

Hina meets SL FM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar who is on two-day official visit to Sri Lanka held meeting with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry and discussed bilateral relations between the two countries with him. The State Minister congratulated Foreign Minister Sabry on Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Sri Lanka's independence.

@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 20

Regd. No. 241

RAJAB 13 1444 -- SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 05 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

Price. 20



LAHORE: Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Maulana Fazlur Rehman called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. They discussed the overall political situation of the country and other issues of mutual interest.

India can't crush Kashmiris' iron will: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that India is mistaken if it believes it could crush the iron will of the Kashmiri people. "No amount of state terrorism, unleashed by Indian Occupation Forces, can break the will of the Kashmiris or undermine their legitimate struggle," the prime minister said in a message on observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day. The prime minister urged India to honour its commitments made to Pakistan, the UN and, above all, to the Kashmiri people. "On behalf of the entire Pakistani nation, I want to assure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that we stand shoulder to shoulder with them. We will continue to lend moral, diplomatic and political support to their just cause, until they attain freedom from Indian oppression," PM Office Media Wing in a press release quoted the prime minister saying.

He further reiterated that Pakistan would also continue to raise its voice at all international platforms and highlight India's barbaric actions in Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Every year, the prime minister said, on the fifth of February, the people of Pakistan reaffirmed their solidarity with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. "On this Kashmir Solidarity Day, we renew our commitment of our unflinching support to them in their just struggle for inalienable right to self-determination," he added. The prime minister said the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was one of the oldest, unresolved items on the agenda of the United Nations. Over the last seventy-five years, India had continued its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and suppressed its people, he said, adding thousands of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives and suffered countless atrocities at the hands of the Indian occupation forces.

Imran announces 'Jail Bharo' movement

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and Former prime minister Imran Khan announced the 'Jail Bharo' movement.

As per details, the PTI chief Imran Khan said it is better to start the 'Jail Bharo' movement than protest on road. They are fond of getting us jails, we will let them get their wish, he added. Imran Khan said after the coming 90 days whoever stays in the government, article 6 will apply on them. The nation is expecting that the judiciary will stand by the constitution.

The former prime minister Imran Khan claimed that nothing is in control of the current government. People should think about where is this country heading. Speaking of overseas Pakistanis, the PTI chairman claimed that the 10 million Pakistanis who are living abroad are the country's strength. He said even if two million of them invest in Pakistan they would need to ask other countries for help.

The PTI chairman lambasted the PDM-led government, he said that the prices of petrol, electricity and gas have hiked up and it will increase more in near future. He predicted that the PDM government is now looking for escape amid the increasing inflation. Furthermore, the PTI chairman Imran Khan said that the ARY head of news was arrested at midnight 3 am. They break doors, enter homes and arrest people, which affects the children.

No need to launch any Jail Bharo Tehreek: Marriyum

PTI lacks capacity, courage to launch fill the prison movement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not have the courage and capacity to launch the "fill the prison movement" in the country.

Addressing a news conference here, she said Imran Khan's call for the movement was nothing but another political stunt which was aimed at diverting people's attention from corruption during his four-year (mis)rule which ushered in extreme inflation, terrorism and economic crises in the country.

"Imran Khan does not need to launch any Jail Bharo Tehreek' as the prisons will get filled automatically when he starts appearing before the courts to answer about corruption, loot and plunder during his four-year tenure as the prime minister," she remarked. Flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi, she said at the first place, the leadership would have to present themselves for the arrest in such movements, but ironically Imran Khan was using his party workers as a shield to save his "dirty and stinking" politics as well as to cover up his corruption.

"How ironic it is that Imran Khan is urging his workers to get ready for the 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' while hiding himself in his bulletproof Zaman Park residence," she stated. Marriyum said the people who started weeping after spending two days in prison did not have the courage to fill the jails while on the other hand, the entire nation had witnessed how bravely the leader-

ship of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) remained in jails for months during the fascist rule of Imran Khan.

She said PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari remained in jail for 248 days while his sister Faryal Talpur was dragged from the hospital to jail on the occasion of Eid and the media channels were told to telecast that footage. The minister said likewise, Nawaz Sharif spent 374 days in jail, Maryam Nawaz 158 days, Rana Sanaullah 174 days, Captain (Retd) Safdar 53 days, Khawaja Asif 176 days and Hamza Sharif 627 days. The story of political victimization during the tenure of Imran Khan did not end here as Shahid Khaqan Abbasi remained behind bars for 222 days, Miftah Ismail for 142 days, Shehbaz Sharif for 340 days and Ahsan Iqbal 364, she added.

She said Mir Shakeel was sent behind bars to set an example for the entire media that nobody would be spared if they dared to criticize Imran Khan's government. Marriyum said Imran Khan, who gave a call for the fill the prison movement, had not only sent all the opposition leaders and media persons into the jails but also set up a dedicated office in the Prime Minister's Office which updated him regularly on the treatment meted out to them.

She said the same person during his visit to the United States announced that he would remove the air conditions from the jail in which Nawaz Sharif was kept. He issued directives to the authorities concerned in the jail not to give a chair to Shehbaz Sharif for offering daily prayers. "Imran Khan should better launch 'Doob

SC returns another petition

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has returned another petition filed against the appointment of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi. The apex court's Registrar Office returned the petition on Saturday after raising objections declaring that the language used in it was ambiguous and misleading. The plea taken in the application was also misleading, the Registrar Office added.

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KASHMIR
SOLIDARITY DAY

#KashmirSolidarityDay
#PakistanStandswithKashmir



CTD arrests nine terrorists in IBOs across Punjab

LAHORE (NNI): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Saturday arrested nine terrorist in IBOs conducted in four districts of Punjab.

According to the CTD officials, the terrorists were arrested in Gujranwala, DG Khan, Bahawalpur and Lahore. Those arrested in Lahore belonged to the

banned TTP. The arrested terrorists have been identified as Abdul Rehman, Ruvaidd Khan, Ghulam Allah, Ahmed Hassan, Jaleel Ahmed, Imdadullah, Basit Ali and Junaid Ali.

The officials said material to manufacture suicide jacket, hand grenade and heavy weaponry were recovered from their custody, adding

that seven cases had been registered against the suspects and the investigation was under way.

The officials further said 20 suspects were interrogated in the IBOs. The CTD arrested 91 suspected people in 476 combing operations and 67 cases had been registered against the suspects.

Railways to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Railways would enthusiastically observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day on Sunday, February 5.

According to the PR Lahore Division spokesperson here on Saturday, banners, streamers and flags had been displayed on trains and railway stations to express solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, PR Lahore Divisional Superintendent M Haneef Gull said that the struggle of Kashmiri brothers and sisters would be successful one day. He said that the Pakistani nation was standing with its brothers in Jammu and Kashmir, who had been struggling against the oppression of India and its forces.

Ex-MPA Gujar booked in hostaging case

LAHORE (PPI) Raiwind City Police Station on Saturday registered a case under terrorism clauses against PTI's former member of Punjab Assembly Shabbir Gujar and his brother Khalid Gujar.

The case was lodged by Inspector Nadeem Akhtar lodged the case against the two Gujar brothers at Raiwind City Police Station. Shabbir Gujar and his supporters had been accused of making a police party hostage when it raided his dera to arrest proclaimed offender Muhammad Usman. During the raid, Shabbir Gujar, Khalid Gujar, Tariq Gujar, Adil Gujar and others had drawn weapons and pointed at the cops.

They tore apart the policemen's uniforms, damaged the government vehicles and also hurled stones at the members of the raiding party. Police had also made seven arrests on the occasion. Police now have registered the case under terrorism clauses of 440, 342, 353, 186, 149, 216 and 506.



KARACHI: Youngsters enjoying at sea view during sunset. —APP Photo

India set worst example of HR violations in IIOJK: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman

Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Saturday said the Indian government has set the worst example of the violation of human rights by

snatching the autonomous status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) through an illegal move on August 5, 2019 to suppress the liberation struggle of the people.

In his message regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day, he said India would not be able to sustain its illegal occupation through such draconian laws and actions.

Expressing complete solidarity with the people of IIOJK, he said the people of Pakistan were supporting firmly Kashmiri brethren in struggle for their just cause.

The increasing Indian brutality, cruelty and worst violation of human rights in

Kashmir has exposed the ugly face of India to the whole world.

Now the time has come that human rights leaders, institutions and organizations should take steps to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the United Nation resolutions.

Senate Chairman said that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and all the political parties of Pakistan have taken steps for a peaceful solution to the issue.

There is a need to take more measures at the national and international level for a fair solution to the Kashmir issue.

Sanjrani further said that the people of IIOJK had rendered matchless sacrifices for their just right to self-determination. He said durable peace in the region was linked with the early resolution of the Kashmir issue

in accordance with aspirations of the people of IIOJK and called upon the international community to play its role in the interest of peace and harmony in the region.

He said that the people and institutions of Pakistan not only fully support the innocent Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom, but they will not hesitate to make any sacrifice until their freedom is achieved.

Senate Deputy Chairman Mirza Muhammad Afridi said that February, 5 is a day of solidarity for the sacrifices made by Kashmiris for freedom.

Which is celebrated with full enthusiasm by all Pakistanis and Kashmiris living across the country. He said that all the political parties, institutions and the entire nation of Pakistan are of the same language regarding the Kashmir issue.

ANF, Sindh rangers seizes narcotics

KARACHI (INP): The anti-narcotics force (ANF) and Sindh Rangers on Saturday seized 18 Kilogram heroine in a joint operation on Karachi super highway.

As per details, two residents of Karachi were also arrested in the joint operation of ANF and Rangers.

In another operation, the ANF recovered 10 Kilograms in Hyderabad from a resident of Sanghar. The ANF also seized 1.2-kilogram heroine in Blue area Islamabad from a resident of Attack. A parcel carrying 906-gram ice to Australia was recovered from a courier office in Lahore.

Earlier, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized a large haul of hashish in a raid in an under-construction house. The ANF foiled a smuggling bid of 100 KG of hashish, which was being smuggled overseas by sea.

COURT NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF IFTEKHAR AHMED CIVIL JUDGE VII KOHAT. Suit no.91/FC, Date of hearing: 20-02-2023, Titled:- Shazia Bibi Vs Muzaffar Khan(etc) Notice against:- (1) Muzaffar Khan S/o Muhammad Ali Khan R/o Nai Abadi Faiz Abad Saryan District Islamabad(3)Hazar Abbas S/o Abdul Qayum R/o Shair Kot Ghari Allah Yar Khan Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad) (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Dower(etc) of against you defendants in which date of hearing 20-02-2023 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendants is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 20-02-2023. Otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 28-701-20723 (Court of C.J VII, Kohat)

IN THE COURT OF IFTEKHAR AHMED CIVIL JUDGE VII KOHAT. Suit no.40/FC, Date of hearing: 17-02-2023, Titled:- Khalida Vs Inyatullah Khan (etc) Notice against:- (1) Inyatullah Khan S/o Kampany Khan(2)Kampany Khan S/o Jalal Khan R/o Shadi Khel Tehsil & District Kohat presently R/o (now in Kohati Mohallah Masan Road Near Tax Chowk Kimari Karchi) (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Dower(etc) of against you defendants in which date of hearing 17-02-2023 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendants is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 17-02-2023. Otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 23-701-20723 (Court of C.J VII, Kohat)

In the court of Kashif Ali Syed civil judge III Tungi, Suit no 198/1 next hearing date 09/02/2023, Case title - Nasir Khan vs Jamshid Khan etc., Summon to -1 Jamshid s/o Habib Rasool .2 shah Khalid s/o shah Rehman r/o sahib Gul mahal dahki Tangi charsadda (Defendants) The above Defendants is directed to appear before this court on 09/02/2023 personally or through attorney or through counsel in failure an ex-parte proceeding will be proceeded against you.

Pakistan to continue supporting Kashmiris: Kamran Tessori

KARACHI (PPI) Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori has said in his message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day that the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by the Indian forces continues even today despite the passage of 75 years.

The Sindh governor said that during this period, India had inflicted atrocities on the innocent Kashmiris. He further said that occupied Kashmir had become the biggest prison in human history, and the international community was against the India's this cruelty.

Tessori said that despite

the barbaric Indian brutality, Kashmiris are burning the candle of freedom and despite Indian oppression, the movement of Kashmiri brothers is emerging.

The problem of Kashmir will be resolved only by giving will.

He further said that even if the night of oppression is long, it will end one day and Kashmiri brothers will be breathing in free air very soon. He further said that Pakistan would continue to support the Kashmiri brothers politically, morally and socially.

Meanwhile, Tessori visited the shrine of Hazrat

Ayub Ansari in Istanbul in Turkey. He recited Fateha at the shrine and prayed for the security of Pakistan. The Sindh governor also prayed for the elevation of the ranks of those martyred in the Peshawar tragedy.

He said that this incident should be condemned as much as possible, and those involved in that act of terrorism were cowards and wanted to destroy the peace of Pakistan, but the morale of the forces of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan was high. Together we will never let them succeed in their nefarious intentions, he concluded.

Imported govt snatched last morsel of bread from mouth of masses: Mussarat

LAHORE (INP): Central leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Mussarat Jamshed Cheema has said that the imported government has snatched last morsel of bread from mouth of masses.

In a statement issued on Saturday, she was of the view that the entire global community was well famil-

iar of "Kafayat Shahari" of the Shehbaz Sharif's government who raised the volume of cabinet to 78.

Mussarat Cheema said that privileges being offered to special assistants and advisors by giving status of federal ministers to them. Masses were deprived of two time meal and rules were enjoying the

luxuries, she added.

She said that the corrupt gang put the sovereignty of the country at stake to get rid of Imran Khan but he enjoys support of the majority of masses. Their all plans to disgrace the PTI chief would fell flat and those involved in conspiracies would have to pay for it, she concluded.



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Sedition laws must be abolished: HRCP

LAHORE (NNI): The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expresses its deep concern over the spate of recent arrests and cases filed against opposition leaders and journalists on charges of sedition, treason, and making statements conducive to 'public mischief' and incitement to violence.

The sheer impunity with which such arrests have been made, often without warning in the early hours of the morning, with some of those arrested alleging that their families were harassed and their property

damaged, is cause for alarm, a press statement said here Saturday. Successive governments have brazenly weaponised archaic, colonial-era laws to stifle dissent. Never has this served any democratic purpose.

While we do not condone abusive or threatening language or slander, in light of the recent arrests of leaders such as Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed and Fawad Chaudhry under Sections 153-A, 505 and 124-A, HRCP urges the government to abolish the sedition law, as it is currently worded, from the Pakistan Penal Code, given its long

history as a tool of political victimisation.

A political process to do so, which was initiated in the Senate in early 2020 but could not come to fruition, must be revived immediately.

Section 124-A constitutes a constraint on the legitimate exercise of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and expression. Dissent and criticism of the government are essential ingredients of robust public debate in a vibrant democracy and should never be construed as sedition.

LG secretary reviews cleanliness in city

LAHORE (APP): Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Secretary Dr. Irshad Ahmed has instructed the officers of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) to make Lahore a cleaner city by ensuring 100 per cent attendance of workers in the field.

He was inspecting cleanliness conditions of various areas of the provincial capital early in the morning on Saturday. He said "Lahore city is our heart and making it clean and beautiful is our

priority." LG&CD Special Secretary Pervaz Iqbal, LWMC Chief Executive Officer Ali Annan and other officers were present.

The secretary said that staff of operational wing should take all possible measures to provide a clean environment to the citizens. He reviewed the garbage dumping process at Lakho Der dumping site and Mahmood Buti. He also reviewed the temporary collection points in Shadman and he directed the LWMC

to improve fencing and ensure complete cleanliness around the points.

Dr. Irshad Ahmed appealed to the citizens that this was their city and their cooperation was very important for sanitation. "Avoid throwing garbage on different places. I will visit other cities to review the performance of waste management companies", he added. Earlier, CEO LWMC Ali Annan also briefed about the working of mechanical sweepers and anti-smog squad.

Revolutionary changes demand team work in health sector: minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Minister Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Dr Jamal Nasir has said that revolutionary changes in the health sector demand team work.

He was addressing the 9th CEOs health/MSs conference held at a local hotel here on Saturday. He urged CEOs health to perform their duties honestly and beyond political pressure.

Dr Jamal Nasir said that essential and standard medicines lists available in hos-

pitals should be displayed at entry points for awareness of the public and discourage political atmosphere in all the health facilities including Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centres.

He deplored that training programme was not upgraded for paramedics to launch them in the past but now this programme would be initiated soon.

Secretary Health Ali Jan, in his address directed to ensure hepatitis screening for staff of all health facilities

as well as their vaccination. He urged CEOs and MSs to get all the patients admitted in the hospitals under Sehat Sahulat Programme in a bid to earn maximum revenue for hospitals. He said that bulk purchase of hospitals through CEOs at cost of Rs.9.2 billion was being done and month-wise disease calendar being prepared to sensitize the MSs. He said that clinical audit of dengue deaths reported in 2022 would be conducted at all cost.



KP Governor visits victims of Police Lines explosion at LRH

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday said that he will play his full role to solve the problems of the people of the entire province especially in the health sector. He said that LRH is a public hospital not only for Peshawarits but across the province, it is time to meet their needs on a priority basis to reduce the burden on all major hospitals in the province and will try to improve the health facilities. He expressed these views while talking to journalists during his visit to Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) Peshawar. The Governor on this occasion donated two German dialysis machines to the hospital administration and reiterated his commitment to cooperate with the hospitals of the province in the future.

Governor Ghulam Ali also visited the injured of Police Lines blast. He paid tribute to the families of the injured for their great sacrifice and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. The Governor paid tribute to the doctors, nursing staff and other medical staff dedicated to the service of humanity for showing exemplary spirit. The Governor asked the medical staff to provide all kinds of treatment and facilities to the blast victims. Ghulam Ali said that the tragedy of Peshawar Police Lines is a national tragedy on which the entire nation has suffered and the people of the province and especially the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police share in the

grief and we will stand side by side with them. On this occasion, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, Federal Ministers, Chief Ministers of Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, who immediately visited here after the tragedy and encouraged the blast victims. The Governor also expressed his gratitude for the announcement of the aid package for the martyrs and the injured by the Federal and Sindh governments. He said that all the political parties were invited to the apex committee meeting, but only one political party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did not participate in

the meeting. Responding to a question regarding holding of elections, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that he has sent a letter to the Election Commission and suggested that they should consult with all the stakeholders before holding the election and agree after reviewing the overall situation. As a Governor, he said, it is my responsibility to take such a decision that benefits the people and does not create difficulties for them. He said that serving the people is my first priority, I have served the people before and will continue to serve the people in the future. Provincial Minister Adnan Jalil and Secretary Health Department were also present on this occasion.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali talking to an injured policeman of Police Line blast at LRH.

‘JI to hold peace march on 8th’

PESHAWAR (APP): Tje District Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Bahrullah Khan on Saturday said that a peace march will be held on February 8 under the leadership of party chief Sirajul Haq in the provincial capital. Talking to APP Bahrullah Khan said that preparations for the march are going on and we are also in touch with traders and other social organizations and invite them to join this peace march. He said that there is an atmosphere of depression in the entire province over the Police Lines blast. He said that we want the end of terrorism from this land and want peace in this province. He said that people of all schools of thought should join the peace march because the law and order is not only a problem of Jamaat-e-Islami but of the entire nation, so we want to turn this march into a national march.

Literary festival kicks off

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-day literary festival kicked off here on Saturday aiming to enhance reading and writing habits among students and people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event was organized by students with the support of US-Aid and Directorate of Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at a local hotel. Renowned scholars, writers, poets and journalists and more than 1000 students of different schools, colleges and universities participated in the festival. On its first day of the festival the children's literary activities, writing workshop, and Pashto poetic gatherings were held. Renowned columnist, and educationist Dr Pervaz Hoodbhoy, Dr Nasir Jamal Khattak Vice Chancellor Swabi University, Dr Shabbana Gul and Zubair Torwali shared their views with the students and also demanded of the government to revamp the curriculum according to modern age. Talking to APP, organizer Abdur Rehman said that the main purpose of the festival is to restore the link between the writers and the readers. He said that they want to groom the creative skills of the youth in the province.

Caretaker minister vows to revamp Industries Dept subsidiaries

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Revenue Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Adnan Adeel Saturday said that subsidiaries of the Industries Department would be revamped to attract domestic and foreign investment to the province. Speaking in a Mulaqaat Programme under the auspices of the Khyber Union of Journalists (KhUJ) here on Saturday, he said that the provincial Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BoIT), Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) and Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KP-EZDMC) would be activated. He said that being a businessman by himself, he is fully aware of the prob-

lems and issues faced by the industrial and trading communities of the province and will leave no stone unturned to resolve their problems and address their issues. He said that the promotion of industries and investment will generate employment opportunities. Adnan Adeel, who also holds the portfolio of revenue, said that during last financial year, a revenue target of Rs.9 billion was achieved by the department, but this year, he said only 25% of the target is achieved and hectic efforts would be required to achieve the same target. He said that federal government has levied withholding and sales taxes on the revenue collected by the

Board of Revenue, which after the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment has no justification and pledged to raise these matters with the federal government soon. He said that digitization of the revenue department is progress, saying the completion of the process would help increase the revenue of the province. He said that he has directed the revenue department to prepare a detailed report regarding encroachments on state land to him, so that could be retrieved from the occupants. To a question, he said that priority of the caretaker government is making arrangements for free, fair and transparent polls to prevail democracy in the country.

