

**Gandapur granted bail**  
**F.P. Report**  
D I KHAN: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) Dera Ismail Khan circuit bench Tuesday granted protective bail to former federal minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Amin Gandapur till April 8 next in one case of Bhakkar and Islamabad each. The lawyer for Ali Amin Gandapur said that he had been asked to approach the courts of Sargodha and Islamabad.

 @thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX No. 65 Regd. No. 241 SHABAAN 29 1444 -- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES Price. 20



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributing Chrome Books among the students as part of Teleschool Pakistan and Google for Education Programme.

# PM for digitization of education, proper teachers' training

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed that all resources and efforts should be utilized to introduce the modern modes of education including the digitization initiatives, besides imparting of the latest training to teachers.

He was addressing a launching ceremony of 'Teleschool Pakistan App, Google for Education and Digital Continuous Professional Development' initiative to further revolutionize the formal education medium in Pakistan. The prime minister observed that teachers' training in the country was not up to the mark which was unfortunate and cited his experience in Punjab province.

He said that he had directed for steps to improve the quality of about 40 training centers in the province during his tenure as the chief minister. The prime minister urged the Minister for Federal Education to chalk out a mechanism in consultations with the provincial governments to improve the quality of teachers' training.

Referring to the significance of the latest technology in modern education, he underlined that if they wanted to equip the young generations with the latest education, they would have to give them laptops and other related gadgets, so that the future builders of the nation could get themselves acquainted with the new modes of education. He said that about 100,000 laptops would be distributed among the high achievers across the country hinting that suck-like initiatives would be realized.

The prime minister opined that the vocational training programme should be taken forward in collaboration with the provincial governments and the private sector. Instead of making investments on the brick and mortar, they should invest over the young students by imparting them technical and skill training, he added.

The prime minister emphasized that the students should be directly trained by involving the private sector. The best institutions in the private sector should be hired in a transparent manner and investment be made on each student by imparting them proper training. The prime minister said that they would also establish a network of Danish schools in the far-flung areas of Balochistan for which huge investments would be made.

He expressed the confidence that the quality education to the students in remote area of the province would help bring them at par with the rest of the students of the other parts of the country. He also urged that the educational requirements of the orphan children should be taken care of.

He said imparting the latest education to the young generations should be the goal of life for them. Appreciating the efforts of the federal minister, ministry and other partners, the prime minister said it was a good day for the education sector of the country as the latest technology would be utilized to further improve the quality of education.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain said that quality of education was linked with teachers' training which was being focused. The covid-19 pandemic had provided the world with the opportunity to adopt distance school learning methods, he added.

The minister said under the initiative, six channels were being launched which would prove a milestone in the education system of the country. He said in Pakistan there were about 22.8 million out-of-school children and resources were not enough to cater to them, he said, adding the recent initiatives would be helpful in covering the needs of these children.

He said that the technical and skill development of the youth was vital and observed that the country's universities were not included among the world's top leading educational institutions which was unfortunate.

Representatives of development partners, parliamentarians and relevant officials were present during the ceremony. Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Waseem Ajmal presented an overview of the initiative.

He said digital contents would be created and made available on different medium. A total of six digital channels were being launched for different ages. He said after the Covid pandemic, 6000 quality videos were prepared. Teachers would also be properly trained under the professional development initiative, he added.

Under the initiative, 150 chrome books were being distributed among the students while another 6,000 chrome books would be distributed soon, he added. President and GCEO PTCL Hatem Bamatrafi, in his remarks, expressed that they felt pride on being part of the latest educational initiative which would help transform the educational system in Pakistan. Earlier, the prime minister also distributed chrome books among different students of Islamabad.

**Chairman NDMA briefs PM about relief, rehabilitation efforts for quake-hit Turkiye, Syria:** Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and apprised of the relief and rehabilitation efforts for the quake-affected populace of Turkiye and Syria.

The chairman NDMA further apprised that a total of 2,686 tons tents had been sent to Turkiye via 69 flights whereas another 2,597 tons of relief assistance had been dispatched to Turkiye and Syria through ships. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release, Upon the direction of the prime minister, NDMA had got 50,000 tents prepared including fire-proof tents. So far, a total of 36,402 winterized tents had been sent by NDMA to Turkiye via 26 special flights, it was further added.

