 2 tanks to a Mercedes as he underwent training with them ahead of their arrival on the battlefield, saying he hoped they would bring a breakthrough in the war. He is among dozens of Ukrainian troops Germany is training on Leopard 2 simulators and then the tanks themselves at its largest military training ground, in Munster, before sending them to Ukraine.

Germany last month agreed to supply the tanks, regarded as one of the best in the West's arsenal, overcoming misgivings about sending heavy weaponry that Kyiv sees as crucial to defeat Russia's invasion but Moscow casts as a dangerous provocation. "It is crucial that we use this modern weapon wisely, it will bring the breakthrough and we will win in the end," said the 57-year-old soldier.

Asked about the difference between Western and Soviet systems, he said: "You can imagine it like the difference between a Mercedes and a Zhiguli" - referring to a Soviet car

sold under the brand name Lada in the West. The version of the tanks Germany will be sending, produced by Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, weighs more than 60 tonnes, has a 120 mm smooth bore gun and can hit targets at a distance of up to 4 km (2.5 miles). Ukraine's foreign minister said last month he expected to receive 120 to 140 Western tanks in a "first wave" of deliveries from a coalition of 12 countries, including the German Leopard 2, with time needed for training.

In all, Germany is training several hundred troops on various aspects of warfare as part of a European effort to instruct some 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers. Another soldier, who was being trained on the Marder infantry fighting vehicle, said the Western systems were not that far removed from those of Soviet-built vehicles the Ukrainians have been using. "We have experience with similar weapons systems ... The logic is the same, sometimes we don't even need the interpreters to understand the instructors," said the 33-year-old,

like his colleague wearing a scarf pulled up over his face and orange-tinted ballistic glasses to hide his identity.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said he was impressed by the Ukrainian troops. "Talking about a war is different from looking into the faces of people who ... came here directly from the frontline, and who will go back there with the tanks once they have completed their training," he told reporters. The soldiers are working 12-hour days, six days a week.

"They are highly motivated and eager for knowledge ... They know that they will be back at the frontline in five weeks' time," said a German lieutenant-colonel who is responsible for the Leopard training and only gave his name as Peter. Both soldiers are set to head back to Ukraine by the end of March. Asked about how they tackle their fear, the 57-year-old said troops had to adapt to it. "Fear? Yes, everyone is afraid. But it is crucial how you handle your fear - and how to fight on despite of it," he said.

## UK summons Iran envoy over 'threats' to journalists

LONDON (AFP): The British government summoned Iran's top diplomat in London to condemn "serious threats" to the lives of UK-based journalists, after a Persian-language TV network was forced to relocate. Charge d'Affaires Mehdi Hosseini Matin was hauled in "to make clear the UK will not tolerate threats to life and media freedom", British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said in a statement.

The private network Iran International announced that it had been forced on UK police advice to shut down its London studios, and had switched to 24-hour broadcasting from Washington. The station has provided extensive coverage of anti-government protests that erupted in Iran five months ago, and said two of its senior journalists received death

threats in response to their reporting.

"I am appalled by the Iranian regime's continuing threats to the lives of UK-based journalists and have today summoned its representative to make clear this will not be tolerated," Cleverly added. "The UK will always stand up to countries who threaten our fundamental values of freedom of expression and the media." The diplomat, Iran's most senior representative in London in the absence of an ambassador, was directed to meet with the head of the UK foreign ministry's Middle East department.

London's Metropolitan police said that working with the MI5 spy agency, since the start of 2022, it had foiled 15 plots "to either kidnap or even kill" people seen as "enemies of the (Iranian)

regime". But the decision to ask Iran International, which employs around 100 journalists in the British capital, to shutter its office sparked concerns from rights groups. "UK is certainly able to guarantee the safety of #IranInternational. It's a question of political will," said Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, director of the Norway-based Iran Human Rights group.

"I hope it's a temporary measure and that @IranIntl will resume its work from London soon," he added on Twitter, arguing it was "unacceptable that UK gives in to terrorist threats". Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman pushed back at such claims, telling reporters that the police have been working "extremely hard" to protect the station's staff.



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# Global implications of Ukraine dispute

US President Joe Biden made an unannounced visit to Ukraine on Monday to express solidarity with the Ukrainian nation ahead of the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of its weak neighbour. During the visit, Mr. Biden met with his Ukrainian counterpart President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and assured him of the US's unwavering support of Ukraine in its fight against Russia for as long as it takes and reaffirmed America's commitment to Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Following Biden's visit to Kyiv, the state department has announced additional military support, economic assistance, and a fresh barrage of sanctions against Russian entities and individuals to ramp up pressure against Moscow's authoritarian regime.

The war in Ukraine has marked its first anniversary while completing a whole year of unprecedented bloodshed, and destruction, in addition to thousands of casualties and displacement of millions of innocent Ukrainians, who witnessed unimaginable sufferings and misery over the past 12 months. Undoubtedly, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has brought some of the deadliest effects to the nations farther away from the conflict zone in Eastern Europe while the energy crisis, price hikes, and currency devaluation almost hit each nation around the globe. Meanwhile, western sanctions seriously undermined the global trade and foreign relations of nonaligned countries in the world.

One year after Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, the hopes for an early and peaceful resolution of the Ukraine issue diminished and fear of a wider conflict or world war III involving exchanges of nuclear warheads between Russia and Ukraine's western allies became more relevant in the contemporary world. The western bloc including Australia and Japan supported Ukraine through all possible means, while Minsk facilitated Moscow's invasion against its weak neighbor and Kremlin also enjoyed Beijing's cooperation to mitigate the worst effect of the sanctions imposed by the west. Recently, the European Union has provided Kyiv with heavy weapons including aircraft, tanks, missiles, and other military hardware to compete with its staunch enemy. Meanwhile, western Intelligence has expressed concerns regarding the possibility of Chinese military assistance to Russia which could alter the current strategic dynamics in Eastern Europe and also provoke a global conflict in the future.

Presently, President Zelenskyy is persistently pushing his allies for the provision of the latest military hardware including US-made F-16 fighter jets or similar other European airplane to counter Russia in the Donbas region, however, western strategists are conscious about providing such lethal weapons to Kyiv that might enrage Krimlen to directly challenge NATO and it's regional allies. Western policymakers fear similar conditions if Beijing offers substantial military support to Moscow that might imbalance the geostrategic matrix in the region.

The current trajectory of the events portrays a vicious picture of the regional peace which is blatantly being challenged by the warring blocs in one or the other way. Moscow demilitarization and denazification operations against Kyiv could not seize their stated objective while the west's defense of democracy and the western legacy still faces a heightened risk in the region. The situation has been complicated by a year-long hostility and the possibility of a wider conflict increases every other day. Both warring blocs have ramped up their efforts to champion the competition, so peace is unlikely to prevail in the universe until aggressors pause their hostility in the future.

# The world after Ukraine war

RUSSIA'S full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been catastrophic. It has led to the loss of tens of thousands of precious lives, the displacement of millions of people, and the destruction of countless homes, civilian buildings and infrastructure. It has also unravelled Russia's moral and strategic standing in the world, as it has become clear just how badly prepared the Russian army really is and how exaggerated Russian economic might has been.

The war has also been disastrous for the rest of the world. Not only has it destabilised energy markets, fuelled inflation and disrupted the supply of foods and commodities, but it has also exposed and aggravated the poor state of world affairs, accelerating nuclear proliferation, fuelling an arms race, crippling the United Nations, and undermining international law, multilateral cooperation, and humanitarian assistance. It has been a truly stupid war. Russian interference in Ukrainian affairs escalated in 2014 with Moscow's forced annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and its instigation of a conflict in the Donbas region. The failure of European powers to reach a diplomatic solution in the following years, combined with the United States push to expand NATO eastwards, led to the worst, most primitive attempt at resolving a conflict: a war of choice.

Russia's decision to invade and bomb its beloved, Ukraine, after long boasting of their shared attachment, history and culture, is not romantic; it is necrophilic. It has also made the whole world feel that much more unsafe. And like other wars of choice before it, it has exposed the limits and outright failure of the international system.

The bipolar, the unipolar and now the multipolar world orders have demonstrated that when it comes

to the world powers, there is no hope to be had from international law or international agreements during geopolitical conflicts. These are for the weak to honour at gunpoint and for the strong to violate at will. It is a rigged global system that favours the powerful against the powerless - one that will, in all likelihood, lead to more countries pursuing a nuclear deterrent to fend for themselves. It is no wonder, many reckon Ukraine was naïve to give up its Soviet-era nukes in 1994, in return for international assurances, including Russian and American security assurances, under

rather Orwellian declaration, saying that "weapons are - in fact - the way to peace".

European nations, large and small, are hiking their military expenditures, including the once great power Germany, which had stayed out of the arms race since its defeat in World War II. Last year, Berlin announced it was setting up a \$113bn military fund. Russia has also planned a 2023 defence budget of approximately \$84bn, 40 percent higher than the forecast budget put forward in 2021. To be sure, that is

Marwan Bishara

Unsurprisingly, the five largest spenders are the US, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia, accounting for 62 percent of global defence expenditures.

Needless to say, such increases in military spending necessitate cutting other public spending - mostly on social security, education and healthcare - which does not bode well for the common good. The extent of global warmongering was apparent at this year's Munich Security Conference which just concluded. While Stoltenberg

*The new arms race is great news for the war industry which is flourishing like never before. Since 2014, world military spending has increased each and every year, reaching an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion in 2021. Unsurprisingly, the five largest spenders are the US, China, India, the United Kingdom and Russia, accounting for 62 percent of global defence expenditures. Needless to say, such increases in military spending necessitate cutting other public spending - mostly on social security, education and healthcare - which does not bode well for the common good. The extent of global warmongering was apparent at this year's Munich Security Conference which just concluded. While Stoltenberg warned the West against making the same mistake with China as it did with Russia, Western leaders underlined their commitment to war, turning the conference hall into a war room - diplomacy be damned. This is bad news for an already chaotic and unstable international system and for the fragile continental security in Europe and Asia. War feeds into more war and in the process corrupts language, culture and international relations by reinforcing the cycle of madness.*

the Budapest Memorandum.

More countries like Iran, Japan, and South Korea may follow in the footsteps of Pakistan, India, North Korea, and Israel, by going nuclear, trampling over non-proliferation efforts. International security has been further strained by Russian invocation of nuclear war, lapsed nuclear treaties, and the US secretly modernising nuclear weapons deployed to five NATO countries. The West is also jumping into an arms race. In January, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg made a

only 10 percent of what the US will spend on its military in 2023.

Alarmed at the events in Europe and the hostile rhetoric from the West, China has also joined the arms race with an increase in military spending - its largest ever in absolute terms, prompting greater military spending by its neighbours. The new arms race is great news for the war industry which is flourishing like never before. Since 2014, world military spending has increased each and every year, reaching an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion in 2021.

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This is bad news for an already chaotic and unstable international system and for the fragile continental security in Europe and Asia. War feeds into more war and in the process corrupts language, culture and international relations by reinforcing the cycle of madness. "We will fight till the end", "as long as it

bilising factor the world over. The US, along with Russia, has been a leading arms exporter, including to some of the world's poorest nations and worst regimes, reaching Faustian security deals with the Middle East's greatest violators of human rights, while hypocritically championing the global fight for democracy and human rights. It should come as no surprise that following its own invasion of Iraq, the US condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine rings hollow for much of the world. Similarly, its recognition of Israel's illegal annexation

of the occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories has undermined its condemnation of the Russian annexation of Ukrainian land.

Cynicism is contagious in the international arena, and superpower cynicism has spread like the plague, reaching all corners of the world. The hypocrisy of world powers has undermined multilateralism and cooperation during global health and humanitarian emergencies and alienated much of the world in the process. No wonder, countries in the Global South are looking out for their own interests, come what may, and have remained largely neutral on the Russian war in Ukraine, despite US pressure to engage. While some have joined Western nations in condemning the Russian invasion at the UN, most have not lent a hand in support of Kyiv and have maintained or even strengthened their relations with Moscow.

Leaders outside the Western orbit have generally gone hybrid, refusing to stick to one camp and rather seeking to preserve their interests, leveraging relations with Washington, Moscow and Beijing. Authoritarian regimes - inspired and emboldened by the misbehaviour of world powers - are also acting to preserve their very own narrow interests, regardless of the common good, or any moral, public or global consideration. Although we have made major strides forward as a human civilisation, culminating in healthier, richer, better-educated generations, we seem attracted, if not addicted, to destructive conflicts that could set us back generations.

History teaches us that great powers decline or perish because of reckless wars, but to no avail. For decades, Russia and America have followed in each other's footsteps, fighting wars they could not finish except in humiliation and massive destruction. And then came Ukraine, alas. Stupid, indeed.

Aljazeera

# As Lebanon disintegrates, Nasrallah incites war

IN recent days, a rash of angry demonstrations have torn across Lebanon's urban centers, with banks the focus of particular outrage in this cash-starved country, after the lira lost 98 percent of its value. So, as Hassan Nasrallah strode up to his rostrum, what themes did he choose to focus on in his address to the nation?

In fact, he treated us to a bizarre tribute to the Iranian people's "massive participation" in nationwide rallies celebrating the Islamic Revolution's anniversary. Disregarding the civil disorder in his own nation and continuing anti-regime protests across Iran, Nasrallah carped that the media had ignored these "millions-strong marches" in support of the Islamic Republic. He added that those who bet on the downfall of the ayatollahs' regime would be disappointed. Indeed, in such a scenario, none would be more disappointed than Lebanese people themselves, who continue to be held hostage by the shameless puppets of this theocratic regime.

To our astonishment, an enraged Nasrallah revealed that all of Lebanon's travails are the fault of the "Great Satan," thundering: "I tell the American government that if they want to sow chaos in Lebanon, you will

lose everything." And how will Hezbollah retaliate for these US "conspiracies against Lebanon?" Nasrallah warned America that, "If you push Lebanon into chaos, we are ready to use our arms against your protegee, Israel ... We are ready to resort to the option of war. Today, I say that whoever wants to push Lebanon into chaos or total collapse must expect from us the unimaginable."

Lebanon has undergone one of the most severe economic impositions of any nation in modern history. Does Nasrallah seriously believe that it is in any shape for embroilment in a wholesale conflict with the amassed armies of America, Israel and the remainder of the Western world? Israel's latest deadly airstrike against Damascus security apparatus targets appears like a retort to Nasrallah's delusions, demonstrating how easily Hezbollah's capabilities could be shattered. What American conspiracies are we talking about? Did the US ambassador secretly incite Hezbollah and its allies to sabotage Lebanon's political establishment and leave the country without a functioning government for years on end? Did the CIA trick Nasrallah into stockpiling enough explosives to blow up half the country in Hezbollah-controlled port warehouses? Did Joe Biden

Baria Alamuddin

goad Iran and the "resistance" into exploiting Lebanese financial institutions for money laundering, in order to scare off the International Monetary Fund and have these banks targeted by sanctions? Please enlighten us, Mr. Nasrallah.