Renovation Work is in progress in Balahisar Fort



F.P. Report

about ten acres. The fort has a historical significance and with the passage of time, the decoration of this historical heritage continues to ensure the protection. Since 1948, Fort Balahisar has been used by the Headquarters Frontier Corps North while it is also opened for tourists at different times. A large number of school, college & university students and families visit here, while tourists from all over the world also visit here. The Department of Archeology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has continued restoration and renovation of this great master-

piece. Even now, many places in Balahisar are being renovation. With the passage of time and due to the different seasons, some places need to be renovated so that every part of this historical heritage can be protected. Fort Bala Hisar has an important role in the identity of Peshawar city. The events connected with this historical heritage highlight its importance. The government of Pakistan issues orders for the protection of many such historical places in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from time to time to ensure the protection of these historical places of Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: ANP's central general secretary Mia Iftikhar Hussain and provincial general secretary Sardar Hussain Babak addressing a public gathering. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Section 144 imposed in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (PPI): Section 144 has been imposed in Peshawar over security fears, banning gathering of five or more people in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa capital. Peshawar Deputy Commissioner Shafiullah Khan said on Saturday that due to feeble security situation Section 144 has been enforced in the provincial capital, which will remain effective for 10 days. The deputy commissioner warned that those who will violate the Section 144 will be dealt with under Section 188.

Zeeshan completes MS Degree



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zeeshan Kakakhail a Peshawar based journalist completed his MS Degree in media studies from Riphah International University Islamabad with A plus Grade. He promised to continue his hard work in future.

15 ADs of Information Deptt posted as PROs to caretaker ministers

PESHAWAR (APP): Fifteen assistant directors of Information and Public Relations Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been posted as public relations officers (PROs) to caretaker ministers of the provincial cabinet. According to the notification, issued here, on Saturday, Ghulam Hussain posted as PRO to Minister

Adnan Jalil, Khan Sarwar as PRO to Bakht Nawaz Khan, Mukhtiar Ahmad as PRO to Shahid Khan Khattak, Habibullah Mehsud as PRO to Chief Secretary KP, Khan Ghalib as PRO to Haji Fazal Elahi, Mujahid Khan as PRO to Manzoor Khan Afridi, Riaz Ghafur as PRO to Haji Muhammad Ghufuran, Irshad Ahmad as PRO to Advocate Sawal

Nazir, Afrasiab as PRO to Syed Muhammad Shah, Shan Muhammad as PRO to Taj Muhammad Afridi, Muhammad Huzafa as PRO to Irshad Qaiser, Sajid Khan as PRO to Shafiullah Khan, Rizwan Malik as PRO to Abdul Haleem Qasuriya, Naemul Haq as PRO to Muhammad Ali Shah and Qazi Arif as PRO to Hamid Shah.

PTI responsible for current inflation: PPP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Information Secretary, Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Malik Amjad Afridi said on Saturday that the former ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was responsible for "current inflation, corruption and deteriorating law and order situation in the province". Addressing a press conference, here, at Peshawar Press Club, Amjad Afridi said that the leadership of PTI in KP "misled" people on the name of change and involved in negotiating with the Taliban by providing them support in their survival. He said that former spokesman of KP Govt Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif had admitted that PTI government's policy of holding talks with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) resulted in a "failure". Amjad Afridi demanded the federal and provincial caretaker government to devise a comprehensive plan to arrest terrorists and their facilitators before holding of next general elections. He said that the current government



had achieved success in restoring dignified relations with world powers due to its successful foreign policy and today superpowers were giving importance to Pakistan due to its successful foreign policy. He said the politics of Imran Khan was "over" and only PPP would emerge victorious in the next general elections. He said that people were well aware of the performance of PPP which had always raised the voice of poor segments of the society by providing them maximum relief during its tenure.

Directorate foresee better future of youth of merged districts: Asif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Natives in its effort to promote Women Empowerment is striving hard to take steps that encourage young women to become leaders of tomorrow.

4-day Young Women Leaders Summit was held at Murree organized by The Natives in collaboration with Directorate of Youth Affairs, KP. 33 Young women leaders were engaged in an inclusive-based residential event on topics of

women empowerment, women rights, gender-based violence, early marriages, and human rights. Speakers from academia and developmental sector conducted sessions and activities on the event topics. Directorate of Youth

Affairs, KP urges young women to participate in such kind of events that will enhance their confidence and understanding of the rights they deserve.

Cold weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Regional Meteorological Department on Saturday forecast cold and partly cloudy weather for most districts, while very cold in upper districts and hilly areas. Isolated light rain is likely to occur over Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Buner, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Bajaur, Mardan, Swabi, Peshawar, Charsadda, Mohmand, Khyber, Kohat, Orakzai.





In brief

Cut in bus fares demanded F.P. Report

MARDAN: Despite the opening of CNG station in Mardan, the fare could not be reduced. The citizens have demanded to take notice from the higher authorities. According to the details, CNG stations were opened in Mardan after a one-month ban like across the province. And as usual gas is readily available in vehicles. During the one-month ban, the owners of vehicles running on public transport and local routes had increased the fares, so despite the availability of abundant CNG, the transporters and local vehicles are not ready to reduce the fares. And they are robbing the public with both hands by charging arbitrary rent while the district administration and transport authorities have kept silent. Citizens have demanded reforms from the higher authorities.

Teen commits suicide

D I KHAN (INP): A teenager committed suicide by swallowing poisonous pills over unknown reasons here on Saturday. A 15-year-old youth Muhammad Majid s/o Zulfiqar Ali hailing from village Khano Khel of Dera Ismail Khan consumed toxic pills due to which his condition deteriorated. He was rushed to local hospital in critical condition but expired during treatment. Reasons behind the suicide could not be ascertained.

Three killed in road mishaps

CHINIOT (INP): At least three people including an elderly man were killed and two others injured in separate road mishaps in different areas of Chiniot on Saturday. Police said that an over speeding car knocked down a motorcycle at Jhang road near Chenab Nagar resultantly bike rider Abdul Rauf was killed on the spot. An elderly man was killed after hit by an over speeding motorcycle while crossing Kalowal road. In another accident at Kalowal road, a man identified as Ilyas was killed after hit by motorcycle. Two including Ijaz and Umair were injured after a reckless driven truck knocked down a motorcycle near Kot Ismail at Chenab Nagar road. The bodies and injured were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at concerned police stations started investigations.

Photo exhibition

BAHAWALPUR (INP): Commissioner of Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar has said that the voices are being raised for the rights of Kashmiris from all over the world and India has deprived Kashmiris of their rights by changing the status of Occupied Kashmir. He expressed these views during the inauguration ceremony of the photo exhibition in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day at Bahawalpur Arts Council on Saturday. Additional Commissioner Coordination Faisal Atta Khan and Director of Arts Council Sajjad Hussain were also present. Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Raja Jahangir Anwar said that today's photo exhibition depicted the brutality of the Indian Armed Forces in Illegally Occupied Kashmir. He said that every child of Pakistan is participating in the struggle of Kashmiris and International organizations should also play their roles for Kashmiris. He expressed hope that Occupied Kashmir will be a part of Pakistan in near future.



LOWER DIR: Activists of PDM holding a protest rally against Peshawar Police Lines mosque suicide attack. — F.P. photo

Industrialists flay Admn for stoppage of cargo trucks on roads

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Stopping cargo trucks on Khanpur, Hattar Road is a conspiracy to destroy industries, the administration has disturbed the industrialists by stopping the trucks for many hours. Stopping the trucks should be avoided to deliver the goods to the industries on time, Hattar.

In an emergency press conference held at the HIA head office, the industrialists of the industrial estate said that stopping the freight trucks on Hattar and Khanpur roads for several hours by the local administration is a heinous conspiracy to destroy the industries.

Qadir Mehmood, Atta-U-Rehman and Taj Ghani, while holding an emergency press conference, said that due to heavy taxes and closure of LCs, the industrialists have already been disturbed, but the local administration has not provided goods to the industries of Hattar

Industrial Estate on Khanpur Road.

By stopping the trucks for hours, there is a strong fear of thousands of workers being unemployed due to the timely delivery of raw materials. The employment of workers is dependent on and Hattar Industrial Estate pays billions of rupees in taxes to the government annually and plays an important role in the country's economy, but the extreme of cruelty is that despite the clear orders of the Supreme Court, over-tax is still being collected in the bills, electricity and Industries are on the brink of collapse due to needle gas issues, while the local administration's stoppage of cargo trucks has become a cause of more trouble for industrialists, noted industrialists Qadir Mehmood, Chaudhry Yusuf Abid, Attaurehman, Taj Ghani and Others said that the government should take immediate notice and give relief to the industrialists so that more industries can be set up and the country's economy can improve and

the local administration should avoid stopping the vehicles supplying goods to the industries in Hattar State so that 70 thousand workers will be unemployed due to timely supply of goods can be avoided.

The extreme of cruelty is that the Hattar Industrial Estate, which pays billions of rupees in taxes, is not even established up to the emergency trauma center. In any emergency, the patients are taken to Haripur or Taxila, both sides are 25/30 km away from the Hattar industry, which is on the patient's way. They lose their lives, while the Hattar Industry Estate is the largest estate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is paying billions of taxes annually, and there is a lack of facilities. It is completely ineffective, there is no equipment up to the emergency kit. We demand from the federal and provincial governments that an emergency unit should be built in Fulfour, which has all the medical equipment and doctors.

Cancer dreadfully increasing in Pakistan

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Cancer is dreadfully increasing in Pakistan. Renowned physician, consultant physician, in-charge of Medicine Department at District Headquarter Hospital, Dr. Muhammad Farooq has said that the number of cancer patients in the world is more than 14 million. More than 15,000 men die of lung cancer and 40,000 women die of breast cancer every year in Pakistan. He was expressing these views while talking to the media on the occasion of World Cancer Awareness Day.

He said that cancer is a deadly disease. Lung cancer is common in men while breast cancer is common in women. The rate of fatal disease in Pakistan has increased to an alarming extent. The annual death toll has crossed 1 lakh. He said that every year in Pakistan more than 178 thousand people suffer from different types of cancer among them, 80,000 men and more than 90,000 women. Among them, 15,000 men die of lung cancer, while more than 40,000 women die of breast cancer.

He said that along with breast, lung and mouth cancer, stomach cancer is

also increasing in Pakistan. He further said that according to the World Health Organization, cancer has become the fastest growing disease in the world. Currently, the number of cancer patients in the world is 14 million and it is feared that in the next ten years this number may reach 25 million with an increase of 11 million.

DPO gets honorary shields:

Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Touqeer Ilyas Cheema gave away honorary shields to DPO Hafizabad Rai Mazhar Iqbal to acknowledge his good performance for maintaining law and order situation and provision of justice to people without any discrimination during his posting in the district. Honorary Shield were also given to ADCR Abdul Rauf, AC Hafizabad Rab Nawaz Chadhar, AC Pindi Bhattian Bilawal Ali Hunjra, AC HMR and Coordination Ishtaq Ahmad, PSO to DC Malik Abdul Qadoos, District Nazir Malik Shoaib Aslam Awan, Incharge Security Branch Mian Imtiaz Ahmad, Superintendent Hamid Kamal Ansari, Reader to DC Tanveer Ahmad and representative of District Information Officer

Hafizabad Anjum Sohail for showing good performance in connection with improving service delivery.

On the occasion, DC said that honest, hardworking and dedicated officers and officials are honour and assets of district administration while such employees would be encouraged at all level. **Kashmir Solidarity Day:** Kashmir Solidarity Day is also being observed in the district to highlight Indian brutality on suppressed people of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, today. In this connection, major ceremony is being held at district complex Hafizabad. DC Touqeer Ilyas Cheema will hoist national flag and lead Kashmir Solidarity Walk. Government officers, officials, social, religious, political workers, students, teachers and other people will participate in the walk.

Different functions will also be held at schools, colleges in Sukheke Mandi, Pindi Bhattian, Jalalpur Bhattian, Kaleke Mandi and other cities and towns of the district to draw attention of the world community towards inhuman violence by India on innocent people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Ms. Sehrish awarded PhD Degree

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Department of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, Kohat University of Science and Technology, arranged Public Defense for the award of PhD Degree to Scholar Ms. Sehrish Khan under the Supervision of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jamil.

The scholar in the presence of Examiners (Prof. Dr. Shahid Niaz Dean, Prof. Dr. Raza Ahmad COMSAT University Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Qusid e Azam University Islamabad and Prof. Dr. Daud Khan KUST) defended her PhD research.

The public defense was attended by a good number of Faculty and Students from Faculty of Biological Sciences. The chairperson Prof Dr. Noor Muhammad facilitated the whole event and appreciated all the examiners for their valuable time.

Boy kills mother for honour

GUJRANWALA (INP): A Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) footage of the 'honour killing', wherein a 12-year-old boy killed his mother in Gujranwala, has emerged. According to details, a 12-year-old boy – identified as Sawan – killed his mother over 'honour' in Gujranwala's Satellite town on Wednesday (February 01).

In the CCTV footage, the child – who was wearing a burqa – can be seen opening fire on her mother. The victim's brother has filed a police report, maintaining that deceased Nazia Bibi was divorced by her husband a few months ago. "After separation, Sawan and his two brothers lived with their father, while my sister was taking care of three other children," he added.

The deceased had already filed a case against her ex-husband Salim for not bearing the expenses of their children. As per police investigation, the victim Nazia Bibi left home with her sister, when her son opened fire at her leaving her dead on the spot while injuring another woman – identified as his aunt.

Robbery incidents on the increase in Dargai Bazaar

Shafi ullah

MINGORA: Robbery in Dargai Bazaar spark traders, deep anger among businessmen across the division, demanding the arrest of the involved persons.

President of Malakand Division Abdul Rahim raised questions about the systematic operation of robbery group in Mega Mart in a broad daylight. The members of the organized dacoity group should be immediately arrested and punished. According to the details, the business community of Malakand Division is very angry against the organized dacoity group robbery at Mega Mart in daylight in Dargai Bazaar.

Malakand Division Traders Federation President Abdul Rahim and General Secretary Zowar Khan have strongly condemned the incident and called it a cowardly move. While talking to media representatives, he said that if the incident of robbery of Haji Gohar ghee dealer had come to an end, this incident would not have happened today.

They said that the occurrence of a robbery by an organized gang in the Mega Mart in Dargai Bazaar in broad daylight is a matter

of moment for the local administration and law enforcement agencies, but it is a question mark on their performance. They said that due to this cowardly incident, a strong reaction is being expressed in the business community of Malakand division. The anxiety found among the traders can be removed.

They said that in this regard, the responsible and relevant authorities should realize their responsibilities and take all measures to protect the life and property, honor and dignity of the people, provide protection to the business of the business community of Malakand Division, the administration and It is the responsibility of the concerned authorities, the incident of robbery of Haji Gohar ghee dealer been brought to an end, then this incident would not have happened in Dargai Bazaar today and the accused should be arrested and brought to justice.

Swat Police arrest another motorcycle lifter: Swat Police have arrested the second accused member of the motorcycle lifters gang and recovered four stolen motorcycles from his possession. An FIR of the motorcycle lifting was registered with Police Station

Saidu Sharif by a complainant Shahab Ahmad, resident of Raja Abad. The motorcycle was lifted from Roshan Hospital, Saidu Sharif.

Taking notice of the incident, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand, Sajjad and District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Shafiullah Gandapur formed a joint team headed by SP Swat and SDPO Saidu Sharif and comprising of Station House Officer (SHO) Saidu Sharif and other police officers and tasked it for the arrest of the accused and recovery of the motorcycle.

The investigation while utilizing modern scientific techniques traced the gang with the help of CCTV cameras and arrested its ring leader Akhtar Said son of Redol, resident of Balasur, Chapriyal and recovered five motorcycles from his possession. During the investigation, he revealed the names of his two accomplices. Saidu Sharif Police while following the case arrested the accused Abdul Rehman son of Redi Gul, resident of Chapriyal and recovered four more stolen motorcycles from his possession. Efforts for the arrest of the third accused Omar Ali, resident of Mardan, were in progress.

Rally held in favour of police in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir civil society and political activists on the call of Pakistan Democratic Movement on Saturday staged a protest rally against the Peshawar Police Lines outside bombing and to express solidarity with the police outside the Tamerghara Press Club. The protesters also held a peace march.

The protesters holding banners and placards in

their hands with slogans condemning the Peshawar tragedy and paying tribute to the martyrs chanted slogans for peace.

The PDM district president and former MPA Haji Bahadar Khan, Malik Muhammad Zeib, Muzaffar Syed, Nawabzada Mahmood Zeib Khan, Malik Azmat Khan, Sardar Javed Tajik Advocate, Qazi Ayaz and Malik Shah Naseem addressed and said that the Peshawar Police Lines bomb blast was an

attack on the Pakhtun nation and there was little to condemn them.

They said that the nation stood by the police force in this hour of grief and sorrow and those elements who wanted to spread unrest, terrorism and chaos in the country. They demanded the government to deal the perpetrators with iron hands. The speakers said that no sacrifice would be spared to maintain peace and order in Lower Lower.



D I KHAN: Student holding a walk to support Kashmiri people on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day.

Faisalabad to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day

FAISALABAD (APP): The Kashmir Solidarity Day would be observed throughout the district on Sunday, February 5, with the renewal of commitment of continuing support to Kashmiri brethren till liberation of held Kashmir, according to a spokesperson for the district administration. The day will start with special prayers in mosques of the city for early freedom of occupied Kashmir. Quran Khawani sittings would also be arranged after Fajr prayers where the participants would also offer 'Fateha' for the martyrs of Kashmir struggle. One-minute silence would also be observed at 10 a.m. in the city while activists of religious groups would make a chain of human hands in the city to honour Kashmiri martyrs.

The religio-political and social organisations would also arrange a number of functions, meetings, seminars and walks to highlight the importance of Kashmir Solidarity Day. The spokesman said that

Divisional Commissioner Ms Silwat Saeed, flanked by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Imran Hamid Sheikh, and City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, would unfurl the national flag at Metropolitan Corporation Hall besides addressing a seminar and leading a walk in this connection on the same day.

The Faisalabad Arts Council (FAC) would also arrange a painting exhibition at Nusrat Fateh Ali Auditorium at 11 a.m. to mark the day. The Police Department has also made comprehensive security arrangements for the Kashmir Solidarity Day functions to foil nefarious designs of the enemy. A spokesman said that more than 500 police officials as well as officers would perform security duty at various sites whereas Dolphin force and Elite force teams would remain active throughout the day and ensure thorough patrolling, especially in sensitive areas. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid

Mehmood Hamdani also directed the SPs, DSPs and Inspectors to take appropriate measures and beef up security in their respective areas, especially at public places. The CPO would check sector-wise security of the Kashmir Day functions, he added.

One killed

ATTOCK (APP): A furious woman fed up with domestic violence shot dead her husband in village Kamalpur Musa in the limits of Rangoo Hazro Police station on Saturday, police sources said.

According to police sources, the couple which belongs to KP was living in a rented house in the village where an identified person named Abdullah Khan subjected his wife Nazakat Bibi-mother of four, to domestic violence. On Saturday, when the man trashed her, the woman out of rage took out a pistol and shot her husband and fled away. Later the Police shifted the body to the tehsil headquarters hospital Hazro for an autopsy.



HYDERABAD: Workers of Sui Southern Insaaf Jafa Kush Union Sindh and Balochistan holding a protest rally in favour of their demands.



Brazil sinks aircraft carrier in Atlantic despite pollution risk

SAO PAULO (Agencies): Brazil has sunk a decommissioned aircraft carrier in the Atlantic Ocean despite concerns expressed by environmental groups that the ageing warship was packed with toxic materials. The “planned and controlled sinking occurred late in the afternoon”, some 350 km (220 miles) off the Brazilian coast in the Atlantic Ocean, in an area with an “approximate depth of 5,000 meters [16,000 feet]”, Brazil’s Navy said in a statement.

The decision to scuttle the six-decade-old aircraft carrier “Sao Paulo” came after Brazilian authorities had tried in vain to find a port willing to welcome the vessel. Though defence officials said they would sink the vessel in the “safest area”, environmentalists attacked the decision, saying the warship contained tonnes of asbestos, heavy metals and other toxic materials that could leach into the water and pollute the marine food chain.

The Basel Action Network had called on newly-elected Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva - who took office last month pledging to reverse surging environmental destruction under far-right ex-President Jair Bolsonaro - to immediately halt the “dangerous” plan to scuttle the ship. The NGO Shipbreaking Platform - a coalition of environmental, labour and human rights organisations - had described Brazil’s planned sinking of the Sao Paulo as potentially a “state-sponsored environmental crime”.

