

Marriyum grieved

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday expressed deep grief over the demise of senior journalist Tahir Najmi. She, in a condolence message, prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family for bearing the irreparable loss with fortitude. Marriyum said she was deeply saddened by hearing the sad news of Tahir Najmi's death.



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50,000 tents to be dispatched to Turkiye: PM

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that around 50,000 winterised tents would be dispatched to the quake-hit Turkiye by March 23 this year.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting to review the manufacturing of tents and other relief goods for Turkiye, said the relief supply for the earthquake victims of Turkiye and Syria would be dispatched within the given timeframe. He directed the authorities concerned to carry out random checking of the winterised tents to ensure their quality.

The prime minister told the meeting that the finance ministry, despite financial constraints, provided resources for supply of relief goods which was appreciable. He also thanked the National Disaster Management Authority, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, and Information and Broadcasting Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, and Pakistan's ambassadors to Turkiye and Syria for their efforts for relief of the quake affected people.

He said the Pakistani philanthropists were donating relief goods wholeheartedly for those who suffered the losses caused by the earthquake. The NDMA Chairman General Inam Haider Malik, finance and planning ministers and

Pakistan's ambassador in Turkiye briefed the meeting on the status of relief supplies to the quake-hit Turkiye and Syria. It was told that by 23rd of March, 34 flights would leave for Turkiye carrying 50,000 winterised tents and 38,000 blankets for Turkiye, and 22,000 blankets and 10,000 ration bags for Syria.

It was told that two cargo flights carrying 220 tons of relief goods would leave for Turkiye by today (Friday) while a Pakistan Navy ship would carry relief goods to Syria. The prime minister instructed to ensure supply of relief goods within the given time. The meeting was attended by finance minister, planning minister, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, Pakistan's ambassador to Turkiye and relevant senior officers.

Shehbaz orders uninterrupted power supply in Ramadan's Sehr, Iftar hours: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday issued special instructions to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity during the hours of Seher and Iftar in Ramadan.

The prime minister gave the direction in a meeting with Chairman Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) Hafiz Nauman. The step will facilitate the fasting people during the holy month.

Premier greets President Xi Jinping: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on

Friday felicitated China's President Xi Jinping on being elected for the position for a third term.

"The confidence of the Chinese people and parliament in President Xi Jinping is a recognition of his extraordinary leadership skills," the Prime Minister said in a message of greetings on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan. President Xi Jinping was voted unanimously by the People National People's Congress (NPC), as the President of China for the next five years.

Shehbaz Sharif said, "President Xi Jinping has become a symbol of China's development and people's prosperity. Under his leadership, China has become the world's top economic power and this journey continues." The prime minister said under the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping, China was making remarkable achievements in every sphere, including education, health, agriculture, innovation, and technology.

Shehbaz Sharif expressed the hope that the tried and tested evergreen strategic cooperation between the two countries would be further strengthened during the next five-year term of President Xi Jinping. The prime minister extended extends his best wishes to President Xi Jinping, and the government and people of China.

LG by-laws challenged in PHC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Local Government Act 2013 by-laws has been challenged before Peshawar High Court (PHC) regarding issuance of birth, dead and marriage certificates, on Friday.

Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has compelled citizens to obtain their birth, dead and marriage certificates after 90 days by court orders while the writ petition prayer to declare the by-laws against LG Act 2013.

The petition stated that LG Act 2013 asserting that birth, death and marriage certificates should be issued by local governments department. However, the by-laws urged that citizens should obtain birth, dead and marriage certificates within 90 days otherwise it should be provided through court's orders.

The writ argued that it will further complex the procedure of obtaining certificates from LG department while 2013 Act didn't mention contexture of court in the script. Advocate Shah Faisal Ilyas filed the writ petition while stated that LG 2013 Act states village and neighborhood councils shall issue birth, dead and marriage certificate while no stipulated timeframe was established for obtaining the certificate.

The writ further argued that by-laws will create burden on courts on one hand while on the other side it will also compel citizens to utilize more resources and time. The petition added that referring such minor cases to court will increase burden on judicial system and will be duplication of resources during intact LG system. It is worthy to mention that the writ will be place before a divisional bench of PHC in upcoming days for hearing.

FIA get remand of Shoaib Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A judicial magistrate court on Friday granted a three-day physical remand of accused Shoaib Sheikh to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for alleged bribing to a judge in the Axtad degree case.

The FIA produced the accused before Judicial Magistrate Umar Shabbir and requested for his 10-day physical remand to carry out an investigation into the matter. The FIA's investigation officer informed the court that the high court had ordered an inquiry against the accused, and during the investigation transaction of some amount in the account of the former judge was found. However, the judge did not confess to taking any bribe, he added.

The accused said he had no connection with the transaction and he should have been given some time to join the investigation. Whether the accused, who had transferred the said amount into the judge's account, had been arrested, he asked. Prosecutor Ishfaq Naqvi said a total of 26 accused were named in the case. The statement of the said former additional session judge was part of an appeal pending with the high court, he added. Shoaib Sheikh had filed the appeal without going to jail, the prosecutor said. He stated that the former judge had confessed before the two high court judges to receiving the bribe, and opposed the request of the defence seeking to discharge the accused from the case.



BEIJING: President and Chairman Central Military Commission Republic of China Xi Jinping took oath of loyalty with Constitution after re-election for the third time.

Govt proposes amends in law regarding returned references

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday said that the government had proposed amendments in section-IV and V of the NAB law with regard to the references returned by the accountability courts.

An ordinance would be issued until the Parliament in session, he said, adding that the accountability courts had been given powers to transfer the references to the relevant forums if these did not fall in their jurisdictions. Addressing a press conference, the minister said that there had been rumors about the future of the references returned by the

accountability courts recently, adding that indeed these references were not quashed instead only their forums had been changed.

The minister said that the chairman NAB would be authorized to send the inquiries to the relevant institutions. However, the investigations on various matters could be closed only if the court would be satisfied. He said that deputy chairman would use all the powers of chairman NAB in his absence.

He said that previously NAB had been accused of political engineering and the apex court had also observed the same in Saad Rafiq case. The leadership of PML-N was acquitted from NAB references by

the courts under the previous law, he said. Azam Nazeer Tarar said that PTT's government had used the NAB for political purposes, adding that Imran Khan had introduced three ordinances during his tenure.

To a question, the minister said that under Article 19 of the constitution toshakhana record from 2000 to onward would be public soon on website or in print form without discrimination after being compiled. He, however, said that compiling record of toshakhana since 1947 was a huge and time taking exercise. To another question, he said that there was a need that every institution should have self-accountability system.

as victorious with the masses support",

he added. He said that Imran Khan had inflicted colossal loss of Rs.50 billion to the national kitty in collaboration with property tycoon out of which a property of Rs.15 billion was registered in the name of his wife.

He said that the time had come for the accountability and the law would take its own course. He warned that Imran Khan could be arrested as the hide and seek could not save him (Imran) from the accountability. He

asked the workers to buckle up their shoes as the elections and accountability would be held simultaneously.

He said that Imran Khan would be in jail because of his loot and plunder. He alleged that Imran Khan was taking refuge under fake excuses of illness but one day he would have to surrender before the law. He said that Nawaz Sharif would certainly return back to lead the masses and give a shameful defeat to the so-called leader who had usurped power through conspiracies.

Imran wants to give nation bitter pill under garb of immediate polls: Sana

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Federal Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan on Friday said that Imran Khan wanted to give nation a bitter pill under the garb of immediate elections with ulterior motive to avoid accountability in Tosha Khana and foreign funding cases.

Addressing the workers' convention at al-Fateh Sports Complex here, he said the PML-N was fully prepared for the elections. "We would not only take part in the elections but would emerge

The Frontier Post

Forces kill five terrorists F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed five terrorists during separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in North and South Waziristan, the military's media wing said Friday. In a statement, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the terrorists were killed after an "intense fire exchange" between them and the security forces.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review relief activities for earthquake victims of Turkiye and Syria by Pakistan.

FM calls for global unity to fight against growing Islamophobia

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday opened a special high-level meeting to commemorate International Day to Combat Islamophobia, with a fervent call to everyone - from any religion or creed - to stand together in the fight against hatred, bigotry and intolerance.

"The observance of this Day serves to reinforce our shared commitment to raise awareness about the insidious phenomenon of Islamophobia, advance mutual respect and understanding, and develop concrete measures to eradicate this contemporary plague," he told delegates in the UN General Assembly Hall, while highlighting that Islam is a religion of moderation, tolerance and pluralism. The meeting is co-convened by the Office of the President of the General Assembly and Pakistan in its capacity as the Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers.

Last year, the 193-member Assembly adopted Resolution 76/254 designating March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Apart from Casaba Korosi, the Assembly's President, present at the meeting, among others, were UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Miguel Moratinos.

OIC Secretary-General Hissein Braham Taham and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nazila Ghanea, were due to address by video link. In his opening remarks, FM Bilawal said since 9/11, animosity and institutional suspicion of Muslims and Islam across the world escalated to "epidemic proportions".

"Despite protestations to the contrary," the foreign minister said, "Islam and Muslims are routinely linked to terrorism". In some cases, he said, the rhetoric of hate and incitement to violence was officially inspired, noting that repeated pogroms of Muslims had been instigated by officially sanctioned neo-fascist policies and ideologies with complete impunity.

"The policies and violent actions of those who deny the right of self-determination of Muslim peoples represent the worst manifestations of Islamophobia today," FM Bilawal added. In this regard, he urged the UN secretary-general to formulate an 'action plan', in coordination with the OIC countries, to halt and reverse Islamophobia.

Such an action plan, he said, could include:

-- The appointment of a UN Special Envoy to combat Islamophobia;

-- The adoption of measures to protect Holy Sites, including the

thousands of mosques and mau-soleums;

-- The adoption of laws - at the national and international level - to outlaw hate speech, Holy Quran's vandalization, and discrimination and violence against Muslims and other communities;

--The provision of legal assistance and appropriate compensation to those subjected to such Islamophobic acts and;

-- The establishment of national and international judicial mechanisms and laws to hold those responsible for acts of Islamophobia accountable.

"Unfortunately," the foreign minister said, "the virus of Islamophobia is spreading faster than we have been able to react. 'Not even the greatest democracies are immune. We have witnessed democratic societies impose Muslim bans. So-called free societies allow for the desecration of holy texts and holy sites. Even my region is not immune with democratic secular societies under the threat of being transformed to religious and Islamophobic states. 'Today, we must renew our resolve to build an inclusive society where different cultures and beliefs are celebrated and diversity is embraced. We can ill afford to ignore dangerous ideologies and acts dividing us as humanity," he added.

(Continued on Back Page)

Iran and Saudi Arabia agree to resume ties

TEHRAN / RIYADH (Agencies): Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed on Friday to re-establish relations after seven years of hostility which had threatened stability and security in the Gulf and helped fuel conflicts in the Middle East from Yemen to Syria. The deal was announced after four days of previously undisclosed talks in Beijing between top security officials from the two rival Middle East powers.

Tehran and Riyadh agreed "to resume diplomatic relations between them and re-open their embassies and missions within a period not exceeding two months", according to a statement issued by Iran, Saudi Arabia and China.

"The agreement includes their affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs." Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for missile and drone attacks on the kingdoms oil facilities in 2019 as well as attacks on tankers in Gulf waters. Iran denied the charges.

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis movement has often carried out cross-border missile and drone attacks into Saudi Arabia, which has led a coalition fighting the Houthis, and in 2022 extended the strikes to the United Arab Emirates. In Friday's agreement, Saudi Arabia and Iran also agreed to activate a security cooperation agreement signed in 2001, as well as another earlier accord on trade, economy and investment. Both countries thanked China, as well as Iraq and Oman for hosting earlier talks in 2021 and 2022.

The agreement was signed by Iran's top security official, Ali Shamkhani, and Saudi Arabia's national security adviser Musaed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban. China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A White House national security spokesperson said the United States was aware of reports of the agreement and welcomed any efforts to help end war in Yemen and de-escalate tensions in the Middle East.

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Australia, India agree on strengthening ties

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi pledged greater defence and economic ties on Friday after a diplomatic tour where the leaders bonded over their countries' shared love of cricket.

Last year, the two countries signed a free trade deal called the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), the first signed by India with a developed country in a decade. However, a much larger Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) has been stuck in negotiations for over a decade.

Discussions between the countries restarted in 2011 but were suspended in 2016 as the talks were gridlocked. Negotiations resumed in 2021 but a deal has yet

proved to be elusive. Australia and India, with Japan and the United States, make up the Quad alliance that is seen as a bulwark against China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. Albanese's four-day visit to India included a Thursday reception aboard the INS Vikrant, India's first homemade aircraft carrier, where he announced new joint military drills.

"Security cooperation is an important pillar in the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Australia," Modi said on Friday at a joint press briefing after a private meeting. Australia and India made "significant and ambitious" progress in strengthening defence and security ties and also discussed climate change issues, Albanese said. "We discussed the increasingly uncertain global security environment and committed to strengthening the Australia-India defence and security partnership," Albanese said.

"We also agreed on an early conclusion of our ambitious CECA as soon as possible and I am hopeful that we will be able to finalise that this year," Albanese told reporters.

"This transformational deal will realise the full potential of the bilateral economic relationship, creating new employment opportunities and raising living standards for the people of both Australia and India."

Bilateral trade between the countries was \$27.5 billion in 2021 and India says trade has the potential to nearly double to \$50bn in five years under the ECTA. Friday's meeting came a day after the leaders watched the opening morning of the fourth cricket Test together in Modi's home state of Gujarat.

Over 179,000 Pakistanis to perform Hajj this year

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Mufti Abdul Shakoor said Friday that 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims would perform Hajj this year. Announcing the Hajj policy 2023 in the federal capital during a press conference, the minister said that all possible steps are being taken to provide maximum facilities to the pilgrims.

The estimated Hajj cost for the northern region, which includes Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, Faisalabad, Rahim Yar Khan, and Sialkot, is Rs1,175,000 while for the southern region, it is Rs1,165,000.

Giving details, the minister said that the estimated cost for the northern region under the sponsorship Hajj scheme is \$4,325 and \$4,285 dollars for the southern region. In a bid to facilitate overseas Pakistanis, the minister said that this year, the government has introduced a sponsorship Hajj scheme for them.

"Under the scheme, we hope to receive \$194 million," said the religious minister. He maintained that the government aims to start receiving the Hajj applications from March 16, while the deadline would be March 31. The Hajj draw would be conducted in the first week of April. He said the overall national quota for this year's Hajj is 179,210 pilgrims, which would be distributed among government and private sectors with a proportion of 50-50.

The minister said that Road to Makkah project facility will continue at Islamabad Airport which is likely to be extended to Lahore and Karachi. He claimed that on his personal request, Saudi Arabia has reduced the necessary Hajj duties compared to the previous year. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), on March 4, had announced that its pre-Hajj operation would start on May 21 and continue till August 12 during which the national flag carrier will lift 38,000 pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.



High level delegation meets Iranian Consul General

LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab, Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer visited the Iranian Consulate along with a high-level delegation.

The delegation included Secretary Industry and Commerce Ehsan Bhatta, Secretary Agriculture, Special Secretary Agriculture, Commissioner Lahore and CEO Punjab Board of Investment & Trade Jalal Hasan. Provincial Minister of Industry, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer and the delegation met Iranian Consul General Mehran Movahed Far.

During the meeting, bilateral trade relations and provision of relief in the holy month of Ramadan was discussed. Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer said that the Punjab government had prepared a comprehensive plan to provide relief to the people during the month of Ramadan.

Consul General Mehran Movahed Far said that they were ready for all kinds of support to provide relief to their Muslim brothers during Ramadan Mubarak. "We are keen to import meat from Punjab and for this purpose the support of Punjab government is required". CEO PBIT Jalal Hasan said that Punjab Investment Board will play its effective role in trade with Iran.

Lahore Metro Bus Service to run from 6 am

LAHORE (PPI) Following the direction of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi Lahore Metro Bus Service will start at 6 am instead of 6.30 am for the larger interest of the working class. According to a report, the decision will help thousands of laborers traveling on the Lahore Metrobus service daily. They will be able to reach their destination points on time.

In this regard, the government has taken the approval of the cabinet also. It should be noted that earlier Lahore Metrobus Service started at 6:30 am and the people working in the factories often got late. The matter came to the notice of Mohsin Naqvi who directed the Punjab Mass Transit Authority to change the Lahore Metro Bus Service timetable so that thousands of labourers could reach their destination on time.

Earlier, a meeting of the Punjab Mass Transit Authority was held on Friday while Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was in the chair. The issues of the Punjab Mass Transit Authority were reviewed in the meeting. The meeting was also apprised about the start of Lahore Metrobus Service at 6 am. Punjab Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretary of Finance.

12 TTP, Al-Qaeda terrorists arrested in Punjab operations

LAHORE (NNI): In a major development, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) teams have nabbed 12 terrorists in intelligence-based operations in three Punjab cities including Lahore.

According to information made available by CTD officials on Friday, the arrested terrorists are belonged to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan

and Al-Qaeda. Material used in making suicide vests and explosives were also seized during these operations, the officials said.

The CTD officials further said that the terrorists were identified during interrogation of 61 suspects. They said the terrorists were plotting to carry out sabotage in sensitive districts.

Three of the terrorists

were arrested from near a "restricted area" of Lahore.

Cases have been lodged against these terrorists and further interrogation was underway, the CTD officials divulged.

The CTD officials said 797 coming and search operations were carried out during the on-going week, during which 159 suspects were detained.

JI Karachi chief asks court to hold polls on 11 UC seats

KARACHI (PPI) Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Karachi Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said Friday He submitted before the court that elections were not held on 11 seats of union council chairmen and vice chairmen in Karachi owing to the death of candidates or other reasons.

Talking to media, he asked the court to order the Election Commission to hold elections on these 11 seats immediately so that the mayor of Karachi could

be elected.

He said the JI was the most successful party in the recently held local government elections in Karachi. Naeem said the JI had given a proof to the Election Commission about its success in five union councils, but the commission had become a political tool of the PPP.

He said the ECP was duty bound to conduct transparent and impartial elections. It was not per-

forming its constitutional obligation. "Why are the results of 11 union councils not being announced?" the JI leader questioned.

He claimed that the PPP wished that elections would not be held in these 11 union councils as it would face defeat.

Hafiz Naeem had moved the Sindh High Court, seeking an order for the commission to hold elections in the remaining union committees of the city.

Anti-polio drive to start from March 13 in Punjab

LAHORE (NNI): The anti-polio campaign in 13 districts of Punjab will start from March 13.

The campaign will last for seven days in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad and for five days in Bahawalpur, Bhakkar, DG Khan, Layyah, Mianwali, Multan, Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Sheikhupura and Sialkot.

As many as 11.35 million children up to the age of five years will be immunized against polio during the drive, said Dr Jamal Nasir, Minister primary and secondary healthcare.

The minister PSHD, Dr Jamal Nasir and Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid

Akhtar Zaman reviewed the arrangements for the campaign at a meeting in the Civil Secretariat here on Friday. Dr. Jamal Nasir, all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated in the meeting through video link. The Secretary Specialized Healthcare, Secretary Primary Healthcare, officials of the health department, besides representatives of international organizations working for polio eradication were also present at the occasion. The health minister appealed to the parents to get their children of 5 years age vaccinated at all cost to save their future. Vaccination is the only solution of protec-

tion from polio, he added.

The Chief Secretary directed that the anti-polio campaign be made a success. He mentioned that for the complete elimination of polio, it is very important to continue the collective efforts against the virus. He added that the DCs should pay special attention to the quality and coverage of the anti-polio drive.

The Secretary Primary Healthcare informed the meeting that more than 90,000 polio workers would perform duties in the anti-polio campaign starting from March 13. He said that special points have been set up for the coverage of the moving population.

PM will be responsible if any institution refused to cooperate in elections

LAHORE (NNI): Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi said on Friday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be responsible if any institution of the state refuses to cooperate in terms of holding the elections.

Mr Elahi held a meeting with other PTI leaders to discuss the matter of elections. He said as per the constitution, no institution could

refuse to extend support in elections. He recounted how the election date for Punjab elections had been announced on the order of the apex court.

"If Shehbaz Sharif will create any obstacles in connection with the implementation of the apex court's order over ensuring to hold the elections. Then he will be sent packing like former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani." Lashing out at

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, saying, "Soon the interior minister will be held accountable." He pinned hope on forming the government in Punjab as the date of the elections in the province had been announced.

Mr Elahi lambasted the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), saying, "This is the first government that is badly escaping from holding the elections."



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Gulam Ali in a group photo with the participants of 36th Mid-Career Management course who visited Governor's House during inland study tour.

1973 Constitution guarantees unity of federation: Rabbani

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Parliamentary Committee for Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of Pakistan Senator Raza Rabbani has said that the 1973 Constitution is a guarantee for the unity of all units of the federation of Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference along with the Pakistan Peoples Party leaders at the PPP Central Secretariat here on Friday, he said that the shape of the current federation could not remain intact in case of any new constitution. He said that all federating units and all political parties had accepted the 1973 Constitution unanimously and no one could terminate the Constitution, even martial law administrators could not do so. He said that the Constitution had kept all united despite several problems and differences.

The senator said that the country could not afford the consequences of any new experiment. He said that any other way would have adverse effects on the federation, and every institution should play its role within the given parameters of the Constitution. Raza said that ceremonies of the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution 1973 would be held round the year. He said that the first programme in this regard would be held in Islamabad, the second in Karachi and the 3rd would be held at

Lahore on March 25.

He said that it was better to hold all elections on the same day. He said that the PPP never avoided elections and whenever the electoral process would be held, the party would participate in it. Rabbani said the PPP had sought applications from the candidates, adding the situation was odd as two assemblies had been dissolved and now in these two provinces, Punjab and KPK, elections would be held on the basis of the previous census, while in the rest of the country and provinces, elections would be held according to the new census results.

He said that the PPP opposed arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan for political reasons; however, in case of corruption charges, the arrest of anyone should be made according to the law. To a question, he said that there should not be double standards in judiciary, adding that the trial of of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) could not have started had the relief being given to the prime minister of Banigala was provided to him. He appealed to the Supreme Court to hear the ZAB case again, as the then chief justice had admitted that the courts were under pressure at that time. He said that the Constitution provided a solution to every constitu-

tional issue, adding that the SC was also resolving issues under the Constitution 1973.

He said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition government in centre would never allow any steps against the national security and interests. He said the PPP always stood at its principled stance against dictatorship, and no misadventure could be allowed.

To a question, he said that General Musharraf fled to Dubai after imposition of Article 6 on him.

