

**Torkham border reopens**

LANDI KOTAL (INP): Torkham Border, a key border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan, has reopened for passengers and trade transit. The Torkham border was closed on Sunday evening. Residents had reported heavy gunfire on Monday morning near the Torkham border crossing, but the Taliban official had denied any clashes and said the situation was under control.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif receiving former president, Asif Ali Zardari in PM's House.

## Reference filed in SJC against Justice Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An advocate of the apex court judge Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi, for amassing assets beyond his known sources of income, besides being guilty of misconduct.

Advocate Mian Daud, while talking to media persons outside Supreme Court building, said he had filed a reference against Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi in judicial council. He said asset details of Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi had been submitted through the reference. He said that Justice Naqvi had properties beyond his known sources of income. A purported audio leak of Justice Naqvi is also taking rounds in media. "We have requested the Supreme Judicial Council to investigate the matter," Mian Daud said. "If his act falls under the misconduct, the SJC should take action against the judge," he said.

"Justice Mazhar Naqvi changed the statements of his assets thrice. There are some assets of Justice Naqvi which have never been brought on record," Mian Daud claimed. "The judge has owned many properties with the help of his frontmen. Two sons of Justice Mazhar Naqvi practicing law in Lahore High Court and with their help, he is accumulating wealth," he alleged.

"Front man Zahid Rafique is notorious in legal fraternity for earning money through his influence. With an account, expenses incurred on educational activities of Justice Naqvi's daughter are paid," he claimed. Alleging that Justice Mazhar had been guilty of misconduct and amassing assets beyond his known sources of income, he requested the Supreme Judicial Council to investigate the allegations leveled against the judge.

## LHC moved against size of federal cabinet

LAHORE (INP): The formation of the federal cabinet has been challenged in the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday. In his petition filed in the high court, Azhar Siddiq advocate said the size of the federal cabinet cannot be over 42, but the incumbent federal cabinet has swelled to 85.

The petition also stated that the 85-member federal cabinet of the Shehbaz government is a clear violation of Article 92 (1) of the Constitution. Azhar Siddiq pleaded with the court to immediately pass orders for the reduction in the number of federal cabinet as the kingsize cabinet is a burden over Pakistan.

## Maryam blames 'cabal of five' for country's situation — asks judiciary to assess 'own responsibility' amid election date controversy

F.P. Report

SARGODHA: As the announcement of the date of the elections triggered a big debate in the country, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz has asked the judiciary to assess its "basic responsibility" before evaluating the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on conducting the general polls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"You sat down to evaluate the election commission's responsibility. Definitely examine it, but have you ever assessed your own basic responsibility?" the politician asked, as she addressed a workers' convention in Sargodha, Punjab on Thursday. Maryam's demand came a day after Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial took a suo motu notice of an apparent delay in polls and formed a larger bench — headed by himself — to hear the case, the hearing of which began today.

Without taking any names, she asked: "Does the dam waley baba [former chief justice Saqib Nisar] know where Pakistan stands today? Do Baba Rehmat and [ex-CJP Asif Saeed] Khosa sahib know where the country stands today?" Turning the aim of her critique back to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran and how he was facilitated by people in the then-establishment and judiciary — both before and during his government's tenure — the PML-N leader spoke as their photographs ran on a screen behind her.

"The five people visible on the screen are responsible for Pakistan's current situation. This cabal of five is responsible," she said, which included two incumbent SC judges. Maryam added that the former Inter-Services Intelligence chief Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hamid was

their "leader", as he wanted to become the army chief.

"Faiz Hamid wanted to become the chief. He needed a political face," she claimed. The politician reiterated that the traces of Hamid still exist. "Faiz Hamid does not love Imran Khan. There is fear of the crimes they have committed in the last five years. He made billions of rupees and transferred them to the Gulf countries," she said, adding that while Nawaz was the people's representative, the former spy chief chose the "watch-stealer" Khan.

Taking a jibe at PTI's 'Jail Bhara Tehreek' (court arrest drive), Maryam said: "Those in the jail are missing their parents and children in one night. This is the world's first 'Jail Bhara' movement in which [PTI] workers were ahead and the police were behind." She said only 60 to 70 people got themselves arrested in Lahore, a city of 15 million people. "Those chanting for 'Jail Bhara' campaign until yesterday (Wednesday) are now asking to be freed."

She added that Imran Khan is going into "history's dustbin" and criticised him for not showing the leadership qualities which her father Nawaz Sharif possessed. "Prisons for workers and bails for oneself," she said while joking about the PTI chief being afraid of going to jail and also avoiding the courts. Mocking former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi for joining the PTI and reminding him about his comments on former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa for being a Khan apologist, the PML-N stalwart said: "Today, Parvez Elahi has taken the responsibility of changing nappies." She also censured his son Moonis Elahi for doing nothing but making money all his life.

### Election date case

## SC question dissolution of KP, Punjab assemblies

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah of the Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday raised questions on the dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies. The observation from the judges came during the hearing of the suo moto notice on the election date for the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial had taken suo moto notice day earlier and formed a nine-member bench to hear the case. The bench held its first hearing today. Apart from Justice Minallah, Justice Shah and CJP Bandial, the bench includes Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar.

During the hearing, Justice Athar Minallah remarked that it is to be seen whether provincial assemblies were dissolved as per the Constitution or not. While Justice Shah wondered whether the assemblies can be dissolved on someone's dictation.

"How can the assemblies be dissolved at the directive of an individual if the representatives are elected for

five years," he noted. The judge said that the court will also see if the assemblies' dissolution is constitutionally wrong and if the matter can be resolved through their restoration. Earlier at the outset of the hearing, the court observed that the authority for giving the date of the elections after the dissolution of the assembly needs clarification.

It stated that the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assemblies were dissolved on January 14 and 17, respectively, and the elections have to be held in 90 days after the assembly dissolution as per Article 224/2 which provides a timeframe. The SC remarked that Punjab Governor Baligh ur Rehman says that he has not dissolved the provincial assembly on the chief minister's advice.

"It will be determined through the suo moto case who has the authority to give the election date," the court remarked. It said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had also complained about not getting funds and security for holding the polls. "Supreme Court won't tolerate the violation of Constitution," CJP Bandial remarked, adding that he was issuing a notice to the attorney general for Pakistan.

He said that the apex court wants to ensure that elections are held as per the Constitution. The CJP observed that the court had to hear three matters: the timeframe of 90 days for elections under Article 224, president's authority to announce date of polls, and who had the authority to announce the date. He said that the apex court had the February 10 order of a high court and several other factors in front of it.

At this, Barrister Ali Zafar interjected by saying that they wanted to bring some matters regarding the president on record. "Violation of Constitution won't be tolerated under any circumstances," CJP Bandial remarked, adding that the proceedings will not be prolonged due to lack of time. The chief justice then directed the parties to prepare their arguments for the next hearing.

He said that the court intended to hear all the parties. Meanwhile, Justice Mandokhel said that he had some reservations regarding the suo moto notice in this case. "We have the petitions of the speakers of two assemblies. This suo moto notice was taken on the note of Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Mazhar Naqvi," the judge said,

(Continued on Back Page)

## 8 terrorists killed in Balochistan operation

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The security forces on Thursday gunned down eight terrorists during a sanitisation operation in Balochistan's Mazaaband Range, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

Terrorism is again rearing its head in the country since the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) announced the end of the ceasefire in November last year. According to a statement issued by the military's media wing, terrorists had attempted to ambush a convoy of security forces in the Kech District of Balochistan on Wednesday evening.

"While alert and combat-ready troops not only foiled this cowardly attempt without any loss of life, they also immediately commenced a follow-up operation to hunt down the fleeing terrorists using ground and aviation assets," read the statement. The ISPR said that a suspected hideout of terrorists was identified in Mazaaband Range today morning, where a sanitisation operation was launched.

"In ensuing, heavy exchange of fire, eight terrorists have been killed while a large cache of arms and ammunition including explosives has also been recovered," it added. The ISPR also vowed that the security forces will continue to thwart any attempt by inimical elements, on the behest of hostile intelligence agencies, to disrupt hard-earned peace in the province.

## LHC summons details of gifts received from Toshakhana

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has summoned details received by different personalities from Toshakhana, ARY News reported on Thursday. As per details, the Lahore high court heard the plea regarding the detail of gifts received by personalities from Toshakhana.

The court asked that it should be disclosed who received gifts from Toshakhana. The government's counsel told the cabinet has decided to declassify the record prior to 2002. LHC inquired that is there any holy cow who received gifts from Toshakhana before 2002. The government will release the detailed record on the website, the counsel told the court.

The record of all the gifts received by different personalities before 2002 needs to be released. The court will also check how the relations with other countries are affected by the disclosure of Toshakhana details, LHC told the government counsel.

## President approves mini-budget

ISLAMABAD (PPI): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday gave assent to the Finance Supplementary Bill 2023- commonly known as mini-budget- which was sent to him on Wednesday.

The National Assembly passed the Finance Supplementary Bill 2023 on February 20. The President gave assent in accordance with Article 75 of the Constitution, the President House said in a statement. The bill envisages additional taxes and duties of Rs170 billion to meet the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the revival of the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) stalled for months. The government is making all-out efforts to convince the Washington-based lender of its commitment to fulfilling the requirements set for the loan programme.

# Austerity policy to be strictly enforced: PM

## Shehbaz for making Pakistan-US partnership diverse, multidimensional

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the austerity policy he had announced a day earlier would be enforced strictly and no laxity in this regard would be tolerated.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the implementation of the policy, said the "historic" decisions made to promote austerity and simplicity would have a far-reaching impact that also got applause from the public. He directed the formation of a monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of the decisions. The committee would meet at least fortnightly.

To be chaired by a cabinet member from a coalition party, the monitoring committee would comprise representation from all the allied parties. Other committee members would include Special Assistant to PM Jahanzeb Khan, Principal Secretary to PM and federal finance secretary.

The prime minister said the austerity measures would help save national resources; however, effective outcomes depended on the full enforcement of the policy. Federal ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain and Tariq Bashir Cheema, Advisor Qamar Zaman Kaira, State Minister Hashim Notezai, SAPM Jahanzeb Khan and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighting the significance of long-standing cooperation between Pakistan and the United States underscored the need to make this partnership diverse and multidimensional.

He underlined that parliamentary exchanges between the two countries, as vibrant democracies, were vital to promoting understanding of each others' perspectives at the political level. The prime min-

ister expressed these views while welcoming a six-member US Senate delegation from the Democratic Party, which led by Senate Majority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer called on him here.

Other members of the delegation included Senators Maria Cantwell, Amy Klobuchar, Gary Peters, Catherine Cortez Masto, and Peter Welch. The prime minister highlighted that Pakistan and US celebrated 75 years of diplomatic relations last year, and that this diplomatic milestone presented an ideal opportunity to chart future course for Pak-US bilateral ties.

Pointing to the unrealized potential in the trade, investment and technology realms, he emphasized the importance of forging a more robust and mutually beneficial bilateral economic partnership. The prime minister recognized the important role that the vibrant Pakistani community played in serving as an important bridge between the two countries.

He thanked the US for its support and solidarity with the people of Pakistan during the 2022 floods and its participation in the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan. A number of issues of mutual interest and importance including the situation in Afghanistan, and deteriorating human rights situation and growing repression in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were also discussed during the meeting.

The prime minister urged the US Congress to play its due role in raising its voice for the rights of the Kashmiri people and against the rising wave of anti-Muslim extremism in India. Senator Schumer, thanking the Prime Minister on behalf of the delegation, affirmed the desire to further strengthen Pakistan-US bilateral ties in various dimensions through continued engagement and wider co-operation.

## Pak-Afghanistan agree on joint work against terrorism

Muhammad Asad

ISLAMABAD: The recent visit of a high-level Pakistani delegation led by the Minister for Defense, Khawaja Muhammad Asif

Toshakhana, ARY News reported on Thursday. As per details, the Lahore high court heard the plea regarding the detail of gifts received by personalities from Toshakhana.

The court asked that it should be disclosed who received gifts from Toshakhana. The government's counsel told the cabinet has decided to declassify the record prior to 2002. LHC inquired that is there any holy cow who received gifts from Toshakhana before 2002. The government will release the detailed record on the website, the counsel told the court.

The record of all the gifts received by different personalities before 2002 needs to be released. The court will also check how the relations with other countries are affected by the disclosure of Toshakhana details, LHC told the government counsel.

TTP inside Pakistan, while Afghan authorities have assured Pakistan of all possible help in this regard, added Mumtaz Zahra Baloch.

To another question regarding the deteriorating security situation in Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, the Spokesperson said that Pakistan is seriously concerned regarding the security of the Palestinian people who continuously met brutal suppression by the Israeli authorities.

According to Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Pakistan consistently maintained that there should be a complete withdrawal of Israel from occupied Arab territories including Jerusalem along with the reinstitution of Palestinians' inalienable right to self-determination and sovereignty in an independent and viable state of

Palestine based on pre-1967 boundaries with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its Capital.

While responding to a media query regarding the recent statement of US Counselor Derek Chollet regarding Pak-China ties, Mumtaz noted that Pakistan, being a sovereign state exercises the right to choose its economic partners from around the globe on a mutually common beneficial basis. According to her, Pakistan considers China an all-weather strategic economic partner and a consistent, generous, and steadfast friend that always stood by Pakistan for the last several decades. While commenting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan believes that peace and dialogue are important for the resolution of the dispute.

## Court sends Khetran on 10-day physical remand

QUETTA (Agencies): A court in Quetta has sent Balochistan's Minister for Construction and Communications Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran into police custody on a 10-day physical remand. Earlier, the minister was produced in the court amid tight security. Khetran had been arrested yesterday (Wednesday, February 22, 2023) in connection with the murder of three persons.

According to the police official, he was arrested in the DIG Police Office Quetta when he appeared before DIG in the afternoon. "Khetran is accused of murdering three people of Marri Tribe, a woman and her two sons and that is why he has been taken into custody," police said, as the protesters continued their sit-in in Quetta for the second consecutive day demanding justice.

In an utterly inhuman and woeful incident, three bullet-riddled bodies were found in a well in the Barkhan district on Monday. The relatives of the deceased blamed the provincial minister Abdul

Rahman Khetran for the killings. According to the reports, Khan Mohammed, a local, used to work as a bodyguard of Abdul Rehman Khetran. But after developing some differences with Sardar he fled from Barkhan but his family was held hostage by the Sardar.

Khan Mohammad's wife released a video message and pleaded for her family's release from the private jail of Khetran. Previously, she had also said that she and her daughter were routinely sexually assaulted by Abdul Rehman Khetran.

**Remaining family members of Khan Marri recovered by Levies Force:** Levies Force personnel, during an operation in Nana Sahib area of Dukki district of Balochistan, recovered rest of the family members of Khan Muhammad Marri on Thursday.

Levies sources said a son of Khan Muhammad Marri was recovered from Dukki while, in another operation, two sons were recovered from Dera Bugti-Barkhan border area. Two daughters were also recovered, one

from Barkhan and other from Dera Bugti. It merits mentioning here that three other family members of Khan Muhammad Marri — Giran Naz and her son and daughter — were recovered from Dukki-Barkhan border area, said Levies sources.

All the six family members of Khan Muhammad Marri are in safe custody of government. The police had found dead bodies of two sons of Khan Muhammad Marri and another woman from a well of Barkhan area. The Marri tribes had started a protest sit-in after placing corpses in front of Chief Minister's House which was ongoing.

Government officials said Giran Naz and her children will be presented before media and details of all operations conducted in this regard will be divulged. On Wednesday night, the police had arrested Balochistan Communication Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran. Levies force had discovered three mutilated bodies from a well in the Haji Kot area of the Barkhan district on Monday night.





IGP lauds resistance of SSU commandos against terrorist attack on KPO

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Thursday said the courageous resistance of Special Security Unit (SSU) officers and personnel in the terrorist attack on the Karachi Police Office was commendable.

During his visit to the SSU headquarters and meeting with officers and personnel of SSU, he said the attack was repulsed due to the systematic and timely action of SSU.

The Sindh Police chief said, "I also applaud the resistance of the police officials who were martyred in the attack. We cannot forget the eternal sacrifices of our martyrs."

Later, the IGP Sindh shook hands with the police officers and personnel individually who participated in the operation against the terrorist attack. Additional IGP Karachi Javed Alam Odho, DIGP Finance, DIGP Security, AIGP Operations Sindh and AIGP Logistics Sindh were also present on the occasion.

## 173 LWMC absenting employees sacked

LAHORE (APP): The management of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) has made major decisions to improve sanitation system in the city, and issued a notification to dismiss its 173 employees due to their persistent absenteeism.

In the last two months, more than 250 employees have been sacked for taking long leave without bringing it into the notice of the management. Furthermore, digital registration of stock has also been formally started, said a spokesman for the LWMC.

The action was taken on instructions of the LWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din, while strict monitoring was under way.

The CEO said that carelessness in the matters of cleanliness of Lahore city would not be tolerated at any cost. The entire system of LWMC was being monitored in a digitalised manner.

## Print media directed to submit record

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Press Registrar Department of Information and Public Relations Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has directed owners of newspapers to submit records of employees and their wages to the competent authority, on Thursday.

In this regard, Press Registrar issued notice while stating that submit the record as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa press, newspaper, advertising agency and books publication Act 2013. The notice further added as per Wage Board Award, the owners are obliged to submit record before competent authority.

## 6th Sindh Literature Festival on March 3-5 at Arts Council Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The 6th three-day Sindh Literature Festival will begin on March 3 and continue till March 5, announced President Arts Council Mohammad Ahmed Shah, well-known writer Noorul Huda Shah and others in a press conference at Auditorium II Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi here.

Ahmed Shah while giving a briefing said that the season of festivals is going on. The first festival was started sixteen years ago by Arts Council Karachi.

There was no festival before that, and the overall conditions in Karachi were very bad at that time, he said that culture is the only way that can bring us together at a center, our base is the province of Sindh, the capital of Sindh is Karachi.

# CM orders to ensure smooth traffic flow during PSL

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi has directed the administration and traffic authorities to ensure smooth traffic flow during the practice matches of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

He emphasised the importance of effective management to ensure that the arrival and departure of teams do not cause any significant traffic disruption and that security measures are in place.

The caretaker chief minister announced that the Center Point underpass would be opened for traffic on Feb 25 after round-the-clock efforts, which is expected to significantly improve the traffic flow.

He directed the authorities to complete the remaining work on the underpass without any delay, regretting the inconvenience caused to the public due to construction work.

**Mohsin Naqvi takes notice of firing incident:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has sought a report from IG police about an incident in which three persons were killed in firing outside Phalia Kutchery. He directed that the arrest of the accused be ensured without delay and added that no effort should be spared in providing justice to the bereaved families.

**CM seeks report on housemaid murder:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has sought a report from RPO Gujranwala about the murder of a housemaid and directed strict legal action against the accused.

The accused should be punished according to the law and the provision of justice be ensured to the victim's family which suffered a great loss. He also extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family and assured them of the provision of justice.

## Fascist Indian forces using rape as war weapon to humiliate Kashmiris: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that the fascist Indian forces were using rape as a weapon of war to humiliate the people of Indian illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IIOJK) and suppress the powerful dissenting voices to defuse the flames of freedom struggle.

Speaking at a Roundtable Debate titled "Targeting Vulnerable Groups as a Weapon of War: India's Abuse and Impunity in Kashmir organized by Legal Forum for Kashmir-LFK" on the occasion of the Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day observed on both sides of Kashmir here on Thursday, she said that the notorious army forces were committing such heinous war crimes under the protection of draconian law, Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), giving complete impunity to the brutal forces from accountability, said a press release.

On the occasion, she paid tribute to the struggles and sacrifices of the survivors of mass rape and torture in Kunanposhpora, who were yet to get justice despite lapse of 32 years and vowed that the brave Kashmiri women would not let go in vain their sacrifices. Mushaal, the wife of incarcerated senior Hurriyat leader Yasin

Malik, said that as February 23 was one of the blackest days in the history of Kashmir when Indian troops entered Kunanposhpora area in Kupwara district and committed mass rape.

She said that Indian troops had gang-raped around 100 women of all ages from eight to eighty years old on the night of February 23 in 1991 during a siege and search operation in Kunanposhpora in Kupwara district. The chairperson stated that Kunanposhpora mass rape was a glaring example of Indian troops' brutalities in IIOJK. It is a blot on the so-called democratic face of India, which is using rape of women as an instrument of state terrorism in IIOJK.

She went on to say that the gravity of the situation could be judged from the fact that at least 682 women have been martyred by Indian troops since January 2001 till date. The Hurriyat leader stated that since January 1989, the unabated Indian state terrorism rendered 22,957 women widowed while Indian forces' personnel have molested 11,256 women. She stated that thousands of women lost their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers in the occupied territory who were subjected to custodial disappearance by Indian Army, police and paramilitary personnel.

## Senior journalists at workshop stress curbing misinformation on social media

LAHORE (APP): Senior journalists and anchors called upon journalists to present and promote a bright picture of Pakistan, considering it as their prime duty, and avoid misinformation, being spread on the social media, and being followed by people blindly.

Speaking about the hybrid warfare, senior journalists Mansoor Ali Khan, Dilawar Chaudhry, Salman Ghani, Irshad Arif and Sajjad Mir said that Pakistani society was being victimised through hybrid warfare due to low literacy rate, lack of knowledge and less research work. People blindly follow fake news and trends, society will have to equip citizens well with knowledge and research and choose reliable sources.

