

Elahi's son properties freed

LAHORE, (PPI): A local court on Saturday directed the authorities to freeze Rs10 billion worth of land and 22 bank accounts of Rasikh Elahi, his wife and their frontmen in a money-laundering case. Rasikh Elahi is the son of PTI President Parvez Elahi. The court also ordered freezing of the property and bank accounts of Moonis Elahi's wife and Chaudhry family's frontmen Qaiser Bhatti and Abid Bhatti.

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

[www.thefrontierpost.com](#)

Vol. XXXIX

No. 62

Regd. No. 241

SHABAAN 26 1444 -- SUNDAY, MARCH 19 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

Price. 20

3 terrorists killed in Awaran IBO

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces have killed three terrorists in a gun battle during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted after tracking their hideout in general area South of Awaran, Balochistan.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, from March 15th onwards, an Intelligence Based Operation was initiated to intercept a terrorist group operating in the general area South of Awaran. The terrorists were linked with firing and improvised explosive devices incidents along Turbat Awaran Road and surrounding areas.

The forces based on credible information had laid multiple ambushes along different routes in the area frequented by the terrorists for last three days. Resultantly, a party of three terrorists was intercepted while moving towards their hideout, and on being blocked, opened fire on the security forces. During the ensuing heavy exchange of fire, all three terrorists were killed, while a cache of arms and ammunition was recovered. "Pakistan Army in step with Nation, remains determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan," the ISPR said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of a burning police vain following the clashes between police and PTI supporters, outside the court during appearance of Imran Khan.

Imran's antics lay bare his fascist, militant tendencies: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that if anyone had any doubt, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Niazi's antics of the last past few days laid bare his fascist and militant tendencies.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said "From using people as human shields to throwing petrol bombs at police to leading 'jathas' to intimidate judiciary, he (Imran) has taken a leaf out of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh)

book."

Shehbaz praises umpire Aleem Dar for his meritorious services: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday appreciated umpire Aleem Dar for his meritorious services to international cricket and said Pakistan was proud of him.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said Pakistan thanked umpire Aleem Dar for his meritorious services to international cricket, as he stepped down from the 'ICC Elite Panel of Umpires'. "His flawless umpiring across all formats of the game has

won praise across the cricketing world. Pakistan is proud of him!" he added in a tweet.

The record-holding 54-year-old Dar had officiated in 435 men's tests, ODIs and T20s including four world cup finals to his cap. The International Cricket Council (ICC) on its Twitter account, posted that Dar had a long and celebrated career as an international umpire. He made his international debut in 2000 and quickly rose through the ranks, with his sound decisions in matches earning him acclaim from the players and fans.

Toshakhana case: Imran's arrest warrants cancelled

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal Saturday cancelled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's non-bailable arrest warrants in the Toshakhana case after an hours-long drama at the Federal Judicial Complex.

The judge adjourned the hearing till March 30 and told the parties in the case that arguments will take place during the next hearing and also ordered Khan to ensure his presence. In line with PTI's insistence that Khan's life is in danger and he needs security, Islamabad Chief Commissioner Noorul Amin Mengal shifted the hearing from F-8 Court Complex to the Judicial Complex in G-11 as a "one-time dispensation".

Ahead of Khan's arrival at Islamabad's Judicial Complex, the area was put on high security to ensure law and order and avoid any untoward situation — as was created last month. But a situation like last time arose as PTI workers suddenly began pelting stones at the authorities inside the premises of the Federal Judicial Complex, resulting in teargas being spread to the courtroom where the hearing was to be conducted.

For the second time in a row, the charged PTI workers broke the security barrier of the complex to enter its premises in a show of solidarity with their party chief but caused him to miss the hearing. Police sources also said that the workers were firing teargas at law enforcers. Media reporters on the spot said PTI workers also heavily damaged three police mobiles and used slingshots to hit law enforcers with stones, which forced police to fire teargas at them.

The PTI chief was scheduled to appear before the court at 3:30pm, but he ran into back-to-back hurdles — from vehicles overturning to police and party workers clashing on several spots — in reaching the capital. Once he arrived at the judicial

complex after the stipulated time, the clashes forced him to leave the premises of the complex. Due to the violence that erupted inside the complex, the judge allowed the former prime minister to mark his attendance from his car and exempted him from attending the hearing in the courtroom. While PTI workers clashed with police and caused damage to public property, law enforcers briefly detained the PTI chief's chief of staff, Shibli Faraz. PTI workers also set fire to 10 police motorcycles outside the judicial complex and overturned a police officer's car.

When Judge Iqbal arrived at the courtroom, Khan's lawyer, Gohar Ali, informed him that the PTI chief has arrived at the judicial complex, but was facing hurdles in coming to the courtroom. "No issues, let him come if he wants to. God have mercy, he is unable to reach [here]," the judge said, as he noted he would wait for the PTI chief to appear. The lawyer also told the judge that it wasn't Khan's fault that workers turned out to support him.

Then Judge Iqbal said that the election commission's lawyers should take notice of what was happening inside the premises of the complex. "The hearing would begin once Khan arrives and left for his chambers," he said. When he came back to the courtroom, Babar Awan told the judge that Khan's attendance should be marked in his car as the situation was tense outside.

The judge said if the attendance was marked in that manner, then what would happen during the hearing? As the PTI pressed for it, the judge allowed Khan's attendance to be marked in his car. Due to the turmoil, the court sought suggestions from the parties on whether the hearing should be adjourned. Khan's lawyer Haris said that the PTI chief could not be indicted today. The election commission's lawyer said that the time of the hearing should also be decided.

Lahore thrash Multan in PSL final

LAHORE (Agencies): In a nerve-racking Pakistan Super League final, Lahore Qalandars became the first team to successfully defend their title and take the trophy home Saturday after beating Multan Sultans by one run at Lahore's Qaddafi Stadium.

Young pacer Zaman Khan held his nerves calm to defend 13 runs in the final over to power Lahore Qalandars to the second consecutive PSL title after skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi's all-round brilliance against Multan Sultans.

Set to chase 201, the Sultans fell just one run short of glory as the visitors could accumulate 199/8 in their quota of 20 overs despite Rossouw's half-century.

Sultans' opener Usman Khan and Mohammad Rizwan scripted a flying start to the run chase as the pair charged on the Qalandars' bowlers right from the start and amassed 41 runs inside four overs. David Wiese then rattled Usman's stumps to hand a much-needed breakthrough to the Qalandars. He scored 18 off 12 deliveries.

Sultans' skipper Rizwan then joined hands with Rossouw and stitched a crucial second-wicket partnership and added 64 runs at a brisk rate before Rashid Khan forced Qalandars' comeback.

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CJ PHC chairs 10th Judicial committee meeting — enhance security at varsity campus directed

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid Khan chaired the 10th PJC meeting at the PJC Secretariat in which Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Additional Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, Inspector General Prisons, Joint Secretary Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan etc., were participants.

The implementation status of the decisions taken in the previous meetings were reviewed. The Chair express satisfaction over the decisions completely implemented and made directions to the relevant departments to implement the decisions that were partially implemented. There was a thorough deliberation on each agenda item. The Committee reiterated the need for the establishment of a Forensic Science Lab at Regional Levels and an indigenous and state of the art Forensic Lab at Peshawar to ensure investi-

gation of cases on scientific lines. The Committee was apprised that land is identified at an alternate location in Hayatabad and soon the process of acquisition of land will be completed and work will commence. Inspector General of Police briefed the Committee of the security situation in the Province and informed that adequate security measures have been taken to avert a security breach.

Towards integration of different computer applications developed by different departments, it was informed that by and large Police Database is integrated to High Court. PC-I for the purpose will be submitted for approval to the relevant forum. Shifting of courts to the newly merged districts North Waziristan and South Waziristan also came under discussion. IGP stated that the security situation in both the districts is not conducive at the moment, therefore shifting of courts at this stage will not be feasible. The Chair asked about the continua-

tion of already working court in North Waziristan, to which IG responded that security would be provided to the said court. Regarding shifting of Judicial Magistrate to South Waziristan, the Registrar informed that identification of space for the establishment of court is in the process. After evaluation of the security situation and upon finding proper place of sitting, possibility of shifting of Judicial Magistrate to South Waziristan will be considered.

The directives issued by the NJPMC in the last meeting also came under discussion. The issue of disposal of cases of Under Trial Prisoners was deliberated upon and the Chair directed that Prosecution shall produce the Police witnesses before the courts immediately and no delaying tactics will be tolerated. Vice Chairman KP Bar Council was directed to take on board the Bar Members to prioritize the cases of Under Trial Prisoners. Regular meetings in this respect will be

held by the AIG Investigation and DG Prosecution to review the progress of disposal of cases. The bottlenecks if any shall be brought before the concerned District & Sessions Judge who shall take immediate remedial measures. It was decided that the ratio of disposal of cases of Under Trial Prisoners shall be reviewed in the next meeting and it is expected that significant decrease shall be ensured.

The law & order situation in the University of Peshawar was highlighted by the Chair. IG Police was directed to enhance the police force in the Campus. The University Administration shall be taken on board by the Police to prepare a road map for a safe and secure environment in the University Campus. The Chair also directed that the private security staff deployed in the University Campus is untrained, so the Police shall take measures to train them as weapon in the hands of an untrained person is more lethal.



PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Qaiser Rashid Khan chairing 10th PJC meeting at PJC Secretariat

Governor assures jirga of compensation for destructed shops

PESHAWAR (APP): A 25-member tribal jirga from Mir Ali North Waziristan called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Governor House on Saturday.

The Jirga led by Maulana Naik Zaman and Anwar Hussain complained to the Governor that 2,520 out of 6,964 shops have been compensated while the remaining have not yet been paid.

They requested the Governor to play a role in paying the compensation.

The Governor assured the Jirga of his cooperation in resolving the demands and said that the tribal people have rendered matchless sacrifices in the war against terror and the problems faced by the tribal people will be solved on priority basis.

Governor salutes organizations work for humanity

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday said that Rotary International is a global organization serving humanity with its own resources and the government will provide all available resources, including the provision of land, to establish charitable schools and colleges in the province.

“I see many innocent children in the society who cannot go to school due to poverty and are looking for food from the garbage in the streets”.

He said this while speaking as a special guest at Rotary’s “Imagine Con 23, Conference of Change” at a local hotel here.

The conference was

addressed by Provincial Minister Adnan Jalil, President of Rotary International Joharita Solhari, District Governor Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohila, Rotary International Director Faiz Qadwai also addressed and informed the Governor about the humanitarian service duties of the institution.

Caretaker provincial minister Justice (retd) Irshad Qaiser, members of Rotary Clubs of Pakistan, international officials, business community, officials of women’s chambers and representatives of charities throughout the country attended the conference.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Ghulam Ali said that the society requires us to take joint

measures for social service and development.

The Governor said, I salute world institutions’ services in flood and eradication of polio as their struggle is not hidden from anyone.

We should help the poor to build their houses before any natural calamity, said the Governor.

In this regard, I like the proposal of Rotary International to build houses under the establishment of smart villages, Governor Ghulam Ali added.

The Governor said that we should be proud of the institutions that work day and night for humanity and provide services to people during untoward incidents especially in natural calamity.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan addressing a function of Rotary International.

Industrialists refute allegations against CEO KPEZDMC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) strongly rebutted the allegations and propaganda that were leveled against head of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Manag-

ement Company (KPEZDMC), calling them ‘untruthful’, and frivolous, and based on ‘falsehoods’.

The association said services of CEO KPEZDMC Javed Khattak for industrialization and facilitating business community is highly praiseworthy and visible before everyone.

Javed Khattak was always available for the business community and always played a pivotal role in resolution of their problems, it added.

These remarks made by the IAP president Malik Imran Ishaq while chairing a meeting of industrialists here at the association office, said in a press release on Saturday.

Imran Ishaq came down hard on the provincial caretaker government and minister for industries, according to him, they have created problems for CEO Javed Khattak by using an ‘illegitimate’ and ‘unfair’ means.

He said the superior court has set aside the allegations leveled against CEO KPEZDMC and proved them frivolous and baseless in its verdict.

The IAP president congratulated the CEO KPEZDMC over a court verdict in his favour, which was completely rightful and based on merit.

Malik Imran heaped praise on CEO Javed Khattak, saying the KPEZDMC head has played an important role in setting up new special economic zones and promotion of industrialisation, trade and economic activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He alleged the incumbent interim minister for industries, commerce and technical education for misusing authorities and made attempts to create hurdles in the process of industrialisation in the province, but he (interim minister) miserably failed in his intentions and plan.

The IAP chief said the interim minister has kept themselves away from the Industrialists Association Peshawar, Chambers and business community of the province and is only proactive in dissolving boards for fulfilling his own objectives, desires and wishes, which is highly regrettable and condemnable.

Malik Imran fully

assured the support and cooperation on behalf of the association, industrialists and business community to CEO KPEZDMC. He felicitated Mr Javed Khattak after court verdict in favour and on merit.

The association president said the move of the provincial caretaker government, interim minister, against CEO KPEZDMC was completely unfair. He said the industrialists strongly condemn the attitude of the caretaker government and minister.

He continued to say that extension was given to Mr Khattak as CEO KPEZDMC by following merit and rules. He said Mr Khattak has built up a strong coordination with industrialists, business community, senior officials and other bureaucrats.

Group Leader Ghazanfar Bilour on the occasion strongly denounced the incumbent provincial caretaker government for leveling baseless allegations against CEO KPEZDMC and extended his full support and cooperation to Mr Javed Khattak on behalf of the IAP, Chambers and the entire business community.

Urmur Police find corpse of man

PESHAWAR (APP): Urmur police found a corpse of an unidentified man in Mera locality on Saturday.

Station House Officer (SHO) of Urmur Police Station, Tehseenullah had received information about a corpse, who along with a police party reached the spot and took the body into possession and then shifted it to the mortuary.

Police have found no identification-related documents near the corpse.

According to the initial investigation, the cause of the death of the deceased was an electric shock. He was cutting a power supply wire which caused his death.

A police team collected samples of the evidence from the spot and investigation was launched to search out actual facts about his death.

Mian Rashid to formally join PPP

PESHAWAR (APP): Potential political activist and electoral candidate, Mian Rashid Ali Shah Kakakhel is going to announce joining Pakistan People’s Party today (Sunday) during a grand joining ceremony.

In this connection, a public meeting has been scheduled in Nowshera wherein Mian Rashid Ali Shah Kakakhel will formally join the party. All arrangements for holding the public meeting have been completed. The ground has been decorated with the flags of the party.

Senior party leadership including Secretary General, Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, Qamar Zaman Kaira and Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha are likely to attend and address the joining ceremony.

SSP makes surprise visit to different PS

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Haroon-ul-Rashid Khan Saturday made a surprise visit to Inner City and Police Station Agha Mir Jani Shah to review the current security situation besides checking all records, official weapons and cleanliness.

During his visit to the police station, the SSP Operations also reviewed the records, complements of registers, personal statement, official weapons and cleanliness and expressed his anger over the lack of arrangements and poor sanitation situation.

He directed to submit an immediate report on the improvement regarding this.

He met the prisons confined in the Police Station Cell to get an awareness of the Police behavior and also inspected the CCTV cameras.

He also inspected the security arrangements and the residential barracks of the police personnel.

During a briefing, the SHO and other duty staff briefed him regarding the problems being faced by them in the Police Station. He directed the staff to show good manners with the questioners coming to the Police Station and to be alert and vigilant in view of the current situation.

The problems of senior citizens and women should be solved on priority basis, SSP Operations Haroon ul Rashid Khan directed the officials.

He said the problem of poor sanitation systems should be made appropriate to improve the living standard of the policemen camped in the barracks.

12 youth apprehended for doing one-wheeling
City Traffic Police (CTP) Peshawar on Saturday apprehended

twelve persons for doing one-wheeling and impounded their motorcycles at parking terminal on Saturday.

On the directives of the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Peshawar, Qamar Hayat Khan, DSP Charsadda Road along with traffic police personnel carried out a crackdown against the youth doing one-wheeling on their motorcycles at Northern Bypass and took 12 persons into custody while their bikes were impounded.

Later, the City Traffic Police solemnized guarantees from the parents of the arrested youth.

CTO Qamar Hayat Khan directed further acceleration of the operation against all those doing one-wheeling and impounding of their motorcycles.

He has directed no leniency with anyone in this regard.

Partly cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Saturday predicted partly cloudy weather for most districts of the province with chances of isolated rain-thunderstorm and gusty winds over Swat, Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Shangla.

Rain and thunderstorm is also expected in Buner, Malakand, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mohmand, Bajaur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, Khyber, Orakzai, Hangu, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, North & South Waziristan, Tank and D I Khan districts.

Mostly cloudy weather is expected over most parts of Gilgit Baltistan region and light rain at mountainous places of the region.

PPP leader joins JUIF

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former District Nazim and central leader Pakistan People’s Party Daud Khan Khattak along with his friends and family members joined Jammat-e-Ulema Islam Fazl (JUIF) because the party is ideological protector of nation, on Saturday.

This he announced while addressing press conference at Nowshera press club while JUIF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman, former Minister Asif Iqbal Daudzai, Maulana Atta-ul-Haq Darvish and Jalil Jan along with others were present on the occasion.

Former Nazim claimed

that his ancestor had granted various sacrifices in Pakistan Movement while he by himself committed for protection of Islamic ideology and JUIF is savior in this regard.

He added that his family and friends had joined JUIF because it is opposing western agenda and Jewish supremacy on every forum.



PESHAWAR: Visitor viewing students projects during Science & Art Exhibition at City University organized by Peshawar Model Degree Colleges.



In brief

Meeting on rain held

SANGHAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ishaq Gaad presided over a meeting of disaster management authority to prepare a comprehensive strategy to face rainfall situation under which digging of all canals, and cleanliness of nullahs in urban areas will be carried out. DC directed relevant departments to ensure the availability of desilting machines and complete necessary arrangements to avoid any inconvenience during rainfall and submit a detailed report to the DC office. He said that in order to monitor rain emergency situations and face untoward incidents, rain emergency cells will be set up in Deputy Commissioner and all Assistant Commissioner's offices where people can approach their problems. DC instructed the Health Department to declare an emergency in all hospitals of the district by ensuring the attendance of Doctors, Paramedical staff and the availability of ambulances and medicines. He directed the livestock department to start vaccination of animals in the district and set up medical camps in various areas while data on animal losses were submitted to the DC office. He directed the irrigation department to ensure the cleanliness of water courses immediately and strengthen embankments of canals so that the threat of expected flood could be mitigated while details of sensitive spots to be submitted to the DC office. DC acquired details from the education department about school buildings and relief camps and instructed them to furnish new data in this regard.

Five dacoits arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested five dacoits and recovered weapons and other items from their possession. A police spokesman said Dijkot police conducted a raid in Chak No 260-RB and arrested Nabeel, Ali Akbar, Umair Ali and Shehbaz Ali who were wanted to police in a number of dacoity, robbery and other cases. Meanwhile, Ghulam Muhammad Abad police also arrested Amir Haroon and started investigation.

Free medical camps

SARGODHA (APP): The health department will organize 11 free medical camps to provide free facilities to patients and free tests of various diseases, including TB and hepatitis, Chief Executive Officer Health Mushtaq Bashir on Saturday, while talking to APP, said that free camps would be organized from March 20 to 22. The camps would be set up at tehsil headquarters hospitals, including Kot Momin, Bhalwal, Sillanwali, Sahiwal, Sargodha and Shahpur, while five camps would be set up at rural health centres, he added. Mushtaq Bashir said the health department was utilizing all possible steps to provide free medical facilities to the masses, adding that qualified doctors would check patients in the freescreeing camps.