To another question, he said that division in judiciary would not benefit anyone, adding that a strong federation could only be formed by strengthening the parliament, judiciary and executive. He expressed his grief over the demise of the PTI worker and wished to condole with his family and said that the PPP never wanted something wrong happen to any political worker. He said that Imran Khan wanted to meet others but not the political parties leadership. Deputy Information Secretary PPP Central Punjab Faisal Mir demanded dismissal of Aitzaz Ahsan's basic party membership for crossing party discipline red-line several times in 40 years. He said that Aitzaz should join the PTI openly after disassociating himself from the PPP.

Sindh okays outsourcing of examinations

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has approved the outsourcing of matric and intermediate boards in view of complaints of irregularities in board examinations and results across the province.

The Department of Boards and Universities has written a letter to the heads of all matric and intermediate education boards in the province in this regard.

"Due to several complaints about maladministration and corrupt practices in conducting the examinations and compiling the results of SSC and HSC, Minister for Universities & Boards Department Ismail Rahoo, in his capacity as controlling authority, has granted approval to outsourcing the examination system from the forthcoming annual examination 2023 by all boards in a phased manner," the letter read.

The letter further states that the chairmen of all boards are therefore requested to prioritise examination components for outsourcing through an open competitive bidding process in terms of the SPRA Rules, 2010 amended from time to time. "All boards shall cover the required expenditures from within their budget allocation of CFY 2022-23," it added.

Rangers arrest two drug peddlers

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police, in a joint intelligence-based operation on Friday, arrested two alleged drug peddlers and recovered drugs from their possession. The arrested accused were identified as Muhammad Ilyas and Anwar Ali, said a news release issued here. The suspects used to purchase drugs worth Rs. 1.2 million monthly from Hun Chowki and sell it to Garibabad, Malir and Khokhrapur areas.

Govt ensuring people's access to info through RTI Act

F.P. Report

Friday.

PESHAWAR: Right to Information Act 2013 provides information to the people about their resources.

This was stated by Mr. Sayed Saadat Jahan, Assistant Director Communication, KP RTI Commission while imparting training on RTI Act to the participants of workshop "Stake Holders' Training on KP RTI Act, 2013" with theme 'Citizen for Good Governance' arranged by Individuals here at a local hotel in Peshawar on

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was privileged to have enacted this law before all the other provinces. He added that implementation of Right to Information Act gives every citizen the right to information to make a transparent government and administration more responsible which means good governance. The main purpose of the Right to Information Act is to provide information to citizens, to curb corruption and to promote accountability in the work of every public authority.

He said that good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that make the best use of resources while meeting the needs of the society.

Until 2013, access to information of public interest was not easy for an ordinary person.

The implementation of the RTI Act has improved the system of public service delivery. Elected representatives of Local Government, social workers, students, members of christian and transgender community participated in the said workshop.

Radio Pakistan gives importance to regional languages

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Station Director Radio Pakistan Peshawar Syeda Iffat Jabbar said that Radio Pakistan Peshawar has given importance to all local and regional languages.

Speaking at a function in Radio Pakistan Peshawar in honor of the artist from

Chitrali program Khawar Rang, she said that Radio Pakistan has always promoted the national as well as local and regional languages.

Syeda Iffat Jabbar said that Chitrali has its own peculiar beautiful style among all languages in the province and the Chitrali program is very popular among the people.

She said that the Khawar Rang program has a very important role in the promotion of Chitrali art, culture and literature.

Speaking at the event, Chitrali participants said that Radio Pakistan Peshawar is playing an important role in the promotion of language and literature and the station director of Radio Pakistan

Peshawar is a role model in this regard.

On this occasion, Station Director Syeda Iffat Jabbar was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chitrali program artists.

Later, Station Director Radio Pakistan Peshawar Syeda Iffat Jabbar distributed awards to the artists belonging to Khawar Rang.



LAHORE: A person displays a stall at Jilani Park organized by PHA is preparing items to attract customers during Jashan Baharan Festival. —APP Photo



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

**NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING
(RE-TENDER 2nd TIME)**

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

Technical & Financial Proposal through E-bidding on the basis of single stage two envelop system from the pre-qualified firms/companies registered with PHE department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the solar based pumping system.
The works are offered Scheme wise. Detail of schemes are as under:-

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

General Terms and Conditions: 1. Technical Design should be based on Hydraulic Parameters of the scheme provided in the bidding documents and rates should be quoted accordingly in financial bid. 2. Last date for submission technical / financial bid is 27-3-2023 at 12.00 Hours. Technical Bids will be opened at 2.30 hours on the same day, by the bids evaluation/Procurement committee in the office of Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Nowshera, in the presence of bidders or their representative opted to attend. Date of financial bid opening shall be intimated accordingly. 3. Financial bid shall be submitted electronically through e-Bidding not later than 27-3-2023 upto 12:00 Noon. The envelop mark as "Financial Proposal" must contain bid security @2% of the Estimated cost in shape of call deposit along with the stamp duty in the name of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Nowshera and Nonrefundable Bidding Entry Fee @ 0.03% of Tender Cost in shape of separate call Deposit may be furnished (in original) to this office. 4. Additional Security shall be submitted as per KPPRA Notification No. S.R.O. (14) Vol:1-24/2021-22/6058-21 dated: 10-05-2022. 5. Bidders must be registered and active tax payer with KPRA and shall have renewed their registration for current year. 6. This tender notice is also available on PHED website www.phedkp.gov.pk

INF(P) 740/23

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER : PHED NOWSHERA

Muqam chairs briefing session by CEO PESCO

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political & Public Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam, has said that the electricity distribution systems need dedicated attention in the aftermath of the floods which incurred heavy damages to the system.

He commended the incumbent CEO Sardar Arif Khan Sadozai for his dedication towards improving the state of affairs at PESCO since his posting recently. The provincial line losses target, put forth by the ministry, for the month of February, was achieved and surpassed by more than one percent during the incumbent CEO's tenure. The advisor highlighted the dire need to improve the billing system so that public is not forced to pay hefty bills in false over-

billing cases. He directed the concerned quarters to ensure real-time readings and fill vacant seats of linemen where necessary.

APM Engr Amir Muqam stressed that accountability of billing offenders must be ensured across the board for the sake of national interest. He highlighted that few corporate offenders are capable of stealing electricity that amounts to the total supply of several villages. Numerous restaurants, crush plants and prominent hospitals have been caught stealing electricity and fined on spot since the incumbent CEO took charge of his office. Mr. Sadozai emphasised that recovery in hard areas stand at forty one percent as compared to eighty eight percent in soft terrain areas.

Engr Amir Muqam further directed the concerned

officials to ensure zero load shedding during Sehri and Iftar timings in Ramzan. He also gave directives to expedite progress on electricity supply to Kalam while highlighting the significance of the region for tourism. The advisor declared that no tolerance would be shown towards misuse and misappropriation of resources. He added that ongoing work on various grid stations must be completed at the earliest.

Advisor to the Prime Minister for political & public affairs, national heritage & culture division and President Muslim League (Nawaz) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, Engr Amir Muqam chaired a meeting of top officials at WAPDA house Peshawar where he was briefed by the incumbent CEO PESCO Sardar Arif Khan Sadozai, CEO TESCO Qazi Tahir and other senior officials.

Three govt schools improved by facilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The security forces, in collaboration with the Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP), have provided a range of items to improve the infrastructure of three different government schools.

These items include stools, tables, cupboards, computer tables, revolving chairs, curtains, and more. IT Lab of Govt High School Tari Mangal has received 40 stools, 6 fiber-glass tables, 6 steel glass cupboards, 10 computer tables, 1 computer table for the teacher, 20 revolving chairs, 1 revolving chair for the teacher, 1 steel cupboard, 6 curtains, 1 chair for the teacher, and 1 table for the teacher.

Govt Primary School Kotri has received 100 benches, 100 study tables, 5 chairs for teachers, and 5 tables for teachers. Meanwhile, Govt Girls Primary School Sur Surang has received 40 benches, 40 study tables, 2 chairs for teachers, and 2 tables for teachers. The aim of this initiative is to improve the outlook and provide better facilities for the students of the area.

Autism clinic at PCP opened

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Dr. Abid Jameel Friday visited Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) and inaugurated clinic for treatment of children affected by autism.

He visited various departments of the institution, mingled with patients and inquired about their wellbeing. He also appreciated performance of physical rehabilitation center across and praised dedication of staff.

On this occasion, he was briefed that number of children affected by autism were increasing rapidly across the country and scarcity of rehabilitation centre for treatment. He was told that PCP has now taken up herculean task to treat autism patients that is very difficult and demands persistence.

10 hotel managers arrested

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The district administration on Friday conducted raids on different and renowned food outlets and hotels here at the university road and arrested 10 hotel managers over unhygienic conditions of the kitchens and staff.

On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Shah Fahad, Assistant Commissioner Sumaira Sabha along with officials of the Food department visited University, Tehkal, Arbab road, Phase-3 Chowk on University road and visited famous hotels and food outlets.

She inspected kitchens and food items at Usmani hotel, Shinwari Restaurant, Silver Dragon, Chief Burger, Jalil Kababi, Khyber Shinwari Tikka and others and ordered arrest of 10 hotel managers on poor hygienic conditions of the kitchen and staff.



PESHAWAR: Adviser to PM Amir Muqam chairing briefing session by CEO PESCO Sardar Arif Khan Sadozai at Wapda House.

Investment in livestock sector: A viable option to alleviate poverty

PESHAWAR (APP): Sahib Noor (43), a poor farmer of Bajaur tribal district was living below the poverty line unless he took advantage of the government's livestock and dairy farm project that turned his life prosperous. Hailing from Khar tehsil of district Bajaur, Sahib Noor wakes up early in the morning, give water and fodder to his five imported cows before supporting his assistant in cows' milking and washing the four-kal livestock shed farm, established with the financial support of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa livestock and dairy development department.

"Prior to the government's package, I was living below poverty line with serious problems of depression, anxiety and was under the burden of huge loans due to loss of my buffaloes and poultry birds in the last year devastated floods," said Sahib Noor whom family also support him in the livestock farming while talking to APP on Thursday. Appreciating the government's dairy farm and livestock project launched for assistance of poor and flood affected farmers in merged districts, the motivated farmer said that he received five imported purebred cows of purebred under the project while bearing 20 percent cost and 80 percent covered by the government.

"Each cow gives about 17-20 kilogram milk a day which he sells in the market and support his family besides paying electricity bills, wages to his labours and meeting other expenses," he said, adding like him scores of other farmers in his home district were taking benefit from the government's dairy and livestock farming project. KP livestock department's officials told APP that 160 model and livestock farms out of 300 farms were established in all seven merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding work on 20 more livestock farms were in pipeline on which work would soon start to engage more poor farmers and flood hit livestock owners.

"The estimated cost of establishment of a model livestock farm is Rs3.5 million out of which 80 percent was provided by the government and 20 percent shared by the beneficiary registered farmer," he said, adding the business and jobs oriented projects have started positive changes in

lives of tribesmen. He said it was mandatory for each farmer to run the poultry farm for at least five years and properly look after animals provided by the government in a bid to increase milk and meat production besides increasing farmers' income in KP.

"One farm provides jobs to 900 people in merged areas," he said, adding the government also provides milking machines imported from Turkey to registered farmers to avoid waste of milk and ensure its quality. Keeping in view of an availability of vast land in seven merged tribal districts suitable for livestock and dairy farming, the KP government has launched another project i.e. revival of existing poultry farms in merged areas under which free feed, medicines and vaccination services were being provided to the registered farmers by the DVM doctors.

The objectives of these projects are to conserve livestock and dairy wealth by trying to improve the productive capabilities of livestock and poultry through effective animal health coverage and artificial insemination services, feed and fodder for benefits of tribal people. To take advantage of the poultry farms project, the farmer was required to have a day old chicks while medicines and feed services were the responsibility of the livestock department. At least 45 model dairy farms with 3,000 poultry birds were established last year in merged areas.

The government is supporting farmers in construction of model semi-environmentally controlled sheds and farms in merged areas for which Rs seven million would be provided by farmers and 10 million to 15 million by the government, he said adding the government would help registered farmers in solarization of farms. "Each farm would have at least 30,000 poultry birds," he said, adding the project would change the destiny of tribal people. The government, under poverty alleviation through enhancement of milk and meat value chain services in merged areas, was financially supporting farmers who have at least 20 animals and a model cattle farms, he said, adding 20 farms were already established under this initiative.

"The interest of tribal people in

these projects was overwhelming and the department would consider extending the desired project for facilitation of more underprivileged farmers and poultry breeders." Besides merged areas, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was constructing 107 model farms in settled districts of the province to provide poultry and livestock meat to consumers at affordable rates. Approximately, 13.6million litres of milk and Rs1,360 million profit would be achieved from these farms in KP.

The trickled down positive effects of the government's three mega livestock and poultry projects worth Rs3,214 million under the national emergency agriculture programme worth over Rs309.7 billion to alleviate poverty, increase meat and milk production have started visible at the grassroots level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The three gigantic projects including 'poverty alleviation through development of rural poultry' amounting Rs834 million, save the calf worth Rs1,554 million and feedlot fattening programme of Rs826 million have provided much-needed relief to price-hike stricken people, women, persons with disabilities and under-privileged segments of society in the country.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, around 30-35 million rural populations were engaged in livestock raising, having household holdings of 2-3 cattle and buffalo besides 5-6 sheep and goats per family, which helped them to drive 30-40% of their income from livestock. The poultry meat also contributes 28.5% of the total meat production in Pakistan. The basic concept of the milk village project was procurement, processing and distribution of milk aimed at boosting economic wellbeing of rural milk producers and helping urban consumers get quality milk at a reasonable price. The department was trying to take various steps for increasing milk production by organizing dairy cooperative societies at village and tehsil level. The official said these projects after completion would significantly reduce prices of meat and poultry in the open market besides generating employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of poor farmers.

Advisor's health inaugurates paraplegic center

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Caretaker Advisor for Health Dr. Abid Jameel paid a detailed visit to the Paraplegic Center Peshawar and also formally inaugurated the clinic for the treatment of children affected by autism. He was very impressed with the performance of the largest physical rehabilitation center across the country and highly appreciated the dedication of its staff.

Dr. Abid Jameel visited various departments of the institution, mingled with the patients under treatment there and inquired about their well-being. On this occasion, spinal cord injury patients, hailing from different parts of the country, told the Health Advisor that apart from three times meals a day, all treatment facilities and equipment are provided to them completely free of cost, while they are also fully satis-

fied of the good behavior of the staff here.

Dr. Abid Jameel acknowledged that he himself is a witness to this fact as his close relative was admitted here a few years ago who was sooner rehabilitated due to the excellent medical facilities available here. Health Advisor formally inaugurated the clinic and program for the treatment and physical and psychological rehabilitation of children affected by autism. He was told that the number of children affected by autism is increasing rapidly across the country and it has become a big problem in the modern world, but unfortunately there are very few institutions for the treatment of autism and they are also very expensive. It may be noted that children affected by autism are usually self-absorbed and unaware of their surroundings, they shy away from socializing with people, not interested in reading and cannot concentrate

on any task. They cannot sit in one place and get down to fighting and breaking things. Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas told that although the treatment and physical and psychological rehabilitation of children with autism is a difficult job, but the Paraplegic Center Peshawar has now taken up this Herculean task as well.

He also gave a detailed presentation to the Health Advisor about the overall performance of the institution. Addressing the staff and students of the institution, Dr. Abid Jameel assured to bring the expansion and new plans of the institution to the radar of the health department and prayed for further progress of the institution. Earlier, the center's chairman and former finance secretary Ziaur Rehman, chief executive Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas and professional staff warmly welcomed the adviser to the chief minister on his arrival at the paraplegic center.

KPITB launches Google certifications for youth

Muhammad Fahad Khan

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) has partnered with Google to launch the "Grow with Google" program, offering 5000 scholarships for in-demand Google certifications. The initiative aims to upskill the youth of the province, enabling them to explore better career options in the global market space and become globally competitive.

The program, being run by TechValley in Pakistan, will also focus on enabling women to benefit from the opportunity, with a launch on International Women's Day to celebrate the contribution of women in society. The initiative comes amid concerns about a global digital skills shortage, with experts warning that millions of jobs are going unfilled due to a lack of qualified candidates. According to a report by the World Economic Forum, by 2025, over 85 million jobs could go unfilled due to a lack of skilled workers.

Pakistan is not immune to this trend, with a recent report by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan warning that the country is facing a digital skills gap, with a shortage of skilled workers in areas such as software development, data analytics, and cybersecurity. The "Grow with Google" program will help to address this skills



shortage, offering young people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to succeed in the global job market. The program is being launched in partnership with the Higher Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Social Welfare Department, National Incubation Center Peshawar, and Khawateen Rozgar Services.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Sahibzada Ali Mahmud, the Managing Director of KPITB, emphasized the importance of upskilling the youth to meet the demands of the digital age. "The world is changing rapidly, and we need to equip our youth with the skills they need to succeed in this new digital era," he said. "The 'Grow with Google' program will provide our young people with the opportunity to acquire the skills that are in demand in the global job market, and help them to build a brighter future for themselves and their families."

Muhammad Khalid, the Secretary of Science

Technology and IT Department, praised the initiative, saying that it would help to bridge the digital skills gap in the province. "'Grow with Google' program is an excellent initiative that will give young people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the chance to gain the necessary skills to thrive in the digital age. He emphasized the need for more programs like this to bridge the province's digital skills gap and enable its youth to compete in the global job market."

The "Grow with Google" program is just one of several initiatives being undertaken by the KPITB and Science Technology and IT Department of Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to upskill the youth and bridge the digital skills gap in the province. With the support of partners such as Google, they are working to build a brighter future for the young people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ensure that they are equipped to succeed in the digital age.

Tribal elders express concerns against holding of elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Around 50-60 elders of newly merged districts (NMDs) here Friday expressed their strong concerns against holding of elections in NMDs before the conclusion of fresh census/ delimitation in merged districts.

Addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club, the tribal elders including senator Abdul Rasheed, senior vice President Jamiat

Ulema Islam (JUI), Ejaz Ahmad Saeed, Mayor Tehsil North Waziristan, Muhammad Shoaib, former member provincial assembly Akhtar Gul, tribal malik of South Waziristan and others lamented over the problems/issues of merged district (MDs) including the resettlement of Internally Displaced People (IDPs), education, health, infrastructure and communications.

The tribal elders

expressed concerns over the last Census held in FATA in 2017, claiming that the population graph was reported as less than half. They also raised concerns over the change in the Special Status of FATA after the 25th Constitutional Amendment, leaving the commitments uneven after the merger of FATA into KP and later on, reduced the number of national assembly seats from 12 to 6 in NMDs.

adding such ill tactics were used by Imran Khan to please the enraged workers after his childish decision. Ikhtair Wali said that Imran Khan can stage rallies anywhere he chooses and there was no issue in peaceful public gathering under the law. However, he questioned when Imran Niazi will learn to remain abide by law, adding Imran Khan had hardly appeared in courts to defend his cases.

"If a three times elected Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif can face courts cases and imprisonment then why not Imran Khan. Was Imran Khan above the laws of Pakistan," he questioned. Wajid Ali Khan, ANP leader and former provincial minister said that there was no need of taking out a parallel rally in Lahore along with the women's march that created law and order situation on the International Women's Day due to PTI's stubbornness.

"Imran Khan was responsible of

the yesterday's Lahore riots that resulted killing of an innocent political worker," he said and added if Imran Khan asked his supporters to withdraw rally a precious life could have been saved and vehicles of citizens have not been damaged. He said that Lahore's unfortunate incident was tantamount to creating unrest in Punjab province after announcement of the election schedule as PTI was afraid of PDM popularity.

ANP leader said PTI has violated section 144 CrpC imposed by the government to avoid any untoward incident in Lahore and the PTI's rally was tantamount to not accepting the country's laws. Sahibzada Hamza, PMLN Nowshera President said that the PTI Chief was continuously evading court appearances by displaying his plastered leg and at the same time was staging big rallies which were beyond his understanding.

He alleged that Imran Khan was involved in serious crimes and cor-

ruption cases including Toshakhana and PTI foreign funding cases and was getting relief compared to Nawaz Sharif who was sentenced for not taking salary from his son. Terming Imran as Fitna Khan, he said PTI Chief had been exposed due to his repeated vandalism in the court premises. He said PTI government has itself closed own created Ehtasab Commission at Peshawar that exposed Imran Khan tall anti corruption claims.

He said the billion trees project was taken over by the NAB and BRT was completed four times higher compared to Lahore and Islamabad metros, thus PTI wasted taxpayer money. He said the PTI Jail Bhara Movement has miserably failed in KP and Punjab. He said the Imran Khan government was responsible for the economic quagmire in the country after he backtracked from the agreement made with the IMF.

Imran Khan had laid various economic traps for the present govern-

ment after knowing that his days were numbered before his constitutional removal through a successful no-confidence motion by the national assembly. He said that Rs 417 billion were provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2010 under the NFC award including the period of 10 years of PTI and questioned that why standard things like a safe city project, forensics, and DNA labs were not established and why the counter-terrorism department was not fully equipped in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The political experts said that wrangling among political parties would serve no purpose rather weaken democratic institutions and create anarchy. For continuity of democracy and strengthening of democratic institutions, they said it was necessary that all political forces should sit together and hold meaningful dialogues for free and transparent elections that is imperative to bring political and economic stability to the country.

PTI's hooliganism detrimental to democracy, political tolerance

PESHAWAR (APP): The hooliganism demonstrated by the PTI workers yesterday at Lahore was being termed as against the spirit of democratic principles and political tolerance by the experts here on Thursday.

"The violent clash of PTI workers with Lahore police negated the tall claims of the former of being champion of justice and supremacy of institutions that resulted in death of one person," said Ikhtair Wali Khan, PMLN KP Spokesman and former member provincial assembly while talking to APP. Despite repeated requests by the Lahore police to PTI workers to peacefully disperse, he said that PTI workers' scuffle with law enforcers was tantamount to taking law into hands.

"PTI workers has not only violated 144CrpC but also tarnished their own image before people," he said, adding pelting of stones on police vehicles and breaking citizens' vehicles at Canal Road, Mall Road and Zaman Park by the enraged workers was no

service to the nation. He said no government can allow holding of two mass rallies parallel including PTI rally and woman march and that was why PTI was repeatedly requested to postpone its rally for security reasons that was not reciprocated well by the PTI leadership including Imran Khan. "Who would have been responsible in case of subversive activities during PTI rally or women's march," he said, adding that the media is free and the judiciary was functioning independently and if any political leader including Imran Khan had any problem can approach these forums for addressal. He said the country was passing through a very difficult time since its establishment and political leadership including PTI was expected to act wisely by not creating law and order situation in the country especially in Punjab.