They were addressing a two-day training workshop titled 'Hybrid warfare: challenges and way forward', opened here at Aiwan-e-Iqbal on Thursday. The

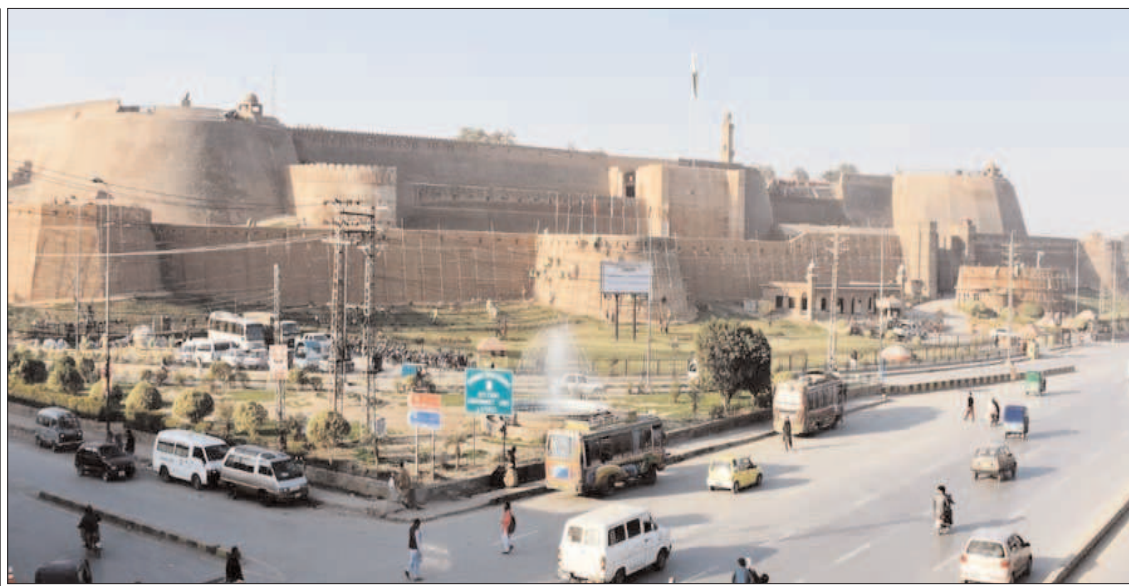
event was arranged by the Press Information Centre.

The speakers said that powerful nations destroyed many states in the past through the use of hybrid war tactics, and by creating inferiority complex among them. But in the present times, developed nations have adopted modern techniques for capturing thoughts and mindsets of masses, and employed social media tools including Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc.

"More than half of the world's population uses

internet, and as journalists, we will have to work for curbing misinformation. It is creating confusion in society besides pressurising our economy," they added.

The senior journalists said that unfortunately, country's political parties had some groups on the social media with fake accounts, which work round-the-clock for creating and spreading fake trends and misinformation against each other. Abusive language is being used in comments; and even journalists are being harassed, they added.



PESHAWAR: Historical Balahisar Fort after renovation work to ensure the preservation of heritage.

# Sindh CM approves 674 more LDP's names for payment of rental support

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Coordination and Implementation Committee (PCIC) has decided to include 674 more names in the list of locally displaced people (LDP) of the anti-encroachment drive launched along three Nullas, speed up work on Malir Expressway and K-IV, completion of Civil works of the Gujarat nullah by removing all their bottlenecks.

The 10th meeting of the Committee was chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at CM House here Thursday which was attended by provincial ministers, Saeed Ghani, Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Advisor Murtaza Wahab, Special Assistant Qasim Naveed, Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, DG NLC Maj Gen Farukh Shahzad, provincial secretaries, Wapda, FWO, and concerned officers. Joint Secretary Planning Commission Tasaduq attended the meeting through video link.

The meeting was told that Malir Expressway would be an access-controlled facility with a starting point on the right bank of Malir River between Jam Sadiq Bridge and Korangi Crossing Causeway and traveling along the Mali River up to the existing Link Road between N5 and M9. The Project, launched for over Rs 27 billion, was expected to provide a new southern route and facilitate thousands of commuters and heavy commercial traffic of the port, Korangi Industrial Area, Landhi Industrial Area, and other such areas going toward upcountry through the National and Superhighways. The project was expected to reduce the commuting time from Jam Sadia bridge to the Superhighway (M9) to only 25 minutes.

The Project will be one of the most strategic economic corridors of the city

providing connectivity to Education City, DHA City, and Bahria Town on the Superhighway. The Project will be a 3x3 lane dualized expressway with a total length of 38.75 km. The Expressway will have 6 interchanges and 5 weighbridges. An issue was raised under which lifting of material from the Military Riverbed was not allowed which was hampering the progress of the project. At this, the Corps Commander Karachi Lt General Babar Iftikhar directed his team to resolve the matter. He added that the project was important and should be completed without any issues.

Commissioner Karachi Iqbal Memon gave a

detailed briefing on the anti-encroachment drive along the three Nullas, Mehmoodabad, Gujjar, and Orangi. He said that Due to Slip Lane, additional cutting, dangerous buildings, and public grievances, the number of Locally Displaced Persons (LDPs) has increased from 6258 to 6932 which showed a difference of 674 LDPs for paying the rental support payment.

The Commissioner also said that around 200 cases of 'change of person' due to death, and blockage of CNIC were also pending with the concerned deputy commissioners. The chief minister approved the additional 674 LDPs and change of name or payment of

rental support. The FWO Brigadier briefing the meeting said that dredging, construction of retaining wall sewer Truck, RCC conduit, road works, and other similar works have been completed by over 80 percent. He added that the remaining works would be completed for which the government has to release the required and remaining funds of around Rs 2 billion.

The CM said that he would talk to the federal government to release the required funds so that all the work could be completed before the monsoon season. The CM also directed the Local Government Department to make cleaning of main nullas a regular feature.

### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES PESHAWAR CAMPUS

#### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Applications are invited for the Staff posts **ON CONTRACT** basis in the following disciplines for **NUML Regional Campus Peshawar**.

Department/Specialization	Minimum Qualification and Experience
<b>Office Assistant (on contract)</b>	Bachelor with minimum 2 years relevant experience in public or private sector organization. Preference will be given to:- • Experience of University or Educational Institutions. • Proficiency in computer handling especially MS Office.
<b>Computer Operator (Contract)</b>	Graduate with one year Certificate/Diploma in at least one computer language from a Recognized Institute with at least 3 years relevant experience. • Preferably has good knowledge of Networking/IT.
<b>LDC (on contract)</b>	Intermediate with typing speed of 30 wpm. Preference will be given to:- • Experience of University or Educational Institutions. • Proficiency in computer handling especially MS Office.
<b>Driver (on contract)</b>	• Category: HTV, LTV, Cars • 5 years' experience with valid driving license. Retired Army Persons with staff car driving experience may also apply.

**CONDITIONS**

- Interested candidates may apply on prescribed faculty application form alongwith detailed CV and attested photocopies of all educational documents, professional experience certificates, copy of CNIC and two recent photographs. Application complete in all respect should be sent through courier to **Regional Director NUML Peshawar Campus, 36-B, Chinar Road, University Town, Peshawar**.
- Job Application Form can be downloaded from <https://numl.edu.pk/jobs/all>
- Application must reach NUML Peshawar by 13-03-2023.
- Incomplete applications or applications submitted by hand/email or received after due date will not be entertained.
- Decision of the University shall remain final in all cases and only Shortlisted Candidates will be called for test/interviews.
- No TA/DA is admissible.

**Regional Director Peshawar**  
Tele: 091-9218380

## Invitation for Bids (3rd Time)

### Single Stage-Two Envelopes

#### SELECTION AND RATE CONTRACTING OF (A) MEDICAL DEVICES (B) MEDICINES (C) NON-DRUG ITEMS etc. FOR THE YEAR 2022-23

- In compliance with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Act-2012 and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) Rules-2014, Medical Teaching Institution Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar invites sealed bids from
  - Manufacturer/s of**
    - Medical devices;
    - Medicines;
    - Non-drug items etc in Pakistan, registered as such with the DRAP for the quoted item/s and regulated under the Drug Act 1976, DRAP Act 2012 and the Rules framed there under; and
  - Importers / Sole Agents or Authorized Distributors of**
    - Medical devices;
    - Medicines;
    - Non-drug items etc, authorized by the Foreign Principal Manufacturer duly registered with DRAP under the DRAP Act 2012 and Rules framed there under;
- The price shall be fixed and valid till 30th June 2023.
- Bidding competition under this advertisement shall be conducted through **Single Stage-Two Envelopes Bidding Procedure** as per KPPRA Act 2012 and Rules frame there under. Under this procedure, the bidders should submit the bids in two sealed envelopes of technical and financial bids, each of which must bear on them the clearly written words 'MTI-KTH Technical Bid 2022-23' and 'MTI-KTH Financial Bid 2022-23' as well as the full and complete identification of the bidder along with its postal and email addresses and phone number's on each of the respective envelope. Both these sealed and labeled envelopes should bear the clearly written words 'Bid for MTI-KTH 2022-23' along with the identification and contact details of the bidder.
- The Bid Solicitation Documents, of required items can be downloaded from [www.kth.edu.pk](http://www.kth.edu.pk)
- The sealed bids (separate technical and financial bids further sealed in one envelope) will be submitted in the Diary Section at office of the Hospital Director MTI KTH on or before **13th March 2023 till 10:30 am**. Any bids presented / submitted / received later than this deadline, or delivered to some office other than the above office, shall not be considered and shall be rejected without any further processing.
- Mentioned Bid Security / Earnest Money amounting to a flat rate of Rupees **200,000/-** against tender as mandatory above from the bidder in the name of the Hospital Director KTH-MTI is required to be submitted along with the Financial Bid within its sealed envelope. An affidavit is required in the technical bid that bid security is placed in the financial bid. PO (Pay order) will not be acceptable as Bids security.
- The pre bid will be held on **03rd March 2023 at 10:30 am** in office of the Manager Supply Chain MTI KTH.
- Quotation must be computer typed & printed; and the offered rate must be written both in words & figures. An authorized person of the bidding entity shall sign & stamp all pages of the bid, as mentioned in the BSDs.
- The bidders are required to submit the unit price of quoted items on the format as prescribed in the bidding documents.
- Quotations with cutting and over-writing shall not be accepted to the extent of that particular quoted item having cutting / over-writing / erasing etc.
- To facilitate further data entry during bids processing, all bidders are also required to submit the quoted product list as per prescribed proformas in the approved bidding documents for this bidding competition, in soft form in MS Excel format (and not in other software formats or images) in USB, duly labeled by a permanent marker with the name of bidder firm along with the words "MTI-KTH bid 2022-23". The bidders must ensure that said USB is openable and readable. Moreover, in the same context, the bidders are also required to submit a table of contents in the start of bid with proper page numbering on each page of the bid.
- Bids will be opened by the Tender Opening Committee MTI-KTH on **13th March 2023 at 11:00 am** in office of the Manager Supply Chain MTI KTH, Peshawar in the presence of those bidders or their representatives, who choose to attend the bids opening process.
- The Competent Authority reserves the right to reject any or all of this bids under clause 47 of KPPRA Procurement Rules 2014.

**HOSPITAL DIRECTOR**  
**Medical Teaching Institution**  
**Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar**

INF(P) 652/23

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### INVITATION TO BID

Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) the largest Exploration & Production listed Company of Pakistan invites Sealed Bids from eligible firms/persons licensed by the Pakistan Engineering Council in the relevant category of following work(s) duly registered with Federal/ Provincial Income Tax & Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue, as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rule:

TENDER S. ENQUIRY NO.	DESCRIPTION	Bid Bond (Pak Rs.)	PEC Category	Bidding Procedure	Schedule Time for Completion of Project	Bid Submission Date	Bid Opening Date
1 C&ESS/ F.T/ 2023/16	Construction of MCC, CCR, Dispatch offices, Security room, Car parking shed and main gate at Wali Plant, F.R Lakki Marwat, KPK Province	1,040,000/-	C-5 and Above	Single Stage One Envelope	135 calendar days	14.03.2023 AT 11:30	14.03.2023 AT 12:00
2 C&ESS/ F.T/ 2023/17	Civil Works required for P & A Rigless Well #03, Shakardara, Distt. Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	161,000/-	C-6 and Above	Single Stage One Envelope	30 calendar days	14.03.2023 AT 11:30	14.03.2023 AT 12:00

- The Master Set of Tender Document containing Annexure(s), SOR/TOR, detailed terms & conditions, Tender Notice and procedure for submission of bids are available on OGDCL website for the interested bidders which can be viewed and downloaded from [www.ogdcl.com](http://www.ogdcl.com) under the title bar of Tenders/Tenders Download without any cost.
- The bids/offers, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must reach at the address mentioned below on or before the date and time mentioned above and the same will be opened as per above mentioned schedule above against each Tender.
- Bidders are requested to contact **Party Chief Engineering Field Party No. 3 (EFP-3)** at Phone # **0300-5550946** for any further queries/ information.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk) and OGDCL website [www.ogdcl.com](http://www.ogdcl.com).

No. 305/69

**PARTY CHIEF ENGINEERING FIELD PARTY NO.03  
OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**  
NEAR SAQDAL OIL FIELD & SHAH PETROLEUM FATEH JANG  
MOBILE #0300-5550946,  
EMAIL: [PARTYCHIEFFEP3@OGDCL.COM](mailto:PARTYCHIEFFEP3@OGDCL.COM)

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# Police torture and threatening encounter: Citizen approached PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A citizen has approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) against torture by Azakhel police while kept in detention at police post Pushtoon Garhi on 10th to 13th February while the writ seeking to retain custody from arresting, harassing and taking into custody till the disposal petition.

The writ petition has been filed by Saqib-ur-Rehman while Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deputy Inspector General Mardan, District Police Officer Nowshera, Station House Officer (SHO) police station Azakhel, In-charge Police Post Ajab Bagh Pushtoon Garhi and Fida Muhammad were made respondents.

The petition stating that on 10th February Azakhel police illegally raided the house and arrested the petitioner and added that in the same evening petitioner was shifted to police post Pushtoon Garhi, where he was vexatiously and illegally detained till 13th February 2023.

On repeated requests, the petitioner was informed that, he is under arrest in First Information Report (FIR) filed on 7th February by Fida Muhammad against unknown persons.

The petitioner's father reached police post Pushtoon Garhi but were not allowed to meet his son, however, In-charge police post informed the father of applicant that he has arrested Saqib-ur-Rehman on directions of DPO Nowshera and SHO

Azakhel while no one can detain anyone more than 24 hours but In-charge turned deaf ear, the writ added.

The unfortunate family time and again approached the respondents, regarding the innocence of but in vain. It is important to note that father of petitioner was told by an insider that during illegal detention, the petitioner was subjected to brutal torture, who twice become unconscious, the petition argued.

The petition stated that SHO Azakhel and In-charge Pushtoon Garhi warned petitioner while releasing that in case he approached Court of Law or informed media or complaint to superior then he will be again taken into custody in untraced case, and will be eliminated/ killed in police encounter.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of Provincial Olympics Association meeting Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

## RTPSC attached salaries of 2 SHOs — issued bail warrant

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: KP Right to Public Service Commission (RTPSC) has attached salaries of Station House Officers (SHOs) along with Additional SHO Peshkhara and Khazana police stations respectively for didn't registering First Information Reports, on Thursday.

Chief Commissioner RTPSC Muhammad Salim Khan along with Commissioner Muhammad Asim Imam heard four complaints regarding services delivery and issued orders in this regard.

RTPSC ordered attachment of salaries of SHO Wajid Khan and Muhammad Javed of Peshkhara police station for didn't appearing before the commission on complaint filed Ahmad Yar for does not registering FIR.

The commission also ordered to attach salary of SHO Khazana Murtaza Khan for didn't registering FIR on complaint of Mufti M. Idress while SHO doesn't

appear before RTPSC summon issued twice. RTPSC ordered both SHOs Wajid Khan and Murtaza Khan to appear before the commission within 14 days.

Moreover, Principal Government High School No. 1 Abdul Saeed along with three complainant students namely Hassan Riaz, Najeeb Ullah and Talha Ali appeared before the commission. RTPSC ordered the Principal Abdul Saeed to issue certificates to students till Monday otherwise submit reply for didn't issuing it because should proceed the case.

However, RTPSC has withdrawn complaints of Tasleem Kausar and Nasreen Begum due to absence for third time consecutively. RTPSC is hearing public complaints on every Thursday while sitting public servants before complainants to ensure delivery of services while the commission is monitoring 80 public services notified by the provincial departments.

## 100 lawyers join Malgari Wakeelan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: More than 100 lawyers joined Malgari Wakeelan forum in a ceremony held at Peshawar District Bar Room. Large number of senior members of lawyer's community was present.

Ex-president Peshawar Bar Association, Amjad Ali Marwat said today's successful program is a sign that the lawyer have complete trust on the Malgari Wakeelan and its policies to ensure the rights of the lawyer's community and rule of law.

He said that Malgari Wakeelan will continue its struggle and more lawyers will join them in near future for the betterment of the community.

He also appreciated the efforts of Khalid Khan, Babar Khan, Adil Khan, Ilyas, Malik Ishfaq, Safiullah and other senior and junior members to work hard for this joining ceremony and make sure the inclusion of these respected lawyers into the forum.

On the occasion, Senior Lawyer Jehanzeb Khan Advocate along with 60 other friends announced their joining of Malgari Wakeelan. Amin Rehman Yousafzai, Khanzada Khan their friends and other female lawyers joined ANP affiliated lawyer forum.

Malgari Wakeelan president Zaman Khatak, General Secretary Farman Ali Mohmand and others were also present in the ceremony. The participants also offered fateha for Late Latif Lala and Razaullah Khan Advocate.

## Action against fares violators directed

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Transport and Science & Information Technology, Shahid Khattak has warned transporters of violation of officially fixed fares and directed immediate action against the violators.

He was talking to various delegations, which called on him here in office on Thursday.

The caretaker minister said that they are taking steps within the ambit of their mandate to extend maximum relief to the people.

He further directed the authorities to control the crowd of traffic on roads and mitigate the traffic related woes of the people. The provincial minister directed the general public to follow traffic rules and extend cooperation to concerned authorities.

Regarding provision of subsidized flour, he said that poor are getting the commodity as per mechanism adopted by the government and now the problem has been resolved across the province including in district Nowshera.

He said that action is being taken against any irregularity committed anywhere in the province.

## PRCS initiates rehabilitation of victims

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Habib Malik Orakzai stated that after providing extensive assistance to families affected by floods in the province, the rehabilitation of those affected in these areas is now a top priority for us, on Thursday.

Therefore, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is starting the rehabilitation phase for the affected in the districts of Charsadda, Swat, Kohistan, and Dir Upper. The Other moment partners will also assist us in this regard.

The process of assessment before rehabilitation of all four districts has been completed. These thoughts were expressed at a meeting of the PRCSKP's Management Committee, where seven new members were included. During the occasion, new members were briefed and told that Pakistan Red Crescent is a part of world Red Cross Red Crescent movement and established under the act of parliament amended in 1974.

PRCSKP had so far aided more than 700,000 people during the recent flooding situation, which cost more than 770 million rupees. The emergency response operation has been completed. Now in these four affected districts, the rehabilitation process will be done on health and hygiene, rehabilitation of clean drinking water channels, reconstruction of the affected homes, and creating opportunities for livelihoods.



PESHAWAR: Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat addressing officers from different cadres undergoing courses at National Institute of Management.

## ‘Documentary Filmmaking’ concluded



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PID and PIC will conduct more training workshops for capacity building of young and mid-career journalists. Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil

A two-day training workshop on “Documentary Filmmaking” organized by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Press Information Department Peshawar and Pakistan Information Center concluded at Peshawar Press Club. Chief Guest and Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik said in his comments that today's era is the era of

digital media and acquisition of new technology is the need of the hour. He said that it is a pleasure to organize such a workshop for journalists.

DG PID Peshawar Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil highlighted the objectives of the workshop in his address. He said that Pakistan Information Center is a subsidiary of Press Information Department and works under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan Information Center is currently established in seven different cities of Pakistan, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Muzaffarabad, Quetta and Gilgit-Baltistan. Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil further said that the aim of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is not only to enhance the capacity of young and mid-career media persons but also to provide modern knowledge to face the chal-

lenges in the world of digital media.

On the second day of the workshop, Senior Journalist and Bureau Chief Snow TV Safiullah Gul told the training participants that a journalist should do a full research on the subject before making a documentary so that he can understand who his target audience is and that What is desired requires complete homework.

He further said that it is very important for the journalist to have an emotional attachment with the documentary because it influences his documentary and for that the journalist should have a positive mindset. The participants also participated in various practical exercises which is one of the features of this workshop.

Senior producer Tahir Mehmood said that before making any documentary, a journalist should consider 3 basic things, idea or planning, recording and post production. He further said

that it is a very vast field whose value is increasing day by day.

Muhammad Faheem Senior Anchorperson asked the participants to make documentaries as an exercise which the participants successfully completed. This was followed by an interactive session in which the participants actively participated and had a lively discussion on various issues.

For the first time, online participation for journalists was organized in the workshop, in which representatives of press clubs from different districts of the province participated online. They asked questions online and the trainers answered them satisfactorily. Journalists from various newspapers, TV channels participated in the two-day workshop.

Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil and Arshad Aziz Malik distributed certificates among the workshop participants and appreciated their active participation.

## Caretaker minister visits PDMA

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Rehabilitation, Taj Muhammad Afridi here Thursday visited Headquarters Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and inquired about the ongoing rehabilitation work in merged tribal districts.

Director General PDMA, Sharif Hussain briefed the visiting minister about rehabilitation work in merged districts and modus operandi of non government organization to help and rehabilitate tribesmen.

Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated performance of PDMA and directed timely steps to address concerns and problems of displaced tribal people.

He also directed best available help to displaced persons that are returning to their native areas.

Later, he visited Provincial Emergency Operation Centre of PDMA and inaugurated 177, toll free number for better assistance of people.

## Bukhari vows zero tolerance

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Population Welfare, Syed Jarar Hussain Bukhari has vowed zero tolerance for corruption and corrupt practices in his department and termed merit as his top priority.

He expressed these views during his visit to the Population Welfare Department here on Thursday.

He also presided over an introductory meeting in the Directorate General and was given a detailed briefing regarding the performance, purpose and objectives of the department.

Speaking on the occasion, the Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister said that the motto of the public sector departments and officers should be the service and provision of maximum facilities to the general public.