50,000 saplings to be planted

FAISALABAD (APP): The district administration has finalized arrangements to plant 50,000 saplings in Jarawal on Tuesday (March 21). A spokesman for the district administration said on Saturday that during a meeting Deputy Commissioner Ali Annan Qamar had directed departments to take part in the tree plantation drive so that the target could be achieved easily.

Punjab Assembly elections Over 1800 polling stations planned in Multan

MULTAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner Omar Jahangir chaired a joint meeting of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Multan officials, police and local administration to discuss arrangements for April 30 Punjab Assembly elections to be held across the province including Multan.

ECP Multan officials, police and district administration have started making arrangements for people to use their right to vote in a peaceful manner on April 30 polling day. Omar Jahangir said that over 1800 polling stations would be set up in the district adding that code of conduct would remain enforced throughout the whole process from election campaigning to polling.

City Police Officer (CPO) Mansoor ul Haq Rana, Returning Officers, District officers, and ECP Multan officials were in attendance. Security arrangements would be made at all polling stations with special emphasis on those identified as sensitive polling stations.

DC asked Returning Officers to visit polling stations for assessment of requirements for foolproof arrangements. Officials also discussed the transportation plan to transport election material. CPO said that violation of the code of conduct would invite action as per law and added that police and law enforcers

would perform their duty to ensure peaceful elections. He added that a comprehensive plan has been prepared for the security of voters, polling staff and material. Returning Officers gave a detailed briefing on preparations for elections.

ACS for early repairing, renovation of Damdama: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) South Punjab Capt. (R), Saqib Zafar, directed officials concerned to complete the repairing and renovation work at Damdama as early as possible. He expressed these views during his visit to Damdama here on Saturday and took strict notice of the lack of proper maintenance.

Speaking on the occasion, ACS South said that Qasim Bagh Fort was a historical and tourist place and every day hundreds of tourists visit the shrines and Damdama located on the fort. He directed to do repair and renovation of Damdama in the best manner and cleaned the portraits and other articles displayed in the art gallery on daily basis.

Metropolitan Corporation officials have started painting work at an art gallery and other parts of Damdama after receiving orders from the Secretary Local government of South Punjab. The administrative secretaries were accompanied by the ACS South Punjab during

the visit to Damdama.

Excise officials asked to work more efficiently for maximum taxes recovery: Director Excise and Taxation Multan division, Jam Siraj, directed the officials and staff to work more diligently for maximum taxes recovery. He said that hard work never goes in vain, adding that the letter of appreciation issued by the Director General Excise Punjab office was the result of better team work.

Director Excise expressed these views while addressing a ceremony of issuance of appreciation letter to Excise department over completing 70 percent tax recovery here Saturday. Mr Siraj further said that recovery campaign has been intensified by the Excise department and issuance of appreciation letter was actually a proof of the hard work of the officers and employees of Multan division.

He said that all the tax targets given by the government would be achieved before June 30. On this occasion, Jam Siraj also expressed his gratitude to the business community, citizens, transporters and other taxpayers and said that all this was the reward of your timely tax payment and he congratulated all the officers and officials and staff. He hoped that they will continue to work with the same hard work and dedication in the future also.

Balochistan govt appoints 849 doctors

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Department appointed 849 doctors to serve in remote areas of the province after the approval of the Cabinet, Spokesperson of Balochistan Health Department Dr. Wasim said.

"The doctors have been appointed in all the districts of Balochistan," The spokesman said that those appointed include 131 consultants, 60 specialists, 270 medical officers, 313 lady medical officers, and 75 dental surgeons. The consultants comprise surgeons, physicians, radiologists, Peds surgeons, peds physicians, gastroenterologists, ENT surgeons, and gynaecologists.

He noted that consultants have been deployed in more than 15 teaching hospitals in Balochistan while Medical

Officers, Lady Medical Officers and Dental Surgeons have been posted in all District Headquarters Hospitals, Tehsil Headquarters, Civil Hospitals of Balochistan. With this initiative of the Balochistan government, there will be no shortage of doctors in the province for the next two years.

All district health committees shall be bound to send monthly reports of doctors to the Health Department. The spokesman stressed that action will be taken according to law against the doctors against whom complaints are received. A special unit is being established in the health department which will monitor all the doctors in the province, he maintained.

Primary school sets up at Humai village

QUETTA (APP): To provide free education to the children of local community and adjoining area, Barrick Gold Corporation set up a primary school at Humai village near Reko Diq on Saturday. The school was set up under the company's social investment program, said a press release received here.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Reko Diq Pakistan Country Manager, Ali E. Rind said that Barrick being a genuine partner to the host communities, was bringing real change and building stronger and more sustainable communities. He hoped that the primary school at Humai would open doors to quality education and opportunities for local children.

"Our focus on education will continue and the Humai Primary School is planned to be upgraded in phases. Additionally, the access to education in three nearby villages and Nokkundi are planned to start this year," he said. Rind said these initiatives are in keeping with Barrick's policy of educating local communities and preparing them for future employment in the mining industry. "We will continue to expand our educational initiatives in the rest of the Chagai district", he added.

On the occasion, the local community leaders and district administration expressed their appreciation to Barrick for being

responsive to community needs as the children of Humai village previously had no access to schools and formal education. A local community leader said, "We want to thank Barrick for making the school functional by refurbishing it, appointing a trained teacher and providing free books and uniforms to our children."

We now have hope for a better future for our children," Barrick's social investment portfolio is guided by the Community Development Committees (CDC), which have local stakeholders and community leaders as key members. In line with this policy, the CDC for nearby villages of Humai Mashki Chah, Nok Chah and Durban Chah has been formed. Named after a local mountain, "Par-e-Koh", the CDC will determine the two-year development plan with priority projects focused on food security, local economic development and access to education, healthcare, and potable water, at its next meeting.

The new Reko Diq agreement ensures that benefits from the project start accruing to the people of Balochistan well before the mine goes into production through advance royalties and social development funds. Reko Diq will be a multi-generational mine with a life of at least 40 years. During peak stage construction the project is expected to employ 7,500

people and once in production it will create 4,000 long-term jobs.

Barrick's policy of prioritizing local employment and suppliers will have a positive impact on the local economy. The company plans to complete the Reko Diq feasibility study update by 2024 and target of 2028 has been set for first production from the giant copper-gold mine in the country's Balochistan province.

Plants sapling drive F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Dr Azmatullah Wazir on Saturday planted a sapling at Sani Khel area of Dara Adamkhel to start plantation drive in the district. Director Agriculture, Representatives of 115 wing and elders of the area were present on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Azmatullah said that plantation is the need of the hour to reduce global warming. He said that global warming is dangerous so people should take part in this drive and plant maximum sapling to save the area from warming in future. He said that plantation can play vital role not only against global warming and weather change but to clean the atmosphere and save people from different diseases.



PABBI: KP Caretaker Minister for Information Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kaka Khel in a group photo with patients during his visit to health centre.

Sixth natives youth camp event started F.P. Report

BARA GALI: The sixth Natives Youth Camp event started on Saturday under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and 'The Natives' in the Bara Gali campus of Peshawar University.

The five-day camp is jointly arranged by KPCTA, the Department of Youth Affairs KP and the Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO). The inauguration ceremony was attended by Managing Directors The Natives, Farhad Khan, Asif Khan and large number of students, said a press release issued by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC). About 50 students from KP, Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Azad Kashmir are participating in the camp. Various sessions including discussions, dialogues on cleanliness, climate change and eco-tourism. These sessions are awareness meant for among the participants.

Speaking on the occasion, participants shared that the event would help highlight the importance of eco-tourism, aware people of the hazards of climate change and promote scenic tourist attractions of the province. They said that the event is being held for the last six years and the training sessions being conducted in the camp has oriented students about the significance of a clean environment and also provided them guidelines to implement these in their daily lives.

During the camp, the students also carried out an awareness walk on cleanliness and also participated in a cleanliness campaign in Barra Gali, Donga Gali and Ayubia Pipeline Track. Such activities are meant to promote the culture and tourism of the province through students who jointly collaborate with CTA for a better, clear and green KP.

Supply of free flour started

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan said supply of free flour to the deserving people has been started here on Saturday. The individuals registered with the Benazir Income Support Programme will be entitled to get free flour.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of flour mills owners. Adnan Mehmood said a total of 520,000 families in the district would be able to benefit from this facility, adding that 26 points had been established for flour supply and 10 counters will be set up at each point from where registered people will be able to get flour.

The deputy commissioner said a total of 13 points had been established in tehsil Sialkot which were setup at Kuman-wala union council, Union Council Office Chaprari, RHC Kahlian, Community Center Kotli Loharan, Union Council Office Barathwala, Shahwali Market Syedanwali Chowk, Union Council Office Bhagowal, Union Council Office Adalat Garha, Hockey Stadium Pasrur Road, Anwar Club Kutchery Road, Venus Marriage Hall Sublime Chowk, Ilyas Marquee Airport Road and Union Council Office Ugoki.

Public awareness vital for TB eradication

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The management of district headquarters hospital Timergara arranged a daylong seminar for its staff in connection with the World Tuberculosis (TB) Day that is celebrated each year on March, 24. The staff of district TB control programme, doctors, paramedics and nurses also held an awareness walk at Timergara the participants of which marched on the road from the hospital to the main city. The regional director of Association for Community Development (ACD) Dr Ashfaq Ahmad, district field supervisor Nawaz Khan, Syed Shehzad Bacha, Mansoor Ahmad and others participated in the walk.

Speaking at the seminar the district TB coordinator Dr Noor Hameed Khan said that the basic objective of the World TB Day was to eradicate the disease and make the public aware of this global epidemic, its precautions and cure. Sharing a data with the participants, he said that 10 million people fell ill with TB in 2018 out of which 1.5 million died from the disease mostly in underdeveloped countries.

He said the TB was a curable disease. Dr Noor said that about 573,000 people in Pakistan suffered from this disease each year out of which 370,000 were properly diagnosed while rest of the patients were not

diagnosed due to certain reasons. He said that about 35000 TB patients only in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were registered with government or private hospitals each year. He said that about 44000 TB patients died of this disease due to lack of proper treatment at hospitals.

He said that weakness, loss of weight, fever, continuous cough for two more than weeks, night sweat, chest pain and fatigue were some of the common TB symptoms. The speaker said that TB was a chronic infectious disease that affected the lungs. He said that anyone with these symptoms could visit the hospital for the TB blood test or sputum test free of cost for detection of the disease. He said the disease could be overcome with a six month regular treatment.

Road accident: A Suzuki pickup van went out of the driver's control and plunged into a deep ravine at Malai area of Khall in the jurisdiction of Khall police station. As a result 12 persons including women and children were injured. The injured including Imran, Hakam Farosh, Habibullah, Tilawat Khan, Hazratullah, wife of Hazratullah, wife of Badshah, Sadarat Bibi, Rahil, Marva Bibi and others were shifted to the district headquarters hospital Timergara. The Khall police registered a case and started further investigation.

PML-N workers' confidence: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz provincial vice president Malik Behram Shehzada expressed complete confidence in the leadership of Ameer Muqam, the party provincial chief and said the workers stood by him. Talking to local journalists at Timergara here the other day, he said the PML-N provincial chief Engineer Ameer Muqam had made the party functional and popular in parts of the province. He said that some big wigs in the party were busy in conspiracy and wanted to replace him.

The PML-N leader said the former Governor Iqbal Zafar Jhagra had closed the doors of his office for party workers during his tenure as Governor in the province. He said the opponents of Ameer Muqam within the party had limited the PML-N only to Peshawar and Hazara while the present provincial chief had made it popular throughout the province. He said the PML-N senior leaders in the province were not happy with Ameer Muqam as they had not been given portfolios in the caretaker cabinets. He said that Ameer Muqam stood like a rock when the party was passing through a difficult time and he rendered great sacrifices for it. He said the Lower Dir party workers would fully support their provincial chief and would not let anyone to replace him.

Meeting to implement Ehtram-e-Ramazan Ord held

NAWABSHAH (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shaheed Benazirabad Muhammad Salim Jatoti presided over a meeting in Durbar Hall to implement the Ramazan Ordinance and ensure the supply of food items to the masses at the rates fixed by the government.

According to a handout issued by the district information office, ADC said that the Ramazan Ordinance will be strictly enforced during the month of Ramazan and strict legal action will be taken against the violators, otherwise legal action will be taken against traders who were hoarding and profiteering.

He also instructed the municipal and town officers to ensure cleanliness in the cities besides ensuring electricity supply in the mosques.

ADC instructed the officers of Sui Gas Company to ensure the supply of gas for the preparation of Sehah and Iftar. He directed Assistant Commissioners of all talukas to implement the recommendations of the price Control Committee during Ramazan on the prices of daily use items, hoarders, profiteers and violators of Ramazan Ordinance.

Action should be taken against, apart from these steps should be taken to provide drinking water and drainage to the citizens. Addressing the meeting, DSP Police Habib-ur-Rehman Lashari said that a plan had been prepared by the police department to control the law and order situation during Ramazan and to ensure traffic flow and provide security to the people.

They will also not be

allowed to violate the law, he added that policemen will be appointed outside mosques while snap checking will be carried out by police along with Sindh Rangers DSP Police. He appealed to the public to cooperate with the district administration and police to maintain peace and order during the month of Ramazan. In the meeting, Additional Director Local Government Abdul Sattar Rathore, Additional Director Agriculture Muhammad Ramzan Chana, Deputy Director Information Ghulam Abbas Gorah, Price Control Committee members, Assistant commissioners of all tehsils, representatives of vegetable, fruit, poultry and other trade unions, police, HESCO, town and municipal and other departments participated.

Criminals' stepped-up criminal activities in Sindh

SUKKUR (INP): Gangs of outlaws and dacoits have apparently stepped-up criminal activities in upper Sindh areas in the wake of an operation launched against them by police in Shikarpur, Sukkur, Ghotki and Kandhkot-Kashmore districts.

According to police officials, the dacoits have kidnapped seven people in different areas and robbed several passengers on highways over the past two days. The officials said that a gang of outlaws

blocked a section of Karachi-Peshawar Indus Highway near Napar Kot in Shikarpur district and robbed passengers of cash and valuables such as mobile phones, wrist watches and gold jewelry. They also took away a passenger Abdul Karim from their hideouts in riverine area, said the officials, adding police had cordoned off the area and mounted a search for the hostage. Later, relatives of the hostage blocked the highway in protest against

police's failure to protect the passengers and demanded immediate recovery of their loved one. In another incident, another group of dacoits kidnapped two car occupants in Kandhra area near Rohri.

Police said that they chased the kidnappers and found the hostages' car abandoned on a roadside. They received information later that the kidnappers had released one of the hostages, who had reached his home, said police.



Indian students face exit from Canada over fake papers

NEW DELHI (BBC): More than 150 Indian students have been told to leave the country by the Canadian Border Security Agency (CBSA), which says they arrived in the country on forged college admission letters. The students say they were unaware of the forgeries and insist they were duped by their immigration consultation agency in India that provided them the document.

Many who received the eviction letters are now embarrassed to come forward - living in a Western country is seen as a matter of prestige by many Indian families, especially in the state of Punjab where Dimple K is from. "My mind is dark. I cannot move forward, nor go back," said Dimple. She has been living in Canada on a student visa since 2017. In a similar case four years ago, 129 Indian students in the US were arrested for enrolling in a fake university.

Dimple, who is from a middle-class family in Jalandhar district, has a postgraduate science degree and tried unsuccessfully to get a job in India. The hope of a better life with her husband prompted her to apply for a student visa in Canada. She heard about an immigration agency - which police say has been shut for the past seven months - and used it to get a Canadian visa.

"The agency told me that one of

the colleges had accepted my documents, and gave me the admission letter which they said was from the college," she said. Dimple paid the agency 1.2m rupees (\$14,525; £11,970). The amount was to cover her college fee. The agency also gave her a certificate to prove that she had funds to take care of living expenses in Canada.

But Dimple said that within two days of her arrival in Canada she was informed by the agency that there had been a strike at her college. They advised her to apply to another college, which she did. In 2019 Dimple completed her diploma in computer networking and received her work permit. But in May last year, a year after she had applied for permanent residency, she was informed by Canadian authorities that her application contained a forged document.

In January, she was served an exclusion order and told to leave Canada and not return for at least five years. She has challenged the order in a federal court in Canada and her attorney Jaswant Singh Mangat is representing over three dozen students who are in a similar situation. In most of these cases, he says, fake admission letters were provided for exorbitant fees and used to obtain visas. The immigration department discovered the forgeries when the students later applied for

permanent residency. The CBSA told the BBC that it doesn't comment on individual cases. But it added that last year they uncovered a scheme whereby "unsubsidised private college programmes were leading foreign students to a post-graduation work permit (for \$25,000) with the sole purpose of acquiring permanent residency".

"This investigation led, on 7 June 2022, to the decision by the federal and provincial governments to tighten the criteria for granting post-graduation work permits. The investigation targeted 11 colleges that were implicated in the fraud," it said. The scam's collapse has shattered many dreams and left many of those affected wondering what they can do.

"We cannot take any legal action because we don't have any proof against the [Indian] agency which prepared our documents," said Chamandeep Singh, a student also from Punjab. Inderjit Singh meanwhile insisted he would not return to India because he said the forged documents were not his fault. Experts called on Indian authorities to crack down on immigration agencies which deceive students. They also urged applicants to be aware of such scams and look for registered immigration agents. "This is your money, your life, your future," lawyer Mr Mangat warned applicants.

US envoy 'optimistic' about summit

PRISTINA (AP): A United States envoy urged Serbia and Kosovo to implement a European Union-facilitated agreement on normalizing their relations, calling it the best option to preserve peace and security in the region.

Envoy Gabriel Escobar was in Pristina ahead of Saturday's summit meeting between Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti in Ohrid, North Macedonia. "We think that this European proposal, facilitated through the EU dialog, offers a tremendous opportunity to create a peaceful, sustainable and productive relationship between two countries, two important countries of the region," Escobar said after talks with Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani.

Last month in Brussels, Vucic and Kurti gave their tacit approval to the EU plan to end months of political crisis and help improve ties. The summit will tackle the most contentious issue on which the two sides fundamentally disagree - the recognition of Kosovo's statehood. Vucic said he won't "sign anything" during the summit. The EU plan calls for the two countries to maintain good neighborly relations, recognize each other's official documents and national symbols, and would see Belgrade allow Pristina to seek membership in the EU and UN. Kurti has hailed the agreement as a firm step toward a final deal on mutual recognition likely later this year.

UN: Wide resistance to Myanmar mily's repression

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Widespread popular resistance to brutal repression by Myanmar's military shows no sign of abating across much of the country, and with both sides intent on winning by force "there is no prospect for a negotiated settlement," the UN special envoy to the conflict-wracked nation said.

In a grim assessment, Noeleen Heyzer told the 193-member UN General Assembly that the impact of the military's February 2021 takeover of the country has been "devastating," with violence continuing "at an alarming scale." She pointed to the military's intensified use of force since its extension of the state of emergency on Feb. 1, including bombings, burning of civilian infrastructure "and other grave human rights violations to maintain its grip on power." She said the regime's "four cuts" strategy - blocking access to food, funds, information and recruits - also continues to target civilians as collective punishment.

Myanmar for five decades had languished under strict military rule, but the generals then loosened their grip and in 2015 Aung San Suu Kyi rose to lead an elected civilian government. Following the military's ouster of the government two years ago, the junta moved to violently suppress public opposition to the takeover. Some experts now consider the situation in Myanmar to be a civil war in which the army has conducted major offensives against widespread armed resistance.

Heyzer said the genera-

tion that benefited from the country's opening up after 2015, especially young people, "is now disillusioned, facing chronic hardship and many feeling they have no choice but to take up arms to fight military rule." She said heavy fighting has spread to new areas, putting more lives at risk and complicating operations to deliver humanitarian assistance. She said 17.6 million people now require assistance.