"The Lahore's riots exposed the PTI leadership's deep frustration after prematurely dissolving the Punjab and KP Assemblies," he said,



In brief

Motorcycle lifter gang busted
F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: Police has busted a gang of motorcycle thieves and arrested its four members during a raid, claimed an official on Friday. Taking notice of bike theft incidents in Miranshah town, DPO Salim Riaz constituted a special team headed by SHO Laiq Marjan and tasked it to ensure arrest of bike thieves at all costs", said an official. He said that the police experts traced the gang with the help of modern technology and informers and arrested its four members during a raid. "The cops seized four stolen motorcycles from the arrested men and shifted them to the police station in Miranshah town", he added. The official also claimed that the same police party arrested an alleged killer two hours after he murdered a man at Chashma Pull in Miranshah. "The deceased identified as Zar Ayaz, a resident of Bannu was attacked when he was going somewhere in an auto rickshaw", he maintained. He said that the law enforcers rushed to the site of occurrence, collected evidence and arrested the killer with the weapon used in the crime.

10 suspects held; arms recovered
Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The district police and Elite force on Friday conducted joint search operations in areas around Kohat University and District Jail here and apprehended 10 suspects, including two drug peddlers. During the operation, two pistols, dozens of cartridges and two kg of hashish were recovered from the possession of the arrested persons, said the spokesman of district police. A heavy contingent of police and elite force participated in the search operation under the leadership of DSP Sadar Saifur Rahman and SHO Jarma Saifullah. Women police and officials of intelligence agencies were also involved in the operation. The police teams also checked necessary documents of the people residing in the rented houses and detained six non-local people living in rented houses without legal agreement and registration.

Woman dead due to wrong medication
F.P. Report

MARDAN: A woman died due to an alleged wrong injection at Mardan Medical Complex (MMC) Hospital. The relatives protested by keeping the body on the road. According to Abdur Rahman, a resident of Nista Road Khandhari, his mother was undergoing treatment in the surgical ward after the operation. Today the doctor prescribed an injection and brought the injection, my mother died as soon as it was administered. After the death of the woman, the relatives protested and kept the body on the road and blocked the Mardan Nowshera road in front of the MMC. Demanded investigation of the incident and action against the doctor. In the meantime, Additional Assistant Commissioner Junaid Khalid reached the spot. And negotiated with the protesters and dispersed peacefully on the assurance of an impartial investigation of the incident. Meanwhile, Medical Director Dr. Hamad said when contacted that the incident of the deceased woman has been taken notice of a formal investigation has been initiated. All aspects will be considered, he added that the deceased woman's operation was successful and her relatives were also satisfied with it.

EPA: Climate change threat for agriculture, health

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The climate change is still the greatest constant threat to human health and agriculture, the government is trying hard to reduce disaster risks, the services of non-governmental organizations is vital and cannot be ignored in this regard.

These views were expressed by the Director General of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Muhammad Anwar Khan while speaking on the occasion of the inauguration of the two-year development project regarding the threats posed by climate change.

Director Lasoona Azam Khan, Project Director Noor Malik, Project Manager Lala Rukh, Ali Khan of GiZ, Mohammad Abid, Khadija, ADC Sohail Khan, AC Asghar Surani and others were also present on this occasion. On this occasion, the speakers said that we all have to play a role to reduce the risks caused by climate change because it can pose risks not only to Pakistan but to the whole world.

They said that to deal with these challenges there is a dire need to increase the capacity building of the

masses at the local level and to train them, to create awareness among the people on how to deal with these threats.

On this occasion, Lasona director Azam Khan said that this awareness campaign is being launched by non-governmental organizations in two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Swat and Lower Dir, through which the people at the local level are aware of the effects of climate change threats on agriculture and health sector and added regular training will be given to reduce health hazards,

He said that work is going on at the government level to reduce the threats caused by climate change, along with him, we are trying hard to deal with these challenges and in this regard, training workshops and awareness campaign will be organized.

Minister's Labour reviews departmental progress: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Labour, Excise and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi visited the offices of the Labour Department in Saidu Sharif during his visit to Swat as well as reviewed and discussed the performance of

the department with the officers there. He expressed satisfaction that all the district labour offices in Malakand division including Swat are promptly disposing off cases related to workers and laborers community while currently there are no pending cases of laborers left in Saidu Sharif Labor Courts.

Haji Manzoor Afridi strictly instructed the labour authorities to address the problems and difficulties of the workers on priority basis and to always treat them politely. He said that apart from increasing employment opportunities, the provincial government is trying to improve the quality of life of workers and to provide quality education and health facilities to their children, in which the role and cooperation of labour officers is equally important.

Earlier, the Labour and Excise Minister Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi heard the problems of the local people in Saidu Sharif and issued orders to the relevant authorities on most of their applications on the spot, while assured them that their other grievances would be resolved at an appropriate level.

Police arrests six alleged culprits including PO

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Police arrested an outlaw after exchange of fire in Kherukhel Pakka area of Lakki Marwat on Friday in the premises of Ghaznikhel police station.

An official said that a party of Ghaznikhel police station was dispatched to the remote rural locality on information about the presence of a suspect wanted by police in a murder case there. He said that the cops came under firing attack when they reached the area and started laying a siege around the hideout of the criminal.

"After retaliatory firing the outlaw laid down arms and surrendered", he maintained, saying that police seized an assault rifle, a shotgun and ammunition from the suspect identified as Muhammad Abbas, a resident of Peshawar and shifted him to the police station. The official said that police had registered a case against the arrested man under relevant sections of law and began investigation.

Meanwhile, police have arrested five suspects including three drug peddlers in separate actions in parts of Lakki Marwat on Wednesday. During a routine patrolling, a police party captured two persons including Saifur Rehman and Faheem Raza and seized 1010 grams hashish, a pistol and bullets from

them.

Separately, another party of Ghaznikhel police station arrested three drug peddlers including Qudratullah, Aftab and Amir Ayaz and recovered 915 grams heroin, a pistol with bullets and a small quantity of hashish from them. Police had registered separate cases against the arrested suspects and began an investigation.

District admin along with Scouts Association launched plantation drive: The district administration with support of the forest department and by Scouts Association planted over 500 hundred plants in the district headquarters complex Tajazai on Friday.

Local deputy commissioner Abdul Hadi inaugurated the tree plantation drive by sowing a seedling in the DHQ complex. The forest department southern circle Bannu conservator Saleem Khan Marwat, AC Tariq Mehmood, additional ACs Sultan Nooruddin Ahmer and Awais Khan, SDFO Nageebullah Khan, ADEO Ihsanullah, rescue service emergency officer Atif Sardar, students and scouts also took part in activity and planted saplings.

Saleem Marwat briefed the deputy commissioner about his department's initiatives to increase forest cover in the region. He said that the forest department would plant around 1.5 million plants during the cur-

rent spring season. "Along with sowing new saplings the forest department is also taking steps to take care of already planted trees under Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme", he claimed.

The deputy commissioner assured that his administration would extend full support to the forest department to increase the area of timberlands in the district. He asked the forest officials to grow more and more trees to reduce pollution, improve air quality and help local residents to increase their income. Hadi also inaugurated the spring tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling on the premises of Government Shaheed Muhammad Ghasan Khan Centennial Model High School No. 1, in Lakki Marwat city.

DEO Ilyas Khattak, Deputy DEO Gul Faraz and schools' heads accompanied him. He also attended as a chief guest the prize distribution ceremony of the annual district high and higher secondary schools sport tournament. On the occasion, students sang patriotic songs, delivered speeches and presented tableaux. A PT platoon presented a guard of honour to the deputy commissioner and took him to the venue of the function. The deputy commissioner distributed trophies, shields and certificates among the players of winner and runner up teams.

Nation to decide their fate by means of vote

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Vote is a national trust and duty and its correct use is the right and responsibility of every Pakistani. We can make a better decision for our future only with the correct use of vote. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri expressed these views in one of her statements. She said that the correct use of vote is the duty of every Pakistani and it is a right to use the right to vote without any pressure or coercion. Through voting, we are the future. She said that no society can deny the importance of vote; no state can become a state without its people.

It is through voting in elections that we decide our good and bad. Good and sincere leadership can be brought by the correct use of vote, while on the other hand, wrong people can also come to the assemblies due to misuse, so for the development and prosperity of the country, men and women above 18 years of age must register their vote. Make and elect sincere

leadership for the nation and for this the correct use of vote is very important and it is very important to highlight the importance of vote registration and exercise of right to vote in the society.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri said that Pakistani women are more than half of the population and the importance of their vote is undeniable and women are a problem for the country. Women can play an important role in the selection of leadership and representatives. Democracy cannot be strengthened until women are empowered. She further said that the number of women in terms of population in the country is more than half of the population but the registration of women voters is less than 43 percent.

The tragedy is that even registered women do not use their right to vote. Women should register their vote to exercise their right to vote and make better decisions for themselves so that they can use their right to vote for the devel-

opment of the country. She also said that the vote is very important in developed countries, it is not just a slip, but it is cast considering the destiny of the country and the nation, but unfortunately, the turnout of the vote in our country is very low. Few people hesitate to participate in the electoral process. If we know the power of vote and use it properly and put the rightful and competent person in power, then our problems can be solved better.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri further said that every single vote of every person, including women, is very important in the upcoming election. There is a dire need for correct use of vote in Balochistan because the people here are becoming conscious and they are getting to know their good and bad. The people of Balochistan will no longer be seduced by the so-called representatives and leaders who raise hollow slogans. People will choose the best and sincere representatives for them.



QUETTA: Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq addressing a protest camp for early release of Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman.

Unloading rail carriages compels passengers to return tickets

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: At Hafizabad Railway Station, the rush increased due to the unloading of 8 coaches of Pakistan Express from Karachi to Rawalpindi. 70 to 100 passengers started returning their tickets every day.

According to the details, at Hafizabad Railway Station, eight carriages are unloaded from the Pakistan Express from Karachi to Rawalpindi on reaching Faisalabad. Many passengers are forced to travel standing up due to lack of space in the train, while many passengers are returning 70 to 100 tickets every day due to non-availability of space, which is not only causing financial loss to the Railway Department but also causing serious trouble to the passengers.

Passengers have demanded from the Federal Minister of Railway Department and other authorities that more bogies should be added to Pakistan Express and the bogies being unloaded in Faisalabad should also be restored.

Two convicted for lifetime imprisonment: Additional Sessions Judge Ch. Tariq Bashir sentenced the woman and her husband to life imprisonment in the famous drug case. According to the details, about two years ago, Ali Jabbar, son of Faeqer Muhammad resident of Qila

Sharif, Qila Lal Singh Sheikhpura and his wife Tahreem Fatima were bringing a large amount of opium in their car. While Vanike Tatar police recovered more than two and a half kgs of opium from the vehicle during checking and arrested both husband and wife and registered a case against them.

Now, the other day, the Additional Sessions Judge while pronouncing the verdict in the said case sentenced both the husband and wife to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 35,000/- rupees. For non-payment of fine, the accused will have to undergo another year and six months of imprisonment.

Kabaddi competition kicks-off: Hafizabad 'Kabaddi' Club won the Kabaddi Match against Pindi Bhattian Kabaddi Club. The match was played at Hanif Muhammad Stadium Hafizabad in connection with celebrating Jashan-e-Baharan. The team of Hafizabad Kabaddi Club secured 37 points while runner up team of Pindi Bhattian Kabaddi Club could secure 35 points.

ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig was chief guest on the event. DO Sports Nabeela Cheema, Chief Officer MC Hafizabad Qazi Abid Qayyum and a large number of spectators witnessed the match and applauded the players. ADCR distributed prizes among players.

Digital census underway with pace: 7th digital Census is underway in the district and officers of district administration are supervising the census process by visit different areas.

ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig, ADCG Ishfaq Ahmad and DO population Welfare Hafizabad visited various areas and checked working to census teams. They directed the field staff to continue their duty with dedication and honesty in large interest of the nation. They also took feedback regarding census process.

Cleanliness drive launched: 15-days 'Safai Nasif Eman Hay' Campaign is in full swings in the district including Hafizabad city, Pindi Bhattian, Sukheke Mandi, Jalalpur Bhattian while special teams of Municipal Committees are engaged in cleanliness of streets, roads and lifting of heap of garbage from populated areas in the district.

This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich and ADC/Administrator MC Hafizabad while visiting different areas of the city Hafizabad. They reviewed working of sanitary staff and directed the sanitary workers to perform their duty with hard work and honesty with the passion of serving the people and obvious improvement must be reflected by their working.

Police arrests POs

F.P. Report

WANA: Police has arrested proclaimed offender allegedly involved in drug cases and attempt to murder by in the premises of Wana police station, on Friday.

Under the supervision of District Police Officer South Waziristan Shabir Ahmed Shah, Wana city police arrested the wanted accused in drug trade including attempted murder, Zaitullah alias Karbala, in a police encounter. District Police Officer South Waziristan, the famous criminal named Karbala, who is the murderer of seven people, and after the merger, Wana police registered three cases of murder, while four murders were also committed during the FCR.

Under the supervision of District Police Officer South Waziristan Shabir Ahmad Shah, SHO Azam Warsak Alamgir Khan Mehsud, Additional SHO Usman Khan Mehsud, including seven vehicles and armored police, arrived at his house, surrounded and after firing at the police for several hours, the police arrested him alive. The accused, wanted by the police, Zaitullah alias Karbala, was also involved in drug dealing and is considered a symbol of terror in the entire district. The people of Wana sub-division, especially Doog area, paid tribute to Wana police including District Police Officer Shabir Ahmad Shah and SHO Azam Warsak Alamgir Khan for arresting the accused by technical means without any loss of life.

Man kills himself

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): A man committed suicide along with his minor daughter by jumping into Abu Zehbi canal over domestic issues, rescuers said. Muhammad Saleem, 52, drowned along with 3-year-old Zoha, resident of Mohala Katra Ahmed Khan into 150 feet deep canal water.

Rescue staff reached out to the spot and the search operation was continued until the filing of this report.

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Situated in the charming hilly areas between Murree and Abbottabad, the Ayubia hill resort is famous for its Chairlift which was one of the major attractions for tourists in the hilly area needs reopening.

As per details, Ayubia chair-lift was closed down due to technical faults. It was imported from Switzerland and fixed at Khanspur which is 8,500 feet high from sea level. It was installed in 1965 by GOP with small parks at both ends now has outlived its useful life and need to be replaced with modern and international standards chairlifts.

Initially the chairlift was operated by the Hazara Hill Tract Improvement Trust (HHTIT) owned and controlled by the then Government of NWFP and after 2000 by Galiyat Development Authority (GDA). Ayubia was also declared as a national park in 1984 by the wildlife department with the objective of preserving scenic beauty of the area, promoting research in natural environment and creating awareness among people about wildlife and plants.

Abdul Raheem, a local journalist told The Frontier Post that this hill station gave a spectacular view in the summer season and had its own charm but the snowy view in the winter



season was simply magical and matchless. However now it is losing charm due to closure of country's oldest chair-lift which is out of order. "The lives and livelihood of local inhabitants are being severely affected after its closure as this was the only and one source of earning for them who through the business of hotels, restaurants and handicraft got employment" he added.

Amna Sardar, former lawmaker and social activist from Galiyat said, Ayubia is an historic resorted place in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, was named after Muhammad Ayub Khan, second President of Pakistan. The area support temperate coniferous forests and temperate broad leaf and mixed forests ecoregion habitat, with an average elevation of 8,000 feet above the sea level. The area attracts a large number of tourists annually, there is a large number of hotels and restaurants around the National Park of

Ayubia.

The Chairlift was the first recreation facility of its kind in Pakistan and remained a major attraction for domestic tourists till its closure. She said, for Pakistan and especially for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, tourism can be a massive source of earning as we possess top-class tourist attractions from the stunning himalayan peaks, beautiful lakes, panoramic valleys, rich culture, centuries old-civilisation and vast deserts to all the other natural and man-made attractions. But, unfortunately tourism potential has largely been untapped and no serious attention paid by the concerning authorities towards the betterment of the economic growth of the country. When contacted, Spokesperson Galiyat Development Authority (GDA) Ahsan Hameed told that they are planning for installation of new chairlift and different proposals are under consideration in this regard.

Kohat Police conducts operation in surroundings of KUST, Jail

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Ten (10) suspects including two drug peddlers have been taken arrested during a joint search and strike operation of local police and Elite Force in the surrounding localities of the Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST) and District Jail Kohat, said a press release issued on

Friday.

The operation carried out under the supervision of DSP (Saddar), Saif-ur-Rehman was also included women police, personnel of the civil sensitive agencies and heavy contingent of operational police and Elite Force.

During the operation, police personnel also checked documents of tenants and took six Afghan

nationals living without registration. Two pistols, dozens of cartridges and two kilograms of heroin powder were also recovered from the arrested suspects. For complete scrutiny, the arrested persons were shifted to Police Station Jarma and formal FIRs were registered against all those from whom arms, ammunition or narcotics were recovered.



US democracy group downgrades Peru, Burkina

WASHINGTON (AFP): Peru and Burkina Faso led a global deterioration in freedom last year but a number of other nations made improvements, giving hope in the fight against authoritarianism, a US democracy research group. In its 50th annual report, Freedom House downgraded both Peru and Burkina Faso on its index of countries and also assessed declines in Russia, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Hungary, among others.

Peru, whose political chaos grew last year with the impeachment of president Pedro Castillo after he tried to dissolve Congress and rule by decree, was moved from free to partly free, while Burkina Faso, which endured two coups in 2022, went down to not free. The report found an overall decline in global freedom led by concerns about freedom of expression, with media coming under pressure in at least 157 countries. But 2022 also saw bright spots. Colombia and Lesotho were both upgraded to free from partly free and Freedom House saw improvements in nations including Slovenia, Kosovo, Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines and

Zambia.

Colombia saw the election of its first left-wing president, Gustavo Pedro, who has vowed to increase democratic inclusion, while Lesotho elected diamond tycoon Sam Matekane on a platform of transparency and economic reforms in the landlocked African nation. The 2022 report "documents a continuation of troubling trends, but it also gives some reason to hope that the freedom recession of the past 17 years may be turning a corner," Freedom House president Michael Abramowitz said in a statement. Latin America is a key frontline, with the opposite shifts in rankings for Colombia and Peru. The report covers the time before the inauguration in Brazil of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who defeated the far-right Jair Bolsonaro.

"For years, Latin America was a stable region, there were relatively high levels of freedom and Cuba as an outlier, until authoritarian consolidation took hold in Venezuela and then in Nicaragua," said Amy Slipowitz, a co-author of the report. In Peru, she pointed to authoritarian steps taken by former president Alberto Fujimori,

who ruled from 1990 to 2000, as a harbinger of recent trends in the country, which has seen six presidents in five years. "One of the trends we found in the broader global research was that both coups and attempted coups can lead to long-term deterioration down the line," she said, pointing to after-effects of the 2014 military takeover in Thailand and the 2016 attempt to oust Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Freedom House listed Ukraine, which is battling a Russian invasion, as partly free. While judging Ukraine to have democratic elections, it pointed to concerns over corruption and President Volodymyr Zelensky's efforts to control media content with the stated aim of countering Russian propaganda. India, which boasts of being the world's largest democracy, was listed as partly free for the third straight year after being downgraded over curbs on civil liberties and freedom of expression under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Freedom House is primarily funded by the United States as well as other democratic governments but operates independently.

Malaysia ex-PM faces graft charges, vows to fight

PUTRAJAYA (AP): Former Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was arrested and will be brought to court to face corruption charges, the anti-graft agency said. Muhyiddin, who led Malaysia from March 2020 until August 2021, will be the country's second leader to be indicted after leaving office. Ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak was hit with multiple graft charges after he lost a 2018 general election and began a 12-year prison term in August after losing his final appeal in the first of several trials.

The anti-graft agency said Muhyiddin, 75, will face charges Friday related to alleged abuse and money laundering linked to government projects awarded under his rule. It said Muhyiddin was detained shortly after he arrived at the agency for the second time in three weeks to answer questions about an economic stimulus program for ethnic Malay contractors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Muhyiddin was released on bail and denied any wrongdoing. He told reporters he faces seven graft charges, calling it a "malicious political act" by current Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's govern-

ment to crush the Islamic-dominated opposition coalition Muhyiddin leads ahead of state elections. He said he never met the contractors who won the projects and did not receive any money from them.

"The purpose is to embarrass me by dragging me to court tomorrow," Muhyiddin said. "I affirm that I am innocent and that I will answer all the charges against me in court." Anwar in December ordered a review of government projects approved by past administrations that allegedly did not follow the rules. He has denied that the case against Muhyiddin is politically motivated, telling local media the investigation was independently carried out by the anti-graft agency. "If you said all cases are politically motivated, then how are we going to arrest people for big corruption cases?" Anwar was quoted as saying by the Malay Mail, an online news portal.

Two senior leaders from Muhyiddin's Bersatu party were also recently charged with graft. The anti-graft agency froze Bersatu's bank accounts amid investigations into alleged illegal proceedings. Earlier, a large crowd of supporters gath-

ered outside the anti-graft agency building, chanting "Fight! Fight!" and "Allahu Akbar (God is great)" amid speculation that Muhyiddin would be arrested and charged. Apart from the award of government contracts, Muhyiddin said the charges against him include abuse of power for supporting a tax cancellation appeal by a business tycoon. He said any contributions from the tycoon to Bersatu were political funds channeled straight into the party's account, not his personal bank account, and should not be considered a bribe.

He said the charges were an attempt to thwart his opposition coalition's strong support, especially from the country's majority ethnic Malays. He warned that Anwar's government "will be punished by the people" in the state elections. Anwar and Muhyiddin battled for the premiership after a November general election produced a hung parliament. The country's king later appointed Anwar as prime minister after he formed a unity government with several smaller parties. Anwar's strength will be put to test in elections in six states in the coming months.

14 migrants drown off Tunisia after wave of racist violence

TUNIS (AFP): Fourteen people from sub-Saharan Africa drowned in the Mediterranean, authorities said in Tunisia, where black migrants have faced a wave of violence since an inflammatory speech by President Kais Saied. The drama occurred off the coast of Tunisia's Sfax region, where a spokesman for the court in charge of the investigation said the dead were from two sunken migrant boats.

Three migrants died and 34 were rescued in one sinking, followed by 11 deaths in a separate incident with 20 rescued, the spokesman Faoazi Masmoudi said. The coastguard, in an earlier statement on Facebook, said its personnel had rescued 54 people "of various sub-Saharan African nationalities", and recovered 14 bodies, but mentioned only one boat. The agency said it had prevented a total of 14 attempts to cross the sea and rescued 435 migrants, almost all from African countries south of the Sahara. Many black migrants in Tunisia have been made homeless amid a wave of racist violence since President Kais Saied accused them last month of causing a crime wave and representing a "criminal plot" to change the country's demographic composition.

The North African country hosts around 21,000 undocumented migrants from other parts of Africa, less than 0.2 percent of the population. Hundreds, including children and pregnant women, were made homeless in the winter cold and many registered with their embassies for repatriation, mostly to West African countries. Others have sought to reach Europe in unseaworthy boats from Tunisia, whose coast lies about 130 kilometres (80 miles) from the Italian island of Lampedusa at its closest point.