## Northwest School of Medicine holds convocation



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Northwest School of Medicine Peshawar held its First Convocation ceremony on Thursday, awarding degrees to 94 male and female graduates of the MBBS batch of session 2016-2021. The event was held in the school's auditorium and was attended by the Chief Guest, Prof. Abid Jameel, Advisor on Health to Chief Minister KP, Prof. Zia Ul Haq Vice Chancellor of Khyber Medical University, Prof. Noor Ul Iman Principal Northwest School of Medicine, Prof. Tariq Khan, Chairman Alliance Healthcare and Prof. Muhammad Saleem Gandapur Registrar Khyber Medical University. Members of the Academic Council, faculty members, parents of students, as well as other distinguished guests attended the prestigious ceremony.

During the ceremony, six

outstanding graduates were awarded gold medals, including Dr. Hira Zahid, who secured six gold medals for her exceptional performance throughout her academic career. Dr. Hira Zahid achieved 1st Position in 2nd Professional Examination 2016-17, 1st Position in 3rd Professional Examination 2018-19, 1st Position in 5th Professional Examination 2020-21, and was the best graduate in session 2016-21 at Northwest School of Medicine. She also secured the 5th Position in 3rd Professional Examination KMU and 2nd Position in 5th Professional Examination KMU at Khyber Medical University.

Other notable graduates included Dr. Omar Iqbal Khan, who achieved 1st position in the 1st professional examination of Northwest School of Medicine 2016-2017 and 8th position in the 1st profes-

sional examination of Khyber Medical University 2017, and Dr. Sundus Iqbal Khan, who secured 1st position in the 4th professional examination of NWSM and was awarded a gold medal.

Dr. Hoor Sajjad Kakakhel achieved 8th position in the 3rd professional examination of KMU, while Dr. Farrukh Ansar was awarded a gold medal for 20 publications in high impact factor national and international journals, including 10 PubMed indexed publications. Additionally, Dr. Asadullah Khan was awarded the gold medal for showing high performance in informal academic activities.

The First Convocation ceremony of Northwest School of Medicine was a great success, celebrating the achievements of its graduates and recognizing their dedication and hard work throughout their academic journey.





## In brief

### 45 passengers hurt in mishap F.P. Report

MARDAN: As many as 45 passengers were injured including women and children in road mishap at Shahbaz Garhi happened due to brake failure, on Thursday. A passenger bus going from Buner to Karachi with an accident near Shahbaz Garhi Thana Chowk in Mardan. As a result, 45 people including women and children were injured. According to sources, the accident occurred due to brake failure. As soon as the information was received, Rescue 1122 ambulances and medical team reached the spot and provided first aid to 21 injured people. While 24 injured were shifted to Mardan Medical Complex and District Headquarters Hospital. District Emergency Officer Imran Khan Yousafzai personally supervised the operation.

### APCA arranges gathering F.P. Report

BUNER: All Pakistan Clerk Association (APCA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has arranged gathering to honor retired colleague in Abbottabad, Buner and Dir at Polytechnic Institute Swari hall. The gathering was chaired by Wazir Zada and district Buner president Mian Quresh while APCA central Chairman Fazal Ghafar Bacha was Chief Guest of ceremony. APCA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts presidents and Buner district cabinet other clerks and teachers and class IV presidents attended. The retired Clerks Ghafoor and Naseemul Haq from Buner Zubair from Abbottabad and Saleem Khan from Dir graced with flowers and sowners. The central chairman also graced the same respect to appreciate them for their services rendered during job. The central chairman the district president the retired clerks addressed. Talking to media personnel, the central chairman and KPK president announced holding KPK cabinet oath taking ceremony in start of March. They demanded of the government increase their salaries at the ration of inflation and warned of launching protest prior Ramszan if demands were not meet, they concluded.

### No development sans education F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Government Post Graduate College Timergara Principal Professor Wazir Akbar said that development without education is impossible in field of life, on Thursday. This he said while addressing students at farewell party and added that development, prosperity and peace have become a value for the people who have received education. However, Alamzeb Advocate, Malik Inam, Fazl Raziq and others, speaking at the Farewell Ceremony organized in honor of the students of Timergara Dreams College, on this occasion the students of Dreams College presented recitations, Naat, speeches and other regional music which the participants enjoyed very much. The speakers further said that the students spent their precious time social Don't waste time in media and other useless activities and pay special attention to your education and training and try hard to become a peaceful and responsible citizen for the society. There is a need for educated youth whose morals and character will affect the society because the society is dominated by obscenity, mischief, hoodlums and idle people, whose prevention is the need of the hour.



QUETTA: Activists of National Party holding a protest against killing of mother and daughter in Kohlu.

## KKU hold seminar on quality assurance

F.P. Report

KARAK: Directorate of Quality Enhancement (QEC) Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak has arranged one day seminar on quality assurance procedures in higher education on Thursday.

According to a press release of the University, Director Quality Assurance Higher Education, Archives and Libraries Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Imranullah Mrwat was the Resource person of the Seminar. All heads of the Academic Departments and Sectional heads of the University and representatives of the affiliated colleges participated in the Seminar.

Mr. Imranullah Marwat said that government was making all out efforts to strengthen academic relationship between Universities and colleges and bring universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at par with Higher Education Commission's quality assurance policies.



The academic, financial and administrative matters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa universities are managed through proper authorities and governing bodies and quality assurance is the main focus for ensuring educational progress, he added. He said that internal and external quality assurance are being conducted in a university and HED has also devised customized quality assurance mechanism for BS level colleges of the province. Director Higher Education Department informed that maintaining minimum benchmark in the universities and colleges of the province was the quality education through specified standards.

He said that bringing quality in academics and

governance system of the higher education institutions is one of the main indicators of educational excellence. He also gave away detail presentation about quality assurance procedures of HEC and HED for Universities and Colleges.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Director Quality Assurance Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Muhammad Shah Din said that all employees of the University are responsible and accountable for quality assurance in academics, finance and administration. Assistant Director Quality Assurance Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak Dr. Nasir Iqbal also presented detail introduction of the University's Quality Assurance Directorate.

## Tribesmen sit-in continue in Wana F.P. Report

WANA: The tribesmen continued sit-in protest on 7th day against the shutdown of internet service in Raghzai area of Lower Tehsil Barmal of South Waziristan.

The participants of the sit-in say that the 3G4G internet service has been suspended in Raghzai area of Lower Waziristan for two and a half months, due to which the people of the area are facing several problems. The business activities of the local people have come to a standstill due to the lack of internet service, most of the people of Raghzai area go to work abroad due to their poverty and constraints. People say that thousands of people of Lower Waziristan tehsil Barmal are deprived of internet service even in modern times.

Member National Assembly (MNA) Ali Wazir while addressing the protest said that internet service is our basic human, legal and constitutional right, I want to give a clear message to the government that 3G4G internet service should be restored immediately in Tehsil Barmal areas. Go, we don't want anyone to deprive us of our constitutional rights anymore. They will fight on every front to achieve, and will continue to get their rights.

## Six militants encountered in Lakki F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: As many as six militants were killed in a shootout with police in the Abbas area of Lakki Marwat on the night between Wednesday and Thursday, police claimed.

According to sources, police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) commandos launched the operation in the rural area located across Kurrum river on information about presence of militants there. "A gun battle took place when the law enforcers reached there", maintained the police officials, adding that six terrorists were killed and their bodies were shifted to a local hospital.

## 6 arrested F.P. Report

MARDAN: District administration Mardan has arrested six persons for selling official subsidized flour in black market and recovered 5000 sacks from their possession, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Captain (Retd) Abdul Rehman, an Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Junaid Khalid conducted raids on atta dealers' shops at Ghala Dher locality. He inspected shops in the bazaar and found that the official subsidized flour from Punjab and KP was being sold in the open market and arrested the culprits red handedly.

# Arrangement for Tablighi gathering in Bannu directed

F.P. Report

BANNU: Commissioner Bannu Division Parvez Sabat Khel has issued instructions to the divisional and district administrations to take full measures for purposeful and peaceful conduct of Mega Tablighi gathering in Bannu district.

According to details, all the resources should be utilized for the peaceful conclusion of the big gathering organized in Hamza Tablighi Center Bannu on 24, 23 and 25 February 2023. He said that other facilities including traffic plan are arranged for the participants of the gathering to come and can move around without facing any trouble.

Commissioner Bannu has issued instructions to all the concerned departments to perform their duties diligently. Meanwhile, Commissioner Bannu Division Parvez Patakhel said in his message that our religion Islam

teaches us peace, development and prosperity, the successful holding of tablighi meeting at large scale will also show the achievement of good goals for the current society. He further directed all the authorities and officials, that they should participate fully in cooperating with the assigned duties in good faith and get rewards.

On this occasion, he also requested to the participants of the gathering for special prayers for prosperity, peace, development and security in the society. On this occasion, Commissioner Bannu Division Parvez Sabat Khel said that all the departments, including the Pakistan Army, have been planned to remain alert until the three-day preaching gathering in Bannu district to brought to a peaceful and purposeful conclusion. He said that in order to obtain the pleasure of Allah Almighty, this grand Tablighi gathering is being

organized in Hamza Tablighi Center on February 23, 24 and 25, 2023 after a long time.

In which Tablighi members from all corners of the country are expected to participate. And people will humbly ask for prayers, forgiveness and supplications in the presence of Almighty GOD, so that there is success in both worlds. Apart from this, prayers for the development, prosperity and peace of the society will also be asked in the grand preaching gathering. He said that the district administration, including all relevant attached departments, will use their resources for the peaceful and successful organization of the meeting. He desired goals of the three-day Tablighi meeting can be successfully completed and prayers should also be sought before ALLAH Almighty for peace and security, development and prosperity of the society.

# 80 companies including MNCs join GIKI Career Fair

F.P. Report

SWABI: About 80 multinational and national companies from across the country participated in Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology Career Fair, said a press release issued here on Thursday. The event was inaugurated by Eric Zong, Director, Pakistan Partner Development Department, Huawei.

Distinguished officials of the companies, Professors, deans and heads of the departments, faculty members, research associates, Engineers, directors, members of Career Fair committee and students have attended the ceremony. The representatives of the companies interacted with academia and interviewed the final year students for a job in their respective organization.

The final-year students are expected to complete their BS study in different disciplines of engineering and management sciences in June this year. Officials of the companies said that it was really an extraordinary day in the Institute academ-

ic calendar because on one side the unemployment in the country has reached an alarming proportion while representatives of the companies were conducting interviews of the students for giving them jobs in their companies before completion of their BS engineering on the other.

Eric Zong and Prof Dr Fazal Ahmed Khalid inquired about the hiring process of the companies and their culture, and how they are incorporating the new emerging technologies in their organizations while meeting numerous challenges. Eric Zong, Director lauded the gathering of academia and industry on one platform during the Career Fair.

Shakil Durrani, Executive Director of Society for the Promotion of Engineering Sciences and Technology in Pakistan (SOPREST) said that they would like to get feedback from the GIK Institute alumni and looking forward to younger Gikians that how we could improve further. Tahir Irfan Khan, Vice Chancellor Abbottabad University of Science and Technology said that there

is no dearth of talent, Pakistanis are incredible and we have to work according to the requirements of the country which is rich in natural resources. "A strong industry could help us in boosting the country's economy," he said.

Prof Khalid said that there is an urgent demand to strengthen academia-industry linkages. He spoke in detail about Artificial Intelligence, continued innovation trends in GIK Institute and emerging technologies. "The career fair has provided a golden chance to the companies to interact with the students and hire them while keeping their requirements in mind. At the same time, they also interacted with academia," he said. Barrister Habil Ahmad Khan president of GIK Institute Alumni Association said that the world is fast changing and we have to catch it to improve our feeble economy while stressing on taxing the elites to end their monopoly, hoping that many opportunities for the young educated people would be created soon.

# Security of lives & property constitutional's obligation

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: The newly-appointed District Police Officer Dr. Fahad Ahmad has said that protecting the life and property of the people is the primary responsibility of the police. Actions are being intensified against criminals, drug dealers, land mafia, moneylenders and other elements involved in crimes.

Crime professionals will be dealt with iron hands. Work is being done on practical basis to make police service centers, front desk more functional. He was expressing these views while meeting the delegation led by Ex-Chairman Press Club Rana Muhammad Arshad Anjum and Malik Humayun Shahzad in his office and Ex-General Secretary Hafiz Muhammad Aziz-ur-Rehman.

District Police Officer Dr. Fahad Ahmad said that the pending FIRs have been filed on the instructions of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and no difficulty will be seen in future FIRs. In all the police stations across the district, large-scale daily raids against drug peddlers and criminals are going on rapidly and the target of arresting criminals has been assigned. He further said that the journalist community and the people should cooperate with the police to eliminate crimes. All resources and efforts are being utilized to control crime and rule of law throughout the district is the top priority of the police department.

In response to a question, he said that the biggest challenge at the moment is narcotics including ice and

other drugs, and the police, the media and the public can overcome it together, and we all have to play our part in it. He asked general public and media personnel to report these death merchants to the police. The police will take actions against them without any delay, no one is above the law and the law is equal for all. No leniency will be shown to any mafias and those who display arms and grab the property of the poor. Wherever there are land mafias, report them directly to me. In coordination with the concerned administration, measures will be taken on an emergency basis to eliminate traffic jams across the city so that traffic problems within the city can be minimized.

DPO informed the citizens to ensure the safety of their children and report any kind of mischievous elements to the police immediately. He said that the police service center is open till 12 midnight, in which access to driving license and other facilities has been made easy for the public. To deal with any type of terrorism, it is important that the owners ensure the registration of their tenants and shopkeepers, factory owners must register their private employees. In this regard, the facility of mobile app is also available.

On this occasion, General Secretary Press Club Malik Hamid Raza, Information Secretary Press Club Mehmood Ali, Abdul Khaliq Khokhar, Hafiz Shakeel Ahmed Mughal, former General Secretary Hafiz Muhammad Aziz-ur-Rehman were also present.

All journalists representing Hafizabad media assured the DPO of their cooperation.

**Edu's department donates Rs1.7 million for earth quake victims:** Chief Executive Officer Education Hafizabad Wazir Ahmad Agha has said that teachers, students and other staff of education department has been deposited Rs.17 lakh donation for earthquake affected people of Turkey and Syria so far.

He said that winter clothes and other daily used items were also collected from schools for earthquake victims of our brethren. He said that we would not left people of Turkey and Syria alone in this time of trial.

**Provision of fertilizer on official's prices assured:** Additional Deputy Commissioner Intiaz Ali Baig said that district administration is committed to ensure supply of fertilizer to farmers at official price in the district and officers of District Administration and Agriculture Department were conducting raids at the shops of fertilizer dealers for this purpose.

He said that AC Hafizabad Munawar Hussain, Deputy Director Agriculture Fazal Rasul and Assistant Director Muhammad Yousaf imposed Rs. 20,000/- fine to two fertilizer dealers during the raids on the charges of receiving exorbitant price of Urea fertilizer from farmers. He said that appropriate steps are also being taken to ensure petroleum product to motorists and farmers on fixed price in the district and officers are visiting the petrol pumps regularly for elimination artificial inflation.

## Blood feud resolved through jirga in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A jirga of local elders on Thursday succeeded to resolve a blood feud between the families of one Muhammad Sabir and Shad Muhammad, residents of Khadang Talash. The property dispute had claimed the life of one youngster Muhammad Shafiq s/o Shad Muhammad during a clash some months ago. The Talash Dushkhel Quami Islahi Jirga started its efforts to settle the feud and succeeded in bringing both the families to the negotiating table.

A function in this regard was held at Talash with President of the Talash Dushkhel Quami Islahi Jirga and former district councilor Muhammad Ibrahim in the chair. The jirga's former president Muhammad Asrar Khan,

chairman village council Khading Rehmanzada, Malik Bazir Khan, Murad Khan, Mufti Syed Alam and others shed light on the importance of the jirga system in Pukhtun society. The speakers said that the courts' decisions were not as long-lasting as the settlements reached through a jirga of elders.

They said the jirga members should avoid favoritism, personal and political interest and the parties should cooperate with it. They said that peace was a condition for the development and prosperity of the region and petty disputes always led to conflicts and bloodshed. The parties embraced each other and announced to live like brothers in future. The victim's family Shad Muhammad announced to forgive the accused party unconditionally. The station

house officer Talash Tauheed Khan, Jirga general secretary Dr Noor Muhammad and chairman village council Bajaro Sardar Ali were also present.

**Anti-encroachment:** The Samarbagh assistant commissioner Muhammad Suhail Khan along with tehsil municipal administration staff launched an anti-encroachment drive at Samarbagh bazaar. Several illegal roadsides' encroachments were removed and the road was cleared for traffic. Large size sign boards and other items were confiscated. The AC said the drive would continue till the end of encroachments in the area. The AC asked the local shopkeepers to strictly follow the government rules and avoid occupying extra space on roadsides.

## Farewell party for RPO, DPO D I Khan held

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A dignified farewell ceremony was held at Police Club Dera in honor of Regional Police Officer Dera Muhammad Saleem Marwat and District Police Officer Dera Muhammad Shoaib who were transferred from Dera region, on Thursday.

In which District Police Officer Tank Waqar Ahmed, District Police Officer South Waziristan Shabeer Hussain, Additional SP Dera Javed, SP Investigation Dera Khalid Usman, SDPOs and other senior officers were present. Speaking on the occasion, District Police Officer Dera Muhammad Shoaib said that a lot was learned from the command of RPO Dera.

As per the instructions given by him, he always performed his duty honestly

and worked to ensure the delivery of justice to the poor and common man. Working with Dera Police is a memorable moment of my life and I am also thankful for the full support of Police Officers and knowledgeable people of Dera during my employment here.

On this occasion, RPO Dera appreciated the efforts of District Police Officer Muhammad Shoaib and said that he performed his duties bravely despite being attacked by terrorists during polio duty. Transfers/postings are part of employment. It is my honor to serve as Regional Police Officer Dera and I salute you.

It has always been my endeavor to help the policemen of Dera division who are fighting the terrorists with their limited resources, to be able to meet the expectations of the people and to

ensure the supremacy of law and perform my duties with honesty, dedication and courage.

It has maintained the law and order situation in the state by ensuring the rule of law. They said that I am grateful to the without humble people of Dera Division, the media, the business community, the political and civil society, the district administration and the veterans and officers of our police department. Due to their exemplary support, I spent a memorable time and I will always remember their love.

Finally, on behalf of Dera Division Police, Regional Police Officer Dera Muhammad Saleem Marwat and District Police Officer Dera Muhammad Shoaib presented honorary police shields and souvenirs.





# Ruins of Turkish city of Antakya tell story of a rich past

ANTAKYA (AP): For nearly two weeks, Mehmet Ismet has lived in the ruins of Antakya's most beloved historic mosque, a landmark in a now-devastated city that was famed for thousands of years as a meeting place of civilizations and revered by Christians, Muslims and Jews.

The 74-year-old took refuge in the Habib Najjar mosque after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake killed tens of thousands in Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6. He has slept and prayed under the few arches still standing, mourning the future of a city renowned for its past. The destruction in Antakya was nearly total. Much of the city is rubble. What's still standing is too unsafe to live in. Almost everyone has left. A new 6.4 magnitude earthquake, centered in Hatay province where Antakya is located, struck again, killing people, injuring more than 200 and causing more buildings to collapse, in some cases trapping people.

"It can be rebuilt. But it will not be like the old one," said Ismet, pointing to the destruction of the mosque, where he sat in the courtyard with a friend by a wood-burning heater. "The old is gone. Only the name remains." Antakya, known as Antioch in ancient times, has been repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes and rebuilt over history. But residents fear it will be a long time before it recovers from this one, and that its unique historical identity may never be fully restored. The destruction is so great, and they say the government cares little for this area.



Antioch, built in 300 B.C. by a general of Alexander the Great in the Orontes River valley, was one of the biggest cities of the Greco-Roman world, rivaling Alexandria and Constantinople. Saints Peter and Paul are said to have founded one of the oldest Christian communities here, and it's here that the word "Christian" first came into use. It later drew Muslim and Christian Crusader invaders. The melding of faiths is part of the city's character.

A parable from the Quran kept running through Ismet's mind. Three messengers from God came to a town, urging its sinful people to follow His word. They refused, and God destroyed the city with a mighty blast. The Quran doesn't name

the town, but many traditions say it was ancient Antioch. Ismet saw a new lesson from the present-day devastation.

"All religions are here. We were living well. Then politics and hypocrisy prevailed, and disagreement followed," Ismet said. "People... have disagreed and are robbing each other. God is punishing them." The mosque can now be reached only by clambering over heaps of concrete and old stones that were once Antakya's old city. It traces Antakya's many histories: The site originally held an ancient pagan temple, then a church, before finally settling as a mosque, built in the 13th century. The mosque was destroyed in an earthquake in 1853 and rebuilt four years later by the

Ottomans. Even the legends surrounding Habib Najjar, the mosque's unknown namesake, are intertwined with multiple faiths.

Ismet recounted one popular story: Najjar was a resident of Antioch who urged locals to believe God's messengers referred to in the Quran. They beheaded him, and his head rolled down the mountain to the spot where the mosque now stands. Another version of the legend says Najjar was a believer in Jesus, whose disciples cured his son of leprosy, and was killed for promoting the new Christian faith. Modern Antakya was already a shadow of its ancient self. In recent years, it witnessed steep economic decline and growing

emigration to Europe and the Gulf. Tension had been growing between the shrinking local population, which included Christian and Alevi communities, and a growing Syrian population that fled its country's civil war.

Some city residents complain of neglect from a central government busy with helping other provinces where it has a stronger voting base. With little evidence, locals accused Syrian refugees of stealing from stores and the government of downplaying the death toll. Many worry more people could leave if Antakya is not rebuilt quickly. In the face of rising criticism from several quake-hit cities, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other officials have recognized delays in the response. No one addressed Antakya's woes in particular. "Maybe in one month, we will start the renovation or organization," Yahya Coskun, deputy director general of Turkey's museums and cultural heritage, said about the destruction to the city's landmarks.