Built in the late 1950s in France, whose navy sailed the aircraft carrier for 37 years as the Foch, the warship had earned a place in 20th-century



naval history. The Sao Paulo took part in France’s first nuclear tests in the Pacific in the 1960s and saw deployments in Africa, the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia from the 1970s to 1990s. Brazil bought the 266-metre (873ft) aircraft carrier for \$12 million in 2000. A fire that broke out on board the ship in 2005 accelerated the vessel’s decline.

Last year, Brazil authorised Turkish firm Sok Denizcilik to dismantle the Sao Paulo for scrap metal. But in August, just as a tugboat was about to tow it into the Mediterranean Sea, Turkish environmental authorities blocked the plan. Brazil’s defence ministry said in a statement that the dismantling plan for the ship “represented an unprecedented attempt” by Brazil to safely dispose of the ship through “environmentally sound recycling”.

Brazil then brought the aircraft carrier back home but did not allow it into port, citing the “high risk” to the environment. According to the defence ministry statement, the area selected for the sinking was identified by the Navy’s Hydrography Centre, which considered it the “safest” location as it was outside Brazil’s exclusive economic zone, environmental protection areas, free from documented submarine cable and was at a depth greater than 3,000 metres (9,840ft). “In view of the facts presented and the increasing risk involved in towing, due to the deterioration of the hull’s buoyancy conditions and the inevitability of spontaneous/uncontrolled sinking, it is not possible to adopt any other course of action other than jettisoning the hull, through of the planned and controlled sinking,” the ministry said.

SK FM Park touts US ‘extended deterrence’

WASHINGTON (Reuters): South Korea Foreign Minister Park Jin said after meeting US top diplomat Antony Blinken that Seoul and Washington were committed to strengthening “extended deterrence” in relation to North Korea.

South Korea has sought assurances over extended deterrence, referring to the ability of the US military to deter attacks on US allies, amid concerns over Pyongyang’s increasing missile and nuclear capabilities. “The ROK (Republic of Korea) and the US will continue our watertight coordination to achieve genuine peace on the Korean Peninsula,” Park said during a joint news conference following the meeting at the State Department in Washington.

“We are committed to strengthening extended deterrence while maintaining a robust combined defense posture. Any provocations by North Korea will be met with a firm and united response.” Park and Blinken’s meeting followed a visit to Seoul this week by US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who vowed to expand military drills and boost nuclear deterrence planning to counter North Korea’s weapons development and prevent a war.

Major car producer South Korea has sought talks with the United States over the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which excludes electric vehicles assembled outside of North America from tax credits in the United States. “We will also work together to ensure that the inflation Reduction Act is implemented in ways that address Korean companies’ concerns and benefit both our businesses and industries,” Park said. Park said Seoul would also explore the potential for cooperation with Washington under the CHIPS and Science Act, a law designed to boost US semiconductor production and research with a view to competition with China.

Ethiopia PM holds meeting with Tigray leaders

TIGRAY (AFP): Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other government officials held their first meeting with Tigrayan leaders since a November peace deal, officials and state media said. The two sides evaluated “actions carried out on the implementation of the Pretoria and Nairobi peace agreements so far” and discussed issues that “need further attention,” the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation said.

The meeting took place at a resort in southern Ethiopia, it said. A peace deal between Abiy’s government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) signed in South Africa’s capital Pretoria in November last year silenced the guns in northern Ethiopia.

Under the terms of the agreement, the TPLF agreed to disarm and re-establish the authority of the federal government in return for the restoration of access to Tigray, which was largely cut off from the outside world during the two-year war. Abiy’s national security adviser Redwan Hussein said on Twitter that Abiy and other government officials “met today and held discussion with TPLF delegation regarding the progress of the peace process.”

lines are overhead, and Austin officials said burying existing lines would be expensive and more difficult to repair.

Austin Energy at one point said power would be fully restored by but then backtracked, saying the damage was worse than originally calculated. The utility’s online system for reporting outages also temporarily crashed this week, and city leaders did not hold a news conference to publicly answer questions. “This was a reminder you can have plenty of power plants but still have an unreliable grid,” said Michael Webber, professor of energy resources at the University of Texas at Austin. “The wires and poles are the weak point of the system.”

There have been no reports of deaths from this week’s power outages, though the storm and freeze have been blamed for at least 12 traffic fatalities on slick roads in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

UN rights chief concerned about Israel’s moves

GENEVA (AP): The UN human rights chief expressed concerns that steps taken by the new Israeli government, the most far-right in the country’s history, could fuel further violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the wake of a recent spike in bloodshed in the region.

Volker Türk cited steps such as forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes and government moves to expedite Israelis’ access to firearms. He called on leaders, officials and everyone else on both sides to stop using language that incites hatred, and to shun violence. “Rather than doubling down on failed approaches of violence and coercion that have singularly failed in the past, I urge everyone involved to step out of the illogic of escalation that has only ended in dead bodies, shattered lives and utter despair,” said Türk, who took office in October as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Israel’s ambassador in Geneva accused the rights office of condemning a “legitimate response” by her country — instead of condemning “heinous terrorist attacks” against Jewish worshippers and Israeli civilians. The region is facing one of the deadliest periods of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in years. An Israeli military raid last week killed 10 Palestinians — most of them militants — but also a 61-year-old woman. A Palestinian gunman in a shooting attack a day later outside an east Jerusalem synagogue killed seven people, including a 14-year-old.

Israel’s firebrand national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, responded by taking steps to demolish the home of the gunman and other Palestinian homes in east Jerusalem built without permits, and called for granting more gun licenses to Israelis. Israeli aircraft struck a rocket production workshop in the Gaza Strip, fired Palestinian militants a rocket toward Israel. Over the weekend, a shooting in east Jerusalem by a 13-year-old Palestinian wounded two Israelis. “I fear that recent measures being taken by the government of Israel are only fueling further violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law,” Türk said. Such laws prohibit “collective punishment,” including punitive forced evictions and demolition of homes, he said, warning that expanded licensing of firearms to civilians plus a rise in hate-

ful rhetoric “can only lead to further violence and bloodshed.”

Israel has long accused United Nations institutions of anti-Israel bias, and the UN-backed Human Rights Council — a 47-member-state body, which like the rights office is based in Geneva — has passed more country-specific resolutions involving Israel than any other single country. The office of Meirav Eilon Shahar, Israel’s ambassador to the UN in Geneva, lashed out at the statement from Türk’s office, saying that he broke his silence over the attacks against Israeli civilians “not by condemning these acts of terrorism, not by offering his condolences to the victims’ families, not by even describing these attacks as acts of terrorism, but by solely condemning the State of Israel.”

The statement from Türk’s office “does not even have the decency to describe the attacks last week for what they were, acts of Palestinian terrorism targeting the Jewish people,” Eilon Shahar said. “Its prejudice towards Israel means it chooses to turn a blind eye to the daily incitement of children by the Palestinian Authority and their support for terrorism,” she added. “This must end now.”

Dutch slavery exhibition to open at UN headquarters

THE HAGUE (AP): A landmark exhibition on slavery in the Dutch colonial era that was first staged at Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum is going on display at the United Nations in New York. The show, titled “Slavery. Ten True Stories of Dutch Colonial Slavery,” will open in the the UN headquarters’ lobby from Feb. 27-March 30, as part of a UN outreach program on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Rijksmuseum announced.

“Recognizing the continuing impact of slavery on world history is of great importance. We are very grateful to the United Nations for drawing attention to this important subject through the exhibition,”

Rijksmuseum General Director Taco Dibbitts said in a statement. The exhibition at the UN is an adapted version of the show titled “Slavery” that was opened in 2021 at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and told the story of slavery by drilling down into the personal stories of 10 people, ranging from enslaved workers to a wealthy Amsterdam woman.

The unflinching exhibition looks at the lives of people who were enslaved, those who profited from the inhumane trade and people who opposed it in the Dutch colonial era, from the 17th to the 19th century — in Brazil, Suriname and the Caribbean, as well as in

South Africa, Asia and the Netherlands. The Rijksmuseum show tapped into a national debate about slavery that gained momentum amid the Black Lives Matter movement that swept the world after the 2020 death of Black man George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis. In December, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte apologized for the Dutch state’s role in slavery.

The grim centerpiece of the UN slavery exhibition will be a set of wooden stocks known as a tronco, derived from the Portuguese word for tree trunk, in which several enslaved people could be constrained by clamping their ankles.

US seeks to expel Russian mercenaries from Sudan, Libya

CAIRO (AP): The United States has stepped up pressure on Middle East allies to expel the Wagner Group, a military contractor owned by an oligarch with close ties to Russia’s president, from chaos-stricken Libya and Sudan where it has expanded in recent years, regional officials told The Associated Press.

The US effort described by officials comes as the Biden administration is making a broad push against the mercenaries. The US has slapped new sanctions on the Wagner Group in recent months over its expanding role in Russia’s war in Ukraine. The group is owned by Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Pentagon has described it as a surrogate for the Russian Defense Ministry. The Kremlin denies any connection.

The Biden administration has been working for months with regional powers Egypt and the United

Arab Emirates to pressure military leaders in Sudan and Libya to end their ties with the group, according to more than a dozen Libyan, Sudanese and Egyptian officials. They asked for anonymity to speak freely and because they were not authorized to discuss the issue with the media. A senior Egyptian government official with direct knowledge of the talks said the Wagner group “is at the top of every meeting.”

The group doesn’t announce its operations, but its presence is known from reports on the ground and other evidence. In Sudan, it was originally associated with former strongman Omar al-Bashir and now works with the military leaders who replaced him. In Libya, it’s associated with east Libya-based military commander Khalifa Hifter. Wagner has deployed thousands of operatives in African and Middle Eastern countries including Mali, Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Syria.

Its aim in Africa, analysts say, is to support Russia’s interests amid rising global interest in the resource-rich continent. Rights experts working with the US on Jan. 31 accused the group of committing possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in Mali, where it is fighting alongside government forces.

“Wagner tends to target countries with natural resources that can be used for Moscow’s objectives — gold mines in Sudan, for example, where the resulting gold can be sold in ways that circumvent Western sanctions,” said Catrina Doxide, an expert on Wagner at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. Asked for comment, Prigozhin told AP through his representatives that African countries should be wary of US policy. “We are closely following the movements of the CIA director and attempts to put pressure on the authorities of various states,” the statement said.

Sudan demands United Nations immediately lift arms embargo

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Sudan is demanding the UN Security Council immediately lift an arms embargo and other sanctions imposed during violence in the western Darfur region in 2005, saying the punishment did not include conditions or require the military government to meet UN benchmarks.

Sudan’s UN ambassador, Al-Harith Idriss Mohamed, said in a letter to the council circled that the sanctions “are no longer relevant to the magnificent reality on the ground in Darfur today compared to the situation in 2005.” “Darfur has, for the most part, overcome the state of war, as well as previous security and political challenges,” he said.

Mohamed said Sudan’s transitional government is committed to addressing the remaining social and security issues in Darfur, including sporadic tribal clashes. He added that efforts are being made to

form and deploy a Joint Security-Keeping Force to protect civilians. The Sudanese government has repeatedly urged the Security Council to lift sanctions but this letter was much stronger. It said that “Sudan will accept nothing less than the immediate lifting of these sanctions without conditions or benchmarks.”

The Darfur conflict began in 2003 when rebels took up arms against the authoritarian government in Khartoum then led by Omar al-Bashir, accusing it of discrimination and neglect. The UN previously estimated 60,000 people died in the conflict and 2.7 million fled their homes. Al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged atrocities in Darfur. The court issued an arrest warrant for him in 2009 for crimes against humanity and war crimes and added genocide to the charges in 2010.

In April 2019, Al-Bashir was ousted after three decades in power. He is incarcerated in Khartoum, where he is facing corruption charges and charges related to the overthrow of the former elected government. In October 2021, Sudan was plunged into turmoil following a coup led by the country’s leading military figure, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, that derailed the short-run democratic transition following al-Bashir’s ouster.

Sudan’s ambassador told the Security Council that the continued sanctions have had “a detrimental impact and negative consequences that extend beyond the arms embargo in Darfur and the targeted sanctions on some individuals,” including asset freezes and travel bans. Sanctions discourage investors and “encourage the rogue armed transboundary bands to disrupt peace and order in Darfur, owing to the imbalance of

hard power,” Mohamed said. Lifting sanctions would enable Sudan “to further play an active regional role,” he said.

In July 2021, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recommended four benchmarks to guide the Security Council in reviewing sanctions: progress on political and economic governance issues; transitional security arrangements in Darfur; the National Plan for Civilian Protection; and transitional justice and accountability. Mohamed said some of the benchmarks and targets “are completely unrealistic and cannot be met, neither in the Sudan nor elsewhere in the majority of developing nations.” He not not single out any of the benchmarks. The ambassador also accused some council members of refraining from engaging with Sudan’s government “to achieve realistic, applicable and measurable benchmarks.”

Austin mayor apologizes as city struggles to restore power

AUSTIN, Texas (AP): Widespread power outages in the Texas capital stretched into a third day for thousands of residents following a winter storm that was spiraling into a management crisis as city leaders remained unable to say when all the lights would come back on. Impatience among frazzled, freezing and fed-up families in Austin escalated even as milder weather returned. The newly elected mayor stood before cameras and apologized after a week of slow repairs, failed technology and lacking communication with the public.

“The city let its citizens down. The situation is unacceptable to the community, and it’s unacceptable to me,” said Mayor Kirk Watson, a Democrat who took office in January. “And I’m sorry.” While New England began shivering and closed schools under an Arctic blast expected to bring the coldest weather in a generation,

temperatures finally started to moderate and bring some relief to Austin, where at any given time about 30% of customers in the nation’s 11th-largest city have been without electricity since the ice storm swept into Texas. City officials said that significant progress was finally being made as frozen equipment and roads thawed. About 117,000 customers still lacked power, according to Austin Energy, the city’s utility. That’s down from a peak of around 170,000 people, nearly a third of all customers.

But frustration was not melting away for residents who still had no assurances or sense of when their power would return. “I just honestly think they were not prepared for any of this,” said Edward Kim, 43, whose home had been without power or heat. He was using a generator to keep his house “on life support,” while his wife took her 7-year-old daughter to her

office to get a shower. Steve Spencer, 63, had also been without power — despite the city’s utility calling him twice to tell him his power was on, he said. “I don’t know what’s going on down there,” he said.

Will Rison didn’t lose power, but his parents, who are in their 70s, have been without electricity. They’ve been coming to his home to charge their phones and take showers. “You can only wrap yourself in so many blankets and wait it out,” Rison said. For many, the outages stirred unpleasant memories of the 2021 blackouts in Texas, when hundreds of people died after the state’s power grid was pushed to the brink of total failure because of a lack of generation. That was not the case this week, as the grid maintained sufficient reserves. Energy experts said Austin’s dense tree canopy made the outages caused by fallen trees and iced-over power lines more widespread. Most power

lines are overhead, and Austin officials said burying existing lines would be expensive and more difficult to repair.

Austin Energy at one point said power would be fully restored by but then backtracked, saying the damage was worse than originally calculated. The utility’s online system for reporting outages also temporarily crashed this week, and city leaders did not hold a news conference to publicly answer questions. “This was a reminder you can have plenty of power plants but still have an unreliable grid,” said Michael Webber, professor of energy resources at the University of Texas at Austin. “The wires and poles are the weak point of the system.”

There have been no reports of deaths from this week’s power outages, though the storm and freeze have been blamed for at least 12 traffic fatalities on slick roads in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Nigeria’s Peter Obi started a movement. Can he become president?

ABUJA (Agencies): This month, after eight years of a Muhammadu Buhari presidency under which Nigeria emerged as the world’s poverty capital and endured two recessions in five years, Nigerians will head to the polls to elect his successor, hoping for a new era.

Since the country’s return to democracy in 1999, Nigeria’s presidency has rotated between two political parties, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) now in opposition, and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). But now, the trade union-backed Labour Party is campaigning with Peter Obi, former two-term governor of the southeastern state of Anambra, as leader — and people are taking notice.

Several polls and surveys have projected a win for Obi on February 25, including one conducted for Bloomberg News by Premise Data Corp in September 2022 in which 72 percent of respondents named him as their first-choice candidate. Competition, however, remains stiff despite Obi’s rivals carrying plenty of baggage.

The main one is APC’s Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the influential former governor of Lagos who was instrumental in Buhari’s historic victory in 2015. He has been deemed the candidate to beat, despite fighting to shake off controversies of a past life of alleged drug dealing and falsifying his age. Tinubu’s choice of a fellow Muslim, Kashim Shettima, as a run-

ning mate remains divisive in a population split almost evenly between Christians and Muslims. Tickets for the major parties are usually being split between the two major religions.

Allegations of corruption continue to trail Tinubu’s time in office and that of his former friend and business partner, the former vice president, Atiku Abubakar, who is the PDP’s presidential candidate. There is also the New Nigeria People’s Party (NNPP)’s Rabiu Kwankwaso, former governor of Kano and an influential figure in the north. Both Tinubu and Abubakar can marshal immense resources and may benefit from organised party structures that could help swing the election. But Obi, who was Abubakar’s running mate in 2019, has

sought to claim the moral high ground.

“I have challenged everyone, go and see whether there is anywhere a kobo [coin] of Anambra state money’s missing,” the 61-year-old declared emphatically at a town hall series organised this January by Channels Television, one of the country’s leading broadcasters. In the eight months since defecting from the PDP, Obi’s promises of inclusion and accountability have resonated far and wide, resulting in a groundswell of support reinvigorating an otherwise lacklustre campaign.

Numerous endorsements that have ruffled feathers in the political establishment have followed, including from former President Olusegun

Obasanjo who describes Obi as a “mentee” as well as prominent author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie who calls him her “dearest big bro”. For Obi, who was born in Onitsha, a town home to West Africa’s largest outdoor market, success first came in business. He is listed as the youngest chairman of a publicly listed bank in Nigeria and also has interests in beverage imports.

His wealth was useful during a lengthy litigation process preceding his first stint in public office as governor of Anambra. His party at the time, the All Grand Progressives Alliance (APGA) alleged electoral malpractice against the PDP’s Chris Ngige. Obi’s 2006 swearing-in was a seminal moment that effectively distorted

Nigeria’s electoral calendar; five of 36 state elections will not be held this year because other candidates have followed Obi’s path in getting the Supreme Court to agree that their tenures began after they were restored to office, not from when election results were initially announced. Obi was also impeached by the state parliament but the courts reversed the decision. But how did a wealthy capitalist and establishment figure become the avatar for political disruption and candidate for the union-backed Labour Party? Amaka Anku, professor at Georgetown’s Walsh School of Foreign Service and head of Eurasia Group’s Africa practice, said Obi has keyed into people’s desire for change.

The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
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What left by the Apex Committee

THE National Apex Committee expressed its determination to protect the life and property of the people at every cost and make an example out of the terrorists who shed the blood of Pakistanis. The forum assured the nation that those who attacked innocent Pakistanis, would be punished and the government would come up to its expectations.

Finally, the stage has been set once again, and the events started repeating after a pause of eight years, as the top civil-military joint mechanism has been revived in the center and at the provincial level. The first meeting of the National Apex Committee had been convened in Peshawar on Friday. The committee reviewed the implementation of the National Action Plan and deliberated over the suggestions put forth for its improvement in the current situation. The top national forum adopted multiple decisions including the upgradation of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), CTD, and police, and the provision of necessary training, weapons, and other equipment to LEAs to enhance their capacity. The committee also urged the Ulema and Religious scholars to condemn terrorism and play a positive role in eradicating this menace from the country.

In fact, Pakistan fell prey to the purlind policies of its leaders and no accountability of corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, and the nation faced multiple setbacks in history including the separation of East Pakistan, recurrent dictatorships, industrial depletion, agricultural and economic collapse, flourishing of extremism and perennial resurgence of terrorism, no implementation of comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism and repetition of APS like massacres in the country. If there had a stern action against the perpetrators of the Agartala Conspiracy no fall of Dhaka was to happen and if the first dictator had been prosecuted for waging war against the state no other coup could occur if Justice trading had been ensured no horse trading ever happened. Similarly, if the perpetrators of the APS attack would have been hanged no terror leader ever dares to launch carnage in the Police lines Mosque in Peshawar.

Apparently, the haphazard and inconsistent policies have led the country to this day that each and every nook and corner of the national life describes a dismal condition because our leaders always take an apologetic and rueful approach in dealing with state affairs and mostly preferred party, individual or institutional interests over national prestige, peace, and prosperity.

The issue of terrorism is not an isolated phenomenon it has deep roots in our domestic policies including education, mosque and seminaries, immigration as well as foreign diplomacy, particularly regarding Afghanistan and millions of Afghan Refugees living in the country over the past four decades. Recently, the Afghan interim government has displayed a cold shoulder to Pakistani authorities and advised them to search for terrorism-safe havens in their own land. Realistically, Pakistan needs to rationalize its internal and external policies and adopt a facts-based approach instead of security analysis, ifs, and butts. The Government must enforce a stern justice system, strict border management along with an anti-corruption campaign in custom/Border Police, enforcement of CVE measures, and an immediate return of Afghan refugees to their homeland, so peace can be restored and economic revival could begin in the country.