Heyzer said she and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have made clear that with people unable to "freely exercise their political rights without fear or intimidation," elections called by the military for later this year only risk exacerbating the violence. "There is no public trust in the regime, whose interest is seen as consolidating its control by making a transition from emergency rule to a longer-term military-backed government," she said.

Heyzer said it's critical that Myanmar's future is decided by its people through a Myanmar-led process reflecting all voices, and she stressed that "sustainable solutions for the Rohingya people must be built into the design of a peaceful, inclusive and democratic Myanmar." More than 1 million Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar over several decades, including about 740,000 who crossed the border starting in August 2017 when the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown. International courts are considering whether that crackdown was

20 years after US invasion, young Iraqis see signs of hope

BAGHDAD (AP): On the banks of the Tigris River one recent evening, young Iraqi men and women in jeans and sneakers danced with joyous abandon to a local rap star as a vermillion sun set behind them. It's a world away from the terror that followed the US invasion 20 years ago.

Iraq's capital today is throbbing with life and a sense of renewal, its residents enjoying a rare, peaceful interlude in a painful modern history. The wooden stalls of the city's open-air book market are piled skyward with dusty paperbacks and crammed with shoppers of all ages and incomes. In a suburb once a hotbed of al-Qaida, affluent young men cruise their muscle cars, while a recreational cycling club hosts weekly biking trips to former war zones. A few glitzy buildings sparkle where bombs once fell. President George W. Bush called the US-led invasion on March 20, 2003, a mission to free the Iraqi people and root out weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein's government was toppled in 26 days. Two years later, the CIA's chief weapons inspector reported no stockpiles of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons were ever found.

The war deposed a dictator whose imprisonment, torture and execution of dissenters kept 20 million people in fear for a quarter of a century. But it also broke what had been a unified state at the heart of the Arab world, opening a power vacuum and leaving oil-rich Iraq a wounded nation in the Middle East, ripe for a power struggle among Iran, Arab Gulf states, the United States, terrorist groups and Iraq's own rival sects and parties. For Iraqis, the enduring trauma of the violence that followed is undeniable —

an estimated 300,000 Iraqis were killed between 2003 and 2019, according to the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, as were more than 8,000 US military, contractors and civilians. The period was marred by unemployment, dislocation, sectarian violence and terrorism, and years without reliable electricity or other public services.

Today, half of Iraq's population of 40 million isn't old enough to remember life under Saddam or much about the US invasion. In dozens of recent interviews from Baghdad to Fallujah, young Iraqis deplored the loss of stability that followed Saddam's downfall — but they said the war is in the past, and many were hopeful about nascent freedoms and opportunities to pursue their dreams. In a marbled, chandeliered reception room in the palace where Saddam once lived, seated in an overstuffed damask chair and surrounded by paintings by modern Iraqi artists, President Abdul Latif Rashid, who assumed office in October, spoke glowingly of the country's prospects. The world's perception of Iraq as a war-torn country is frozen in time, he told The Associated Press in an interview.

Iraq is rich; peace has returned, he said, and there are opportunities ahead for young people in a country experiencing a population boom. "If they're a little bit patient, I think life will improve drastically in Iraq." Most Iraqis aren't nearly as bullish. Conversations begin with bitterness that the ouster of Saddam left the country broken and ripe for violence and exploitation by sectarian militias, politicians and criminals bent on self-enrichment or beholden to other

nations. Yet, speaking to younger Iraqis, one senses a generation ready to turn a page.

Safaa Rashid, 26, is a ponytailed writer who talks politics with friends at a cozy coffee shop in the Karada district of the capital. With a well-stocked library nook, photos of Iraqi writers and travel posters, the café and its clientele could as easily be found in Brooklyn or London. Rashid was a child when the Americans arrived, but rues "the loss of a state, a country that had law and establishment" that followed the invasion. The Iraqi state lay broken and vulnerable to international and domestic power struggles, he said. Today is different; he and like-minded peers can sit in a coffee shop and freely talk about solutions. "I think the young people will try to fix this situation."

Another day, a different café. Noor Alhuda Saad, 26, a Ph.D. candidate at Mustansiriyah University who describes herself as a political activist, says her generation has been leading protests decrying corruption, demanding services and seeking more inclusive elections — and won't stop till they've built a better Iraq. "After 2003, the people who came to power" — old-guard Sunni and Shiite parties and their affiliated militias and gangs — "did not understand about sharing democracy," she said, tapping her pale green fingernails on the tabletop.

"Young people like me are born into this environment and trying to change the situation," she added, blaming the government for failing to restore public services and establish a fully democratic state in the aftermath of occupation. "The people in power do not see these as important

issues for them to solve. And that is why we are active." Signs of the invasion and insurgency have been largely erased from Baghdad. The former Palestine Hotel, Ferdous Square, the Green Zone, the airport road pockmarked by IED and machine-gun attacks have been landscaped or covered in fresh stucco and paint.

The invasion exists only in memory: bright orange flashes and concussions of American "shock-and-awe" bombs raining down in a thunderous cacophony; tanks rolling along the embankment; Iraqi forces battling across the Tigris or wading into water to avoid US troops; civilian casualties and the desperate, failed effort to save a fellow journalist gravely wounded by a US tank strike in the final days of the battle for Baghdad. Pillars of smoke rose over the city as Iraqi civilians began looting ministries and US Marines pulled down the famous Saddam statue. What appeared to be a swift victory for the US-led forces was illusory: The greatest loss of life came in the months and years that followed. The occupation stoked a stubborn guerrilla resistance, bitter fights for control of the countryside and cities, a protracted civil war, and the rise of the Islamic State group that spread terror beyond Iraq and Syria, throughout the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe.

The long, staggeringly costly experience in Iraq exposed the limitations of America's ability to export democracy and chastened Washington's approach to foreign engagements, at least temporarily. In Iraq, its democracy is yet to be defined. Blast walls have given way to billboards, restaurants, cafes and shopping centers — even over-the-

top real estate developments. With 7 million inhabitants, Baghdad is the Middle East's second-largest city after Cairo, and its streets teem with cars and commerce at all hours, testing the skill of traffic guards in shiny reflective caps.

Daily life here looks not so different from any other Arab metropolis. But in the distant deserts of northern and western Iraq, there are occasional clashes with remnants of the Islamic State group. The low-boil conflict involves Kurdish peshmerga fighters, Iraqi army troops and some 2,500 US military advisers still in country. It is but one of the country's lingering problems. Another is endemic corruption; a 2022 government audit found a network of former officials and businessmen stole \$2.5 billion.

Meanwhile, digital natives are testing the boundaries of identity and free speech, especially on TikTok and Instagram. They sometimes look over their shoulders, aware that shadowy militias connected to political parties may be listening, ready to squelch too much liberalism. More than a dozen social media influencers were arrested recently in a crackdown on "immoral" content, and this month authorities said they would enforce a long-dormant law banning alcohol imports. In 2019-20, fed-up Iraqis, especially young people, protested across the country against corruption and lack of basic services. After more than 600 were killed by government forces and militias, parliament agreed to a series of election law changes designed to allow more minorities and independent groups to share power.

The sun bakes down on Fallujah, the main city in the Anbar region that

was once a hotbed for al-Qaida of Iraq and, later, the Islamic State group. Beneath the iron girders of the city's bridge across the Euphrates, three 18-year-olds are returning home from school for lunch. In 2004, this bridge was the site of a gruesome tableau. Four Americans from military contractor Blackwater were ambushed, their bodies dragged through the streets, hacked, burned and hung as trophies by local insurgents, while some residents chanted in celebration. For the 18-year-olds, it's a story they've heard from their families — distant and irrelevant to their lives.

One wants to be a pilot, two aspire to be doctors. Their focus is on getting good grades, they say. Fallujah today is experiencing a construction renaissance under former Anbar Gov. Mohammed al-Halbousi, now speaker of Iraq's parliament. He has helped direct millions of dollars in government funding to rebuild the city, which experienced repeated waves of fighting, including two US military campaigns to rid the city of al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Fallujah gleams with new apartments, hospitals, amusement parks, a promenade and a renewed gate to the city. Its markets and streets are bustling. But officials were wary of letting Western reporters wander the city without an escort. The AP team's first attempt to enter was foiled at a checkpoint. The prime minister's office intervened the next day, and the visit was allowed, but only with police following reporters at a distance, ostensibly for protection. The disagreement over security and press access is a sign of the uncertainty that overhangs life here.

JOHANNESBURG (AP): Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan, on a state visit to South Africa, has urged more security cooperation and trade between the two countries. Hassan, Tanzania's first female leader, met South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the capital Pretoria where her delegation of Cabinet ministers discussed trade opportunities and possible agreements with their South African counterparts.

This is Hassan's first official visit to South Africa since she became president of Tanzania following the death of her predecessor John Magufuli in 2021. "We have agreed to enhance our cooperation in the areas of trade and investment considering that South Africa is among the main sources of direct foreign investment in Tanzania," said Hassan. She added that tourism and manufacturing are the leading sectors for investment.

Ramaphosa said trade volumes between Tanzania and South Africa continued to increase but could be improved further. "A key aspect of our bilateral cooperation is the promotion of trade and investment between our two countries," said Ramaphosa. "President Hassan and I will be joining the South Africa-Tanzania Business Forum later today, which brings together business people from our respective countries."

He said among the industries under discussion at the business forum are agriculture and agro-processing, oil and gas, mining and infrastructure development. The two leaders also noted their countries' long-standing relations stretching back to the anti-colonial struggle. Many South African anti-apartheid activists, who fled the country under persecution from the repressive white-minority government or to join the African National Congress's underground armed movement, found refuge and received military training in Tanzania.

Among global challenges, the leaders noted the effect of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on African nations, including the interruption of the supply of agriculture-related products such as fertilisers which have exacerbated the continent's food security situation problems. Hassan is set to host United States Vice President Kamala Harris when she visits Africa at the end of March as the US continues its outreach to African countries.

Harris's trip to Africa follows visits by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, first lady Jill Biden and the current trip of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. All have encouraged stronger US ties with African nations in the face of competition from China and Russia.

Tanzania's first female president on visit to SA

Sorrow in Peru as mudslides destroy homes

PERU (Agencies): One mudslide after another finally destroyed the house of Elvis Palomino in Chaclacayo, east of Peru's capital Lima, where others are stacking sandbags they hope will save them from a similar fate.

As heavy rains continue to drench the region, they fear the rising waters of the Rimac—Quechua for "talking river"—could also turn them into casualties of the natural disasters that have claimed several dozen lives this year. "It took my entire house, left me with nothing," said Palomino, a 58-year-old security guard with four children who lives in a middle-class suburb of brick houses.

He barely managed to contain his tears as he stood looking at the only two walls left of what used to be his family home, destroyed by torrents of mud and stone, known locally as huaicos, that swept through Chaclacayo this week. Three other homes nearby were also razed. "It is not easy to accept this reality," Palomino told AFP. "I do not wish this on anyone. I don't have a bed, I don't have a radio, all my stuff is gone."

The clothing on his back



was all he had left. The rainy season that started in January and could last until April has left 50 dead and some 8,000 affected by damage countrywide, according to relief agencies. Unusually intense this year, the downpours have seen rivers burst their banks and caused landslides in the Peruvian Andes.

In Chaclacayo, some 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) east of Lima, rivers of mud flooded the main highway, stranding hundreds of vehicles with cargo and passengers. Ray La Rosa, a neighbor of Palomino, said that for him, "the most worrying thing is that we are without water and electricity because of the huaicos two

days in a row."

Nearby, 56-year-old Charo Matos was scooping water from her flooded house with a bucket, saying she was now "frightened" of the rising Rimac. Authorities have set up a camp on dry ground with 15 tents to receive families evacuated from the banks of the river, as the meteorological office warned moderate to intense rains would persist until. The downpours were triggered by cyclone Yaku, a type of extreme event experts say are associated with the weather phenomenon El Nino, which warms the south Pacific and pummels the coasts of Peru and Ecuador with heavy rains.

Rescuers race to pull helpless out of Turkey floodwaters

ISTANBUL (Agencies): Only five weeks after a series of major earthquakes devastated southeast Turkey, disaster strikes again. Deadly flooding turned boulevards into raging rivers. So far, waters have killed 16, according to the state news agency Anadolu. Frantic cries for help can be heard in the video as bystanders desperately try to brace themselves against the force and wade into the water to catch helpless neighbors bobbing in the rapids that used to be a street.

Several neighbors line the inundated roads and offer anything for victims to grab onto. Bystanders offer ladders, hoses, scarves and anything to those trapped and the group to pull the person out. The crowd watches and cheers on the effort. Watch how fast the muddy water pushes cars effortlessly. They collide together like flotsam. Police officers don dive suits to hit the "street" and pull any survivors and bodies from the wrecks.

One policeman at a rescue scene was reduced to tears. Government officials took to social media to plead with residents to evacuate basement and first-floor apartments and homes. The Turkish Minister of Defense posted a video of an

armored military vehicle towing two crowded buses from an underpass. Local media reported seeing officers pulling several bodies out of the bus.

After the deadly quakes destroyed over 164,000 buildings, according to AP, many homeless people were forced to shelter in tents and makeshift container homes. In one city, officials evacuated quake survivors from almost 2,000 tents, according to local news outlet Milliyet. One family living in a container that they placed in the garden of their tumbled destroyed home washed away. Milliyet said that first responders found one dead, but three more are still missing.

The area saw 6 inches of rain in two days, the worst in 65 years, Sanliurfa officials said in a statement. A typical March only sees 2.5 inches of rain. The city got a third of its annual rainfall in just two days. Officials also reported that 4,895 residents called the emergency number for help just in that city. More dramatic video shows a truck driving along a riverbank. Runoff across the road pushed the big rig over the edge and into the ravine.

Flooding ate away at a bridge. A photographer caught the asphalt breaking apart in big chunks and dis-

appearing into the water. The country is still mourning after three earthquakes of 7.5, 7.8 and 6.7 magnitude rocked the region on February 6, 2023, followed by 11,000 aftershocks. The first major quake struck in the middle of the night, forcing many out of bed and into the snowy streets with no supplies.

Facebook user arrested

HANOI (Reuters): Police in Vietnam arrested a Facebook user who authorities accuse of "attempting to overthrow the state" by sharing content that defamed leaders of the ruling Communist Party, its security ministry said.

Phan Thi Thanh Nha, 39, was accused of posting and sharing 25 articles and videos since 2018 seeking to "distort and defame leaders of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the state," the police-run Ministry of Public Security said in a statement. Despite sweeping economic reform and increasing openness to social change, Vietnam's ruling Communist Party retains tight media censorship and tolerates little criticism, with dozens of people jailed for speaking out against authorities.

The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
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Rising Islamophobia in BJP-ruled India

PAKISTAN strongly condemned the recent Islamophobic remarks by K S Eshwarappa, a BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, and denounced the proposed plan of the Indian government for closing down over 600 religious seminaries in its country. According to the Foreign Office Spokesperson, these remarks are another manifestation of the rising Islamophobia in the so-called biggest democracy of the world. Pakistani Spokesman expressed deep concerns about the alarming rise in racism, faith-based crimes, and violence against Muslims in India.

Right-wing politics and anti-minority rhetoric of the BJP-led Indian government had squeezed the space for minorities in India while Muslims across the country remained a major victim of ultra-nationalist policies and religion-based politics of the Modi government since assuming power in 2014. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign for cow protection and baseless propaganda for bulldozing hundreds of Muslim seminaries over the alleged accusation of being built on Hindu temples are those provocative schemes that spill hate and Islamophobia in Hindu extremists and cause large-scale anti-Muslim riots in most parts of India. According to reports, BJP leaders deliberately incite hate and spread Islamophobia to grasp power and increase their public rating among the masses but their heinous politics has ruined the life of Indian Muslims and exposed fake secularism of Indian society. Apparently, multiple legislations of the Indian parliament including cow protection and religion conversion laws, inter-religion marriage act, citizenship ship act, and residential segregation played a pivotal role in promoting social injustice, religious bigotry, and hate crimes while providing shelter to the perpetrators of those regretful acts in Modi ruled India.

The recurrent incidents of hate speech, racism, and Islamophobia have become customary, whereas profanation of poise personality, desecration of the Holy Quran and Islamic verses, along with physical attacks on Muslim men, women, and Mosques are common in India. Presently, over 210 million Indian Muslims face intimidation and religion-based discrimination from the Hindu majority and feels insecure not in public places, educational institutions, and market but equally unsafe in their homes across India, particularly the states ruled by the Hindutva-influenced BJP fanatics. According to statistics, over 1000 incidents of hate crimes and violence against Muslim have been reported since April 2021 while undocumented occurrences are likely to be many times more than it. Unfortunately, neither the central government nor the provincial administrations ever condemned the Islamophobic act and violence against Muslim rather political leadership and state Police blatantly assisted the criminals during the legal formalities, investigation, as well as prosecution which always led to the release of the culprits involved in multiple terror incidents including Samjota Express, 2002 Gujrat's riots, and others.

Historically, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred have deep roots in India throughout history. Although Muslim communities had been residing in the Indo-Subcontinent since the 6th century AD and a significant number of local Hindus were converted to Islam at an early age, Hindus never consider Muslim as indigenous people over the past centuries. That is the reason that at the helm of the independence movement from British rule, Hindu politicians and religious clerics opposed the partition of Pakistan and pursued the nefarious doctrine of Akhand Bharat so far.

In fact, hate crimes, desecration of poise Muslim personalities, and physical attacks against Muslims are common phenomena across India, however, BJP leaders deliberately commit such shameful acts on the eve of International Day to Combat Islamophobia that clearly illustrates inner filthiness and prejudice of Indian leaders against 1.5 billion Muslim residing in their country and across the world. Pakistan and other Muslim nations must raise this issue globally to expose India's odious designs to the world.

One by one, the pillars upholding liberal Britain are disintegrating

LIBERAL Britain is beginning to collapse. It's not just the sacredly "neutral" institutions that are in peril, although many of them will struggle to survive the coming decades. Liberal centrists have long sought to tell a highly particular story about our island nation - of the benevolence of a Blairite, technocratic Third Way, of unity in diversity, and of the desirability of a cautious and gradual approach to change. That story is now disintegrating under the weight of its own contradictions.

Just look at the BBC. There are many dimensions to the mess the broadcaster has found itself in since Gary Lineker's Twitter outburst over the Government's migration policies. Make no mistake, however: in the eyes of millions, the pundit has once and for all exposed the lie at the heart of the corporation. It is far from being the strictly impartial body it purports to be, dedicated to representing fairly the views of the whole population. Many of its employees evidently think that its rightful role is as a mouthpiece for a particular political creed - one that thinks Britain somehow has a semi-mystical power to absorb and heal the diverse peoples of the world. It may seem facetious to point out that a similar sort of ideology was once upheld by the gentlemen of Union and empire. But there is surely a historical continuity between the early BBC and football royalty's disgusted invectives against insular Little England. They are part of a civilising tradition - one that is not so much politically neutral but seeks to transcend politics in pursuit of a higher moral

cause. Indeed, when John Reith embedded the principle of the BBC as an impartial body, he envisaged an institution answerable to neither government nor necessarily to listeners, but to a loftier calling: cultural uplift and civic nationalism.

True, many of the Beeb's journalists are genuinely dedicated to presenting current affairs through a neutral lense. Credit must also be given to its director-general, Tim Davie, who

elite - has been further eroded. Witness also the fury at the increasingly politicised behaviour of the Civil Service. The liberal story's second pillar - unity in diversity - is in equally serious trouble. For years, liberal Britain has thrived on the country's perceived capacity to integrate disparate communities, from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to more recent arrivals. Today, how-

Sherelle Jacobs

world entitled to British asylum under international law.