"Antakya's destruction is a loss to humanity," said Jan Estefan, a silversmith and one of the city's few remaining Christians. "We still want to live here. We have no intention of leaving." Antakya's Greek Orthodox Church was destroyed. The church, which was the seat of the Greek Orthodox patriarch up until the 14th century, was leveled in an 1872 earthquake and rebuilt. "History has once again been wiped out," said Fadi Hurigil, chairman of the board of directors of Antakya Greek Orthodox

Church Foundation.

Old mosques were cut off by mountains of rubble. The old bazaar lay in ruins. Crushed buildings line Kurtulus Street, said to have been the world's first illuminated street when it was lit with torches at night in Roman times. Parts of the archaeological museum have been damaged. Outside the city center, Mount Starius protected one of Christianity's earliest churches - St. Pierre - which is built in a cave in the mountain and has sections dating to the 4th century. A set of stairs leading to it was damaged. There were cracks in the walls of the Synagogue of Antakya, home to the area's 2,500-year-old Jewish community. The president of the city's Jewish community and his wife didn't survive. About a dozen Jewish residents and the synagogue's Torah scrolls were temporarily relocated to Istanbul, said Rabbi Mendy Chitrik, chairman of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States.

Chitrik said it will hard for the small, elderly community, whittled down by years of emigration, to rebuild. "However, I am certain that it will come back." Many residents seem to have accepted it is their city's fate to return from disaster. "After seven times, they rebuilt and brought it to life again. Now is the eighth time, and God willing ... we will live in it again," said Bulent Cifcifi. His mother was killed in the quake, and it took a week to dig her body out.

In one shape or another, Antakya will survive, he said. "Death is unavoidable. We will die and new people will come,"

he said, choking on tears. "Who is Antakya? Today it is us. Tomorrow someone else." Meanwhile, demolition teams are clearing mounds of rubble from the devastating Feb. 6 earthquake in Turkey and Syria, as emergency responders scramble to shelter survivors - who were traumatized anew by magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Turkey's already badly battered province of Hatay. That quake killed eight people in Turkey and Syria and demolished or damaged more buildings, leaving countless homeless. The combined death toll from the Feb. 6 earthquake in both countries stands at around 46,000 - the vast majority in Turkey.

Here's a look at the key developments from the aftermath of the earthquake. The powerful earthquake in Turkey and Syria will require a huge reconstruction operation at a scale "never seen before," a top European Union official said. European Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi made the comment during a visit to Ankara to prepare for an international donor's conference, scheduled for March in Brussels. The conference aims to mobilize funds from the international community to support Turkey and Syria following the quake. "We are all shocked by the horror the people of Turkey have to go through," Varhelyi said during a joint news conference with Sweden's minister for foreign trade and Turkey's foreign minister. "This is why we are here to help; because we care, because we are friends, because we are allies."

## Court orders free movement to Nagorno-Karabakh

AMSTERDAM (Reuters): The World Court ordered Azerbaijan to ensure free movement through the Lachin corridor to and from the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, as an intermediate step in ongoing legal disputes with neighbouring Armenia.

The Lachin corridor, the only land route giving Armenia direct access to Nagorno-Karabakh, has been blocked since Dec. 12, when protesters claiming to be environmental activists stopped traffic by setting up tents. Armenia last month told judges at the World Court, formally known as the International Court of Justice, that neighbouring Azerbaijan's blockade was designed to allow "ethnic cleansing", a claim rejected by Baku.

Armenia's foreign ministry welcomed the court's decision and called on the international community to ensure Azerbaijan immediately implemented the ruling. "Armenia will closely monitor the situation and inform the court of any violations by Azerbaijan," it

said in a statement.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but its 120,000 inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians and it broke away from Baku in the first of several wars in the early 1990s. The court said it had evidence that traffic through the corridor was still disrupted, causing "shortages of food, medicines and other lifesaving medical supplies", and depriving Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh of critical medical care. It therefore ordered Azerbaijan to "take all measures at its disposal to ensure the unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions."

Azerbaijan has denied any blockade, saying the activists are staging a legitimate protest against what it characterised as illegal mining activity. The country's ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement said it would "continue to uphold the rights of all people under international law and to hold

Armenia to account for its ongoing and historic grave violations of human rights". The court rejected a plea for provisional measures by Azerbaijan that would order Armenia to help remove land mines from areas it previously controlled, and to stop planting explosive devices which prevent Azeri nationals from returning to their former homes.

It also rejected pleas by Armenia to order Azerbaijan to stop alleged orchestration of protests and disruption of natural gas flows to Nagorno-Karabakh. The court instead referred to the emergency measures it had issued in the tit-for-tat cases brought by the feuding South Caucasus neighbours in 2021, which ordered both countries to not do anything that would make the conflict worse and to prevent the incitement of racial hatred against each others' nationals. The World Court in The Hague is the UN court for resolving disputes between countries. Its rulings are binding, but it has no direct means of enforcing them.

## Foreign troops to help train Ukrainian troops

STRAUSBERG (Reuters): German military instructors teaching some 1,000 Ukrainian troops how to use Western tanks and other arms will soon be reinforced by several hundred specialists from other countries, the head of the Special Training Command said.

"We are talking about some 30-50 troops from Norway and several hundred from the Netherlands," Lieutenant-General Andreas Marlow told Reuters in an interview at his headquarters in the town of Strausberg near Berlin, adding he was aiming for further contributions from other nations. "I hope we will be able to convince more partners to support us," he said, noting the first additional trainers are expected to arrive by the end of March.

Marlow's Special Training Command (STC) is part of a European Union military mission set up in November to train up to 30,000 Ukrainian troops in various skills to help Kyiv fight off Russia's year-old invasion. Courses in various European countries range from basic training to the operation of modern battle tanks such as the Leopard 2, air defence systems, rocket launchers and howitzers. So far, some 1,500 mainly German soldiers have been handling the training in Germany, with the goal of completing courses for some 9,000 or more Ukrainians by the end of 2023, Marlow said.

Poland is another major training hub while Spain, France, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Italy are also running courses. Beyond the EU mission, US and British troops are training Ukrainian troops in Europe as well. While public discussions over the past few months have focused on whether or not the West would supply tanks to Ukraine, the instructors in Germany stress the importance of all weapons acting in concert.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy last year calls for a restoration of territorial integrity and for Russia to reaffirm it according to the UN Charter, which Zelenskyy said is "not up to negotiations."

It also demands a withdrawal of Russian troops and cessation of hostilities. Russian ally Belarus suggested amendments to the draft UN resolution, seen by Reuters, including "prevention of further escalation of the conflict through feeding the parties with lethal weapons."

## Philippine police hunting killers of NZ tourist

MANILA (AP): A Philippine police search was underway for two motorcycle-riding men who shot and killed a New Zealand man in a brazen street robbery that officials fear could scare foreign tourists away. The 34-year-old tourist, Nicholas Peter Stacey, was fatally shot once in the chest while trying to wrest a pistol from one of the two robbers who held him up and his Filipina girlfriend in a suburban street in Manila's Makati financial district, police Maj. Gen. Jonnel Estomo said.

"We regret to report this incident and extend our sympathy to the bereaved family," Estomo said in a statement, adding he has ordered the police to "leave no stones unturned until the culprits are brought to jail and are prosecuted." While he described the deadly street robbery as an "isolated incident," Estomo acknowledged it has the potential to frighten foreign tourists. Police patrols would be beefed up to prevent a recurrence, said Estomo, who heads the Metropolitan Manila police.

"We know that this inci-

dent could spark fear among tourists, who plan to visit our country so we will make sure the slain victim will get justice and demonstrate that the police are always ready to provide service," Estomo said in a statement. The slain victim's girlfriend, Pamela Gaye Villanoza, told investigators that she and Stacey had just arrived in the capital region from a holiday trip in the western island province of Palawan and were walking to a laundry shop in the early hours after midnight when the suspects approached on a motorcycle. One of them alighted and pointed a pistol at the couple while his companion parked the motorcycle a few meters away. Stacey grappled with the armed man and was shot and killed, she said.

Before fleeing, the gunman, who was wearing a black shirt and red athletic shorts, took the cellphone and wallet of Stacey's girlfriend, police said. Investigators would try to match a slug found in the area and compare it with slugs recovered from other recent crime scenes in the heavily populated metropolis to try to identify the sus-

pects and assess how they operate, police said. Stacey's killing occurred amid high-profile gun attacks on two local politicians that underscore how criminal violence even against officials has persisted despite the government's pledge to combat such violence.

Gunmen wounded Governor Mamintal Alonto Adiong Jr. of southern Lanao del Sur province and killed four of his bodyguards in an attack on their convoy. Police said they had killed one of the suspects in a clash. Separately, unidentified men reportedly wearing police uniforms fired guns at the van of northern Aparri town Vice Mayor Rommel Alameda, killing him and five companions in northern Nueva Vizcaya province. The suspects remain at large. Crimes, decades-long Muslim and communist rebellions, and other security concerns have long hampered tourism in the Philippines, a Southeast Asian archipelago that offers white sand tropical beaches, diving and surfing resorts, heritage towns, rainforests and warm hospitality.

## Rise in asylum-seekers entering Canada

TORONTO (Reuters): Thousands of asylum-seekers crossing irregularly into Canada via a dirt path between New York State and the province of Quebec are becoming a political flash-point once again in Canada as the Quebec government says it can no longer accommodate the rising numbers.

The movement of asylum-seekers into Canada from the United States has picked up since Canada lifted COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in late 2021, a trend mirroring global displacement. More than 39,000 refugees entered Canada last year via unofficial crossings, the vast majority via Roxham Road linking Quebec and New York State. The number crossing into Quebec more than doubled last year compared to 2017, when Roxham Road made international headlines. Almost 5,000 more people seeking asylum crossed into Canada between official border crossings last month - the highest January since the Canadian government started breaking down this data in 2017. That 2017 spike was spurred in part by then-US President Donald Trump's crackdown on migrants.

Canada is a signatory to the international Refugee Convention under which Canada must adjudicate most refugee claims with limited exceptions. The Convention has limitations

to the definition of refugee; Canadian law has exceptions as to who can access refugee protection in Canada. The influx has prompted Quebec Premier Francois Legault to ask Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government to resettle refugee claimants in other provinces and to issue work permits more swiftly as the province's "capacity to take care of the asylum-seekers is now largely exceeded."

Quebec is proud of its "tradition of welcoming refugees" but its services are strained, Legault wrote in an op-ed in Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper this week. He has expressed concern in the past that non-francophone newcomers would hamper government efforts to promote the French language. The federal government says it has transferred more than 5,800 asylum-seekers out of Quebec since June. A spokesperson for Canada's Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship minister said in a statement the government is working with communities outside Quebec on a "pan-Canadian approach" that would include resettling refugee claimants elsewhere.

Legault also called on Canada to push the United States to rewrite the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) - something Canada says it is doing. Under the STCA, anyone trying to cross the Canada-US border

in either direction at a formal border crossing will be turned around and told to apply for asylum in the first of the two countries they arrived in, with few exceptions.

Canada wants to rewrite this agreement so it can turn back asylum-seekers apprehended anywhere along the border - not just at formal crossings. The agreement is the reason people wanting to claim refugee status in Canada enter the country via Roxham Road in Quebec: Otherwise they could come to Canada at any US border crossing. Twice, Canadian federal courts have struck down the agreement and, twice, appeals courts have upheld it. The latest case was argued at Canada's Supreme Court last fall and a ruling is expected in the coming months.

Speaking to reporters, Trudeau said his government had been trying to "close" Roxham Road for years by rewriting the STCA. "The challenge is not to say 'Oh, we should close it.' The challenge is, how to close it, how to make sure that people aren't choosing to cross irregularly into Canada, to protect the integrity of our immigration system but also stay true to the values that we have." Abdulla Daoud, executive director of the Refugee Centre in Montreal, said bureaucratic delay is the real problem with the asylum-seeker influx.

## Canada must be on guard against Chinese polls interference

OTTAWA (Reuters): Foreign interference in elections is a very serious issue and Canada must be on guard against it, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, following a media report saying that China sought to influence the outcome of the 2021 election.

Already tense Sino-Canadian relations have become more strained since the shooting down of a suspected Chinese spy balloon over North American airspace earlier this month and a recent Canadian media report about what it said were Beijing's attempts to influence the last vote. Last week, the Globe and Mail newspaper cited secret and top-secret Canadian spy-agency documents saying that Chinese diplomats and their proxies worked to defeat Conservative politicians considered more hostile to Beijing.

The Globe also said the documents showed China favored a Trudeau re-election, albeit with a parliamentary minority, which was in fact the outcome. "This is an extraordinarily serious issue... we are seeing systematic attempts at interference by countries like China and Russia and others who want to destabilize democracies," Trudeau told reporters in Richmond Hill, Ontario. "Everyone should be worried about the fact that countries like China and Russia and others are continually trying to spread misinformation and disinformation, trying to interfere in our elections unsuccessfully, so far," he said, but cautioned against falling into "partisan traps."

The leader of Canada's main opposition party, Conservative Pierre Poilievre, last week accused Trudeau of ignoring the Chinese interference and benefiting from it. "Amplifying and giving reasons to mistrust the outcome of an election... is not a good path to go down for society or for democracy," Trudeau said. Trudeau raised "serious concerns" directly with Chinese President Xi Jinping late last year over Beijing's suspected meddling in the 2019 election, which had been reported by a domestic broadcaster.

The relationship between China and Canada has been tense since the detention of China's Huawei Technologies executive Meng Wanzhou in 2018 and Beijing's subsequent arrest of two Canadians on spying charges. All three were later released but relations remain sour. Ottawa confirmed it was aware of other air and maritime surveillance attempts by China that were thwarted by the Canadian military, after the Globe reported Chinese floating devices were found in the Arctic in autumn.

## Russia rails at UN move on Ukraine, China readies 'position paper'

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): Russia has urged UN states to vote against an "unbalanced and anti-Russian" move at the General Assembly by Ukraine and others to mark one year since Moscow invaded, as China said it could release a "position paper" on the war within days. The 193-member UN General Assembly is due to vote later this week on a draft resolution stressing "the need to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace" in line with the founding United Nations

Charter. Ukraine and its supporters hope to deepen Russia's diplomatic isolation by seeking yes votes from nearly three-quarters of the General Assembly to match - if not better - the support received for several resolutions last year. The draft text would again see the General Assembly demand Moscow withdraw its troops and call for a halt to hostilities. General Assembly resolutions are non-binding, but carry political weight. "Even the eventual cessation of hos-

tilities without a clear incentive for meaningful negotiations as well as rectifying the issues that lead to the crisis will not bring a long-lasting solution," Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia wrote in a letter to UN member states, seen by Reuters.

"There is no mentioning of 'dialogue' or 'negotiations,'" he said of the draft. "If the text remains unbalanced and anti-Russian as it is now we ask Member States to vote against it." A peace plan proposed by Ukraine's President







# The world must not abandon northwest Syria (again)

**THIS month, after two massive earthquakes claimed thousands of lives and flattened entire towns and villages in the country's northwest, the world finally started paying some attention to Syria. The devastation caused by the disaster grabbed international headlines, and governments pledged to deliver aid to affected areas. This renewed focus on Syria is much needed and welcome, but long overdue.**

Syria's humanitarian crisis did not start with the February 6 earthquakes. Before this month's disaster, seven in 10 Syrians - some 15.3 million people - were already unable to meet their basic needs. Millions were suffering the many consequences of seemingly never-ending conflict, and a shocking 90 percent of the population was considered to be living in poverty. For too long, the international community turned a blind eye to the growing humanitarian crisis in Syria. In fact, many in the West did not even know Syria's brutal conflict is not yet over until this month's earthquake returned the country to the global spotlight. Indeed, a poll commissioned in the United Kingdom by our charity, Syria Relief, in 2021 - during one of the most intense moments in the conflict and as humanitarian needs spiralled to unprecedented levels - revealed that only 58 percent of Britons were aware that the Syrian war was still ongoing at that time.

The international community was indifferent to and ignorant of Syrian

suffering until this month's tragic events for several reasons: media apathy towards a conflict that has been going on for more than 10 years, the West becoming more insular and focussed on its own immediate problems, the prevalence of a "charity begins at home" mindset amid a global economic downturn... Of course, none of these is an acceptable excuse for ignoring the plight of Syrians. I believe charity should begin where the needs are greatest and Syrians, suffering from several interconnected crises, have been in desperate need of humanitarian assistance for more than 10 years.

Since the February 6 earthquakes, Syria finally started to receive, to a certain extent, the attention it deserves and the assistance it needs from the world. But can we be certain that the international community will not abandon Syria once another crisis starts dominating the news cycle? I recall the devastating aftermath of the blast that ripped through the port of Beirut in 2020. I remember how the entire world suddenly started to pay attention to the problems that had plagued Lebanon for at least a generation - the problems that paved the way for the explosion. I remember how the great and the good said action would be taken, help would come, and no longer would the global community leave Lebanon without any support. Regrettably, this dedication lasted only a few weeks - if that. Today, the economic and political

Othman Moqbel

turmoil in Lebanon is worse than ever.

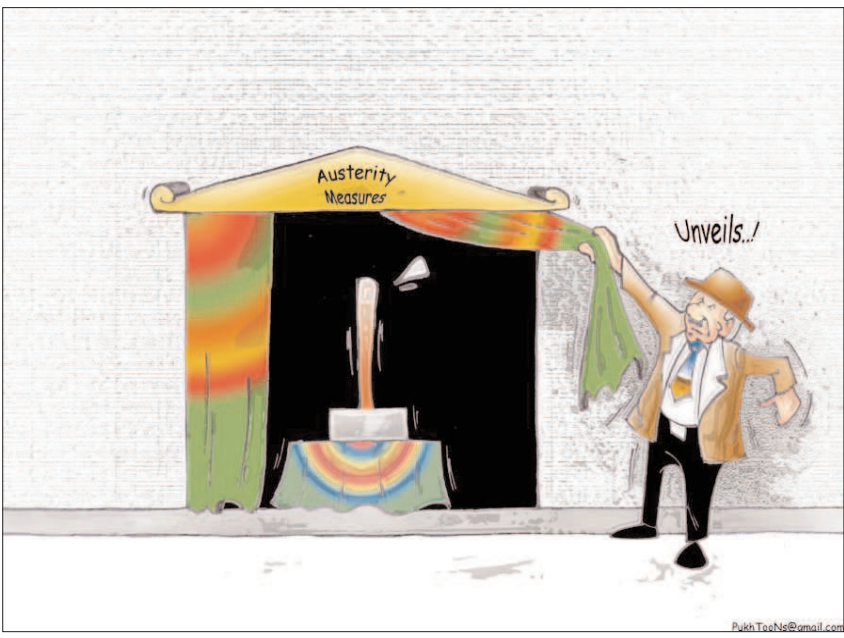
I also remember how in 2021, when Gaza was under bombardment, so many in positions of power said they were outraged and promised action. Their determination, of course, lasted only a single news cycle. The blockaded enclave was again under attack just a few weeks later. Last year, Pakistan and war-torn Yemen suffered from fatal floods. There were news reports, pledges and promises of help, but the world's attention dried up faster than the floodwaters.

Now, I am afraid the same will soon happen to Syria. I am afraid that once a new crisis grabs the headlines, the plight of the Syrian people will be forgotten. This week marks one year since the start of the Ukraine war. On this anniversary, the media attention will understandably turn to Ukraine, and the human suffering still being caused by this conflict. This, however, should not be at the expense of the Syrians. We cannot afford to focus on a single crisis at a time, and allow media attention to decide who gets to be supported or saved.

Today there is a humanitarian catastrophe in Syria. However, the February 6 earthquakes did not start this crisis - they only exacerbated it. The situation got this bad because the international community did relatively little to address the root causes of Syria's many problems for many years. Today, Syrians are suffering

not a natural disaster but a man-made one. Now that the world is once again looking at Syria due to the earthquakes, it should not look away. Governments and UN bodies must treat this tragedy as a wake-up call - they should not only take action to swiftly meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Syrian people, but also start working towards securing a lasting, just and sustainable peace in the country. We, the public, must pressure our leaders to act. We must make sure they do not simply move on to the next tragedy, problem or conflict once the earthquakes fall off the news agenda.

The West and the wider world have the luxury to move on when they become bored of the myriad problems facing Syria - but Syrians, especially those in the earthquake-hit northwest, are not. They have no easy way out of the area which has long been devastated by conflict and is now also a natural disaster zone - an area so isolated and closed up that high-level UN negotiations have to take place on a six-monthly basis to even get basic humanitarian aid into the region. Today Syrians are suffering so much because the world has been ignoring their plight for years. The earthquakes caused so much destruction and pain in Syria because they tore through what was already a hotspot of poverty and deprivation. We should make sure the world does not turn its back on Syrians again - if it does, the damage it causes would be worse than that of 100 natural disasters.



## We stand united with Kyiv

**A year ago, an overwhelming Russian force attacked Ukraine, a sovereign and independent neighbor. Russia's brutal assault on Ukraine and its population represents a blatant attack on and a manifest violation of the UN Charter and its key principles guaranteeing sovereignty and territorial integrity for all member states. These principles are the bedrock of the international rules-based order on which our collective peace and security depend.**

Through its heroic defenders and resilient civilians, Ukraine's courageous stance against Russia's overwhelming force has rallied the world. A vast majority of UN members repeatedly voted to condemn Russia's illegal aggression. In October, 143 UN members stood on the side of freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity. This wholesale rejection of Russia's efforts to dismember another sovereign UN member state sent an unmistakable signal to the Kremlin and to the rest of the world.

Allies and partners have rushed lifesaving assistance to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. Approximately 50 countries have contributed security assistance, economic and energy support, as well as humanitarian aid to ease Ukraine's suffering. We welcome Saudi Arabia's recent pledge of \$400 million and an earlier pledge of \$10 million to aid Ukrainians. Similarly, we applaud the Kingdom's leadership in mediating a prisoner exchange between Ukraine and Russia last fall that released hundreds of prisoners of war. Russia's merciless attacks have

Gwyneth Kutz & others

deliberately and continuously targeted Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. In recent months, Russia has sought to weaponize winter, deliberately attacking Ukraine's energy facilities and networks. These attacks deprive innocent civilians of heat and electricity during a frigid winter, freezing Ukrainian men, women, children and the elderly to death.