The country has long been a springboard for people fleeing war and poverty elsewhere on the continent to seek better lives in Europe, along with thousands of Tunisians themselves. Rome said in February that more than 32,000 migrants, including 18,000 Tunisians, reached Italy from Tunisia last year, while thousands more have departed from neighbouring Libya. European governments, particularly in Rome, have pressured Tunis to stem the flow, and the coastguard regularly intercepts boats carrying migrants in its territorial waters, part of the world's deadliest migration route.

A spokesman told AFP that the coastguard would continue to battle "gangs involved in organising clan-

destine immigration operations". Last month, Saied had ordered "urgent measures" to tackle irregular migration. He said "hordes" of migrants were causing a crime wave and threatening Tunisia's demographic composition, echoing a conspiracy theory popular among the far right in France. His comments sparked outcry, with rights groups accusing him of racism and hate speech. Landlords, fearing heavy fines and jail sentences, evicted hundreds of migrants, many of whom are still living rough in Tunis. But Saied denied he was racist, saying he had African friends. He slammed the "malicious remarks" of those who "wanted to interpret the speech as they saw fit to harm Tunisia".

Speaking after a meeting with Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, who is chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Saied said migrants in Tunisia were "brothers". He said the aim of his speech was to ensure respect for "Tunisian legality regarding foreigners". "This situation concerning Africans cannot be interpreted by malicious tongues, as they have done in recent days, as racism. What?" "I am African and I am proud to be African," he said.

Mexico leader rejects calls for US military action against cartels

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador rebuked calls from some US lawmakers advocating military action in Mexico against drug cartels, describing the proposals as threats to Mexican sovereignty. "We are not going to permit any foreign government to intervene in our territory, much less that a government's armed forces intervene," Lopez Obrador said during a regular news conference.

The kidnapping of four Americans - two of whom were killed - in a northern border state intensified calls from Republican lawmakers in Washington to take a tougher line on organized crime. Texas Republican Dan Crenshaw released a message in Spanish on Twitter asking Lopez Obrador why he opposes a proposal the congressman introduced in January authorizing military force targeting drug cartels in Mexico.

"In addition to being irresponsible, it is an offense to the people of Mexico," Lopez Obrador said during the news conference, adding that Mexico "does not take orders from anyone." Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said in a Fox News interview that it was time to "put Mexico on notice" and advocated introducing legislation to classify some Mexican drug cartels as "foreign terrorist groups." The fatal kidnappings and backlash could complicate delicate efforts to foster closer collaboration between the US and Mexico on immigration and the trafficking of drugs, particularly ultra-lethal fantasy.

Lopez Obrador said he would begin a public information campaign aimed at Mexicans in the United States about the Republican-led proposal. If Republican lawmakers try to "use Mexico for their propagandist, electoral and political purposes, we will make a call to not vote for that party," Lopez Obrador said.

2nd warmest winter on record in Europe

BRUSSELS (Reuters): Europe is emerging from its second-warmest winter on record, European Union scientists said, as climate change continues to intensify. The average temperature in Europe from December to February was 1.4 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the Boreal winter season, according to data published by the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).

That ranks as Europe's joint-second warmest winter on record, exceeded only by the winter of 2019-2020. Europe experienced a severe winter heatwave in late December and early January, when record-high winter temperatures hit countries from France to Hungary, forcing ski resorts to close because of lack of snow. The European Commission said on Jan. 2 hundreds of temperature records had been broken across the continent, including the Swiss town of Altdorf reaching 19.2C, smashing a record standing since 1864.

C3S said temperatures were particularly high in eastern Europe and the north of Nordic countries. While overall temperatures in Europe were above the norm, some regions were below-average, including parts of Russia and Greenland. Scientists say Europe's winters are becoming warmer as a result of rising global temperatures, due to human-caused climate change. The unusually mild winter offered some short-term relief to governments struggling with high gas prices after Russia slashed fuel deliveries to Europe last year, with higher temperatures curbing gas demand for heating in many countries. But the high temperatures pose risks to wildlife and agriculture. Winter temperature spikes can cause plants to start growing or coax animals out of hibernation prematurely, making them vulnerable to being killed off by later cold snaps.

20 years after US invasion, Iraq far from 'liberal democracy'

BAGHDAD (AFP): Twenty years after the US-led invasion of Iraq toppled Saddam Hussein, the oil-rich country remains deeply scarred by the conflict and, while closer to the United States, far from the liberal democracy Washington had envisioned. President George W. Bush's war, launched in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is seared in memory for its "shock and awe" strikes, the toppling of a giant Saddam statue, and the years of bloody sectarian turmoil that followed.

The decision after the March 20, 2003 ground invasion to dismantle Iraq's state, party and military apparatus deepened the chaos that fuelled years of bloodletting, from which the jihadist Islamic State group later emerged. The US forces, backed mainly by British troops, never found the weapons of mass destruction that had been the justification for the war, and eventually left Iraq, liberated from a dictator but marred by instability and also under the sway of Washington's arch-enemy Iran. "The US simply did not understand the nature of Iraqi society, the nature of the regime they were overthrowing," said Samuel Helfont, assistant professor of strategy at the Naval Postgraduate School in California.

Bush -- whose father had gone to war with Iraq in 1990-91 after Saddam's attack on Kuwait -- declared he wanted to impose "liberal democracy", but that drive petered out even if Saddam was overthrown quickly, Helfont said. "Building democracy takes time and building a democracy doesn't create a utopia overnight," said Hamzeh Haddad, a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. Instead of discovering nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, the assault by the US-led international coalition opened a Pandora's box, traumatised Iraqis, and alienated some traditional US allies.

Major violence flared again in Iraq after the deadly February 2006 bombing of a Muslim Shiite shrine in Samarra north of Baghdad, which sparked a civil war that lasted two years. By the time the US withdrew under Barack Obama in 2011, more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed, says the Iraq Body Count group. The United States claimed nearly 4,500 deaths on their side. More horrors came to Iraq when the IS group declared its "caliphate" and in 2014 swept across nearly a third of the country -- a savage reign that only ended in Iraq in 2017 after a gruelling military campaign.



Today some 2,500 US forces are based in Iraq -- not as occupiers, but in an advisory, non-combat role in the international coalition against IS, whose remnant cells continue to launch sporadic bombings and other attacks. The years of violence have deeply altered society in Iraq, long home to a diverse mix of ethnic and religious groups. The minority Yazidis were targeted in what the UN called a genocidal campaign, and much of the once vibrant Christian community has been driven out. Tensions also simmer between the Baghdad federal government and the autonomous Kurdish authority of northern Iraq, especially over oil exports.

In October 2019, young Iraqis led a nationwide protest movement that vented frustration at inept governance, endemic corruption and interference by Iran, sparking a bloody crackdown that left hundreds dead. Despite Iraq's immense oil and gas reserves, about one third of the population of 42 million lives in poverty, while some 35 percent of young people are unemployed, says the UN. Politics remain chaotic, and parliament took a year, marred by post-election infighting, before it swore in a new government last October.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has vowed to fight graft in Iraq, which ranks near the bottom of Transparency International's corruption perceptions index, at 157 out of 180 countries. "Every Iraqi can tell you that corruption began to thrive ... in the 1990s" when Iraq was under international sanctions, said Haddad, adding that graft is more in focus now "because Iraq is open to the world". Iraq is battered by other challenges, from its devastated infrastructure and daily power outages to water scarcity

and the ravages of climate change. And yet, said Haddad, today's Iraq is a "democratising state" which needs time to mature because "democracy is messy".

A major unintended consequence of the US invasion has been a huge rise in the influence its arch foe Iran now wields in Iraq. Iran and Iraq fought a protracted war in the 1980s, but the neighbours also have close cultural and religious ties as majority Shiite countries. Iraq became a key economic lifeline for the Islamic republic as it was hit by sanctions over its contested nuclear programme, while Iran provides Iraq with gas and electricity as well as consumer goods.

Politically, Iraq's Shiite parties, freed from the yoke of Sunni dictator Saddam, have become "the most powerful players", says Hamdi Malik, associate fellow at the Washington Institute. Iran-backed groups have managed to maintain a certain "cohesion" despite infighting after the last elections, he said, adding that "Iran is playing a crucial role" in making sure the cohesion lasts. By contrast, Iraq's minority "Kurds and Sunnis are not strong players, mainly because they suffer from serious internal schisms", said Malik. Pro-Iran parties dominate Iraq's parliament, and more than 150,000 fighters of the former Iranian-backed Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary forces have been integrated into the state military. Baghdad must now manage relations with both Washington and Tehran, says a Western diplomat in Iraq speaking on condition of anonymity. "It is trying to strike a balance in its relations with Iran, its Sunni neighbours and the West," the diplomat said. "It's a very delicate exercise."

Chinese vessel orders Philippine plane carrying media to 'leave'

MANILA (AFP): As a Philippine Coast Guard plane carrying journalists flew over the Spratly Islands in the hotly disputed South China Sea, a Chinese voice issued a stern command over the radio: "Leave immediately." The order came from a radio operator on a Chinese coast guard vessel 3,500 feet (1,066 metres) below -- one of dozens of ships seen prowling the waters.

AFP was one of several media outlets given the rare opportunity to fly over some of the dozens of tiny islands and reefs where the Philippines, China and several other nations have competing claims. Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, including the Spratlys, ignoring an international ruling that its claims have no legal basis. In the past decade, it has ripped up thousands of hectares of reef in the archipelago to create militarised islands with runways, ports and radar systems.

To assert its claims, hundreds of Chinese coast

guard and maritime militia vessels patrol the waters, swarming reefs, harassing and attacking fishing and other boats. They also try expel non-Chinese planes from the airspace overhead. "You have entered (the water around) a Chinese reef and constituted a security threat. To avoid misunderstanding, leave immediately," the Chinese radio operator said, in one of seven messages issued in Chinese and English as the coast guard plane flew over a Philippine-occupied island and shoal.

The Filipino pilot responded that they were flying within Philippine territory. - "Bullying behaviour" - During the four hour flight in the Cessna Caravan, Philippine Coast Guard personnel identified nearly 20 Chinese vessels, including suspected maritime militia boats, in waters around some of the nine islands and reefs occupied by the Philippines.

Seventeen Chinese maritime militia boats were also spotted by the Philippine coast guard near Sabina

Shoal, which is claimed by Manila. Fifteen Chinese maritime militia boats were seen in the vicinity of Titu, the largest Philippine-occupied island which lies about 430 kilometres (267 miles) from the major Philippine island of Palawan. A Chinese navy ship was 15 kilometres from the island, while a coast guard vessel was half that distance away, according to estimates provided by the Philippine Coast Guard.

At Second Thomas Shoal, where Philippine marines are stationed in a derelict navy ship grounded to assert Manila's territorial claim in the waters, a Chinese coast guard vessel was about 11 kilometres away, the Philippine authorities said. Last month, a Chinese coast guard boat was nearly 20 kilometres from the shoal when it allegedly used a military-grade laser light against a Philippine patrol boat. That was the latest major maritime incident between the Philippines and China. It sparked a fresh diplomatic row and prompted

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos to take the unusual step of confronting the Chinese ambassador to Manila.

Marcos has insisted he will not let China trample on the Philippines' maritime rights -- in contrast to his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte who was reluctant to criticise Beijing. The Philippines' new strategy was to call out China's "bullying behaviour and aggressive actions", Commodore Jay Tarriela, the Philippine Coast Guard spokesman for the West Philippine Sea, told a forum in the capital Manila. Manila refers to waters immediately to its west as the West Philippine Sea.

The coast guard is regularly publishing information, including photos and videos, about Chinese vessels in the waters around Philippine-occupied features. This helps inform Filipinos and enables other countries to criticise China over its activities, Tarriela said. And it forces Beijing "to come out in the open to explain or to completely lie".

Georgia's geopolitical future at the heart of its protests

TBILISI (AFP): The protests in Georgia reflect internal political turmoil over its geopolitical destiny in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, analysts say. The ruling Georgian Dream party has insisted it remains committed to Georgia's EU and NATO membership. But a "foreign agent" bill reminiscent of Russian legislation used to silence critics has in recent days sparked demonstrations, to which authorities have responded with water cannons and tear gas.

Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili congratulated protesters in the Caucasus country after the government said it would drop the bill. Concerns have mounted that the Georgian government is flirting with the Kremlin and putting the Black Sea nation on an authoritarian path. "There are concerns

that Georgian Dream, which has been in power since 2012, wants to turn the country into a one-party state," said Thomas de Waal, a senior fellow at Carnegie Europe. Magdalena Dembinska, of the University of Montreal, said civil society and media had typically acted as the guardians of Georgian democracy. "putting a break on authoritarian aspirations".

But worry has grown since Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili's party tried to introduce the "foreign agent" law, even if for now they have withdrawn it. It could have served "to silence civil society", Dembinska said. In the run-up to 2024 parliamentary elections, it could also have contributed to stamping out criticism over the jailing of former president Mikheil Saakashvili, she added. The pro-Western reformist has

been held since 2021 over "abuse of office", though backers say he is a "political prisoner", and EU nations have expressed concern over his deteriorating health.

Days after Russia invaded Ukraine a year ago, Georgia applied for EU membership together with Ukraine and Moldova. In June last year, EU leaders granted formal candidate status to Kyiv and Chisinau but said Tbilisi must implement reforms first. They included ending "political polarisation", improving democratic oversight, implementing judicial reform, guaranteeing freedom of the press and battling the influence of oligarchs. The Georgian government has been blowing hot and cold on whether it actually wants to join the Western bloc. "They make statement that they are pro-EU. But actions demon-

strate a different scenario," said Natia Seskuria of British think tank the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), alluding to the latest law proposal.

"If it gets ever passed, it would alienate Georgia from the West," she said. In contrast, opinion polls show that a large majority of the population support joining the European Union and NATO. "Without a European perspective, Georgia won't have any future but turning into Russia's backyard," Georgian human rights activist Ana Aptsiauri wrote on Twitter. The former Soviet republic has historic ties with Russia. Moscow and Tbilisi went to war in 2008 and Russia still controls Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, where Russian is widely spoken, even though the territories are recognised internationally as part of Georgia.

The Frontier Post

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National Clean Energy Policy, pros, and cons

RECENTLY, the Federal Cabinet has approved the National Clean Air Policy to effectively combat the challenges to environmental and industrial pollution in the country. According to the details, the Ministry of Climate Change prepared an extensive plan covering a wide number of subjects, including the safety of public health, steps to reduce the death rate, promotion of agriculture, reduction in air pollution, and improvement in the quality of air in urban and rural areas.

Pakistan a resource-deficient agricultural nation faces serious challenges relating to industrial and environmental pollution aggravated by the disastrous effects of climate change in recent years. Pakistan witnessed 173 major climate-related events including superfoods, forest fires, heat-waves, earthquakes, and Tisumanies over the past 20 years that caused thousands of causalities, and billions of rupees in financial losses due to livestock slumps, infrastructure, and crops' destruction. Meanwhile, increasing environmental and industrial pollution, smogs, water shortages, soil erosion and desertification, prolonged heatwaves, and the sharp meltdown of glaciers caused enormous challenges for the government. Historically, unethical living habits, encroachment, brutal deforestation, no implementation of industrial laws/regulations, and poor governance further added to environmental pollution and caused serious health issues in the country. Over the decades, environmental pollution and poisonous smog have become an existential threat to the nation while Pakistan's major cities including Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar had been identified as the most polluted population centers in the world. According to a world bank report, Pakistan's economy suffered huge financial losses on annual basis because of air pollution, while the average life of people was reduced by 2.7 years in the South Asian nation.

There had been little acknowledgment of the problem, among the masses, lax anti-pollution regimes and cosmetical legislation played a regretful role in making up for the climatic disaster. The recurrent buildup of smog in major cities and recent climate-induced superfoods had sensitized the Pakistani government and the masses about the dangerous effects of those events. Recently, the Ministry of Climate Change has prepared an extensive policy covering a number of subjects, including public health, mortality rate, promotion of agriculture, reduction in air pollution, and improvement in the quality of air in urban and rural areas. The government has also suggested multiple measures to control industrial emissions, modernize agriculture, effectively stop the burning of crop waste, adopt international standards for waste management, and use low-emission gases for heating and Kitchen purposes. The government aims at decreasing the emission of poisonous gases by 40 percent in the next 10 years.

Historically, Pakistani leaders had always gone behind ambitious and imaginative goals throughout the past, but mostly those outlandish ideas remained unrealized because of a lack of interest in bureaucracy and no backing from political leadership. In fact, a national agenda merits a consistent public-private partnership, political resilience, and all-time support from the top leadership until the achievement of the task, which had been the sole reason for the non-accomplishment of various national endeavors including multiple five years national development plans, National Action Plan (NAP) against Terrorism, Tree plantation campaigns, rehabilitation of IDPs and flood victims, etc. in the past. Therefore, the government must articulate SOPs for government departments, private businesses, households, and individuals backed by a public awareness campaign to ensure maximum public participation to achieve optimum results. Otherwise, numerous policy documents have become mere decoration pieces or library archives without execution.

Syrian regime should be rehabilitated despite its nature

THE suspension of Syria from the Arab League took place more than 11 years ago due to the bloodshed caused by the violent crackdown of the Assad regime on its own people. This is a very long time in the Middle East and the geopolitical landscape has flipped many times during this period. Despite the horrors that the regime committed and should be punished for, the core issue of the regime in Syria is its continuous stance against the region's interests and its full alignment with the mullahs in Iran.

The efforts to bring Syria back into the Arab fold and the international community will take time. Yet, one wonders if, just like its isolation, which did not make much difference, its rehabilitation will make any difference either? We are today in a much more polarized world and Syria's capacity to impact geopolitical shifts is greatly diminished, if not nonexistent. Damascus has, for decades, been acting as the Arab enabler or an arm of the mullahs' regime. It has traded and profited from its political decisions at the cost of the interests of the region. And it will continue to do so. The one certainty is that, even if it is rehabilitated, Syria will not be closer to Arab interests. It will stay aligned with the mullahs. The same mullahs that today are killing their own people.

Some still ask if Bashar Assad could split from the mullahs. The answer is clearly no. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and other affiliates are too much in control. Not even pushing out the Iranian influence through the support of Russian influence worked in the past. This

was the case even after the IRGC and Hezbollah were unable to bring back stability and it was left to Moscow to give most of the Syrian territory back to the Assad regime. Moscow was also the first to put forward the rehabilitation of Assad as part of the reconstruction plans for the

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Today, the return of Syria and its reining in of Hezbollah are complete delusion. Assad has not been able to engineer a change in the current Lebanese political dynamics despite what many expected. In fact, whether in Lebanon or even Syria, the Assad regime has been supplanted by Nasrallah and Hezbollah. Assad is inca-

pable of changing this. Even if the next Lebanese president is one of his close allies, it will not change anything in the overall dynamics. It might provide a little relief for Hezbollah, but it stops there. The fact is that, as long as the IRGC and Hezbollah are in Syria fighting to defend the regime, there is little

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Assad can do to bring the Iranian proxy back under its control in Lebanon. Taking back control of its decision-making in Damascus is even more inconceivable. This can be simply explained with the news of at least four people being killed in a drone attack in eastern Syria, in an area held by Iranian forces, on Wednesday. The Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights indicated that the strike targeted an area of Deir Ezzor that houses residences of leaders of the Revolutionary Guards and members of Hezbollah who fight alongside the Syrian regime. Their boots on the ground make Assad irrelevant for now.

Moreover, the political exploitation of the humanitarian aid sent to Syria following last month's devastating earthquakes hints at the unchanging nature of this regime. It cannot change and will not change. It is, by all measures, an organized crime regime. There is no ideology (not even a flawed one), there are no values and no vision besides blackmail, racketeering, killings and dirty activities. Further proof is the growing Captagon trade, in which it takes part with Hezbollah. Just last week, seizures by law enforcement agencies in the Gulf region and in Italy amounted to more than 15 tons of the drug. There is no other description for this regime than a criminal organization. And so, considering this regime's nature, it actually makes sense to bring it back into the fold of the Arab League and to reopen relations with it. Why, you ask? Let me answer that with what the character Michael Corleone says to Mafia caporegime Frank Pentangeli in "The Godfather Part II" movie: "Keep your friends close but your enemies closer." This bluntly explains why Syria should be brought back. Not for any other reason. Indeed, as long as this regime is subservient to the mullahs in Tehran, it is and will stay an enemy of Arab countries and a peaceful broader Middle East.

Arab News

The other nuclear threat you might have missed from Putin's speech

Marion Messmer

EASY to miss in Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech to parliament last week was a glancing reference to the possibility of Russia resuming nuclear testing. In a surprise move, Putin said that Russia was ready to resume nuclear weapons tests if the US conducted one first. While most of the media focus has been on Russia suspending its participation in the New START nuclear arms treaty, this announcement was just as significant, with potentially devastating consequences.

It would signify a further step towards escalation in Ukraine by demonstrating Russia's intent to use nuclear weapons and could begin another, more devastating, nuclear arms race. Neither Russia nor the US have conducted a nuclear weapons test since the early 1990s - soon after that, they negotiated the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in Geneva - and although both India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, only North Korea has continued to test nuclear warheads since.

If Russia were to resume tests, other nuclear armed states might follow. North Korea would certainly take

this as carte blanche for further tests and there would be concern in the US about potentially falling behind Russia in the development of new nuclear capabilities. All potentially leading to a new arms racing dynamic. The US has no reason or intention to resume such tests. But by inserting this into his 'State of the Nation' speech, Putin appears to be creating a false narrative that the US is working towards a nuclear weapons test to justify Russia breaking the CTBT and once again conducting its own tests.

Indeed, the Russian news agency TASS reported in early February, days before Putin's speech, that the Novaya Zemlya nuclear test site is ready to resume if needed. Firstly, as a signal of intent to ride roughshod over all nuclear agreements, demonstrating its capability and resolve - domestically and internationally - to use nuclear weapons. And secondly, because Russia is developing new nuclear capabilities and has insufficient data without new warhead tests.

Neither reason is comforting. A Russian nuclear weapons test would shatter several decades of international agreements and any sense of certainty in non-

proliferation efforts. The CTBT underpins the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by creating a credible premise that states will reduce their nuclear arsenals over time rather than continuing to expand. It would foment concerns in other nuclear-armed states that Russia can gain valuable insights from test data which they are currently missing out on. This could lead to more states testing as they modernize their arsenals. In the US, some political figures would be likely to call for nuclear weapons tests, not wanting to be outdone by Russia or fall behind. A new nuclear arms race would emerge with several nuclear powers competing, amid few remaining treaty constraints.

By abandoning the CTBT and expanding its nuclear arsenals, Russia and any other states joining in a new series of tests would seriously damage the NPT. It is hard to see how it could recover from such a drastic departure of its central promise - that the five Nuclear-Weapon States will reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons - resulting in complete and irreversible disarmament.