It is ultimately this dilemma that has compelled the Tories to abandon the liberal immigration narrative, as they attempt to pass legislation that will see anyone who enters the country illegally sent back to their country of origin or a third country. On one level, the new law is deeply cynical - No 10 aims to expose the softness of Labour's immigration

standards will surely rise.

Put simply, a tradition of gradualist progress has made way for one of gradualist decline. Yes, there will be silver linings in the Budget, as the UK economy enjoys a modest rebound. But this cannot distract from the overarching narrative of stagnation. Having endured one lost decade of growth, we are staring down the barrel of another. Neither real wages nor productivity have improved meaningfully since the financial crash. Hope endures that agile tech startups might rescue the country from its sclerosis. But the fact that a bailout for the sector was even considered amid the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank suggests that they are just as likely to entrench the country in its corporate capitalist rut. Perhaps most disturbing of all is the overwhelming defeatism that permeates the ruling class. With Brexit and the Liz Truss experiment having both spectacularly failed to rejuvenate Britain through Schumpeterian shock therapy, the Blob is now committed to overseeing our country's gentle decline.

In my own view, the implosion of the liberal story is not particularly something to celebrate. It had its hypocrisies, intolerances and downright falsehoods. Perhaps it could never hope to survive in a volatile and divided world. But its demise creates a vacuum, which threatens to tip Britain into a three-way war between Left and Right and alt-centrists over the content of a new national story. We are back in the days of Roundheads and Cavaliers, puritans and heretics, the woke and the heathens, the toffs and the tough. And it threatens to get very ugly.

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ever, the notion that the country can indefinitely absorb and assimilate all - or even a satisfactory proportion - of the people that might have a legitimate claim to settle here is unsalvageable.

In the case of legal immigration, public fury is mounting at the extraordinary numbers allowed into the country, in direct contradiction to the promises made by politicians over decades. The social con-

no longer workable. It was enshrined in 1951 on the implicit calculation that most of the world's displaced people would not - or could not - take up the offer of help. Today, global instability, postcolonial state-building failures, and heightened awareness of opportunities abroad have seen migrant flows relentlessly rise. As Suella Braverman correctly points out, there are now 100 million people around the

stance while pursuing a policy it knows full well it may never implement if it gets tied up in the courts. Still the move, reflected in similar policy shifts across Europe, is a huge break in sentiment from the status quo. The final thread of the liberal story to unravel is that of cautious modernisation - of the desirability of the relative stability of the social market economy and of the inevitability that, if it is "managed" well, living

What to make of China's role in the handshake heard round the world

David A. Andelman

I heard round the world. Indeed, the agreement between long-time foes Saudi Arabia and Iran to bury the hatchet and re-establish diplomatic relations after years of confrontation and religious hostility, must inevitably take a back seat to the venue and the peacemaker who brokered this landmark pact.

Suddenly, Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his first major initiative just hours after claiming an unprecedented third term in office, has shown his ability to play peacemaker for one of the most toxic relationships in a strategically critical and often unstable region. The mediator role is one that Xi has clearly lusted after for some time, most recently in his offer to broker a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine, viewed with the deepest skepticism by Ukraine and most of its western allies. Friday's deal was an aggressive move by China, but it may pay off in spades.

China has secured its status as a close friend and reliable partner to two of the world's leading oil producers. Iran is also prospectively the world's newest nuclear-armed power, while

the US has faithfully guaranteed Saudi Arabia's security for generations. Until now. Both are nations vital to China's own strategic interests - particularly its need for reliable sources of oil as counterweights to Russian supplies that could prove increasingly problematic if the Ukraine conflict continues unabated. China has been importing oil at a pace of some 10 million barrels per day, according to official Chinese data in tons estimated in barrels by Reuters' Asia Commodities and Energy Columnist Clyde Russell, a figure that is expected to surge this year as Covid lockdowns have lifted.

Last year, China purchased more Iranian crude oil than it did before a 2017 peak when there were no sanctions on Iranian oil exports, according to three tanker trackers monitored by Reuters. At the same time, China has found itself being forced to compete with rival India for cheap Russian crude oil. New, reliable sources from the Middle East could prove most attractive. In December, Xi paid his first visit to Saudi Arabia in nearly seven years and oil was at the top of the agenda. At the same time, China has

long lusted after a firm strategic foothold in the Middle East and Gulf regions. Five years ago, it pressured Djibouti into allowing a Chinese naval facility that dominates the entrance to the Red Sea to be built on its shore, just up the coast from the major American facility of Camp Lemonnier. But a toehold on the Middle East mainland has so far eluded it, as Russia has expanded its own military facilities with air and naval facilities in Syria.

But any number of questions remain. How likely, now, is Saudi normalization of relations with Israel? In search of such a gesture, the Saudis have been negotiating with Brett McGurk, the National Security Council's coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, and Amos Hochstein, the top White House aide for global energy. In January, Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said that, given a recent discovery of indigenous uranium reserves, the Kingdom intended to advance its plans to develop a front-end nuclear fuel-cycle, and was seeking US input (potentially a first step

toward a nuclear weapon). The Saudis have also been anxious to receive pledges to resume arms transfers that had been blocked over its human rights record and refusal to back Ukraine in its war with Russia, and for increased security guarantees.

A rapprochement with Iran, despite its ambition of destroying the state of Israel and Israel's intention of pulverizing any Iranian nuclear weapons program, could be seen as a more feasible or appealing course of action for the Saudis. At the same time, the proxy civil war in Yemen rages on, where Saudi-backed government forces have fought for more than eight years to a debilitating and bloody standoff with Iranian-backed Houthi rebels. The United States has been especially anxious to bring a lasting end to hostilities. The first major initiative taken by President Joe Biden days after taking office was an announcement that Washington would no longer support the Saudi war effort there. Yet the war continued to grind on. This new China-brokered agreement is the first potential breakthrough for an end to hostilities - and

without any American participation.

A winding down of American influence in the region has been clear for some time. Last July, Biden shared a much-publicized fist-bump with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, only to have it turned around as a slap in the face three months later when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) announced it would be slashing oil production by 2 million barrels per day - engineered, by most accounts, by Saudi Arabia and Russia to keep oil prices high. With Friday's announcement in Beijing, Saudi Arabia appears to have thrown in its lot ever more defiantly with China and its close friend Russia. Saudi Arabia has never condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, nor has Russia condemned the Saudi proxy war in Yemen. So, what should be the American position in all this? Clearly, any end to the hostilities or even a truce between the two principal and virulently opposed religious currents in Islam - the Sunnis (the majority in Saudia Arabia) and Shiites (the majority in Iran) - should be welcome news.

It should light a fire under Israel to restrain its more expansionist impulses and demonstrate a degree of good will toward the Palestinians -perhaps at this point the only action that could lure Saudi Arabia into a comparable arrangement with Israel, even brokered by the United States. That Friday's accord between Iran and Saudi Arabia was undertaken with the good offices of China is most disquieting but should not in any way distract from American efforts to contain China's ambitious expansion. The big surprise is that China appears to have stepped in to fill the vacuum left by American vacillation in the Middle East. But on Monday, Biden is expected to announce a \$100 billion deal with Great Britain to build a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia - a vital step toward countering China's increasing dominance of the seas in the Pacific.

With this agreement, the stakes have only intensified. China, as well as Saudi Arabia and Iran, appear intent on only expanding their reach and power in their respective regions, making containment an increasingly appropriate goal for the United States.

A people's constitution would give Lebanese hope

Khaled Abou Zahr

THE upcoming municipal elections in Lebanon have been delayed to May due to a lack of material and resources, according to the caretaker Cabinet. Despite the situation getting much worse, it is similar to what happened in 2016, when speculation abounded as to whether the elections would take place. In the absence of a new president and a caretaker prime minister, many wonder if the same void is about to take place with municipalities and mukhtars. Regardless, the Lebanese expect little change from these elections. Cynicism and despair have already won all upcoming elections.

The Lebanese are well aware that no elections or new president, prime minister, mayor or mukhtar will change the course of their country. They do not expect change and are now relying on themselves more and more to continue with their daily lives. In this current system, there is nothing that allows

them to build their lives or plan for any positive future. The reality is that Lebanon needs to build something new. Lebanon needs a new political system. A new constitution is what should be put to the vote as soon as possible. Not the replacement of one disappointing politician with yet another.

Despite being the most important, municipality elections are usually the most overlooked by voters all over the world. They impact citizens the most. They impact them and where they live directly. For Lebanon, the focus should be placed elsewhere. It should be on putting forward a new constitution, which should be the subject of a referendum - a vote to change the current political system. It is impossible to change the country and create a better future while keeping this broken and corrupted political system.

How could this work? How could Lebanon put forward a new political system? What should the polit-

ical and security transition look like? And, more importantly, what could permit such a transformation? Moreover, what would this new constitution look like? I believe that answering these questions is exactly where we should start. It is about imagining a new state and writing a new constitution. So, Lebanon does not need massive crowds, protests and chants that dissipate and die as soon as the gatherings end. Lebanon needs to be reinvented and rebuilt. It needs hard work. Let us forget cynical politics for a second. Most Lebanese think they cannot change anything. This is not true. They cannot change anything in the current system, but they can put forward a new one. And this is a big difference. Today, good men and women will be crushed or corrupted if they enter the political arena. This is why they need to start by formulating a new one. This is the only way, even if it sounds

ridiculous in the face of the current challenges of daily life. Putting forward a new constitution is the seed or road map that is needed to move forward. Let people visualize and dream again of what their country could be and how their lives would be. Bring back hope.

In order to achieve this, Lebanese from all sides should come together. Lawyers, scientists, writers, judges, economists, artists, entrepreneurs and, obviously, people from all confessions. They have the power to make this change. It should exclude any present or past public official or politician. This group should ask themselves, what is Lebanon? What does the country stand for? What is important to nurture and preserve? How do they insulate the country from being torn apart with each geopolitical shift? In short, how does Lebanon mature and take its fate into its own hands? I am convinced that, should a few good men and women take

on this initiative, they will quickly come to the realization that a federal system is what will empower Lebanon. It is the only system that resembles the Lebanese. It is the only system that will allow for them to be "out of many, one." Which is exactly what they are at their core.

Why is it that Lebanese get along everywhere else in the world but become cannibals in their own country? Why is it that brilliant successes are achieved in all fields by Lebanese everywhere but in Lebanon? Simply because, today, the Lebanese political system exacerbates the fear of the other and of losing out, as well as envy and greed. All this comes to an end with a federal system. In a federal system, the equivalent of municipal elections are the most important. If we compare with successful examples such as Switzerland, we see how diversity becomes power instead of being a drag on the country. People vote in their canton on what

matters the most - education, healthcare and security - without impacting the others. In Germany, the Gemeinden (municipalities) have considerable autonomy and responsibility in terms of the administration of schools, hospitals, housing and construction, social welfare, public services and utilities, and cultural amenities. This is what Lebanon needs.

This should be done while guaranteeing, within the constitution, respect for human rights and the iron-clad independence of the courts. Just as in other similar countries, a bicameral system could also be implemented and it should be discussed. Ultimately, Lebanon needs a fresh start that no election, whether municipal or parliamentary, would be able to achieve. Even if, tomorrow, by some miracle, Lebanon woke up to a new president and prime minister, the nightmare would continue. Change starts with a dream and its execution.

Arab News

Russia’s bite no longer matches its Bark in Ukraine

Mikhail Vinogradov

THE tougher the rhetoric of the Russian regime, the more starkly obvious the contrast between its words and actions. Expectations of President Vladimir Putin's recent state-of-the-nation address were high enough for it to be broadcast live by international media. The Russian president tried to live up to the hype by threatening to conduct nuclear tests, among other things. Nevertheless, the impact fell short of his apparent intentions, and the address quickly disappeared from the news agenda. Nor did the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 bring the escalation that had been feared. Moscow's radical rhetoric failed to materialize into mega-strikes on Ukrainian territory or any other major developments.

The Kremlin's words and deeds had parted ways long before the February anniversary. The explosion on the Crimean Bridge at the start of October prompted speculation over impending retaliation, and many expected Putin to respond by declaring martial law on Oct. 19. That did happen, but it was partial, only applied to certain territories, and was soon forgotten. The same day, General Sergey Surovikin - the then head of the Russian military in Ukraine - warned of upcoming "difficult decisions," which sounded ominous and was interpreted by some as a reference to the use of tactical nuclear weapons. The sudden death of the Belarusian foreign minister, Vladimir Makei, in late November also prompted alarm and speculation, especially given the more frequent Russia-Belarus summits. Finally, a large-scale Russian offensive and/or second wave of mobilization was widely expected in the first few days of the new year.

Yet the partial mobilization announced on Sept. 21 remains the

Kremlin's last "big" decision to date. Since then, there has been a considerable decline in the intensity of military decision-making, and key events such as the fall of the city of Kherson generated no official reaction whatsoever. This lengthy pause raises questions, not least over whether the Russian elites and public support the government's radical rhetoric. Of course, some Russians are radicalized and support the war, but their numbers have not grown substantially, and most people simply aren't politically active.

Those who agree with the official stance do so for a variety of reasons: some think that they should support their country whatever happens; others are worried for their compatriots on the front lines; some fear even the hypothetical possibility of a Russian defeat. As for the elites, they don't necessarily agree with the war's supporters, who tend to be mostly older people from rural areas and small towns. Those in the establishment are certainly more informed than the rest of the country, but they can do little to change the situation and have few channels to express their frustration. This is not to say that new escalations are not possible, but morale is quite low given the general disquiet over the current state of affairs.

Amid the lack of action, the concepts of "victory" and "success" are becoming increasingly blurred. It's also becoming obvious that there is too tolerance within the system for "activists": those willing to take the initiative and act on the system's behalf without orders from above. Both senior officials and the apparatchiks from specific government agencies are doing what they can to curb activism. A classic example is the conflict between the businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the controversial Wagner private military company, and the Defense

Ministry. Prigozhin has been seeking to become an activist, but so far unsuccessfully. Nor have public officials who have moved to the annexed territories received the anticipated career boost either.

While the elites are essentially distancing themselves from the government, the main activist and player representing the system is Putin himself. But his public actions are not enough to make up for the sluggishness of the elites, which at times borders on sabotage. Another reason for the current pause is the lack of resources and military capabilities needed to affect dramatic changes on the front lines. The Russian armed forces weren't prepared for such a lengthy and large-scale conflict, so most scenarios relied on missile and air strikes. The real potential of the Russian armed forces is also a matter of public debate. There was a lot of detailed analysis of the first weeks of the Ukraine campaign, but it's hard to come by thorough and objective reflection on what happened next. Frequent personnel changes in Russia's military command also play a role here, although it's not always evident what tactical impact they carry. It's still unclear what a second wave of mobilization could accomplish, or what the political and socioeconomic fallout could be. While the first wave passed without major incident, the biggest impact was on small towns and rural areas. A second wave will be more keenly felt in big cities, which certainly won't improve relations between the state and the public. It's also possible that the Russian authorities have made a conscious decision to put things on hold until circumstances improve. It has long been speculated that Moscow is seeking to provoke conflict among the Western coalition partners, especially European Union

governments, which it expected would have to address public discontent triggered by sharp energy price hikes. Russia may also be looking for greater disagreements within the United States if the war continues until the 2024 presidential elections there. Moscow may still believe that Kyiv's Western partners will grow tired of the war and start pressuring Ukraine to freeze the conflict.

Meanwhile, the 2024 Russian presidential elections are also looming on the horizon. Moscow will certainly want to achieve some tangible results by then, but it's even more important to avoid sustaining new losses, while a new escalation would increase the risk of such losses. Paradoxically, the Kremlin believes de-escalation is unacceptable and constantly announces its radical intentions in the media and through massive public gatherings. Yet its actual steps are nowhere near as radical as expected by either its supporters or adversaries.

The situation is changing faster than the authorities can make and implement decisions. This doesn't necessarily weaken the Russian leadership's position, but it occasionally enables skeptics to say that even Moscow itself isn't all that certain about the feasibility of its own plans. Meanwhile, Ukraine and its international partners continue to look for Russia's vulnerabilities. One way of forcing Moscow to make mistakes is deliberately trying to push it to take radical new steps. This is perhaps how the Russian authorities saw US President Joe Biden's trip to Kyiv on Feb. 20, as well as the attack on a Belarusian military airport on Feb. 26. Such events present the Kremlin with a tough choice. A lack of reaction will be interpreted as a sign of weakness, while spontaneous retaliation means falling into the opponent's trap.

The Moscow Times



Why Xi may finally be ready to talk to Zelensky

Frida Ghitis

YOU might have expected US officials to seem concerned about reports that Chinese President Xi Jinping is planning to speak with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky after Xi's likely trip to Russia next week. After all, Xi, who leads the country the US views as its greatest strategic threat, is feeling stronger than ever. In the past few days, the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong secured an unprecedented third presidential term and, in a blow to US influence in the Middle East, Xi helped broker a diplomatic agreement between bitter rivals - Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Now, emboldened by that success, Xi may try to bring peace to Ukraine. If he can find a formula that stops the bloodshed in Ukraine without allowing Russia's aggression to pay off, Xi will deserve the plaudits. Zelensky, the Ukrainian people, as well as the US and its allies would welcome such an outcome. But this is all a big if. Given the potential -

cally dangerous conflict. China has been trying to convince the world that it can offer an alternative to US power. A real attempt to broker peace in Ukraine, even an unsuccessful one, can help promote the image of responsible statesmanship. From the US perspective, the effort has the potential to start loosening the ties in the "no-limits" friendship between Xi and Putin which, as I argued before, should be a goal of US foreign policy. It's a bit of jujitsu, with China's success in the Middle East potentially helping US aims elsewhere, by encouraging Xi to try his hand in Ukraine - opening the possibility that it could put distance between him and Putin. And yet, a conversation between Xi and Zelensky - which would come just after Xi visits Putin - could be risky.

Xi and Putin - the autocracy brothers - have much in common, from their wish to see the United States and the western alliance weakened, to their disdain for democracy and their autocratic practices at home. It's

what China wants from the world than what is required to stop the war. The position paper also called for "abandoning the Cold War mentality," and the expansion of a military bloc - meaning NATO - as well as stopping economic sanctions and "keeping industrial and supply chains stable." It was a clear sign of the reasons why China would like this war to end. The Chinese outline further calls for ceasing hostilities and starting peace talks. But, unlike Zelensky's plan, it does not require Russia to remove its troops currently occupying big pieces of Ukraine.

A ceasefire under those conditions would cement Russia's control and stop the momentum, which arguably now favors Ukraine. Even in Bakhmut, where Ukrainians are struggling to hold ground, Russia has spent months seeking to capture the now-devastated town. It may capture it in the end, but the cost shows just how fiercely Ukrainians are fighting.

Simply put, a formula exists for ending the war in Ukraine. But Putin is determined to keep parts of

If Xi moves to bolster Russia's arsenal, it could turn the tide of a war that has largely been disastrous for Russia, and could make for a much deadlier, long-lasting and geopolitically dangerous conflict. China has been trying to convince the world that it can offer an alternative to US power. A real attempt to broker peace in Ukraine, even an unsuccessful one, can help promote the image of responsible statesmanship. From the US perspective, the effort has the potential to start loosening the ties in the "no-limits" friendship between Xi and Putin which, as I argued before, should be a goal of US foreign policy. It's a bit of jujitsu, with China's success in the Middle East potentially helping US aims elsewhere, by encouraging Xi to try his hand in Ukraine - opening the possibility that it could put distance between him and Putin.

and other less obvious but also important outcomes that could follow from the meeting - it's not surprising that Washington seems rather pleased by the news. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan hailed the idea, saying the US has been trying to convince Xi to speak with Zelensky. Zelensky, too, has wanted to talk to Xi, one of the few major global players with whom he has not had a chance to have a conversation since the war began.