The staggering human toll of Russia's aggression extends far beyond Ukraine's borders. The war caused food, fertilizer, fuel and energy prices to skyrocket, putting 70 million people around the world at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition. This has implications for regional stability. High food prices are driving popular discontent in some countries in the Middle East, North Africa and, particularly, the Horn of Africa, which is also suffering from drought. In the face of this global crisis, Saudi Arabia has worked with other donors to save lives, helping to feed and support many through its generous assistance. However, as long as Russia continues its brutal war of choice in Ukraine, millions around the world will continue to suffer. This conflict is not just about security in Europe. Every country has a vital interest in defending the principles and values enshrined in the UN Charter that protect borders, sovereignty and people. There is abundant evidence that Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles have been used to attack Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and cities. We firmly condemn any trans-

fer of Iranian UAVs to Russia and their use in Russia's war against Ukraine, just as we condemned UAV and missile attacks against the Kingdom.

Iran-Russia military collaboration in Ukraine brings this conflict closer to the Gulf and threatens our shared stability. We will continue to stand with Ukraine to protect the Ukrainian people and territory against Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression. We will also stand with Saudi Arabia to protect the Kingdom's people and territory from Iranian proxies and their attacks.

A year into Russia's illegal and unjustified war, as brave Ukrainians fight for survival and their country's independence, we will continue to stand united with Ukraine as long as it takes. Indeed, it is crucial to present a united front to deny Russia the opportunity to undermine peace, security and prosperity in Ukraine and around the world. The international community cannot accept violations of the core principles of the UN Charter. Russia is the sole obstacle to peace in Ukraine. Russian troops and military equipment must withdraw unconditionally from the entire territory of Ukraine and hostilities must cease in order for there to be a just and comprehensive peace. We call on President Vladimir Putin to end this war today without further human suffering. As we stood with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and our other Gulf partners against an unjust invasion in the 1990s, we stand together now with Ukraine.

Arab News

## ‘Just give Ukraine the planes’

Martin Kettle

**CUT to the chase and give them the planes, demanded Boris Johnson during Monday's Commons exchanges on Ukraine. Send them the fighter jets, insisted Liz Truss a few moments later during the same debate, as the two ex-prime ministers vied to flaunt the leadership qualities they lacked when they were actually in power.**

If only the Ukraine war were as easily resolved as we armchair experts like to think. But it is not - and it won't be when the fighting resumes soon either. The anniversary of Vladimir Putin's invasion this week has provided a platform for a lot of well intentioned pontification. It's often spot on, as Joe Biden's was in Kyiv and Warsaw this week. Good for morale, undoubtedly. Not so good for objectivity, however, or for statecraft. We urgently need more of both on Ukraine. Take the example of planes. Sending fighter jets to aid Volodymyr Zelenskyy's forces has been seized on by Johnson and Truss as the latest ratchet-up in their respective Churchill and Thatcher tribute-act contest at Westminster. But people who know about these things say that Britain's Lightnings and Typhoons are in fact not easily serviceable in Ukrainian conditions. So what would we actually be giving them?

Meanwhile, a report on Wednesday on European air forces' war-fighting credibility by the Royal United Services Institute's Justin Bronk paints a far less gung-ho reality of what might really be involved in a Ukraine air war. Almost all European air forces, the RAF included, currently lack key capabilities that would enable them to gain and exploit air superiority over Russia, says Bronk. The planes are inadequately protected on the ground, and vulnerable to long-range missile attack. Their pilots, reared in

peacetime patrolling, are not trained for high-intensity fighter missions. And the Europeans cannot credibly take out enough enemy air defences to gain aerial battlefield control. These defects can be remedied with enough time and money. But we don't have endless amounts of either. Planes are also just one example. Before fighter jets it was battle tanks. Tanks, as I understand it, are a mobile battlefield gamechanger if everything else on which they depend for combined advances - signals, artillery, troops and air cover - is in place too. That's not the case - not yet, anyway. If they get bogged down or isolated, tanks become targets, as the Russian tank crews discovered outside Kyiv a year ago.

The larger point, though, is that there is too often a gulf between the boosterish talk about how the Ukraine war can be won and the likely realities on the ground. This can lead to unguarded ambitions as well as oversimplification. Questioned about ammunition shortages, the foreign secretary, James Cleverly, promised airily on Monday that Britain's manufacturers would have to "step up a gear". What that actually means in practice is anybody's guess. There is a similarly dangerous problem when politicians start virtue signalling about war aims and postwar dispositions. Whether the issue is Ukraine's future territorial boundaries, Nato or EU membership, reparations from Russia, human rights trials or other sanctions, politicians would be wise to hold their tongues when they can. It is easy to play to the gallery over such a historic outrage as Putin's war, but promises made now can be a hostage to fortune in an unpredictable future. Peace will impose different priorities.

History matters enormously. Russia is a huge country with enormous resources, including people. It has a historic sense of insecurity, not without justification, from which it has never fully been able to escape. In 1946 the American diplomat George Kennan, often seen as the architect of the US cold war policy of "containment" towards the Soviet Union, put it in terms that still seem broadly accurate today, especially in the light of Putin's paranoid speech this week. "Russian rulers have invariably sensed that their rule was relatively archaic in form, fragile and artificial in its psychological foundation, unable to stand comparison or contact with political systems of western countries," Kennan wrote. "And they have learned to seek security only in patient but deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it." Putin exemplifies all that.

One consequence, argued Kennan, was that Russian leaders are able to take a long view of the struggle. Autocracy gives them time that democracies, always more susceptible to short-term domestic concerns, do not enjoy. Hence, in our day, Putin's clear belief that he cares more about crushing Ukraine than the west cares about defending it. He is not alone. The George W Bush era officials Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates argued last month that a year of military stalemate in Ukraine could see western public opinion tire of the conflict and western nations press for ceasefire lines. There isn't much evidence of that yet, although it may come. Support for Ukraine in Europe and North America remains stable. But so is opposition to direct military involvement. Talk of a US shift against support for Ukraine is prema-

ture right now, although as the US elections in November 2024 get closer, it could happen. It is a delicate balance.

Rice and Gates draw the conclusion that the west must act decisively this spring, in weeks not months. That is Biden's and Nato's approach too. More and better weapons for Ukraine now can inflict decisive defeats on Russia, forcing Putin to back down. That thinking underlies recent summits in Germany and Poland. But it leaves uncertainty about what a Ukrainian victory would actually look like. None of us knows what Biden and Zelenskyy tell one another on such subjects when they are together. But there has to be an end goal and it is likely there is disagreement. We have to assume such talks are taking place. They certainly should be.

The last thing that is needed is a crushing victors' peace that makes Russians believe they and their children are being punished for losing. Magnanimity in victory always makes far better sense. Emmanuel Macron grasps this. So, you sometimes sense, does Biden. In some ways the most intriguing - and perhaps, for the future, the best - news of the week is that the UK still has back channels to Moscow that were used to alert the Russians to Biden's Ukraine visit. Everything here ultimately hinges on what happens to Crimea. Historically, both Russia and Ukraine have territorial, emotional and naval claims on Crimea. Neither claim entirely trumps the other. In the end, though, if Kyiv's arms prevail, then Kyiv's allies will have won the right, as paymasters and suppliers, to set conditions on the peace that follows. It's called statecraft, and it is the skill that the western powers now need to deploy more decisively and wisely than ever.

## Putin trying to wait out Western support

Maximilian Hess

**A year into Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine stands steadfast. The Ukrainians have displayed remarkable resilience and courage in defending their country. They have managed to stop the blitzkrieg Russian President Vladimir Putin had hoped would bring him a quick victory and have carried out a successful counter-offensive in the east and south.**

As a result, Russia does not control a significant portion of the territory whose annexation it proclaimed last September in violation of international law, and it is suffering mounting losses. Despite the less than stellar performance of the Russian army, Putin is showing no signs of abandoning the conflict. In his February 21 State of the Nation speech, he openly labelled the conflict a war, dropping the "special military operation" narrative he used earlier, and vowed to continue going "further" into Ukrainian territory to push the "threat away from our borders".

The West has so far demonstrated that it stands by Ukraine. On February 20, US President Joe Biden made an unannounced visit to Kyiv, where he met with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy and pledged that Washington will back Ukraine "for as long as it takes". The following day, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also travelled to Kyiv to meet with the Ukrainian president. She affirmed Italian support for Ukraine and said that her government intends to supply Spada and Skyguard air defence systems to the Ukrainian army, in addition to the SAMP-T/Mamba, which it had already decided to deliver together with France.

A few days earlier, at this year's Munich Security Conference, other European leaders pledged their support for Ukraine and even recognised they had been too slow to provide it with the weaponry needed to push Russia further back towards the pre-February 24 lines of control. German

Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for the West to deliver as many tanks to Ukraine "now" despite his own months of dithering on the decision to do so. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak endorsed allies sending combat aircraft to Ukraine and providing training to Ukrainian pilots on the most advanced jets.

The West has also shown unwavering commitment to economic sanctions on Russia aimed at weakening the Kremlin, decreasing its war chest, and constraining its ability to invest in its war-making capabilities. The latest major sanction - a ban on Russian refined oil products - came into effect on February 5. US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland has said that the G7, the group of leading world economies, is discussing plans for new sanctions which could be announced during the bloc's February 24 virtual summit.

But Western support for Ukraine has also been lacking in certain respects. The West has not endorsed writing off Ukrainian debt, while proposals that assets seized from the Russian central bank and blacklisted Russian oligarchs be given to Kyiv as compensation have yet to progress. It has also faced bottlenecks in terms of production and struggled with getting third countries to approve transfers, which threaten its ability to supply Kyiv with sufficient ammunition. Western policy is effectively too reactionary and piecemeal. While it is crucial that support remains adaptive in response to evolving threats and potential new attacks, it is important to ensure it is maintained over the long term.

Over this horizon, the lack of a formal alliance between the West and Ukraine is a risk that needs to be addressed. As the conflict has transformed into a war of attrition, Putin is now clearly hoping to wait out the West on its support for Ukraine and thus secure a victory on the battlefield in the long term. While Western cohesion in the aftermath of the ini-

tial invasion has been among the few positive surprises, Putin recognises that the longer his war goes on, the more costly it will be for the West to finance Ukrainian defence and reconstruction efforts. He sees the war's economic costs as potentially helping to bring to power more pliable Western leaders in the years to come.

Foremost among these is former US President Donald Trump, comfortably the odds-on favourite to be the Republican nominee again in the 2024 presidential race. He has increasingly criticised Western support for Kyiv and said that he believes he can secure a peace agreement with Putin if re-elected. Meanwhile, a former associate of his advisor Rudy Giuliani has admitted that their efforts in Ukraine sought to undermine its ability to defend itself from Russia. Europe, too, still has its own prominent politicians who are sympathetic to Putin's arguments. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has maintained his pro-Kremlin rhetoric, though his budgetary dependence on EU funding has reined in his urge to veto sanctions against Russia.

Other examples include Meloni's coalition partner, Silvio Berlusconi, who is a longstanding friend of Putin's, having visited him in Crimea after its 2014 annexation. France's perennial far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen is also known for her soft approach to Russia. Jordan Bardella, her successor as leader of the National Rally party, has in recent weeks called for lifting energy sanctions on the Kremlin. With France's next general election not due until 2027, the risk of a pro-Russian president coming to power may not be so pressing, but Putin sees openings elsewhere. For example, in Slovakia, the parliament approved a snap election for September 30 after the government lost a no-confidence vote. Former Prime Minister Robert Fico, who is critical of EU sanctions on Russia and opposes sending weapons

to Ukraine, stands a chance of winning the vote with his Smer-SD party and heading a coalition that may be more sympathetic to Moscow than the current one. To preclude the risk of support for Ukraine wavering due to disunity, the West must begin to consider the long game in its own strategy. One crucial step is to conclude a formal alliance with Ukraine. If the US, the EU and UK were able to agree on such a move, it would demonstrate to Putin not only the failure of his current war strategy but also underpin long-term support.

Ukraine's NATO and EU aspirations are, of course, in part aimed at securing just such an alliance. But while Russian forces still occupy large swaths of Ukrainian territory, membership in NATO is not a realistic prospect. Despite the approval of its EU candidacy last year, Kyiv is also a long way from joining the bloc. As Turkey and several Balkan states can attest, EU membership candidacy can be a decades-long waiting house. That is why a separate formal alliance between the West and Ukraine is needed - one that would not inhibit the country's EU and NATO aspirations. It does not have to offer formal security guarantees mandating Western intervention either. But it should provide a legal and enduring basis to solidify the current reality that Ukraine and the West are each other's foremost allies.

Such an alliance could build on the precedent of the declarations on defence and security cooperation signed between the UK and Sweden and Finland last May, which preceded their NATO applications. These agreements pledge support when a member comes under attack but do not mandate direct intervention. The past year has shown that Putin cannot win this war, but Ukraine could lose it if it is abandoned by the West. Guaranteeing enduring Western support is the only hope of forcing the Russian president to the negotiating table. Failing that, it would ensure he loses on the battlefield.

## Turkiye, Syria earthquakes

Sinem Cengiz

**It has now been more than 10 days since the devastating earthquakes struck the south-east of Türkiye and the north of Syria. Throughout this time, all Turks, whether in Türkiye or abroad, have psychologically collapsed. We have been and still are experiencing a mixture of feelings at the same time, such as desperation and hope, anger and happiness (the latter for those rescued). During these days, we have seen both the most beautiful and the ugliest aspects of humanity.**

While writing this article, the official death toll has surpassed 35,000, making this disaster the deadliest in modern Turkish history, surpassing the 1939 Erzincan earthquake that killed 32,000 people. Türkiye is going through a process of a crisis within several other crises. This catastrophe wiped out the history, the past and the memories of so many people. It destroyed homes, ancient sites and even cities and a civilization. However, this calamity should not take the future of those who survived and who have suffered the pain of all the country. This collective pain should trigger a collective awareness.

There have been rays of light amid this darkness. The international community's solidarity and response has been very important. It is certainly unforgettable to see countries from all across the world rushing to save lives. Some 74 countries sent rescue teams and aid to quake-hit Türkiye within a few hours. The list of countries to have provided support to the Turkish people is too long to mention here, but there are some noteworthy ones, such as Greece, Armenia and Israel. The Turkish people

this reality.

Also, we cannot forget how Ukrainian rescue teams came to save lives in Türkiye while their country was at war. Although there were also Russian rescue teams on the ground, they only believed a single thing: "Just a life to save." It was the same for both Palestinian and Israeli rescue teams, who worked for days amid the rubble. On one side, members of the Israeli rescue mission held Shabbat prayers, while on the other Palestinian rescue teams worked and prayed for the Turkish people.

In the midst of the disaster, when every second was important for a human life, all politics, tensions and interests were kept aside. Besides all the horrific memories of this calamity, these scenes will stay in my mind and heart, as well as the Turkish people's minds and hearts, forever. It is noteworthy to say that the international support shown to Türkiye is more than just aid. It is actually a light at the end of the tunnel. It is a chance to bind the wounds created by years-long tensions. As Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias said: "We do not need to wait for natural disasters to improve our relations." Many call this earthquake diplomacy. Even if the tensions between neighbors — which also exhausts the people — might not change overnight, it should pave the way for a change of tone and approach. This is particularly important for Türkiye in the post-earthquake era. Türkiye will now go through several phases of rescue, rehabilitation and recovery. The Turkish people are exhausted by the political polarization at home and diplomatic tensions abroad. Rehabilitation is needed both at home and abroad.

Amid this darkness, a border crossing between Türkiye and Armenia opened for the first time in 35 years to allow humanitarian aid through. This was symbolically very important because the two countries still do not have formal relations, although there is an ongoing rapprochement process. The same border crossing was also used in 1988, when a big earthquake hit Armenia and the Turkish Red Crescent Society moved aid to the affected areas. Humanity has no borders, but unfortunately only disasters remind us of

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# SCCI stresses for adopting sustainable policies for economic prosperity

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Muhammad Ishaq stressed the need of adopting sustainable policies for bringing economic prosperity and development in the country.

He also called for proper consultation with the business community during formulation of policies.

Ishaq was addressing during a visit of the National Institute of Management (NIM), Peshawar, 36th Mid-career Management Course (MCMC) participants/senior officials here at the chamber's house on Thursday.

The MCMC delegation was led by faculty member NIM Peshawar Muhammad Tayyab. Apart from SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, executive members Haji Ghulam Hussain, Imran Khan Mohmand, S. Minhajuddin, Naem Qasmi, Munawar Khurshid, and Aftab Iqbal, Rashid Iqbal Siddique, Fazl I

Wahid, Shahrukh Khan, Fahad Amin, a large number of traders, industrialists and representatives of business community were present during the meeting.

Ishaq said the country's economy, business and trade are reeling while serious steps were not taken to put the economy on the right direction.

The SCCI chief lauded bureaucracy has played a pivotal role in enforcement of policies with consistency.

He added despite the limited powers, the senior officials are making vigorous efforts to bring economic stability and prosperity in the country.

On the occasion, Ishaq through his detailed multiple-media presentation briefed comprehensively the participants of MCMC about the establishment of SCCI, its aims and objectives, various programs, especially steps that were taken for welfare and relief for business community and other facilities, SCCI-2.0 initiative, and measures for digitization.

The chamber president while responding to various queries of the MCMC participants expressed his displeasure over lack of sufficient steps by authorities concerned for boosting up the country's export.

He, however, stressed that commercial attaché/counselors posted at Pakistan's missions abroad should play their due role for enhancement investments and the country's trade and export.

To another question, Ishaq replied that SCCI has initiated measures for E-services and business community issues would be resolved on a fast-track basis through use of digital means.

The chamber president lamented that the economy wasn't included in the priority of the politicians.

He said the government relevant departments are not paying heed to problems of the business community and have least bothered to take steps for amicable resolution of their multiple issues.

Responding to the question of dollar smuggling, Ishaq said KP was put into the red-zone by commercial banks for the last 15 years, owing to which, it has not only made it difficult to run business and industry but was impossible in the province.

Stressing the need for social and economic empowerment of the women folk, the SCCI chief said it is imperative to provide equal opportunity and level-playing field to women to play due to development of the national economy.

He said the chamber has undertaken pragmatic steps for gender-equality and provision of all rights to women at every level. He expressed the hope that economic stability would come by adopting sustainable policies and making proper consultation with stakeholders.

The SCCI president emphasized the need for strengthening of liaison and coordination between business community and bureaucracy.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Ishaq presenting shield to Faculty Member of National Institute of Management Muhammad Tayab during his visit to Chamber.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships, MSC Joanna, Xpress Bardsey and EM Astoria carrying Containers, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal on Wednesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, T-Rigel and Coral Actinia with Palm oil and Chemicals also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PAQ berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, three ships, MSC Joanna, Xpress Bardsey and Mild Bloom left the port on Thursday.

The cargo throughput of 120,571 tonnes comprising 72,733 tonnes imports cargo and 47,838 tonnes export cargo including containerized cargo carried in 3,864 Containers (1,050 TEUs Imports and 2,814 TEUs export) was handled at the Port during the last 24 hours.

There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, three ships, Sochrina, Ithoni and Hua Wei 8 & two more ships, Al-Zubarahand CMA CGM Ivanhoe carrying Mogas, General cargo, Palm oil, LNG and Containers are expected to take berths at FOTCO, MW-2, LCT, EETL and QICT respectively on Thursday.

## PSX's 100-index loses 329 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Thursday, losing 329.09 points, a negative change of 0.80 percent, closing at 40,838.51 points against 41,167.60 points the previous day.

A total of 150,264,321 shares were traded during the day as compared to 196,543,047 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.772 billion against Rs6.413 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 319 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 75 of them recorded gains and 220 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 24 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 14,163,476 shares at Rs1.25 per share; Maple Leaf with 10,480,725 shares at Rs23.78 per share, and Kot Addu Power with 9,688,154 shares at Rs28.91 per share.

Goodluck Ind. witnessed a maximum increase of Rs50.00 per share price,

closing at Rs1,000.00, whereas the runner-up was Khyber Tobacco with a Rs27.53 rise in its per share price to Rs394.65.

Bhanero Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs78.84 per share closing at Rs1,100.01; followed by Reliance Cotton with Rs45.00 decline to close at Rs600.00.

**Rupee gains 96 paisas against dollar**

The Pakistan rupee appreciated by 96 paisas against the dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs260.93 against the previous day's closing of Rs261.89.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs266.8 and Rs269.5 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs2.05 and closed at Rs277 against the last day's closing of Rs279.05, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs1.93, whereas a decrease

of Rs2.27 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs314.70 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs316.97.

The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 26 paisas each to close at Rs71.04 and Rs69.55 respectively.

**Gold prices up by 500 to Rs196,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs500 on Thursday and was traded at Rs196,100 against sale at Rs195,600, the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs429 to Rs168,124 against Rs167,695, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat went up to Rs154,114 from Rs153,721, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs30 to Rs2,120 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs25.72 to Rs1,817.55.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$14 to \$1,826 from \$1,840, the association reported.

## MCCI calls extension

PESHAWAR (APP): Malakand Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) has called for an extension of the tax exemption period in the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The call was made during a joint meeting of the cabinet and executive of the chamber here on Thursday with founding president, Mohammad Shoaib Khan in the chair.

Senior Vice President (SVP), Ameer Naushad Khan, vice president Ahammad Khan and executive members also attended the meeting.

The meeting decided to begin both renewal and new membership for industrialists and traders from March 1-24. The applicants have been directed to submit their letterhead, national identity card (NIC), and copy of the National Tax

(NTN) Number.

The meeting discussed the problems faced by the industrialist and trading communities of the country in the ongoing economic crisis and called for the removal of hurdles in the provision of raw materials to industrial zones.

The participants of the meeting also stressed for extension in the tax exemption period in the newly merged districts.

## ICMA sign MOU with GCCI

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The MOU signing ceremony between the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA) and Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) was held on Thursday at GCCI office.