But Nasrallah's real bete noire was how Israel is already reaping megabucks from gas exploitation, with no prospects of an imminent Lebanese cash windfall. "If there is intentional procrastination regarding the issue of oil and gas from Lebanese waters, will we allow Israel to continue extracting oil and gas from Karish?" Nasrallah declared. "I tell you never. This means if you want us to starve - we will kill you." Yet it is Hezbollah's aggressive brinkmanship and Lebanese dysfunction that have delayed progress toward exploiting Lebanese reserves. Lebanese people reacted with abject horror at Nasrallah's warmongering speech. Meanwhile, inept measures by the state risk exacerbating Lebanon's financial chaos. The caretaker economy minister announced that businesses would be allowed to price their goods in dollars. Who can access dollars, other than Hezbollah employees?

Following the targeting of banks, Prime Minister

Najib Mikati dismissively commented that those out burning tires and protesting did not look much like investors - a sign of how detached the ruling classes are from Lebanon's current reality, where even the middle classes have been reduced to considering sending their children to orphanages for their own survival, while people die due to a lack of medication for preventable diseases. Beirut's devastated banking sector - once the region's Switzerland-like financial hub - will take decades to recover from this implosion in its capabilities, reputation and workforce. Meanwhile, Hezbollah's Al-Qard Al-Hasan banking network exploits this collapse to relentlessly expand its own branches, capitalizing on Hezbollah's and Tehran's capabilities, which run parallel to Lebanese state institutions.

Hezbollah propaganda outlets have been pedaling a pipe dream of salvation that the region is on the brink of a diplomatic breakthrough between Iran and the GCC states; including possible outreach by high-level Gulf officials to Damascus. Diplomats closely appraised of the behind-the-scenes negotiations told me this is pure fantasy. They note that negotiations have been led by hard-line

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps figures, who only want to talk about reopening embassies and facilitating two-way travel, while refusing outright to discuss the primary GCC concerns of IRGC entrenchment in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. Hezbollah commanders - with their luxury SUVs, access to dollars and foreign goods - having grown fat on narcotics smuggling revenues, are insulated from economic ruin. But their opulent lifestyle in upmarket Beirut neighborhoods will abruptly end if war were really to reach Lebanon's shores.

Nasrallah knows his conspiracy theories are dangerous nonsense. However, he apparently would rather see Lebanon entirely destroyed than make the necessary political compromises that could extricate Lebanon from its predicaments; particularly as Hezbollah's relationship with its former Christian allies appears to be disintegrating due to wrangling over the presidency and other issues. In 2006, Israel decimated Lebanon, reducing hundreds of thousands of homes to rubble and killing well over 1,000 citizens after Hezbollah rockets killed about 10 people. Doing the math, with Hezbollah's massively upgraded missile arsenal courtesy of the IRGC, if for

every 100 Israelis Hezbollah kills, retaliatory strikes kill 10,000 Lebanese; then, following such a conflagration, Nasrallah would have to crawl out of his bunker and relocate to Tehran because there will not be a country left. He does not care that his supporters in south Lebanon will again bear the brunt of Israel's military fury.

In 2006, post-conflict Lebanon benefited from massive international aid, including billions of dollars of reconstruction funding from Gulf allies. In 2023, Lebanon has no friends to rush to its aid. Hezbollah must also think twice about whether crisis-wracked Iran would be willing to fund its reconstruction and rearmament. At a time when most Lebanese citizens are consumed by trying to ward off starvation for their families, such warmongering is grotesque. Faced with Nasrallah's inhuman logic, Hezbollah supporters must conscientiously ponder whether they are willing to unthinkingly destroy themselves and their homeland in order to do Tehran's bidding. Nobody anywhere should be lightly contemplating war, least of all disaster-afflicted Lebanon, which, following the past three years, already looks like it has been to hell and back.

Arab News

# Macron knows he's finished. He might just choose to resign

Anne-Elisabeth Moutet

IT'S the rumour that's been doing the rounds in Paris for almost three months. Emmanuel Macron has been finding the lack of a majority in the National Assembly frustrating; it's a climb-down from his first term, when the party of the self-minted "Jupiter" enjoyed a 35-seat majority. The president is said to be toying with the idea of calling an early presidential election.

It's not that Macron believes he could win easily: this has become increasingly unlikely given the response to his botched pensions reform. The idea is that, like General de Gaulle in 1969, he would

prefer to resign grandly rather than endure a "cohabitation" with an opposition prime minister, as François Mitterrand did in 1986-88 with Jacques Chirac, and Chirac himself had to between 1997 and 2002 with the Socialist Lionel Jospin.

According to the theory, Macron would walk away, leaving a successor (probably Marine Le Pen) to deal with a country polarised, overtaxed, smothered in debt, its infrastructure, school system and health service threadbare, incapable of slowing down unwanted immigration or to assimilate her newest citizens as her German neighbour does. Untouched by

self-doubt, the president believes no one can do better than him in the next five years: aged only 50, he could then run again in 2028, his absence cancelling the constitutional limit of two consecutive terms.

Needless to say, the rumour has been denied: for one thing, the optimistic interpretation of constitutional law it rests on would need to be validated by France's Conseil constitutionnel. For another, it assumes the country would be clamouring for more Macron after a Le Pen term. Some accounts say the president is sure of success; others point out that should a president Le Pen not do

well, he would be chiefly remembered as the man who gave her the keys to the Elysée; and should she actually pull a Giorgia Meloni, he would in all likelihood be re-elected.

But against these dire readings of the runes is Macron's existential ennui. From many accounts, he is no longer interested in domestic affairs. Last year, as he was running again, his dream was to make his mark on international affairs. Hence his visits to Vladimir Putin, and his grandiose plans for Europe, which he first laid out in a Fidel Castro-length speech at the Sorbonne in September 2017.

It set out three directions

for the EU: namely establishing European economic, political and military sovereignty - in which he saw France as the prime mover. His dreams ranged large: various Elysée courtiers mentioned his hope of a Nobel Peace Prize; at other times there seemed to be an interest in the presidency of the EU; as for Europe's military independence, Macron declared Nato brain dead.

As it turns out, Macron's plan to create, top-down, "European tech unicorns" with fat, bureaucrat-adjudicated subsidies died in the same way as the still non-existent French Covid vaccine; EU political unity has been revived by the war in

Ukraine, where leadership has come from northern, central and eastern Europe, not France; and Nato woke up from its alleged coma as the one defence body capable of punching its weight in a real war situation.

The question remains whether the Dreamer of the Elysée still wants to throw the electoral dice. His poll numbers are bad. Never elected to any other office in his life, he doesn't have the parliamentary clout to force useful alliances. His choices are now a three-and-a-half-year lame-duck long goodbye, or a flamboyant game of Russian roulette. He probably has the stomach for neither.

The Telegraph



# Why pro-Israel groups are funding Nikki Haley’s presidential bid

Ramzy Baroud

**THOUGH** it has been argued that the so-called American dream is long dead, Nikki Haley is proof that the dream is still alive. Unfortunately, the "dream" is hers alone. A close confidant, until recently, of former US President Donald Trump and his pro-Israel circle, Haley wants to be the next president. On Feb. 14, she declared her candidacy and, starting in February next year, she will be officially competing against her former boss in the Republican primaries.

While it is true that her popularity among Republican Party supporters hovers between 3 and 4 percent, Haley still feels that she can win, if she plays her cards right. Though victory in a party that is keen on neither women nor minority politicians is a long shot, she has enough success stories to give her the needed confidence. "Even on our worst day, we are blessed to live in America," Haley said in her campaign launch video. Though such a statement may appear somewhat typical of US politicians on such occasions, Haley's statement carries hidden, even troubling, insinuations.

Haley considers her life a testament to the ahistorical claim that "America is not a racist country" - a chant she led to the cheers of thousands of her supporters at her first campaign rally in Charleston, South Carolina, last week. For Republicans, the Haley profile is critical because it is uncommon. They understand that a Black candidate will not perform well among their constituency. Still, they desperately need a candidate who will appeal to disenchanted minority voters,

if that candidate reaffirms the existing beliefs of most Republicans: That America is a great country free of racism and inequality, with many dangerous foreign enemies and that Israel is its most trusted ally. Haley has enthusiastically played that part for years.

"I was the proud daughter of Indian immigrants. Not Black. Not white. I was different," she said. This seemingly innocuous statement has served as Haley's central message in her political career since she left her family's Exotica International clothing business in 2011 to successfully run for the governor's office in South Carolina. In 2017, Haley's success story continued. She became the US ambassador to the UN. This position has historically been far more relevant to Israeli interests than America's because the UN is one of the few international platforms through which Palestinians and their supporters attempt, though often in vain, to hold Israel accountable for its illegal practices in occupied Palestine.

For decades, the US has opposed any attempt by Arab and other countries to punish Israel for its military occupation and continued human rights violations in the Occupied Territories. The dozens of vetoes used by the US to block any attempt to condemn Israeli colonialism or war crimes at the UN Security Council tell only part of the story. Within the relatively short span of two years of diplomacy that catered mostly to serving Israel, Haley managed to successfully help in the blocking of US funding for UNRWA. She also engi-

neered her country's exit from the UN Human Rights Council due to its criticism of Israel.

She is also credited with being part of the decision that led to America's abrupt withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal with Iran and was a crucial member of the Trump team behind the so-called Deal of the Century, which ultimately fizzled out into empty rhetoric. Now Haley is hoping to cash in - literally - on her dedication to Israel and to her country's hawkish foreign policy in the Middle East. One claim that she has repeatedly made to her donors, which consist mostly of pro-Israeli billionaires, is that she has kept all the promises she made to Israel at the 2017 American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference. Indeed, she has.

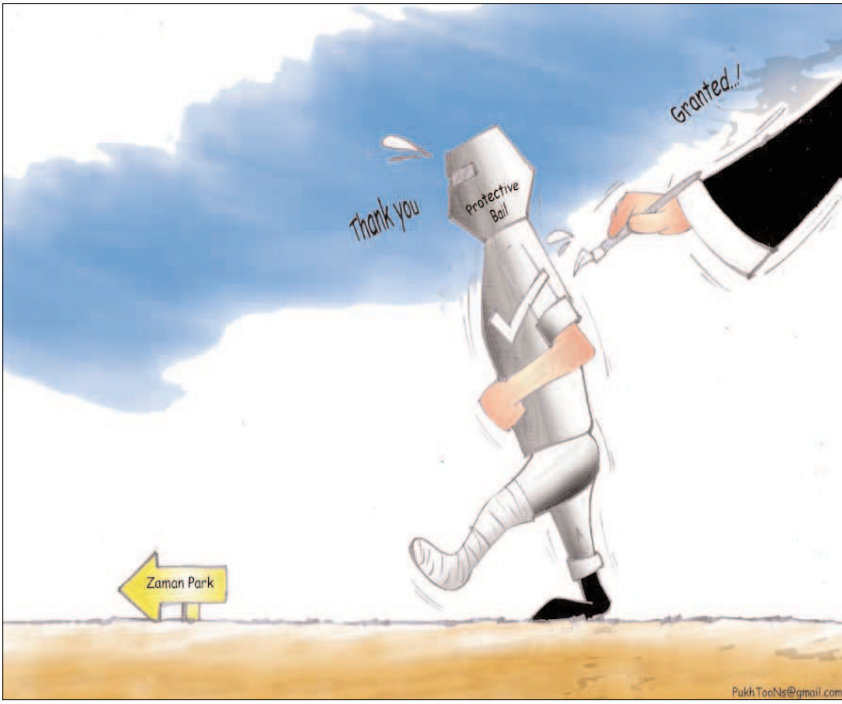
Her performance at the lobby group's annual policy conference "thrilled the crowd," The Times of Israel reported at the time. In her speech, Haley, intoxicated by the political potential of a standing ovation from 18,000 AIPAC conference attendees, declared herself the "new sheriff in town," who will make sure that "the days of Israel-bashing at the UN are over." Regarding Israel, the sheriff delivered, ushering in the country's golden age at the UN and forging lasting friendships with top Israeli officials and donors. Haley became a "source of pride for hawkish supporters of Israel for leading the fight against anti-Israel resolutions," the weekly Jewish newspaper The Forward wrote last week.

Notably, four seconds of footage in Haley's campaign

launch video was shot in Israel, near the fence with besieged Gaza. Walking alongside her was the former Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon. While at the UN, they developed a "unique working relationship - and a lasting friendship," The Forward reported, citing Danon, currently a member of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. Significantly, the former Israeli ambassador believes that, if "Haley was running for president in Israel, she would have won easily." Considering her poor performance among US voters, one must ask the question: Why would an American presidential candidate be far more popular among Israelis than Americans?

Haley's strategy, however, is paying dividends, at least financially. The Forward's Jacob Kornbluh elaborated on the sources of funding for Haley's super political action committee, Stand for America. Much of the \$17 million raised in the last election cycle came from "prominent Jewish donors." They included Miriam Adelson, the widow of late pro-Israeli casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, as well as Paul Singers, Bernie Marcus and Daniel Loeb, among many others.

It may seem strange that such funds are invested in a candidate who has, at least for now, little chance of winning the Republican nomination, but that money is not wasted. The pro-Israeli donors are simply rewarding Haley's many favors, knowing that, regardless of her exact position in government, she will always continue to prioritize Israel's interests in her political agenda, even including, if needed, ahead of her own country's.



## The true legacy of Boris Johnson

Polly Toynbee

**HERE** comes the Boris Johnson Brexit wrecking ball. How could he resist a chance to ride back in to sabotage any agreement Rishi Sunak reaches with the EU? The walrus breaks the surface to warn that abandoning his treaty-breaking protocol deal is "a great mistake", summoning old supporters - who brag that they number 100 - to his battle flag.

Out comes Sir James Duddridge, ex-Brexit min-

place. When errors or deliberate untruths are pointed out, shockingly few ministers or MPs correct the record or even acknowledge the complaint. Silence is their usual response. (Full Fact says newspapers are more likely to correct errors.) Who polices parliamentary honesty? Only MPs themselves, not the Speaker, which is why Johnson's fate stays in the hands of a Tory-dominated House, just as it's their own

claims about the risks of Covid vaccines, from Danny Kruger, Andrew Bridgen and Sir Christopher Chope. Full Fact lists 70 occasions in the last year when MPs have failed to correct their blatant untruths. Only seven made corrections in the Commons.

Full Fact checks many other sources of untruth, including government press offices and charities. Journalists such as the great Tim Harford, of the BBC's More or Less, pick up ques-

***That's a lot of "ifs" that will be required, since Johnson is a lot more popular than Rishi Sunak among party members. And if Labour is still 22 percentage points ahead in May? Well, we already know the Tories won't hesitate to put a scoundrel into No 10. Johnson's shameless reign seems to have opened the way for greater public dishonesty. Evidence from scrupulous and impartial checkers at Full Fact suggests lying in parliament has become more commonplace. When errors or deliberate untruths are pointed out, shockingly few ministers or MPs correct the record or even acknowledge the complaint. Silence is their usual response. (Full Fact says newspapers are more likely to correct errors.)***

ister, to declare that any role for the European court of justice would be a "wedge", knowing the issue is a deal-breaker. The European Research Group's David Jones absurdly claims the protocol means "a foreign government governing part of our country". In case Johnson returns, fence-sitters keep their options open, so Penny Mordaunt calls his intervention "not entirely unhelpful".