Zelensky has good reason to trust his powers of persuasion, and by now the US has also learned that Zelensky can be a very convincing advocate for his country. Although the meeting - which would be a call, according to the Wall Street Journal - has not been confirmed, it would allow Xi to raise his status as a global statesman and peacemaker. Both Zelensky and the Biden administration also hope that the conversation would give Xi a different perspective. Crucially, they hope it will help prevent China from deciding to provide arms to Russia. China denies it plans to arm Moscow, but several western governments have suggested Beijing is seriously considering it. If Xi moves to bolster Russia's arsenal, it could turn the tide of a war that has largely been disastrous for Russia, and could make for a much deadlier, long-lasting and geopoliti-

fair to say Xi would prefer the war to end without a Russian defeat.

In the call, Xi could warn Zelensky that Putin might start receiving Chinese weaponry unless Ukraine agrees to territorial concessions. Xi might be willing to do that even if sending weapons to Russia could trigger damaging western sanctions against China while it's trying to recover from its disastrous zero-Covid policy. And if Xi did, that would put enormous pressure on Zelensky, who has steadfastly refused to let Russia keep any Ukrainian land. But it's also possible that Xi could exert pressure on Putin to accept a different kind of arrangement, one that allows him to extract his troops from the meatgrinder into which he has sent them at a cost of tens of thousands of Russian lives. If Russia had won swiftly, as so many expected, China would probably not mind that Russia invaded Ukraine, a pro-western country whose sovereignty Putin rejects, as China does Taiwan's.

However, that has not been the case. And so a few weeks ago, Beijing released a 12-point peace plan to end the war in Ukraine. Zelensky welcomed China's new interest in Ukraine, calling it "not bad." The plan called for "respecting the sovereignty of all countries," but it was strikingly vague. It seemed more intended to outline

Ukraine, and Zelensky and his people oppose such an outcome. If Xi can convince Putin to accept security guarantees - perhaps by pressuring Ukraine to pledge that it will not seek to join NATO - he would earn a reputation of peacemaker. Other elements could also factor into a deal, such as a legitimate, internationally supervised referendum in certain regions - without Russian troops on the ground - on which nation people want to join.

Optimism about a peace deal, however, is in short supply. The two sides are far apart. Putin thinks he can outlast western support for Ukraine. The latest statement on Ukraine by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis supports that view if the likely presidential contender wins in 2024, and the war has not yet ended. Both DeSantis and Trump seem inclined to stand back and let Putin take pieces of Ukraine. The most realistically hopeful outcome of the talks, if they indeed occur, is that Zelensky's powers of persuasion will work, convincing Xi to keep his weapons out of Russia's hands, and - an even better-case scenario - that Xi might prevail on Putin that this war is unwinnable, so that the bloodshed on both sides can come to an end. Those odds, however, are not good.

CNN

World economy is on the brink of collapse and all the Tories do is tinker

Allister Heath

FOR the past quarter of a century, beginning roughly with Tony Blair's election, the British economy has been undergoing a slow yet radical transformation that now looks set to end in catastrophe. Almost imperceptibly at first, the authorities began relying on cheap credit and an artificial housing boom to keep the economy "growing"; eventually, this turned into outright money-printing and near-zero interest rates. At the same time, the size of the welfare state increased massively, paid for by higher taxes, reduced spending on traditional government functions (such as defence or the courts), as well as the proceeds (via stamp duty) of the growth mirage concocted by the monetary expansion.

Britain's late 20th century economic model, characterised by delayed gratification, hard graft and increasingly competitive capitalism, has given way to a semi-socialist, semi-rentier paradigm, extinguishing our entrepreneurial dynamism and killing productivity growth. For all of Jeremy Hunt's valiant efforts at fixing some of its surface-level problems, this model has now almost completely run out of road. Exhausted by Covid, which accelerated Britain's welfarisation and sent inflation surging, Russia's barbaric invasion of Ukraine was the final straw. Pent up liquidity and the energy shock propelled inflation to 10 per cent, forcing central banks to jam on the interest rate breaks. Yet history shows that jacking up borrowing costs - even when, as now, it is necessary - always wreaks havoc in unpredictable ways. The emerging pattern is ominous: a series of containable financial implo-

sions - LTIs in UK pensions, the collapse of FTX and other crypto-currency operators, the bankruptcy of Silicon Valley Bank - is now giving way to panic across the banking system. The shares of Credit Suisse are down substantially.

We need to face the facts: another financial crisis and recession is now likely. House, bond, commodity and stock prices are falling, and this time central banks no longer have the tools to reflate artificially. We are entering a period of radical uncertainty - one that will surely destroy Hunt's fiscal forecasts and send the national debt surging - at the worst possible moment. Even before any looming financial bust, Britain's "real" economy was in tatters, brought down by extortionate, incentive-sapping taxes. The top 13 per cent of the highest earning adults - the 11 per cent who now pay the 40p tax rate, and the 2 per cent hit by the 45p levy - are being treated as milch cows. Tax thresholds are being frozen until 2028 at a time of rampant inflation, and the additional rate band is being extended, even though no society has ever prospered by crippling its upper middle class. An extra 3.2 million people will start paying income tax by 2027-28 as their nominal income rises above the personal allowance. An extra 2.1 million workers will be dragged into the 40p rate, taking the total to 6.7 million, and an extra 350,000 will be forced to pay the 45p tax rate (or in many cases an even steeper rate), taking that total to 1.17 million. Taxes will hit a post-war high of 37.7 per cent of GDP in 2027-28, including the highest ratio of corporation tax receipts since it was introduced in 1965 (so much for the

impact of Hunt's counter-measures). Public spending will settle at 43.4 per cent of GDP, its highest sustained level since the 1970s. How will this be affordable if another financial crisis erupts?

Hunt's response is to encourage more women with children, older people and those trapped on welfare to work, by bolstering their incentives to do so. But what about those of the rest of the country? Don't they count? No wonder Hunt is relying on net migration of 245,000 a year to prop up growth. The strike that really matters is that of the private sector, which increasingly cannot be bothered to get out of bed. Many will make less effort, not bother with a promotion that leads to barely any extra post-tax pay, won't take the risk of setting up a business or, for those with a sizeable nest egg, simply give up. For older workers, the reduced returns to working come with an ageist culture and the rise of fanatical, hyper-bureaucratic workplace wokery, which many mightily dislike. This isn't to say that some of Hunt's plans won't help. I'm greatly encouraged by the reforms to welfare. The Chancellor's partial deregulation of medicine approval is great, but why not apply the same principle to other sectors of the economy?

The introduction of close to "full expensing" of company spending on plant, IT and machinery - the fine print falls short of the headline - will cancel out half of Sunak's corporation tax rise. It won't, of course, undo the idiotic windfall tax which is killing energy investment. Full expensing is an excellent policy but it shouldn't come at the cost of a

higher headline rate. The social purpose of a business isn't merely to invest. Most companies don't require lots of capital; it isn't "wrong" for them to make money. Hunt's pension reforms are welcome and will help keep a few thousand doctors in work. But George Osborne slashed the annual tax-exempt pension contribution from £255,000 a year (when the pound was worth a lot more) to just £40,000 during his banker-bashing phase; the highest earners can currently save almost nothing. The rise to £60,000 barely covers a few years of inflation, and the highest earners will only be allowed to save £10,000 a year. Given this, abolishing the lifetime allowance, invented by Gordon Brown in 2006, while good news if it ever happens, will be largely symbolic.

The Chancellor's childcare reforms represent the final step in a vast expansion of the welfare state, yet government-created pathologies in our economy and society are to blame for the crippling cost of childcare. An alternative liberal-conservative approach would be to deregulate the childcare industry and levy much lower taxes on parents through an additional, per child tax allowance (bolstered by a benefit for those on low-incomes), and allow families to organise themselves as they see fit. Hunt's Budget was greeted by the FTSE 100's worst day since the start of the pandemic. The reason? Britain's big-state, debt-added economic model is fundamentally broken, and a global crisis looms. No amount of tinkering, however well-intentioned, will be enough to protect us from a traumatic reckoning.

The Telegraph

Biden’s pick for World Bank president can’t fix its crisis

Arthur Larok

THE mission of the World Bank is supposed to be to eradicate extreme poverty and promote shared, sustainable prosperity. Yet to many of us, the bank has actually done more to entrench poverty and injustice than any other global institution, including through the conditionalities it imposes on poor nations that need its loans. One of the reasons for the World Bank's failure is its archaic governance structure, set up after World War II, at a time when most African and Asian nations had not achieved independence and so had no sovereign voice. Another reason is that its leadership is not recruited through an open global process but rather by a patriarchal "gentleman's agreement" that allows the president of the United States to unilaterally appoint the bank's president.

Every one of the 12 full-time presidents of the World Bank to date has been a male, US citizen. This illegitimate arrangement is something ActionAid, a global federation supporting more than 15 million people in nearly 40 countries to live a dignified life free from poverty and oppression, has been challenging, together with others, over the past decade.

This week I have started my new role as secretary-general with ActionAid. Applying for this job involved an intense process which lasted several months but it was what

it needed to be - transparent and rigorous. It is an honour, as well as an important responsibility to be the first Ugandan, the first African, to serve as ActionAid's permanent secretary-general. In comparison, the recruitment of a new president for the World Bank is opaque and effectively restricted to American citizens. That pattern appears set to continue, with US President Joe Biden unilaterally nominating former Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga for the post of the bank's next president. I call on Biden to get with the 21st century and ensure the next World Bank leader is truly the best person for the job. His nomination, sadly, is deeply inappropriate given the huge significance of this role in the world.

The credibility of Banga to make the changes that are needed at the World Bank is fatally compromised by the lack of legitimacy in his appointment. How can he set out a bold new vision to challenge and transform power when his own power as president comes from a distorted process? Banga is a private equity executive with no experience in public service. Indeed, his corporate background reflects the kind of inequality-driving, climate-destroying hyper-capitalism that is everything the World Bank should be standing against if it wants to genuinely aim for ending global poverty. The World Bank urgently needs new thinking if it is to get on track with its

supposed mission. To start, we need a World Bank president who will definitively move away from the climate denialism of the present president, David Malpass. But at a time when we need the World Bank to stand up to the fossil fuel industry, the institution is still busy funding fossil fuels. We also need someone who will recognise that the climate debt of the Global North cannot be paid to countries profoundly affected by the climate crisis in the form of loans that will lead to further indebtedness. Yet, the climate finance proposals expected to be discussed at the World Bank meetings in April focus precisely on a massive expansion of loans, not grants.

It is time for the World Bank to recognise the scale of the global debt crisis - and to acknowledge that debt is an accelerator of the climate crisis. Indebted countries have to raise dollars - and the easiest way to do that is through extracting fossil fuels and national resources and through export-oriented industrial farming serving the global supply chain. If debt exacerbates the climate crisis, how can more debt be the answer? We need a president who will chart a new path, away from 40 years of structural adjustment and austerity. Together with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank continues to champion cuts and freezes to public sector wage bills. It fails to support the obvious alternative of

helping countries to expand their tax revenues in progressive ways in order to sustainably finance front-line public sector workers who are key for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The new president will need to lead the development of a new gender strategy for the World Bank, one that confronts the contradictions between the narrowly targeted work of its gender team and the wider gendered impact of its work enforcing austerity. When public spending is cut, women are triply disadvantaged: the first to lose access to public services, front-line jobs and the first to assume unpaid care work.

The present gender strategy, which runs out this year, is instrumentalist, narrow and largely ineffective. Any new one must be transformative. In my role as secretary-general of ActionAid, I will be using a feminist lens to fight for system change. The World Bank needs to make a definitive move away from its support for privatisation and public-private partnerships, learning from the mounting evidence of their harm, particularly the exclusion of women and girls that comes from charging fees. But the bank remains caught up in an ideology that sees public services as the problem, not the solution. If there is little hope for system change from the World Bank and reform is not possible, abolition is the only alternative.

Aljazeera

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Police-ICCI to work together to further improve security in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Islamabad Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Saturday urged the Islamabad Police for taking CCI on board to further improve the security situation in the Capital in order to boost business activities.

While talking to Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural Islamabad during his visit to ICCI, Ahsan said that a secure and peaceful environment is the key requirement to promote business and investment activities, said a press release.

He said that the rural areas in Islamabad need further improvement in the security situation and urged these police to work in close liaison with the trade associations of rural areas to provide a more secure environment to the traders community.

He also urged the need for registering data of all security guards deployed in the markets of rural areas and verify their credentials to make sure that clean record holders are employed as security guards in rural areas.

He asked the police to

hold open kuchehries so that the citizens could highlight their issues for redress and devise a strategy to deal with the issues being faced by the citizens due to anti-social elements.

Speaking at the occasion, Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country and providing them a secure environment is the high priority of police.

He assured that he would work with ICCI and concerned market associations

to further improve security arrangements in the rural areas.

He said that police would collect data of security guards posted in housing societies of rural areas to verify their credentials. He said that police would also start the process of registering Afghan nationals in Islamabad and monitor their movements in order to ensure that they aren't involved in any criminal activities. He said that open kuchehries would also be started soon as they were suspended due to the security situation.

Workshop on Peshawar’s Prosperity five year Plan held

PESHAWAR (APP): A consultative workshop on Peshawar Prosperity five Years Plan was organized with the objective to holding discussion on economic development of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunwa.

According to a press release issued here on Saturday, the workshop was organized by Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) here at a local hotel.

The SMEDA and CGPA are jointly developing Peshawar Prosperity Plan under the project “Mobilizing Economic Reformers to Keep Critical Civic Space Open in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Stakeholders from industries, academia, civil

society and government departments participated in the workshop.

During the workshop, tangible projects and interventions were suggested for the development of SME sector in the province.

It was also agreed that a comprehensive report on Peshawar prosperity plan will be developed in light of these suggestions and be shared with concerned departments for further implementation.

It merits mention here that Peshawar Prosperity five Years Plan (PPSP) aims at developing actionable and realistic targets for the five years which can contribute to improving business ecosystem in Peshawar.

Ten thematic areas have been identified for PP5P through intense stakehold-

ers’ engagement through Public Private Dialogues (PPDs).

These thematic areas included Entrepreneurship Development, Availability of Adequate Industrial Infrastructure, Improving Awareness Regarding Relevant Laws, Rules and Regulations, Simplified Laws, Rules and Regulation, Marketing and Linkages Development, Capacity Building of SMEs, Easy access to Finance, Ease in Licensing, NOCs, Registrations, Documentation, Introduction of Modern Technology, Technical and Vocational Skill and Improving Business Ecosystem for Women Entrepreneurs.

Improvement in the above 10 areas can bring tangible results in improving the overall business

ecosystem and can help improve the economic development, adds the press release.

For the development of the PP5P, action planning method of the technology of participation will be utilized.

The method requires systematic and methodological involvement of the stakeholders not only in the planning stages, but also in the implementation stages. The key milestones need to be identified by the stakeholders themselves.

PP5P is expected to contribute to the economic development of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through providing a roadmap for key interventions for governments, private enterprises and development partners.

Bank fears return to haunt global stock markets

NEW YORK (AFP/ APP): Stocks markets tumbled again on Friday as fears of a banking crisis resurfaced despite massive financial lifelines thrown at embattled lenders to prevent contagion across the sector.

Markets had rallied on Thursday after Wall Street titans including JP Morgan, Bank of America and Citigroup pledged to inject \$30 billion into First Republic Bank.

Credit Suisse had also rebounded after it said it would borrow up to \$54 billion from the Swiss central bank. But shares of First Republic Bank and Credit Suisse dove back deep in the red on Friday, with the US lender slumping 33 percent and Switzerland’s second biggest bank dropping eight percent.

The stock prices of other major banks also fell, with JP Morgan, Citigroup and Bank of America down at least three percent.

The wider markets were also in the red. On Wall Street, the S&P 500 finished down 1.1 percent.

In Europe, London stocks closed down 1.0 percent, while Frankfurt slumped 1.3 percent and Paris dropped 1.4 percent to cap a rollercoaster week.

“The negative disposition for the broader market has a familiar driver: worries about the state of the banking industry,” said market analyst Patrick O’Hare at Briefing.com.

Banks stepped in to save First Republic over fears it could suffer a run of withdrawals by customers worried it would follow US lenders Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, which went under last week and fueled fears of another financial crisis.

O’Hare said the market was unnerved by data showing that bank borrowing from the US Federal Reserve’s discount window

hit a record high of approximately \$153 billion for the week ending March 15, “exceeding anything seen during the financial crisis.”

The Fed’s discount window allows banks to quickly access funds, providing them with liquidity when customers withdraw more deposits than expected, and the record figure is an indication of stress in the sector.

“This week has been a liquidity crisis, but it seems that the moves by authorities to remedy the situation have not completely reassured wary investors,” said Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at online trading platform IG.

The dollar fell against its major rivals, while oil prices sank more than four percent at one point before clawing back some of that ground.

“Oil prices have been pummelled this week as turmoil in the banking sector

has increased the risk of a significant economic slowdown or recession this year,” said market analyst Craig Erlam at Oanda trading platform.

Investors will focus next week on whether the US Federal Reserve will stick to its interest rate-hike policy to combat inflation.

Before the SVB crisis unfolded, there had been a widespread expectation the Fed would ramp up its tightening campaign and push on for as long as needed until it had quelled inflation.

But with SVB’s demise largely blamed on the sharp rise in borrowing costs -- fueling fears of a repeat at other banks -- speculation has swirled that the Fed may stop hiking and maybe even cut rates to provide some stability.

However, the European Central Bank on Thursday stuck to its plan to lift rates by a half percentage point despite the turmoil.

Huawei has replaced thousands of US-banned parts in its products, founder says

SAN FRANCISCO/NEW YORK (Agencies): Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd’s founder said that the company has replaced more than 13,000 parts in its products that were hit by US trade sanctions, according to a transcript of a speech posted on Friday by a Chinese university.

According to the transcript posted by Shanghai

Jiao Tong University, Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei said Huawei had over the past three years replaced the 13,000 components with domestic Chinese substitutes and had redesigned 4,000 circuit boards for its products. He said production of circuit boards had “stabilized.”

The remarks, which

Reuters could not independently verify, provided a window into Huawei’s efforts to bounce back from US trade restrictions. Since 2019, Huawei, a major supplier of equipment used in 5G telecommunications networks, has been the target of successive rounds of US export controls.

Those controls cut off

both Huawei’s supply of chips from US companies and its access to US technology tools to design its own chips and have them manufactured by partners. The Biden administration last year also banned the sale of new Huawei equipment in the US.

Ren made the remarks in a talk to Chinese technology experts on Feb. 24, the



FAISALABAD: People standing in a queue to purchase flour bags on subsidized rate initiated by government.

Delegation of PSGMEA visits GCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Delegation of Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) led by Chairman PSGMEA Arshad Latif Butt met with the President of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GCCCI) Sikandar Ishfaq Razi, here on Saturday.

Matters of mutual interest including SMEs Development and e-commerce along with exchange of data were discussed in the meeting.

PSGMEA and GCCCI agreed to sign an MoU, regarding some of agreed points, whereas the Chairman of PSGMEA Arshad Latif Butt said that being a seasoned and experienced person, he would fully exploit his potentialities to resolve the problems being confronted by the value added sector, and would play important role in understating the issues and problems of sports industry.

SCCI president visits APP office

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry President (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik on Saturday visited Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Sialkot station.

Vice President SCCI Aamir Majeed Sheikh also accompanied him on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Ghafoor Malik said: “Since I have started performing my duties as the president SCCI, I have seen that APP Sialkot is doing very well”. The SCCI president appreciated the role of APP team for covering the events of Sialkot chamber and highlighting the issues faced by the business community.

Malik said: “APP team is playing a positive role to highlight the positive face of not only Sialkot but also Pakistan for which we pay tribute to them”.

Khawaj Saad, Ishaq Dar discuss Aviation, PR affairs

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafiq, along with a delegation, called on Finance Minister Ishaq Dar at Governor’s House and discussed affairs of Railways and Aviation, here on Saturday.