ICMA is a professional accounting body that excels in delivering high-standard education, professional training, and research & development activities that are aimed to improve business efficiency.

The Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce GCCI strives to promote and facilitate the businesspeople of Gujranwala city. ICMA through its Corporate Training, R&D facility and Advisory Boards will help GCCI members in getting the professional skills needed to better understand the modern ways of doing business and thus optimize the business development of leading businesses. ICMA has all the resources to provide Corporate Training and Professional Certifications to members of GCCI.



Zia ul Haq, President GCCI signed the MOU on behalf of Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) and Mr. Zia ul Mustafa, Chairman

Strategic Board signed on behalf of Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA).

The objective of the MOU is to jointly under-

take Corporate Trainings, Research and Development input on the policy framework of government and joint promotion and events.

## US Consulate team visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Counselor Section Chief US Consulate Lahore Richard T Phillips visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Thursday.

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed Richard Phillips and his team.

He said that the visit of

Richard Phillips would further enhance relationship between the Sialkot Chamber and the US Consulate Lahore.

"Indeed, the United States is the top trading partner of Pakistan and the business community remains committed to build upon existing bilateral relations to support socio-

economic development of the country," he added.

Malik mentioned that special favour extended by the US Consulate Lahore to the Sialkot Chamber would help in facilitating and improving business to business relationships.

During the meeting, Richard Phillips listened to issues of the business com-

munity and US citizens residing in Sialkot regarding US visa policy.

He briefed the participants regarding visa policy and answer the questions of the participants.

Senior Vice President SCCI Wahub Jahangir and Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh were also present.

## UBL delivers a resilient performance with strong shareholder returns

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: UBL delivered yet another solid performance generating a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of Rs.68.3 billion for the year ended December 31, 2022, with a year on year growth of 31%. Profit after tax (PAT) was reported at Rs.32.1 billion with Earnings per Share (EPS) at Rs.26.19 (2021: Rs.25.23). The Bank declared dividends of Rs.9.0 per share for the fourth quarter of 2022, taking the overall dividend distribution to Rs.22.0 per share for the full year which is significantly higher than the Rs.18.0 per share declared in 2021. Despite economic challenges this year, UBL remained resilient in sustaining its leading position in the Pakistan banking industry.

UBL remains one of the largest financial institutions of Pakistan with a footprint of 1,335 branches in Pakistan and an asset base of over Rs.2.8 trillion. Serving 11 million customers, with deposits of over Rs.1.84 trillion and gross advances of Rs.1.01 trillion as at December 31, 2022, UBL is at the forefront of banking and financial services in Pakistan.

## Lost & Found

I have lost original documents of my 3 Marla House # 939, Street # 28, Sector F-9, Phase-6 Hayatabad Peshawar. If any one finds please contact Hanif Khan s/o Mir Rais Khan Tehsil Domel District Bannu.

We are proud of our highly dedicated and professional team of around 13,500 staff members and remain steadfast in our commitment of reaching remote areas of the country and providing access to banking facilities, thus serving the goal of financial inclusion for every citizen of Pakistan.

The Bank continues to build on its award-winning digital banking infrastructure which has repeatedly been recognized as one of the best in Pakistan in providing the most innovative banking solutions.

**Substantial revenue growth across both funded and fee based segments**

The Bank earned net markup income of Rs.103.2 billion in 2022, with a strong build up in the revenue base which is up 44% year on year. With consistent build up in the balance sheet during the year, markup earning assets averaged Rs.2.2 trillion in 2022, growing by 13%. A timely repositioning within the asset book strengthened interest earnings driven by a well-diversified portfolio of fixed and floating rate investments. This resulted in a sharp increase in net interest margins (NIMs) from 3.8% in 2021 to 4.9% in 2022.

Non-Fund Income (NFI) recorded significant growth of 47% over last year, reported at Rs.34.4 billion, and contributed 25% of the overall gross revenues of the Bank. The year witnessed an increase in Fee and Commission Income by 21%. Customer fees from branch banking operations stood at Rs.2.3 bil-

lion, with an increase of 33%, driven mainly by business acquisitions across the retail network.

Income from cards of Rs.3.1 billion was earned in 2022, up 21% on the back of the portfolio of active debit card customers growing to over 2.5 million, with 930,000 new acquisitions during the year. Home remittance commissions were a strong contributor with Rs.2.0 billion earned during the year as UBL maintained its leadership as the preferred partner to the overseas Pakistani diaspora.

Given our strategic partnership with leading insurance companies, bancassurance remained one of the leaders with a 25% market share in the industry, generating fee income of Rs.1.6 billion in 2022.

**Branch Banking builds earnings base across the Bank**

In 2022, the bank focused on building on its low-cost deposit base and onboarded 613,000 new current account relationships, leading to a robust growth of 13% in average current deposits, with volumes reaching Rs.715 billion. The average current to total deposits ratio improved to 43.6% in 2022 from 42.1% in 2021, while savings accounts averaged Rs.674 billion in 2022 (2021: Rs.661 billion). The domestic cost of deposits came in at 6.4% as against 3.6% in the corresponding period of last year and remained well contained despite the sharp increase in interest rates during the year. In the Home Remittances space, UBL continues to be in the fore-

front with transactions growing by 20%, thus increasing the Bank's market share to 21.6%.

As part of the Bank's Diversity and Inclusion agenda, UBL further enriched its exclusive product for women, "UBL Urooj" with a dedicated debit card as well as targeted alliances to meet the specific needs of women. Since its launch, the portfolio has built up to over 21,000 account holders with Rs.4.0 billion in deposits and winning a 'Dragons of Asia' Award in 2022.

**UBL Ameen remains a core focus with strong growth**

Islamic banking continues as one of the key strategic segments of the Bank expanding its footprint across the country. The Islamic network stands at 150 branches (2021: 145 branches), along with 219 Islamic Banking Windows (IBWs) within conventional branches (2021: 197 IBWs).

UBL strengthened its Islamic business with a strong performance of 87% growth in the Islamic loan book, which averaged Rs.69 billion in 2022. UBL Ameen's deposits averaged Rs.178 billion in 2022, demonstrating strong average growth of 21% over last year.

The Bank views the Islamic segment as a key growth opportunity and will continue to aggressively expand UBL Ameen's presence in this vitally important sector.

**Significant growth in loan book while improving credit quality**

Bank level gross advances closed at Rs.1.01

trillion at Dec'22, with a strong growth of 39% led by the Corporate Banking Group. Commission income from cash management was recorded at Rs.1.1 billion in 2022, growing by 14% year on year with higher throughput volumes across Corporate and SME customers. Income from trade and guarantee business was recorded at Rs.2.0 billion, registering a strong growth of 58% with steady volumes across long standing customer relationships.

The Bank continues to expand within the mid-market segment as the average portfolio of SME and Agri loans recorded a 23% growth over last year with the aim of creating differentiation through customized financial solutions, digitization and a more partner driven approach.

**Digital Banking - Paving the way with growing penetration**

UBL continues to be recognized as the industry leader in Digital Banking. For the third consecutive year, Asiamoney lauded UBL's digital excellence by declaring it the 'Best Bank for Digital Solutions' in Pakistan for 2022. Alongside, Euromoney declared UBL as the 'Market Leader of Digital Banking' in Pakistan, especially based on its track record as the best in digital. In the year 2022, digital transactions have increased by 48% to 55 million with almost Rs.2.6 trillion in payments throughput which is up 53% year on year. In addition, the Bank continued to increase its digital penetration with 49% of active bank customers registered

on the digital app.

Keeping in line with our key strategy pillars, UBL aims to provide a seamless customer experience across all touchpoints and technology platform-based solutions. UBL continues to strive to create a more holistic payments ecosystem which will clearly transform the payments landscape in Pakistan. In 2022, we introduced distinctive features on the digital side to facilitate the users to execute all financial and non-financial transactions effectively and efficiently without visiting the branch. Digital Account Opening, Digital Cheque Deposit and the Urdu mobile app were some of the noteworthy breakthroughs in 2022.

**Commitment to Technology and our Data Strategy - setting us apart**

UBL continued its focus on technology, data and digitalization in 2022 which was responsible for our excellent uptimes and service levels across all of technology infrastructure and customer channels. We have embarked on a well-architected multiyear execution plan to embed technology and data DNA in the core of the organization. At the heart of this program is the implementation of our "Digital Banking Platform" which knits the customer onboarding and internet / mobile experiences across all customer channels. The platform is designed with a view to meeting the future needs of a tech-savvy and well-informed young population and is planned to be rolled out in the future.

In line with our strategy

of being a data driven organization, UBL contributed towards developing a data community, by organizing the first of its kind "Datathon" which was well acknowledged on both local and international forums in the form of awards and media representations.

**Leading by example - Stepping up our social responsibility in times of need**

UBL is fully committed to setting benchmarks for the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) standards in Pakistan though stronger compliance and control standards in line with international best practices. The Bank has focused on investing in green energy solutions and reforming its energy needs through solar energy which will ultimately reduce carbon emissions thus reducing adverse climatic effects and safeguarding natural resources. Through our focus on the United Nations mandated Sustainable Development Goals, the Bank has positively impacted millions of lives in the communities it serves. Post the aftermath of the recent catastrophic floods, UBL has been actively working to provide assistance to thousands of families displaced and affected by the floods under the Bank's overall ESG agenda. Bestway Foundation, the charitable foundation operated by the Bank's principal sponsors, raised over USD 2 million for flood relief which were used to provide sustainable relief to the scores of people tragically affected by the floods.





## In brief

## Azhar, Nisar leave for Indonesia

PESHAWAR (APP): President Pakistan Cycling Federation and international technical officials Nisar Ahmad and Azhar Ali Shah left for Asian Cycling Confederation General Council meeting to be held in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Talking to APP, President of Pakistan Cycling Federation and Asian Cycling Confederation Syed Azhar Ali Shah said before departure that they would represent Pakistan in this meeting. Syed Azhar Ali Shah said that last year the same meeting was held in Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan. He said there is also a road Championship but the race was supposed to be held in March due to Corona. He said another Road Championship would be held in Thailand in June this year. Recently, four experts were given an online course in Korea and four Pakistani experts took a level one course. Junior players and coaches will also go to Korea for 30 days of training which enable them to hold international cycle races.

## 2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup

LAHORE (APP): Remounts and BN Polo registered contrasting victories in the 2nd President of Pakistan Polo Cup 2023 matches, sponsored by Takmeel Square and played here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Thursday. Manuel Sundblad steered Remounts to a convincing 10-8½ victory over HN Polo in the first match of the day. Young six-goaler Sundblad from Remounts played brilliantly and pumped in eight excellent goals while Imran Shahid and Jota Chavanne struck one goal each. For HN Polo, which had a half goal handicap advantage, six goals were converted by Santi Losa while Raja Jalal Arsalan and Haider Naseem scored one goal each. Remounts began the match with a field goal but HN Polo bounced back well and converted two back-to-back goals to have a 2-1 lead by the end of the first chukker. The highly-charged second chukker saw both the sides playing outstanding polo and thrashed in three goals each with HN Polo still enjoying a slight 5-4 lead. Remounts made a strong comeback in the third chukker and fully dominated it by slamming in three back-to-back goals to earn a 7-5 lead.

## LIV Golf future

MEXICO (BBC): Which line-up gets your backing? Dustin Johnson's 4 Aces? The Majesticks of Ian Poulter and Lee Westwood? Ripper GC led by Open champion Cameron Smith? Or is it one of the other nine teams competing in the newly branded LIV Golf League? Or, perhaps, you could not care less about LIV's new season, which starts in Mexico on Friday? If that proves the case on a global scale, it spells trouble for the Saudi Arabian-funded start-up. After eight tournaments in its initial 2022 season, the circuit will be played over 14 events worth a combined \$405m (£335m) this year. There will be greater emphasis on the team competition, which is seen as key to LIV's future. The 48 players compete as individuals - chasing \$20m (£16.5m) purses at each event - but remain part of a dozen four-man teams. LIV see these 12 entities as investment opportunities that could ultimately generate a return on the approximate \$2bn (£1.65bn) that has already been ploughed in by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF).

## Gurbaz, Hasan Ali serve up the Islamabad United special

KARACHI (Cricinfo): This was less of a game, more of a template. Islamabad United have been playing this sort of match for eight years, and when it clicks, no side can quite match their explosiveness. It clicked today in some style, with United blowing Peshawar Zalmi away by six wickets, coasting to the 157 they required inside 15 overs. Hasan Ali, returning to the side, was the star with the ball, taking three vital top order wickets to stymie Zalmi's momentum. Then Rahmanullah Gurbaz stole the show with the bat, his 31-ball 62 seeing United post 80 in six overs, the highest Powerplay total at this year's PSL.

United won the toss and bowled, but for the first six overs, Zalmi were the only ones doing

the winning. Mohammad Harris and Babar Azam took the attack to the new ball, and when they thumped Hasan for 17 in his first over, there was no indication his day would turn around. For six overs, there was a contrast in styles between Babar's silky elegance and Harris' raw power, but the impact they had in terms of run-scoring was strikingly similar. When the fielding restrictions ended, Harris had romped to 35 off 17, while Babar's 34 had taken 19 deliveries.

Shadab removed Harris in his first over, and Mubasir Khan cleaned up Saim Ayub with a flipper, but thereafter it was the Hasan show. Tom Kohler-Cadmore and Rovman Powell had their stumped

rocked back with almost identical deliveries in a match-turning 10th over. There was a new, edgy send-off from Hasan to each batter as they went on their way, and United had pulled things back superbly. Jimmy Neesham fell in Hasan's next over, and before long, Babar, having watched the drama happen from the other end, was forced to take matters into his own hands.

He did as much as he could, but Zalmi needed a power hitter, and that's not an aspect of the game Babar excels at. He farmed the strike and tried to find the boundaries, but couldn't quite manage enough to give his side the big finish they needed against a fear-some batting line-up. The 156 they finished with felt well short.



## Winning streak to continue in next matches, Rizwan

MULTAN (APP): Captain of Multan Sultan and star batsman of the national cricket team Muhammad Rizwan said that the team would continue the same momentum to continue the winning streak in the next matches going to be played at other venues.

Holding a press conference after the match at Multan Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, he said the crowd of Multan has always supported both teams in all matches but the support of the crowd was in Multan's favour at the last ball of the match.

He said the pitch was supporting bowlers and batsmen equally but the bowlers of his team bowled very well today and played a vital role in the victory.

To a question, Rizwan said Pollard was a senior player in the team and his advice was always useful for the team but the captain also has to see everything

## Najam Sethi thanks Multan's crowd

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Najam Sethi extended thanks to the overwhelming crowd of Multan for their support in the five matches at Multan Cricket Stadium, during Pakistan Super League's 8th edition matches.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Najam Sethi said that Multan crowd once again proved that what PSL meant to them by showing their presence in a massive number. He also paid thanks to local administration for successful staging HBL PSL matches in Multan. He said that the Multan Sultans and Karachi Kings thoroughly entertained the crowd in the last match played here, adding the said match would be remembered for a long time.

before taking any decision.

He said early on, the ball was coming much better on the pitch which was being played well by Shan Masood. He said the winning streak would be maintained in future matches after leaving the home ground, adding that at a stage the Karachi

Kings got a strong grip on the match but the bowlers especially the spell by Khushdil Shah and Usama Mir was the turning point.

He said he can not give up till the last bowl of the match, adding that the team was playing every match as a challenge.

## England unchanged for second N.Zealand Test after 'perfect game'

WELLINGTON (AFP/APP): England named an unchanged team for the second and final Test against New Zealand in Wellington starting Friday, after captain Ben Stokes said they had played "the perfect game" to go 1-0 up in the series.

The tourists dominated the first Test in Mount Maunganui to win by 267 runs with 40-year-old fast bowler James Anderson claiming seven wickets.

The haul has seen him return to the top of the Test bowling world rankings for the sixth time in his career and the first time since 2018, deposing Australia captain Pat Cummins.

Stokes was not surprised Anderson had returned to the pinnacle after claiming match figures of 7-54 at the Bay Oval, forming part of a potent pace trio with Stuart Broad and Ollie Robinson.

"I don't think he'll be that fussed by it, to be honest. He'll just keep doing his thing," Stokes said on Thursday. "I think, and a lot of guys in the dressing room do, that Jimmy has been certainly one of the best in the world for a long, long time."

"He's someone I know I can throw the ball to when I need a wicket, so having

someone like him along with Broady and Robbo is a real treat to be able to captain at the moment."

Stokes said consideration had been given to resting one or more of his front-line seamers for the Basin Reserve contest but all three informed him on Thursday they felt fresh and ready to go.

He hinted the trio may have been motivated by the grass-laden nature of the pitch, which appears to hold the promise of side-ways movement.

"It is a fine line between picking your strongest 11 but then also making sure your bowlers are a hundred percent ready," Stokes said.

"It was pretty easy to name the team, once they gave the all-clear they were all good to go." Last week's win was England's 10th from 11 Tests under Stokes, and England's first on New Zealand soil in 15 years.

Stokes was proud his team achieved it by adhering to a game plan that involved piling pressure on New Zealand's top order when they batted in seam-friendly conditions under lights. "When we feel like it's time to put the other team under pressure, that's what we try and do and we

were able to do that," Stokes said. "I think we played near enough the perfect game, considering it was a day-night Test match."

A draw or win in Wellington would subject New Zealand to their first home series defeat in six years. Black Caps skipper Tim Southee hopes a forecast for rain on each of the first two days proves inaccurate, believing his team have the pedigree to square the series. They have fashioned a strong record at the Basin Reserve, having notched seven wins and just two losses from 14 Tests there over the last decade.

"We know these conditions reasonably well and having won a few series and a lot of games in that time, I guess that's where home advantage comes into it," he said. "England, strategically, played it beautifully last week and we had a couple of tough sessions under lights. "But we're now moving forward into a traditional Test match, you can't dwell on what happened."

Southee confirmed seamer Matt Henry would play after missing the first Test to attend the birth of his child but wouldn't divulge who will make way.

## Australia clinch thriller to make seventh straight final

CAPE TOWN (Cricinfo): Australia have reached a seventh successive T20 World Cup final but not without an almighty fight from India, who came five runs short in a thrilling semi-final in Cape Town.

The margin of defeat is four runs smaller than it was at the Commonwealth Games final last year, but that will be little consolation for India, who may feel they only have themselves to blame for failing to get over the line while chasing 173.

They were clumsy in the field, conceded at least 15 runs through overthrows and misfields and dropped two crucial catches - Meg Lanning on 1 and Beth Mooney on 32 - and were equally nery between the wickets. Two crucial run-outs dented their chase including that of Harmanpreet Kaur.



The India captain was ill on the eve of the match and briefly hospitalised with a fever but fronted up to lead her side and almost took them home. After a poor start which left India on 28 for 3 in

the fourth over, Harmanpreet shared in a 69-run fourth-wicket stand with Jemimah Rodrigues and then brought up her first fifty of the tournament.

She had barely cele-

brated it when her bat got stuck in the ground while sliding it in for a second run and Alyssa Healy was quick to break the stumps, leaving India's middle and lower order to get 40 runs off the last 32 balls.

## Departments directed to make arrangements for Horse & Cattle Show

LAHORE (APP): Hassan, Director Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman has directed all the departments concerned to make excellent arrangements for the upcoming Horse & Cattle Show scheduled to be organised from March 10 to 12, 2023.

He issued these directions while chairing a key meeting to review preparations of grand Horse & Cattle Show here at National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Director Admin Ijaz Muneer, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair

Chand Pervene, Assistant Director Zahoor Ahmed and other officials attended the meeting.

The representatives and officials of Police Department, Lahore Arts Council, Punjab Arts Council, Metropolitan Corporation Lahore and Education Department were also present in the important meeting.

Director General Sports Punjab Shahid Zaman further said that a 42.5km cycle race will also be conducted. "The clearance and security of cycle race routes will be the responsibility of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation and Police," he added.

informed that the teams from all four provinces, Islamabad, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir will take part in sports events of Horse & Cattle Show. "Best facilities should be provided to all participating teams and officials of Horse & Cattle Show sports events," he directed the officials concerned.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman further said that a 42.5km cycle race will also be conducted. "The clearance and security of cycle race routes will be the responsibility of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation and Police," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi on this occasion informed that a grand marathon race will also be organized in Horse & Cattle Show in which every citizen can participate.

He said that Social Media Groups of relevant departments have been formed for best coordination during the Horse & Cattle Show. "Around 350 performers will participate in grand Unity Show.

Besides this Lahore Arts Council and Punjab Arts Council will conduct Ghazal Night and Bahar Mushaira as well during Horse & Cattle Show," he elaborated.

## UoCP wins All Pakistan Inter-University Men Hockey C'ship

PESHAWAR (APP): University of Central Punjab clinched the trophy after defeating strong University of the Punjab in the final of the All Pakistan Inter-University Men Hockey Championship played under the aegis of the Directorate of Sports, Islamia College University Peshawar, here at Lala Ayub Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Director General Sports, Khalid Khan was the chief guest on this occasion. Olympians Muhammad Usman and Kashif Ahmad, Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Hockey Association Haji Hidayat Ullah, Field Judge Zia Ur Rehman, former hockey star Mujahid Mana, Engr Aurangzeb, a senior alumina of Islamia College University Peshawar, and Director

Sports and Organizing Secretary Ali Hoti were also present.

University of Central Punjab (UoCP), Lahore played an excellent game but conceded an early goal, when Punjab University took the lead through center striker Yasir Ali on the field attempt.

The early goal lead kept built pressure on UoCP team but their players played well and soon Rana Danish slammed in a beautiful goal on the penalty corner in the first quarter of the final.

It was the second quarter when Rana Danish scored another goal on the penalty corner making the tally 2-1. In the fourth and last quarters Mudassar Ali and Mohammad Arsal scored one goal each in the 57th and 58th minutes to guide UoCP to 4-1 victory

against Punjab University.

In the match to decide the third position, Government College University Faisalabad defeated NUML Islamabad by 7-0.