It would also increase the potential of other states pursuing nuclear weapons

again. South Korea has already hinted several times this year at investing in a nuclear program if the threat from North Korea does not diminish. A return to a global nuclear arms race may push them over the edge. Nuclear testing could also be read as a signal of further escalation, demonstrating Russia's resolve to use nuclear weapons in war or an escalation of the conflict between Russia and NATO. It would mean a step change from Putin's rhetorical threats, to a dangerous reality which could easily spin out of control.

A Russian nuclear weapons test would not come out of the blue. Intelligence services would be able to see preparations ahead of time. The US and the UK have been sharing regular defense intelligence updates since before the invasion of Ukraine, to signal to Russia that its motives are transparent and to help allies coordinate. They could use this same mechanism to draw attention to an upcoming test and to try to prevent it. In such an event, the international community should work together to impress upon Russia its seriousness and coherence against a nuclear

weapons test.

The response should be to immediately increase sanctions until Russia reverses any test preparations. The European Union should act more quickly on sanctions than it has previously. Knowing the risks, other states who so far have avoided taking a position might switch and join the transatlantic pressure on Russia. China and India have a key role to play. So far, they have taken an ambivalent stance on Ukraine, abstaining on UN votes and refusing to condemn Russia outwardly. However, they have criticized its nuclear threats.

China has shown that it is not comfortable with such nuclear brinksmanship and equally does not want to see Russia or the US investing in expansion and development of their arsenals. Seeing such test preparations could see China threaten to withdraw its political and economic support for Russia, which would be a heavy blow to Putin's military ambitions. By conducting a nuclear weapons test, Putin may well want to frighten Western states into no longer supporting Ukraine. However, it is far more likely that NATO member-states, worried about escala-

tion, would simply double down on their support. There are no good options in this scenario: a conventional response from NATO might also be an escalation. A change in nuclear alert levels would send a strong signal to Russia but could also provoke further escalation.

A new nuclear arms race would look different from that of the Cold War. It would no longer be largely a race between Russia and the US and would certainly include China - and have other regional nuclear dynamics implications. In case of a Russian nuclear test, all other nuclear-armed states (with the exception of North Korea which would be unlikely to join) would need to stand together against nuclear testing and work to bring Russia back into compliance. History has several examples where the world came close to a devastating nuclear war and was saved by good fortune. Relying on good luck is not a great strategy, especially in such a complex and tense situation. Adding an increasingly isolated Russia, with a president who makes decisions without the potentially tempering input of other senior officials, is a set up for disaster.

Republicans are playing with fire

Mary E. Lovely & Kathryn Russ

IN an attempt to weaken US diplomatic and military influence, Russian President Vladimir Putin has waged a propaganda war to convince other countries that the United States is engaging in a "purposeful, conscious US strategy to destabilize and make chaotic the situation in [Taiwan] and the world." Chinese President Xi Jinping has lined up with Putin on that score, and the US military has warned that China's parallel campaign of disinformation is intended to create "doubt amongst our allies and partners in the reliability of the United States."

The Republican majority in the House would be doing Beijing and Moscow's work for them if they refuse to raise the debt ceiling, sowing irreparable doubt among even our closest allies not just about US financial commitments, but about any promises we have

made to other countries. US Treasury bonds are IOUs to people who have lent the US' money. Since the national debt hit its limit in January, the US Treasury has been taking extraordinary measures to cover these bond payments, but is quickly running out of options. If Congress doesn't lift the debt ceiling, the US could default sometime between July and September, and possibly even sooner.

There are few things that undermine people's confidence in a partner's stability and goodwill more than getting stiffed. US bonds have been the world's premier safe asset for decades, largely due to our reliable repayments, allowing us to borrow from domestic and overseas investors at highly favorable terms even at times of national crisis, such as the 2008 global financial crisis or the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

Even if the United States finds some way to "priori-

tize" paying allies first, defaulting on any of this debt would undermine the confidence of any country or investor who holds US bonds. Moreover, our allies account for the majority of externally held US Treasuries. It's a who's who of our closest allies in the Pacific, including Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea. Also among them are countries of key geostrategic importance in our competition with China, including India, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Together, these countries hold roughly \$2 trillion in US Treasuries. Other key allies - Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain and Germany - hold more than \$1 trillion in US Treasury securities. Stiffing them would irreparably undermine the trust essential to military and diplomatic coordination around the world, putting our national

security at risk. Defaulting on this debt would also weaken our greatest weapon in the new era of unconventional warfare: the ability to freeze large portions of rogue states' economies through sanctions.

US sanctions are powerful because of the dominant position of the dollar in the global economy. Global markets price key commodities like oil in dollars, and international payments flow through a global banking system that depends on access to US dollars for transactions. All of this is at risk if we default. Fear of not getting repaid on time makes US Treasury securities less attractive as a way to hold foreign reserves, reducing the global demand for dollars. This weakening of official dollar purchases would likely increase volatility in the dollar's value against other currencies and decrease liquidity, prompting investors to

reduce their holdings of dollars in any form.

Loss of confidence would filter into other transactions, including the use of the dollar to price contracts for cross-border loans or imports and exports. In short, failure to raise the debt limit would weaken our national security because it is precisely the world's trust and confidence that the United States government will pay its debts in full and on time that helps keep the dollar as the world's dominant currency.

The danger of a US default goes well beyond global finance. Undermining trust in the US would set back any efforts to make our supply chains more secure and resilient. Stronger partnerships with Europe and countries in the Indo-Pacific are central to American efforts to reduce reliance on China for critical supplies. To succeed, the US needs like-minded countries to invest in new energy and technology value chains,

something they will only do if they believe America is a reliable financial partner, able to fulfill its commitments over the long term, even in an era of extreme partisanship. The current weaponization of US debt obligations by House Republicans is rightly seen by our allies and foes as a major test of the credibility of all of America's commitments.

As competition for economic alliances heats up around the globe, any congressional delay in raising the US debt limit plays directly into Xi's and Putin's hands. The responsible way to control growth in the national debt is by raising taxes and cutting spending in a process of budget negotiations based on good faith. That some in Congress are holding the debt limit hostage to bypass the hard work of budget negotiations creates a national security threat where none should exist.

CNN

Why US-EU relations are in flux

Andrew Hammond

CHARLES Dickens, perhaps the greatest British novelist of the Victorian era, memorably started his novel "A Tale of Two Cities" with the phrase: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." This apparently contradictory statement has enduring relevance in multiple aspects of world affairs, including as a descriptor for the EU-US relationship during the presidency of Joe Biden. These ties are characterized by contradictory impulses in the post-Trump era, as will be highlighted on Friday in a meeting between Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

On the one hand, there is a generally high level of cooperation and alignment in the Ukraine war following Russia's invasion. On the other hand, significant tensions exist in other areas, including over the US' Inflation Reduction Act. On the positive side of the ledger, there is no question that US-EU ties have largely recovered from the nadir of Donald Trump's controversial presidency. This is seen most visibly in their strong cooperation over Ukraine, which recalls the Cold War era, when the transatlantic partners served as the West's geopolitical linchpin, alongside allies like Japan and Canada, against the then-Soviet Union.

However, in other areas of the bilateral relationship, there are much more mixed signals. This includes policy toward China, where the Biden administration would like to see much greater synchronicity between the US and the EU. The relationship between the EU27 and China has chilled significantly since the pandemic. Concerns include the opaque way that Beijing is perceived by Europe to have handled the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis in early 2020, as well as the new Chinese security law in Hong Kong and Uighur human rights in Xinjiang.

However, the Biden team nevertheless has concerns over the degree to which the EU might still accommodate China, given the sig-

nificant economic ties between the two powers, potentially including the ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment. This is a big China-EU economic deal, which would see European and Chinese firms get

remaining a preeminent global center for the green industrial revolution. There is a growing sense on the continent that its edge in this race is imperiled by the assertive industrial strategy of the US. According to a recent report by

However, the Biden team nevertheless has concerns over the degree to which the EU might still accommodate China, given the significant economic ties between the two powers, potentially including the ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment. This is a big China-EU economic deal, which would see European and Chinese firms get better access to each other's market. It is currently in the political long grass in Brussels. Perhaps the most challenging element of the EU-US relationship right now is the Inflation Reduction Act, a massive \$369 billion investment package for clean tech, which poses a major threat to the EU's goal of remaining a preeminent global center for the green industrial revolution. There is a growing sense on the continent that its edge in this race is imperiled by the assertive industrial strategy of the US. According to a recent report by Climate Power, an independent climate change communications group, more than 100,000 new clean energy jobs were created in the US in 90-plus new projects in the first six months after the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law. This highlights why the act has sent shockwaves across

better access to each other's market. It is currently in the political long grass in Brussels. Perhaps the most challenging element of the EU-US relationship right now is the Inflation Reduction Act, a massive \$369 billion investment package for clean tech, which poses a major threat to the EU's goal of

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Europe in recent months, with its massive subsidies for US green industries in areas from renewable power to electric cars. Key EU politicians and firms assert that the law discriminates against those exporting to the US and fear it will lure a critical mass of their businesses, costing jobs and shuttering factories in the green tech sector. In response, the European Commission has announced a new "Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age," which will bring in a series of measures, including loosening state aid rules and a new European sovereignty fund. The latter is intended to preserve the EU's competitive advantage on critical and emerging technologies, including biotechnology and clean tech.

Instead of competition in this area, Von der Leyen wants to see a more cooperative framework, akin to the one agreed earlier this week with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during her first trip to Canada since her elevation to European Commission president. More details about what has been depicted as an EU-Canada "green alliance" are anticipated at the bilateral High-Level Dialogue on Climate in the coming months. Europe is looking to Canada as a minerals-rich country, as it has an abundance of potash, palladium, niobium and uranium. With Europe heavily dependent on sourcing raw materials, including from China, it is looking to decrease its risk on this dependency by using "trusted partners," including Canada. It is not just Brussels driving this. It is not just Brussels driving this, but individual EU member states too. Last year, for instance, Germany reached an agreement with Canada that will see the latter export hydrogen to Berlin from 2025. Going forward, Europe hopes that the US will also turn toward a more cooperative stance on the green economy. If not, the political imperative will grow to try and restore what Brussels wants to be a global level playing field. Von der Leyen wants to preserve Europe's economic attractiveness in what some have termed a green subsidy arms race.



History will damn Britain if it stays weak on China

Matthew Henderson

DESPITE everything, the Government is still clinging to the idea that we mustn't upset Beijing by suggesting that a lab leak may have caused the pandemic. So sensitive is Whitehall to potential slights that Matt Hancock's memoirs were censored by the Cabinet Office, eliding passages suggesting that the emergence of a deadly new virus practically next-door to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was anything other than "entirely coincidental" - the Government's apparent position.

This is emphatically not the official position in the USA, where various federal agencies and congressional committees have all been tasked at one point or another with assessing the origin of the virus. Just last week the director of the FBI noted that the "most likely" origin was a lab leak, while yesterday the US Select Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic declared that "mounting evidence continues to show that COVID-19 may have originated from a lab in Wuhan". America is not alone in its frankness. Australia was the first country to demand an independent inquiry into the origins of the pandemic in April 2020. Beijing's response was swift and

furious, imposing trade restrictions on a wide range of Australian exports. The Australian government held to its line, the CCP's aggressive bullying was exposed to damaging international scrutiny, and other liberal democracies were encouraged to join demands for responsible information-sharing.

And yet Britain is still hesitant to enquire too closely about the cause of a pandemic that caused substantial economic and social damage. Internationally, London is increasingly isolated in its official unwillingness to confront the truth about China, and not just in matters to do with the pandemic. The Government has belatedly constrained some aspects of Beijing's well-established penetration of the UK's core national infrastructure, and Parliament has taken a formal position in condemnation of abuses in Xinjiang. But despite indications of greater foreign policy realism in the 2021 "Integrated Review", Britain persists in a policy of pragmatism even while China is engaged in a campaign against the international rules-based order and universal democratic values.

This vacuous ambiguity is steering Britain into a more and more unstable

position. Despite rising tensions over Taiwan and growing evidence that China tacitly supports Putin's war in Ukraine, it seems that even referring to China as a "threat" may prove too abrasive for the planned revision of Britain's foreign policy strategy. This is not only an inexplicable misalignment of our interests and those of our closest partners. It is something far more reprehensible; groundless confidence that we can "manage" relations with an untrustworthy and ruthless global rival. It is true that relations between Beijing and its critics have deteriorated as a result of their frank honesty. But a more realistic strategic understanding of the CCP's aims and intentions has increasingly coalesced. In some cases, bilateral relations with Taiwan have also strengthened.

Britain's policy of attempting to avoid looking too closely at the threat, let alone risk from China is deepening its reliance on a power increasingly hostile to the international order that sustains our prosperity. Failure to distinguish between friends and foes must at all costs be avoided, as the consequences can be irreversible. The geopolitical question the Government faces is clear: are we drifting onto the wrong side of history?

A lieutenant for Suella Braverman?

Nels Abbey

TODAY'S Politico politics briefing alerts me to the fact that you're looking for help on LinkedIn. There have been 92 applicants so far, apparently. But I'm sorry, that help is me. For it has been my lifelong dream to play a front-seat role in the debasing of British politics and expanding the reach of extreme conservatism. I am confident I will find a greater opportunity to play that role than in working for and alongside you, a leading catalyst of Britain's executive decline, in the capacity of running your office.

I think I have all the qualities. As a graduate of the internationally respected Suge Knight School of Office Management, and required "confidence and credibility to intervene and/or provide constructive challenge to senior stakeholders across the department and Whitehall" comes naturally to me. Suge famously, in muscular fashion, kept a turbulent roster of gangster rappers in line to build his hip-hop empire. He is now in jail, but you get the point. "Strength through fear" would be our method of handling affairs. If a left-wing civil servant, blob lawyer or ex-footballer turned self-appointed conscience of the nation type needs to be dangled from a

balcony by their ankles, as Suge was once alleged to have done, I can do that. I'd like to. The conservatism-buttressed blue-sky thinking that has driven much of my previous success (and yours) would define our regime. The so-called Guardian will be blocked on all devices. Eating (or even discussing) tofu or woke-style sustenance (eg, hummus, avocado and plantain) will also be strictly forbidden. Staff and visitors will consume nothing but red meat - the rarer, the better. Our diet will reflect the tenor of our policies.

Our office will resist all leftwing indoctrination, especially diversity. Diversity is, after all, a weakness and a threat, not a strength and certainly not an opportunity. I will cap our (paid) diverse staff intake at two: you and me. Everyone else must be indigenous with a clearly traceable lineage going back to Cheddar man, probably male and classically educated. They will be unquestioning believers. Some say detector tests don't work; don't believe them. We'll free up time. There will be no acknowledgment of Black History Month, Asian history month, International Women's Day, LGBTQ Pride, equality, equity or any other form of liberal lunacy. We will celebrate nothing but uniformity and

conformity every day. At 3pm. That sounds about right.

We will not have dress-down day. I'd prefer Great British dress-up day: when everyone comes in dressed as their favourite figure from the glory days of the empire. I'd go for Flora Shaw, who, after a period at the Manchester Guardian (boo) proselytised for imperialism so well as colonial editor of the Times and is said to have coined the name Nigeria. But if you found the idea of a man in women's clothing off-brand, I'd happily come in as her husband, Frederick Lugard, who ran Nigeria as governor general with the robustness we need now to stop the migrant boats. I don't have his whiskery moustache. I can buy one. We would outsource your social media to GB News. That's where the ideas come from anyway. And when things go wrong, I'll take the fall. I'll be Kwasi Kwarteng to your Liz Truss. With me at the helm of your office you will be protected from your biggest threat: yourself. Isn't that a super safety net?

Suella & Nels: we need no one else. We'd listen to no one else. Not even Rishi. Especially not Rishi (too wet by half, to be honest). I can start immediately, and I'm keen to. You might not be in the job that long.

Ministers are staging another Brexit coup - and only the House of Lords can save us

Simon Jenkins

THE House of Lords may be doomed, so reformers say, but it has a last chance to redeem itself. It is currently being asked to approve a Boris Johnson legacy, the retained EU law (revocation and reform) bill. This bill is so outrageously undemocratic that it would have been flushed down the loo by any parliament before the gutless one that Johnson ushered in after the 2019 election. It blandly states that some 3,000 to 4,000 statutes passed by parliament over half a century of Britain's EU membership must now be rewritten by ministers, not parliament, or they will lapse at "sunset" on 31 December this year.

This is astonishing. At the time of Brexit, it was agreed that, in general, regulatory harmonisation with the EU would remain for the time being so that trade could continue. Such laws covered swathes of public life: farming, food safety, health standards, travel, animals, employment rights, water and air quality, tax liability, consumer protection, even civil liberties, indeed almost every activity that would benefit from what Margaret Thatcher hailed as the largest market in the world. Hardline Brexiters, ever desperate to show their muscle, then drummed up the present bill to honour their desire for a bonfire of controls. Its archi-

tect was Johnson's now out-of-office henchman Jacob Rees-Mogg, behaving like a teenager disconnecting a car's brakes and safety devices before going on a joyride. Any MPs who dared to quarrel were charged as closet remainers. They passed the bill on a nod.

The implications of the bill have already caused chaos in Whitehall. Thousands of civil servants could be involved in a panic rush later this year. The business department spent £600,000 in two months on staffing costs alone to review the bill. The health department needs 100 officials to reform 137 acts. Environment and food is fighting its way through 1,100 acts, governing everything from quarantine rules to salmonella. Millions of pounds in costs are piling up. A few areas, such as finance, have been excluded as just too explosive to London's now shaky future as Europe's money market. The new Northern Ireland protocol, keeping open the Irish land border, will still require a regulatory morass somewhere on Belfast docks. You cannot be both inside and outside a market without paperwork. Committee hearings in the Lords have seen ministers floundering at every turn. In effect, any acts not redrafted this year will be convert-

ed into executive decisions - "ministers will decide". In other words, parliament's role in scrutinising and passing legislation is passing to Whitehall.

Environment lobbies have been quick to declare this as glaringly undemocratic, not to mention dangerous. A legal opinion from a prominent KC has said the bill would allow ministers to carry out law-making "free of the effective scrutiny of either the electorate or of other members of parliament". Laws fashioned on their whim behind closed doors cannot be considered "accessible, clear and predictable". Citizens will not know from day to day if what they do is legal or illegal. This offends the most fundamental rule of law. A bill that has passed the House of Commons with barely a tweak would now appear to be heading for a barrage of referrals to the supreme court. In that it is like Johnson's previous attempt illegally to prorogue parliament. Rishi Sunak should clearly have killed it as he killed Johnson's Northern Ireland protocol override bill.

What should the Lords now do? The answer screams over the rooftops. They should vote the wretched bill down and send it back to the Commons, like they used to do any bill that offended

their ancestral self-importance. For 50 years, Britain has traded with its adjacent continent on the basis of these myriad acts of parliament. The most rudimentary self-interest begs them to be left alone. A more limited proposal is one of desperation. It is for the Lords to postpone the "sunset date" of 31 December, for a fixed period or indefinitely. The bill will then go back to the Commons and almost certainly be delayed. At the extreme, the Lords should stall the bill under the Parliament Act. With luck, ongoing chaos in Whitehall will carry the sunset deadline over the next election and into a change of government.

There the whole Brexit fiasco will fall on the shoulders of Keir Starmer, whose spinelessness on the subject knows no bounds. With every corner of the British economy - not to mention much of public opinion - crying woe over Brexit, he goes into a huddle, mumbling about "red-wall seats". As the prospective custodian of Britain's prosperity, not to mention its constitution, he is cutting a pathetic figure. Tearing up the Brussels rulebook was pure machismo. Those who challenge it are accused as backsliding, remoaning and boring. We now know what that accusation means: an almighty legislative car crash.

The Guardian

Scotland has become a deeply sinister country

Tom Harris

IF you watched the 1993 movie "Demolition Man", you might recall a scene where Sylvester Stallone arrives in a future dystopian society and is handed an automatic fixed penalty for uttering a curse word in public. Welcome to the future. Or should that now be, "Welcome to Scotland"? A consultation by the SNP Government suggests that as a way of fighting misogyny, men who loudly and publicly discuss their sexual conquests could face jail terms of up to seven years. No one is suggesting that misogyny isn't a social menace that harms and threatens women. But jail time? Really?

Another suggestion is that a crime could be committed if a man "deliberately rubs up against a woman in a public place". Having just returned home from a trip to a very crowded London where I frequently used rush-hour Underground trains, I wonder how practical such a law would be. Remember that prosecution could only follow a police investigation. Witness statements and other physical evidence would need to be sought to demonstrate that a particular man was unnecessarily, and for his own sexual gratification, seeking to intimidate a woman. The trouble is, the defence could argue he was just trying to squeeze

onto a packed train. How could anyone prove otherwise? But the SNP have form in seeking to control the way we behave - and even think. And it is a testament to the party's lack of imagination, or perhaps its lack of confidence in its own ability to promote its own values, that it sees imprisonment as the only solution to a range of bad behaviour. Not education, not nudge psychology, not the condemnation of family or colleagues. Jail.

The plans, contained in a consultation document, are based on a report by Labour peer, Baroness Helena Kennedy. Oddly, given the administration's obsessive pursuit of self-ID for trans people, the document suggests that a crime will have been committed in cases "where the perpetrator perceives their victim to be a woman, irrespective of the victim's sex or gender." In other words, "I didn't think he was a woman - he looks like a bloke in a dress to me" might actually be a valid defence in court. And since no serving Scottish Government minister can adequately define what a woman actually is, it doesn't take a mastermind to anticipate some legal and cultural difficulties in putting this particular set of rules into law.

This is the approach of a party

that seems to believe that the police desperately need more to do with their copious amounts of free time and that the courts are experiencing plenty of quiet periods due to a lack of actual crimes taking place. Humza Yousaf, who hopes to take up the job of first minister once the current leadership election is out of the way, introduced, while justice minister, a hate crime law that would criminalise even speech in the privacy of Scots' own homes. If you make a tasteless joke at the dinner table that someone somewhere might take offence at, you could face jail. An Englishman's home may be his castle, but under Humza Yousaf, a Scotsperson's home is just an extension of the Scottish Government's writ.

That particular law, although it received Royal Assent, has still not been enacted by the police, since no officer knows exactly how it can possibly be enforced. They should read Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-four", in which parents guilty of Wrongthink are reported to the authorities by their own offspring, given that it is surely the only route to a prosecution under Humza's Law. It sounds unhinged, and it is. But this is what happens when you place an array of substantial legislative powers before a

group of people who are more eager to signal their virtue and earn the applause of the crowd than to govern competently. The current SNP leadership debate has effectively demonstrated that even senior ministers have doubts over the alleged successes of this devolved administration and whether it is capable of governing above the admittedly low threshold of "mediocre".