US-Hungary diplomatic row

RECENTLY, the Hungarian foreign minister has accused the US ambassador to Budapest, David Pressman of interfering in Hungary's internal affairs, meddling in Hungary's judiciary, and pushing American colonialism. Hungarian Foreign Minister, Peter Szijarto termed Pressman's comments irrelevant and completely unacceptable to a sovereign nation like Hungary.

The United States of America and the right-wing Hungarian government of nationalist leader Viktor Orban are not on friendly terms since President Biden replaced Orban's beloved friend Donald Trump in the White House. Later, the war in Ukraine became another reason for their mutual disagreement as Orban's Hungary did not side with the US-led western coalition against Russia particularly Budapest actively opposed western sanctions against Moscow and called them poisonous and counter-productive for European Nations.

The US Ambassador to Hungary, David Pressman had criticized Budapest's policy regarding the war in Ukraine and Orban's pro-Moscow doctrine since his appointment in Budapest in August last year. Interestingly, American Envoy smartly denied Peter's assertion with another intervention while saying that he does not consider Russia's attempt to unilaterally redraw the borders of Europe as just a domestic political development in Hungary.

Historically, western diplomats particularly American envoys had been trying to dictate and lecture third-world nations in the past, and nearly a dozen western diplomats issued a joint communique to foreign governments including Turkey, Pakistan, and others in recent years. However, the liberal diplomat was disliked by the host nation long before his arrival in Budapest and confirmation hearing in the US Senate. According to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, foreign envoys represent their countries in the host nation and are used to protect their country's interests and promote bilateral relations between the two nations. Diplomats enjoy various immunities but are not entitled to criticize the policies of the host governments, however powerful nations observe global laws on their territory but try to introduce their own creed in foreign countries. Such policies only survive in former colonies and banana republics, while independent nations vehemently dislike uncourteous diplomacy.

What are the possible endgames in Ukraine war?

AS we approach the first anniversary of Russia's invasion later this month, the Ukraine war remains the world's dominant geopolitical conflict. The big-picture structural issue is the post-Cold War order in Europe and the place of a shrunken and much-diminished Russia in the European security order and architecture. History did not end with the defeat of the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Nor was the power status of post-Soviet Russia settled. The immediate conflict parties are Russia and Ukraine.

Yet, in a very real sense, Ukraine's territory is the battleground for a proxy war between Russia and the West that reflects the unsettled questions since the end of the Cold War. In his influential book, "The Anarchical Society" (1977), Oxford professor Hedley Bull argued that war is the arbiter of the creation, survival and elimination of actors in the system, especially the major powers; of the ebb and flow of political frontiers; and of the rise and decline of regimes. This is the real stake.

The precise course and battlefield ebbs and flows of the war are impossible to work out for independent observers. As always, all conflict parties are deeply involved in propaganda, highlighting their own successes while exaggerating enemy casualties and atrocities.

It seems reasonably safe to infer that Moscow badly miscalculated its initial ability to shock and intimidate Kyiv into submission with a surprise blitzkrieg, and the war has entered a grinding attrition phase. Retired British Lt. Gen. Jonathon Riley notes that Russia committed under 10% of its available combat troops to Ukraine, indicating firstly, that its war aims were always limited and secondly that it retains the ability to regroup and go on the offensive against selected targets.

John Mearsheimer argues that had Putin's goal been to invade, conquer, occupy and incorporate all of Ukraine into a greater

Russia, the initial force would have had to be closer to 1.5 million than 190,000.

Putin's political aim might also be to break Europe's political resolve and fracture the North Atlantic community's cohesion and unity. If so, thus far at least the opposite has happened. And the asym-

metrization country — a slow and gradual escalation is the more likely short- and medium-term trajectory.

This could take the form of intensified Russian attacks on critical Ukrainian infrastructure, increased NATO military resupply of depleted

Ramesh Thakur

lowness of Russia's image as a formidable military power. The war has highlighted flaws and shortcomings in Russian arms, technological sophistication, doctrine, training, logistics and integration of land, air and sea capabilities; that is, in its combat worthiness on

conflict parties. This is why Western sanctions on Russia in effect pitted the West just as much against the rest — an unintended but predictable outcome.

Counteracting persistent Western criticisms that India had somehow compromised on moral principles in sourcing oil imports from Russia, India's petro-

impose an inconvenience, amid widespread poverty in India they can have life and death consequences.

All that said, the risk is if the West pursues outright defeat and humiliation of Russia, Putin might yet resort to the use of nuclear weapons that will end in catastrophe for everyone. All sides have been extremely careful thus far to avoid any direct Russia-NATO clash. But will NATO be seduced by the temptation of regime change in Moscow, or by Ukraine's call for this, into rejecting opportunities for an end to the conflict before costs begin to exceed gains?

Even short of that, it is hard to see Russia giving up Crimea: it is too important from a purely strategic point of view. For the present, though, both the timing of when to commence serious negotiations as well as the terms of a settlement that is minimally acceptable to all the main conflict parties will depend on the course of the war. Typically, negotiated cease-fires and peace agreements are preceded by intensified fighting as all sides seek to create facts on the ground to strengthen their bargaining positions when talks begin around the conference table.

Just as prudent nations under wise leaders prepare for war while at peace, so too they must prepare for peace even in the midst of armed conflict. Battles won and lost — hard military facts on the ground — will determine the cartographic maps that delineate Russia and Ukraine's new borders, perhaps with some tweaking in post-cessfire negotiations to take into account demographics and other factors. That will still leave open other big questions to be addressed: the nature and political orientation of the regime in Kyiv; the status of Crimea; the place of ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine; Ukraine's relations with Russia, NATO and the EU; the identity of guarantors and nature of guarantees, if any, for Ukraine; and the timing of an exit from sanctions for Russia.

Japan Times

John Mearsheimer argues that had Putin's goal been to invade, conquer, occupy and incorporate all of Ukraine into a greater Russia, the initial force would have had to be closer to 1.5 million than 190,000. Putin's political aim might also be to break Europe's political resolve and fracture the North Atlantic community's cohesion and unity. If so, thus far at least the opposite has happened. And the asymmetrical equation remains. As the undoubted aggressor with pretensions to great power status, Russia will lose by not winning while Ukraine as the weaker object of aggression will win by not losing. With inflamed nationalism on both sides — fueled in Ukraine by naked Russian aggression and in Russia by the conviction that the West's real goal is not to protect Ukraine but to destroy Russia as a functioning country — a slow and gradual escalation is the more likely short- and medium-term trajectory. This could take the form of intensified Russian attacks on critical Ukrainian infrastructure, increased NATO military resupply of depleted Ukrainian arsenals and strikes by Ukraine ever deeper into Russia proper. In turn this escalates the probability of the conflict parties becoming trapped in a game of nuclear Russian roulette. The US has managed to bleed Russia heavily by arming Ukraine without putting its land, sea or air troops into battle. But how amenable is Kyiv to US pressure to compromise? Putin has exposed the hollowness of Russia's image as a formidable military power. The war has highlighted flaws and shortcomings in Russian arms, technological sophistication, doctrine, training, logistics and integration of land, air and sea capabilities; that is, in its combat worthiness on the battlefield. But NATO military stocks have also been seriously depleted and the weaponization of trade, finance and energy has, on balance so far, proven costlier to Western peoples than to Russians.

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the battlefield.

But NATO military stocks have also been seriously depleted and the weaponization of trade, finance and energy has, on balance so far, proven costlier to Western peoples than to Russians. Every economic transaction has a buyer as well as a seller and criminalizing the transaction for political reasons inflicts pain on buyers as well, including innocent third parties outside the

leum minister (and former permanent representative to the United Nations), Hardeep Singh Puri, pointed out in a CNN interview on Oct. 31 that Europe's purchase of Russian energy in one afternoon equated to India's energy imports from Russia in three months. Moreover, he insisted that India's primary moral duty is to its own consumers. That is, where for high-income populations in the West rising energy prices

I went viral in Germany for a meme about Scholz

A couple of weeks ago, at a moment of huge frustration over Chancellor Olaf Scholz's foot-dragging on allowing Europe's German-made Leopard tanks to go to Ukraine, a Ukrainian friend WhatsApped me a satirical mockup on "Scholzing". Next to a photograph of the chancellor, it defined Scholzing, dictionary-style, as: "verb: communicating good intentions only to use/find/invent any reason imaginable to delay these and/or prevent them from happening". I found this sharp and amusing, quickly retweeted it, and thought no more about it. My Twitter account seemed to be buzzing, but then I'd been writing a lot about the issue myself.

Six days later, I was watching an interview with Scholz on Germany's ZDF television channel when the interviewer confronted him with "Scholzing", attributing the coinage to "a British historian". I went back to my Twitter feed to find that this one quick tweet had been viewed 1.1m times. In German and international media, the definition was being widely quoted as mine. Since, as we all

know, the internet never lies, it has now become a historical fact that I thus defined "Scholzing". (I had incautiously tweeted the meme directly from WhatsApp, so it didn't show up as something sent from Ukraine. I subsequently clarified this on Twitter, but of course no one reads the clarification.)

I asked my Ukrainian friend if he knew who was actually behind this satirical mockup. He didn't, but Ukrainians have been using the word for months. Already last June, a tweet from @biz_ukraine_mag reported that "to 'Scholz' is now an accepted term in Ukraine meaning to continually promise something without ever actually having any intention of doing it".

Still and all, the reactions have been interesting. One of the editors of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany's leading conservative paper, wrote a semi-humorous editorial commentary in which he said that "our English-speaking friends" would be better advised to reflect first on "Bidening, Trumping, Trussing and Johnsoning, not to mention Harrying and Meghaning". The clear implication, albeit lightly expressed,

was that we Anglo-Saxons should mind our own business. (By contrast, I would welcome any German satirical swipe at Johnsoning, although support for Ukraine happens to be the one and only issue on which Boris Johnson deserves respect.) Since, however, the coinage comes from Ukraine, not the UK, this little German-Anglosphere sideswipe need bother us no longer.

Much more significant was Scholz's own response on ZDF's What now ...? programme. Having dilated on the amount of support Germany has given to Ukraine, he said, in what had every appearance of being a line prepared with his spin doctor, "the translocation of Scholzing is 'Germany is doing the most'". It's true that German support for Ukraine has indeed been very considerable, as you would hope from the democracy with the biggest economy in the EU and the most extensive ties to eastern Europe. Yet to say "Germany is doing the most" is not merely self-satisfied, even self-righteous, but also self-evidently false.

It's the United States that

has done the most. Indeed, for all the amazing courage and skill of the Ukrainian armed forces, were it not for the scale and speed of US military support much more of Ukraine might today be occupied by Russia. So really we Europeans — all of us, Brits very much included — should be reflecting on why it is that, nearly 80 years after 1945, we still rely on Uncle Sam to defend European soil, European freedom and European security.

Meanwhile, a huge tragedy is unfolding before our eyes. What we — and democratic Germany more than anyone — swore after 1945 would "never again" (Nie Wieder!) happen is happening again: a European country is subjected to a war of terror that has clearly genocidal aspects, including multiple atrocities committed against civilians, dehumanising rhetoric and forced Russification in occupied territories. Some 14 million Ukrainians have fled their homes. I recently attended a funeral of young soldiers in Ukraine, spoke to some of their wounded comrades, heard the wrenching tears of a refugee from Mariupol.

Now a new Russian offensive seems imminent. More people will be killed, maimed, orphaned, marked for an entire lifetime. In such a situation, time is of the essence — and delay makes time work for Putin. "Scholzing", in the sense of careful, slow, managerial decision-making, is fine in peacetime economic policymaking, but it gives the other side the advantage in war. (In fairness, one should note that there are a few Scholzers inside the Biden administration, and more in some other European capitals.) It would have been possible to start preparing a European Leopard initiative six months ago. Germany would not have been "going it alone". It would have been at the heart of a European concert of nations. This would have been true "European sovereignty" in practice — and welcome German leadership.

Nobody knows what will happen on the battlefield this year, but one quite probable result of the slowness and hesitancy exemplified by the German chancellor is a kind of escalating stalemate, with ongoing trench warfare resembling that of the first world war. When

the shooting war eventually winds down, there could be a semi-frozen conflict, with Russia hanging on to a significant part of the territory it has occupied by force since 24 February 2022. At home, Putin could then claim a kind of victory, a historic reconquest of at least part of Catherine the Great's Novorossiyya (New Russia), thus also extending the life of his tyranny. His example would encourage Xi Jinping to have a go at Taiwan, driving an even bigger nail into the coffin of a "rules-based international order". In short, this would be the negation of everything democratic Germany has stood for.

These are the real stakes, the reason "Scholzing" is no laughing matter. I believe passionately that Germany should be in the lead, not the rear, in a shared, Euro-Atlantic effort to end the largest war in Europe since 1945 in the only way that will bring lasting peace. If the term actually came to signify "Germany is doing the most" — meaning also acting fast and decisively — I would be the first to sing hymns of praise to Scholzing. If only it would be true.

Sri Lanka recovering well thanks to support of friends

Pakeer Mohiideen Amza

IT gives me immense pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations and warm felicitations to all my countrymen and women domiciled in Saudi Arabia on the happy occasion of the 75th National Day of Sri Lanka. Seventy-five years is a small fraction for a country with 2,500 years of recorded and proud history.

We have had ups and downs, like any other country. We have had challenges and opportunities, like many others. We faced calamities, both natural and man-made. But despite all these challenges, we remained resilient. The tsunami devastation of

2004 and the 26 years of armed conflict were the challenges that we successfully faced in our contemporary history. The current economic challenges that we are undergoing are also compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine crisis, which have had an impact on the global economy. It is heartening to see that Sri Lanka is now on the path to recovery, due to the strong support of our friends and partners in the international arena, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In spite of all the above, we have excelled in our social indicators, parallel to the developed world,

thanks to our heavy investments in education and health. Sri Lanka-Saudi Arabia relations date back several centuries. Sri Lanka was a pivotal point on the historic silk route, which was used extensively by Arab traders. In ancient times, Arabs called Sri Lanka "Serendip," which was later added to the English vocabulary as serendipity.

The relations between Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka are based on common values, mutual respect, noninterference and respect for sovereignty. Both countries support each other in international forums. The Sri

Lankan leadership has, on numerous occasions, expressed its admiration for Vision 2030, a well-thought-out strategy that takes into consideration the kingdom's strengths and capabilities, as well as the impressive progress toward realizing the vision's objectives that has been made so far under the able leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Sri Lankan leaders have also articulated their impression of the massive giga-development projects embarked on in the Kingdom in the recent past as part of Vision 2030. In

this context, Sri Lanka is pleased to reiterate its support of Saudi Arabia's bid to host Expo 2030, which goes in parallel with Vision 2030.

The past year has been a productive one for Sri Lanka-Saudi Arabia relations. In March 2022, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan visited Sri Lanka. This was the first bilateral foreign ministerial visit from the Kingdom to Sri Lanka since we established diplomatic relations in 1974. Following this visit, we had four ministerial visits from Sri Lanka to the Kingdom in the space of 10 months. Last week, we concluded a successful

visit to Saudi Arabia by Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry. Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia inked an Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and initiated deliberations to conclude several other agreements during the visit. This visit has no doubt infused positive vibes into our relations.

Our leadership in Sri Lanka also values the messages of felicitations from King Salman and the crown prince on the occasion of our National Day. I humbly submit that our leaders and people greatly value the messages of friendship and felicitations. Long live Sri Lanka-Saudi Arabia relations.

Will Turkiye abandon Syria’s rebels?

Christopher Phillips

AS Ankara and Damascus edge toward reconciliation, the remnants of Syria’s rebels in the north are concerned that their long-standing Turkish patron will soon abandon them. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has insisted that Ankara will continue to support the opposition. However, it is unlikely that Damascus will accept any deal that allows for permanent rebel strongholds, with Syrian President Bashar Assad having long pledged to recapture “every inch” of territory lost during the civil war. With his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan seemingly keen to move the detente forward before the upcoming elections in May, the remaining rebels are understandably nervous.

There are two significant remaining rebel areas in northern Syria. Firstly, the three pockets around Afrin, Azaz and Tal Abyad, carved out by the Turkish military to keep Syrian Kurdish militants away from Turkiye’s border. These are nominally ruled over by the Syrian National Army, a collection of rebel militias armed, trained and salaried by Ankara. However, Turkiye is widely accepted to be the true authority, with Ankara running schools and other essential services.

Second is Idlib and its environs, originally captured from Assad by the rebels during the civil war and administered by various militias. While some of these have also been armed and supported by Turkiye, by far the most powerful is Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. Known as HTS, which remains largely independent of Ankara, despite some cooperation. HTS has sought to moderate in recent years, encouraged by Turkiye to disown its origins as an Al-Qaeda affiliate, but Western governments remain unconvinced, keeping it listed as a terrorist organization.

Both rebel regions oppose Turkiye’s moves to reconcile with Assad. Angry protests broke out in Azaz and other Turkish-ruled towns after Syria and Turkiye’s defense ministers met in Moscow in December, while Syrian National Army factions, HTS and other militias have come out

Army units into Assad’s army, with Turkish guarantees, could be one way for Ankara to persuade some rebels to accept normalization with Damascus.

However, no such agreement would work with HTS or the other fighters in Idlib. The Syrian National Army fighters have

However, in principle, folding Syrian National Army units into Assad’s army, with Turkish guarantees, could be one way for Ankara to persuade some rebels to accept normalization with Damascus. However, no such agreement would work with HTS or the other fighters in Idlib. The Syrian National Army fighters have already shown themselves willing to shift allegiance in search of pay and stability by signing up for the fight against Syria’s Kurds, rather than Assad.

against reconciliation. However, most have been careful not to be too critical of Erdogan. Despite sharing opposition to a deal between Ankara and Damascus, a reconciliation would likely impact the two rebel areas differently.

Fehim Tastekin of Al-Monitor reports that Turkish officials have mooted the Syrian National Army being integrated into the Syrian Army. This would echo reconciliation agreements made between surrendering rebel groups in Rastan and Deraa earlier in Syria’s war, whereby oppositionists remained in the areas they held, but their units accepted Assad’s rule. These agreements, brokered and guaranteed by Russia, were frequently broken, with Rastan’s former rebels deployed elsewhere and some of Deraa’s launching a low-level insurgency. However, in principle, folding Syrian National

already shown themselves willing to shift allegiance in search of pay and stability by signing up for the fight against Syria’s Kurds, rather than Assad. The Idlib rebels, in contrast, have remained steadfast in their resistance to Damascus and will not likely be won over. Nor would Assad want them, as he regards HTS as unreconstructed extremists and is wary of inviting the enemy into the regime’s military.

The improbability of HTS and other Idlib rebels reconciling with Assad therefore raises the prospect that any Ankara-Damascus deal will reopen fighting in northwest Syria. With Assad unwilling to accept Idlib’s de facto independence, he and his Russian and Iranian allies will likely look to recapture the rogue province as soon as Turkiye’s support for it ends — even if Ankara has trans-

ferred control of Afrin, Azaz and Tal Abyad.

This, of course, would be problematic for Turkiye. Idlib is far more populous than the three northern pockets, currently hosting up to 3.4 million people, including many refugees who fled Assad’s control elsewhere in Syria. Any renewed fighting or the prospect of an Assad takeover would likely prompt many to seek refuge in Turkiye. Erdogan would strongly oppose this, given his reconciliation with Assad is partly driven by a desire to repatriate the increasingly unpopular 4 million Syrian refugees his country already hosts. An Assad invasion of Idlib also raises the prospect of HTS and other militants themselves fleeing to Turkiye, giving Erdogan another headache on home soil he would rather avoid.

Ankara is well aware of this dilemma and it is no minor footnote in an inevitable reconciliation between Erdogan and Assad. Indeed, Idlib and HTS’ fate could well prove such an insurmountable problem that it derails the whole process. Erdogan, of course, may be conscious of this. Much of his courting of Damascus is aimed at winning over anti-refugee voters and it is unlikely that a full reconciliation deal with Assad will be worked out before the polls in May. After that, provided he is reelected, he will be under less pressure to accept a full abandonment of Idlib and may try to persuade Assad to accept some kind of compromise.

Indeed, this might explain the rebels’ cautiousness in condemning Ankara’s recent diplomacy with Damascus: Their best chance for survival is an Erdogan victory in May and they do not want to alienate him. In contrast, were victory to go to his opponents, who feel less attachment to Syria’s rebels, the chances of a deal with Assad and their abandonment would increase considerably.



When everyone from coffin-makers to sewage attendants is on strike, it’s clear work isn’t working

AT midnight on 25 January, warehouse workers at Amazon’s BHX4 in Coventry stopped sorting and scanning goods, walked away from their workstations, past management and security, and became the first workers to officially go on strike against the corporate giant in the UK. In taking their action, these workers joined striking Co-op Funeralcare coffin manufacturers in Glasgow, sewage plant attendants and flood forecasting officers at the Environment Agency, and security and visitor services staff at the British Museum in London, National Museums Scotland, and the National Museum of Liverpool.