But it is. He has no scruples about stirring up the DUP to resist a settlement. With its Stormont leadership lost and a threat on its right flank, returning to the Northern Ireland assembly to play second fiddle to Sinn Féin may look less appealing to the DUP than joining a Johnson resistance. In his Brexit campaign Johnson never cared about Northern Ireland, but like Enoch Powell before him, he may find Ulster unionism a useful weapon for Conservative outcasts, and damn the lethal consequences.

If a resurrection of the disgraced leader they ousted looks implausible, we know anything is possible from this Conservative generation, since they have previously inflicted austerity, Brexit, Johnson and Liz Truss on the country. Expect them to panic if a routing in council elections looks like foreshadowing a general election massacre.

If the privileges committee decides he lied to parliament, and if parliament votes for a 10-day suspension, and if 10% of Uxbridge voters sign a petition for a byelection and if they eject him, that might finally nail shut his political coffin. That's a lot of "ifs" that will be required, since Johnson is a lot more popular than Rishi Sunak among party members. And if Labour is still 22 percentage points ahead in May? Well, we already know the Tories won't hesitate to put a scoundrel into No 10.

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rule that bars calling an "honourable" member a "liar" on pain of suspension: it would be banded about too often.

Sunak may rue promising "integrity, professionalism and accountability", as he falls into Johnsonian habits. For example, at prime minister's questions earlier this month he threw out a bizarre accusation that the Labour party and Keir Starmer were "bankrolled" by Just Stop Oil. Full Fact, after thorough research, concludes: "We can find no evidence that this is true," demanding, as it always does, that "he either backs up his claim with evidence, or admits his mistake and corrects the record". Will Moy, the head of Full Fact, says No 10 failed to respond at all, so he calls on people to sign a demand that he does. Sunak also failed to correct a claim that a "record" number of new homes had been built last year: it was fewer than the year before and way off the record. It's easy to mis-speak in the heat of debate - and very easy to correct: ministers only need send an email to Hansard but they rarely do. Inexplicably, that route isn't available to ordinary MPs, though they can correct themselves on Twitter.

Johnson was a serial offender: he repeated 10 times that more people were in work than they had been before the pandemic, even after being reprimanded by the Commons' Liaison Committee: in fact, there were more than half a million fewer. He said Starmer had voted 48 times to overturn Brexit: not true. He said the warm home discount was worth £140 a week: it's only £140 for the winter, so why not correct it? Some Labour MPs also tell untruths they don't correct, mostly the same one, repeated often, that the cost of living will rise by £2,620 per family this year, which Full Fact calls an unreliable assumption: it will rise, but by less. Michael Gove was the first to claim wildly that new post-Brexit trade deals were worth £800bn: untrue, as almost all are existing deals.

Most damaging are Tory MPs' potentially lethal

tionable figures: he called out "the spectacular bull-shit" of Jeremy Hunt's (uncorrected) claim of 11,000 excess NHS deaths at weekends. Peter Osborne's excellent website keeps a running tally of MP untruths not just in the House, but in media appearances such as Lucy Frazer on Question Time parroting Johnson's frequent lie that "we have 40 new hospitals": they are a phantom. The BBC and Channel 4 have good analyses of dubious politicians' claims in their reports.

Who should police political truth? Chris Bryant, recused from chairing the privileges committee for the Johnson case, suggests the Office for National Statistics should demand a legally enforced correction from any MP using mendacious figures. Liz Saville-Roberts' elected representatives (prohibition of deception) 10-minute rule bill would have legally forced elected officials to tell the truth. But applying the law makes hay for lawyers: Johnson's privileges defence is costing taxpayers up to £220,000.

Beyond obvious statistical lies, the veracity borderline is muddy territory between routine political hyperbole and downright untruth. There are half-truths such as Suella Braverman's claim that Labour voted against funding more police officers three years in a row: yes, but only because the sum put forward by the government amounted to underfunding. Yet no one wants to tongue-tie the ordinary rough and tumble of political exuberance.

More parliamentary turpitude is on its way with Johnson's honours list feared to be full of rogues, chums and donors. But his worst legacy may be MPs' realisation that nothing usually happens when they utter untruths. With public trust at a low ebb, a future Labour-dominated Commons could tighten its rules. Above all, it could create a culture change to shame those who refuse to apologise for what Winston Churchill was first to call "terminological inexactitudes".

## The West is in a world war in Ukraine and still lacks a strategy for winning it

John Bolton

**SINCE** Russia's second invasion of Ukraine last February, Nato members have spent considerable time patting themselves on the back, extolling their successes. Unfortunately, the West's overall balance sheet is not nearly so rosy. One year in, consider the debits, not just the credits.

Most tellingly, the US and its Nato allies failed to deter Russia's offensive in the first place. On several occasions, President Biden said he didn't really believe deterrence was possible, merely that Russia could be punished for aggression after the fact. For example, a month after the invasion, Biden said: "Let's get something straight. You remember, if you've covered me from the beginning, I did not say that in fact the sanctions would deter him. Sanctions never deter."

Biden's careless remarks may have encouraged Russia. At a January 2022 press conference, his first in 10 months, when asked about a possible Russian onslaught, he answered: "It's one thing if it's a minor incursion and then we end up having a fight about what to do and not do, et cetera. But if they actually do what they're capable of doing... it is going to be a disaster for Russia if they further degrade and, invade Ukraine." But the failure to deter the Kremlin was a consequence of much more than Biden's sloppy geostrategic thinking and loose lips. Nato's utterly insouciant response to Russia's first invasion in 2014 laid the foundation for the seemingly inevitable sequel.

The West stood idly by when Russian forces intervened in Donbas and seized Crimea; imposed only perfunctory sanctions thereafter;

negotiated the embarrassing, Moscow-leaning Minsk Agreements; and for years did precious little to provide anything close to satisfactory levels of military assistance and training to Ukrainian forces. Biden's catastrophic 2021 decision to withdraw from Afghanistan and his unimpressive meeting with Putin in Vienna in June of that year were also significant factors. Was the West really helpless? Quite the opposite. Even as the risks of Russian invasion grew in late 2021, the US and its allies could have significantly expanded their weapons deliveries (and the accompanying flow of Nato forces into Ukraine to provide training) to show Western resolve. We could have imposed heavy economic sanctions on Russia both for its 2014 aggression (better late than never) and its continuing, menacing build-up along Ukraine's border. This would have made clear that Nato was reversing its feckless handling of the first invasion and would not repeat it. Whether so late an effort to create deterrence could have succeeded is speculative, but at least Ukraine would have had larger stockpiles and been better prepared for Moscow's aggression last February.

Biden's reluctance to do little more than grouse about Moscow's invasion preparations stemmed largely from intelligence failures paralysing Nato capitals. In closed briefings to Congress shortly after Russia struck, American intelligence experts predicted Kyiv would fall within days, and the country within weeks. If there was dissent among US agencies, that disagreement did not make its way into the press, which means there

probably was none. Instead of developing a strategy for victory - repelling and defeating the Russians - Nato settled on a strategy for aiding post-defeat guerrilla warfare, and spiriting Volodymyr Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials out of the country. Zelensky, heroically, was having none of it, replying to the offer of safe transit to Poland: "I don't need a ride. I need ammunition."

When, contrary to expectations, the Russian forces underperformed stunningly, while Ukraine stood its ground, Nato had no plan B. It was not ready for success. Make no mistake, the intelligence failures regarding both Russian and Ukrainian combat-arms need to be corrected urgently, lest we are caught by surprise by China and others, perhaps because we have underestimated our enemy's capabilities rather than overestimated them. Almost one year later, Nato still has no strategy for victory. Saying that the war's objectives and operational direction must be left to the Ukrainians is obviously insufficient. At least some Europeans, namely France and Germany, hoped early on that laying off responsibility on Ukraine might help force early Kyiv-Moscow negotiations to end the conflict. Today, this approach is simply a way for Western governments to avoid facing reality: we are in a world war in Ukraine, not directly with Nato forces, but with almost everything else on the line.

Russia is backed by its own entente with China and arms suppliers such as North Korea and Iran. The world is filled with "neutrals". Nato members have long asserted, and still do, that Ukraine must be restored to

full sovereignty and territorial integrity, meaning the boundaries that newly independent Ukraine assumed at midnight on December 21 1991. Nonetheless, the West has been unable or unwilling to draw appropriate conclusions from its failures. We need a strategy that addresses Nato interests. Instead, for a year, we have had one dispute after another about what weapons systems to supply: Polish MiGs, Himars, longer-range artillery, tanks, F-16s. This is the wrong way to win a war, a war whose objectives Nato leaders fear to state. A list of weapons systems certainly is not a strategy, which emerges first by deciding on goals, then determining and marshalling the resources necessary to achieve them. If we fail to craft an articulable strategy, those who worry about Nato publics growing tired of yet another "endless war" will indeed have much to be concerned about.

Both the Trump and Biden administrations failed to deter Russia. Instead, Putin is deterring us from aiding Kyiv more effectively for fear that he will expand the war, trepidation reiterated just days ago regarding Crimea. We should ask ourselves: with what army? Putin's nuclear threats have been hollow; he should learn that their use amounts to signing his death warrant. The West needs to call Putin's bluff, decide what it wants, and then pursue it. Abraham Lincoln once complained that his generals had "a case of the slows". He would recognise Nato's problem today. We must break our conceptual chains, or next February will bring more retrospectives about the Ukraine war's second year and what the third will bring.

## World must find courage to help Syrian people

Chris Doyle

**THE** earthquakes that pulverized southern Türkiye and northern Syria on Feb. 6 are, for the uninitiated, just plain natural disasters. Yet, especially within Syria, mankind had prepared the ground to magnify every element of the horror. In the aftermath, emergency aid has only trickled into northern Syria. It remains too late, too little.

Syria had become the forgotten country. The needs there have been growing while the aid was decreasing. More Syrians were in need of aid in December than at any point since the war began. Most of the reported fatalities from within Syria were in the opposition-controlled areas of northwest Syria. Here, out of a population of 4.6 million, 4.1 million were in need of aid prior to the earthquakes. Just under a quarter of Syria's population is crammed into 4 percent of its territory. Overall, all the aid appeals remain grossly underfunded. In total, 15.3 million people in Syria were in need of aid prior to the earthquakes.

These are not just numbers, statistics used to decorate routine UN reports. Every single one of these 15 million people has a complex and telling story. Now, millions have an additional chapter to this never-ending story of loss and suffering. The TV cameras will leave, as they always do, and attention will leave with them. Haiti, for example, is still recovering from the 2010 disaster that killed more than 300,000 people, but few notice.

But is there an opportunity, a mini window to create a silverish lining to all this horror? If we are to give any meaning to the grandiose statements of the good and the great of standing in solidarity with the Syrian people,

the international community has to make a major step change, rustling up hitherto unseen courage.

Firstly, we must stop dealing with Syria as if it was in permanent emergency relief mode. You cannot persist with an approach of a short-term emergency response to a long-term disaster. One Syrian told me: "It's as if we have been treated like an earthquake zone for the last 12 years." People need to rebuild their lives and their homes, not just exist precariously on aid handouts. Schools and hospitals must be rebuilt; doctors, nurses and teachers trained.

Yes, there are legitimate fears that the Syrian regime will abuse any aid to Syria, but this has been happening for years. Along with the trade in Captagon, international aid provides the regime with its richest revenue stream of hard currency. The existing system is benefiting the regime and its cronies. Let us stop pretending this is being tough on Bashar Assad. Secondly, end the farce over cross-border aid. One border crossing at Bab Al-Hawa is insufficient. The UN Security Council debates the cross-border mechanism every six months. The next due date is in July.

Aid requires access but access has been a political question, abused by varying parties. This has to end. Millions of Syrians are totally dependent on the Bab Al-Hawa crossing. The beneficiaries of aid are meant to be the Syrian people, even though Russian diplomats at the UN keep arguing that the cross-border aid should be for the benefit of the Syrian government in Damascus. A temporary agreement with reluctant consent from Damascus a whole week after the earthquakes has permitted two

additional border crossings to be opened for three months only. One wonders why the Syrian regime will not agree to all five border crossings with Türkiye being opened, and for longer.

The reality is that UN Security Council approval is not an absolute requirement for cross-border aid. Assistance can be provided based on international law. The International Court of Justice has ruled that "there can be no doubt that the provision of strictly humanitarian aid to persons or forces in another country, whatever their political affiliations or objectives, cannot be regarded as unlawful intervention, or as in any other way contrary to international law." Rather than use the UN, individual governments, including the US and European states, could provide aid directly. They could do this without the restrictions the UN faces and far more rapidly. The UN has been cumbersome and held back by the regime and its allies, which have shown no interest in the well-being of Syrians.

Thirdly, proper governance is required in the northwest of Syria, as it also is for the rest of Syria. No sovereign authority exists in northwest Syria. No single body can officially request international aid. In any rebuilding program, who will make sure that proper standards are upheld? Many of the pancaked structures collapsed because of wildcat building with no regulations. As much as anything, local residents should be empowered. They should be given the tools and means to rebuild using locally available materials. However, a local authority has

to ensure this meets the requisite standards. Local councils used to exist in opposition areas, but donors withdrew support.

Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, a group that has publicly, if dubiously, claimed to have ended its links with Al-Qaeda, is the dominant power in Idlib. It has been accused of blocking aid. It is repressive and not part of the solution. Those actors that continue to allow it to flourish have to be pressured to end that support. Türkiye has to stop all support for Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. Turkish officials deny any collusion, but Ankara could do so much more to weaken the extremist group if it wanted to. A strategy to defeat or at least diminish its power is essential.

Fourthly, sanctions reform has to be engaged. This is for the US and the EU, the main sanctioning parties. Adapting sanctions does not automatically equal helping the regime. In fact, if responsibly and carefully handled, empowering Syrians locally will take power away from Damascus. Conversely, an enfeebled population scrounging for bread is easier to control. Prolonged sanctions help the regime, as they have done in Iraq, Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Libya and elsewhere.

Finally, for the fractured, dismembered remnants of Syria to have any future, a political solution is vital. The state has to function properly for effective reconstruction and rehabilitation. This will not be easy, but it should not be ducked. A policy of inertia because a brutal regime in Damascus survives only prolongs that regime and the people's suffering. The international community should revert to a political process they have long since abandoned.

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**PESHAWAR:** President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq presiding over a meeting at Chamber.

## Telenor recognised at OICCI Women Awards

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan has been recognised as the “Best Conductive Workplace Environment for Women” at the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s (OICCI) Women Empowerment Awards 2022.