There is a brand of politician whose ambition, whose whole reason for entering politics, seems to be to change the way other people think, to coerce them into believing in the same principles as they do. And they see the police, the courts and the prison system as the mechanisms through which this change can be brought about. They claim to be champions of diversity, but beyond skin colour and gender preference, genuine diversity is anathema to them, because they think diversity of thought is undesirable. They are edging us, in the petri dish of Scottish politics, towards an Orwellian future, without even the self-awareness or the knowledge of literature that would allow them to recognise the shift. Maybe they'd rather watch films. And maybe watching 90s action ones featuring Stallone is giving them some inspiration.

The Telegraph

Important Notice

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

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 208 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 208.33 points, a positive change of 0.50 per cent, closing at 41,793.87 points against 41,585.54 points the previous day.

A total of 272,742,393 shares were traded during the day as compared to 229,088,710 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.770 billion against Rs 7.431 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 329 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 222 of them recorded gains and 86 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 21 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Fauji Foods Ltd with 24,362,756 shares at Rs 5.70 per share;

Telecard Limited with 23,457,500 shares at Rs 8.03 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 19,078,655 shares at Rs 1.32 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 534.00 per share price, closing at Rs 8,249.00, whereas the runner-up was Bata (Pak) with an Rs 48.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,835.00.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 1,317.55 per share closing at Rs 18,210.00; followed by Ismail Ind with Rs 18.23 decline to close at Rs 460.10.

Rupee recovers Rs 1.52 against dollar

The Pakistan rupee recovered Rs 1.52 against the dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs 280.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.29.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 281.5 and Rs 284 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 30 paisa and closed at Rs 297.56 against the last day's closing of Rs 297.86, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen decreased by 01 paisa to close at Rs 2.05, whereas an increase of Rs 1.23 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 335.66 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 334.43.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 41 paisa each to close at Rs 76.45 and Rs 74.78 respectively.

Gold prices decline by Rs 200 to Rs 197,500 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 200 and was sold at Rs195,400 on Friday against its sale at Rs 197,400 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.172 to Rs.169,324 from Rs.169,496, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.155,214 from Rs. 155,371 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,120 and Rs.1,817.55 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by US\$15 to \$1,834 against its sale at \$1,819, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs a meeting on Civil Aviation Sector issues at Finance Division.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships, namely MSC Patnaree III, Express Rome and Ullswater, carrying containers and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and EngroVopak Terminal the other day.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Silver Cindy and Coral Actinia carrying mogas and chemicals also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port on the same day.

A total of nine ships were engaged at the PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships LNGC Doha, Express Rome, MSC Patnaree III, Dolphin 03 and World Royal left the Port on Friday morning.

A cargo volume of 129,930 tonnes, comprising 92,709 tonnes of imports cargo and 37,221 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,539 containers (986 TEUs Imports and 1,553 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

Whereas, edible oil tanker PVT Neptune carrying palm oil is expected to take berth at Liquid Terminal later today.

Expo to bring world to Riyadh

RIYADH (APP): Members of the Bureau International des Expositions Enquiry Mission on Friday met with Majid Alkassabi, Minister of Commerce, who went over the Riyadh Expo 2030 candidacy file with the members of the delegation.

The BIE Enquiry Mission also met with Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Minister of Tourism, who laid out the government's blueprint for what he called "the most impactful site and visitor footprint" for Riyadh Expo 2030.

The minister declared: "We are on track towards developing a sustainable tourism sector and realizing promising projects that will make the Kingdom and Riyadh, in particular, one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. Our plans will contribute to achieving our vision to welcome 100 million tourists by 2030.

His Excellency affirmed the Kingdom's determination and the readiness of the capital to accommodate the largest number of visitors to the Riyadh Expo 2030. Since the Kingdom first opened its doors to international visitors, it has seen fundamental changes in its hospitality industry, making it attractive to the global leisure traveler.

The BIE delegation continued its visit to the headquarters of the DGDA, where they were briefed on its development plans by the CEO, Jerry Inzerillo.

The delegation then took a tour at the Turaiif and Bujairi districts. The day ended for the Enquiry Mission members with a dinner with Faisal Al- Ibrahim, Minister of Economy and Planning, who highlighted Saudi Arabia's efforts to diversify its economy and increase the share and GDP contribution of the non-oil sector.

Workers' remittances down 10.8 per cent in Jul-Feb FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overseas workers' remittances posted a decline of 10.8 percent during first eight months (Jul-Feb) of fiscal year 2022-23 as the remittances fell from \$20.18 billion in Jul-Feb of FY22 to \$18.00 billion in the period under review.

On year-on-year basis, the overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.0 billion in February 2023, posting a decrease of 9.5 percent as compared with the same month of previous year's inflow of \$2.2 billion.

On month-on-month basis, the remittances in February 2023 witnessed an increase of 4.9 percent when compared with the inflow of \$1.9 billion recorded in January 2023.

According to a recent data released by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday, remittances' inflows during February, 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$454.6 million), United Arab Emirates (\$269.2 million), United Kingdom (\$324.0 million) and United States of America (\$219.4 million).

During the corresponding month, the overseas Pakistanis living in Bahrain sent \$35.6 million, from Kuwait \$63.1 million, from Qatar \$67.8 million whereas \$75.0 million were dispatched from Oman.

Similarly the inflows from Germany, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Italy,

Greece, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Belgium were recorded at \$47.1 million, \$33.9 million, \$5.2 million, \$37.4 million, \$66.5 million, \$25.3 million, \$5.3 million, \$6.9 million, \$9.7 million and \$8.1 million respectively.

Likewise, from Malaysia, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and Japan, the workers dispatched \$6.5 million, \$8.7 million, \$3.4 million, \$46.8 million, \$40.4 million, and \$5.9 million respectively.

Remittances from South Africa during the month under review stood at \$11.8 million while that from South Korea stood at \$8.6 million. Similarly \$53.9 million were received from other countries.

E&P companies deposit over Rs3.1 billion for welfare schemes in Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Exploration and Production (E&P) companies operating in Sindh province have deposited Rs 3,108.309 million in bank accounts of different oil and gas producing districts during the last five years to carry out welfare schemes, under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

"The companies have collectively deposited Rs3108.309 million in joint bank accounts of DCOs/DCs of different districts of Sindh Province to execute development projects in the surrounding localities of their operational fields for the welfare of local communities on a regular basis," according to an official document available with APP.

In line with the Petroleum Concession Agreements (PCAs)/Social Welfare Guidelines issued by the Petroleum Division, the E&P companies are obligated to deposit a certain amount in the joint accounts of the concerned District Coordinator Officers (DCOs) and Deputy Commissioners (DCs).

The social welfare projects related to health, education, clean drinking water, and road infrastructure are executed under the supervision of district-level committees, having adequate representation of local parliamentarians.

The E&P companies, operating in different parts of the country, have collectively discovered 16 oil and gas reservoirs during the last fiscal year in pursuit of

making the country self-reliant in the energy sector.

Out of these, ten discoveries were made in the oil and gas fields of Sindh, four in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one each in Balochistan and Punjab.

Initially, the companies started extracting oil and gas from seven newly discovered wells of Sindh province including Taj-1, located in Tando Allahyar district, Turk South-1 & Mulaki West-1 and Bhatti North-1 in Badin district, Fazil-1 in Ghotki district, Mohar in Khairpur district and Naimat West DT-1 in Sanghar district. Currently, their accumulative oil and gas production stood at 1258.98 barrels per day and 10.91 million cubic feet per day respectively.

Asian markets tumble as bank worries spread from Wall Street

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets sank again Friday following a rout on Wall Street with banks taking a hefty hit after signs of trouble at a regional US lender sparked concerns about the wider sector.

The sell-off comes as traders nervously await the release of US jobs data later in the day, with many fearing a forecast-beating figure could press the Federal Reserve to ramp up borrowing costs more than previously thought. US lenders were sent into a tailspin Thursday after SVB Financial Group, which specialises in venture-capital financing, announced a stock offering and offloaded securities to raise much-needed cash as it struggles with falling deposits.

The firm's shares collapsed 60 percent in New York as it said it lost \$1.8 billion following the sales.

In a bid to prevent a run on the bank, SVB CEO Greg Becker asked clients to stay calm during a conference call Thursday, Bloomberg News reported, citing someone familiar with the matter. The news came as crypto banking giant Silvergate said it planned to close as the sector faces more turmoil.

Major US banks suffered hefty losses, with Wall Street titans including JP Morgan, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Citigroup all deep in the red.

Data showing more people than expected made jobless claims last week -- indicating a softening of the labour market -- was unable to soothe investor worries, and all three main indexes were deep in the red by the close of trade in New York.

US Treasury yields sank as investors flocked to the safety of government bonds. While higher borrowing costs can be beneficial for banks, many that took out loans and made other investments during the period of ultra-low rates have seen their value erased as the Fed tightens monetary policy to fight inflation.

Lenders are also struggling to keep customers and so offer better rates, or sell assets at a discount, putting pressure on the smaller banks. "We have been in a zero-interest regime for a multiyear period and banks have operated in a certain way," said Jens Nordvig, of Exante Data and Market Reader. "Certain banks are going to have difficulty in a totally different environment." And SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes said: "In days like this, 'bad news is indeed bad news', especially when the potential of massive mortgage defaults enters the market purview.

exes were sharply lower on Thursday as concerns about the management of US banks emerged, ahead of the release of US employment data" later on Friday, IwaiCosmo Securities said.

Also, "because the Nikkei index has risen in the last five days, its shares were subject to sell-offs," it said.

Traders were digesting the latest policy decision from the Bank of Japan, which decided to stick to easing in its last meeting before Kuroda steps down and is replaced by economics professor Kazuo Ueda.

Shortly before the opening bell rang, government data showed household spending in Japan declined 0.3 percent in January from a year earlier to mark the third consecutive monthly drop.

That was worse than the 0.1 percent expected by economists polled by Bloomberg. However, spending jumped by 2.7 percent from December, driven by new government stimulus.

The dollar stood at 136.66 yen, against 136.15 yen seen Thursday in New York.

SoftBank Group plunged 6.26 percent to 5,343 yen while Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing lost 1.71 percent to 28,735 yen.

Sony Group dropped 2.70 percent to 11,700 yen while Tokyo Electron fell 1.25 percent to 48,030 yen.

Weekly inflation up by 1.37 per cent: SPI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.37 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on March 09, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 243.87 points as compared to 240.57

points during the past week, according to PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 42.27 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed a 1.62 percent decrease and went up to 248.90 points from last week's 244.94 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption group from Rs 17,732-22-888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175; and above Rs 44,175 witnessed an increase of 1.55 percent,

1.40 percent, 1.29 percent, and 1.71 percent respectively.

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis included tomatoes (12.43%), potatoes (11.37%), onions (9.26%), sugar (5.48%), bananas (5.31%), cooking oil 5 litres (4.27%), wheat flour (4.06%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (4.01%), curd (1.89%), milk fresh (1.82%), tea packet (1.79%), rice basmati broken (1.24%), salt powdered (1.21%), lawn printed (2.00%) and shirting (1.45%).

The items which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included chicken (6.73%), garlic (2.07%), pulse moong (0.83%), eggs (0.77%),

pulse masoor (0.50%), LPG (0.26%), firewood (0.12%) and pulse gram (0.05%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities that witnessed an increase in prices included onions (305.23%), cigarettes (165.86%), gas charges for q1 (108.38%), diesel (93.82%), eggs (78.63%), rice irri-6/9 (78.14%), petrol (77.89%), rice basmati broken (77.27%), bananas (74.01%), pulse moong (72.54%), tea packet (66.31%), pulse mash (56.02%), pulse gram (55.97%) and bread (55.36%).

The commodities which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a YoY basis included tomatoes (41.79%), chillies powdered (7.42%) and electricity charges for Q1 (6.64%).

President attends inaugural ceremony of SBP

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik on Friday attended the inauguration ceremony of the new State Bank of Pakistan building in Sialkot.

On this occasion, the SCCI President had a one-on-one meeting with Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmed wherein multiple issues of the industry were discussed.

On the occasion, Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmed announced that six months extension would be given on the cut-off date of the EPD Circular No 01, 2023 allowing exporters an ample time to settle their overdue proceeds.

Ghafoor Malik thanked the governor State Bank for the most positive announcement made in the greater interest of the export sector.



KARACHI: Irum Tanveer (DGPR) Karachi receiving award during Award ceremony of Women's Day Celebration Ceremony at Australian Concept Infertility Medical Center Clifton.

Global bank shares sink over US fears

PARIS (AFP/APP): The world's biggest banks took a stock market beating on Friday as signs of trouble at a US regional lender sparked concerns over the wider sector.

The four biggest US banks lost a whopping \$52

billion in market value on Thursday after shares in SVB Financial, a major lender to the tech industry, sank by 60 percent.

Deutsche Bank was among the biggest losers on Friday as its shares fell by almost 10 percent after Frankfurt's stock market opened, recovering somewhat later to trade around seven percent lower.

In London, Barclays, Lloyds and NatWest shed as much as five percent before paring back some losses. France's Societe Generale fell more than five percent while BNP Paribas was down more than three percent. Switzerland's UBS and Credit Suisse sank by more than four percent.

Tokyo-listed Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group gave up more than six percent while HSBC lost around three percent in Hong Kong, as did National Australia Bank in Sydney.

SVB Financial spooked the markets after announcing a stock offering and offloading securities to raise much-needed cash as it struggles with falling deposits.

It revealed that it had lost \$1.8 billion following the sales, raising concerns that other banks could be facing similar problems.

SVB chief executive Greg Becker sought to reassure customers about the bank's financial health on Thursday, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

The newspaper said Becker urged them not to pull their deposits from the bank and not to spread fear or panic about its situation.

Investors fear that other banks could face similar losses as their bond portfolios have been hit by rising interest rates, analysts say.

Central banks worldwide have been hiking interest rates in an effort to tame decades-high inflation.

The higher rates have hurt the value of bonds with lower returns that lenders held before central banks launched their rate-hike campaigns last year.

Banks now face losses if they decide to sell those assets to cover the drop in deposits.

"In theory, the rising interest rates would've been a boon for the banking sector as it would top their net interest income, as they would start making money on deposits, yet again," said Swissquote bank analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaya.

"But the problem is that the interest rates rose too fast," she said.

In another blow, crypto banking giant Silvergate said it planned to close as the sector faces more turmoil.

Stock markets were already on edge this week after US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell warned that a quicker pace of hikes might be required to fight inflation.

The Fed is holding its next policy meeting on March 21-22 but markets are eagerly awaiting the US jobs figure due later on Friday for clues on how US central bankers might act.

Investors fear that the Fed could tip the economy into recession if its rates are too steep and held high for too long.

Shares of the biggest US bank, JPMorgan Chase, ended the day down 5.4 percent on Thursday.

Bank of America and Wells Fargo both fell 6.2 percent, while Citigroup was down 4.1 percent.

"It is not a stretch to say that this episode is emblematic of the higher-for-longer rate regime we appear to be at the start of," Deutsche Bank analysts said in a note. "We'll have to see how this story develops but something always breaks hard during or after a Fed hiking cycle," they said.

Court Notice

In the Court Of Sana Afzal Civil Judge (V) Kohat, Suit No. 213/1 date of hearing 13-03-2023, Titled: - Muhammad Iqbal Vs Luqman (etc), Notice against: - (3) Ihsanullah S/o Muhammad Javed (6) Younas Khan S/o Afzal Khan r/o Qoum Zarghon Khel Dara Adam Khel District Kohat (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit of against you defendants in which date of hearing 13-03-2023 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/ mode therefore you defendants are intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 13-03-2023. Otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order Issued on 08-03-2023 (Court of CJ V Kohat).



In brief

Shangara bags Tenpin Bowling C'ship title

RAWALPINDI (APP): Robert Shangara bagged the men's singles title of the National Tenpin Bowling Championship at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi. Meanwhile, Ayaz ur Rehman won the inter Schools title of the Championship. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijazur Rahman, Secretary General, Muhammad Hussain Chatha and large number of peoples were also present on the occasion. Robert grabbed the first position while Ali Saldera stodd 2nd and Fazil Mania and Sajjad Shah obtained 3rd position and 4th positions, respectively. Rehman won the Inter Schools event while Haarij and Aftab got 2nd and 3rd position, respectively. The concluding ceremony of the championship would be held on Sunday (March 12) in which Trophies, Medals and Certificates will be delivered to the winning players.

Shiffrin equals record with 86th World Cup win

ARE (Agencies): Mikaela Shiffrin has equalled the record for World Cup wins with an 86th victory in Friday's giant slalom in Are, Sweden. The 27-year-old American will have the chance to surpass Swede Ingemar Stenmark's record on Saturday when she races in the slalom in the same resort. Shiffrin had led after the first run and built on that to beat Italy's Federica Brignone by 0.64 seconds. "This is just a spectacular day," Shiffrin told Eurosport. "I just wanted to fight for it. It's amazing, incredible." It was Shiffrin's 12th World Cup win of the season and she also secured the season-long World Cup giant slalom title. Shiffrin, who had already secured the overall World Cup title for a fifth time as well as the slalom crystal globe, has now won six out of nine giant slaloms this season, as well as World Championship gold. Sweden's Sara Hector came third, 0.92 seconds behind Shiffrin. "It was harder with the visibility," said Shiffrin, who stood on the podium holding a pair of skis with '86 victories' written on the bottom.

National Amateur Golf C'ship in April

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) would be holding the National Amateur Golf Championship in Lahore from April 27-30. In this regard, a signing ceremony was held at the Rawalpindi Golf Club, wherein the Pakistan Golf Federation (PGF) signed a sponsorship contract for the Championship with Future Development Holdings (FDH) Private Limited as the Title Sponsor. Speaking at a press conference about the championship, PGF Secretary Brig (R) Sajid Akram, said PGF was the supreme body of golf in the country. "It is an endeavour of PGF to promote the game of Golf in the country in the best possible way," he added. "Every day, more and more youngsters are joining in to learn and improve their skills," the PGF Secretary said, adding that the Federation had 49 registered golf courses in the country, out of which only 24 golf courses are 18/27 holes. He said we were also ensuring the maximum possible int'l participation of Pakistani golfers. "Our team consisting of two females and as many men is currently representing Pakistan in Bangladesh."

Rossouw's record ton sinks Zalmi as Sultans storm into playoff

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Rilee Rossouw brought jaws - and PSL records - down with an unbridled display of power-hitting, turning a chase of 243 into a cakewalk. Along the way, he made the joint-fastest fifty of the tournament, converted it into its fastest ever hundred - going past himself - and pushed the Multan Sultans into the PSL playoffs.

Peshawar Zalmi - still not sure of their place in those playoffs - have now lost two straight matches despite posting 240 and more on the board. They were ambushed by Jason Roy a few nights ago and now it was Rossouw's turn as the South African powerhouse clattered eight fours and 12 sixes to mastermind the second-highest chase in all of T20 history, with five balls to spare.

The longest Rossouw went between boundaries in his innings was six balls. His first five scoring shots were all fours or sixes. And he kept going. By 17 deliveries faced, he had a fifty to his name. He only ran two of those runs. T-w-o. That detour into English county cricket via Kolpak had taken one of the biggest and brightest stars in South Africa away from the spotlight. But he's back now and he's got numbers that are scarcely believable. Over 297 T20s, he's maintained an average over 30 and a strike rate over 140. Some of the other people who've managed to do that are Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard, David Warner and AB de Villiers.

Rossouw had a strong support cast helping him. Kieron Pollard chipped in with 52 off just 24 balls. Their third-wicket partnership - 99 off 43 balls -



Rilee Rossouw made a 41-ball hundred, the fastest in the PSL.

formed the bedrock of this chase. A little while earlier, when Sultans were bowling, 21-year old seamer Abbas Afridi, picked up 4 for 39. Three of those wickets came in the space of nine deliveries where he gave away only eight runs. In a game where runs were scored at the rate of two a ball, that was noteworthy.

So too were Babar Azam (73 off 39) and Saim Ayub's (58 off 33) fifties. Zalmi's two openers were incredibly fluent at the start of the game, setting up such a strong platform that they could keep hitting despite

the speedbumps that Afridi's spell had put in front of them. At the halfway point, they would've felt fairly pleased with their work. The rest is now history.

Failures happen when playing with fearless approach: Shadab Khan: Islamabad United Skipper Shadab Khan has termed loss against Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 8 match as a result of playing with a fearless approach in the game.

"Failures will happen when you play with the type of fearless approach and we will back our per-

spective. Definitely, we did not perform in all three departments batting, bowling and fielding which is why we lost the game," he said in a presser after the game late Thursday.

Qalandars thumped a 119 runs victory over Islamabad United in front of another full-house at the Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi on Thursday. He also lauded Rashid Khan for figures of four for 21 saying Rashid was a world-class player.

Khan said catches win matches and if you drop catches in these types of situations then it costs the game. "But it is how you accept failures and give confidence to the players. I'm sure our bowling will make a comeback."

He said we would continue this approach in the upcoming matches and we would play with modern-day cricket. "The fans came to support us and we are thankful to them." Lahore Qalandars pacer Haris Rauf said you gain a lot of confidence when you bowl on this kind of wickets (Rawalpindi) where high scores were being made.

"The management fully backs the players and has given us full authority to go in the match and enjoy," he said. He said he contributed by taking wickets and stopping runs in the previous matches. "I will try to give my best in the games ahead. To a question, he said we were mentally prepared for the game. "Yes Azam Khan is a key player for Islamabad but he was injured." He said Multan Sultans pacer Ihsanullah was performing for his team and is the future of Pakistan.

Half-centuries by Wyatt, Bismah and Winfield-Hill; four-fer by Anam



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A 137-run second wicket partnership from 79 balls between Danni Wyatt and Bismah Maroof, and a four-fer by Anam Amin was the cornerstone of Amazons' 41 runs victory over the Super Women in the second Women's League exhibition match at the Pindi Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Wyatt scored an eye-catching 97 off 45 balls with 17 fours and three sixes, while Bismah struck 11 fours in a 51-ball 73 not out to help Amazons collect 204 for three after electing to bat first. Lauren Winfield-Hill fought a lone battle when she struck 11 fours and three sixes in an impressive 42-ball 80 as the Super Women finished at 163 for nine with left-arm spinner Anam registering figures of 4-0-17-4.

Friday's result meant the three-match series was now tied at one-all, with the decider to be played on Saturday, which is also being celebrated to promote women's empowerment through education in collaboration with CIRCLE Women.

In a match that produced 10 sixes and 49 fours, Amazons were quickly in a bother when Eymaan Fatima (2) was back in the hut on the fourth ball. However, Wyatt and Bismah not only repaired the damage but played attractive shots all around the park.

Wyatt dominated the partnership by stroking eloquent boundaries before Bismah took control of the proceedings

following the Englishwoman's departure by cresting some quality shots. Bismah put on 65 runs in 37 balls with Tammy Beaumont (13 off 13) Tess Flintoff (14 off 7) following the departure of Wyatt to steer her side to a position of strength.