These disputes, along with other settled and potential disputes, make up the current wave of industrial action in Britain. This episode of renewed labour

Polly Smythe

GMB member on the spot, spending the evening on picket duty. Stopping HGV lorries, and asking them not to cross the picket line, he shouted “driver go back, no one’s inside, everyone’s here”.

Where workers are winning their pay demands, they’re largely seeing settlements below the level of inflation, which is still more than if they’d not taken strike action. Settlements often include one-off payments, which happened, for instance, at Shelter, the National Coal Mining Museum, and Felixstowe port. While bonuses provide immediate and genuine relief to workers and shouldn’t be sniffed at, they aren’t the same as permanent salary uplifts. The Office for National Statistics reported 467,000 days were “lost” to strikes in November, a 10-year high. At 323 in November,

staff to replace striking workers has already been used by some employers. The government has avoided engaging with the root cause of the disputes and instead introduced a draconian new law imposing minimum service levels on employees, while hiding behind pay review bodies.

On 1 February, the TUC’s “protect the right to strike” day, close to half a million workers went on strike, with civil servants, teachers, university staff and train drivers walking out. Outside Downing Street, children who’d joined a National Education Union rally wrote the names of their schools in chalk on the pavement. So far, this strike wave has seen limited coordination of action between unions, making this day both significant, and a reminder of the difficulties of meaningful coordination. Pat Cullen, the general secretary of the RCN, has clear-

The GMB has taken bus drivers out on strike in Sunderland and on Arriva’s north west route, as has the RMT in Somerset and Cornwall. The strike wave has brought with it an entire generation who have never stood on a picket line before. The very act of organising and striking can be educative, transformative, and disruptive to ideas of what your job, union, and life are supposed to look like. During the 24-hour Amazon strike, a worker who arrived for his night shift instead became a GMB member on the spot, spending the evening on picket duty. Stopping HGV lorries, and asking them not to cross the picket line, he shouted “driver go back, no one’s inside, everyone’s here”. Where workers are winning their pay demands, they’re largely seeing settlements below the level of inflation, which is still more than if they’d not taken strike action. Settlements often include one-off payments, which happened, for instance, at Shelter, the National Coal Mining Museum, and Felixstowe port.

militancy has been called everything from the unimaginative “winter of discontent” to the overwrought “general strike”. It spans all sectors, and strikes are happening or are on the cards in industries that aren’t traditionally strike-prone, such as charity and entertainment. And, unlike the biggest disputes in the 2010s – the public sector strikes of 2011 and 2014 – this time there is substantial private sector involvement.

In transport, strikes have been bringing trains, planes, buses, trams, and in the case of gig economy drivers for Uber and Bolt, taxis, to a halt. Unite has reported an 827% increase in strike action for bus drivers working for operators such as Arriva, Stagecoach and Abellio. The GMB has taken bus drivers out on strike in Sunderland and on Arriva’s north west route, as has the RMT in Somerset and Cornwall.

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the number of strikes happening simultaneously is the highest it’s been since November 1978, the original “winter of discontent”.

Most strikes been limited to one or two days, although there have been a handful of indefinite strikes: criminal barristers, Jacobs Cream Crackers factory workers and tram drivers on the West Midlands Metro. In October, Unison members embarked on continuous strike action after a council house repair worker was denied sick pay by the Barnet Group after being injured at work. The long Conservative assault on the public sector has meant striking workers in health-care, the civil service, and now in education and the fire brigade, are able to channel public frustration with disruption caused by disputes away from workers and towards the government. I’ve spoken to nurses who report better staffing levels on strike days, as the minimum safety levels agreed for life and limb cover are higher than everyday understaffed shifts.

The government seems to believe that settling one dispute will result in it having to settle them all, despite having already agreed a pay increase with criminal barristers last summer. Legislation introduced in July allowing agency

ly stated her opposition to coordinated action, saying “our days of action and future planning is based only on what is best for nursing”. Nurses will instead strike on 6 and 7 February.

Dissatisfaction with work has led not only to strikes but also to less coordinated forms of action in the shape of a high quit rate and chronic staff shortages. In November 2022, 13.3% of businesses surveyed by the Office for National Statistics reported experiencing a shortage of workers, with vacancies highest in social work and food services. Between last July and September, more than 1 million people moved from one job to another.

This high a quit rate can be suggestive of worker power – you don’t walk off your job without being fairly confident you’ll find another one – but it’s also a reminder that far too often workers navigate poor pay and conditions alone, leaving one bad situation for another. In this sense, that workers are resigned to the absence of trade unions from their lives. Non-union workers are seeing the victories being won by organised labour, making now a crucial moment for unions to reach out to those who want to improve their workplaces for themselves and their colleagues.

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Hope for ordinary Ukrainians in 2023 is victorious return of their country – and of the light

Andrey Kurkov

UKRAINE has entered 2023 as if going into a dark room where it is impossible to turn on the light. It seems that there are windows, but there is darkness behind them too. We must wait for the dawn or the restoration of the power supply. While there is neither one nor the other, darkness provokes a feeling of deep fatigue.

The Lviv University teacher and well-known Ukrainian poet Galina Kruk has noticed an unsettling pattern in her life – during a blackout, the power banks and batteries that feed her torches and lamps stop working about half an hour before the electricity comes back on. Then there is pitch darkness, which seems even thicker than when the lights first went out – that “early” darkness with which it was still possible to somehow cope. These half-hour periods of impenetrable darkness, during which a person feels completely helpless, are the most difficult, both psychologically and physically. The time stretches to infinity – space shrinks and becomes terribly cramped. You feel acute hunger and a desire for sleep. Your muscles lose strength and physical movements require energy that is no longer there. For Galina, this state repeats itself every day and already she dreads these half hours without light.

In complete darkness, without additional sources of energy, a person indeed becomes defenceless. You might have a candle, but it

gives just enough light to see your fear in the mirror, your inner condition written on your face, welling up in your eyes. After all, electricity allows communication with relatives and friends and the surrounding world in general. It is impossible to communicate with the help of a candle, except to send a signal from the window – “I am alive!” A sense of helplessness worries many, and as the periods of darkness drag on and become more frequent and batteries and power banks are no longer equal to the battle, people seek advice on how to cope. They exchange information about new, more powerful power banks and rechargeable batteries, about LED lamps that work for a long time from power banks with brighter bulbs that allow you to read books for hours. There is also advice on taking vitamin D. Apparently, the lack of this vitamin exacerbates depression – a key danger for people who regularly find themselves in complete darkness.

Complete darkness – when nothing and no one is visible – makes you think more about yourself. You pay more attention to physical problems and are more likely to hear your inner voices – anxious and nagging. When light conquers darkness and the electricity is turned on, there is temporary calm and thoughts switch from yourself to the world around. Galina thinks about another parcel

of medicines that she recently sent to the Ukrainian military in Bakhmut. Has it already been delivered? Have any of the soldiers found the medicines useful? Usually, packages for the Ukrainian army reach the addressees at the speed of courier mail and feedback from the front-line comes quickly.

Supporting the war effort has become a form of therapy, if not a cure, for many Ukrainians. Galina wants to write poetry about life and love, but she stops herself. She is not sure that during a war you can write about something other than war. But if you write only about war, then it is, as it were, magnified. Galina’s friend, Irina, who also lives in Lviv, takes an ironic view of the forced darkness in the city’s apartments. She is sure that the city can expect a population explosion in the coming year. The lack of electricity and internet could also bring children and teenagers back to live communication, which she feels is no bad thing, although not everyone agrees with her.

Many parents dream of their children learning to live without the internet, but communication in the dark is not the most pleasant, and children and candlelight are never a safe combination. The children themselves relate to the enforced darkness or the lack of internet in different ways. The son of our Kyiv friends, 13-year-old

Artem, does not grieve when the electricity goes out in the morning or afternoon. He has remote school lessons at that time. No internet means no classes. But if there is a power cut in the evening, Artem gets bored: his mood deteriorates quickly.

Artem and his parents live on the 19th floor, and several times a day they have to walk up the stairs to their apartment. Using the elevator even when there is electricity is like playing Russian roulette. You can get stuck in there for hours! They have improved their fitness, but also go to bed earlier due to fatigue and the lack of electricity. Only Artem falls asleep much later than his parents. During the day, when there is electricity, he downloads movies and music videos to his smartphone – in the dark, he watches everything until the battery on his smartphone runs out or until he falls asleep.

Soon, as the days get longer and nights shorter, nature itself will come to the aid of Ukrainians whose depression is heightened by darkness and the lack of electricity. If good news from the front is added to this, it will be easier for Ukrainians to switch to a more optimistic, spring-like mood. For now, they are holding on, sometimes with the last of their strength and willpower – holding on to their belief that Ukraine will win and restore everything that Russia destroys, including energy facilities, including the light.

The Guardian

Deciphering the dynamics of Turkiye-Oman relations

Sinem Cengiz

THE natural gas purchase agreement signed in the last week by Oman and Turkiye is the latest in a series of small steps showing both Ankara and Muscat’s interest in improving bilateral relations. The deal was the result of mutual efforts to expand energy cooperation between the two countries.

On Monday, Oman LNG signed a long-term agreement with Turkish state energy company the BOTAS Petroleum Pipeline Corporation to supply 1.4 billion cubic meters of liquefied natural gas annually under a 10-year contract starting in 2025. Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Fatih Donmez said that, although the agreement is valid for 10 years, it could be extended if the conditions are favorable. Several other international energy firms have recently signed long-term agreements with Oman LNG to import LNG from the sultanate. Turkiye’s natural gas deal was the outcome of a visit to Oman by Donmez last August. His visit and meetings there focused on investment opportunities in oil, gas, renewable energy and hydrogen. After the visit, a delegation from BOTAS went to Oman for talks. Turkiye is to host a gas summit on Feb. 14-15, with the motto “Securing the Future Together.”

Turkiye and Oman share a complementarity of means and goals in

the region and beyond, and the recent natural gas purchase agreement is an important step in a trust and relations-developing process aimed at deepening ties. It fits within Oman’s foreign policy focus on economic diplomacy, while it is also in line with Turkiye’s increasing interest in enhancing trade relations with individual Gulf countries. Moreover, like the other Gulf countries, Oman is envisioning an economic development initiative, which is known as Oman Vision 2040. Turkiye could benefit from taking a more active role in this regard.

The Turkiye-Gulf reconciliation has created room for Oman to foster its relations with Ankara without the pressure of the tensions seen over the past decade. Oman, which is known as the “Switzerland of Arabia” due to its legacy of diplomacy, pursues a neutral and inclusive approach toward Turkiye. This approach is solely motivated by pragmatism and aims to fortify its position in an increasingly volatile region. As part of this policy, it has improved its economic and defense relations with Ankara. But these relations are still at a moderate level.

However, significant developments have taken place in the past two years. In January 2021, the

Omani-Turkish Friendship Association was established by the Omani Foreign Ministry to symbolize the two countries’ continued cooperation. In November, Turkiye and Oman signed a cooperation protocol to increase mutual trade and cooperation in various fields. In January, Oman ratified a protocol amending its air services agreement with Turkiye that was signed in Montreal last year.

Energy is not the only dimension of Turkish-Omani relations. In 2001, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to promote military cooperation. It is hard to make bold statements about a cooperation deal between two countries on military-defense issues. However, the military relations between Oman and Turkiye are reportedly said to be anchored on the strong foothold that Turkish defense companies Havelsan and FNSS have gained in the sultanate.

Also, there were reports in 2021 that the Omani and Turkish defense ministries had reached a preliminary understanding on Muscat’s procurement of Bayraktar TB2 drones, but no details were disclosed. Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar are among the GCC countries to have already signed agreements with Turkiye to buy TB2s.

Meanwhile, among the Gulf countries, Oman and Saudi Arabia



Political instability biggest threat to Pakistan's economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday put forward the fact that political instability and adventurism had been the biggest threat to Pakistan's economy.

He was speaking at a Round Table Conference on "Pakistan's Economics", jointly organized by the Planning Ministry and the Lahore School of Economics, in Lahore.

The minister said in 2018, the outgoing government's Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) was worth Rs 1000 billion and Defence Budget was Rs 1000 billion as well - Whereas in 2022, the PSDP was reduced to merely Rs 500 Billion or less and "PTI's government started to default on public payments in their last financial quarter".

Professor Iqbal said that in order to earn policy dividends, there needed to be continuity as policies take root, grow, evolve, and start bearing fruits over a decade. Thus, policy efforts to expand a resource base in Pakistan (undertaken by the PML-N's government in its tenure) failed to bear fruits because they became a victim of political instability.

The planning ministry further added that the ongoing debate around the economy must not discount the political landscape and its challenges as economic measures or woes are not in.

He said in this Vision 2010, it was identified that Pakistan must expand its energy capacity (despite the fact that Pakistan was an energy surplus in 90s).

However, the minister said that the democratic government was thrown out and as a result, Pakistan

faced one of the worse energy crises in 2010 and onwards.

Similarly, the minister said that in 2013, his office came up with 'Vision 2025' that envisioned Pakistan becoming one of the top 25 economies by 2025.

The government took all measures to actualize this goal by overcoming law and order issues, defeating terrorism, and breaking bottlenecks of energy and infrastructure (through CPEC). As a result, think tanks like PWC started predicting that Pakistan can become a top 25 economy by 2025.

Minister Iqbal said that the PML-N government for the first time ever transformed Pak-China strategic relations into economic relations - As a result, billions of dollars of investment started to pour into infrastructure/energy and other sectors. Thar Coal, a

national resource was tapped for the first time ever.

He said the entire momentum that Pakistan picked up from 2013-18 got lost to the adventurism of "Tabdeeli".

Furthermore, he said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s initial phase of infrastructural and energy projects was to be followed by the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) by 2024, where relocating Chinese investments (worth billions of dollars) were to be housed. However, from 2018 to 2022, "work never started on 5 out of 9 proposed SEZs and there is embarrassing progress on 4 SEZs that actually got started".

The minister said that Pakistan had two choices and stands at a critical juncture: either, It can again go through a stabilisation process and then again aspire for growth but will

then be hit by circular debt/budget deficit and breaks will have to be applied "Or we can address structural issues of economy by focusing on exports to expand its overall base and by including value-added goods and services. As of now, the top publicly traded companies of Pakistan have negligible contribution towards exports, as current incentives do not push them to do so" he said.

Minister Iqbal said that its true that Pakistan needs to walk through a stabilisation process but that must be coupled with long-term industrial framework that realigns economic incentives in the country due to which Pakistan's savings are not parked in real estate/gold/foreign currency but instead goes into making Pakistan a productive economy across all sectors.

He said that in order to extend ownership of Pakistan's reform agenda to people at large including academic/practitioners/civil society movers and shakers, the

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has launched a Champions of Reform network which is open to all and anyone interested can join it by visiting Ministry's website pc.gov.pk

Minister Iqbal said that govt is also focusing on harnessing private and foreign direct investment in sectors related to export-oriented goods and services.

Earlier, Prof. Dr. Azam Chaudhary, WTO Chair, and Dean of Economics at LSE presenting on current economic challenges and way out for Pakistan said that in deliberations, it came out that inflationary

pressure is due to high aggregate demand because Pakistan has continued to spend which is illustrated by the high budget deficit.

Besides, that he said a high surge in commodity prices globally, especially in fuel, volatile exchange rates linked to Balance of Payment problems.

In proposed solutions, Dr. Azam stated that measures suggested by IMF, which the current Gov't might be forced to implement are necessary for Pakistan's economy.

He proposed to let the exchange rate find balance in the open market, reduce the budget deficit by cutting back on the expenditure on development projects and increase taxes.

Dr. Azam said that the government finds itself in a dilemma as on one hand there are measures to be taken to stabilize the econo-

my but on the other hand, those measures risk making a lot of people economically vulnerable.

He stated that Pakistan should aspire for higher growth but that's only possible if Pakistan successfully stabilises its economy.

Dr. Moazzam presenting on a Macro Economic Model quantifying Pakistan's economic issues and potential fixes said floods have added challenges by destroying rice, crops and sugar cane crops causing a supply shock of billions of dollars to Pakistan's economy.

The flood shock can disrupt Pakistan's growth rate by a reduction of up to 3.5 %, he said adding that floods along with causing supply shocks have also caused demand shocks, dependent of the political landscape but in fact are directly proportional.

Azerbaijan wants to sign PTA with Pak to boost economic ties

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov said on Saturday that Azerbaijan wanted to sign Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Pakistan to boost bilateral economic relations.

He said that Azerbaijan has started direct flights from Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad to Azerbaijan and as a result, 50,000 Pakistanis flown to Azerbaijan last year. This has also helped to increase the trade turnover three times.

He was talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) where LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Azerbaijan Embassy's 3rd Secretary Behbud Gadali and LCCI Executive Committee members also spoke on the occasion.

The Ambassador recalled that in one and half years, since he came to Pakistan as an ambassador, this was his third visit to LCCI which showed their intent for the business and trade relations with Pakistan. Lahore Chamber was a biggest chamber and also represented the provincial capital of the largest province of the country, he said and added that this also showed the possibilities and opportunities both countries possessed.

The Ambassador also emphasized on the need for exhibitions which he termed most important and significant to increase bilateral

trade. "We have already delegations from Islamabad and Gujranwala Chambers and we hope to see a delegation from LCCI very soon. We have a very easy visa process which takes only three hours to get Azerbaijan visa. Trade is not only government's or business community's task but all the segments of society can also help in this regard as we believe that today's tourists can be a tomorrow's trader or student or a high government official."

He said that Azerbaijan had established a few working groups and also increased the number of those working groups and they were already working to cooperate in energy, health and agriculture sector of Pakistan.

Khazar Farhadov said that private sector must take an active role as relations of both the countries were unique. "Pakistan has supported us in our war with Armenia and never recognized Armenia because of this occupation of Azerbaijan's territory. Our people and government highly appreciate Pakistan's support."

Azerbaijan had a trade surplus of around US \$ 26 billion which showed that they were a successful in term of their business projects, he said and asserted, "We have very good trade relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan has invested US \$ 12 billion in Turkey, while Turkey also invested

US \$ 10 billion in Azerbaijan. We also want same economic relations with Pakistan so that the three flags of Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey can fly together."

He said that they were already importing rice from Pakistan and Pakistani rice had a huge market in Azerbaijan. He said that more than 300 businessmen had visited Azerbaijan which was encouraging. Azerbaijan had also lifted the duties on rice and it was high time to export rice from Pakistan to Azerbaijan.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar accepted the invitation extended to him by the Azerbaijan Ambassador and also agreed to plan a delegation to Azerbaijan soon.

He said that Azerbaijan was open for all initiatives with private sector, adding that Pakistan and Azerbaijan had good diplomatic relations but they had yet to succeed in translating these ties into maintaining sound bilateral trade.

Kashif Anwar said that according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan in 2021-22 were 6.3 million dollars which considerably dropped from 15.5 million dollars in 2020-21. However, the imports from Azerbaijan improved to 1.5 million dollars from 0.7 million dollars during that period.

He said that there was a need to explore the ways of

increasing trade between both countries. The main reason of such a low level of trade was lack of proper information about each other's markets. He said that Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan were mainly comprised of rice, textile and frozen meat while Pakistan imports petroleum gas from Azerbaijan. There was definitely a need of finding new products lines and avenues of cooperation for enhancing trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

The LCCI President said that Pakistani products including pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, sports goods, value-added textiles, leather products, home-made crafts, processed food and engineering goods had great scope in Azerbaijan. There was a great potential of joint ventures in tourism sector. Azerbaijan could also benefit from the expertise of Pakistan in IT sector. He said that the commercial sections of their respective embassies had to play a positive role in this connection.

Similarly, in order to increase private to private contacts and bilateral trade, the embassies and chambers should provide every possible assistance. He said that both countries should plan to organize exchange of trade delegations and also holding single country exhibitions on reciprocal basis.



FAISALABAD: Vendors displaying seasonal fruit oranges bags to attract customers at fruit market.

Dar stresses re-probe role of PDF and SOEs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Saturday stressed the need to reinvigorate the role of Pakistan Development Fund Limited (PDFL) and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

Chairing a meeting on PDFL and SOEs, the minister stressed for considering their business plan, governance structure and financial viability with the concept of accountability to safeguard public assets.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance, Tariq Bajwa, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Chairman Akif Saeed and senior officers from Finance Division attended the meeting, according to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The meeting reviewed the role of PDFL and SOEs and discussed modalities for bringing improvement in the governance of SOEs and line ministries.

The meeting also discussed restructuring of PDFL in order to revitalize its role to promote infrastructure in the country.

SLIC premium revenue grew by 64 per cent in 2022

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman State Life Insurance Company of Pakistan (SLIC) Shoaib Javed Hussain on Saturday said that the premium revenue of the company increased by 64 per cent during the year 2022 and reached to Rs Rs279 billion.