The delegation included Aviation Secretary Saif Anjum, PIA Investment Limited Chairman Shaukat Ali and PIA Director Commodore Usman Gul.

During the meeting, Kh Saad Rafique gave a detailed briefing to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on the performance, projects, issues and other matters pertaining to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), PIA and Pakistan Railways.

He said that civil aviation, PIA and Pakistan Railways were taking all possible measures to ensure provision of better services to the air and rail passengers, besides improving the

respective freight components of both the services.

The finance minister appreciated the efforts and measures taken in the aviation and Pakistan Railways for ensuring better services to the people.

He promised to play his role in timely execution of projects of the Civil Aviation, PIA and Pakistan Railways to further improve services for the public as well as the business community.

Zafar to perform as LCCI Acting President

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry will perform as the Acting President of the LCCI in the absence of the chamber’s President Kashif Anwar who is out of country for a business visit from March 18 to 21.

A LCCI spokesman confirmed this to media here Saturday and said that Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry is also the President of Pakistan Africa Business Associations (PABA). A

body that is actively exploring African market for the benefit of Pakistan’s business community.

He added that Zafar Mahmood was desirous to take Pak exports up to US \$100 billion especially in the African continent, and he had since long been working hard to achieve this goal.

He is a pioneer in establishing bilateral economic links with African countries and always seeking to develop these relationships. In this regard, he has been conducting “Africa Shows”

in Lahore for many years with great success.

He also visited more than 100 countries, while heading many business delegations.

He is a great leader with high aims and ambitions, and his motivational speeches and remarkable work experience can be a guidance key for young entrepreneurs.

He has immense confidence in his work and he believes in proving his ideas by implementing them rather than just imaginations.

Oil gains reverse on banking sector fragility

LONDON (Agencies): Oil prices fell in volatile trade, reversing earlier gains of more than \$1 a barrel, as banking sector fears set crude on course for its biggest weekly decline in months, according to Reuters.

Brent crude futures fell by 76 cents, or 1.02 percent, to \$73.94 a barrel by 1322 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude was down 52 cents, or 0.76 percent, at \$67.83.

Both benchmarks hit more than one-year lows this week. Brent was on track for its biggest weekly fall since December at more than 10 percent, while WTI was heading toward a loss of more than 11 percent, its biggest since last April.

Pressure this week followed the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank and trouble at Credit Suisse and First Republic Bank.

Prices recovered some

ground on Friday after support measures from the European Central Bank and US lenders, but dropped again when SVB Financial Group said it had filed for reorganization. The news also sent shares of big US banks down by more than 1.5 percent in pre-market trading.

“The conditions for volatile trading remain intact. The oil price rollercoaster is pausing for breath but is by no means over,” said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM.

The drop in prices highlights “the continued fragile state of the market,” said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

Analysts do, however, expect constrained global supply to support prices in the foreseeable future.

Members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies,

known as OPEC+, attributed this week’s price weakness to financial drivers rather than any supply and demand imbalance, adding that they expected the market to stabilize.

WTI’s fall this week to less than \$70 a barrel for the first time since December 2021 could spur the US government to start refilling its Strategic Petroleum Reserve, boosting demand.

And analysts expect China’s demand recovery to add price support, with US crude exports to China in March heading toward their highest in nearly two and a half years.

Saudi Arabia and Russia in a meeting on Thursday affirmed their commitment to OPEC+’s decision last October to cut production targets by two million barrels per day until the end of 2023.

An OPEC+ monitoring panel is due to meet on April 3.

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation

HONG KONG (APP): Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) is taking its “Talent Game On 2K23” talent programme to another level with its finale - the “Gamified Career Journey in Live” event, plus the official kick-off for Hong Kong’s largest innovation and technology (I&T) career expo. The simultaneous events mark a high point in HKSTP’s commitment to build Hong Kong into a leading hub for global tech talent.

Starting from today to April 17, the Hong Kong I&T Career Expo 2023 offers 2,500+ jobs from over 250 companies for

local and overseas talent of all backgrounds and disciplines.

Ms Fanny Wong, Head of Talents and Human Resources, HKSTP, said: “Hong Kong is truly back on the world stage with the return of major international events and a revival of economic activity, which makes this the perfect moment for our I&T sector to shine.

HKSTP is reaching out more than ever to the global I&T community, drawing more young talent and tech companies to our city. With the co-launch of the Gamified Career Journey in Live event and I&T Career Expo 2023, we are

showcasing I&T career opportunities to both tech and non-tech talent, which is proof that HKSTP and Hong Kong is now open to all.”

The “Gamified Career Journey in Live” event continues from the earlier Talent Quest online challenge and leads participants on an interactive physical experience. Over 500 participants embarked on an immersive career discovery journey in a showcase of how I&T can be a diverse and rewarding career path for people of all backgrounds and disciplines.

Participants can connect face-to-face and be

inspired by innovators from Park companies including flight simulation technology provider, Aeroism, and food upcycling startup Breer. Experts from Microsoft were also on hand to talk on the hot topic of Open AI and JobsDB presented an outlook on I&T careers and salary trends.

The in-person gamified event also kicked off the Hong Kong I&T Career Expo 2023, the city’s largest tech career fair. Like last year, it is going virtual this year to reach an even bigger global audience and prove how Hong Kong is back in the eyes of the global tech community.

Running from 18 March to 17 April, the Expo offers jobseekers, young talent, fresh graduates, and university students, a one-click process to reach over 2,500 I&T job opportunities from over 250 companies in the hottest tech sectors of AI & data, biotech, fintech, and robotics, among others.

Both the “Gamified Career Journey in Live” and Hong Kong I&T Career Expo 2023 are a part of HKSTP’s “Talent Game On 2K23” programme, which began in mid-February with its Talent Quest online game that has attracted over 100,000 players and 2,000

registered jobseekers. Talent Game On 2K23 represents a major success in HKSTP’s annual talent drive and is advancing the city-wide mission to grow local talent and also attract global talent into the city’s I&T talent pool.

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) has for over 20 years committed to building up Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology hub to propel success for local and global pioneers today and tomorrow. HKSTP has established a thriving I&T ecosystem that is home to two unicorns and Hong Kong’s

leading R&D hub with over 12,000 research professionals and over 1,200 technology companies focused on healthtech, AI and robotics, fintech and smart city technologies.

Established in 2001, we attract and nurture talent, accelerate and commercialise innovation and technology for entrepreneurs on their journey of growth in Hong Kong, to the Greater Bay Area, Asia and beyond. Our growing innovation ecosystem is built around our key locations of Hong Kong Science Park in Shatin, InnoCentre in Kowloon Tong and three modern INNOPARKs in Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O

and Yuen Long. The three INNOPARKs are realising a vision of new industrialisation for Hong Kong. The goal is sectors like advanced manufacturing, electronics and biotechnology are being reimagined for a new generation of industry.

Through our infrastructure, services, expertise and network of partnerships, HKSTP will help establish innovation and technology as a pillar of growth for Hong Kong, while reinforcing Hong Kong’s international I&T hub status as a launchpad for global growth at the heart of the GBA innovation powerhouse.



In brief

Inter-Club Kabaddi begins in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Inter-Club Kabaddi Championship of the Peshawar District got underway here at village Soorizai Payan, a suburban village, situated 30-kilometer away from provincial capital Peshawar. After an interesting competition in the match, the team of Qadeem Kali defeated Hiko Daman village by 37-35 in the opening match.

Former International Kabaddi player and Secretary General KP Kabaddi Association Syed Sultan Shah Barri was the chief guest on this occasion who formally inaugurated the Championship. Organizing Secretary Malang Jan, and a large number of spectators were also present. Talking to APP, Syed Sultan Shah Barri said that steps have been taken for the promotion of Kabaddi in Peshawar. He said the association is making every effort for the promotion and development of traditional Game Kabaddi. He said the semi-finals and final would be organized on Monday wherein great enthusiasm was witnessed among players and the event attracted a large number of spectators.

Shakib, Hridoy help Bangladesh to record-breaking win

SYLHET (Agencies): Bangladesh set two new team records in their 183-run win over Ireland in the first ODI in Sylhet. It is their biggest win in ODIs, batting first, after they scored 338 for 8, their highest total in the format, too. The visitors, who have come to these shores after 15 years, were bowled out for 155 in 30.5 overs. Bangladesh's innings was built around Shakib Al Hasan and Towhid Hridoy making nineties, with Mushfiqur Rahim's fiery 26-ball 44 complementing their effort. Hridoy's 92 is the highest by a Bangladeshi debutant in ODIs, beating Nasir Hossain's 63 in 2011. Hridoy became the first batter from this team to score a fifty on debut batting in the top five, Shakib scored 93, the fourth time he has fallen in the nineties. The pair added 135 runs for the fourth wicket, the foundation on which Bangladesh built their record-breaking total. With a big chase in front of them, Ireland suffered a top- and middle-order collapse, triggered by Shakib and then made terminal by Ebadot Hossain and Taskin Ahmed, who picked up the next four wickets to fall. The visitors went from 60 for 0 to 76 for 5. Nasum Ahmed cleaned up for the lower order with 3 for 43. On the day of winning the ESPNcricinfo award for 2022's best Test bowling performance, Ebadot finished on his career-best ODI figures of 4 for 42. But it was Bangladesh's batting that made this victory possible. The big partnership between Hridoy and Shakib came on the back of Ireland taking three early wickets. Paul Stirling took the catches of both Tamim Iqbal and Litton Das, before Andy McBrine removed Najmul Hossain Shanto for 25. The trio must have rued their luck having seen what followed. Shakib and Hridoy spent roughly 15 overs rebuilding the innings before unfurling a flurry of boundaries. During this consolidation period, Shakib became the third cricketer to reach 7,000 runs and 300 wickets in ODIs. The pair struck a four each in the 32nd over before Shakib launched into Harry Tector in the 35th over. He struck five fours -- sweeping twice, cutting one through point, and chipping over cover and long-on -- as Bangladesh lifted the scoring significantly.

PSL 8 digital media ratings higher than IPL: Sethi

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Management Committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Najam Sethi has claimed that the digital media ratings of the eighth edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2023 have been higher than the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Addressing a press conference prior to the final of the HBL PSL 8 at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Saturday, he said the HBL PSL 8 achieved 150 rating points this year as compared with the 130 of the IPL 2022.

He hailed cricket fans for the success of the 8th edition of the HBL PSL, acknowledging that the league could not succeed

without support of the die-hard fans. Najam Sethi said 80 per cent footfall was recorded during the HBL PSL 8, adding that he was thankful the spectators for turning up in large number to the stadiums in Lahore, Karachi, Multan and Rawalpindi.

The Chairman Management Committee, who is due to leave for Dubai to attend ICC and ACC meetings, said the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) has given many stars to the Pakistan as well as world cricket over the past eight years.

Najam Sethi further added HBL PSL provided opportunity to many cricketers who could not get a chance in other leagues

or their national outfits and these players emerged as stars.

About his Dubai yatra, Najam Sethi said that upcoming Asia Cup, ICC Men's ODI World Cup and ICC Men's Champions Trophy matters will be discussed during the ACC and ICC meeting in Dubai, adding that all options will be discussed regarding the holding of the Asia Cup and ICC Champions Trophy in Pakistan. He said the foreign security experts have expressed their utmost satisfaction over the security situation in the country.

The Chairman PCB Management Committee said the success of the league has given him the self-belief that the PSL

may be held in any part of the world, adding that some of the PSL fixtures may be held in the United States of America (USA) as we have been invited to do so.

On the standard of pitches, he said the standards of pitches during the HBL PSL 8 has proved it beyond doubt that there was no need to invite foreign curators for the preparation of cricket pitches in Pakistan.

On addition of more teams in the HBL PSL, he said he has taken up the idea of adding two more teams in the PSL 9 with the franchises, adding that the HBL PSL model will be reviewed after the 10th edition of the league. He said the PCB has

been overseeing the affairs of the Pakistan Women League.

Sethi said cricket stadiums in Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi and Karachi will be renovated and expanded within the next six months.

On the issue of contracts with the betting sites, he said "the contracts with the betting sites had already been signed by the league before I took over as Chairman PCB Management Committee in December 22". He said the contracts have expired with the completion of the HBL PSL 8, adding that the decision regarding the renewal of contracts with the betting sites for the next PSL edition will be

taken in the light of cultural and religious norms of the country.

The Chairman said the matters regarding administrative costs of the HBL PSL have been resolved with the Punjab government, adding that no such stand-off will occur in future.

On Mickey Arthur, he said the PCB has taken up issues raised by the media with the former Head Coach Mickey Arthur, assuring that matters with Arthur are in the final stages. Chairman Najam Sethi said the schedule of the Pakistan-New Zealand series has been revised in view of the Punjab Assembly elections on April 30.

Wapda's Noor-ul-Ain wins BoK KP Women Squash Championship

PESHAWAR (APP): Noor-ul-Ain of Pakistan Wapda clinched the trophy of the All Pakistan Bank of Khyber Women Squash Championship after defeating Rushna Mehboob of ZTBL in the final played at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex on Saturday.

Bank Khyber HR Head Mohammad Asif was the chief guest along with squash legend Qamar Zaman, Vice President Ehsanullah, Chief Organizer and Chief Referee Manoor Zaman, Associate Secretary Sajjad Khalil, Muhabullah Khan, Finance Secretary Wazir Gul, Coach Adil Faqir and other personalities were present.

In the final, WAPDA's Noor Al Ain won the final against Roshana Mahboob of ZTBL in a thrilling 3-2

battle, the score was 11-8, 2-11, 11-5, 6-11 and 11-5. In the four-day Championship, the best 32 top-ranked players from all over the country participated in which Pakistan Army, Pakistan WAPDA, players from SNGPL, ZTBL, Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were involved. Among the top rank players participating in the tournament are Noor Al Ain, Maryam Malik, Komal Khan, Noor Al Huda, Mehwish Ali, Roshana Mahboob, Kainat Amir, Umm Kulsoom, Amna Malik, Hira Aqeel, Sana Bahaduri, Zahra Abdullah, Manahil Aqeel, Hafsa Yusuf, Maira Hussain, Naheed Faiz, Wajiha Altaf, Nimra Aqeel, Ayesha Shehbaz, Malecha Shah, Bushra Shehbaz,

Sara Noor, Nashia Shahid and Mashal Khan showed their best game.

Squash legend Qamar Zaman and President KP Squash Association Dawood Khan paid tribute to Bank of Khyber for sponsoring the Championship. They said that the bank has always played its role in the promotion and development of sports.

They congratulated the MD of Bank of Khyber and his team and appealed to other financial institutions to emulate them. Bank of Khyber HR Head Muhammad Asif congratulated the organizers for organizing the best competitions and expressed determination that Bank of Khyber will continue to play its full role in the development of sports.



LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars' captain Shaheen Shah Afridi and teammates celebrate after win the Pakistan Super League Twenty20 cricket final match between Lahore Qalandars and Multan Sultans.

National Open Polo C'ship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023: BN, MP/Newage in main final

LAHORE (APP): BN Polo and Master Paints/Newage Cables breezed into the main final of the Century Ventures National Open Polo Championship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023 after winning their respective semifinals here at Lahore Polo Club on Friday.

In the first semifinal, BN Polo defeated Diamond Paints 9-6. From BN Polo, Hamza Mawaz Khan played tremendous polo and smashed in superb six goals while Juan Ruiz Guinazu hammered a hat-trick to take a 6-4 lead. For Diamond Paints, Chulo Corti thrashed in three goals while Nico Roberts banged in a brace and Mir Huzaifa Ahmed scored one goal.

BN Polo began the match with two back-to-

back goals to gain a 2-0 lead, while Diamond Paints also struck one to reduce the margin to 2-1. They played well in the second chukker by banging in a brace against one by BN Polo to level the score at 3-3. Diamond Paints scored one more in the start of the third chukker to earn a 4-3 lead, but BN bounced back brilliantly by hammering a hat-trick to take a 6-4 lead.

Both the teams converted one goal each in the fourth chukker, with BN still enjoying a 7-5 lead while in the fifth and decisive chukker, BN Polo scored two goals against one by Diamond Paints to win the match by 9-6.

In the second semifinal of the day, Master

Paints/Newage Cables beat Master Paints by 7-6.

From Master Paints/Newage Cables, Simon Prada did the magic with mallet and polo pony and slammed in all the seven goals. For Master Paints, Manuel Crespo pumped in three goals while Pelayo Berrazadi banged in a brace and Agha Musa Ali Khan struck one goal.

Both the teams were off to a flying start as they thrashed in two goals each to level the score at 2-2. The second chukker was also evenly poised but this time, they scored one goal each to equalize the score at 3-3.

Master Paints/Newage played better polo in the third chukker by hammering

two goals against one by Master Paints to get a slight 5-4 edge but in the very next chukker, Master Paints converted one to level the score at 5-5.

Master Paints/Newage once again took a 6-5 lead in the beginning of the fifth chukker, which couldn't last long as Master Paints also scored an equalizer to make it 6-6. In the dying moments of the match Simon Prada smashed in the match-winning goal to steer Master Paints/Newage to a thrilling 7-6 victory.

The final will be played on Sunday (March 19) between BN Polo and Master Paints/Newage Cables while DS Polo will compete against FG Polo in the subsidiary final.

Djokovic denied entry to US to play at Miami Open

MIAMI (Agencies): World number one Novak Djokovic has failed in his bid to play at next week's Miami Open after being denied entry to the United States.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner, 35, had applied for special permission to enter the US because he is not vaccinated against Covid-19.

The US requires international visitors to be vaccinated and proof will be required until at least 10 April. Djokovic withdrew from the ongoing Indian Wells event for the same reason.

"Obviously, we're one of the premier tournaments in the world, we'd like to have the best players that can play," said Miami Open tournament director James Blake. Speaking to the Tennis Channel, he added: "We did all that we could. We tried to talk to the government, but that's out of our hands. We tried, and he wasn't able to play."

"Same result that he had in Indian Wells, where I know [fellow tournament director] Tommy Haas did as much as he could. We tried to get Novak Djokovic to be allowed to get an exemption, but that wasn't able to happen."

"We'd love to have him, and he's our greatest champion, he's won six times here. Unfortunately, that's way above my pay grade." Serbia's Djokovic missed last year's US Open because of his vaccination status. Djokovic, who also missed last year's Australian Open.

Peshawar win wrestling championship



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar won the wrestling championship organized by Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Provincial Wrestling Association. Along with it, admin officer Irshad Khan, organizing secretary of the event Zahidullah, Namatullah and Inayatullah and other personalities were present.

According to the results, Peshawar Wrestling Club won the first position with 85 points by winning six gold and five silver medals, Punjab won four gold and five silver medals and came second with 65 points, while Khyber District won two gold, three silver and five

browns.

Won third position with 55 points, Noman of Peshawar won gold in 54 kg weight, Aslam of Punjab won silver medal, Adnan of Peshawar Wrestling Club won gold in 57 kg weight, Sajjad of Punjab won silver medal, Khyber K Atif won the Browns, 61 k In the log weight competitions, Irfan of Punjab won gold, Saeed of Peshawar won silver and Salman of Khyber won bronze.

Tawheed won gold, Karamat of Punjab won silver and Saud of Khyber won browns medal. Speaking to the media on this occasion, Deputy Director of Sports Operations Jamshed Baloch said that Provincial Secretary Sports Captain

(R) Mushtaq Ahmed 'D. These competitions were organized under the instructions of G Sports Khalid Khan, Director of Sports Operations, Azizullah Jan, in which famous wrestlers from KP and Punjab participated.

He has won numerous national and international medals in this regard, while talking to the media, Zahid wrestlers also said that this is the best initiative by DG Sports to show the wrestlers of Punjab and KP their best skills.