Telenor Pakistan takes immense pride in its diversity initiatives, making it a leader in promoting gender equality and women’s rights in the workplace. The workplace disparity is a global issue affecting millions and Telenor Pakistan is dedicated to bringing a change by providing women with the support and resources they need to succeed in the workplace.

“This award recognises

our organisation’s efforts in promoting equal opportunities at the workplace,” said Areej Khan, Chief Human Resources Officer, Telenor Pakistan. “Given the potential for economic growth that comes as a by-product of inclusion and diversity, we at Telenor Pakistan firmly believe that everyone should be given equal employment opportunities. We look forward to continuing our commitment to creating a diverse and more inclusive culture where everyone feels valued.”

Telenor Pakistan is committed to promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion. Through the Girls Learn, Women Earn initiative, Telenor Pakistan trained over 1,000 women from across the country in

digital literacy, providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the digital economy. Telenor’s ‘NayaAghaaz’ initiative is a pioneer platform designed for women on a break from their careers to get back on the professional track.

In addition to upskilling that comes with the program, Telenor Pakistan further offers facilities like mental health counselling, mentorships, placement support, flexible working hours and provides its employees with the opportunity to connect and get inspired by other females through its extensive women empowerment network called EmpowHer.

Moreover, Telenor Pakistan’s work on

Taleemabad—an e-learning program—has empowered and educated 768,000 female students since its inception and shattered the perception that women are digitally illiterate. At the same time, the Organisation’s child online protection program has upskilled one million children, with 50% of them being girls, through its Safe Internet Program.

Telenor Pakistan’s commitment to women empowerment extends beyond the workplace and into the community, where they support initiatives that promote gender equality, education and diversity while making a difference in women’s lives and helping them achieve their full potential.

## PSX, ACCA sign MoU for capacity building, knowledge sharing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for capacity building and knowledge sharing on financial literacy and inclusion, Environment, Social and Governance (ESG), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), CPEC verticals, investment management, IPOs and social entrepreneurship.

Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director

and Chief Executive officer PSX, Farrukh Khan, said the MoU laid down the guiding principles to benefit the capital markets and market participants to augment cooperation between ACCA and PSX for their own capacity building and that of other stakeholders in terms of financial literacy, inclusion, ESG, CPEC verticals, and investment management, among other areas, according to press statement received here.

Moreover, he said, the MoU would enable PSX and ACCA to hold workshops and webinars to dis-

seminate information on PSX’s mandate and scope of activities. Furthermore, mentorship is also provisioned in the MoU for start-ups to guide them on their financial activities and enhance their financial capabilities.”

On the occasion, ACCA president, Joseph Owolabi said the MoU would provide an opportunity for positive change to youth and contribute to Pakistan’s promising future.

He said, mutual commitment to promoting financial inclusion was key to individual empowerment while

also driving sustainable, inclusive economic growth.”

Assad Hameed Khan, head of ACCA Pakistan said this partnership would serve as an outreach and opportunities platform for young professionals not only to upskill, but also to understand their professional role towards developing the capital markets of Pakistan.

The MoU also enables PSX and ACCA to develop a calendar and organise joint or independent events and activities for their stakeholders’ networks.

## Traders resent over unnecessary actions and imposition of heavy fines

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Muhammad Ishaq expressed resentment over unnecessary actions, harassment of the business community and imposition of heavy fines by government authorities concerned on pretext of enforcing policies.

He stressed the dignity of the traders community should be kept intact during actions by the government relevant departments/authorities, what, he said, the business community has played an important role in economic stability

and improvement by paying various taxes.

SCCI chief demanded to frame policies by making proper consultation with chambers and relevant stakeholders.

He furthermore asked to avoid taking steps which would cause a collision between the business community and government authorities concerned.

Ishaq was addressing members during the visit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KFS&HFA) Director General (DG) Shahrukh Ali Khan here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

Apart from the chamber’s vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former vice president Javed Akhtar, Director Technical KFS&HFA Abdul Sattar Shah, Director Operation of the food authority Alftab Hussain, executive member of the chamber Naem Qasmi, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Laal Badshah, Munwar Khurshid, Salman Altaf, Ihsanullah, Fazl Wahid, Zahoor Khan, Sadder Gul, Ishtiaq Muhammad, traders, exporters attached with honey sector, office bearers of different bazaar market associations, representatives of traders’ community

were present in a large number on the occasion.

Muhammad Ishaq apprised the DG Shahrukh Ali Khan regarding reservations of business community over unnecessary actions, harassment and collection of heavy fines.

He said the economic conditions are already very fragile, saying that the situation has been further aggravating owing to anti-business policies of the present government.

The SCCI president asked the government to take pragmatic steps to facilitate the business community and avoid enforcement of policies that would prove detrimental for business, trade and exports.

Representatives of traders’ community on the occasion apprised the meeting about raids by food authority, enforcement of separate policies, laws and regulations by different authorities, double actions and imposition of heavy fines.

The business community demanded the KP Food Authority to reduce license fees and ratio of fines at optimal level.

While keeping in view the difficulties of the traders’ community, the participants demanded to provide all facilities at KP

Food Authority main office.

ShahRukh Khan while responding to various queries of the SCCI members said that KP Food Authority (Amendment) Act had been prepared, in which it has been proposed to reduce fines, saying that the amended act would be implemented after formal approval by the provincial assembly.

Opposing the checking of food items by various authorities, DG said the KP Food Authority has procured the latest equipment and machinery worth millions of rupees for testing of food items. He said KP Food Authority is making sure to provide hygienic foods to people at every level.

He assured that unnecessary actions would be avoided and a letter would be written to Deputy Commissioner Peshawar to convey reservations of the business community’s over crackdown by the local administration in markets for checking of food quality and standards.

DG informed that KP Food Authority has introduced a star rating system aimed at improving the quality and standards of restaurants/food outlets in the city.

## PSX turns around, gains 276 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around on Tuesday, gaining 276.20 points, a positive change of 0.68 percent, closing at 40,949.84 points against 40,673.64 points the previous day.

A total of 96,490,520 shares were traded during the day as compared to 92,717,662 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 4.605 billion against Rs. 4.461 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 300 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 150 of them recorded gains and 123 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were TRG Pak Ltd with 12,961,340 shares

at Rs 116.14 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 12,183,008 shares at Rs.1.17 per share, and Hascol Petrol with 3,401,000 shares at Rs.5.55 per share.

Pak Services witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.115.79 per share price, closing at Rs.1,774.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with a Rs. 69.22 rise in its per share price to Rs.992.22.

Reliance Cotton witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.46.58 per share closing at Rs.600.00; followed by Pak Tobacco with Rs.37.73 decline to close at Rs.741.00.

**Rupee sheds 63 paise against dollar**

Pakistan rupee depreciated by 63 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs 262.51, against

the previous day’s closing of Rs 261.88.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 267 and Rs 269.5 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 08 paise and closed at Rs 280.10 against the last day’s closing of Rs 280.18.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs1.95, whereas a decrease of 06 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 315.44 as compared to its last closing of Rs 315.50.

The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 17 paise each to close at Rs 71.47 and Rs 69.98 respectively.

## Gold prices increase by Rs500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 500 on Tuesday and was traded at Rs 197,000 against sale at Rs.196,500, the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 429 to Rs 168,896 against Rs 168,467, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat went up to Rs 154,821 from Rs 154,427, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.20 to Rs.2150 whereas that of and ten gram silver went up by Rs.17.14 to Rs1,843.27 respectively.

## SVP termed Kuwait visit successful

SIALKOT (APP): Senior Vice President (SVP) Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry Wahub Jahangir termed the visit of SCCI’s trade delegation to Kuwait successful. In a statement issued on Tuesday, SVP SCCI said that the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a MoU under which both the concerned chambers reiterated their commitment to enhance cooperation for increasing bilateral trade.

## Lost & Found

I have lost my Original Passport # HF4118193 somewhere if anyone finds please return it to Zahid Khan S/o Saadat Khan Peshawar.

## BRI’s CPEC-initiative for economic prosperity

### Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

The year 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. In January 2023, China signed a MoU on the joint construction of the BRI with Turkmenistan apart from signing updated MoU with the Philippines, these two recent events demonstrated that the BRI meets the needs of world development and conforms to the expectations of the international community, and always enjoys strong resilience and vitality. In fact, BRI cooperation embraces the historical trend of economic globalization, responds to the call for improving the global governance system to meet people’s longing for a better life. China has signed more than 200 BRI cooperation agreements with 151 countries and 32 international organizations so far and Global Economic Prospects report released in January 2023 by World Bank slashed its 2023 global economic growth forecast to 1.7 percent due to the reason the economic globalization is encountering headwinds and global economic recovery is in the doldrums, on the other hands joint construction of the BRI has shown a more important role in boosting the economic growth of relevant countries and regions and promoting the common development of all countries. BRI if fully implemented, would generate \$1.6 trillion in benefits annually in global revenue by 2030 - accounting for 1.3 percent of global GDP. The BRI was proposed by China, yet it generates opportunities and benefits for the entire world. In fact, this Chinese’s initiative has provided new platforms for international trade and investment. Data showed that the cumulative value of trade in goods between China and countries along the BRI routes reached nearly \$11

trillion from 2013 to 2021, while the two-way investment hit more than \$230 billion. The initiative has also alternatively promoted infrastructure connectivity and made new contributions to the well-being of the people in various countries.

The high-quality BRI cooperation conforms to the trend of the Fourth Industrial Revolution as this cooperation has injected new vitality into the ancient Silk Road by seizing opportunities of digital, Internet-based and intelligent development, fostering new growth opportunities with exploring new development pathways, and building the digital Silk Road and Silk Road of innovation. A known UK sociologist Martin Albrow, mentioned that the BRI has connected China’s peaceful development with the prosperity and happiness of the whole world.

The multilateral development institutions and cooperation platforms established and encouraged by China, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund, will contribute to the building of a fairer and more reasonable global governance system. BRI from visionary blueprints to intensive implementation, has taken a journey from taking roots to achieving sustainable progress.

China’s “circle of friends” for joint construction of the BRI has expanded continuously, while the BRI’s quality of cooperation has kept improving and its development prospects have grown more promising. China will consider holding the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation this year to provide fresh impetus for the development and prosperity of the world. China is ready to work together with various parties to continue promoting high-quality construction of the road for peace, prosperity, opening up, green development, innovation, and connected civi-

lizations, so that the initiative, a project of the century, will better benefit people across the world.

In Pakistan, under BRI’s flagship Project CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) four Special Economic Zones were planned. Among those first one was Rashakai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan, first phase of which was successfully completed.

Recently a field study visit was organized to RSEZ jointly by China Study Centre (CSC) University of Peshawar (UoP) headed by Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar, Pro Vice Chancellor, and Director CSC and Pakistan China Friendship Association (PCFA) headed by Secretary General PCFA KP Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani to RSEZ to celebrate the Chinese Spring & Lantern Festival 2023 with Chinese Friends. During this day long visit the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC)’s CEO Mr. Javed Iqbal Khattak briefed about the progress and development of the RSEZ. He said that the RSEZ is divided into three phases. The completion time for the first phase is December 2023, but to dedicated and devoted team they are ahead of time in first phase. Chinese Enterprises and Pakistani companies are taking a keen interest in investment in the RSEZ having total area 1000 acres with estimation create around 250000 to 300000 job opportunities for the local people. On this occasion China Road & Bridge Corporation (CRBC)’s Ms. Zheng Fang (Sophia), KPEZDMC’s Chief Operating Officer Mr. Adil Salahuddin & Mr. He Bing Project General Manager CRBC for RSEZ gave very informative presentations on the current developments in Zone. Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar, Pro Vice Chancellor, and

Director CSC UoP thanked Mr. Javed Iqbal Khattak CEO, KPEZDMC, and his entire team for the warm welcome & informative presentations and said that CPEC has brought a lot of opportunities for Pakistan. RSEZ is only one part of the billion-dollar project of CPEC. Today we feel happy that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is developing under different CPEC projects. PCFA KP Secretary General Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani said that China is always been very supportive of Pakistan and RSEZ is one the good examples. Through RSEZ Chinese Enterprises will come and they will invest here and take in prosperity of the area.. The technology transfer will occur, and Pakistani enterprises will learn from Chinese expertise in various fields. The visiting Study team of CSC & PCFA along with senior Management of KPEZDMC visit the RSEZ and later Cut the cake as a token of Courtesy and happiness joining Chinese on their happy occasions of Chinese Spring Festival & Chinese Lantern Festival 2023.

The team was briefed that spread over the area of 1000 acres, Rashakai prioritized Special Economic Zone is a flagship project under the industrial cooperation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework that serves as CPEC Special Economic Zone. RSEZ will be developed by CRBC (China Road & Bridge Corporation) in joint venture with KPEZDMC. An SPV named Rashakai Special Economic Zone Development and Operations Company (RSEZDOC) has been setup for implementation of this agreement. RSEZ is located on Motorway (M1) near CPEC route, it is 60 km away from Peshawar-Provincial metropolis City of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan & sister

city of Urumqi-capital city of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China to the west and 90 km away from Islamabad-Capital city of Pakistan to the east. Distancing 800 km from Khunjerab Pass-Pakistan China Boarder in the north, 111.6 km from Torkham Border Pakistan Afghanistan Boarder, and 39.6 km from Azakel Dry Port, which gives Rashakai a unique strategic advantage to serve the consumer markets of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Southwest China, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Enabling a business-friendly environment for attracting foreign direct investment and relocation of the high-tech industry from the world, paving the way for technology transfer. Due to its locational advantage and resource pool, the economic zone has predominant investment feasibility for the following industrial clusters/sectors like Processing and Manufacturing,

Home Appliances, Pharmaceutical, Home Building Materials, Automobile and parts, Agriculture and Horticulture, Wholesale Market/ Specialty mills sat the movement. RSEZ turn the area as an economic hub for the rest of nearby locality and sounded cities of the Province. After a positive response of the efforts of the KPEZDNC the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to construct ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) City’ on Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway near Rashakai. According to government sources, the city will be constructed on eighty thousand Kanal lands at a cost of over four billion dollars under CPEC and will consist of education and commercial zones, public buildings, apartments, golf course, theme park and sports facilities.

Briefing on the occasion it was informed that as an active Chinese’s side leading partner for the development of RSEZ,

Chinese state-owned enterprise China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) is actively involved in its marketing to develop the SEZ. The investment plan is focused on high-tech, export-led industries that can add value to the local natural resources and food industry.