Addressing the SLIC annual marketing convention, he said that despite challenges posed by macro-economic and market volatility, SLIC delivered the strongest business numbers in its history and grew its premium revenue to Rs 279 billion, which was up by 64% as compared the revenues of the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the new business also recorded Rs173 billion, which increased by over 161% during the year 2022, adding that it is the highest-ever premium collected since the inception of the company.

Besides, significant progress was also recorded in group life and health insurance, adding that the highest-ever new business was also attracted during the period under review.

The SLIC earnings were registered at over Rs122 billion, he said adding that investment yield witnessed about 10.5% growth and it paid out claims worth over Rs167 billion to policyholders, which were also the highest ever since the inception of SLIC.

The bonus allocated to policyholders valuing over Rs95 billion, he said adding that the assets of the company also stood at over Rs1.56 trillion, which grew by 15% from 2021.

Chairman SLIC further said that Pak-Life Fund reached to over Rs1.4 trillion and increased by 15% from 2021.

He said that SLIC is the largest and the only 'AAA-rated' insurance company in the country. As the leading insurer of the country, it is ensuring the well-being and financial security of its policyholders and partners and has emerged as one of the most successful State-Owned enterprises in the country.

He said that in any country, the existence of a vibrant and growing insurance industry is essential

for the growth of its economy, adding that State Life has surpassed last year's results and delivered exceptional results in 2022, making SLICs 50th year a truly golden year.

This has only been achieved due to the dedication of professional workforce, across our officers, staff, and sales force cadres as they implemented the innovative vision and competitive strategy of corporate leadership, he added.

Insurance becomes even more important during challenging times and difficult circumstances, he said adding that whether it is for health, saving, children's education or retirement, State Life is a partner in an individual's life journey and support in making key life decisions.

He also thanked policyholders, business partners, and shareholders for putting their trust in State Life and it will continue to lead the evolving life and health insurance landscape by paying special focus on technology and customer-centric services continues to drive the organization.

CG for enhanced interactions to further strengthen trade

KARACHI (PPI): Consul General of Indonesia Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat has stressed the need to further strengthen the existing trade and economic cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan through enhanced interactions between the business communities in addition to connecting Indonesian and Pakistani youngsters and children for fostering future economic cooperation.

"For this purpose, Indonesia Pakistan Youth Forum was opened to provide a vibrant platform for our younger generation who must lead way for creating opportunities while another forum namely Indonesia Pakistan Children Friendship has also been created so that our children could know more about each other", he added while speaking at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi

Chamber of Commerce & Industry President KCCI Tariq Yousuf, SVP Touseef Ahmed, VP Haris Agar, Chairman Diplomatic Missions & Embassies Liaison Subcommittee Zia ul Arfeen, Former President Majyd Aziz, Former VP Shamsul Islam Khan and KCCI Managing Committee Members were also present on the occasion.

Indonesian CG, while appreciating the spirit shown by KCCI to enhance trade ties with Indonesian business community, said that the Indonesian Consulate regularly holds interaction with all the stakeholders including politicians and government officials but they rely much on Pakistan's private sector to boost trade and economic relations. "Indonesia and Pakistan with diverse cultures and huge population are altogether a big market

with lots of opportunities."

Terming the Indonesia Pakistan ties as genuine, practical and result-oriented, he reiterated that the business communities must regularly meet each other to further develop the existing relations. "A business delegation from Pakistan should visit Indonesia to explore trade and investment opportunities which will be fully facilitated by the Indonesia Consulate", he advised, adding that his Consulate has been receiving a lot of queries about doing business with Pakistan, hence, these opportunities should not be missed.

He informed that trade volume between Pakistan and Indonesia increased to more than US\$3 billion last year, indicating a rise of 28 percent as compared to 2021. "We, at the Indonesian Embassy and Consulate in Karachi

are hoping for more and more interaction and real cooperation in the economic and trade fields so that the existing trade volume could be improved further", said Dr. June, "Pakistan imports remains mostly confined to palm oil and coal whereas Indonesia mainly imports textiles, sportswear and agriculture products from Pakistan, therefore, exchange of more products needs to be encouraged."

He said that Indonesia, which was now chairing the ASEAN, was keen to enhance Pakistan's interaction with ASEAN which was one of the biggest regional cooperation and a huge market with a population of more than 600 million. "Pakistani business community can use Indonesia as production base for sending goods to ASEAN countries."

Karandaaz to launch survey on 'financial inclusion'

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the aim to help increase financial inclusion, especially of underserved groups in the country, Karandaaz is all set to launch a comprehensive demand-side survey - Karandaaz Financial Inclusion Survey (K-FIS), a nationally and provincially representative financial inclusion survey of over 6,600 individuals across Pakistan.

The survey aims to track access to and demand for financial services, especially digital financial services. The survey will help measure the adoption and use of a range of financial services among key underserved groups, including females, the poor, rural, and others. It will identify drivers and barriers to the adoption of digital financial services. The survey aims to produce actionable, forward-looking insights based on rigorous data to support product and service development and delivery, according to a press release issued here.

Financial inclusion - the extent to which individuals are included in the formal financial system is a development priority for governments across the world. This emphasis is based on the rationale that financial inclusion leads to social equality and confers tangible benefits for segments at the bottom of the pyramid that can benefit through better access and cost-effective financial services.

Having a financial account makes it easier, safer, and cheaper to receive wages from employers, send remittances to family members, and make payments for goods and services. Mobile

money accounts make it possible, even for the poor, to save and cope with adverse shocks.

Individual accounts give women more say on their household finances or save at their own pace or towards their own goals. Moreover, micro and small businesses are provided with effective means to access formal financial services, allowing them to be linked with the documented economy. Reciprocally, financial institutions and governments benefit from the increased size of the formal economy through several means, such as enhanced business revenue and tax collection.

Pakistan is one of several countries with a National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) targeting financial inclusion as a goal. The strategy has usage and access to digital accounts as the first pillar of an extensive plan. The metrics through which basic financial inclusion is measured are vital, and data is the backbone of programs aimed at strengthening the financial ecosystem through private and public interventions.

To support financial inclusion in Pakistan, Karandaaz believes making data-driven decisions and evidence-based policymaking will be key to realizing the country's NFIS goals. Furthermore, it is important to have clear definitions, metrics, and estimates for better planning and intervention designs.

CEO Karandaaz, Waqas ul Hasan says, "It is estimated that the achievement of NFIS goals will add \$5.5

billion to the GDP and create 3 million new jobs out of 1 million will be through digitization alone. K-FIS responds to the need for timely demand-side data and practical insights into major drivers of financial inclusion, chiefly digital financial services, including mobile money, and the potential for its expanded use, especially among unserved and underserved population segments. Karandaaz proudly takes ownership of this survey, whose depth and breadth allow for analysis of a large number of financial inclusion indicators by several segments such as urban and rural, gender and provinces. In conducting this rich survey, we are col-

lecting important data on a rich set of indicators and promoting a data-centric culture within the financial ecosystem."

The survey findings will be shared via a Zoom webinar on February 7 followed by two-panel discussions. The panelists for the discussions include Dr. Rashid Bajwa, CEO NRSP; Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, President HBL; Mr. Sohail Javaad, ED Digital Financial Services Group, State Bank of Pakistan; Mr. Mudassir Aqil, CEO Telenor Microfinance Bank; and Mr. Mohd. Yahya, Head of Digital, Bank Alfalah. Dr. Nafisa Shah, Member of the National Assembly, will deliver the closing address.

Karachi Kings announces SKMCH&RC as official charity partner for PSL 8

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karachi Kings has announced Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) as its Official Charity Partner for HBL Pakistan Super League 8. Imad Wasim will lead 2020 winners Karachi Kings this season.

The team will clash with Peshawar Zalmi in their first match on Saturday in Karachi, which is one day before the International Childhood Cancer Awareness Day. Karachi Kings and Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) will engage in various activities to highlight the cause of fighting cancer through the platform of cricket because we must unite to close the care gap and address avoidable and unfair disparities in cancer outcomes for patients resulting from who they are or where they live.

The team represents Karachi where Pakistan's largest tertiary care cancer centre is under construction, expected to open in late 2023.

Together, we can close the care gap for cancer patients of Southern Pakistan by providing equitable access to cancer treatment under one roof, irrespective of their ability to pay.



In brief

3,000 cops to be deployed for PSL match

QUETTA (PPI): Azfar Mahesar, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Quetta has said that 3,000 personnel of police would be deployed to provide security to the PSL match to be held between Peshawar Zulmae and Quetta Gladiator at Bughti Stadium, Quetta on Sunday (today). Talking to media at Quetta Press Club here on Saturday, he urged people to cooperate with police so as to avert any untoward situation during PSL match. He said that special traffic planning had been devised for the event to be held in Quetta, adding that PSL event was being held in Quetta after a long time. It is pertinent to mention that PSL event between Quetta Gladiator and Peshawar Zulmae would be held on Sunday (today) at Bughti Stadium, Ayub Stadium, Quetta.

Scorchers beat Heat

PERTH (Agencies): Perth Scorchers won the Big Bash for the fifth time with a thrilling five-wicket victory over Brisbane Heat. Nick Hobson hit a six and a four in successive balls as the Scorchers chased down their target of 176 with just four balls to spare in Perth. A half-century from Ashton Turner and a lively cameo from Cooper Connolly helped set the platform for the win. Nathan McSweeney earlier top-scored with 41 for the Heat as they posted 175-7 from their 20 overs. The Scorchers, who were the defending champions, went into the game as favourites after topping the table and having beaten Brisbane Heat in both meetings during the regular season. In contrast, the Heat were bottom of the table in mid-January but three wins from their final four games took them to fifth, before they came through three knockout games to reach their first final since 2013. After the Heat won the toss and chose to bat, McSweeney anchored their innings, putting on 79 for the second wicket with Sam Heazlett. Their momentum was checked by the loss of three wickets for 13 runs, but Max Bryant's lively 31 from 14 balls and unbeaten 21 from 16 from Warwickshire's Sam Hain lifted them up to a competitive score. The Scorchers were reduced to 54-3 early in their reply, but then Turner, who hit 53 from 32, and Josh Inglis (26 from 22) put on 80 for the fourth wicket.

Messi open to play next WC

BUENOS AIRES (INP): After hoisting his first World Cup trophy with Argentina in December, Lionel Messi said that tournament would be his last, but now it appears he's open to the possibility of playing in the 2026 event. "Because of age it'll be difficult to make 2026," Messi, 35, told Diario Ole in Argentina. "I love playing football and while I feel like I'm in good shape and enjoying this, I'm going to keep at it. It seems like a long time until the next World Cup, but it depends on how my career is going." Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni would love to see the superstar who is one of only six players to compete in five World Cups suit up for the next World Cup, which will be held in the United States, Canada and Mexico. "I think Messi can make it to the next World Cup," Scaloni told Spanish radio Calvia FM last month. "It will depend a lot on what he wants and what happens over time, that he feels good. The doors will always be open. He is happy on the pitch, and for us [it] would be good."



CAPW TOWN: The captains pose with the trophy with the Table Mountain at the back, Women's T20 World Cup.

Fakhar, Haris and Sharjeel on making of aggressive openers in HBL PSL 8

LAHORE (APP): One of the most crucial aspects in T20 cricket is to start strongly as gaining an early momentum in an innings that spans only 20 overs often provides an upper hand over opposition.

Whether it has been Test cricket or One-Day Internationals, the openers have always had their work cut out as they are required to provide solid platforms to those next in the batting order.

T20 cricket has added a layer of difficulty as the format demands the runs to be scored at a brisk rate all while ensuring the wickets stay intact in the Powerplay. As the T20 format continues to evolve, there are various methods and philosophies opening batters have deployed to deliver the goods for their sides.

PCB Digital spoke to Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Haris and Sharjeel Khan. The three batters have established themselves as attacking openers and will be in action in the HBL Pakistan Super League 8, which commences on 13 February in Multan.

Fakhar played an integral role in Lahore Qalandars' successful HBL PSL 7 campaign. His 588 runs were the most for any batter and his staggering strike-rate of 152.72 was the best amongst the top five run-getters last year. Amongst the batters play-

ing in the upcoming edition, Fakhar's 73 are the most sixes behind Islamabad United's Asif Ali's 79.

Fakhar said: "As an opener, I try to exploit the opening six overs as there are gaps with two fielders outside the 30-yard circle. I try to go for boundaries from the very first ball and make the most of the good balls by rotating the strike. "There are many factors that shape up an aggressive opener: natural game, the mindset and the demand of the team. I think having an attacking mindset is of the utmost importance."

"The approach usually differs in the second innings as you are going after a target. If you are going after a small total, then you have time to adjust and the pressure is not that much. But, you have to attack in case you are chasing a big total." A product of age-group cricket, Haris, who played the ICC Men's U19 Cricket World Cup in 2020, took the HBL PSL by storm last year as he smoked 166 runs at a strike-rate of 186.51 in five matches. His strike-rate in the Powerplay was almost a run better (187.32) and he smashed a boundary every third ball.

Haris, who turns 22 on 30 March: "It is very important to anticipate so I am continuously reading the fields. I see which two

fielders are outside the circle and that helps me predict what two to three balls the bowler is looking to deliver and that is how I plan my shots. Like, if the bowler has positioned a deep square leg, I know that a bouncer is on the cards. Thankfully, the success rate to date is around 80 per cent for me."

"You need a strong and solid technique to be aggressive and attack the bowler. For me it is about dominating the bowler no matter who he is."

Sharjeel Khan was the first batter to score a century in the HBL PSL. He clubbed eight sixes in his 62-ball 117 for Islamabad United against Peshawar Zalmi in the second qualifier and Islamabad were eventually crowned champions of the inaugural edition. He has, to date, smashed 72 HBL PSL sixes, one less than Fakhar.

Sharjeel, who since his return to the HBL PSL in 2020 has been in Karachi Kings, has hit a boundary every 4.5 ball in the HBL PSL and that is because of his desire to make the most of the Power-plays.

Sharjeel said: "I believe 70 to 80 per cent of the match is defined by how the first six overs go. What I have learned over the years that a team which has the most boundaries wins the match, so I try to milk the first six overs."

Arrangements for colourful opening ceremony of PSL in progress

MULTAN (APP): The colourful opening ceremony of the 8th edition of Pakistan Super League will be held on February 13 at Multan Cricket Stadium as star players from across the world will join the mega event.

Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) has been entrusted with the task of decorating the stadium by maintaining cleanliness, said CEO MWMC Shakeel Ahmed Bhatti during his visit to the site.

He stated that hosting the opening ceremony was a big honor for Multan. He stated that exemplary arrangements would be made for the mega event.

Besides this, the whole city would be ornamented. It is pertinent to mention that Multan Cricket Stadium will host five matches of the Pakistan Super League. Multan Waste Management Company started taking all possible measures to beautify and maintain cleanliness, said Bhatti.

Millat Tractors Jr National Tennis C'ship concludes

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Two titles each for Ahtesham Humayun (SNGPL) and Abdur Rehman (SICAS) in the Millat Tractors Junior National Tennis Championship 2023 that concluded at Punjab Tennis Academy, Bagh-e-Jinnah Lahore on Saturday.

SNGPL's Ahtesham Humayun played outstanding tennis against Mahatir Muhammad of Karachi to win the boys U-18 final by 6-3, 7-5. The final was a treat to watch as both the players exhibit their prowess throughout the final and displayed outstanding tennis skills and techniques, but Ahtesham held his nerves and succeeded in winning the thrilling encounter by 6-3, 7-5. "I worked really hard for this event and now I am looking forward to represent my country in ATF and ITF junior events."

In the boys U-16 finals, Ahtesham Humayun continued to shine and succeeded in completing the brace of titles after thrashing young Asad Zaman by 6-1, 6-0. In the boys U-18 doubles final, Mahatir Muhammad/Asad Zaman got w/o against Ahtesham Humayun/M Salar.

In the boys U-14 final, Hamza Ali Rizwan beat Amir Mazari 2-6, 6-4, 13-11 to clinch the title. In the boys U-14 doubles final, Amir Mazari and Nabeel Qayum beat Zohaib Afzal Malik and Hamza Ali Rizwan 5-3, 3-5, 10-6. In the boys/girls U-12 final, Abdur Rehman (AAA Associates) beat Razik Sultan 4-0, 4-2. In the boys/girls U-12 doubles finals, SICAS' Abdur Rehman/Hajira beat Shayan Afridi/Junaid Khan 5-3, 4-0. In the boys/girls U-10 final, Shayan Afridi beat Mustafa Uzair Rana 4-0, 4-0.

Col Mukhtar Ahmed (R), Sr Manager (Admin & Purchases) Millat Tractors Ltd, graced the occasion as chief guest while the guests of honour were Imran Ayub Manager Admin Millat Tractors Ltd, Col Asif Dar (R), Col Arif Malik (R), Mr. Haider from USA, Naseem Ahmed, players, their families and tennis lovers.

Naseem Shah Goodwill ambassador of Balochistan appointed as DSP



QUETTA (APP): Fast bowler, Naseem Shah was appointed as the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) as a goodwill ambassador of Balochistan on Saturday evening.

A function in this regard was held in the central office of Quetta police. Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Zahid Saleem and other high-level officials were also present on the occasion. "I will always be an ambassador of Balochistan

and will plead its case", Shah told the participants of the ceremony.

He said the province is beautiful and known for its hospitality and strong traditions. "Since childhood, I was frightened of police and today I am wearing a police uniform", Shah said.

Naseem Shah, the fast bowler has become the goodwill ambassador a day before the Pakistan Super League (PSL) exhibition match in Quetta between Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi.

3rd Allama Iqbal Polo Tournament : Finals on Sunday

LAHORE (APP): Remington Pharma will take on Diamond Paints in the main final of the 3rd Allama Iqbal Polo Tournament sponsored by Lahore Smart City here at the Jinnah Polo Fields on Sunday, Feb 5, 2023.

Before the main final, the subsidiary final will be played between FG/Din Polo and Platinum Homes/Master Paints at 1:30 pm. The special guest of the final is expected to be Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman, while many personalities including the sponsors Lahore Smart City high-ups, players, their families and polo

lovers will also be present on the occasion.

Jinnah Polo Club Secretary Major Ali Taimur also thanked Lahore Smart City for sponsoring the two-week mega polo event. He said that after this last eight-goal event, the high-goal 14-goal competition is starting and from now on, the events will be more challenging and exciting. The team Remington Pharma consists of Basel Faisal Khokhar, Ahmad Zubair Butt, Ahmad Bilal Riaz and Hamza Mawaz Khan while Diamond Paints team comprises of Mir Shoaib Ahmed, Bilal Hayat Noon, Lt Col Omar Minhas (R) and Nico Roberts.



PERTH: Perth Scorchers celebrate their fifth BBL title in 12 seasons.

Arsenal loses 1-0 at Everton for 2nd Premier League defeat



LIVERPOOL: Players in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Arsenal at Goodison Park.

LIVERPOOL (AP): Arsenal lost in the Premier League for just the second time this season as Everton pulled off a surprising 1-0 win over the leaders on Saturday in its first match under new manager Sean Dyche.

A couple of Dyche's former players at Burnley did the business for him at a lively Goodison Park.

James Tarkowski headed in an inswinging corner to the far post from Dwight McNeil for the winning goal in the 60th minute, capping a performance of intensity and desire from a team that started the match in next-to-last place.

While Everton climbed out of the relegation zone at

least temporarily, Arsenal tasted defeat in the league for the first time since losing at Manchester United on Sept. 4. Second-place Manchester City can trim the gap to Arsenal to two points with a win at Tottenham on Sunday, though Arsenal would still have a game in hand.

It will go down as one of Arsenal's worst performances of the season, at a time when Mikel Arteta's team was looking in prime shape to go on and win the league for the first time since 2004. "This is not going to be a rose pathway," Arteta said. "This is going to be tricky and we will have to dig in and play much bet-

ter than we did today."

Everton showed improved shape and organization under Dyche, characteristics he demanded of his well-drilled Burnley teams over the years and ones he sees as integral if his new club is to preserve its 69-year top-flight status.

Dyche said he had crammed a lot of instructions to his players into his first week on the job and wanted to get them to "understand the basics of the game." "It's not that they weren't wearing the badge with pride, it just needed shining up a bit," Dyche said. "There was commitment but it maybe got a bit softened."

Everton had the better of the first-half chances, with Dominic Calvert-Lewin unable to get enough on the ball from two yards out after Amadou Onana surged down the left and sent in a cross before Abdoulaye Doucoure headed wide from McNeil's cross.

Bukayo Saka had a weak shot cleared off line and Arsenal teammate Eddie Nketiah blazed high and wide, but the visitors were often hounded out of possession in midfield and struggled to keep their composure. Indeed, frustrations boiled over in stoppage time as Arsenal left back Oleksandr Zinchenko clashed with Everton substitute Neal Maupay off the ball.

Jorginho, signed on Tuesday from Chelsea, came on as a second-half substitute for his Arsenal debut but didn't make a significant impression.

"We needed more composure and to control emotionally the game better. We gave away so many unnecessary free kicks and that's what they want," Arteta said. "Today I love them much better than the week before or a month ago. It is easy to be next to someone when they are winning well. I am still so proud of all of these players."