They will get opportunities and along with that they will also get opportunities to go ahead and they will come They will also be able to prepare for the competitions. He hoped that such events will continue in the future.

KP Taekwondo Pumze training seminar Mardan-2023 kicks-off

PESHAWAR (APP): Under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association, great start of the Pumze seminar which is being conducted in a joint venture with Pakistan Taekwondo Federation at BISE Mardan's Indoor Hall on Saturday.

Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association Ilyas Afridi, Secretary KP Taekwondo Association Waqar Afridi, and Secretary Pakistan Taekwondo Federation Murtaza Hassan with other including Syed Sadaqat Hussain, Javed Akbar and Korean Master Seongoh Choi along with assistant coaches Wijaya Al Hassan

and Haseeb Al Hassan Zain were also present.

Korean Master Seongoh Choi is here on his visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Course Conductor with more than 60 male, female coaches and senior players from different districts from across the province are participating in this course.

Korean Master Seongoh Choi is introducing coaches and athletes to the latest techniques of Taekwondo Pomze, which was received with great interest by the coaches from all over the province. The Korean Master, in his brief chat, expressed his happiness and said that the coaches

are very hardworking. "I will try to deliver as many techniques as possible to them," he added.

On this occasion, Secretary Pakistan Taekwondo Federation Murtaza Hassan said that the President PTF Col. (retired) Waseem Ahmed is very interested in the promotion of Taekwondo and such courses would help Pakistan in promoting the game besides producing more coaches and players at the international level. He thanked the Korean Master and assistant coaches and Mardan Region Association who are playing a great role in making this seminar a success.



In brief

Four of a family killed

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least four people of a family were killed in a shootout that took place in the Dhok Bel area of Rawalpindi on Saturday. According to a private media report, a man shot and killed four people, including his 40-year-old sister-in-law, in the Dhok Bel area in the jurisdiction of Kaller Syedan police station in Rawalpindi. According to the police, the stepbrother Naseer used to force his sister to give a statement in favor of his brother, who was imprisoned in connection with a murder case. When the family declined to testify, the accused showed up and opened indiscriminate fire. According to Muhammad Ahmad, the husband of the deceased woman, the accused shot dead Zulekha Bibi, 40, her 25-year-old niece Nazreena, his 30-year-old nephew Ansar, and his 25-year-old nephew Perviz. Meanwhile, SSP Investigation said the suspect was at large and raiding teams had been added up to arrest the culprit.

IRSA releases 82,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 82,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 66,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.98 feet and was 28.98 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 22,100 cusecs while outflow as 33,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1097.60 feet, which was 47.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 22,700 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur has recorded 43,900, 33,500, 31,500 and 9,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 12,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

5 warehouses of fireworks raided

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted raids on 05 warehouses of fireworks and recovered firecrackers in huge quantities besides arrested five dealers during the crackdown, informed a police spokesman on Saturday. City Police carried out operations on warehouses and arrested firecrackers dealers who were identified as Malik Zafar Iqbal alias Bala, Kashif Iqbal, Asif Iqbal and Waleed. The police of the Ganjmandi area also arrested firecracker dealer Tayyab Elahi while conducting an operation on a warehouse. Thousands of cotton balls, pomegranates, firecrackers and other items were recovered from their possession. SP Rawal appreciated the performance of police teams said that those who endanger the lives of citizens will not escape from the grip of the law. Fireworks manufacturing, sale and purchase are a crime according to law. The operations will be continued against illegal businesses, he added. The operation was conducted on the directives of City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani.

Imran using tactics to delay court proceedings in Toshakhana case: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was using tactics to delay court proceedings and hearing in Toshakhana case but he would have to be accountable of his deeds and embezzlement.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Attaullah Tarar said that PTI chief Imran Khan was destroying Pakistan's peace so he can avoid indictment in one case, alleging unrest in Islamabad is part of a plan to avoid appearing in court.

He said PTI workers fired shells at the capital police and created hurdles in an attempt to prevent Imran Khan from appearing in court. Tarar said that Imran Khan was not only attacking the state institutions but had been defying the country's courts for months.

Special Assistant said that what is happening in Islamabad is another effort of Imran Khan to not appear

before the court.

"There is no hurdle if Imran Khan wants to appear before the court but if your workers resort to firing shells at police, then the law will take its course," he maintained.

He said Imran Khan has been caught red-handed and he is creating a commotion after sitting in the car.

The SOPs discussed with Imran's team clearly mentioned that armed people will not be allowed to enter the capital when the PTI chief comes to attend the hearing, he said, adding that PTI shared a list mentioning who will accompany Imran during the hearing but the party has not followed it as armed people are also present with the PTI chief.

He said that Imran Khan's convoy violated one way due to which a traffic mess was created and this violation was deliberately committed to avoid in time appearance before court. "Imran Khan's vehicle is in front of the Judicial Complex and

there is no hurdle from police, law enforcers and the government. He would be facilitated if he is ready to appear in court," he added.

He said the government is aware of where the teargas being used by the PTI workers came from, adding that cases will be registered against PTI workers creating unrest who also brought stones from Lahore in vehicles.

Attaullah Tarar said that PTI should be treated as a terrorist organization as its defying the state's writ. In Toshakhana case, he said that Imran Khan first refused to receive warrants and his workers attacked at police team in Lahore. He said that all hype had been created to avoid indictment but he would have to be answerable for embezzlement he did.

"A person who delayed foreign funding case for years is reluctant to appear before court in Toshakhana case and using delaying tactics to avoid indictment," he added.

Regime change operation to be exposed: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (PPI) Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Saturday the regime change operation behind toppling Imran Khan's government was going to be exposed.

In a series of tweets, the former interior minister hit out at the ruling coalition's rhetoric that they put their politics at risk to save the country, adding that the government had defaulted Pakistan.

"Public is always top

priority of the state but the government has destroyed the masses," he apparently lamented gloomy economic situation that has made it difficult for a common man to arrange a square meal for family.

He said the public would prefer hunger over compromise on national assets. He said the government was unable to secure \$6 billion assurance from friendly state, making it difficult for it to sign agreement with the IMF to receive the bailout package.

Saying inflation has surged to 50 per cent, he demanded that the sensitive speech of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar should be made public.

He said Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed's tour to China was crucial, adding that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari should have visited the friendly country. He said the government was scrambling to seek funds from various countries but the solution to the problems was lying under its nose.

Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates PAEC's Diagnostic Center Narowal



ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday inaugurated Diagnostic Center Narowal (DCN), a satellite centre of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) for providing medical facilities to cancer patients of the districts and surrounding areas.

Owing to the keen interest and special efforts of the minister, the PC-I of Diagnostic Center Narowal as Phase-II of Gujranwala Institute of Nuclear Medicine was approved in 2017 and currently, PAEC is running 19 cancer hospitals in the country, which are catering to medical needs of over 70% of the cancer patients.

Nuclear Medicine and Radiology departments have also been established at DCN to provide diagnostic services to the general public of the area.

The center is equipped with the latest medical equipment including SPECT/CT Gamma Camera, Digital Radiography, Digital Mammography, Ultrasound, Immunoassay Lab and Hot Lab facilities.

The DCN has been designed in such a way that it could also cope with the future needs of Medical Oncology. Speaking on the occasion, the minister paid tributes to the scientists and engineers of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, who made the defense of the country unconquerable.

"We have witnessed the longest era of peace on the borders owing to scientists of PAEC who are now contributing in other spheres of

national life like health, nuclear power and agriculture", he added.

Ahsan Iqbal further said that PAEC has recently inaugurated two mega nuclear power plants of 2,200 MW generation capacity included K-2 and K-3 in Karachi. The agricultural scientists of PAEC from four centers are providing latest crop varieties to boost agriculture sector of the country.

Chairman PAEC, Dr Raja Ali Raza Anwar thanked the minister for his continued support to all projects of the commission in particular and science and technology in general and said PAEC has always prioritized the healthcare segment under corporate social responsibility (CSR) of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

Chairman PAEC, Dr Raja Ali Raza Anwar thanked the minister for his continued support to all projects of the commission in particular and science and technology in general and said PAEC has always prioritized the healthcare segment under corporate social responsibility (CSR) of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

segment of society are visiting the Pakistan Monument."

Amna further said that its unique design and the scenic location has made it one of the most famous monuments of the country and making it one of the top places to visit in Islamabad and Rawalpindi twin cities.

It is pertinent to mention here, the idea to create a national monument in Islamabad was first proposed by former President Pervez Musharraf. The government laid the foundation stone in 2004. In 2005, the Council of Architects and Town Planners organized an architecture competition to select a design for the landmark.

The concept was simple that the monument had to signify a sovereign state and the strength of its people.

Benazir Kafalat stipend increases up to Rs 8,500: Shazia Marri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Shazia Marri on Saturday said that the stipend under the Benazir Kafalat initiative has been increased from Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 8,500 after a recent increase of 25% in the BISP fund.

The minister was speaking during the inauguration ceremony of Benazir Dynamic Registry Centre at the BISP District Office Narowal. She was accompanied by the Federal Minister of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal.

The event was attended by government officials, community leaders, and beneficiaries of the BISP program. During the inauguration, Shazia Marri introduced Benazir

Dynamic Registry to the audience, which evaluates socio-economic conditions on a fluid basis and updates data periodically.

The registry is operational at 600 centers across Pakistan, and it benefits over nine million people, Shazia Marri added.

She emphasized that floods and global inflation have changed the economic conditions of people in Pakistan and that the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) survey is mandatory for inclusion in the BISP beneficiary list.

She urged women to get registered with the NSER survey and thanked Ahsan Iqbal for his support.

Responding to a question from the audience, Shazia Marri stated that BISP is planning to carry out a program based on the discontinued initiative:

Waseela-e-Haq. Benazir Income Support Programme is trying to expand its circle. She further stated that the Benazir Income Support Program is recognized as one of the most transparent initiatives by well-reputed international organizations like the United Nations.

In his remarks, Ahsan Iqbal welcomed Shazia Marri to the land filled with cultural ethos. He commended the work done by Shazia Marri for expanding the horizon of the Benazir Income Support Program.

He added that BISP is a program that goes beyond politics. He was informed by the DG NSER, Naveed Akbar that the Benazir Income Support Program has data of around 34 million households in Pakistan. He also apprised the minister about the National

Socio-economic Registry. Ahsan Iqbal stated that the Prime Minister has a keen interest in the Benazir Income Support Program.

During his talk with the media, he outlined the reasons for the current inflation, including the IMF deal signed by the previous government, the Ukrainian war, and the devaluation of money by the previous government. The Benazir Income Support Program is an essential support for people in this hour of need. It has been providing crucial support to the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of society, particularly women.

MNA Khursheed Junejo, Parliamentary Secretary, MNA Ibrar Shah, MNA Tariq Shah, Advocate Rashid Khan and Faisal Mir welcomed the ministers at the Narowal Office.

ANF recovers 285 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations managed to recover over 285 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to Punjab and recovered 60 kg charas and 20.4 kg opium besides netting four accused resident of Peshawar rounded up near Islamabad Motorway.

In another raid, ANF recovered one kg charas and held a drug peddler resident of Rawalpindi from 'Khana Pul' area on Islamabad Expressway. In third operation conducted in Dhoke Hassu, one kg charas was recovered from the possession of a female drug smuggler resident of Mardan.

The spokesman informed that ANF in an operation managed to recover 857 grams Ice drug from a parcel booked for New Zealand at Lahore G.P.O. Office.

In fifth operation conducted by ANF and FC near Qilla Abdullah in Balochistan, 202.8 kg charas concealed in bushes were recovered. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Police issued 22,854 character certificates to citizens

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Police khidmat markaz of Islamabad capital police have facilitated citizens with different services like issuance of character certificate, foreigners' registration, registration of tenants and domestic servants, a police public relations officer said.

He said that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan is taking all possible steps to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad adding that several steps have been taken by the police in this regard.

He further said that police khidmat markaz has received 22,989 applications of character certificates so far. On which 22,854 character certificates were issued to the citizens after complete verification by concerned police stations while work on the remaining applications were under process.

For character certificates, applicants must bring his/her original CNIC and passport. In

case, the Islamabad address is not mentioned on applicant's CNIC, he must bring residential proof or rental agreement.

If the applicant is abroad, he/she will have to authorize his relatives on a specified authority letter duly attested by a gazetted officer. In addition to the authority letter, a copy of the exit stamp, CNIC of the applicant, passport and photograph of the applicant abroad is also required for issuance of character certificate.

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

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

Sanjrani condoles with Tarin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Saturday visited the Lahore residence of former Finance Minister Shaukat Fayyaz Ahmed Tarin to express his sympathies on the death of his mother.

Accompanied by Senator Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir and Prince Ahmed Umerzai, the Chairman Senate offered Fatima for the deceased and prayed to Allah Almighty to rest her soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family.

The Chairman Senate also met with former Prime Minister Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain to inquire about his health and express his well-wishes. He also discussed current political situation of the country with Chaudhary Pervez Elahi, who congratulated Sanjrani on the Senate's golden jubilee celebrations.

The Chairman also had a meeting with Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar and prominent industrialist Jehangir Khan Tarin to discuss matters of mutual interest.



ISLAMABAD: A family on his way to cover with sheet to protect from rain on motorbike at Federal Capital. —APP Photo

IGP Islamabad visits Judicial Complex to review security arrangements

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Inspector General of Police (IG) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan visited the Judicial Complex to review security arrangements and met with the officials of Islamabad capital police, Punjab police, FC, and Pakistan Rangers personnel who were performing duties in order to maintain the law and order situation, a police public relations officer said.

He said that the IGP Islamabad has directed the police officials to be highly alert and ready all the time

to deal with any emerging law and order situation.

"Will shall take every possible necessary measure to protect the lives and property of citizens as well as private and commercial property and ready to thwart adventurism from the anti-social elements" IGP Islamabad said while addressing the police officials.

He further said that all the officials who are performing duties are putting their best efforts to maintain the law and order situation in the capital.

"Islamabad Capital Police will never allow anyone to disturb the peaceful environment of the city and will take all necessary steps to protect the lives and property of the citizens", he vowed.

All the officers have been directed to stay vigilant in their own respective areas and brief the personnel to deal with any law and order situation and check all the duties by themselves. "All personnel posted on duty should be sent with proper kits and gadgets," he further directed.

Woman found dead

QALA-I-NAW (Pajhwok): A 50-year-old woman has been found dead in Qala-i-Naw city of Badghis province, police said on Saturday. Police spokesman Seddiqullah Seddiqi on Saturday tweeted the woman's body was found in first security district of Qala-i-Naw on Thursday evening. The victim, a resident of the first security district of Qala-i-Naw City, had been shot dead, he said. Without providing details, the police official said the body was handed over to her family.

The Frontier Post

Shabaan 26, 1444 — Sunday, March 19, 2023

Needy families received aid

KAPISA (Agencies): Over three hundred (300) needy families in some districts of Kapisa province of Afghanistan received cash aid provided by "Pamlerne" Institute in coordination with the Department of Agriculture of Kapisa province on Saturday. The Ministry of Agriculture of Afghanistan said in a statement that two hundred (200) families received 180 dollars each and other one hundred (100) families received 87 dollars to 100.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Parents call for reopening of girls' schools

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Saturday, several parents and students urged the caretaker government of Afghanistan to reopen secondary schools for girls, which had been shuttered for the previous 544 days.

Parents of the students expressed concern for their children's future and urged the authorities to allow their daughters to return to school.

"We ask the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools and universities for our children," said Samiullah, father of a student, ToloNews reported.

Families said that the closure of schools had led to increased psychiatric disorders in their daughters and asked for the reopening of the school beyond the sixth grade on March 21 to begin the new academic year.

Since the Takeover of

Afghanistan by the Taliban, schooling above grade six has been closed, which, later in December last year, barred girls and women from going to universities and working with NGOs.

Although the interim administration insisted that the ban on girls' education was temporary and that they would permit it once the environment was appropriate, more than one and a half years have passed since then. However, the environment is still unsuitable for girls attending universities and schools.

The uncertainty and the schools' ongoing closures have created concerns among the parents and students, and they have frequently requested that the government end their worries by reopening the school doors for girls in grades beyond sixth this week.

Funding shortage forces UN agency to cut rations

KABUL (Agencies): The UN food agency in Afghanistan announced that a lack of funds has forced deep cuts to life-saving assistance in March for at least four million people.

Catastrophic hunger could become widespread across Afghanistan, and unless humanitarian support is sustained, hundreds of thousands more people will need assistance to survive, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned.

Due to funding constraints, at least four million people will receive just half of what they need to get by in March. Food stocks have run out before the next harvest is due in May, this is traditionally the most difficult time of the year for rural families, WFP said.

The cuts come at a time when already vulnerable Afghans are just emerging from yet another freezing winter. Sub-zero temperatures combined with economic distress has pushed millions into despair, the agency added.

WFP urgently needs \$93 million to assist 13 million people in April and \$800 million for the next six months. Although donors gave record amounts in 2022, since November last year WFP had been warning that funds would run out just as the lean season is reaching its peak in March and April.

ISIS hideouts targeted in Balkh province: Mujahid

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Islamic Emirate spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said that Taliban security forces targeted ISIS hideouts in the fifth, sixth and eighth areas of Mazar-e-Sharif province, and described it as a substantial strike against insurgents.

Mr. Mujahid on Saturday wrote on Twitter that Taliban security forces launched special operations against the ISIS militants in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital city of Balkh province.

The operation continued until late Friday night, as a result several ISIS fighters died and one Islamic Emirate security personnel sustained an injury, Mujahid said.

Additionally, local sources reported a clash between Taliban security forces and anti-government militants in the Dashte Shor area of Mazar-e-Sharif.

With the arrival of spring, ISIS fighters have increased their attack throughout Afghanistan, particularly in northern provinces. Militants of the



Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) claimed responsibility for the attack on the Tabyan Cultural Center, which resulted in the death and injury of scores of journalists in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Prior to the Taliban's takeover of Kabul, ISIS presence was only seen in eastern Nangarhar and Khost provinces.

However, the insurgent group quite rapidly

expanded its operation to different parts of Afghanistan over the past 18 months.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), ISIS militants have been behind some brutal attacks in Kabul over the past months, including the attack on the Russian Embassy and a hotel that accommodated Chinese citizens.

Meanwhile, the insurgent group has also launched ruthless attacks on educational institutions and even targeted high-ranking Taliban officials in Kabul.

Given the volatile security situation in Afghanistan, ISIS is the only active militant group in the country posing threats to the ruling regime according to some security and political experts.

Carpets production tripled in Bamyan this year



BAMYAN CITY (Province): The production of carpets has increased three fold in central Bamyan province this year compared to the previous year, an official said.

Naeem Rezaee, deputy head of Commerce and Industry Department, said public interest in the carpet weaving had significantly increased. He said 7,000 square meter rugs were produced last year, while its production reached 21,000 square meters this year.

Rezaee added: "The pro-

duction of rugs was estimated 7,000 square meters last year, while this year it had reached to 21,000 square meters and was still going up".

He added: "The poverty and unemployment of the people ban on girls' education at schools and at universities caused for the people, especially the females to switch to rugs weaving industry".

Mohammad Ibrahim Ali Zada, an official of rugs industries in Bamyan said public interest in the carpet

weaving industry increased compared to past year.

Ali Zada said, last year 800 carpet weavers worked in the industry, while the number had reached 2,000 weavers during this year.

He added the price of carpet weaving depended on the avert quality of the carpet in the province, adding that the rate of one square meter carpet weaving ranged from 2,000 afis to 4,000 afis per square meter.

Abdullah, another individual associated with the

carpet industry said, the lack of carpet processing facilities was one of the major defects of this industry in Afghanistan and it had a direct impact on the price of the product.

He said: "Most of the produced rugs are transported from Afghanistan for processing and then supplied to international markets after being processed in that country."