China’s Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong during his tenure in Pakistan as Ambassador said that cooperation in promoting the construction of industrial parks is an important part of the corridor towards high-quality development. Modern industrial parks can effectively integrate resources, cultivate competitive industrial clusters, and increase exports, thereby helping Pakistan achieve sustainable development. With the Rashakai SEZ adjacent to Afghanistan and linked to Gwadar Port, it has the potential to become a base for Pakistan to export commodities to Afghanistan and other regional markets in West China and Central Asia, and if properly managed, can become a hub for regional interconnection while enhancing regional security. This is especially important for Afghanistan, with the US military departing the country in mid-September this year. If this project can be protected and allowed to prosper, Rashakai will ultimately be seen as important to Pakistan as Shenzhen was to China’s early development - increasing trade opportunities and foreign direct investment in addition to creating regional wealth and security. Like CPEC for Pakistan & region, BRI is a Chinese President Xi Jinping’s initiative for the prosperity and connectivity plan for economic & commercial activities globally.

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In brief

Cesar discharged from hospital

LONDON (Agencies): Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta has been discharged from hospital after suffering a concussion during Saturday's home defeat by Southampton. Azpilicueta lay motionless on the pitch after being struck in the face by Sekou Mara as the Saints substitute attempted an overhead kick. The Spain defender, 33, received oxygen treatment for several minutes before being taken off on a stretcher, though he was conscious as he left the field. Chelsea said he was "recovering well". In a statement on Tuesday, the Blues added: "The club's medical team are closely monitoring Cesar's condition, adhering to the important concussion protocols in place to ensure his safety. "Cesar observed training today, before he starts working towards returning to the pitch." On Sunday, the full-back tweeted : "My family and I would like to thank everyone who has been looking after me since yesterday's incident. "From the Chelsea FC medical team, to team-mates and opponents, to St Mary's and Cleveland Hospital and all staff members and doctors: a massive thank you from the bottom of my heart. Now, time to recover and I will see you soon on the pitch!" James Ward-Prowse's free-kick in first-half stoppage time condemned the Blues to their fifth defeat of 2023. They are 11 points off the Premier League top four with 15 league games remaining.

7th National Road Cycling C'ship

PESHAWAR (APP): The Baikistan Cycling academy won women and men cycling titles in the 7th National Women and Men Cycling Championship which concluded here on Tuesday. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali was the chief guest on this occasion. Pakistan Cycling Federation and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association organized elite and junior competitions, besides other road competitions for both male and female cyclists. 11 teams, including Baikistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Army, Wapda and others participated in the championship. The circuit race was organised under Asian and UCI rules with a loop of 13.5 km. The KP governor distributed prizes and medals among the players. On this occasion, the President of Asian Cycling Confederation, Pakistan Cycling Federation President Syed Azhar Ali Shah, Organizing Secretary and President KP Cycling Association Nisar Ahmed, General Secretary PHF Muazzam Khan, Commissioner and Chief Judge Haroon, Nusrat Khan, Javed Khan. Sardar Nazakat, Sarmad Shabab, Muhammad Tariq, Mah Noor, Razzaq, Usman and Tahir Zareen were also present. More than 110 cyclists participated in the competition. Mariyam Ali won gold medal, Maleeha Ali Silver and Saniya Khalid won Bronze Medal in Women's Junior Road Race, while Naimat Ullah of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won Gold, Azan of Sindh won Silver and Karim of Balochistan won Bronze Medal in Men's Elite Race. Nadia Bibi of WAPDA won gold, Kokab Sarwar of Baikistan won silver, Kannza Malik of Baikistan Cycling Academy won bronze medal, Sanaulah of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won gold, Shabir Hussain of Balochistan won silver and Shan of Crank Academy won bronze medal in Men U23 category road race.

# England break T20 World Cup record in win over Pakistan

CAPE TOWN (Agencies): A sensational batting performance by England saw them post the highest total in Women's T20 World Cup history to crush Pakistan by 114 runs. Nat Sciver-Brunt's sublime 81 not out from 40 balls and Danni Wyatt's 59 set up England's 213-5 in Cape Town. Sciver-Brunt and Amy Jones, who made 47, added a partnership of 100 from just 48 balls for the fourth wicket as Pakistan's bowling and fielding fell apart. In reply, Pakistan slumped to 99-9 with Katherine Sciver-Brunt and Charlie Dean taking two wickets each to ensure England finished the group stage unbeaten. In a one-sided encounter England capitalised on misfields, dropped catches and wayward bowling with a dominant performance that sends a clear message to their semi-final opponents - South Africa or New Zealand. England lost Sophia Dunkley, Alice Capsey and Heather Knight for single-figure scores but Wyatt, who had previously struggled for runs at the top of the order, continued to attack and reached her half-

century from 29 balls in the 12th over. Nat Sciver-Brunt then followed her important half-century against India with another stunning performance, smashing 12 fours and a six in a brutal display of hitting that left Pakistan depleted. She was well supported by Jones, who was dropped first ball, as the pair expertly manipulated the field and pummelled the ball to Newlands' huge boundaries with ease. England's total beat the previous record of 195-3 set by South Africa against Thailand at the 2020 edition of the tournament. A fine bowling display then capped an extraordinary all-round performance from England as Pakistan, with no choice but to try and attack from the offset, succumbed to England's consistency and an imposing run-rate that never felt within their reach. England's place at the top of the group confirms they avoid defending champions Australia in the semi-finals, who will play India. England batters punish poor Pakistan In an exhibition of Twenty20 power-hitting and skill, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Wyatt and Jones walloped

the ball around Newlands with disdain. But at times, it was difficult viewing as Pakistan were completely outplayed and the gulf in class was glaring. England are a top team benefitting from a solid domestic structure and strength in depth, and while Pakistan are a much-improved side, it was a performance that showed just how far behind other nations are to England, India and Australia. It is not discrediting England's batting to acknowledge this - they were ruthless, smart, and skilful. Every time Pakistan moved a fielder, Nat Sciver-Brunt hit it straight over the area they had vacated. Wyatt saw her opening partner, Dunkley, depart in the second over but remained unflustered, making the most of her chance to punish the sloppy bowling that frequently came her way. Jones was hit in the stomach by two no-balls but continued to ramp and scoop and pull the ball at will. England will know the bigger tests are to come, the stronger bowling attacks and more dangerous batters.



CAPE TOWN: England celebrate the wicket of Omaima Sohail of Pakistan during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup match between England and Pakistan at Newlands Cricket Ground.

## Warner ruled out of Australia's remaining 2 tests in India

SYDNEY (AP): Veteran opener David Warner has been ruled out of Australia's remaining two test matches in India after injuring his elbow and sustaining a concussion in the second cricket test in New Delhi. Warner was substituted out of the match after the first innings and replaced by Matt Renshaw. Australia slumped to a six-wicket loss following a dramatic second-innings batting collapse as India took a 2-0 series lead and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Cricket Australia issued a statement Tuesday saying Warner will return to Sydney for rest and recovery but is expected to return to India next month for the three-game limited-overs series. Australia is struggling with form and injury problems in India. Injured pace bowler Josh Hazlewood also returned to Australia, without playing a test, after the loss in New Delhi. Skipper Pat Cummins was making a quick return to Sydney because of a serious family illness but was scheduled to be back in India ahead of the third test starting March 1 at Indore.

## Victory for Rimsha Ijaz in ladies section of 9th J.A.Zaman Open Golf

LAHORE (APP): Rimsha Ijaz won the ladies contest of 9th J.A.Zaman Open Golf here on Tuesday at Lahore course. At the conclusion of the 18 holes for ladies on Tuesday, it was Rimsha Ijaz of Defence Raya who transcended her rivals by managing an impressive score of gross 76 and thereby laying claim to the first gross prize. She plays to a handicap of one which is an achievement for a Pakistani golf playing lady amateur and with her steadfast play succeeded in bringing off victory for herself. The runner up in ladies gross was Hamna Amjad, another astounding lady golfer with a zero handicap. Her score for 18 holes was gross 78. Third gross position went to the little one from Lahore Garrison, Bushra Fatima who plays to a six handicap, and her playing capabilities are extraordinary. Hopefully in a years time she will be amongst the best lady player in the country. Her gross score in this contest was 81. In the race for honors in net category, the high achiever was Shahzadi Gulfam of Lahore Garrison. Her first net prize was attributable to a net score of 69. Second net was won by Tehmina Ahmed of Lahore Gymkhana, score being net 73. Ana James of Royal Palm won the third net position with a score of net 74. As for senior amateur event, the competitors have to compete over two days or 36 holes. They played 18 holes on Tuesday and after 18 holes the leader is Sardar Murad of Defence Raya and he is placed at a gross score of 78. A one stroke behind him is Najam Hafeez of Lahore Gymkhana and looks determined to play formidably in the 18 holes contest tomorrow Wednesday.

## 2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup BN Polo, Master Paints/Newage win openers

LAHORE (APP): BN Polo and Master Paints/Newage Polo emerged victorious on the opening day of the 2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup 2023 sponsored by Takmeel Square here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Tuesday. Juan Maria Tito Ruiz guided BN Polo to an emphatic 10-6 triumph over Remounts in the first match of the opening day. From BN Polo, Juan Maria Tito played a brilliant game and contributed with five fabulous goals while Hamza Mawaz Khan fired in four fantastic goals and Roberto Arias converted one goal. Manuel Sundblad slammed in three goals while Ahmed Zubair Butt banged in a brace and Imran Shahid struck one goal for Remounts. BN Polo started the match in great style as they hammered a hat-trick of goals against one goal by Remounts to take a 3-1 lead. The second chukker was evenly poised as both the sides played well and

converted two goals each with BN Polo still enjoying a 5-3 lead. The third chukker was identical to the second one as both the teams converted two goals each with BN Polo stretching their lead to 7-5. BN Polo dominated the fourth and decisive chukker by pumping in three goals against one by Remounts to win the match by 10-6. Juan Cruz Greguoli's heroics helped Master Paints/Newage Cables thrash HN Polo by 7-1 in the second match. Greguoli was hero of the day for the winning side as he thrashed in three tremendous goals while Simon Prada banged in a brace and Raja Taimur Nadeem and Farooq Amin Sufi converted one goal each. Santi Lusa scored the only goal for team HN Polo, which had a half goal handicap advantage. Master Paints/Newage Cables dominated the match right from the word

go as they slammed in three back-to-back goals to gain a 3-0 lead. They added one more goal in their tally in the beginning of the second chukker to enhance their lead to 4-0 while HN Polo struck one to reduce the margin to 4-1. Master Paints/Newage continued their dominance in the third chukker and hammered another hat-trick of goals while no more goal was converted in the fourth and last chukker, thus Master Paints/Newage winning the match by 7-1? as HN Polo had a half goal handicap advantage. A large number of spectators were present to watch the first day's matches. Jinnah Polo Fields President Lt Col Shoaib Aftab (R), Secretary Maj Ali Taimur (R) and a large number of spectators were also present on this occasion. Col Shoaib expressed his special thanks to the sponsors, Takmeel Square, for supporting the game of kings and knights.

## Hope, Wiese star as Lahore Qalandars dominate Quetta Gladiators

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Shai Hope smashed 47 from 32 balls before David Wiese took three wickets to put Lahore Qalandars in command as they beat Quetta Gladiators by 63 runs in the 10th match of the Pakistan Super League season 8. Defending champions Qalandars put up a combined batting effort to reach a respectable 198/6 in the 20 overs after they were put into bat. Hope led the charge in the middle

overs with a powerful 47 from 32 balls, laced with five fours and a maximum, after openers Fakhar Zaman and Tahir Baig were sent back to the hut inside the powerplay. West Indies' new ODI captain sailed Qalandars to 146/3 before Odean Smith (2-41) got rid of him with Iftikhar grabbing the catch at deep mid-wicket. Left-hander Hussain Talat also played a brief cameo alongside Hope, scoring 26 from 13 balls.

Zimbabwe's Raza, however, fired in with two sixes and a four and went not out with no.7 Rashid Khan, who joins Qalandars earlier today. Quetta bowlers leaked too many runs, especially pace spearhead Naseem Shah, who went wicketless against 47 runs in his four overs. Odean Smith and spinner Qais Ahmed claimed two wickets apiece while Mohammad Nawaz and Mohammad Hasnain took a scalp each.



KARACHI: Sikandar Raza plays a shot during the death overs.

## GC University Faisalabad and Poonch Azad Kashmir University won their matches



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Higher Education Commission's inter-varsity hockey championship match has ended with two more matches, Poonch University and GCU University Faisalabad won their matches. In the ongoing Inter Uni versity Hockey Championship organized

by Islamia College University, Peshawar, in the ongoing Inter versity Hockey Championship match played yesterday between Nimal University Islamabad and Peshawar University, Nimal University won by three goals to one. defeated In the second match, GCU University Faisalabad defeated Poonch University Faisalabad by

seven goals to zero and qualified for the next round. Deputy Director Sports Jafar Shah was the chief guest on this occasion. While Director of Sports Islamia College University Peshawar Ali Hoti and Secretary of District Peshawar Archery Association Sarfraz Khan were also present with him.

## Gavaskar goes berserk, says greedy Pakistani cricketers missing IPL bucks

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar has lashed out at former Pakistan cricketers for passing 'uncomplimentary' remarks on Indian cricketers, which he claims stems from the fact that players across the border cannot participate in the Indian Premier League. The IPL, over the years, has played catalyst in bringing players from different nations together, hence mellowing the aggression between them considerably. However, it doesn't mean that the IPL has doused the fire in the bellies of these players or dampened the level of competition among them, with Gavaskar putting his point across. The legendary Indian batsman feels that while the IPL has bridged the gap across the world, there is always an exception, with Gavaskar pointing fingers at Pakistan. Barring the inaugural edition of the IPL, cricketers from Pakistan have been banned from participating in the IPL due to political tension between the two nations; and this, Gavaskar reckons, has led to a certain degree of animosity. "When two of the top-ranked teams play against each other, then sparks are bound to fly. However, since the IPL began, the animosity between players of the two teams has lessened considerably while the intensity hasn't reduced one bit and that's how it should be. Sharing the same change room,

hotels and travelling to different venues over a period of six weeks to play has made the players get to know each other better, understand the different cultures and attitudes and approaches to the game," Gavaskar wrote in his column for Mid-Day. "While there will always be a bit of banter between players, the angry and sometimes vulgar exchanges are a thing of the past. Today, if there are any such issues, it's invariably between players who don't play the IPL and thus have a bit of resentment towards the Indian players who play against them. Some of them believe that their achievements are such that they should be getting more than the Indian player, who gets millions through the IPL." Gavaskar's comments come in view of the ongoing Test series between India and Australia. Historically, tempers have flared between the two teams, including the previous Border-Gavaskar Trophy, but this time around, there has been absolutely nothing of such sort with most of the noise around the series emanating from the media publications of both nations. Accusing the media of 'pulling players down', Gavaskar pointed out how ex-cricketers, especially from Pakistan, make it their agenda to produce Indian cricketers in lesser light in order to gain social media traction. "What the following for

the game also does is to make the media, especially the online media, look to get more eyeballs or followers and so anything to do with cricket and especially about Indian players gets into the public domain even if it actually belittles them. That's the sad part especially when the views of those across the border get online in the Indian media. It's almost a daily thing to hear some former player from across the border pulling down an Indian player and saying the Pakistani player is better. What these guys know is that they will immediately get a response from the Indian fans who will defend their favourite player and in doing so, increasing the followers of the former player from across the border," added Gavaskar. "It's a trick that is used by them knowing that to increase their followers all that they have to do is say uncomplimentary stuff about Indian players, past or present. Have you ever heard or read any Indian player past or present saying anything about the players from across the border? Frankly, nobody cares, so no Indian that I know has said anything about the players from across the border. It's simply not our style. If our online media ignores what is said across the border then it will automatically stop, but our media will publish it even if it is pulling a fellow Indian down."