Everton, which claimed its first victory since Oct. 22, had lost every game since the restart after the World Cup except for a draw at second-place Man City.

West Indies in control on rain-shortened 1st day vs Zimbabwe

BULAWAYO (AP): Captain Kraigg Brathwaite and fellow opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul both scored half centuries as the West Indies reached 112-0 before rain washed out play after lunch on day one of the first test against Zimbabwe on Saturday.

Zimbabwe's bowlers lacked penetration on a flat pitch at the Queens Sports Club but were able to keep the Windies batsmen in check with calm and composed bowling. The West Indies openers, who both finished the day undefeated on 55, looked comfortable at the crease and pounced on the bad ball when the Zimbabwe bowlers fluffed their lines.

"The pitch looked good for batting, but obviously we knew rain would be a factor," Brathwaite said. "Today is history, today is gone, we have to come back tomorrow and start setting the foundation again."

Zimbabwe fielded five debutants, including former England batter Gary Ballance, who completed his international switch during the African team's white-ball series with Ireland in January.

"We kept the pressure on, but credit to the West Indies, I thought they batted nicely," said Steve Kirby, Zimbabwe's bowling coach. "It was a very good surface for test cricket. On a different day, we could have had two, three wickets. It was just a good day of old-fashioned test cricket." Zimbabwe is missing frontline bowler Blessing Muzarabani though long-term injury as well as in-form batting all-rounders Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl, who are playing Twenty20 franchise cricket in Dubai and Bangladesh, respectively.

"We are always going to lose players to white-ball cricket," Kirby said. "But there is still a huge appetite for test cricket. Test cricket is a privilege. It's a very emotional time for them (the debutants) and they will remember it for the rest of their lives."

Both games of the two-match series will be in Bulawayo. Ballance, returning to his country of birth, had represented England in 24 tests most recently in 2017.

Zimbabwe is captained by Craig Ervine with regular test skipper Sean Williams out with injury.

Ronaldo breaks duck after lucrative Saudi move

RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo got off the mark for his new Saudi paymasters Al Nassr on Friday with a stoppage-time penalty that rescued a 2-2 away draw against Al Fateh.

The Portuguese, who turns 38 on Sunday, buried the spot-kick in the 93rd minute for a point that left the Riyadh club joint top of the Saudi Pro League with a game in hand over Al Shabab. Ronaldo broke his duck in his third appearance, after he fired blanks in the January 22 league win over Ettifaq and in this week's Super Cup loss to Al Ittihad.

Days before his Al Nassr debut, he scored twice for a Saudi composite team in an entertaining 5-4 loss to a Paris Saint-Germain side featuring his great rival Lionel Messi.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who holds the all-time records for Champions League and international goals, will bank more than 400 million euros for his surprise move to Saudi, according to sources close to Al Nassr.

The giant sum includes 200 million euros for promoting Saudi Arabia's expected joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup, the sources told AFP.



In brief

Three died in roof collapsed incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least three people were killed in a roof collapse incident that occurred in the Izmir Town area of Lahore district, Police and Rescue reported on Saturday. According to details, the roof collapsed due to the bursting of a gas pipeline inside the house as a result of which 3 people died. The Rescue and Police rushed to the site and still engaged in efforts to remove the debris, the debris will be cleared soon. Investigations are underway.

IRSA releases 77,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 77,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 48,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1490.88 feet and was 92.88 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,200 cusecs while outflow as 42,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1130.50 feet, which was 80.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,000 cusecs and 10,500 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 33,000, 36,200, 30,000 and 9,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and zero cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

World Cancer Day observed

ISLAMABAD (PPI): World Cancer Day was observed on Saturday with the aim of spreading awareness and educating people about its detection, treatment, and prevention. This year theme of the day is "Close the Care Gap," which is a continuation of the 2022 theme and will last till 2024 with specified objectives for each year. Meanwhile, in a Radio Pakistan's program, medical expert Dr Sharif Astori said media can play an important role in raising awareness about cancer. He said by using simple food and life style, we can avoid this deadly disease.

Food dept recovers hoarded flour

RAWALPINDI (PPI) The Punjab Food department in a crack-down against hoarders on Saturday recovered over 66,000kg hoarded flour in different raids in Rawalpindi. In order to provide relief to the citizens, the food department is monitoring the stocks by its tracking system. As per details, the deputy director food department in different raids on godowns in Rawalpindi recovered over 66,000 kgs of hoarded wheat flour. Cases have been registered against six people and sealed a flour mill. The recovered wheat flour will be provided to the masses at the government's fixed rate, the deputy director said. Earlier, the Punjab food department decided to check the flour mills' record amid the intense wheat shortage. As per details, the food department asked for three months' records from flour dealers and shopkeepers. The officials asked if the flour which is provided by the government to flour mills, reaches the shops, as many shopkeepers complain about the shortage.

Pakistan stands united with Kashmiri people of IIOJK: Asad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communications and Postal Services Asad Mehmood on Saturday said that the entire Pakistani nation stands with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

In a statement issued, here on Saturday, the min-

ister said that the sacrifices of the oppressed Kashmiris would not go in vain and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir would be freed soon from the shackles of slavery.

He also emphasized the international community to take measures in coercing

India to fulfill its obligation by giving the due right of self-determination to Kashmiris, as per United Nations' resolutions.

He further urged human rights organizations and international bodies to raise their voice against Indian imperialism in the region.

President stresses importance of sports activities in healthy living

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday stressed the importance of promoting healthy activities and sports that were closer to nature.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony of a golf tournament here, he said the game of golf brought humans closer to nature. He said exercise and physical activities were very important for human health.

It was healthy to be in a natural environment as it also helped in taking better decisions, he added. He underscored the need for encouraging healthy activities like golf among citizens, especially youth.

Earlier, the President gave away prizes to golfers who won the golf tournament and achieved distinction in different categories of golf. Chief of Pakistan Navy Admiral Muhammad

Amjad Khan Niazi also attended the prize distribution ceremony.

Chief Executive Officer of Serena Hotels Aziz Bolani informed about the sports diplomacy undertaken by his hotel for the promotion of sports, especially golf. President Dr. Alvi appreciated the hotel management for the initiative of organizing the golf tournament in the capital city.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the winners and best players of the golf tournament, organized by a local hotel.

Preparations finalized to observe 'Kashmir Solidarity Day': Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira on Saturday said the ministry had finalized all preparations to observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 05 to express sympathies with oppressed Kashmiri people.

In a statement, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would visit Muzaffarabad to address the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) legislative assembly while the special messages of Prime Minister and President of Pakistan would be aired and through different media tools on the

Solidarity Day.

He said the documentaries to highlight Indian atrocities and tyranny in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) would be aired on Pakistan Television (PTV) and other channels. Social media would be used as a tool to raise voices to urge the international community to pressurize India to stop its atrocities on innocent Kashmiri people.

"Private television channels and FM Radio is committed to covering the event organized in various parts of the country on eve of Solidarity Day," Kaira added.

He said Pakistanis living across the world would express their solidarity with the Kashmiri people in this difficult time. The solidarity walk had also been arranged at Shahrah-e-Dastoor in this regard, he apprised.

The adviser said one minute's silence would be observed to pay glowing tributes to the Kashmiri martyrs those had sacrificed their lives for the Kashmir cause.

He concluded the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had already displayed the banners on various Shahrahs including the Express Highway in the federal capital.

Police Khidmat Markaz facilitate 726 citizens during the last 24 hours

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police, khidmat markazs have facilitated 726 citizens with different services relating to issuance of character certificate, foreigner's registration, registration of tenants and house servants, general police verification and report of missing items, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the direction of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police are taking all possible measures and initiatives in order to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad.

While, Islamabad capital police khidmat markaz has provided several services to the citizens including issuance of 75 character certificates after the complete verification by concerned police stations, while 301 general police verification, 45 reports of missing documents and valuables, 40 vehicles verification, 195 foreigners registration 60 tenants and 10 domestic servants data

have been entered during the last 24 hours.

Police Mobile facilitation van service has also been working while khidmat markaz in different areas including sectors F-6, G-10/4, H-11, Bani Gala, Swan Garden, Khanna and at various police stations were also facilitating the citizens.

IGP Islamabad said that, well trained staff has been appointed there who are providing best services to Pakistani nationals and foreigners. Such steps would improve the trust of people in the police, he maintained.

Over 68,000 e-challan tickets issued through safe city cameras: Islamabad capital police safe city E-challan system has issued 68,911 fine tickets to motorists over various traffic rules violations in federal capital Islamabad through safe city cameras so far, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police is utilizing all available resources and tak-

ing strict measures against the traffic rules violators according to law.

According to the details, the Islamabad capital police have issued 654 e-challan tickets during the last 24 hours and a total of 68,911 e-challan tickets to motorists have been issued over various traffic rules violations so far.

CPO Safe City said that the e-challan tickets were delivered to the violators at their home address. A copy of challan was attached with the master file of the vehicles at the excise office over non-payment of penalty amount within the given time, he added.

The car owners who were subjected to a fine could not sell or transfer their vehicle until the clearance of dues. The fine amount could be paid through different banks, mobile accounts and other digital means.

He further said that there was a significant decline observed in the number of road mishaps and traffic violations in the federal capital after introducing this new challan system.



ISLAMABAD: A view of banners display on a pedestrian bridge ahead of Kashmir Solidarity Day at Faizabad. —APP Photo

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Saturday issued a power suspension programme for Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00AM to 04:00PM in Sawan Garden, 1, Sawan Gardens, 2, River Garden feeders, and surrounding areas.

Kashmir Cultural Festival starts at Lok Virsa, Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) in collaboration with Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir Culture Department and Federal Directorate of Education have opened a 3-day "Kashmir Cultural Festival" in Islamabad, marking Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on Sunday (February 5).

The main objective of the festival is to promote Kashmir cause through a cultural perspective while expressing solidarity with the innocent Kashmiri people struggling for their right of self-determination in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The main features of the festival included Kashmiri Artisans-at-work, Kashmiri folk crafts, Kashmiri patriotic songs, Kashmiri folk paintings, photo exhibition on Kashmir, Kashmiri cuisine, screening of video documentaries on Kashmir, Kashmir musical evening, stage drama on Kashmir, promotional stalls to promote Kashmir cause and display of banners bearing slogans in favour of Kashmir cause.

Federal Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division, Farina Mazhar, addressing the opening ceremony condemned the atrocities being committed by Indian troops on the innocent people of IIOJK for demanding their right of self-determination.

Hindutva regime converts heaven like valley into a killing field

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation said that the Hindutva regime altered the heaven like valley into a killing field and urged the world powers and UN bodies to take "concrete and meaningful" steps for the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir.

Speaking at an event organized by Kashmir journalist forum in connection with Kashmir solidarity, here on Saturday, she said that Kashmir was a flashpoint for nuclear war and the settlement of the dispute was necessary for lasting and durable peace in the region.

She said that the Kashmir dispute must be settled according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the UN resolu-

tions which granted them the right to self-determination.

She said that brutal Indian forces crossed all limits of barbarity and terrorism to dampen the courage of freedom fighters in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mushaal said that Kashmiri people were being killed in fake encounters in the occupied territory on daily basis to spread fear among the people.

The Hurriyat leader stated that the top Kashmiri leadership including her husband Yasin Malik were imprisoned in fake and fabricated cases and deprived them of all legal and fundamental rights.

The chairperson reminded: "History tells us that struggles for free-

dom cannot be vanquished."

Mushaal vowed that the valiant Kashmiri people were bound to realize their cherished goal of freedom come what may.

She said that the Indian government violated the mutual agreements between Pakistan and India and international laws by abrogating the special status of occupied Kashmir.

The Hurriyat stated that New Delhi was bent upon changing the demography of the occupied territory to convert Muslims majority into minority by issuing domiciles to non-Kashmiri settlers.

She urged that the world must take notice of it and put pressure on India to recognize the right to self-determination of Kashmiris.

Threats & talks can't go together, says Faisal Javed

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Senator Faisal Javed said on Saturday threats and offers for negotiations could not go together as the government was registering cases against its opponents on one side and sending invitation for talks on the other side.

While talking to media persons outside a court PTI bigwig said embroiling the opponents in the politically-motivated cases would not fix the worsening economy and depreciate the US dollar against the rupee.

His remarks come as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has invited PTI Chairman Imran Khan to attend the All Parties Conference (APC), scheduled to be held on Feb 7, to discuss the challenges being faced by the country.

Mr Javed said: "We are ready for talks if the government announces a date for general elections in the country". The PTI has

been demanding early elections in the country since the ouster of Imran Khan as prime minister through a no-confidence motion in April last.

He highlighted that inflation in the country had surged to a record level.

He said the government was also planning to introduce a bill, adding that any curbs on journalism would not be accepted. Accusing the government of political victimisation of the PTI leaders, he said they were facing different cases on a daily basis. "I have been nominated in 13 cases," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, PTI leader Murad Saeed said over 100 people, including policemen, were martyred in the Peshawar mosque blast. "We had been alerting the government about security situation since June last," he said, adding that actions should be taken to save the country from the menace of terrorism.

Anti-Riot Force personnel expelled from police barracks in Islamabad

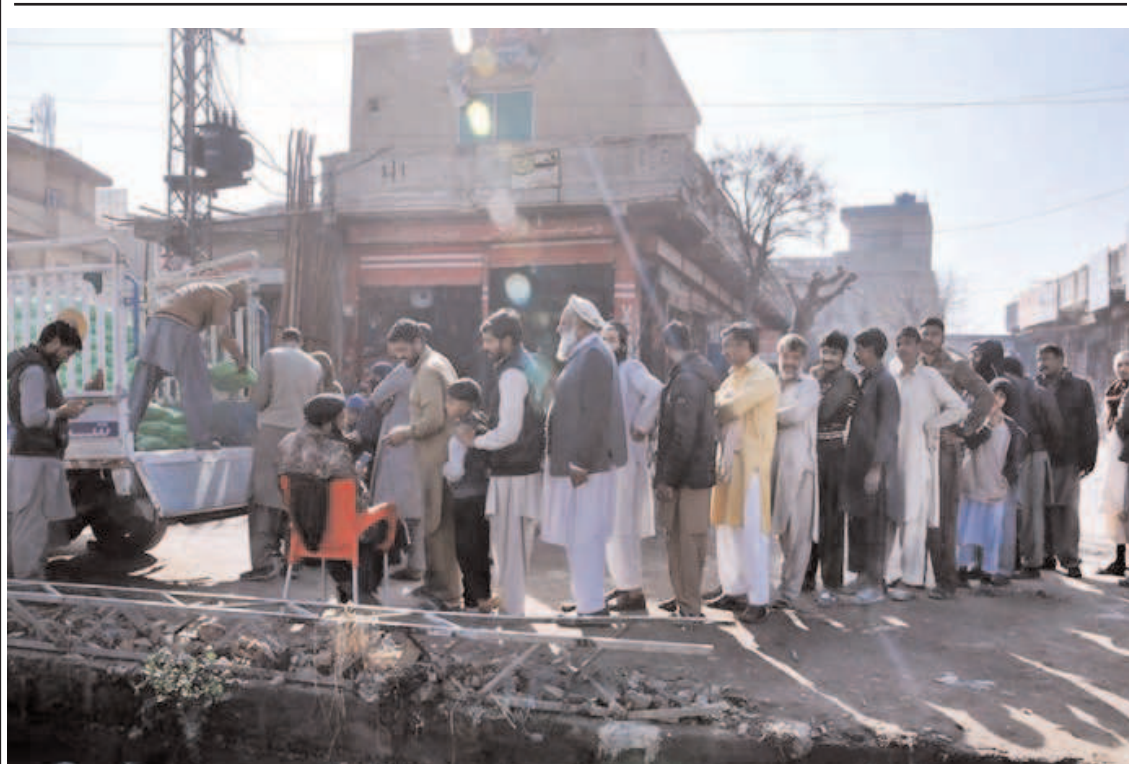
ISLAMABAD (NNI): Anti-Riot Force officials have been expelled from police barracks in Islamabad Police Lines.

The police officials have protested against their officers posing questions that why their luggage was thrown out and what were the reasons behind that. DIG Sohail Zafar has started investigation of the incident.

The officials who have been expelled from barracks also include the injured cop in I-10 bomb blast. The police personnel said they had no place to live.

They complained that they were told to leave barracks in Police Lines and find some other place to live and that new recruitments were being made.

A police spokesperson said that DIG Sohail Zafar was probing the issue and that no negligence will be tolerated over breach of discipline and welfare of cops by police officers. The spokesperson said that probe report will be submitted within two days.



ISLAMABAD: People standing in a queue for purchasing flour bags on subsidized rates from a truck at Khana pul. —APP Photo

Afghan refugees hold protest

LONDON (Agencies): Afghan refugees have protested against the UK government's plans to move them 200 miles from London to Yorkshire amid claims that they could challenge the decision in the courts. Carrying homemade placards saying "Do not disturb our education", more than 120 people – including teenagers and toddlers – gathered outside Downing Street. The Home Office had told 40 families with 150 children leave the capital next week for another hotel.

Earthquake hits Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): People in Afghanistan's Paktika province who were hit by earthquakes have already been living a life of misery, and continue to face problems amid the cold spell in Afghanistan. An earthquake of magnitude 4.3 occurred in Afghanistan at around 09:07 am on Saturday. The depth of the quake was 186 km below the ground according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS). No casualties have been reported yet.

Afghans complain about health cards required by Iran at border

KABUL (TOLOnews): Afghans complained about the high price of "health cards" given by an Iranian-run Red Crescent office in Afghanistan for Afghans who cross from Nimroz into Iran. They said they should receive this card from Red Crescent for free. The validity period of these cards is short, and are given to applicants at a high price, they say. "The card they give to us costs 400 afghani, it has to be free, people are not able to pay 400 afghani," said Mena Gul, a

Maidan Wardak resident. "It has to be for free because the validity time of this card is short, it is only for 20 days, both countries governments' have to pay attention to this," said Rahmatullah, a Ghazni resident. "When you cross the border this card is not valid on the other side," said Raz Mohammad, a Nimroz resident. "They just look at the card at the border, they don't register it with the system," said Noor Ahmad, a trader. Meanwhile, local offi-

cials of Nimroz said that they shared this problem with the Iranian delegation when they were in Nimroz and the Iranian delegation pledged to address the problem. "We talked about the validity time of health cards to increase it to three months for our brothers who have passports and go to Iran," said Habibullah, head of the Culture and Information in Nimroz. TOLOnews sought comments from officials of Iran's Red Crescent in Nimroz, but they were not present for the conversation.

Nangarhar residents irked by low standard health service

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Some residents in eastern Nangarhar province have complained against the presence of unprofessional physicians and unregistered pharmacies.

They said some health centres did not have work permit but officials pledged to resolve the problem.

Ulfat Shinwari, the resident of Ghanikhel district, told Pajhwok Afghan News besides Jalalabad City, the provincial capital, unprofessional physicians and unregistered pharmacies were functional

He criticized health officials as well saying they did not monitor health centres and their negligence opened way for such activities.

Gul Wali, the resident of Sherzado district, asked the relevant officials to stop the sale below the standard medicines and monitor state and private pharmacies.

"We demand health officials to monitor clinics, pharmacies and laboratories because outdated medicines existed and that needed serious attention to be removed," he said.

Waseel Khal, who brought his father to Jalalabad City, said physicians were doing their business instead of treatment.

"They write unnecessary tests for patients and that has to be carried out in a specific lab and when he write medicines these medicines should be purchased from a specific pharmacy. We want the health department to control these activities."

Public Health Director Dr. Mohammad Rahim Qalandarzozy said five tonnes of outdated medicines and 1,400 tonnes of expired food items had been collected.

"Public health department daily monitored unregistered pharmacies and health centres and most of unregistered clinics had been closed and the process was still underway."

Herat Exporters Union discuss problems and challenges with Minister



HERAT (Agencies): Acting Commerce and Industry Minister Nooruddin Azizi met with local traders and members of the Herat Exporters Union in Herat province of Afghanistan. The ministry in a state-

ment, on Saturday, said that during the meeting, members of the union shared their problems and challenges with the minister and asked for help to resolve them. Acting Commerce and

Industry Minister Nooruddin Azizi during the meeting said that exporters are the backbone of the country's economy and his ministry is working on creating an exportation zone to cover several

provinces. He promised to cooperate with the Exporters Union in Herat and asked the union members to share their problems in a written form so the ministry would respond to them.

Protest against ban on women's education: Taliban detains professor

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan acting authorities detained Ismail Mashal, a lecturer who tore up his Bachelor's and Master's degrees on live TV in protest against a ban on Afghan women's education in the country.

"Mashal was mercilessly beaten and taken away in a very disrespectful manner by members of the Islamic Emirate," Mashal's aide Farid Ahmad Fazli referring to the Taliban government while speaking to AFP.