Mohammad Taqi, a construction laborer switched to carpet weaving profession due to the lack of construction work and run his life from from weaving carpets. He said his income low in carpet weaving comparing in the field of construction but still he was able to compensate his daily expenses.

Ahmad Ali, the resident of Bamyan city, was also busy in rugs weaving industry along with his son and two daughters; he was satisfied with his work.

Considering the poverty and unemployment in the society, carpet weaving has a good income, he said.

He said a six square meters rug can be woven in 30 days by four workers which make 12,000 afis of income.

Chamber of Agriculture seeks UN's support for wheat storage facilities

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock on Saturday asked the United Nations to support Afghanistan by providing storage facilities for wheat as an important step for the country's economy.

The chamber emphasized the need for the collection of wheat from various sources for enriching the country's strategic reserves.

The requests are made amidst concerns over possible droughts in the country.

"The international community and other countries need to support Afghanistan under the current situation. The government also has to make wheat storage facilities so that we will not face hunger," said Mirwais Hajizada, the deputy head of the chamber of agriculture and livestock.

"Afghanistan needs six to eight million metric tons of wheat every year. Fortunately, nearly five million metric tons of it is

supplied from domestic sources and the rest is supplied from foreign sources," said Qutbuddin Yaqubi, an analyst.

Officials from Agriculture and Livestock said the ministry intends to buy 100,000 tons of wheat for strategic reserves and has send the plan to the cabinet of the Islamic Emirate for approval.

"The ministry of agriculture has sent the plan to the cabinet to allocate the purchase budget of 100,000

tons of wheat for emergency situations," said Musbahuddin Mustaeen, a spokesman for the ministry. "After the approval of the 1402 solar budget, it will be known where and how the wheat will be purchased."

According to figures from the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, Afghanistan should have three million tons of wheat in its strategic reserves so that it will not face hurdles under emergency conditions.

Nangarhar families reconcile after 12-year feud

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): A family in the Momandara district of eastern Nangarhar province has resettled in its ancestral place after 12 years of displacement.

Way for the return of Alaf Khan's family was paved after reconciliation with Akhtar Baz's family.

Both cousins entered enmity 12 years back when they fought over children which resulted in the killing and injuring of Akhtar Baz's sons.

Alaf Khan spent the past 12 years in displacement and away from his relatives, he always strived to reconcile with Baz and end the enmity, but the later who lost one son and another was injured was committed to take revenge.

Abdul Zahoar Salarkhan, a tribal elder who head the reconciliation Jirga between the two families, said few months earlier he started efforts for reconciliation between the two families.

He said Baz was committed to take revenge and disagreed with reconciliation. He added after the efforts of tribal elders Baz finally agreed to reconcile without any privilege.

"With our own expenses, we went to foreign often and made efforts to make reconciliation between the two families," he said.

He said the people of Hazar Naw area were deeply saddened by the enmity between the two families because both were good people and serve the village.

"We locally call them Nayan — hear dresser — they were our Nayan and served our people. We made our efforts for the sake of Allah because these people served use," he said.

Abdullah Moman, another member of the Jirga said in the past daughter of sister were granted for such reconciliation but now they tried to make this

reconciliation without any privilege.

Alaf Khan, whose sons killed their cousins, and initiated this enmity, said they were now comfortable after 12 years with the support of tribal elders' reconciliation.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Even if we were in foreign and the security situation was good but we were always afraid that we will be attacked, our children could not go to school and our youth could not worked."

He said they will make sure that their children do not repeat these type of activities in the future.

Akhtar Baz whose young son was killed and another injured in the enmity said he reconciled for the sake of Allah and for the future of both families and reversed his decision to take revenge.

"We thank our elders that they resolved our problem. My family decision

was that we will take revenge because we are Pashtons but now their mediation and their talks change my decision," he added.

He said if children get education these type of incident will not be repeated and the society will also progress.

Sadiqullah Qureshi, deputy head of Nangarhar's Information and Cultural Affairs, said efforts were on through the Department of Tribal Affairs to bring an end to personal enmities in districts and villages.

"There was four decades of fighting in Afghanistan, people are uneducated, there is lack of awareness and the number of enmities are more. Only tribal Jirgas could resettle these types of enmities," he added.

Nangarhar, known for Jirga and negotiations had witnessed reconciliation of personal enmities in the past as well.

30 violent cases registered against journalists in Afghanistan: NAI

KABUL (Khaama Press): NAI, Supporting Free Media in Afghanistan says violation against journalists has increased, and in less than three months, nearly 30 violent cases have been registered against journalists across the country.

NAI, on the occasion of Journalists' Day, celebrated on Saturday in Afghanistan, in a statement said that two journalists were killed, and 16 others injured in last week's bomb blast that took

place at the press event in northern Mazar-e-Sharif province.

The statement further added that the situation for journalistic activities and reporting has deteriorated with each passing day in Afghanistan. A considerable number of media outlets and news agencies have shut their doors due to overwhelming challenges and economic constraints, and thousands of journalists have lost their jobs and fled

the country.

NAI has asked the Taliban authorities to respect freedom of speech and media activities, and not let the fragile freedom of expression get affected further.

On March 11, an explosion took place at the Tabyan Cultural Center in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, resulting in the death of at least two journalists and the injury of 18 others. A group of journal-

ists said the attack showed their community is not safe in Afghanistan, calling it an attack on freedom of speech in the country.

Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, the situation has become extremely difficult for journalists to operate in Afghanistan. Besides the ruling regime having imposed tough restrictions on media and journalists, the security situation has deteriorated.

500 rapid learning classes created in Nimroz

ZARANJ (Pajhwok): Five hundred rapid learning local classes have been created in Zaranj, the capital of southwestern Nimroz province, and in the far-flung areas of some districts to provide learning opportunity for children unable to attend schools due to several reasons, an official said.

The Ministry of Education in cooperation with its international partners strived to expand access to education for youth and children who deprived from mainstream education in Nimroz.

The religion of Islam made getting education compulsory on men and women but due to decades of war and conflict there was still no school or educational institution in many parts of the country.

Qari Sharifi, deputy head of Nimroz Education Department, said 500 rapid learning local classes had been recently established with the financial support of UNICEF and in coordi-

nation with Kowar Organisation in the far-flung areas of the provincial capital Zaranj, Khashrud, Chakhansur, Kang, Charhburjak and Dilaram districts.

He said 17,500 boys and girls would be able to get education in these classes.

Of these 500 classes, 92 are established in Zaranj City and 408 in the remote areas of some districts.

He said the education department was facing the shortage of teachers, text books and equipment in the districts.

He added the education department would support every programme that strengthened education in the province.

"Half of the schools in every district were disabled due to the shortage of teachers and children are deprived from education."

He welcomed the establishment of these schools and said there were some handicaps existed in this programme which needed

to be addressed by UNICEF and Kowar Organisation.

Kowar Organisation Director Munir Ahmad Sherzad who has responsibility for the implementation of the project, said as a result of the establishment of 500 rapid learning local classes 17,500 students in the centre and district were not getting education.

He said 115 classes are established in Khashrud, 31 in Chakhansur, 25 classes in Chaharburjak, 236 in Dilaram and 89 classes for girls in Zranj City.

He said students are distributed books, health kits, provided teachers, class kits, water containers, bags and other needed items.

Referring to the rapid local classes and normal classes at school, he said in rapid local classes students studies two classes in one year while normally one class is taught in a year.

For normal classes the age condition is 7 to nine while for rapid local classes the age condition is 10 to

15. Mohammad Umar, the resident of Sardasht village in Kang district, said his two daughters deprived from education due to long distance to the school, adding that now they are enrolled in one of the rapid local class near his house.

"For years I wished, I could take my children to the school, I am a poor man and could not afford to buy books, notebooks and other items needed for the education of my children. Now I am happy and thankful to Allah that my daughter in the age of seventh and ninth are able to go to school."

Umar said most schools in Kang district are inactive due to the lack of teachers therefore children fond of learning were deprived of education but now with the help of UNICEF they will have access to education. These rapid learning classes are a golden opportunity for people in the far-flung areas to learn something, he added.

Abdullah, 14, one of the children could not go to school over the past three years in Dilaram district. He said: "I am interested in learning, there was fighting in our district all the time and the school remained closed."

He is thrilled with the creation of rapid local classes and said he and other children like him who were deprived of education have now have an opportunity to learn.

Fatima, one of the teachers local classes in Chakhansur district, said many children in the Mullah Rasoul Dafki village who could not study due to some issues are attended the newly established rapid local classes with zeal and enthusiasm, but people in the village want more similar classes to be established.

Abdul Sammad, head of the Mullah Rasoul Village Council, said 31 rapid local classes are established in the village on the bases of



requirement, these classes are provided all the needed equipment and facilities.

"There were some students in these classes who did not know how to pray and lacked religious knowledge they dared how to

write and read in these classes," he said.

Raza Yaqubi, monitoring and evaluation director of the rapid learning classes, said these classes are created in the areas where schools are not available

and thousands of students had been offered the opportunity to study. On the bases of survey conducted recently there was need for more similar classes to be established in Dilaram, Khashrud and Chaharburjak district.



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the conference titled 'Traditional and Non Traditional Security Imperative for Pakistan.'

NAB closes probe against Muqam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) conducted an inquiry against Prime Minister's adviser Engineer Amir Muqam for four consecutive years on the allegations of accumulating assets beyond his known sources of income, recorded the statements of more than two hundred witnesses. After four years of continuous inquiry, the value of assets of Amir Muqam turned out to be much lower than his legitimate sources of income and no corruption could be proven against him, due to which NAB closed the inquiry.

The decision to close the inquiry was based on the findings of the final inquiry report and the recommendations of the authority's executive board, which stated that there was no evidence to pursue the case further. According to a notification, Chairman NAB approved the closure of the inquiry against Maqam, Maqam was under investigation for his alleged involvement in these cases. When asked to comment on the closure of the inquiry, Muqam expressed his views saying that I thank Allah Almighty for being the leader, he added that baseless cases were established against opponents by former govt.

Imran's agenda of chaos, anarchy exposed: Sana

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan on Saturday said that the illegal weapons, petrol bombs and evidences recovered from Imran Khan's residence in Zaman Park had exposed his agenda of creating anarchy and chaos in the country.

Addressing a press conference at Model Town, he said that the police had to face severe resistance during its action to clear "no-go area" in Zaman Park but it did not use any weapons or torture, adding that the police conducted search operation in outer portion of Imran Khan's House despite having search warrants of complete house but it did not enter into inner portion. The search warrant of whole house would also be executive as the law enforcement agencies have doubts of presence of illegal weapons and other material in Imran Khan's House, he asserted.

Rana Sanaullah said that the police have taken custody 65 suspected persons from Zaman Park, who would be scrutinized in investigation process, whereas the police also recovered material to make petrol bombs, Kalashnikov and catapults from Imran Khan's house which was used against the police, he said. The minister said that Imran Khan wanted to create anarchy, chaos and spoil the youth, which has been proved through the weapons and other items recovered from Imran Khan's house today. Imran Khan has used every tactic to achieve his agenda of chaos and anarchy, he maintained.

Rana Sanaullah said that PTI chief had raised claims of accountability during his government but at the same time, his front person Farah Gogi was engaged in looting public money and was involved in money laundering, adding that the evidences of Imran Khan's corruption scams of billions of rupees under the umbrella of Al Qadir Trust

and others had also been exposed. The minister said that Imran Khan would be convicted in Tausha Khana, Terrian White and other cases so he refused to appear before the courts. The police despite facing severe resistance and violence by the PTI activists conducted an action in Zaman Park to implement the court orders, he added.

Rana Sanaullah said that it was court's order to allow the people to enter into Judicial Complex as per provided list, later the court ordered to allow the media personnel to enter in the judicial complex, so the government while acting upon the court's order, only allowed the nominated persons to enter into the complex premises. Imran Khan reached at Judicial Complex's gate with a mob of 300 people and resisted to enter along with violent mob so at that time the police had to disperse them because armed group could not be allowed to enter into the court, he added.

The minister said that the PML-N had always respected the judiciary but Imran Khan had never respected the judiciary and violated its decisions. Imran Khan was afraid of jails or being arrested, so he was trying every effort to spoil peace and create unrest in the country just to save himself from being behind bars, he asserted. Rana Sanaullah said that the PTI chief during his government, wanted to eliminate the opposition and now when he was in opposition, he tried everything to create anarchy and derail the government, so the people should expose and reject him, he added.

To a question, he said that it has been established that 13 arrested accused out of total 65 did not belong to Punjab but of other provinces, whereas the weapons recovered from Imran Khan's House were totally illegal, he added. Those who wanted to enter the Judicial Complex today along with Imran Khan were also carrying weapons, he maintained.

AK-47s, bullets recovered from Imran's house, say police

LAHORE (Agencies): Police on Saturday allegedly recovered assault rifles and a cache of bullets from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's Zaman Park mansion in a search operation, detaining over 60 party cohorts accused of resorting to hostilities to obstruct the law.

Hours after Khan hit the road to attend the Toshakhana case hearing in the capital on Saturday, Punjab Police barged into his residence. The police and PTI supporters recently fought pitched battles outside the former prime minister's home in Lahore, wounding several on both sides when the former tried to arrest Khan. However, a police operation was launched at Imran Khan's residence this morning to clear the area of 'security camps' established by the party.

Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Anwar, in a press conference, said police had finished the search and cleanup operation in Zaman Park and took into custody AK-47 assault rifles and a large number of bullets from Imran Khan's mansion in Lahore's posh neighbourhood. Moreover, glass bottles, suspected to be used in making Molotov cocktails, and hundreds of marbles for being shot at police with slingshots were also collected from Khan's house.

Later, he said five more Kalashnikovs were also found on Khan's property. To a question, the IG said the legal status of the guns — whether they were licensed or not — was being evaluated. He said before the operation, the roads around the park were blocked with shipping containers, "which now have been cleared". The police conducted the search operation with water cannons, contingents of fully-equipped riot police, lady police, and prisoner vans, the top Punjab cop said, adding that anti-encroachment personnel also accompanied the police along with heavy earthmoving machinery.

'Courts responsible for weakness of the writ of the state'

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Saturday the "courts are responsible for the weakness of the writ of the state. Upholding the writ of the state is the responsibility of the government as well as the other national institutions", she said while addressing a press conference here.

"Petrol bombs were recovered from the residence of Imran which the miscreants kept throwing on the police", she said adding that PTI has turned itself into an armed group. She said that the police in Islamabad also bravely faced the mischief of PTI workers and foiled the conspiracy to spread chaos. Imran Khan was not afraid of playing with national interests, making conspiracies, violating the law and the constitution, as he considered himself above the law, she said.

The minister said one person cannot be allowed to attack the judiciary with a mob and get relief through aggression. Marriyum Aurangzeb questioned whether the justice system was "afraid of terrorists and petrol bombs". "When a Ladla (a darling), a hooligan, a scoundrel comes to courts like this and he gets a bundle relief package from the court, it gives the wrong message," she maintained. She said that Imran Khan illegally dissolved the National Assembly fearing the success of the no-confidence motion by compelling the President, Speaker and deputy speaker National Assembly to violate the constitution.

The minister said Imran Khan had brainwashed the youth and had been instigating them to attack the state and national institutions. She lamented that "a thief, a terrorist, and corrupt person" was still at large. She reminded that Imran Khan has not appeared in this case since the start of its hearing in the



Election Commission of Pakistan from 18 August 2022. The minister said that on August 18, August 21, 2022, January 31, 2023, February 7, 2023, Imran Khan did not appear in the Islamabad High Court. On January 31, when Imran Khan was to be indicted, he got exemption from personal appearance.

She said that he did not appear in Islamabad High Court on March 9, 2023, and he got relief from there too. On March 13, again he did not appear in court again and the session court issued his non-bailable warrants, the police were ordered to arrest Imran Khan and present him in court where he was to be charge-sheeted. She rebutted Imran's statements in the foreign media in which he had claimed that he had been given bail by the court. The minister termed Imran a habitual liar who gives excuses of his old age and health problems. Rejecting Imran's claim about bail in Toshakhana case, she said if he had bail why he presented the excuse of disability and disease and why he did not show the police personnel the bail orders who had come to arrest him. She also questioned why Imran gave the undertaking if he had secured bail. She said today Imran Khan was going to Islamabad with gangs of goons armed with batons and weapons.

"Popular political parties

do not need people from banned organizations to protect them," she remarked. She said this person was involved in hitting the policemen and attacking police vans with petrol bombs but he was not given punishment. The minister said if such a person gets relief from the court, then the state loses its importance. She said that one court orders that he should be arrested and produced in the court, the other court provides relief to him.

This person, she added had blown up the court orders in the air as the police had gone to Zaman Park to implement the court orders of his arrest. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that tens of thousands of citizens of Pakistan stand in queues in hope of justice from courts every morning carrying files of pending cases for years. In contrast, she said Imran Khan goes to the courts for bullying and gets relief. Marriyum said it was completely unfair if a person who has been committing terrorism in broad daylight got relief from the court. She said all the PML-N leaders including Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Miftah Ismail, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Salman Rafique, Hanif Abbasi and others presented themselves before the court during the fascist rule of Imran Khan and never resorted to violation of law and Constitution.



یہ دنیا ہی اللہ ہے

The Right Move

معزز ممبران نووا سٹی پشاور ڈویژن!

پچھلے کچھ عرصے سے TMA CHARSADDA کی طرف سے ذاتی عناد، بد نیتی اور کرپشن کی بنیاد پر غیر قانونی اور حقائق کو جانچے بغیر اشتہارات جاری کئے گئے جس پر نووا سٹی انتظامیہ نے

SO(UADAs)/LG/1-32/2022/LCB
Dated the Peshawar, 14th March, 2023

قانونی راہ کو اپناتے ہوئے مجاز ایپلٹ اتھارٹی میں اپیل دائر کی جس پر مجاز اتھارٹی نے ٹی ایم اے کے غیر قانونی آرڈر کو نہ صرف معطل کیا بلکہ اپنے آرڈر نمبر WP NO. 1333-P/2022 مورخہ 22 فروری، 2023 میں نووا سٹی کی APPROVAL کو تمام قانونی کے ذریعے نووا سٹی کے حقوق کو تحفظ دیتے ہوئے بحالی کے آرڈر بھی جاری کر دیئے ہیں۔ الحمد للہ!

مزید آپ ممبران کو ہم مطلع کرتے ہیں کہ محترم عدالت عالیہ پشاور ہائی کورٹ نے اپنے آرڈر نمبر WP NO. 1333-P/2022 مورخہ 22 فروری، 2023 میں نووا سٹی کی APPROVAL کو تمام قانونی لوازمات پورا کرنے کے بعد ہی درست طور پر TMA سے جاری کرنے کا امر واضح کر دیا ہے۔

1- ہم اپنے معزز ممبران کو یقین دلاتے ہیں کہ نووا سٹی تمام ممبران کو بروقت پلاٹس HANDOVER کرنے کے وعدے پر قائم ہے اور انشاء اللہ بہترین سہولیات سے آراستہ ایک بہترین طرز زندگی مہیا کرنے کیلئے کوشاں ہیں۔

2- رمضان کے بعد پہلے بیلٹ کی تاریخ کا بھی اعلان کر دیا جائے گا جو کہ انشاء اللہ سائٹ پر ہی منعقد کیا جائیگا۔

3- نووا سٹی فیز-1 کی بجلی کی ترسیل (ELECTRIFICATION) کی منظوری کے بعد سائٹ پر مہیا کر دی گئی ہے۔

4- رمضان کے بعد سائٹ پر DEVELOPMENT کا کام بھی تیز کر دیا جائیگا اور پہلے بیلٹ کا پوزیشن وقت سے پہلے HANDOVER کیا جائیگا۔ انشاء اللہ!