Faisalabad's Usman Rehman scored three goals while Mohsin, Mohammad Nadeem scored one goal each and Rohail scored two goals in the final moments of the game. NUML after conceding seven goals did not match up to the pressure built by Government College University Faisalabad.

At the end, Khalid Khan along with Muhammad Usman and Kashif Ahmad awarded cash prizes of Rs 90,000 to the winner team, Rs 72,000 to the runners-up and Rs 54,000 to third position holders. A total of 11 universities participated in the championship.

## Karachi citizens appreciate announcement of Karachi Games 2023

KARACHI (NNI): The citizens of Karachi have fully appreciated the announcement of the Karachi Games 2023 by Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman from March 3 by calling this decision a timely, positive and historic step towards the promotion of various sports at the grassroots level.

They expressed hope that the mega sports event organized for the first time on a large scale will prove to be a new milestone in the history of sports in Karachi.

According to experts, the participation of male and female sportsmen and athletes in large numbers in the Karachi Games is proof of the fact that the KMC is serious about promoting positive, constructive and healthy activities in the city and to rehabilitate and rehabilitate sports fields. KMC is making efforts for raising the standard of cricket, hockey, football and other sports at the city level and establishing an atmosphere of brotherhood and solidarity among the citizens through these sports that would bring positive and happy results in future.

Prominent personalities related to sports in Karachi and various sports district associations have also described the interest of Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman in organizing sports activities at the local level and his patronage as auspicious and said that impressive arrangements have been made for Karachi Games 2023 and experts from each sport, elite players, coaches and technicians have been

taken on board, which will enable the implementation of the prescribed international rules of the sport and prepare the players for the highest level of competition. They further said that Karachi is the nursery of sports, due to the inter-district competition in the Karachi Games, the respective associations of each district will field their best available players, as a result of which the fans will be entertained by spectacular and thrilling competitions. These games will end the suffocation in the society and lead to enthusiasm among the youth.

The preparations for the Karachi Games 2023 have entered the final stages. Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Sai-fur-Rahman has inaugurated the Karachi Games Secretariat at KMC Sports Complex, where technical staff, ground committee including officials and members of various sports associations will be present, while a media corner has also been provided for journalists from print and electronic media. Various sports associations and other concerned persons will be in touch with this secretariat. This wonderful and unique sports festival in Karachi will continue for about 10 days and more than 5000 men and women athletes will participate in a record 42 different indoor and outdoor games in the Karachi Games.

These games are being organized at the urban level on an inter-district basis. The sports included in the Karachi Games 2023 are Cricket, Hockey, Football, Basketball,

Shooting Ball, Volleyball, Softball, Netball, Dodgeball, Karate, Taekwondo, Judo, Vishu, Badminton, Table Tennis, Snooker, Boxing, Squash, Chess, Rowing, Carrom, Body Building, Swimming, Roller Skating, Sepak Takra, Futsal, Tug of War, Gymnastics, Wrestling, Shooting, Scrabble, Tennis, Cycle Race, Donkey Cart Race, Arm Wrestling, Mass Wrestling, Weight Lifting, Marathon Race, Apart from field and track, the traditional cultural sports of Sindh include Malakhra Kabaddi and Khokhu also included in these games.

The athletes will utilize the facilities provided at KMC Sports Complex, Kashmir Road and Women Sports Complex Gulshan Iqbal for most of the sports while for other outdoor events cricket matches will be held at Nazimabad Gymkhana, Eastern Star Ground, TMC Ground, Gulbarg Gymkhana, Shadab Ground, Orangi, Landhi Gymkhana, KP Ground and hockey competition will be held at KHA Hockey Stadium and Islahuddin Hockey Stadium.

Football tournament will be held at KMC Football Stadium, Trans Lyari. Football ground, Skiston Star Football Ground, Ibrahim Hydari Football Ground, while basketball competition at Aram Bagh Court and table tennis competition at Sindh Sports Board Complex Nazimabad, boxing competition at People's Sports Complex, snooker, boating, cycle race, donkey cart race is scheduled at different locations.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 100,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 100,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 60,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.55 feet and was 69.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow as 50,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1115.55 feet, which was 65.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 19,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 50,400, 44,800, 30,400 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### HEC launches programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Higher Education Commission (HEC) has launched the third cohort of National Faculty Development Programme (NDFP) for newly inducted faculty members of higher education institutions (HEIs) at HEC Regional Centre Lahore. Twenty-three faculty members from public sector HEIs of Pakistan are attending the programme, said a news release issued here. NAHE has been organising NDFP since 2020 for the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) applicants in online mode. However, in 2022, a programme was redesigned to face-to-face mode and was launched for the newly inducted faculty members. Director General (NAHE) welcomed the participants of the programme and congratulated them on their selection for this programme. He highlighted the efforts of NAHE in designing this program. He advised the participants to gain maximum benefits from this unique and valuable opportunity and to professionally support the faculty members in their HEIs by cascading similar activities. He also appreciated the efforts and support of Incharge HEC Regional Center Lahore Ghafoor Ahmed and his team for effective execution of these activities. Several activities will be held to achieve the learning objectives of the programme which include daily interactive sessions, group projects, presentations and assignments related to various modules of the programme.

### Pakistan Veteran Football League

PESHAWAR (APP): The second All-Pakistan Veteran Football League kicked off here at Tahmas Khan Football Stadium, on Thursday. DG Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khalid Khan was the chief guest on this occasion. Director Operations Azizullah, DSO Peshawar Gul Rukh, Patron in Chief Hussain Ahmed, DSO Chitral Ameer Zaman and other guests participated in large numbers. Eight football teams from Pakistan are participating in the league. The matches are being played on the basis of the single league basis. The tournament will continue till February 26. Peshawar Club and Veteran Football Club Kohat played an interesting match wherein a large number of spectators enjoyed the thrilling matches.



ISLAMABAD: Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) addressing a Press Conference at PID.

## Govt's 'austerity plan' will steer country out of economic crisis soon: Karim Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister and former deputy speaker National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday expressed hope that the government's austerity plan will steer the country out of the current economic crisis soon.

The economic challenges facing the country at present were mainly due to the poor economic performance and corrupt practices by the previous government, he said while talking on a private news channel. He said "big and bold

decisions" were the need of the hour to stabilise the country's economy.

Replying to a question, he said that Pakistan People's Party did not believe in political victimization of any political leader as PPP itself faced victimization and rendered sacrifices for democracy which will always be remembered.

He said that the inefficiency of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership was being exposed with each passing day, adding, PTI's so-called marches

had failed badly and now its 'jail bharo tehrak' will fail as well. He further mentioned that Imran Khan's government had adopted flawed foreign, domestic and economic policies due to which the country stood isolated, adding, PTI leaders were painting a rosy picture in the last four year's public gatherings, but the situation on the ground was vice versa.

He said the elections will be held on time and the coalition government will complete its term.

### Raja condemns killing of 11 innocent Palestinians by Israeli forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday strongly condemned the killing of 11 innocent Palestinians by Israeli forces. In a condemnation here, the Speaker National Assembly said the killing of 11 innocent Palestinians and the wounding of 102 people due to the aggression of the Israeli Army was highly condemnable.

Raja Pervez said the cruelty and brutality of the Israeli Army unleashed on innocent Palestinians was a serious violation of modern principles. "International human rights organizations should take notice of the Israeli Army's aggression against Palestinians living in Palestine," Raja Pervez Ashraf said. The Parliament and people of Pakistan expressed full solidarity with the Palestinian people, he added.

He further mentioned that Pakistan would continue to provide diplomatic and moral support to the oppressed Palestinian people at all regional and international forums.

### PUC condemns murder of minority community's person in Sarai Alamgir

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Thursday condemned the murder of a person belonging to the minority community in Sarai Alamgir, Jhelum.

In a video message, PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said the murder of any non-Muslim could not be justified under any circumstances as this heinous crime was against the law and Shariah.

Ashrafi who is also Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East said the protection of non-Muslims lives, assets and holy places was the responsibility of the state and similarly, it was also the responsibility of non-Muslims to follow the Constitution and laws of the land accordingly. He said the Constitution and laws of Pakistan had clearly determined the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims therefore, no individual, group, or organization should cross their constitutional limits.

## Mushahid lauds armed forces' austerity measures amid economic crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Thursday said under ongoing economic crisis, the armed forces of Pakistan stood with the nation and expressed resolve to tackle the challenges and inflation by remaining operationally efficient within the limited available resources.

The chairman while presiding over an in-camera meeting of the Committee held here said, "We are together in our determination to conserve resources and take austerity measures for ensuring rational utilization of public funds."

The committee reviewed in detail the Public Sector Development Programme (PDSP) proposed by the Ministry for the year 2023-2024. The committee was briefed in detail on the status of various

projects under PSDP, to include costing, duration, throw forward and projected demand. The committee after threadbare discussion approved the budgetary proposals for PSDP, 2023-24, a news release said.

While taking briefing on the efforts by the Armed Forces (all three Service) to promote austerity and cost-cutting in unnecessary expenditure, especially savings in foreign exchange, under the ongoing economic crunch, the Committee lauded efforts of armed forces in rationalizing the expenditure without comprising on their operational needs and capabilities. The committee was briefed that sincere efforts were underway to cut all unnecessary expenses under the Austerity Plan. We are fully equipped and capable to respond in befitting manner under all difficult situations the authorities re-iterated.

## Parliament's respect is not Imran's concern, but Power: Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Irfan Siddiqui said on Wednesday that Chairman Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan resigned from the Parliament after being elected in 2002 and 2013, and he did the same now after enjoying almost four years in the highest office.

"It demonstrates that Imran Khan has no respect for the Parliament but is only concerned with

power," he added. Talking to a private media channel, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader said that elections were not just another process to complete but that transparent and undisputed elections should be a concern of all political parties. Even if the election date is announced today, Imran Khan would have many objections, such as questioning the ECP's credibili-

ty or objecting to elections in provinces while the PDM government was placed in the federal government, he expressed.

Irfan Siddiqui further said that this matter (election) will not be solved by announcing the election's date only, adding that all political parties should come up with a comprehensive solution through dialogue, but Imran Khan was not ready for that.

## EPA public hearing participants grill high-rise project proponents on poor preparation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The participants comprising experts, academia and students at the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) public hearing of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report of a skyscraper project to be built in DHA-III lambasted the project proponent over poor performance.

The public hearing was presided over by Deputy Director, EIA and Monitoring Khalid Mehmood Chaudhary, Deputy Director Legal Aamir Abbas Khan along with the representatives of the One Serene Residence project proponent.

The public hearing under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 and review of IEE/EIA Regulations, 2000 includes a detailed account of existing environmental conditions, a project description, an analysis of the impacts and proposed mitigation measures to be implemented during the project execution.

One Serene Residence Project is a 14-storey high-rise residential project intended to facilitate the residents of the federal capital with the most modern residential area with all the required facilities in one place. The project consists of 238 units with green spaces, pools, lounge and terrace areas, two basements, a lower ground

floor, a ground floor, a mezzanine floor and 10 upper floors. It also includes a car parking area for two basements and a water filtration plant. Its total cost was Rs3.51 billion and would be completed in three years. The EIA report by the project proponent mainly revolved around the flora and fauna of the federal capital, environmental conditions, possible impacts of the project on the environment and mitigation measures to ensure eco-friendly development. A local resident, Zia Ul Islam pointed out that the project proponent should share his profile which was not available so that the stakeholders were confident to believe in their claims and project proposals. He also mentioned that the project proponent briefed the participants during the hearing that it would dump sewage into DHA's STP, adding, "please clarify which phase of DHA has STP because liquid waste is being dumped into nearby Nullahs."

## ANF seizes over 508 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized over 508 kg drugs and arrested seven accused while conducting six counter-narcotics operations across the country, said an ANF spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that ANF Balochistan conducted a raid in Pishin and recovered 200 kg heroin and 200 kg morphine.

In another raid in Quetta, ANF recovered 20.4 kg

charras from secret cavities of a car and rounded up two accused. In the third operation, ANF recovered 33 kg charras and held two drug dealers, residents of Gilgit, netted near Gilgit Airport.

He informed that 93 grams heroin and 88 grams Ice drug were recovered from a parcel booked at International Mail Office Rawalpindi for Qatar.

In the fifth operation, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to

Hazara and recovered 43.2 kg charras from secret cavities of a car besides netting an accused resident of Swabi intercepted near Peshawar-Bara road.

In the sixth operation conducted near the Karachi Korangi area, ANF recovered 12 kg charras from the possession of two accused.

All cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations while further investigations are under process.

## PMDC launches interactive online portal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has launched an interactive online portal to facilitate doctors across the country.

According to a PMDC official, the Council started its registration portal as a priority after making all necessary arrangements for the transition from the PMC (Pakistan Medical Commission) to the PMDC.

"We invite all the local graduates, who are approximately over 10,000 and waiting for their permanent registration for long, to apply online for registration."

"These graduates", he added, "waited for quite a long time to get themselves registered but failed due to the rigid rules imposed by the past PMC."

He said on the first day, 1,500 registration certificates were been issued while the PMDC also started issuing good-standing certificates and renewals.

The official said the Council continued issuing permanent registration certificates to the Pakistani doctors, without the requirement of the National Licensing Examination (NLE).

This exam was mandatory earlier as per the previous law of PMC, the local graduates had to appear and pass the NLE exam before getting their permanent registration, even after graduation from Pakistani medical and dental colleges, he added.

In that regard, he said, several protests

and demonstrations were held by different doctor forums and organizations at different levels and the past government was appealed repeatedly to withdraw the said black law. Previously, as per the PMC law, the NLE was taken by the doctors who had graduated from Pakistan's approved medical and dental colleges which was highly criticized by the doctors' community throughout the country.

He said keeping in view the demand of the doctors and on the direction of the Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel, the step was taken after signing the legislation concerned by President Dr Arif Alvi.

He said one of the objectives of PMDC was to make the registration portal in a way that was seamless to use, easy to navigate, and user-friendly.

He added that the PMDC right after promulgation of its ordinance, ensured that the registration portal should be accurate enough and must be able to secure the storage of confidential information of doctors and to develop a system that provided a secure payment system for application fees and develop a system for tracking and managing applications. As per the new Law of the PMDC Act 2022, he said the exam for foreign graduates like the National Registration Examination (NRE) had been introduced for the Pakistani graduates having undergraduate degrees from foreign institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference.



400,000 tons of transfers made

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Railway Authority says 396,455 tons were transferred through the country's railway in the last month. Most transfers are made through Hairatan port says the Afghanistan Railway Authority and the rest are followed to the other port of the country. According to Afghanistan Railway Authority, over 464,000 tons were transferred through Afghanistan's railway, of which more than 16,000 tons were exported.

Highway to be reconstructed

KABUL (Agencies): Public Works Ministry said that Ministry is ready to construct and reconstruct the Kabul-Kandahar highway in exchange for mining extraction. The Ministry of Public Works plans for the economic role of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, that this highway will be divided into five parts, from Arghandi square to Durrani Bazaar, from the center of Ghazni to Pash Kandah, from Pash Kandah to Qalat city, from Qalat city and from Shahr Safa to Manjeh added to the statement.

Books against Islam, national interest will be collected: Ministry

KABUL (TOLNews): Books that are opposed to Islam and the interests of the country will be collected, said officials of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Officials said that publishers have handed thousands of such books to the Ministry of Information and Culture.

"There are still hundreds of books on the market that are written against Islam, against Islamic principles, or that promote other ideologies like secularism. And also, there are some books that lead to the immorality of youth," said Abdulhaq Hemad, the ministry's head of media and

publication control.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Publishers and Booksellers Union said that books with such content were either imported or published in the nation during the last 20 years.

The union said that steps would be taken to stop such books from being published in the country.

"If books are published that add to national tension, political problems, and controversies that drive the nation to a crisis, we will attempt to not publish such books again," said Sayed Ahmad Saeed, the head of the Afghanistan Publishers and Booksellers Union.

"We are ready to carry

out any order that has been approved by the Publishers' Union and the Ministry of Information and Culture. We have never published such books. Those who printed it should understand this," Inayatullah, a publisher, told TOLNews.

Some young people urged the Ministry of Information and Culture to focus on fostering the nation's reading culture. "They should promote a culture of studying in the community. There is only one library at the university that is accessible to students. There isn't any library in this area where I can study my lessons," said Abdul Wahab, a student.

6.8 magnitude earthquake hits Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): An earthquake with a Richter scale of 6.8 was felt close to China's border and struck Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The epicentre of the earthquake was 265 Km from Faizabad.

A 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Tajikistan, followed by an aftershock measuring 5.0 magnitude and another earthquake measuring 4.6 magnitudes. Natural disasters, including landslides, avalanches, and significant snowfall, will likely occur in the area. Experts have warned that a rupture of the natural dam deep within the Pamir Mountains could have disastrous results.

In addition, Chinese state media has reported a 7.3 magnitude earthquake on Xinjiang and Tajikistan border.

In January, two earthquakes jolted the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan, and several avalanches occurred within a month. The province is a disaster-prone area among the rest of the region in the country.

Earlier this month, a Dutch geologist Frank Hoogerbeet predicted that there might be a big earthquake in Afghanistan sooner or later. The earthquake epicentre, estimated in Afghanistan, goes through Pakistan and India and ends in the Indian Ocean.

Deptts asked to pay more attention

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Higher Education Minister, Mawlawi Nada Mohammad Nadeem, said in a meeting that unprofessional people should not be placed in scientific positions under any circumstances.

He said that expertise should be taken into account in the appointment process, and unprofessional should not be provided any place in academic positions.

The provisions of the organizational structure of the central offices and secondary units have been identified and the work in this direction is proceeding rapidly, he said.

He asked the officials of the relevant departments of this ministry to pay more attention to improving matters so that the next academic year has a good start.

According to the Ministry's statement, the problems of the American University of Afghanistan students would be addressed and their documents will be processed.

Minister visit to Helmand

HELMAND (Agencies): Acting Rural Rehabilitation and Development Minister, during his visit to Helmand province, Mullah Mohammad Yunus Akhundzada met with elders of the province.

The Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development assured the restoration of the Helmand river to prevent further destruction, during his visits to that province.

UN Deputy SR Potzel meets with Hamid Karzai

KABUL (TOLNews): Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai met with Markus Potzel, the UN Secretary General's Deputy Special Representative to Afghanistan, and they discussed the current situation of Afghanistan and the reopening of schools and universities for girls.

Hamid Karzai tweeted that in the meeting they discussed the need for a national dialogue to ensure lasting peace in the country.

"Both sides emphasized reopening schools and universities for girls and the needs of national dialogue to ensure peace in the country," said Shahzada Massoud, a close aide to Karzai.

Earlier, political figures outside and inside the country emphasized the need for national dialogue, and they said that it is the only solution for the current situation in the country.

"The current government has to manage unity between people from



Torkham to Wakhan and from Badakhshan to Nimroz so they see themselves in the government," said Mohammad Zalmai Afghan

Yar, political analyst. "I think national dialogue according to what the international community wants is not effective," said Sayed Akbar Agha, a political

analyst.

Meanwhile, the spokesmen of the Islamic Emirate said that right now national dialogue is not necessary and the time for that has passed.

"It's not time to talk political issues with politicians, if they mean by national dialogue with people,

the people are already with us," said Zabiullah Mujahid, spokesmen for the Islamic Emirate.

National dialogue are one of four important parts of the Doha Agreement between the Islamic Emirate and the America, and it's not clear whether these talks will be held or not.

Govt sets up investment consortium with firms



KABUL (Reuters): Afghanistan's interim government has set up a consortium of companies, including some in Russia, Iran and Pakistan, to create an investment plan focusing on power, mining and infrastructure, the acting commerce minister said.

The consortium included 14 Afghan businessmen and his ministry had signed a memorandum of understanding with the foreign companies who would send delegates to Kabul to look into projects worth up to \$1 billion, Nooruddin Azizi told Reuters.

Afghanistan's economy has been severely hampered since the Taliban took over in 2021, sparking the international community to cut most development funding and enforce sanc-

tions on the banking sector. A series of attacks waged by the Islamic State against foreign targets has also worried some investors.

Azizi said the administration was focused on launching several longterm business plans including the consortium and special economic zones, and that it was working on ensuring security.

"Lots of discussions on security have taken place in cabinet meetings also, commissions have been established and... the hiding places (of militants) have been destroyed," he said.

"The Islamic Emirate will ensure security and will support the private sector in the security field," he said, referring to the Afghan interim administration.

As well as mining and

power projects, he said the consortium was eyeing the possibility of building a second tunnel through the Salang pass that connects Afghanistan's north to the rest of the country, and a project to divert water from northern Panjshir province to the capital as well as rebuilding the main highway connecting Kabul to western Herat province.

The minister said the Afghan caretaker government was planning to focus on building special economic zones it hoped would attract foreign investment.

His ministry has helped develop a plan to convert foreign bases into the zones, and a board was being set up with representatives of different ministries. He declined to elaborate while the details were finalised with other ministries and senior leadership.

Shipments of oil, gas and wheat under a major deal with Russia last year had begun arriving in Afghanistan by road and rail through Central Asia, he said, after the payments were made via banking channels despite sanctions that have limited many international payments.

He did not elaborate on which banks had facilitated the payment.

Ban of chicken meat imports demanded



KABUL (Agencies): In a meeting with Acting Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Minister, Mawlawi Ataullah Omari, the Union of poultry

demand the ban of chicken imports to the country.

The head of the Poultry Farmers Union, Ghulam Marouf Zafar, said during a meeting that currently,

about one billion dollars has been invested in the poultry sector in Afghanistan, but the import of 1 chicken and chicken Meat has created a serious challenge for producers and farmers, and if it is not addressed, this economic sector will face stagnation.

He asked for the attention of Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock to the matter.

For his part, Mawlawi Ataullah Omari, declaring support for poultry farmers in the country, pledged to create more facilities in this sector.

Compromise on food to get education

NELLI (Pajhwok): Fatimah Hashami, a teacher in the Khakbad School in Nelli, the capital of central Daikundi province, served as honorary teacher for five years during her total 15 year service.