In turn, Winfield-Hill led Super Women's fightback with a gutsy and aggressive 42-ball 80. She added 54 runs for the second wicket with Chamari Athapaththu (17) and 64 runs for the third wicket with Iram Javed (28) but the task against an accurate and disciplined Amazons' bowling attack was always a tough task.

Anam Amin's tied Super Women in the knots and finished with four for 17. Her scalps included Muneeba Ali (11), Iram Javed (28), Tuba Hassan (1) and Sadiq Iqbal (0). Wyatt had reached her 50 from 23 balls with nine fours and two sixes. Bismah achieved her 50 from 43 balls with six fours and Winfield-Hill reached her half century from 23 with eight fours and two sixes.

Scores in brief:
Match 2 – Amazons beat Super Women by 41 runs to level three-match series
Amazons 204-3, 20 overs (Danni Wyatt 97, Bismah Maroof 73, Tess Flintoff 14 not out, Tammy Beaumont 13; Tuba Hassan 2-34) Super Women 163-9, 20 overs (Lauren Winfield-Hill 80, Iram Javed 28; Anam Amin 4-17, Fatima Sana 2-38)
Player of the match – Danni Wyatt (Amazons).

National Open Polo C'ship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup: FG Polo, BN Polo record victories

LAHORE (APP): FG Polo and BN Polo registered contrasting victories on the fourth day of the Century Ventures National Open Polo Championship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023 here at the Lahore Polo Club on Friday.

Juan Gustavo Ambroggio excelled in the FG Polo's nail-biting 7-6 triumph over DS Polo in the first match of the day. Ambroggio played phenomenal polo and fired in four fabulous goals for the winning side while his teammates Ramiro Zavaleta banged in a brace and Mian

Abbas Mukhtar converted one goal. Hissam Ali Hyder also played well for DS Polo and contributed with four fantastic goals while his teammates Javier Guerrero and Daniyal Shaikh scored one goal each.

FG Polo were off to a flying start as they hammered two goals each in the first and second chukkers to take a healthy 4-0 lead. DS Polo bounced back in the third chukker by thrashing in three goals against one by FG Polo, who were still enjoying a 5-3 lead by the end of the third chukker. The

fourth chukker saw FG Polo adding two more goals in their tally against one by DS Polo to have a 7-4 lead. DS Polo though dominated the entire fifth chukker and pumped in two back-to-back goals to make it 6-7 but they couldn't score more, thus losing the match by 6-7.

Juan Maria Ruiz Guinazu steered BN Polo to a 10-7 victory over HN Polo in the second match of the day. Tito Ruiz played outstanding polo and smashed in superb five goals while Baber Naseem cracked a classic quartet and Hamza Mawaz Khan converted one goal.

For HN Polo, Santiago Loza emerged as top scorer with four goals while Raja Mikail Sami, Raja Jalal Arslan and Haider Naseem converted one goal each.

HN Polo though started the match well by banging in a beautiful brace to take a 2-0 lead but just before the end of the first chukker, BN Polo struck one to reduce the margin to 1-2. The second chukker was evenly poised as both the sides scored two goals each with HN Polo still having a 4-3 lead. BN Polo played better polo in the third chukker and converted two goals against one by HN Polo to equalize the score at 5-5.

BN Polo turned the tables of the match in the fourth chukker where they thrashed in four goals against one by HN Polo to take a healthy 9-6 lead. The last chukker saw both the teams scoring one goal each, thus BN Polo winning the match by 10-7. Polo enthusiasts enjoy entertaining matches.

Lahore Polo Club President Umar Sadiq, executive committee members and a large number of players and polo lovers were present on this occasion to witness and enjoy the entertaining and exciting matches at Lahore Polo Club.

Two important matches of this pool will be played on March 12 after which the position of both the pools will be cleared. Remounts will take on DS Polo at 1:30pm while Master Paints/Newage Cables will vie against BN Polo at 3:30pm.

5th Standard Chartered Karachi United League sponsors 1200+ footballers

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Karachi United Youth Football League 2022-23 held its closing ceremony today, having sponsored over 1,200 footballers. Over the last five years, in partnership with Karachi United Foundation, this exemplary sporting initiative has engaged more than 5000 talented players and tens of community centres.

This year's tournament began on 25 November 2022 and since then has seen more than 180 matches being played. Matches included different age categories such as: 44 matches amongst 20 teams in the Under-16 category 33 matches amongst 22 teams in the Under-14 category 29 matches amongst 12 teams in the Under-12 category 29 matches amongst 12 teams in the Under-10 category 34 matches amongst 10 teams comprising young girls 34 matches amongst 8 teams representing different schools

On the six-year partnership, Khadija Hashimi,

Head, CABM, AME & Country Head, Pakistan, Standard Chartered Bank Pakistan said, "Since inception, the SC KU Youth football league has gained real momentum and we are delighted to have touched the lives of over 5000 young people thus far. Through this league we have been able to bring together children from across different communities and backgrounds onto one level playing field through friendly competition.

Beyond the fact that this improves the skills and game of the children, football stimulates positive mental health and cognitive development. We have also seen it contributing considerably to the promotion of tolerance, respect, perseverance, resilience and equity of the youth engaged. We are extremely proud that at Standard Chartered we have been able to drive greater equality and inclusion of young people."

Commenting on the league, Mr. Imran Ali, Director Youth and Community at Karachi United said: "This year, with the support from Standard Chartered Bank

we have been able to cast a wider net, to increase participation in the league and make it more inclusive - this aligns very well with the Bank's mandate on community impact.

We also have seen an increase in the number of female participation along with new teams from across Karachi. The salient feature of our partnership this year was the opportunity to develop our coaches at the Liverpool Football Club. We are truly grateful to Standard Chartered for enabling this and are confident that the performance of our teams will be greatly enhanced as an outcome."

Standard Chartered has been sponsoring this league since 2017, when 600 children, mostly from underserved communities participated in the tournament.

Today, it attracts thousands of youngsters, who aspire to excel and achieve nationwide recognition as football players and lead a progressive life. This tournament helps the youth in breaking barriers across classes, genders, and abilities, through sports, as they bring a positive change in their deprived communities.

KP team selected for 3rd inter-provincial Tchoukball championship

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The third inter-provincial Tchoukball championship will be played in Faisalabad from March 13 to 16. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team will participate with full preparations. For which the names of the players of the provincial team were announced.

According to the President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tchoukball Association, Haji Muhammad Iqbal and Secretary General Abdul Rasheed Anwar, the third inter-provincial Tchoukball Championship will be played from March 13 to 16 in Faisalabad. In which

male players of teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir will participate.

In this regard, trials were conducted for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team at Tahamas Football Stadium yesterday under the supervision of Provincial Tchoukball Association. Players from different districts including Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swat, Bannu, Kohat, DI Khan and Dir participated in these trials. Among the players who were selected in the trials are Musab Iqbal (captain), Rehan (vice-captain), Shehryar,

Mahmood Zaman, Owais, Riaz, Ghafuran, Luqman, Nauman and Umar.

While Mohammad Jalal will be the team coach. Secretary Abdul Rasheed Anwar said that Tchoukball game is very popular in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and that is the reason why inter-provincial championship was successfully organized in Bannu and Mansehra. In which the male and female athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have shown their best skills. He said that talented players have been selected for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team for this championship as well. God willing, they will win the champion trophy.





In brief

IRSA releases 85,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 85,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 55,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1438.91 feet and was 40.91 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,900 cusecs while outflow as 48,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1103.65 feet, which was 53.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 17,300 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 51,400, 39,200, 31,900 and 9,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Five bids to smuggle flour foiled

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police here on Friday foiled five bids to smuggle 598 wheat flour bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Potohar Division police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up four drivers namely Sher Zaman, Hassan Khan, Adnan, Numan and Jan Muhammad and recovered 598 wheat flour bags. He informed that the accused were trying to smuggle wheat flour bags out of the Rawalpindi division. The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and City Police Officer, Rawalpindi were monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district 24/7 to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids, he added. He said, dozens of bids were foiled during the last 10 days and teams recovered thousands of wheat, flour and fine flour (maida) bags from the possession of the arrested accused.

Crackdown against profiteers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Friday held a crackdown against profiteers, professional beggars, trespassers and arrested five on overcharging. The administration during the inspection at 134 different areas, fined Rs. 12500, sealed shops over unhygienic standards and profiteering while shifted seven professional beggars to police station, said press release. During the crackdown the teams also removed illegal permanent and temporarily encroachments at Mandi Mor, IJP Road and Main Murree Road Barakahu, the administration also arrested two trespassers and First Information Report (FIR) was also filed against one accused on violation. Moreover, one illegal petrol filling agency and one LPG filling station were also sealed over malpractices. Furthermore, nine kilograms of polythene bags were also confiscated during the raids.

One COVID-19 case reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): One more person was diagnosed with fatal Coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 47,774. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Friday.

With 'Clean Air Policy' approval, Pakistan makes a step forward

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has made a significant step forward towards becoming a pollution-free country with the approval of the first 'Clean Air Policy' (NCAP) by the Federal Cabinet.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, who spearheaded the efforts for the formulation of the NCAP, said: "The policy aims to provide a comprehensive framework for improving air quality in Pakistan, with a particular focus on implementing national-scale actions that will lead to measurable improvements."

"It is a policy guideline for the implementing agencies and environmental protection agencies (EPAs) in all the provinces and federating units," she said in a statement on Friday.

Sherry Rehman said if implemented as per the recommended timeframe the policy would set the foundation for a cleaner and healthier future for Pakistan and its people. Speaking on the urgent need for such action, the minister said, "Air pollution is a critical environmental and health issue in Pakistan, causing 235,000 premature

deaths in 2019 alone and reducing the average life expectancy of our citizens by up to 2.7 years. Our country consistently ranks among the world's most polluted, with cities like Lahore and Karachi particularly affected."

The economic toll is staggering, with the World Bank estimating that air pollution has cost Pakistan a staggering US\$ 47.8 billion." She emphasized the policy's crucial role in tackling the challenges of air pollution and recurring smog issues in major Pakistani cities.

The NCAP, which was formulated with the input of all stakeholders at the federal and provincial levels, introduced a comprehensive framework for improving air quality in Pakistan through the implementation of various policy, technological, and management actions, including monitoring air quality targets, she added.

The policy's objectives, she said, included reducing annual deaths and transboundary pollution, improving the health of Pakistani citizens, and having a positive impact on the country's economic activity.

"While the NCAP provides a roadmap for Pakistan to achieve cleaner air, its successful implementation ultimately depends on the provinces," the minister said. "Provinces have been extensively consulted for their inputs as they are the actual implementers, with non-binding recommendations and they have a crucial role to play in implementing measures that will improve air quality within their areas of responsibility."

With the NCAP in place, she said, the government and its partners were poised to make significant progress in the fight against air pollution in Pakistan. The minister said the NCAP had identified one priority intervention in each of the five major air-polluting sectors, including transport, industry, agriculture, waste, and residential.

The successful implementation of the five priority interventions, she added, was expected to make a substantial contribution to improving air quality, reducing emissions by 81% in 2040 compared to the baseline scenario and by 70% compared to 2020 levels.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing a press conference. —APP Photo

Tanveer for empowering women to make them productive citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain Thursday emphasized the need to empower women to make them productive citizens of the country.

Interacting with the female journalists, Rana Tanveer appreciated their contribution towards the field of journalism. He acknowledged the role played by women in the progress of the country. The minister highlighted and encouraged the female reporters to continue with their contribution towards journalism.

He said that the role of women is critical in the development of any sector of Pakistan, especially education. The minister briefed the reporters about the various initiatives taken by the ministry to raise the standard of education and the scope of access to education.

He said that one of the biggest challenges that the education sector in Pakistan

faces is the Out of School Children. He said that there are approximately 22.8 million out-of-school children, which is amongst the highest in the world.

He said that a primary objective of the current government is to focus on reducing this number. Rana Tanveer said that there are more than 16,000 out-of-school children in the federal capital. He reiterated his resolve to bring this number down and make the federal territory a model for the rest of the country to follow.

He said that only through education, we can uplift our country and address the current challenges. Rana Tanveer highlighted the initiative of School on Wheels and said that the purpose of this initiative is to reach the students where there is a lack of infrastructure or students that do not have the financial ability to go to school.

He said that this initiative in the future will be able to

accommodate disaster-affected populations as well. He said that Pakistan requires unique solutions to the problems and the current government is fully utilizing its resources to address the issues of the public effectively and efficiently.

Rana Tanveer emphasized focusing on improving institutional governance, curriculum, access and quality, teaching and research practices, industry-academia linkages, and climate change adaptation.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that most stakeholders complain that our education system does not equip students with the knowledge, experience, skills, or values needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It is clear to everyone that business as usual is not an option. "We need to be bold, innovative, and committed to achieving the three-fold objective of improving access, quality, and relevance of our higher education", he said.

PML-N only able to steer country out of 'crises: Talal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) senior leader Talal Chaudhry on Friday claimed that Nawaz Sharif was still the most popular leader among the people and only PML-N can bring the country out of the crisis.

Talking to a private news channel, he criticized that it was the PML-N leadership that dared to face courts and jails in false cases.

He said that despite all the conspiracies of Imran Khan, the nation always supported the Pakistan Muslim League (N) in the elections, adding, there was no comparison between Nawaz Sharif and PTI's Chairman Imran Khan.

He further said that the nation knows better the difference between a leader and a jackal. Replying to a question about inflation, he claimed the PTI chief was responsible for economic destruction and inflation in the country.

5,500 fine tickets issued over non-registration of vehicles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Traffic Police (ICTP) has launched a massive crackdown against unregistered vehicles and issued 5,500 fine tickets during the ongoing year.

Police spokesman said that ICTP issued tickets to 5,500 unregistered vehicles and motorcycles. He said that special enforcement squads have been constituted which are conducting checking of unregistered vehicles at different points of the city.

Chief Traffic Officer Syed Mustafa Tanveer is leading the campaign initiated on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan. Citizens are also requested to get their vehicles registered at the earliest and affix the number plates on their vehicles issued only by the Excise and Taxation department.

He said that ICTP would show no leniency in this regard. Moreover, special points have been erected at different boulevards of the city, in order to monitor the movement of the unregistered vehicles.

Sanjrani congratulates President Xi Jinping

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday extended warm congratulations to President Xi Jinping on being elected as the President of China for the third time.

The Chairman Senate, on behalf of the Parliament and the people of Pakistan, congratulated President Xi Jinping on his re-election as the leader of China, said a news release. The confidence of the Chinese people and parliament in President Xi Jinping is a recognition of his extraordinary leadership skills.

Under his leadership, China has made remarkable achievements in every field, and has become the world's top economic power, said Chairman Senate.

Sadiq Sanjrani acknowledged that President Xi Jinping had become a symbol of China's development and people's prosperity. The two countries have always enjoyed a strong and evergreen strategic partnership, and it is hoped that this relationship will be further strengthened during the five-year term of President Xi Jinping, he expressed.

The Chairman Senate expressed his commitment to work with China to deepen cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, and to promote regional and global peace, stability and prosperity.

He wished President Xi Jinping all the success in leading China towards greater heights of progress and development. "We hope that the tried and tested strategic cooperation of the two countries will continue to grow and flourish in the coming years" he added.

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Experts advise pollen allergy patients to avoid unnecessary outing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts on Friday advised pollen allergy patients to avoid outdoor activities without wearing face mask and walking around green areas where plants like mulberry trees have growing as spring season increases respiratory problems among capital residents.

Renowned allergy expert on pollen Dr Zawar Ali while talking to a private news channel said that pollen allergy in the capital was the most common disorders for residents every year, however, allergic people should wear masks while leaving the house and riding motorbikes and bicycles while unnecessary outings, especially during sunrise and sunsets should be avoided.

The problem is particularly become severe

among elderly people and children, he said, adding, sectors o H-8, G-6, I8 and F10 are more common for allergic patients. More than eight plants are responsible for the high pollen count in Islamabad, he explained, adding, these plants include paper mulberry, acacia, eucalyptus, pine, grease, cannabis, dandelion, and alternaria.

Another allergy expert Dr Athar Riaz added that the residents, especially those with pollen allergy, have been advised to avoid going to gardens and forests and jogging at tracks which are in the green areas. Do not keep flowers and trees in rooms and houses as well. The major source of pollen allergy in Islamabad is the paper mulberry, he mentioned.

"People should close the

windows to ensure pollen would not enter their houses. After washing, do not spread clothes in the air for a long time because pollens can stick to them. After reaching home people should change their dress and shower to ensure that pollen is washed away", he added.

The cases of pollen allergy increasing in the city and amount of pollen remains high, he said, adding, patients should wear masks while going out.

Experts also explained that pollen allergy symptoms included sneezing, runny nose, watering of eyes, coughing, improper breathing, wheezing and eventually attacks of asthma.

Besides, these symptoms there can be itching on the skin, he added.



RAWALPIND: Security personnel stand high alert outside Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium during a cricket match of Pakistan Super League. —APP Photo

Earthquake strikes Fayzabad

FAYZABAD (Khaama Press): An earthquake with a Richter scale of 4.7 occurred in the Fayzabad province of Afghanistan. The earthquake's epicentre was 140 Km northeast of Fayzabad at 22:01:47 PM. This is the fourth earthquake within a week. "Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.7. Occurred on 09-03-2023, 23:01:47 IST. Lat: 36.57 & Long: 72.30, Depth: 140 Km. Location: 166km ESE of Fayzabad, Afghanistan".

‘Aid may decreased’

KABUL (TOLOnews): The UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, warned that funding for Afghanistan is likely to drop if women were not allowed to work. Speaking at the UN Security Council, Otunbayeva said that the 20th December ban on higher education, and the 24th December ban on women working for NGOs will have serious consequences for the Afghan population and for the relationship between the Taliban and the international community.

Delawar: About \$80m to be invested in oil extraction

KABUL (TOLOnews): Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting minister of mines and petroleum, said that a private company has been given the contract to extract 20,000 tons of crude oil from the Qashgari block of the Amu Darya region.

In an interview with TOLOnews, Delawar said that this company bought at a rate of one ton of crude oil for \$540.

"A company won a contract for one ton of oil for \$540 USD and offered a guarantee of \$200,000; the transfer of that oil will begin. But, while the oil from the Angut oil field provided a cheap price and 7,000 tons of it were advertised, no agreement has yet been made," Delawar noted.

Delawar further stated that this year the Chinese National Oil Company, which has the oil extraction contract of the Amu Darya oil field, will invest 162 million dollars.

"Nearly 80 million dol-



lars will be invested in the oil extraction sector from ten new wells. With its implementation, it will increase the government's income and the amount of oil extraction will also increase," Delawar said.

However, some economists believe that oil extraction and processing in the nation are good for the economy and will create jobs for the people.

"Oil will be extracted and will be processed inside the country. Without a doubt it will provide job

opportunities for the people and also it will prevent the spending of millions of dollars which were yearly spend on the importing of oil from other countries," said Mohammad Karim Azimi, executive director of the Kabul Chamber of Industries and Mines.

According to data from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, the Amu Darya oil field has the potential to produce oil worth billions of dollars, and this ministry is trying to set up a standard oil refinery in the nation.

Canada to allow aid groups to operate in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Canadian government announced that 'terrorism financing laws' will be amended to allow Canadian humanitarian aid organizations to help needy families in Afghanistan, following pressure from aid agencies.

Currently, Canadian aid organizations have ceased operations in Afghanistan due to some legal constraints which are in conflict with the established laws in Canada.

Over the past year and a half, humanitarian aid organizations have repeatedly complained about the Canadian government's strict regulations. According to the aid organizations will have to pay taxes to the Taliban authorities while operating in Afghanistan.

Since Canada considers the Taliban as a de facto regime that forcefully seized power, operating under the group's regime, will cause legal issues for aid agencies, as per the terrorism financing laws. To amend the laws, the government sent a bill to the parliament on Thursday.

As per the suggested bill, in order to operate in Afghanistan, humanitarian organizations will have to apply for an exemption from anti-terrorist laws, according to CBC news. After a thorough assessment, the Minister of Public Safety of Canada will either accept or reject the application.

Therefore, Canadian organizations will not have the full freedom to operate in Afghanistan.

Marco E. L. Mendicino, Canada's Minister of Public Safety said that amending the laws does not mean engaging with the Taliban, and as per the Canadian laws, the group will remain a de facto regime, not a legitimate government to represent Afghanistan.

Mr. Mendicino further added the Taliban have demonstrated that they do not value human rights and have committed "massive violations" against people, especially Afghan women and girls. As per the new law, aid organizations can provide essential assistance including food, shelter, healthcare services, and education to the people of Afghanistan during these difficult times.

Afghan women protest in Kabul, demanding right to education and job



KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanist women started a protest against the Taliban-led government on March 8, the day the world spoke out in favour of women's rights, demanding rights to education and employment.

The protest took place in Kabul and demanded to lift of the ban restriction on education and work for females. The protest came after a statement issued by the Ministry of Higher education stated the opening of

Universities without female students. The Taliban-led government banned women from attending university last December, which has confronted massive condemnation nationally and internationally.

The United Nations condemned the ban on women's right to education and work, saying, "Under the Taliban, Afghanistan remains the most repressive country in the world for women," said the UN special envoy, Roza

Otunbayeva.

On the other hand, the Taliban banned women's working in NGOs last December. The protesters also urged the international community to pay attention to the current Afghan women's situation, particularly the ban on working.

Meanwhile, the UN warned the de facto government to drop humanitarian aid if women were prohibited from working. Banning women from working in

NGOs disrupted humanitarian aid since Most of the aid organizations' staff were female.

In a report delivered on Monday to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Richard Bennett, the Special Rapporteur for the United Nations on human rights in Afghanistan, stated that the Taliban's prohibition on female education "may amount to gender persecution a crime against humanity."

Women distribute books for Int'l Women Day

KABUL (TOLOnews): A number of women distributed books free in honor of International Women's Day, and said that the purpose of these kinds of programs is to promote the culture of reading and study.

The organizers of the program said they distributed near to two hundred books to women.

A number of participants called on the Islamic Emirate to allow women's education and to hold these kinds of programs for women.

"We celebrated women's day and distributed books to promote the study of culture," said Khatera, an organizer.

"Because of women's day we had a special program and we distributed books to women and we sent a message saying that even with



restrictions they cannot stop us, and we continue on our way," said Hussna Surwari, an organizer.

Meanwhile, some participants called on the Islamic Emirate to provide education for women.

"These kinds of programs are useful for our culture and have good impact on youth and

women....," said Hussna, a participant.

"We call on the Islamic Emirate to allow women an education and to open schools and universities," said Hasiba, a participant.

Some residents and booksellers said that in the last two years the culture of study in the country has decreased dramatically.