Mashal last year ripped up his academic degrees on Live Telecast Tolo TV, which went viral on social media to protest the ban on women's education in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, he was a lecturer teaching at three different universities in Kabul. However, when the Taliban issued a decree ban on education, he resigned from his academic post on 20 December. Recently he opened a book handcart in the form of a protest on women's education and distributed them for free to Kabul's residents. He stated that all the books, 21,000 were part of his collection. Since August 2021, the



Taliban Islamic Emirate has imposed several bans on women's work and education. On the one hand, they restricted school girls' education, not beyond sixth grade; on the other hand, they restricted women from working in national and International organizations.

Recently, acting higher education ministry released a letter ordering all private and public universities not to allow female students to sit for the university entrance exam. The decree was confronted with substantial condemnation by the people and international communities.

610 children suffering from VDS registered

KABUL (Pajhwok): Over 600 children suffering from Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) also known as the 'hole in the heart' registered in the 10 months of ongoing solar year and introduced to hospitals for treatment, an official said on Wednesday.

The source said that 184 of these children had been recovered after treatment and returned to their families adding that still there was no case of fatality registered.

Erfanullah Sharfzoy, director Information Department of the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), said in the past the facility to treat children suffering from the VSD was not available in the country and these children were transferred to foreign countries for treatment.

He added currently the capacity of doctors in the country had increased and to some extent these children are provided the treatment in the country.

Sharafzoy said: "This solar year 610 children referred to hospitals, out of them 184 had recovered and handed over to their families, there was no fatality during the operation," he added.

He said since 2008, the

ARCS treated 13,000 children suffering from the VSD.

He said in the past children suffering from VSD were sent to China, India, Germany and Pakistan for treatment but this year only nine children had been transferred to Pakistan.

Dr. Sharafat Zaman, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, said currently a large number of children suffering from VSD were treated in the country but still there were no adequate facilities to provide treatment to all these patients.

He said the MoPH was striving to arrange complete facilities for the treatment of VSD patients inside the country. VSD children patients are thrilled over the provision of health facilities for the treatment of their children.

Matuillah, the father of a VSD patient, said his child was treated inside the country by an Afghan doctor.

"My son is two and half year old and was suffering from VSD, he was referred to the French Maternity and Child Hospital by the ARCS and four days ago his operation was conducted and today we were discharged from the hospital," he said.

But some patients still demanded the provision of VSD treatment inside the country.

Medical doctors say that there were no clear reasons why children suffer from VSD but there were some genetic factors that contributed to this disease.

Dr. Mohammad Hanif Tasal, a trainer and specialized in general and child heart surgery, said: "Factors that make it possible for a child to be born with a hole in the heart are genetic factors that play a greater role, especially parents who were born with such diseases."

In addition he said: "Also, environmental factors which are unknown factors and the use of some medicines, especially those used for nervous problems, lack of minerals, anemia and mother's nutrition during pregnancy, all of these cause heart disease in children."

Dr. Tasal stressed and added He said with emphasis that a mother who suffered from some infectious diseases during pregnancy or used some improper food spices during pregnancy, or has genetic factors, all of these factors may facilitate it the newborn child to be infected with VDS.

Four water supply networks built in Khost province

KHOST (TOLOnews): Four water supply networks worth fourteen million Afghanis total were developed in the province of Khost by the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in cooperation with the Citizens Organization For Advocacy and Resilience (COAR).

With the help of these projects, about 700 families now have access to clean water.

These water supply net-

works have been built in the province's center and in Ismailkhail district.

"We were considering a total of five villages, and this project was discontinued in one village due to the lack of funding from the donor, but deep wells and high-altitude concrete reserves were developed in four villages," said Mohammad Hakim, the provincial head of COAR.

Locals are pleased with the building of water sup-

ply networks in their areas.

"This project is crucial to us. We were experiencing problems due to a shortage of water. We gained a lot from this project," said Mohammad Jan, a resident of Khost.

"Now, we have access to water and we are happy," said Sayedullah, another resident of Khost.

According to Khost's local officials, the implementation of such projects

is important and will ensure the safety of the institutions engaged in Afghanistan's development.

"We have informed all institutions that we would ensure your security at the cost of our lives," said Mohammad Anwar Dinparwar, deputy governor of Khost province of Afghanistan.

The majority of people living in rural parts of Khost still lack clean water to drink.

Kandahar City dwellers demand eradication of noise pollution

KANDAHAR CITY (Pajhwok): The residents of Kandahar City, the capital of southern Kandahar province, have complained against the growing noise pollution in the city and said it caused disturbance for the dwellers.

Saifuddin, the resident of Kandahar City, said disorder and noise pollution had increased in the city which mentally disturbed people. "There are a lot of traffic in the city, the sound of vehicles horns, generators in front of shops and in addition small loudspeakers are on to attract customers," he said.

He said it was a serious issue and relevant officials should take steps to control this situation and ensure order and management in the city.

Bashir Ahmad, another Kandahar City resident, said the noise created by vehicles horns and engines caused more disturbances for the people and there is need for solution to this issue. "Due to disorder and mismanagement most traffic are blocked in most points then the drivers press on horns, there is nobody to tell them why they press on horn unnecessarily," he

said. Health experts also agreed that noise pollution was dangerous for the mental situation of people and if a person continuously hears voices he will get angry quickly.

Dr. Enayatullah Sharifi said: "Voice pollution is dangerous for the nerve system of human being and could not concentrate on a single point. Continued suffering from voice pollution hampered human brain so the better thing is that to keep yourself away from voice pollution."

Mohammad Rahim Bashardost, information director of the Environmental Protection Department, said efforts to control noise pollution in Kandahar City had been intensified and they were jointly working with the Traffic Department and other relevant institutions to address this issue.



"After the takeover of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan there is more traffic and more congestion in the city, we try to prevent noise pollution, roundup loudspeakers from the city

and make regular inspection," he said.

Kandahar residents linked the growing pollution with increase of growing use of old vehicles, burning of tires and unhealthy

items for heating and other similar factors. They said due to government negligence these unfair activities could not be stopped which added to growing pollution in the city.

Substandard fuel imports worry people

ZARANJ (Pajhwok): The residents of Zaranj, the capital of the western Nimroz province, complained about low-quality fuel imports, but the official say measures are underway to address the issue.

Najibullah, a driver from Zaranj, told Pajhwok Afghan News they were suffering losses due to a surge in low-quality fuel imports from Iran.

The man said he had been working as on driver the Pul-i- Abresham road for six years, spending half of his earning on car repairs. His vehicle often develops faults as a result of inferior fuel. The low-quality fuel is smuggled through Abresham border and the Kang district of Nimroz province, causing problems for the people and by damaging their vehicles.

"I twice replaced my car engine's injectors during the past two months for

5,000 afs. I fixed the engine a month ago by spending 20,000 afs. Such expenses are back-breaking for workers like me," he regretted.

Najibullah asked the government to prevent the smuggling of poor-quality fuels into the country and crack down on their sellers and suppliers.

Sadiq Amiri, another resident of Nimroz, said: "People are concerned about low-quality fuel imports. They have been suffering losses because of such fuels."

The substandard fuel is smuggled into the country through the Kang district of Nimroz through tractors before being sold to drivers in gallons.

"These fuels are also sold in plastic bottles to the drivers. Different substances like plastic particles, water, dirt and other things are mixed with the

fuels, damaging engines of vehicles," Amiri claimed.

He asked the government to prevent the sordid business, which could be witnessed in no other province of the country.

Matuillah Saber, director of Afghanistan National Standards Authority, acknowledged the imports of low-quality fuels through Kang district. He said measures were being taken to prevent such imports.

Officials of the governor's house are working on a draft law for the construction of a fuel depot near the Iranian border in Kang, where the imported fuel will be tested for quality checks.

The low quality fuels would be returned while standard supplies would be allowed to enter markets, the director added.

Oil traders, who were given 25 days to build the depots, have got five days

left to complete their work. Thereafter the draft regulation would be implemented, he continued.

Currently, fuel imports are taking place via two routes. The oil Imported through Abresham border is tested and controlled. But the supplies through Kang are not checked.

As a result, there are problems with these supplies. Around 300 metric tonnes of fuels were imported through Kang, creating problems for the people, Saber said.

"At the moment, there are 99 oil tankers in Kandahar province. The quality of the fuel they are carrying will be tested as well," the official assured.

ANSA has so far returned 28 tankers of low-quality fuel to Iran, Saber revealed, hoping the problems of transporters would be solved with the implementation of the draft.



NABLUS: A Palestinian boy throwing stone towards Israeli forces during clashes.

‘Pakhtuns rendered matchless sacrifices’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary General Awami National Party, Mian Iftikhar Hussain said here on Saturday that Pakhtuns would not hesitate to make any sacrifice to restore peace in their motherland and defeat the enemies at any cost.

Addressing the participants of Peace March in front of Peshawar Press Club, Mian Iftikhar recalled the attack on Army Public School and termed the recent attack on Police Lines mosque as a cowardly act of terrorists. He said that the Pakhtun nation was united to end militancy that created the deteriorating law and order situation.

He said that it was most unfortunate that innocent Pashtuns were being targeted by terrorists, adding that concerned institutions should investigate the Police Lines blast and bring the culprits to the court of law.

FM reaffirms Pak’s support to Kashmiris

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reiterated that they would continue to lend unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people until the realization of their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

"I want to remind our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan will never sit back and watch silently while Kashmiris continue to suffer Indian atrocities. Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy," the foreign minister said in a message on Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed on February 5. The foreign minister said as they observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Pakistan saluted the sacrifices of their Kashmiri brothers and sisters who had suffered for more than seventy-five years under brutal Indian oppression.

He stressed that India must end its gross human rights violations in IIOJK; reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 including demographic changes; repeal draconian laws; allow UN-mandated investigations into cases of extrajudicial killings and implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

For over seven decades, he said, the Indian occupation forces had brutalized the Kashmiris and denied them their rights. Today, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was one of the most-militarized zones of the world, with the presence of over 900,000 occupation forces, he added. "With its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, India has opened a new chapter in suppressing the people of IIOJK. With fresh delimitation of electoral constituencies, issuance of millions of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris, and addition of hundreds of thousands of

non-Kashmiris in the voters lists, India's ruling dispensation aims to transform

Kashmiris into a disempowered minority in their own land," he added. Foreign Minister Bilawal further said that Kashmiris were living in a constant state of fear as Indian forces engaged in the indiscriminate use of force and extrajudicial killings in staged "cordon-and-search" operations.

Ex-CJ case: IHC bench reconstituted

ISLAMABAD (INP): On the objections to the IHC bench which was formed to hear former chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's appeal against the interim decision of a trial court in his defamation suit against the PTI chairman, Justice Babar Sattar has been removed from being part of the bench on Saturday.

KP expresses complete solidarity with Kashmiris

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has said that on Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provincial government express complete Solidarity with Kashmiri people, and reiterate their resolve to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to them in their struggle to get the right of self-determination.

In a statement issued on Kashmir Solidarity Day, Muhammad Azam Khan said that the right of self-determination was the basic right of the people of Kashmir, and their struggle for the same could not be suppressed through oppression by the Indian government, adding that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand side by side their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their genuine struggle, and will continue to do so until they get their right to self-determination.

The Caretaker Chief Minister urged upon the international community and human rights organizations to take notice of the Indian government's brutalities in occupied Kashmir, and play their due role to giving Kashmiri people their right to self-determination by getting implemented the resolutions of the United Nations in a letter and spirit.

He maintained that the decades-long struggle of the Kashmiri people for their freedom is unprecedented all over the world, and hoped that the people of Kashmir would soon be able to get their right of self-determination.

He condemned the unilateral decision of the Indian government of finishing the special status of occupied Kashmir provided in the Indian Constitution followed by the locked-down imposed by the Indian army in occupied Kashmir with the aim to suppress the struggle of Kashmiris for their freedom.

Alvi: No solution of J&K sans wishes of Kashmiri people

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan consistently maintained that a lasting solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people.

"Pakistan also urges the international community and organizations to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its gross and widespread human rights violations in IIOJK," the president said in a message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed on February 5.

"We observe this day to draw the attention of the international community towards the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which provide that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute would be made in accordance with the will of the people, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations," he stressed.

Today, the president said Pakistan called upon India to allow unfettered access to the UN and OIC

observers, international media and human rights organizations to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to obtain first-hand information about the situation there, and investigate and report the human rights violations.

The president reiterated that Pakistan would continue to extend its unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause. "Today, we observe Kashmir Solidarity Day to express Pakistan's unflinching support for the legitimate and just struggle of the Kashmiri people for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination," President Secretariat Press Wing in a press release quoted the president as saying.

On this occasion, the president said that they paid rich tribute to the selfless sacrifices made by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters during their decades-old resistance to the Indian occupation.

Over the last 75 years, the Indian occupation forces had unleashed a reign of terror and carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), he said, adding the presence of more than 900,000 Indian

armed personnel had turned the region into an open prison.

The president said India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, the 4th Geneva Convention, and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. India had been consistently engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through artificial demographic changes, political engineering, economic marginalization of the local people and an assault on Kashmiri identity and culture, he added.

"It is alarming that India is undertaking demographic changes in IIOJK by bringing non-Kashmiris to settle in the valley. India's heavy-handed approach frequently manifests itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, custodial torture, enforced disappearances and the use of pellet guns in IIOJK," he added. The president said India had muzzled the media and incarcerated the Kashmiri leadership and defenders of the human rights, adding these excesses and brutalities had been well-documented by several human rights organizations and international media outlets.

Court sends Sheikh to jail on 14-day judicial remand

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A district and sessions court in Islamabad has rejected the police's request of extending the physical remand of AML leader Sheikh Rashid and instead send him to jail on judicial remand for 14 days. Judicial Magistrate Umar Shabbir announced the verdict reserved earlier

and directed to send Sheikh Rashid to Adiala Jail on judicial remand.

The court rejected the prosecutor's request for a five-day extension in the physical remand. Earlier, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed was produced in the court in Islamabad after his two-day physical remand was expired. The AML leader

was arrested on Thursday last in connection with a complaint filed by PPP Rawalpindi Vice President Raja Inayat Ur Rehman in Islamabad's Aabpara Police Station for alleging that PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari was hatching a plot to assassinate PTI chief Imran Khan.

5 فورے
یوم یکجہتی کشمیر
February 5, 2023 Kashmir Solidarity Day



#KashmirSolidarityDay
#PakistanStandswithKashmir



Dr Arif Alvi

President, Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

Foreign Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Qamar Zaman Kaira

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan

Today, we observe Kashmir Solidarity Day to express Pakistan's unflinching support for the legitimate and just struggle of the Kashmiri people for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. On this occasion, we pay rich tribute to the selfless sacrifices made by our Kashmiri brothers and sisters during their decades-old resistance to the Indian occupation. We observe this day to draw the attention of the international community towards the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which provide that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute would be made in accordance with the will of the people, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. Over the last 75 years, the Indian occupation forces have unleashed a reign of terror and carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The presence of more than 900,000 Indian armed personnel has turned the region into an open prison. India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international laws, including the UN Charter, the 4th Geneva Convention, and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. India has been consistently engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through artificial demographic changes, political engineering, economic marginalization of the local people and an assault on Kashmiri identity and culture. It is alarming that India is undertaking demographic changes in IIOJK by bringing non-Kashmiris to settle in the valley. India's heavy-handed approach frequently manifests itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, custodial torture, enforced disappearances and the use of pellet guns in IIOJK. India has muzzled the media and incarcerated the Kashmiri leadership and defenders of human rights. These excesses and brutalities have been well-documented by several human rights organizations and international media outlets. Today, Pakistan calls upon India to allow unfettered access to the UN and OIC observers, international media and human rights organizations to IIOJK to obtain first-hand information about the situation there, and investigate and report the human rights violations. Pakistan also urges the international community and organizations to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its gross and widespread human rights violations in IIOJK. Pakistan has consistently maintained that a lasting solution to the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute is possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan will continue to extend its unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause.

Every year, on the fifth of February, the people of Pakistan reaffirm their solidarity with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. On this Kashmir Solidarity Day, we renew our commitment of our unflinching support to them in their just struggle for inalienable right to self-determination.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest, unresolved items on the agenda of the United Nations. Over the last seventy-five years, India has continued its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and suppressed its people. Thousands of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives and suffered countless atrocities at the hands of the Indian Occupation Forces. The already bad situation took a turn for the worst following India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019. These illegal and unilateral steps have been rejected by Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

The human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) remains a source of grave concern to Pakistan and the rest of the world. India has brazenly targeted Kashmiri men, women and children through curfews, blackouts, arbitrary detention, imprisonment, and denial of basic rights. The popular Kashmiri political leadership has been illegally detained or deliberately victimized through fictitious cases. The media has been silenced through coercion and religious scholars have been arrested. Draconian laws have been enacted that deny the fundamental freedoms of the Kashmiri people.

India has also intensified its campaign to bring about demographic changes in IIOJK, so as to convert the Kashmiris into a minority in their own land. These actions are in violation of UNSC resolutions and international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention. India is mistaken if it believes it can crush the iron will of the Kashmiri people. No amount of state terrorism, unleashed by Indian Occupation Forces, can break the will of the Kashmiris or undermine their legitimate struggle.

We urge India to honour its commitments made to Pakistan, the UN and, above all, to the Kashmiri people.

On behalf of the entire Pakistani nation, I want to assure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that we stand shoulder to shoulder with them. We will continue to lend moral, diplomatic and political support to their just cause, until they attain freedom from Indian oppression. Pakistan will also continue to raise its voice at all international platforms and highlight India's barbaric actions in IIOJK.

As we observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Pakistan salute the sacrifices of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who have suffered for more than seventy-five years under brutal Indian oppression.

For over seven decades, Indian Occupation Forces have brutalized the Kashmiris and denied them their rights. Today, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is one of the most-militarized zones of the world, with the presence of over 900,000 occupation forces.

With its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, India has opened a new chapter in suppressing the people of IIOJK. With fresh delimitation of electoral constituencies, issuance of millions of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris in the voters lists, India's ruling dispensation aims to transform Kashmiris into a disempowered minority in their own land. Kashmiris are living in a constant state of fear as Indian forces engage in indiscriminate use of force and extra-judicial killings in staged "cordon-and-search" operations. Political activists and human rights defenders face arbitrary detention, torture and confiscation of properties.

India must end its gross human rights violations in IIOJK; reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 including demographic changes; repeal draconian laws; allow UN-mandated investigations into cases of extrajudicial killings and; implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

I want to remind our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan will never sit back and watch silently while Kashmiris continue to suffer Indian atrocities. Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. We will continue to lend unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people until the realization of their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

On this Solidarity Day, we stand united with our Kashmiri brethren in their valiant struggle to achieve the long overdue legitimate right to self-determination. The unflinching support of government of Pakistan and its people to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination has remained unshaken throughout last seven decades. We salute and pay tribute to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for resisting all tools of Indian state terrorism and sacrificing their lives for their birthright of self-determination. Indian tools of state terrorism like extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture, forced disappearances, collective punishments and incarceration of Kashmiri leaders have miserably failed to subdue the will of Kashmiri people. The indigenous and untiring struggle of Kashmiri people has proved that no level of suppression can break their will for their just demand of right to self-determination. In desperation, India took illegal and unilateral actions on August 05, 2019 and revoked the special status of Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir IIOJK in order to implement its sinister design to change the demography of IIOJK. Since then, more than four million domiciles have been issued to non-Kashmiris. New property laws have been promulgated to usurp the land of Kashmiris. India is also manipulating the local elections by redrawing the electoral constituencies for allocating higher number of seats for Hindu majority areas. All of these Indian obnoxious steps are blatant violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, international laws and 4th Geneva Convention. Pakistan, Kashmiris and the world community have widely rejected these illegal engagements and deceptions of India. These steps are glaring manifestation of the RSS inspired Hindutva mindset of Indian government which marginalizes minorities. Today India stands exposed before the world as an aggressor and oppressor. Its so-called secular and democratic credentials stand fully discredited. India must realize that Kashmiris have a glorious history of standing up against all tools of suppression and any misadventure of Indian authorities will further strengthen the Kashmiris resolve for freedom from Indian occupation. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have undertaken enormous efforts in highlighting the Kashmir issue on all international forums. As a result, we have seen increased awareness in the world community of this festering dispute. International human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, United Nations Office of Higher Commissioner for Human Rights and Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of OIC have well documented and highlighted the human rights violations in IIOJK. Today India's mantra of Kashmir being "internal" matter of India rings hollow. The world community must recognize its collective obligation towards Kashmiris. The continued apathy towards suffering of Kashmiri people will have disastrous consequences for the region and beyond. Pakistan has consistently maintained that durable peace and security in the region is contingent upon peaceful resolution of the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. We once again reiterate our resolve that Pakistan will continue to provide all possible political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their just struggle for right to self-determination as enshrined in UNSC resolutions and as per wishes of the Kashmiri people.

کس منہ سے کہا تم نے
کشمیر تمہارا ہے

حنا موش گواہوں کو
معلوم تو سارا ہے

پھولوں کو بھی روندنا ہے
بچوں کو بھی مارا ہے

کشمیر کی وادی میں
کیا ظلم اتارا ہے