Narrating her story, she told Pajhwok reporter that soon after joining school the idea to teach others inception in her mind and then she worked hard to make her dream reality.

During her learning period, Fatimah's luck supported her and the school authorities where she was studying agreed that she could teach the lower classes.

"For five years I served as honorary teacher and made no absence, at the end of the education year I got some bonus as part of encouragement," she said. She added after five years of honorary service a chance was offered to

become permanent teacher. "From 2012 till now I serve as official teacher in the Khakbad School."

She added most of her family members — her father, sister, two brothers, brother's wife and nephews served as teachers in different schools and this further encouraged her to become a teacher and served the children.

Fatimah said the profession of teaching provided awareness to children regarding the life and their future.

After her school duty, Fatimah said she taught at private school, adding that teacher should introduce new methods in their profession.

She said that she had arranged a puzzle table and thought work for her students in the school, which made the students understand each topic very care-

fully and be able to find solution for each problem.

She said for the coming education year she have more plans and prepared more thought tables.

She recalled during Covid-19 pandemic when educational institutions were closed she recorded videos and provided to the students, adding the often she was caught in difficulties related to her profession but she never surrendered.

Referring to the valued and importance of education Fatimah said education is a matter of reasoning and thoughts, education brought up a person and polishes his soul

At the core of her discussion, she said people should not allow their children to get distance from education irrespective of difficulties and challenges they face.

"Instead of one bread,

we should take half breads and allocate the money of half bread to education," she believed.

Eid Mohammad Alamizada, the director Provincial Education Department broadcasting, said individuals who devote their life for the service of education and development, were fully supported and credited by the education department.

He acknowledged that Fatimah really worked hard in her teaching profession and development of education.

Nadir Seerat, a civil society activist, said that over the year Fatema worked hard for the educational development of children in Daikundi.

He said a large number of her students received high education credentials now.

Quadratullah Mosavi,

another civil society activist, said that Fatemah Hashami served most part of his life in the education of children.

He added that Daikandi is facing many deprivations in all sectors, but the good thing was that there are people who have worked for many years to address the education challenge and were still trying.

Daikundi residents believed that people should strive to get education in every circumstance.

Alam Gul, a local resident, said individuals who served the people for years deserved appreciation and admiration.

Raza Qambari, another Daikundi resident, said education was compulsory on men and women and people themselves must strive to create opportunity for learning in every circumstance.

Minister meets Faryab tribal elders and clerics



FARYAB (Agencies): Acting Border and Tribal Affairs Minister Mullah Noorullah Noori met with local tribal elders and Islamic scholars in Khawaja Musa district of Faryab province.

During the meeting, both

sides discussed the development projects, reconstruction, education, health care, and security issues in the region.

Khawaja Musa district elders and scholars have shared their problems and challenges with the min-

istry officials and asked for finding solutions to them.

Mr. Noori assured the tribal elders and scholars that their problem will be taken to relevant government institutes for resolving them.





**PESHAWAR:** President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 3rd International Public Health conference, at Khyber Medical University.

## SBP-held forex reserves record meagre increase

KARACHI (Agencies): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)-held foreign exchange reserves have witnessed a meagre rise as the cash-strapped nation desperately tries to unlock the critical International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan tranche — which will pave way for more funding.

The central bank, in a statement without mentioning the reason, said that its foreign exchange reserves have increased by \$66 million to \$3,258.5 million as of the week ended February 17, which will provide an import cover of around three weeks. The net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stand at \$5,468.0 million, \$2,209.5 million more than SBP, taking the total liquid foreign reserves to \$8,726.5 million.

The forex reserves are expected to get a boost next week as the Board of China Development Bank has approved a \$700 million facility for Pakistan, according to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, and the funds could be deposited in the SBP's account this week. The Washington-based lender and Pakistani authorities began talks Wednesday — a few days after an IMF mission left Islamabad without signing a staff-level agreement despite holding talks for 10 days.

"IMF programme will soon be revived, InshaAllah, as there are one or two items that are left to be implemented," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said during his address to the federal cabinet in Islamabad. In a bid to resume the delayed IMF programme and avoid a default, the incumbent government has taken steps in the past two months ranging from adding new taxes, increasing energy prices, and loosening its control on the rupee.

Parliament approved last Monday the supplementary finance bill that increases sales tax from 17% to 25% on imports ranging from cars and household appliances to chocolates and cosmetics. People will also have to pay more for business-class air travel, wedding halls, mobile phones, and sunglasses. A general sales tax was raised from 17% to 18%.

To ensure that austerity measures amid the economic crunch begin at the top, PM Shehbaz unveiled cost-cutting measures to save \$764 million annually. "This is need of the hour," he said after the cabinet meeting. "We have to show what the time demands from us and that's austerity, simplicity and sacrifice."

Fitch Ratings — a global credit ratings agency — has downgraded the \$350 billion economy twice in four months, citing dwindling foreign reserves. Bloomberg data shows that Pakistan has coupon repayments of \$542.5 million this year. In all, the country has \$8 billion in dollar bonds debt due by 2051 with the next payment of \$1 billion due in April of next year. Most of the nation's external debt of about \$100 billion is sourced from concessional multilateral and bilateral sources. Not only debt, but Pakistan also faces a dollar crunch that tests its external stability.

## Increasing risk of NCDs can be countered: Alvi

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that in order to set up a healthy and balanced society, walking more and more, using stairs up to two or three floors instead of a lift, and consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits instead of a simple diet, excessive use of salt and sugar in food should be preferred to avoid Non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The increasing risk of NCDs and mortality ratio can be countered through a balanced diet and moderate exercise. The only sustainable solution to the growing number of diseases especially NCDs in poor countries with low education ratios like Pakistan is prevention.

He was addressing the closing session of the 3rd International Public Health Conference at Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar as a chief guest, while Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali, Chief Minister Azam Khan, Advisor for Health Prof. Dr. Abid Jamil, vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Registrar Prof. Dr. Muhammad Salim Gandapur, Secretary Health, DG Health, deans, heads of various institutions, foreign delegates, faculty, medical experts and students were also present in large numbers on the occasion.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that while making any policy and strategy related to health, especially NCDs, we must keep social and societal needs, problems, and attitudes in mind. He said that women have a fundamental and key role in bringing up children. The complex health problems faced by the entire nation can be controlled to a great extent by proper training in public health. He said that we have no shortage of policies; the real problem is the implementation of these policies.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that there are 9 million births in Pakistan every year, half of which are involuntary, through proper planning, information, and provision of facilities not only the increasing population can be controlled, but through this, it is also possible to solve the health problems of women and children. He said that nature has blessed us as a nation with immense abilities, but due to the lack of proper use of these resources and abilities, we have lagged behind our neigh-

boring countries in the race for development in every field of life. Our political leadership instead of paying attention to social and public health issues they are caught in personal interests and political disputes, which is of course a matter of concern for all of us.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that instead of giving separate training to doctors regarding the prevention of NCDs they should be trained in the importance and practical methods of prevention of these infectious diseases during their medical education. He emphasized that we should give priority to connecting our new generation with society and making them feel and understand the social problems. He said that the success of the Covid crisis is a good model for us, resulting in the least human and economic loss of Pakistan in this outbreak. This model can also be applied to dealing with NCDs. 24% of our population is suffering from mental diseases, and 60-80% of students are under mental stress, one of the major causes of the mental stress along with many other factors is financial problems which is a big challenge for all of us to deal with, he said.

"We need 900,000 nurses now, while there are only 200,000 nurses in the country, it will take us 50 years to reach the target of 900,000. Similarly, only 1900 psychiatrists are available for 220 million populations in the whole country, we need to move towards an online health system keeping in mind the modern needs and financial constraints," he added.

The President said that brain drain is an important issue in Pakistan; our valuable capital is being transferred abroad in the form of doctors and other professionals. While on the other hand, ignoring the principles of health, a large number of people are suffering from obesity, diabetes, and heart and mental diseases. Earlier, The KMU vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq welcomed the guests while addressing the conference, he also highlighted the fifteen-year performance of the university and presented the objectives and recommendations of the conference, while Prof. Dr. Abdul Basit talked about the causes and prevention of diabetes and Prof. Dr. Samin Siddiqui discussed the situation and challenges of NCDs in Pakistan.

## PTI leaders being treated as terrorists in jails: Imran

LAHORE (Agencies): Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan said that the PTI leaders and workers are being treated as terrorists in the jails who surrendered before the authorities during Jail Bharo Tehreek, on Thursday.

Imran Khan addressed the workers and supporters on the second day of the Jail Bharo Tehreek in which a large number of leaders and activists surrendered before the authorities to protest against the incumbent government. He said that those who presented themselves for arrests during Jail Bharo Tehreek are being kept with terrorists in the jails. The PTI chief said that they are political inmates which should be kept in a separate barrack.

Khan criticised the government for sending the political prisoners of Jail Bharo Tehreek to jails in different cities. "Are you thinking that we will be afraid after these steps? Why people would come out of their homes in Peshawar if they are feared of their arrest? You will see people coming out in Rawalpindi tomorrow. If we do not adopt a peaceful way of protest, then the nation will be enraged and it will be disastrous."

Regarding previous arrests and detentions, Imran Khan said that

Pervaiz Elahi's secretary is missing so far and no one knows about his whereabouts. A close relative of Moonis Elahi was abducted and brutally tortured. He said that Pervaiz Elahi has been given the position of president in his honour after his inclusion in the PTI. He slammed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) once again. Khan said that they had never seen this kind of election commission so far.

He alleged that ECP formed an anti-PTI caretaker set-up. Khan said that PTI had forwarded the names of 23 government officers for stopping their deputations due to their alleged involvement in May 25 incident. He added that the commission had deputed all those officers despite PTI's reservations. Khan further alleged that the caretaker set-up is being controlled by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whereas, Maulana Fazlur Rehman's instructions are being followed in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

"Both caretaker set-ups are partial to target PTI. The caretaker set-up is doing everything except free and fair elections. If elections are delayed, then what will be the legal position of the caretaker set-up after 90 days?" He criticised the record of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT)

regarding the Wazirabad gun attack has vanished. The PTI chief said that the current rulers are targeting the judiciary due to the fear of elections.

Imran Khan said that Shehbaz Sharif had asked the nation to brace for another wave of inflation in his press conference yesterday. He questioned Shehbaz Sharif about how his family is bearing expenses while residing in London. He slammed the rulers for dissolving their Rs1,100 billion corruption cases and warning the nation of a new wave of inflation. He asked Shehbaz Sharif to ask the nationals about their miseries.

Khan said that Jail Bharo Tehreek is a protest against inflation. Imran Khan appealed to the judiciary to take notice of the unlawful moves of the government. "I want to tell the judiciary that it is a decisive moment and everything will be remembered in the history."

He said that the nation knows the history of 'Sharif mafia' and the attack on the Supreme Court (SC). He added that Nawaz Sharif do not want a fully functional judiciary and Shehbaz Sharif had even dictated Justice Qayyum about the period of imprisonment to the opponents. Khan said that Shehbaz Sharif is still launching criticism against the judiciary.

Minallah said that the court was discussing the Constitutional clause in this case.

The first question would be whether the assembly was dissolved as per the Constitution and the second, whether the assembly had to be viewed under Article 184(3). Justice Muneeb Akhtar said he believed all political parties should be heard as they constitute a government in a democracy. The attorney general supported Justice Akhtar's suggestion.

Meanwhile, Advocate Azhar Siddique requested the court to seek the record of the high court. The president has issued the date for the elections, he said. At this, CJP Bandial said that the court would only issue the notices today. "The president fixed April 9 as the date of elections. Punjab governor also raised objection on the announcement of the date," he added.

The CJP then said the court was issu-

## Court gives remand to Professor's murderer

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: Judicial Magistrate Peshawar has granted two-days remand murderer involved in killing of Professor of English at Islamia College to police for interrogation, on Thursday.

According to prosecution, the murderer Sher Muhammad has killed Professor Bashir on 19th February while police has arrested the culprit from Karak district after his escape from the crime scene.

Investigation Officer requested court for provision of remand for further interrogation and investigation the murderer Sher Muhammad working as watcher at Islamia College University. Judicial Magistrate Peshawar has accepted plea for police remand for two days. It is worthy to mention that Sher Muhammad has killed Professor Bashir over alleged oral dispute.

## Five person killed over land dispute

**F.P. Report**

KOHAT: As many as five persons were killed over land dispute in the premises of Shaheed Riaz police station, on Thursday.

According to details, Muhammad Ansr and Muhammad Jan sons of Janan along with two other unknown persons opened firing on land dispute in which five persons were killed at Barh area of Kohat district. The deceased were identified as Yousef Khan, Muhammad Iqbal, Saqib, Rauf and Kashif while the murderers escaped from the crime scene.

Following the incident large number of police personnel were deployed in the premises while cordoned the area to the culprits involved in the mass shooting.

## Earthquake jolts Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (PPI): An earthquake of magnitude 6.2 on the Richter scale jolted Islamabad and its surrounding areas on Thursday.

There were no reports of damages or casualties. Meanwhile, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake hit eastern Tajikistan on Thursday, the US Geological Survey said. According to reports, the quake struck around 5:37 am local time (0037 GMT) at a depth of about 20.5 kilometres (12.7 miles). The US Geology Survey estimated that "little or no population" would be exposed to landslides from the quake.

Its epicentre appeared to be in Gorno-Badakhshan, a semi-autonomous eastern region that borders Afghanistan and China, about 67 kilometres from the small mountain town of Murghob.

## Court sentences PTI activist

PESHAWAR (INP): A district and sessions court awarded a 26-month sentence and Rs50,000 fine to a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist for sedition, burning the national flag and making its video viral on social media.

Judge Ashfaq Taj convicted Junaid Ahmad, a resident of Dareshkhel area of Karak district, as he was furnished with the evidence on record regarding the offence.

# PM: Country's uplift linked to success of youth loan program

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that country's progress was linked to the success of the Youth Loan Program which besides supporting the unemployed youngsters also benefited the national economy.

The prime minister, addressing a ceremony for cheque distribution among the beneficiaries of the Prime Minister Youth Loan Program, said if provided ample opportunities, Pakistan's youths would take the country to new heights. He said the loan scheme was the continuation of the PM Youth Loan scheme launched in 2013 by that time prime minister Nawaz Sharif and billions of rupees were disbursed among the entitled youth.

The prime minister recalled that CM Youth Loan Scheme was also launched in Punjab and 75,000 youths were also given vehicles on loan. He said the recovery ratio of the youth loan scheme was around 99 per cent which manifested the honesty of the country's youngsters.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the 99% recovery ratio of the youth and

Kissan loan schemes falsified the misconception about the risks involved in the individual loans by the banks. He said Pakistani youths never got their loans waived off — a problem that inflicted huge losses to the national economy.

The prime minister congratulated the beneficiaries of the loan scheme and appreciated the services of SAMP Shiza Fatima Khawaja, banks and other partners for their services and contribution to the success of the program. She said the agriculture and SME sector would be among major beneficiaries of the loan program.

Punjab Bank President Zafar Masood highlighting the features of the freelancer card, said the freelancers could bring in revenue worth billions of rupees if card was issued and account access was made easy. He recalled that in the past, the recovery ratio Rozgar scheme was 99% while the recovery rate of Kissan scheme was 99.6% which removed the misconceptions about the government loan schemes. Earlier, a documentary was played marking the testimonials from the beneficiaries of the youth loan scheme which enabled them to earn sustenance for their respective families.

"I am giving laptop, not Kalashnikov," the prime minister remarked who earlier distributed cheques among the beneficiaries of

## PTI leaders, workers to 'embrace the shackles' in KP

PESHAWAR (INP): A day after the inception of the 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' from Punjab, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and activists are set to ignite the drive with its provincial leaders and activists courting arrest in Peshawar today (Feb 23), says PTI senior vice president Fawad Chaudhry.

Taking to Twitter on Thursday, he wrote, "The Tehreek's second day will witness PTI leaders and activists giving the message of [real] freedom by courting their arrests and embracing the shackles". "Peshawar will follow Lahore in its pursuit of justice and staging a protest against inflation," he added.

Earlier, PTI leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Azam Swati, Zubair Khan Niazi, Omar Sarfraz Cheema and Hammad Azhar had honoured PTI chief Imran Khan's call for the Tehreek by spearheading the movement in Lahore. Up to 90 people had courted their arrests and were later shifted to the Kot Lakhpat jail, sources said.

PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi was the first to have courted arrest. Reports said police put the

PTI vice chairman in the prison van and later, other leaders including Zubair Niazi, Asad Umar, and Azam Swati sat in the prison van by themselves. Omar Sarfraz Cheema and others also surrendered themselves while Hammad Azhar sat atop a vehicle ostensibly to get a media glare.

A key meeting had, earlier, been held by the governing body of the PTI's Central Punjab wing to finalise the strategy for the movement. Peshawar will witness the launch of the movement on Feb 23 (today) while it will move to Multan on Feb 25, Gujranwala on Feb 26, Sargodha on Feb 27, and Sahiwal on Feb 28. It will hit Faisalabad city on March 1.

"**Court arrest drive': Police to keep PTI leaders in separate jails in Punjab:** The leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who volunteered their arrest in Lahore as part of the "Jail Bharo" movement would be detained in various cities.

Sources said PTI's Senior Vice President Shah Mahmood Qureshi had been sent to Attock, General Secretary Asad Umar and Murad Raas to

DG Khan and Azam Swati had been sent to Rahim Yar Khan. Former home minister Omar Sarfraz Cheema will be detained at Bhakkar jail while Waleed Iqbal will be kept in Layyah jail. Sources said 10 party workers would be kept with each leader in a jail.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Home Department has created space to keep 10,000 people in the jails if the PTI workers and party leaders presented themselves for the arrest. Sources said barracks had been cleared to accommodate the party leaders and workers. Furthermore, police sources said the arrested people could be detained for one month and would not be allowed to meet anyone.

Imran Khan-led party on Wednesday kicked off its court arrest drive in Lahore against the violation of fundamental rights and worsening economic situation. Police said around 90 people had courted their arrest while the PTI leaders claimed there were over 200 arrests. The leaders and workers of the party in Peshawar region will present themselves for court arrest today (Thursday) as the movement entered its second day.



**PESHAWAR:** Police arrests activists of PTI during a rally in connection with Jail Bharu Tehreek.

## SC question dissolution of KP, Punjab assemblies

(Continued from Page 1)

adding that the chief election commissioner was summoned in the case of Lahore police chief Ghulam Muhammad Dogar, who wasn't a party in the case.

At this, CJP Bandial said that some questions have been included by the speakers of both assemblies in their petitions. "Supreme Court just has to look into the Constitutional point and ensure implementation on it," he said. During the hearing, the AG requested the court to give time for the preparation.

At that point, CJP Bandial said that the court will stick to a few important matters during tomorrow's hearing and hold a detailed hearing in the next week. Justice Minallah remarked that a suo motu notice should be taken on the dissolution of provincial assemblies as well. "The Constitution defines a time-

frame related to the election. It was much easier for us to fix the two petitions filed for the election but now the president has given the date," CJP Bandial remarked.

As the proceeding moved forward, the CJP remarked that the court will see if the political parties need to be called. At this, Islamabad High Court Bar President Shoaib Shaheen maintained that involving political parties would prolong the matter. "It would be beneficial for all if the decision on the suo motu notice orders holding of the elections," he said.

Shaheen added that it was a time-bound case where the issue was to conduct the elections. During the hearing, Justice Mandokhel also mentioned "audios" in which Supreme Court Bar Association President Abid Zuberi was talking about the judges. "It doesn't disqualify to be a suo motu case in these circumstances," he said. At this, Justice

Minallah said that the court was discussing the Constitutional clause in this case.

The first question would be whether the assembly was dissolved as per the Constitution and the second, whether the assembly had to be viewed under Article 184(3). Justice Muneeb Akhtar said he believed all political parties should be heard as they constitute a government in a democracy. The attorney general supported Justice Akhtar's suggestion.

Meanwhile, Advocate Azhar Siddique requested the court to seek the record of the high court. The president has issued the date for the elections, he said. At this, CJP Bandial said that the court would only issue the notices today. "The president fixed April 9 as the date of elections. Punjab governor also raised objection on the announcement of the date," he added.

The CJP then said the court was issu-

ing notices to the AGP and advocate general of all four provinces for February 27, directing them to assist the court in the case. The court also issued notice to President Arif Alvi, the federal government, ECP, Punjab and KP governments, governors and chief secretaries, and adjourned the hearing till tomorrow, (February 24). The court remarked that President Alvi and the governors of Punjab and KP will also be heard as they have the exemption under Article 248 but their views are crucial on this matter.

Moreover, CJP Bandial said that Justice Mandokhel's reservations had been noted. Ahead of the hearing, the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) has raised objections over the formation of the bench. "The Supreme Court must include nine senior most judges in the bench," the PBC said, adding Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood should be added in the bench.

The addition of these two judges will give an impression of impartiality on the bench.

"We expect that Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi would voluntarily recuse himself from the bench," said the PBC. The Supreme Court had taken suo motu notice on Wednesday two days after President Dr Arif Alvi fixed April 9 as the date for elections to the provincial assemblies — a move condemned by the government as "unconstitutional and illegal".

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) also sought input from the attorney general of Pakistan (AGP) and other legal experts — but no official announcement has been made so far. The issue of delay in elections was referred to the chief justice by a two-member Supreme Court bench comprising Justice Ahsan and Justice Naqvi in the Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Ghulam

Mehmood Dogar case on February 16.

According to the apex court's statement, the bench will assess who is eligible to issue the date for polls, the constitutional responsibility of the federation and provinces, and who will fulfil the constitutional responsibility of conducting elections and when. "It is the government's responsibility to conduct elections in Punjab and KP according to the Constitution," the top court's statement read.

The Supreme Court added that the two provincial assemblies were dissolved on January 14 and 18, respectively. "Under Article 224 (2), polls should be held within 90 days of the assembly dissolution. The Constitution mandates that polls be held within 90 days." The country's top court also said that requests for the date of elections were also received from the Islamabad High Court bar and speakers of KP and Punjab assemblies.