## In brief

### IRSA releases 108,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 108,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 66,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.62 feet and was 72.62 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 18,700 cusecs, while the outflow as 50,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.20 feet, which was 67.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 19,700 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 52,700, 44,600, 29,500 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 5,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Annual competition of Hifz-o-Quran

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is organizing annual competition of Hifz-o-Quran and Husn-e-Qirat on Wednesday. All nominated Hufaz and Hafiza from all provinces including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan arrived in the federal capital to participate in the competition, the ministry's spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt told APP on Tuesday. He said 70 contestants who had been victorious at tehsil, district and provincial level were participating in the competition. According to age, there would be a competition between a total of 10 categories of Hifz-o-Quran and Husn-e-Qirat, he said adding that the prize distribution ceremony would be held on Thursday. Umar Butt said the ministry would award prizes worth Rs 2.5 million and certificates of appreciation to the winners. He expressed the hope that it would provide an opportunity to the winners to represent Pakistan in the international competitions related to Hifz-o-Quran and Husn-e-Qirat.

### Mainly dry weather: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly dry weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours. While cold weather will prevail in the northern areas of the country. Light rain-wind/thunderstorm/snowfall is expected at isolated places in Chitral, Dir, Kashmir and its adjoining hilly areas. According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country. During the last 24 hours, rain-wind/thunderstorm occurred in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Murree. Dry weather prevailed in other parts of the country. The rainfall recorded was Kashmir: 06mm, Rawalakot 06mm, Garhidupatta 02, Muzaffarabad (Airport) 01, Gilgit-Baltistan Astore 05, Skardu, Bagrote 01, Punnjab: Murree 01mm. The lowest minimum temperatures recorded were Kalam -07C, Leh -06, Gupis, Malamjappa -02 and Skardu -01C.



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Pakistan Railways retrieve 986 acres land from land grabbers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 986 acres of its land worth million of rupees during various anti-encroachment operations across the country from the land grabbers. "Around 484 acres retrieved in Punjab, 141 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 335 acres in Sindh and only 26 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached.

The official said that in the light of the directives of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued

to all Divisional Superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment.

"The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added.

He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades. "The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments," he added.

He said the government was taking several steps to

retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including a detailed survey being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation by various government departments.

The official said that First Information Reports (FIRs) were being lodged and cases were registered and sent to PR Judicial Magistrates for expeditious trial. The issue regarding illegal occupation and possession of Pakistan Railways' land by government departments and institutions has also been taken up with the concerned departments, he added.

The official said PR owned 167,690 acres of land across the country, of which 90,326-acre was in Punjab, 39,428-acre in Sindh, 28,228-acre in Balochistan, and 9,708-acre in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Fitness certificate mandatory for vehicles entering motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Communications Asad Mehmood on Tuesday instructed the relevant authorities to enforce the fitness certificate of passenger vehicles for entering the motorways.

This decision has come after a tragic road traffic crash on the Motorway (M-2) at Kalkarhar Salt Range, where a passenger bus crashed due to brake failure resulting in 14 fatalities, 11 serious injuries, and 31 minor injuries.

In the wake of this decision, any vehicle without a fitness certificate would be banned from entering the motorway considering the safety of passengers on motorways.

Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police Khalid Mahmood, met with the Minister of Communications after the accident, and the fitness certificate requirement was introduced as a measure to ensure safer travel for passengers on motorways.

The IG Motorways has been instructed to inform the four provincial transport secretaries about this initiative for ensuring the checking of the fitness certificate of vehicles before entering the motorways.

## Four vehicles smuggling wheat impounded

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Tuesday impounded four vehicles with 1849 wheat and flour bags and sent four accused behind the bars.

According to a district administration spokesman, the food Department Rawalpindi and Potohar Division Police conducted raids in Naseerabad and Taxila areas and rounded up Zulfqarnain with 450 wheat bags, Arslan with 300 flour bags and Iqbal for carrying 1040 flour bags.

Meanwhile, Taxila police rounded up Arslan Butt and recovered 50 wheat flour bags from his possession.

He informed that the authorities of the food department along with Potohar Division Police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up the wheat flour smugglers. He said that the accused were trying to illegally ship wheat flour and wheat out of the Rawalpindi division.

## Overseas Pakistanis pivotal for development of country: NA speaker

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Tuesday said the role of overseas Pakistanis in the socio-economic development of the country was pivotal.

He expressed these views during his meeting with a delegation of overseas Pakistanis led by the Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi.

The speaker appreciated the hard work and dedication of overseas Pakistanis who were playing important role to keep the country intact on the path of development.

He said the incumbent parliament was taking all measures for the welfare of overseas Pakistanis adding that incentivizing skilled labour force to work in other countries would not only contribute to socio-economic development of the host countries but also for Pakistan.

He stressed on the need to provide opportunities of learning skills especially

in the field of modern technology to people so that they could find suitable jobs in foreign countries.

The speaker also said resolving issues of overseas Pakistanis had been the priority of incumbent parliament as "remittances sent by overseas Pakistani bring economic stability in the country."

The minister lauded the concern and support of the NA speaker for the welfare of overseas Pakistanis.

He also briefed about important initiatives of government for the facilitation of overseas Pakistanis and to enhance skill laboured force.

He said the incumbent government would continue to strive hard for facilitating and resolving the challenges faced by overseas Pakistanis.

The delegation was comprised of Shaoquett Moselamane, Dr Muhammad Shahbaz, Chaudhry Rana Iftikhar and Nadeem Ahmad.

## ANF seizes over 1679 kg drugs; arrests 34 peddlers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 1679.947 kg of drugs and 586.800 liters of hydrochloric Acid (HCL) worth US\$ 57.941 million internationally, arrested 34 persons including three women, impounded 13 vehicles while conducting 38 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country during last week.

ANF spokesman said that the seized drugs comprised 97.351 kg heroin, 1404.696 kg hashish, 22.600 kg opium, 154.150

kg methamphetamine (Ice), one kg crystal and 0.150 kg weed. ANF Balochistan recovered 902 kg of drugs and 586.800 liters of hydrochloric acid (HCL) in nine operations and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 70 kg heroin, 682 kg hashish and 150 kg methamphetamine (Ice). ANF Punjab recovered 13.393 kg of drugs in three operations while arrested three persons involved in drug smuggling and impounded a vehicle.

The seized drugs com-

prised 9.593 kg heroin, 1,800 kg hashish and two kg methamphetamine (Ice).

ANF KPK recovered 621.059 kg of drugs in seven operations while arrested five persons involved in drug smuggling and impounded two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 621.059 kg of hashish. ANF Sindh recovered 19.918 kg drugs in six operations while arrested 11 persons including a woman involved in drug smuggling and impounded four vehicles.

## Consumers urge to manage traffic, causing congestion on Srinagar Highway

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mismanaged car queues are causing traffic congestion at Srinagar Highway due to car parking alongside the road of the popular weekly bazaar at H-9 Sector.

The mega shopping bazaar and most visited place of the metropolis lacks proper management and coordination to make visitors park their vehicles properly. The entrance and exit to the parking remain overfilled, bungled and aching especially on Sunday which causes an unmanageable traffic load for officials and market staffers.

Visitors prefer to park vehicles along with Srinagar Highway, service road and at 9th avenue to seek easy entrance and exit after their shopping. Kashif Raza a visitor of the market said that the parking area remains occupied and the customers have to reach their cars on foot while carrying heavy packs of grocery. He said that to avoid inconvenience citizens prefer to park their cars on the main road.

Another visitor Saima Khurshed commented that citizens prefer shopping from the weekly markets as prices of essential commodities are reasonable. She said that customers save some money but waste their time due to unmanaged traffic. When contacted Islamabad Traffic Police, the relevant official

said that traffic management of weekly markets remains on the top of the priorities list of the police. He said that wardens are always available on the Srinagar Highway and around the weekly markets to maintain the traffic flow.

He informed that every customer is in hurry and tries to park the car close to the doors. He said that challan tickets are issued to those who violate the parking rules. Talking to APP, Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area Awaid Bhatti said the administration is putting best efforts to solve the parking issue in the area along with better management and renovation of the bazaar to facilitate citizens.

## Security Forces conduct 6,000 anti-terror operations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The security forces in the past three months have conducted some 6,921 anti-terrorist operations to purge the nation from the scourge of terrorism and killed 142 terrorists and arrested 1,007 in various operations across the country.

The anti-terrorism efforts were expedited against the recent resurgence of terrorism by the security forces who have conducted numerous operations across the country, the sources told APP.

The security forces not

only arrested terrorists and their facilitators but also foiled several attacks during the last three month.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, some 1,960 operations were conducted including 1,516 area domination operations, 301 intelligence-based operations, and 143 area sanitisation operations. During the operations, 98 terrorists were killed and 540 were arrested. In Balochistan, 3,414 operations were carried out comprising of 2,980 area domination

operations, 67 intelligence-based operations, and 367 area sanitisation while 40 terrorists were killed and 112 were arrested.

In Sindh, 752 intelligence-based operations were conducted in which three terrorists were killed and 344 were arrested. In Punjab, 165 intelligence based operations were conducted and during these operations a terrorist was killed while 11 were arrested. The security forces were continuing operations to prevent terrorism across the country.

## Rs 44.270 bln releases for various water resources schemes so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has released an amount of Rs 44.270 billion for various water resources schemes under Annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) in first six months of current fiscal year 2022-23.

According to official data of the Planning Commission, the government has specified a sum of Rs 97.559 billion for various projects in PSDP 2022-23. Out of total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 38.172 billion while foreign aid component was Rs 6.097 billion.

A sum of Rs 35.911 billion has been spent on various water-related projects so far. The Ongoing schemes included 13 hydel and 61 water sector projects, whereas the new projects were only 13 in total.

The allocation of ongoing hydel projects included Rs 55.383 million for Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW), Rs 12,083 Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (696 MW), and Rs 12,000 million for Tarbela 5th Extension Hydro Power Project (1,410 MW).

Among the ongoing water sector projects, Rs 20,000 million each was allocated for Diamer Basha Dam Project and K-4 Greater water Supply Scheme (260 MGD), Rs 12,060 million for Mohmand Multipurpose Dam Project, Rs 7,000 million for Diamer Basha Dam Project (Land Acquisition and Re-settlement), and Rs 5,000 each for Nai Gaj Dam Project Dadu (Sindh) and Kaachi Canal Project (Phase-I) Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Bolan and Jhal Magsi.

The major allocation for new schemes included Rs 500 million for the Chashma Right Bank Canal Left Cum Gravity Project and Rs 300 million each for the construction of five Small Dams Salari-2 Dam, Rai Jo Da Dam, Shalmani Dam, Garwari Dam and Amari Dam in Kohistan Dadu, for construction of six dams including Densi, Kcodal, Kambowah, Khirporah and others; for construction of six smalls dams in District Zhob and Sherani, and others projects.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Andrea Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy at Parliament House.



#### 4.13b Afg revenue collected

FARAH (Agencies): Officials of Abu Nasir Farahi Customs Office said that they have collected 4.13 billion Afghanis in revenue from the port in the past six months. The customs office head, Mullah Shams ul Haq Akhund told this news agency that the customs officials will not allow imports of low-quality materials into the country. The port which is 120-kilometer far from the capital of Farah province connects Afghanistan with Iran.

# The Frontier Post

## AFGHANISTAN

Rajab 30, 1444 — Wednesday, February 22, 2023

#### Team appointed

KABUL (TOLOnews): A delegation has been appointed to investigate school uniforms for male students to adjust them based on Islamic and cultural values, an education official. The move comes as the new school year in Afghanistan is due to start in April. "In every school, every educational center, students should wear a uniform which is in accordance with our culture and Islamic values," said Farhad Ahmad Stanikzai, a spokesman for the Nangarhar education department.

## Fresh \$40m cash reaches Kabul: DAB

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan Central Bank on Tuesday announced that a fresh \$40 million cash package has reached Kabul, and deposited in a private bank.

Afghanistan central bank also known as 'Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB)' in a statement said on Tuesday that the Afghan Interim Regime appreciates the moves which lead to the inflow of cash to the country.

The central bank has stated that the government appreciates the international community's support in shipping cash into the country aimed at helping vulnerable families during these difficult times, as the country is wrestling with economic and humanitarian crises. This comes as

Pakistani Rupee and Iranian Rial have rapidly depreciated over the past weeks, whereas, Afghani has remained quite stable, mainly due to the inflow of the international community's cash aid packages to Afghanistan.

Over the past year and a half, millions of dollars have been shipped to Kabul, being reported by Taliban officials in a regular manner. Furthermore, DAB auctions USD in a regular manner, aimed at stabilizing the value of the local currency against foreign currencies, USD, in particular.

The critics of the ruling regime say that the Taliban are the primary beneficiaries of the International Humanitarian Cash Aid

Packages than ordinary people who struggle for survival.

Previously, Ahmad Masoud, the Leader of the Afghanistan National Resistance Front (NRF) had said that the Taliban regime will collapse as soon as the \$40 million weekly cash package is cut short.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan had earlier clarified that cash packages shipped to Afghanistan are deposited in UN accounts in a private bank, and will be used by UN agencies solely for the purpose of humanitarian aid and other supportive programs. The money will not be handed over to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the announcement said.

## Iran to handover Afghan Embassy to Afghan govt

TEHRAN (Khaama Press): The Iranian Foreign Ministry plans to hand over the Afghan Embassy in Tehran to the Afghan interim government after months of negotiations, according to unofficial sources.

Iran will officially hand over the embassy to the Taliban in the coming days according to an Afghan diplomat who has been in contact with the officials of the Iranian foreign ministry. A serious decision has been made in this regard, the diplomat added.

Previously, Afghanistan's foreign ministry in a letter stated that Mohammad Afzal Haqqani was appointed as the ambassador to Iran. The letter noted that Haqqani, as the first secretary of the embassy, will be in charge of the diplomatic mission in Iran.

Initially, Haqqani had traveled from Tehran to Kabul and then returned with his letter of appointment as head of the Afghan Embassy in Tehran. However, the Iranian Foreign Ministry had not accepted Haqqani as the new ambassador to Tehran. Now, a serious decision has been taken in this regard the Afghan diplomat said.

The Taliban-run administration has neither internal legitimacy nor international recognition. So far, no single country in the world has recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

Iran is the third country to join Pakistan and Russia which handed over the Afghan embassies to the group a few months ago.