9th anniversary of Fahim's death remembered

KABUL (TOLOnews): The 18th day of Hout (March 9) is the 9th anniversary of the passing of Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim.

Qasim Fahim, after the Bonn meeting, and after helping to found the Afghan interim government, became the first deputy of the government and defense minister.

Mohammad Qasim Fahim was born in the year 1957 in Panjshir province.

"Let's forget each other's sin, and love each other," said Marshal Qasim Fahim.

"Marshal Qasim Fahim was a mujahid and a commander in the jihad period and he had courage and good management," said Sadiq Shinwari, a former military figure.

Fahim received his first schooling in his hometown and in 1349 (solar year) he



joined the Arabic School in Kabul to continue his higher education.

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Fahim, offered his condolences.

Karzai said on Twitter "Marshal Fahim was a patriotic and peace-seeking person. He was a

strong believer in peace and a firm friend in this way, whose efforts were appreciated and are unforgettable."

Some Kabul residents have a variety of views about Qasim Fahim's achievements.

Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim died at the age of 56 due to a heart attack on March 8, 2014.

Young Afghan women training as midwives

KABUL (Agencies): In a small village located at the western end of the snow-covered Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan's Bamiyan Province, Aziza Rahimi, 35, mourns the baby she lost four months ago after a harrowing birth with no medical care.

Rahimi, who has five other children, said that riding a donkey to the nearest hospital was out of the question when she was jolted by pain while nine months pregnant in the middle of the night.

Stumbling and bleeding, she walked for two hours to her in-laws' house after her husband was unable to find help to take them to the hospital. She gave birth there. The baby boy died shortly after.

"It was hard for me when I lost my baby. As a mother, I nurtured the baby in my womb for nine months, but then I lost him. It is too painful," said Rahimi.

Rahimi is not the only mother who has lost her child. For many women living in Afghanistan's rugged and remote landscapes, the distance from their homes to hospitals can be the difference between life and death.

Isolation can become a death sentence in any difficult birth, doctors and aid workers say, contributing to Afghanistan's extremely high maternal and infant mortality rates, among the worst in the world.

Afghan girls relocate to Rwanda to continue their education: IOM and SOLA partnership

GENEVA/RWANDA (Agencies): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is supporting the relocation of Afghan girls to Rwanda to continue their education, following the decision by the de facto authorities to ban women and girls from secondary and tertiary education in Afghanistan.

The girls are among the first overseas students to be admitted to the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), an Afghan all-girls boarding school originally based in Kabul, before it was forced to relocate to Rwanda following

the ban.

As the first and only school of its kind, SOLA provides a safe space for Afghan girls to receive a secondary level education, with a vision of creating a generation of female leaders.

"The dedication and strength of Afghan women and girls in the face of such adversity inspires and humbles us every day," says IOM Director General António Vitorino.

"This initiative fills me with hope and resolve to continue our advocacy alongside women and girls in the country, for an

Afghanistan that acknowledges, promotes, and builds on the contributions of its women, and invests in its girls."

The arrival of the girls in Rwanda follows an agreement between IOM and SOLA to assist with safe travel arrangements and relocation of its students - already outside Afghanistan- from their current countries of residence to the SOLA campus in Rwanda.

The students who have arrived so far were assisted and escorted to the SOLA campus by IOM staff.

"The students were very

excited to be travelling to their school. During the flight, the youngest girl was given a pilot's hat and sunglasses. She was so excited and happy; she wore her hat the entire journey and told me she wants to be a pilot when she grows up," said an IOM staff escorting the students.

Reflecting on the agreement between IOM and SOLA, SOLA's Founder, Shabana Basij-Rasikh said: "March 2023 marks one year since the Taliban closed the doors of girls' schools in Afghanistan, denying Afghan girls the right to study past 6th

grade. It is incredibly meaningful to me that they are now arriving in Rwanda to pursue their education, and I am endlessly grateful to IOM for helping facilitate their safe travel to our school where they will grow to become members of a generation of leaders who one day will help rebuild Afghanistan."

The new students will join their classmates at SOLA, who were welcomed by the Rwandan Government back in August 2021. IOM will be continuing to help with the relocation of more Afghan students to SOLA.



KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban officials reported on Friday that more than 500 people have graduated from Jihadist schools in Helmand, Laghman, and Sar-e-Pol provinces.

Bakhtar News Agency has reported that 300 people in Helmand, 160 in Laghman, and 50 others in northern Sar-e-Pol province have graduated from religious schools.

Following the collapse of the previous government, the Taliban-run Administration has focused on establishing Jihadist schools across Afghanistan.

Over the past 18 months, the ruling regime has also incorporated several religious subjects into the school curriculum and removed certain other courses that seemed unnecessary for the Taliban

group.

According to the statements of the Minister of Education of the Taliban, the group is going to establish three to ten religious schools in each district throughout the country.

A decree attributed to Hibatullah Akhundzada, Taliban Supreme leader, reveals that each religious school will have ten teachers and eight staff members - which will train between 500-1000 students each semester.

It is also reported that each student at the Jihadist school receives 150 Afghanis per day. Additionally, each teacher at religious schools will receive between 15,000-25,000 Afghanis as a monthly salary, whereas, a teacher with an undergraduate degree receives only

9,000 Afghanis.

Educationists and experts believe that the Taliban-run administration has drastically modified school and university curricula. They have completely removed certain subjects, which can negatively affect students in mastering modern subjects and will eventually lack competitiveness in the job market.

Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, the de facto authorities have imposed restrictions on the rights of women and girls to attend education and work, which prompted worldwide criticism. Instead of easing or removing the gender-based bans, the group emphasizes establishing more and more Madrasas (religious schools) across the country.

TTP ‘highly’ active in KP, ECP told in security briefing

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday was informed that security threats persist in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) due to the banned outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) presence in the province, sources told media.

According to the TV report, a meeting was held at the ECP headquarters in Islamabad chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja in which the poll organising authority was given a briefing by the chiefs of security agencies regarding the latest law and order situation in KP and Punjab. The meeting was summoned by the Election Commission regarding the preparation for polls in the two provinces in line with the order of the Supreme Court.

"There are many security concerns in the KP as the TTP is highly active in the province at the moment," the sources quoted the officials as saying. Later, in a brief statement, the ECP said the purpose of the meeting was to ensure the holding of polls in a peaceful manner. The commis-

sion is meeting the stakeholders in compliance with the apex court orders to hold polls within 90 days of the assemblies' dissolution.

The elections in Punjab are scheduled to be held on April 30 while the date for KP polls is yet to be finalised. Both the houses were dissolved in mid-January on the direction of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan to pressure the government for snap elections. In a similar briefing by the secretaries of the interior and finance ministries, a day earlier, the election organising authority was informed of certain factors causing difficulties to extend security and funds for elections.

The finance and interior secretaries were called to the meeting to ensure the provision of funds and security for the elections. The ECP told Finance Secretary Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh that it would require at least Rs65 billion to hold the general election across the country. Out of this, Rs20 billion would urgently be needed for polls in Punjab and KP. Sheikh was told that, so far, the ECP was only provided with Rs5 billion and was yet to get

the remaining Rs15 billion required in the current financial year.

As per a report, the finance secretary briefed the commission about the overall economic situation of the country. He said it was difficult for the ministry to provide the required funds but, he promised, he would give a final reply after consulting the federal government. Meanwhile, on election security, Interior Secretary Yousaf Naseem Khokhar informed the ECP that apart from the police in the two provinces, other law-enforcement agencies would require 297,000 additional personnel in Punjab and 56,000 in KP. During the meeting, the secretary was urged to contact the army, Rangers and other law-enforcement agencies and inform them to make arrangements for the required force. Along with this, a meeting is also being held on Tuesday with the Ministry of Defence to finalise the arrangements for the election. The KP governor has also expressed his desire to hold a meeting with the ECO next week to decide the date for provincial elections.

Barkhan triple murders: Khetran granted bail

QUETTA (Agencies): A judicial magistrate in Rakhni on Friday approved the bail plea of Balochistan Communications and Works Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran in the Barkhan killings case. Rakhni is a town and union council of Barkhan District.

Session Judge Malik Sujhao Din heard today's case and approved Khetran's bail on surety bonds of Rs500,000 citing "lack of evidence". Speaking to the media after the hearing, Khetran's lawyer Advocate Manzoor Rehmani said no charges were proved against his client.

Last month, a judicial magistrate had granted Quetta Police a 10-day physical remand of Khetran, who was arrested a day earlier on suspicion of his involvement in the triple murder. When the bullet-riddled bodies of the woman and two men were found in a well near the minister's residence in the Barkhan area, the police initially identified them as Granaz, wife of Khan Muhammad Marri, and her two sons. At the time, Marri said the corpses were of his wife and sons, alleging that they were held in Khetran's private jail. He added that more of his children, including a daughter, were captives.

Subsequently, Granaz was recovered along with her 17-year-old daughter Farzana and son. Two other sons were recovered from Kohlu. The woman is still unidentified. The Barkhan triple murder saga saw dramatic twists after police arrested the provincial minister.

NAB seeks record of Gogi's assets

LAHORE (INP): While widening the scope of investigation into the assets beyond means and money laundering case against Farah Khan Gogi, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Friday sought the record of all her properties in Punjab province.

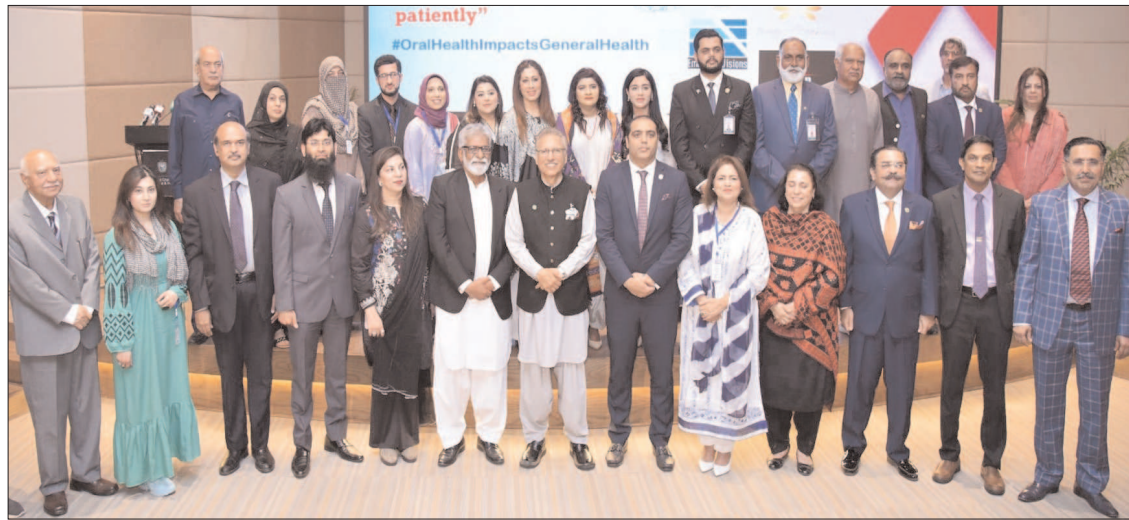
As per media reports, NAB wrote letters to all the development authorities in the province to acquire the details of properties registered in the name of Farah Khan Gogi, a close friend of former first lady Bushra Bibi. The NAB, in its letters, sought the record of residential and commercial properties registered in the names of Farah Khan Gogi and her husband Ahsan Jameel and also of the properties that had been bought and sold.

It is to be noted here that NAB notices had also been issued to Farah Khan Gogi in the Rs841 million bank transactions case. The NAB also sought the FBR returns details of Farah Gogi from 2016 to 2021.

Six dead in mishap

DERA GAZI KHAN (PPI): Six people were killed and several others injured after a tractor-trolley plunged into a canal on Sakhi Sarwar Road in DG Khan on Friday, rescuers and police said.

Rescuers said up to 40 pilgrims including women and children were heading to Sakhi Sawar Shrine at the time of the incident. Emergency responders with the help of locals managed to pull the dead and the injured out of the canal water and shifted them to a nearby hospital. Rescuers and divers are still searching for the missing passengers. Police are investigating the cause of accident.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the participants and speakers of the second Annual Conference of Pakistan Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology.

Sindh uphold reservation with Centre on digital census: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government has conveyed its reservation on the digital census to the federal government. If our reservations are not addressed, we will not accept the results of the digital census. He said that the Sindh government wanted that all political parties and civil society to have full confidence in the digital census and each and person residing in the province should be counted.

He added that head of the family should know that if he has registered 10 members of his family, they should be reflected in the digital census data. The minister also demanded that data of digital census should also be shared with the Sindh government. He said that in the digital census, all the people, including those living illegally, should be counted so that the correct number of population should be available with government. He expressed these views while addressing an important press conference at the Sindh Archives Complex on Thursday. He said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed reservations about the digital census.

Similarly, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has also raised this matter with the federal government and at various forums. In this regard, a zoom meeting also held with the federal government in which Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal was also present. He has concerns of the Sindh government on the digital census were shared with the federal minister. We are waiting for the federal government's response to address the issues on census.

Provincial Information Minister said that an 8-hour long meeting of the Sindh Cabinet was held yesterday, in which important decisions were

taken. The Sindh government is trying to provide maximum relief to the people in the month of Ramadan. He said that Sindh government has already made cut on its expenditures so as to provide relief to general public. He said that It has been decided to delegate the powers of magistrate to the Officers of Bureau of Supply and Prices also to stabilize the prices of daily commodities.

He said that under the powers of the magistrate, the officers of the Bureau of Supply will have the authority to arrest and impose fines on artificial and unnecessary increase in the prices of food items. 'If anyone increases the prices unnecessarily, action will be taken against them,' he added. The provincial minister said that bachat markets will be set up in poor areas to give relief to the people. The minister further said that Sindh cabinet have given approval to launch an operation against bandits in the katcha areas on the border of Punjab and Balochistan. 'This joint operation will be conducted with the help of Punjab Police, Balochistan Police, Rangers and if necessary the services of Pakistan Army will also be sought,' the minister said. He remarked that dacoits have heavy and modern weapons, keeping this in mind, the Sindh government has approved funds to equip the police with modern weapons so that they can fight against dacoits.

In response to a question, he said that Imran Khan is not fighting against any individual, political party or institution. I can prove that Imran Khan has destroyed the country's economy. He said that Imran Khan is busy plotting how to harm Pakistan. Imran Khan is working against the country. He said that when the current government approached the IMF to implement the agreements, Imran Khan and his party's provincial government ministers gave messages to

the IMF not to help Pakistan. PTI chief also prevented overseas Pakistanis from sending remittances to Pakistan so that Pakistan become bankrupt.

He said that Imran Khan has made every possible effort to push Pakistan towards default. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Imran Khan threatened the judiciary and brought crowds in the courts so as to bar judgments against him. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Imran Khan's dream is to become the country's don, he is trying to become Bal Thackeray. The minister said that Imran Khan's appearance and actions are similar to that of Bal Thackeray.

The provincial minister said that Imran Khan holding force with sticks, even today when the Balochistan police reached Zaman Park, his force with sticks was active. He said that Imran Khan has the support of notorious terrorist organizations. He said that as a political worker, he expressed his grief over the death of a PTI worker in Lahore. He said that Imran Khan Imran Khan is doing politics on dead bodies.

Imran Khan aims for more bodies to fall. A person who never participated in anyone's funeral has yesterday directed it's party to hold funeral prayers in different cities for the worker who died in Lahore. In response to an other question, he said that number 1 thief, hypocrite and number one bandit had been awarded the certificate of 'Sadiq and Ameen', which is a great injustice with the country. He said that Saqib Nisar has scored a century of illegal and unconstitutional acts. He demanded that a reference should be sent to the Judicial Council against him. He said that Saqib Nisar should initiate contempt of court proceedings on this against him and he was ready to answer it in any court of law.

President directs steps to avoid dental diseases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said that as curative dentistry had more financial implications, particularly for a developing country like Pakistan, dentists should think out of the box to promote preventive dentistry through public awareness of oral hygiene.

The president, addressing the inaugural ceremony of the International Oral Pathology and Aesthetic Dentistry Conference held here, said preventive healthcare was more important as tertiary care was costlier and unaffordable for Pakistan. Urging the participants comprising oral pathologists, dentists, professors and students, he said that regular brushing of teeth provided almost 99% of prevention from oral diseases. He said Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) also taught the frequent use of Miswak as had been evident from around 20 Ahadith.

The president, also a renowned dentist, shared the success stories of his career in dentistry which marked massive awareness campaigns on oral health which created a win-win situation for both the private partners as well as the field of dentistry. Highlighting the importance of dentistry, he urged dentists to establish their collaboration with the people to promote oral hygiene

and recalled the successful oral hygiene campaign run during the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders.

He said the professional dentists needed to reorient their approach as the quantum of preventive healthcare in their education was not as required. They should broaden their narrow focus to help people achieve prevention against oral diseases, he added. He said the professionals would have to change their paradigm for the maximum benefit of the people to pay back the huge financing made by the country on their higher education.

The president, who earlier also inaugurated the first oral cancer registry, said after oral hygiene, the focus should on the prevention of oral cancer. He advised against the use and sale of betel and other relevant addictive items leading to oral cancer. The event marked the start of the 2nd International Conference on Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology. The Conference is a collaborative event that also includes First International Dental Laser Conference.

On the occasion, the president also launched the Pakistan Federation of Laser Dentistry and distributed shields among the organisers and collaborators of the conference. Earlier, in her address, President of

Pakistan Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology (PSOMP) Federal Zone Dr Joharia Azhar said Pakistan was among very few countries where there was no oral cancer registry.

She also highlighted the need for body of laser dentistry considering the new trends and innovations in the field. She said the oral cancer registry would help maintain the data of the disease in the country besides establishing collaboration with the partners to broaden the network. President PSOMP Nauman Rauf said the conference would help broaden the network of professionals to help them embrace the vision of innovations in the field. Focal Person for Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Naima Ansari highlighted the role being played by women chamber in the promotion of basic health without any gender biases. She said the chamber also gave a special focus on the importance of reproductive health including family planning through the collaboration of businessmen as well as professionals.

Meanwhile, the President Dr Arif Alvi expressed condolence over the death of Editor of Daily Express Tahir Najmi. They lauded the services of Tahir Najmi for the field of journalism and sympathised with the grieved family.



PESHAWAR: ANP central general secretary Mian Iftikhar Hussain addressing during a reference held in memory of late Lateef Afridi Advocate.

Punjab caretaker govt 'B' team of PDM: Rasheed

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad has vehemently criticised the Punjab caretaker government as "B team of the PDM" for its violent crackdown on the PTI activists in Lahore. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said the way the "caretaker government is defending its action on unarmed PTI rally participants, it seems to be the B team of the PDM." There has never been such a bloody Section 144 in Pakistan. Never in the past had a case been registered on the complaint of police, Mr Ahmad said.

He tweeted that police should register the case of Ali Bilal's martyrdom on the complaint of his father. He also criticised KP Governor Ghulam Ali and advised him to be a representative of the state, not of Maulana Fazlur Rahman. He said Pakistan was being sandwiched between Asia Pacific and Indo Pacific. Regarding the IMF deal, the former minister wrote that America had asked Pakistan to secure an agreement with the lender by itself. Sheikh Rashid lambasted Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and said he claimed that he would devalue dollar below Rs200, but the greenback had soared to 300.

FM calls for global unity to fight against growing Islamophobia

(Continued from Page 1)

"The declaration of 15th March as an International Day to Combat Islamophobia by the General Assembly is a demonstration of global solidarity with both known and unknown victims of Islamophobia," FM Bilawal said.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) taught Muslims to treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of race, culture, gender or religion, the foreign minister said, but noted that unfounded phobia of Islam and its adherents was a sad reality, and the challenge was much deeper and deeply rooted. Since colonial times, he said, the entrenched notions that depict Muslims and their beliefs as cultural "others" and "threats" had served to perpetuate, validate and normalize Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred.

"This Islamophobic narrative is not

just confined to an extremist marginal propaganda but regrettably, has found acceptance by section of mainstream media, academia, policy-makers and State machinery. "Islamophobia is, therefore, being constantly fueled by structural discrimination, xenophobia, and negative stereotyping of Muslims and their faith," he added.

Today," the foreign minister said, "we must renew our resolve to build inclusive societies where different cultures and beliefs are celebrated and diversity embraced. We can ill afford to ignore dangerous ideologies and acts dividing us as humanity." In his address, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres thanked the OIC and Pakistan for focusing attention - and calling for action - to stamp out the poison of Islamophobia.

"The world's nearly 2 billion Muslims reflect humanity in all its

magnificent diversity. They hail from all corners of the world. They are Arabs, Africans, Europeans, Americans, and Asians," he said. But, he said, "they often face bigotry and prejudice for no other reason than their faith that takes many forms". The UN chief referred to structural and institutional discrimination that manifests itself in socio-economic exclusion, discriminatory immigration policies and unwarranted surveillance and profiling.

"It reveals itself in the wholesale stigmatization of Muslim communities. And it is reinforced by biased media representations, and - shamefully - by the anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies of some political leaders," he said. "Beyond structural Islamophobia, Muslims suffer personal attacks, hateful rhetoric and stereotyping," the secretary-general pointed

out.

"Many such acts of intolerance and suspicion may not be reflected into official statistics - but they degrade people's dignity and our common humanity," he said, adding that linkages between anti-Muslim hatred and gender inequality were unmistakable. "We see some of the worst impacts in the triple discrimination against Muslim women because of their gender, ethnicity, and faith," Guterres said, noting that the growing hate that Muslims face was not an isolated development.

"It is an inexorable part of the resurgence of ethno-nationalism, neo-Nazi white supremacist ideologies, and violence targeting vulnerable populations including Muslims, Jews, some minority Christian communities and others," he said. "Discrimination diminishes us all," he said, underscor-

ing the need to stand up against it. "We must never be bystanders to bigotry. We must strengthen our defences. This means pushing for policies that fully respect human rights and protect religious and cultural identities, particularly of minorities.

"Our UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites provides concrete recommendations to support governments so that all can enjoy their right to observe religious rituals in safety," he said. "We must recognize diversity not as a threat, but as richness. This means ramping up political, cultural, and economic investments in social cohesion. And we must confront bigotry wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head. This includes working to tackle the hate that spreads like wildfire across the internet.

"That is why I have called on governments, regulators, technology

companies and the media to set up guardrails, and enforce them. We have launched the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech - to provide a framework for our support to member states to counter this scourge while respecting freedom of expression and opinion." As part of "Our Common Agenda", the secretary-general said, the UN was working on a Global Digital Compact for an open, free, inclusive, and secure digital future for all, firmly anchored in human rights. "We are pushing for a code of conduct to promote integrity in public information - so people can make choices based on fact, not fiction; education, not ignorance. "I am grateful to religious leaders across the world who are joining hands to promote dialogue and interfaith harmony."