Unlike the Taliban's first spell from 1996-2001, this time, Iran has maintained close ties with Afghanistan's de facto authorities. Since the hasty withdrawal of America, Iran has kept its embassy operation in Kabul and has actively engaged with the Taliban regime.

Besides, delivering humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan during these difficult times, Iranian officials have repeatedly called on the Afghan caretaker regime to form an all-inclusive government, in which all ethnicities and political groups could see them represented.

## IRC, CAR ink MoU to enable healthcare, essential services for Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Tuesday signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MoU) that outlined operations and activities where CAR and IRC intend to collaborate to facilitate Afghan refugees in access to health and essential services.

The vision of CAR aligns with the strategic approach of International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Pakistan. As IRC in Pakistan has been working proactively with Afghan refugees since 1980's with a wide range of programming under emergency relief, health, education, cash assistance and essential services. The strategic partnership between IRC and CAR is testament of resolve to work collaboratively for Afghan refugees, a news release said.

Amongst multiple challenges faced by Afghan refugees one the foremost is limited access to healthcare, malnutrition, and high rates of infectious diseases. Maternal and child health is also a concern for Afghan refugees in Pakistan as many refugee women lack access to reproductive healthcare services, leading to higher rates of maternal and infant mortality. Mental health is another area of concern for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Overall, the health challenges facing Afghan refugees in Pakistan are complex and multifaceted. Addressing these challenges requires accurate information. It is envisioned that IRC and CAR will collaborate in the development of an annual health status report which will identify areas for assistance in health sector to cater for preventive, curative, and rehabilitative healthcare to Afghan Refugees.

Commissioner Afghan Refugee, Muhammad Abbas Khan speaking at the MoU signing ceremony appreciated IRC's long-standing commitment towards the cause of Afghan refugees and reaffirmed the support of Commissionerate in working collaboratively for provision of quality services with dignity and diligence. He further noted that Pakistan is very proudly hosting millions of Afghan



Refugees and this hospitality was only possible due to the generosity of host communities. "The financial and technical support of international community is paramount along with fostering partnerships for this noble cause."

Country Director, IRC-Pakistan, Shabnam Baloch opined that this collaboration between International Rescue Committee and Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees would pave way for pragmatic programming that was based on evidence-based research and triple nexus approach. She further reiterated IRC's commitment to work alongside government counterparts for fostering a conducive environment for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

A representative of

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A representative of

UNHCR, Raymond Tagle was also present at the MOU signing ceremony and congratulated both agencies on the envisioned partnership.

Pakistan has a long history of hosting Afghan refugees, dating back to 1979. Since then, millions of Afghans have sought refuge in Pakistan. Even today, Pakistan hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world. To streamline the process of coordination the "Commissionerate Afghan Refugees" (CAR) was established in 1979 with the mandate for refugee camp management and to facilitate access to health and education services, skills training for livelihood opportunities, and helping refugees in voluntary repatriation.

## Anti-erosion efforts begun along Amu river



KABUL (TOLOnews): Officials of the Ministry of Energy and Water said that work to fortify vulnerable areas along the Amu River's northern shore have begun.

The Deputy Minister of Energy and Water, Mujib Rahman Omar Akhundzada, said that 2 billion Afghanis have been set aside for the project's immediate implementation, and an additional 6 billion Afghanis will be spent for its construction.

Akhundzada has travelled to the north of the country in order to begin the project to fortify the Amu River's shores along the border regions. He added that the ministry intended to construct retaining

walls in all exposed locations along the Amu River.

"We have two types of plans for consolidation: the first is an immediate plan to eliminate any threat, for which we have set aside roughly 2 billion Afghanis, and the second is a long-term plan, for which we have set aside approximately 6 billion Afghanis," Omar Akhundzada said.

Several inhabitants of Kunduz province's Imam Sahib district expressed their pleasure with the project's execution, saying that once the Amu River's consolidation work is finished, the destruction of thousands of acres of agricultural land and residential

buildings will be prevented.

"Our region is fully under destruction, the agricultural lands, the village, and the mosque are completely under destruction," said Mohammad Mir, a resident of Imam Sahib district.

"Thousands of lands and homes will be saved here after the project starts, and Shir Khan Bandar will also be protected," said Assadullah, another resident of Imam Sahib district.

The project to fortify Amu River's shores has begun in some provinces in the country's north, where residents have previously voiced concerns about the destruction of their homes and fields as a result of the river's flooding.

## UN calls for reopen girls schools

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) says schools and universities will resume in a month throughout the country, as millions of girls are deprived of attending education at secondary and higher levels.

UNAMA on Tuesday said on Twitter that the Afghan Interim Regime should now take action to improve the living conditions of the ordinary people

and the future of Afghanistan.

The UN agency described the ban on female students' education as a clear violation of human rights and "self-harm" as the country is already wrestling with a dire humanitarian situation.

Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, the group has banned female students to attend schools above grade six as well as university.

Following the imple-

mentation of the recent gender-based restrictions, human rights organizations have called the Taliban's move gender parties, where women have been completely erased from public life.

On the contrary, Taliban officials have repeatedly stated that the bans are temporary and will be removed as soon as a pure Islamic environment is created. According to the Islamic Emirate authorities, the ordinary people's mindset

has been corrupted by the presence of Western-style culture over the past two decades.

In response to the human rights organization's statement, the Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid has said that the United Nations agencies and the international community should not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. They should respect Afghan culture and values as well as Islamic Sharia laws instead, he added.

## Farmers worry over low price of carrots



KANDAHAR (Pajhwok): Farmers in southern Kandahar province, who until recently cultivated poppy crop on their lands, this year grew carrots, but complain the root vegetable's sales and prices are low.

Lala, a farmer from Arghandab district, said he

grew carrots on his two acres of land and labored for six months to raise them, but it barely broke even.

Lala told Pajhwok Afghan News farmers in Kandahar would grow poppy until its cultivation was banned two years ago.

"This year, I grew carrots and the harvest did not even cover the expenses."

He said: "The profit of poppy was much higher while a kilo of carrots is sold for only five or six afis in the market."

He believed if factories for carrot juice and jam

were established, the vegetable's price would increase and it would benefit farmers.

Khan Mohammad, another farmer, said the yield of carrots was much better this year, but it price was low in the market, so the farmers expected no income.

Khan Mohammad said: "We take bags containing 12 or 13 kilograms of carrots to the vegetables market and sell them for 70 afis each, we do not make any money, we even do not get our expenses back."

Many farmers turned to cultivation of carrots this year and the high yield brought their prices down while some people opted to selling carrot juice on the streets.

Abdul Manan, a carrot juice seller, said, he would sell pomegranate juice in the past, but now he sold carrot juice and made 300 afis to 500 afis daily.

Ha said: "I have bought

a small juicer. I earn up to 400 afis daily to buy bread for my family."

The Agriculture and Livestock department head said carrots were grown on about 500 acres of land in Kandahar province this year.

Maulavi Shams Rahman Musa told Pajhwok that traders could invest in establishing factories of juice, jam, tomato paste and other agricultural products to encourage farmers.

Musa said: "We cooperate with farmers, we give them advise, attract assistance for them, but to find market for their products, different factories should be established".

Arghandab, Panjwai, Daman, Takhta Pul, Zheri and Dand are the districts of Kandahar where carrots are grown widely.

Health experts say in addition to being tasty, eating carrots is good for the skin beauty, eye sight and prevents some diseases as well.

## Parwan residents plant trees, hope for greener environment

PARWAN (TOLOnews): Some Parwan residents have started planting trees at their own expense, saying they hope to promote a culture focused on the natural environment.

These residents said that thousands of saplings are planted every year in different parts of the province, but due to lack of attention, many of them dry up.

"We do our duty and also encourage people and tell them it is the season for seedlings and to start making the environment green," said Abdul Wadod Wahidi, Parwan resident.

"If every person plants a tree we will have a green environment," said Fardin, a Parwan resident.

Meanwhile, some residents of Parwan complained about the lack of attention to these trees.

"We planted trees, but nobody pays attention to watering these trees and they dry up," said Ahmad Fawad, a Parwan resident.

Meanwhile, local officials in Parwan announced the planting of thousands of saplings soon in the province. "We will start our campaign in 15 days, and we thank the people of Parwan



for starting the planting process," said Hafizullah Mansour, head of the environment dept in Parwan.

Every year the government and citizens plan to

plant trees in most parts of the country, but the protection and care for the seedlings is a challenge that needs to be addressed, say concerned residents.

## Khawaf-Herat Railway to open in one month

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA) said that with the start of activity on the Khawaf-Herat Railway, work will be provided for nearly 5 thousand people.

(ARA) said that transportation of materials on this railway will start in one month.

According to the railway authority, the Iranian Railway Technical Group has taken responsibility for the reconstruction and elimination of the technical problems of this road.

"With the start of the activity on the Khawaf-Herat Railway, five thousand Afghans will find jobs and we hope that this work should begin in Hamal (a

month away) and the ARA has prepared for the arrival of the rail," said Abdulsami Durani, spokesmen for ARA. Economists said that Khawaf-Herat has an important role in the country's economic development.

"Khawaf-Herat railway will shorten the way for exports and imports, and create diversity in transit options," said Sakhi Ahmad

Payman, deputy of the Chamber of the Industry and Mines.

"It's the cheapest way after sea transportation and has an important value for a country as landlocked as Afghanistan," said Azrakshsh Hafizi, an economist. "Khawaf-Herat is a good achievement and a positive step for traders," said Basir Taraki, an economist.

## IEA urged to schedule medical exit exam for female graduates

KABUL (Khaama Press): Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in a statement has asked the Islamic Emirate authorities to schedule medical exit exams for female graduates who have pursued different streams in medicine.

The national administrative body of exams under the Taliban regime on Saturday announced that the medical "Exit Exam" for private and public university students was conducted in the absence of female graduates.

The medical council of Afghanistan has not yet announced the "Exit Exam" date for female students. The MSF late on Monday in a Tweet asked the Taliban authorities that

medical exit exam should be taken from female Afghan students.

The aid organization has said that a lack of healthcare employees can have a negative effect on accessing vital services across Afghanistan.

The MSF has further added women's access to secondary and higher education is of paramount importance to meet the medical requirements of the people and society.

This is the first medical council exit exam after the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. In the previous government, this exam was conducted twice a year by private and public medical university students.

Without passing the

medical council exam, medicine graduates can't receive licenses to practice their professions in Afghanistan.

This comes as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced that Afghanistan's healthcare system is under immense pressure, however, with the support of the United Nations and aid organizations, it has not yet collapsed.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has reported on the possible collapse of Afghanistan's healthcare system, with 90 percent of healthcare institutions and clinics closing down in this country if aid organizations cease their vital operations.





ISLAMABAD: A delegation of All Pakistan Hurriyet Conference, led by Mahmood Ahmad Sagar, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## SC hears Imran’s petition challenging NAB amendments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday heard former prime minister Imran Khan’s petition challenging amendments in the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance by the government. A three-member SC bench, comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, heard the case.

During the course of proceedings, Advocate Makhdoom Ali Khan, counsel for the federal government, said the petitioner must demonstrate that the amendments were discriminated against specific individuals. The applicant had to explain what was the lacuna in the NAB amendments, he added. He said that it had to be seen what was the applicant’s own conduct. He asked what was the conduct of Imran Khan when the NAB amendments were presented?

He asked how could Imran Khan call himself the representative of the people for violation of fundamental rights. Justice Ijaz said that the position of the petitioner was that it was the largest representative party in the country. Justice Mansoor said the court was not informed how the fun-

damental rights of the people were being affected by the NAB amendments. Makhdoom Ali Khan said that no fundamental rights were affected in the NAB Amendments case.

Justice Mansoor asked if the change in the law of accountability made a difference on governance; how did it affect the fundamental rights of the people? Fundamental rights were either affected or not, he added. He said that nowhere in the world was 30% of fundamental rights affected and 70% protected. He asked how could a citizen challenge Parliament’s legislation in the Supreme Court?

He questioned if Parliament abolished the death penalty, could the Supreme Court restore it on the petition of the victims? Makhdoom Ali Khan said that if there was any flaw in the legislation, it could be corrected by the Parliament. From 2019 till now, 221 references were returned due to NAB amendments, he added. He said that 29 references were of politicians, out of the 221 NAB references returned. He said that since 2019, 41 people had been acquitted by NAB, out of which 5 were politi-

cians. Politicians were very few among the beneficiaries or beneficiaries of NAB amendments, he added.

Upon this, the Chief Justice remarked that the politicians benefited from NAB amendments, were few but those were prominent. Advocate Makhdoom Ali Khan said that the persons acquitted by the NAB amendments were given relief by the NAB Ordinance of 2019 and 2021. The Chief Justice said that Tehreek-e-Insaf stated that with the change in the NAB law, the severity and nature of the crime had changed. According to the petitioner, the NAB accused’s wife and children were excluded from the accountability process, he added.

He said that the position of the government was that there should be concrete evidence for the investigation against the wife and children. Makhdoom Ali Khan asked what fundamental human rights were affected by the high or low standard of evidence? If the court changed the NAB law on the request of one party, then the other party should have the same right, he added. Subsequently, hearing of the case was adjourned till Wednesday.

### Imran’s allegation: PHC orders Ministry to submit reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Ministry of Interior to submit reply regarding former Prime Minister Imran Khan allegation of his assassination through two tribesmen and stopped harassment of Waziristan’s residents, on Tuesday.

The petitioner Sajjad Ahmad Mehsud Advocate argued that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has made allegation of his assassination. He added that Imran Khan has claimed two tribesmen from South Waziristan hired for the purpose.

The former Prime Minister making such speeches which has made agitation and chaos in the country, Sajjad Ahmad Advocate argued. PTI chairman allegation has made certain problems in freedom of movement and conveyance of tribesmen, the advocate added.

The Advocate argued that Imran Khan speech has hurt sentiments and emotions of tribesmen of Waziristan who has already impacted by extremism and terrorism adversely. He added that tribesmen had granted unprecedented sacrifices during war against terrorism. The divisional of PHC comprising of Justice Ishaq Ibrahim and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Ministry of Interior to submit reply after initial arguments while adjourned further hearing till date to be fix.

### Death anniversary of PPP leader tomorrow

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The first death anniversary of former Interior Minister and senior leader of People’s Party, Senator Abdul Rehman Malik will be observed with utmost devotion and respect at his residence in Islamabad on Thursday, February 23, 2023. His sons, Ali Rehman Malik and Umar Rehman Malik have requested their late father’s friends and well-wishers to join Quran Khawani, and those who cannot attend, recite Surah Fateha for his soul.

Former Interior Minister Senator Rehman Malik died last year due to complications of Corona virus in a private hospital and was laid to rest in Islamabad. He was born on 12th December 1951 in Sialkot and after completing his early education he obtained MSc Statistics degree with distinction from University of Karachi. As a government officer he held important positions including Director General of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and for his unmatched services to the country and its people, the Government of Pakistan conferred on him the prestigious civil award, Sitara-e-Shujaat (Gallantry). He was among the trusted and loyal associates of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and accompanied her in exile and stayed with her during the difficult times of exile and assisted her in all her political affairs. The historic Charter of Democracy between Pakistan PPP and PMLN was signed at the residence of late Rehman Malik in London, in which he had played a very important role. He raised his voice against terrorism throughout his life and fought the war against terrorism on the frontline as the Interior Minister. He fought for the Kashmir cause at every national and international forum and played key role in persuading FATF to remove Pakistan from the greylist.

Late Rehman Malik also had the honor of holding the post of Federal Interior Minister for the longest time in the history of Pakistan. He has also been the Chairman of several important Senate Standing Committees including the Senate Standing Committee on Interior twice. The Government of Pakistan has awarded him Nishan-e-Imtiaz and University of Karachi awarded him an honorary degree of Ph.D.

Late Rehman Malik was the author of six books including Modi War Doctrine, Bleeding Kashmir, ISIS The Rising Monster Worldwide, Top 100 Investigations and a book on Corona Virus. With a further book, How I Saw It, to be released posthumously.

## Putin delivers a nuclear warning to West over Ukraine

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday delivered a nuclear warning to the West over Ukraine, suspending a landmark nuclear arms control treaty, announcing new strategic systems had been put on combat duty and warning that Moscow could resume nuclear tests.

Speaking nearly a year to the day since ordering an invasion that has triggered the biggest confrontation with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis, Putin said Russia would achieve its war aims and accused the West of trying to destroy Russia. "The elites of the West do not hide their purpose. But they also cannot fail to realise that it is impossible to defeat Russia on the battlefield," a defiant Putin told his country's political and military elite.

Cautioning the United States that it was stoking the war into a global conflict, Putin said that Russia was suspending participation in the New START Treaty, the last major arms control treaty between Moscow and Washington. Signed by then-US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, in 2010, the treaty caps the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads that the United States and Russia can deploy. It was due to expire in 2026.

"I am forced to announce today that Russia is suspending its participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty," said Putin. The Russian leader said, without citing evidence, that some people in Washington were thinking about resuming nuclear testing. Russia's defence ministry and nuclear corporation should therefore be ready to test Russian nuclear weapons if necessary, he said. "Of course, we will not do this first. But if the United States conducts tests, then we will. No one should have dangerous illusions that global strategic parity can be destroyed," Putin said.

"A week ago, I signed a decree on putting new ground-based strategic systems on combat duty. Are they going to stick their nose in there too, or what?" It was not immediately clear which ground-based systems had been put on combat duty. Putin said Ukraine had sought to strike a facility deep inside Russia where some of its nuclear bombers are based, a reference to the Engels air base. Russia and the United States have vast arsenals of nuclear weapons left over from the Cold War and remain, by far, the biggest nuclear powers. Between them, they hold 90% of the world's nuclear warheads.

The New START Treaty limited both sides to 1,550 warheads on deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine ballistic missiles and heavy bombers. Both sides met the central limits by 2018. In

essence, Putin is warning that he can dismantle the architecture of nuclear arms control — including the big powers' moratorium on nuclear testing — unless the West backs off in Ukraine. China, whose top diplomat Wang Yi arrived in Moscow on Tuesday, has cautioned against any nuclear escalation to the Ukraine war.

The Ukraine conflict is by far the biggest bet by a Kremlin chief since at least the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union — and a gamble Western leaders such as US President Joe Biden, who visited Kyiv on Monday, say he must lose. Russian forces have suffered three major battlefield reversals since the war began but still control around one-fifth of Ukraine. Tens of thousands of men have been killed on both sides. Speaking for one hour and 45 minutes below a large emblem bearing the two-headed eagle of Russia, and flanked by a total of eight tricolour Russian flags, Putin vowed to continue until he achieved his aims in Ukraine.

Putin accused the US-led NATO alliance of fanning the flames of the conflict in the mistaken belief that it could defeat Moscow in a global confrontation. "They intend to transform a local conflict into a phase of global confrontation. This is exactly how we understand it all and we will react accordingly, because in this case we are talking about the existence of our country," Putin said. The United States says it is concerned Beijing may be considering supplying weapons to Russia, a step that would risk a potential escalation of the Ukraine war into a confrontation between Russia and China on the one side and Ukraine and the US-led NATO military alliance on the other.

Besides the promise to continue the war and warnings to the West of a global confrontation, Putin also sought to justify the war, saying it had been forced on Russia and that he understood the pain of the families of those who had fallen in battle. The West and Ukraine reject that narrative, and say NATO expansion eastwards since the Cold War ended is no justification for what they say is an imperial-style land grab doomed to failure. "The people of Ukraine have become the hostage of the Kyiv regime and its Western overlords, who have effectively occupied this country in the political, military and economic sense," Putin said. "They intend to transform a local conflict into a phase of global confrontation. This is exactly how we understand it all and we will react accordingly, because in this case we are talking about the existence of our country." Russia would never yield to Western attempts to divide its society, said the 70-year-old Kremlin chief, adding that a majority of Russians support the war.

## Alvi calls for highlighting HR abuses in IIOJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for highlighting the grave human rights abuses and heinous crimes being perpetrated by Indian troops in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

President Arif Alvi was talking to a delegation of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter led by Convener Mahmood Ahmad Sagar that called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad, today. He maintained that the atrocities being committed by the Indian forces on the people of IIOJK needed to be highlighted and raised at all fora so that the real face of India is exposed. The President urged the international community to play its role in implementing the United Nations Security Council's resolutions and also hold India accountable for its crimes in IIOJK. He deplored that these resolutions on Kashmir had not yet been implemented despite the being the oldest

ones on the agenda of the UNSC.

Dr Arif Alvi reiterated that the people of Pakistan stood with their Kashmiri brethren and Pakistan would continue to extend all possible moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris in their just struggle for securing their right to self-determination.

The President highlighted that India was trying to speed up the process of demographic changes through various measures such as issuing over 4.5 million domiciles to Indian citizens for permanently settling them in IIOJK and putting up the Kashmiris' land for sale to non-Kashmiris. He termed these acts as blatant violations of the UNSC resolutions, and international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention.

Dr Arif Alvi said that India was involved in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims, adding that as per Genocide Watch, IIOJK was on the brink of genocide. He also referred to the reports by the Office of UN High Commissioner Human Rights that called

for establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights abuses in IIOJK.

The APHC-AJK leaders apprised the President of the current situation in IIOJK. They informed that over 600,000 Kashmiris had been martyred at the hands of the Indian occupation forces since 1947, and thousands of houses had been burnt and destroyed. They said that IIOJK had been held hostage at the hands of 900,000 Indian forces' personnel who had imposed an unprecedented military siege and restrictions on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people.

The APHC-AJK leaders also highlighted that the Kashmiri leadership had been incarcerated, and extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and torture of the Kashmiri youth had become a norm in the occupied territory. They pointed out that India was effacing the Kashmiri identity and culture but it would not be allowed to succeed in her designs to suppress the resilient Kashmiri people.

## Govt submits details of Toshakhana gifts in LHC

LAHORE (Agencies): The federal government has submitted details of Toshakhana gifts in the Lahore High Court (LHC) where a senior official termed it as "classified".

The government primarily expressed reluctance to submit the Toshakhana details, explaining that the revelation may "cause damage to the interests of Pakistan's international relations". The Cabinet Division had also submitted a report before the court, informing that a new policy on the Toshakhana was being formulated which would be more transparent, fair and in accordance with international practices.

Justice Asim Hafeez of the LHC conducted a hearing into a petition filed by lawyer Munir Ahmad through Advocate Azhar Siddique in 2022, seeking the government to make public the complete details

of Toshakhana gifts received by political rulers and bureaucrats from foreign dignitaries since the creation of Pakistan. According to the petitioner, the members of a democratic society should be sufficiently informed that they may intelligently influence the decision which may affect them. Therefore, the people of Pakistan had the right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way, by public functionaries and their chosen representatives.

The federal government submitted to the Lahore High Court (LHC) details of Toshakhana gifts which a senior official termed "classified", telling the court that it was at its discretion to unseal the documents.

Established in 1974, the Tusha-khana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet

Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and officials by heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.

At the outset of the hearing, Deputy Attorney General Asad Bajwa presented the details of the Toshakhana, informing the court that they were classified, and said it was up to the court if it wanted to unseal the documents. Justice Hafeez replied: "We are not opening the sealed record for now." With the submission of the record, the court issued a summons to the head of the Toshakhana Department with an undertaking for Feb 23 and adjourned the hearing until then.

### Arrest warrants for Abbasi, others issued

ISLAMABAD (INP): An accountability court in Islamabad on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and others in the liquefied natural gas (LNG) reference.

Accountability Judge Nasir Javed Rana issued the directives after the ex-prime minister failed to appear before the court today. Abbasi, ex-finance minister Miftah Ismail, former managing director Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and others were nominated by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the reference. The reference alleged that one LNG company had received benefits of over Rs21 billion because of the contract. The reference claimed that the national exchequer would suffer a Rs47bn loss by 2029 if the contract in question continued. Abbasi has termed these charges "defective".

During the hearing on Tuesday the court issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Abbasi and co-accused Uzma Adil for failing to appear before the court and not seeking an exemption for attendance. It also instructed the counsels of the accused to present their arguments at the next proceedings and adjourned the hearing till March 14.

### Two Levies personnel martyred

MASTUNG (INP): Two personnel of the Balochistan Levies Force (BLF) were martyred, while a cop was injured in separate terrorist attacks in Mastung and Chaman respectively, it emerged on Tuesday.

The attacks come as the country continues to sees an uptick in terrorist activities with the most recent deadly attack being the one on the Karachi Police Office last week. The BLF officials said that terrorists attacked a security checkpoint near the Babri area of Mastung district and fled with the weapons and ammunition stored there. The Mastung assistant commissioner said that the area was cordoned off and a search operation was launched to track down the militants.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack and prayed for the martyred soldiers. He also expressed condolences to the families of the deceased. "The determination and morale of the security forces to destroy terrorists is high," the premier said, adding that the nation salutes its martyrs. Meanwhile, Balochistan Chief Minister Abdul Qudus Bizenjo also condemned the attacks.

## Justice Isa to take up pleas seeking cypher probe

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take up petitions for the investigation of letter containing international conspiracy to topple the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government through no-confidence on Wednesday (today).

Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, Tariq Badar and Naemul Hassan in March last year had filed the petitions in the Supreme Court under Article 184(3) of Constitution requesting the Court to pass direction to probe the veracity of cipher on 'international conspiracy'.

Bhutta in his petition contended that Pakistan after great efforts came out of grey list of FATF, but due to cipher, the law and order situation was created in the country. He requested the SC to direct the government to depute one military and

one civilian agency to investigate about threatening letter.

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan on 27th March, 2022 while addressing a public rally of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers had pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and waved it at the crowd, claiming it was evidence of an "international conspiracy" being hatched to topple his government. The Pakistan Democratic Movement, coalition of 13 political parties, which are in the government now believe that the former premier used the letter as an excuse to woo the government's allies and PTI dissidents in the face of the no-confidence motion against him.

Bhutta further stated in the petition that an "extraordinary situation" had caused a law and order situation in the country by causing hatred against friendly countries. He added that the situation required immediate steps to ease the "mental agony" of common Pakistanis caused by this development. The petitioner prayed that the respondent may be directed to deliver the 'letter' to the concerned civil and military authorities to investigate this threat/letter. The PTI government on March 30 said that it intended to take the issue to the apex court, and claimed that PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif was a part of the conspiracy.

Justice Tariq Masood, a Supreme Court judge on January 24, 2023 had refused to hear the petitions against the Registrar office's objections raised on the petitions seeking directions for a probe cipher due to personal reasons.

## Turkiye thanks Pakistan for assistance

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador Dr Mehmet Pacaci on Tuesday expressed gratitude to the leadership and the people of Pakistan for extending humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of the massive earthquake in his country.

Addressing a news conference, he said the earthquake, centred in the Kahramanmaraş province, jolted the southern Türkiye and affected more than 13 million people across 11 provinces, including Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, Sanliurfa and Elazig. "It was one of the biggest earthquake disasters in the last century. Many buildings collapsed and the damage was huge," he said. Neighbouring countries, including Syria and Lebanon were also affected by the earthquakes, he added.

The ambassador said yesterday, two more major earthquakes of 6-4 and 5-8 magnitude hit the Hatay province again, resulting in new losses and injuries. To date at least 41,000 people had lost their lives and 105,000 people injured due to the massive earthquakes. He said more than 250,000 search and rescue personnel were currently in the field, whose work was coordinated by the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency-AFAD.

As regards the international help, Dr Mehmet Pacaci said as many as 102 countries offered assistance while nearly 5,000 personnel from 59 countries were on the ground for search and rescue operations. He said the Government of Pakistan and

its people were among the very first responders to the earthquake disaster. From the very beginning, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif got in touch with the Turkish authorities, and his recent visit to Adiyaman meant a lot for the people of Türkiye.

The PM also announced that every possible support and aid would be provided to Türkiye to heal the wounds of the people of its earthquake-affected areas, the ambassador added. Lauding other initiatives of the Government of Pakistan, he said the opening of a bank account to collect relief funds for Türkiye and the initial dispatch of some 8,000 blankets and 4,000 winterised tents to the earthquake-hit areas were commendable steps.

Nearly 3,000 winterised tents and 25,000 blankets were on the way to Türkiye by road, he added. "This week and next week more than 4,000 winterised tents will be sent to Türkiye in chartered cargo flights." In addition to the airway and roadway, he said, a maritime bridge would also be established. A Pakistani Navy ship with 3,500 tents would start its journey from the Karachi Port in the first week of March and arrive at Türkiye-Mersin Port in 13 days.

Dr Mehmet Pacaci expressed the hope that Pakistan, being the leading tent-producing country in the world, would be providing the most needed winterised tents to his country. He said the USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) teams of 84 staff, including army personnel and 1122 rescue teams, were dispatched to Türkiye on the first day of the disaster, and they were among the very

first USAR teams to reach the earthquake-affected areas. "They have saved many lives, and retrieved 28 people alive from the rubble, including a 10-year-old boy after 137 hours," he noted. "We are receiving hundreds of support messages and calls from also all provinces and walks of Pakistani society. Pakistani NGOs (non-governmental organisations), including Pakistan Red Crescent and universities are also in contact with our embassy and with our consulates-general.

### Shab-e-Barat on March 7

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The moon of Shabaa-ul-Moazam has been sighted and the Shab-e-Barat will fall on March 7. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, in pursuance of the decision of Central Ru-et-e-Hilal Committee, announced that the first of Shabaa, 1444 AH shall commence from February 22.

The Committee Chairman Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad while announcing the crescent sighting of Shabaa, informed that the committee had received many a solid testimony of crescent sighting from various areas of the country.

Later on, he offered prayers for peace, progress and prosperity of the country and liberation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine and above all, for the earthquake victims of Türkiye and Syria.