## Brigadier martyred in encounter with terrorists

### 3 terrorists killed, troops martyred in Dera



**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday that a brigadier from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was martyred during an encounter with "hardcore terrorists" in South Waziristan's Angoor Adda. In the statement, the ISPR said that an intense exchange of fire took place between the two sides, adding that Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki was martyred "while leading the encounter from the front" and seven others were injured, including two who were critically wounded.

The military's media affairs wing said Brigadier Barki and his team "put up a valiant resistance against the terrorists during the encounter and the officer sacrificed his life for peace of the motherland". "Defence forces of Pakistan and intelligence agencies



pledge to reaffirm and demonstrate firm resolve to eliminate the menace of terrorism from every inch of the country," the ISPR said.

Meanwhile, three terrorists have been killed by security forces while three Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred after an attack on a police check post in Dera Ismail Khan.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the terrorists opened fire on a police check post in DI Khan's Khutti area on the night of March 20-21. Following the attack, security forces immediately cordoned the area, blocking all possible escape routes. The fleeing terrorists were intercepted in the Saggi area of the DI Khan district.

After an intense exchange of fire, three terrorists were killed by the security forces. Weapons

and ammunition were also recovered from the possession of the killed terrorists. During an intense exchange of fire, three Pakistan Army soldiers having fought gallantly embraced martyrdom.

The martyred soldiers include Havaladar Muhammad Azhar Iqbal (age 42 years, resident of Lodhran), Naik Muhammad Asad (age 34 years, resident of Khanewal) and Sepoy Muhammad Essa (age 22 years, resident of South Waziristan) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. The military's media wing said that the sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. It added, "Pakistan Army is determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve."

## 6.8 earthquake rattles many cities of country

PESHAWAR (Agencies): An earthquake of 6.8 magnitudes jolted parts of Pakistan for at least 30 seconds on Tuesday, however, it was not immediately clear whether the tremor had caused any damage or casualties.

Earthquake tremors were felt in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Peshawar, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, and other areas of the country. The epicentre of the earthquake was Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region, while its depth was 180 kilometres, according to the PMD. The earthquake's effects were also felt in Peshawar, Swabi, Lodhran, DG Khan, Bahawalpur, Skardu, Kohat, Toba Tek Singh, Parachinar, Nowshera, and Khanewal.

"People ran out of their houses and were reciting the Quran," an AFP correspondent in Rawalpindi said, with similar reports coming from Islamabad, Lahore and elsewhere in the country. Shocks were also felt in Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Jhelum, Sheikhupura, Nowshera, Multan, Swat, Shangla and other places.

TV footage showed citizens out on the streets from their homes and buildings after the quake shocks were felt. Rescue 1122 director general Dr Khateer Ahmad said the department had received a phone call each from Swabi and Lower Dir on which rescue teams were despatched. "No confirmed reports of any loss of life or property have been received yet. Rescue 1122 is on high alert and ready to provide services during any emergency," he said. So far there have been no confirmed reports of human loss or property damage. Politicians and political parties also reacted to the news and prayed for safety and protection.

## Marriyum lambasted Imran

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Tuesday said terrorists in the guise of party workers came to attack the court and the time was not far off when they would be appearing in courts with veiled faces.

Whether Imran Khan's spouse had got scared when goons of his PTI were assaulting the police and throwing petrol bombs, besides a mob attack on the Judicial Complex (Islamabad), she asked in a tweet. She said whether Imran Khan had any "remorse or shame" for the installation of a camera in the NAB cell of Maryam Nawaz and then watching her on his mobile phone.

Likewise, if he (Imran Khan) felt ashamed for ordering the personnel of security agencies to break into bedroom of Maryam Nawaz at night, she asked. She lambasted Imran Khan for directing the NAB officials to trespass the residence of (Prime Minister) Shehbaz Sharif's daughter. She also berated the PTI chief for dragging Faryal Talpur from hospital on an Eid day and harassing herself (the minister) in Masjid-e-Nabvi and London.

## Imran secures protective bail from LHC in two cases

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday granted PTI Chairman Imran Khan protective bail in two terrorism cases registered against him in Islamabad following last week's clashes at the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC).

The first information reports (FIRs) registered at the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and the Golra police stations in the capital accused the PTI chief and party workers of being involved in attacking police and creating unrest outside the FJC in Islamabad during the hearing of the Toshakhana case on March 18. A two-judge LHC bench comprising Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh and Justice Farooq Haider granted Imran protective bail in the terrorism cases till March 27.

Imran arrived at the LHC at around 1pm on Tuesday. The PTI chairman was accompanied by aide Fawad Chaudhry, party lawyers and private security guards. Imran has renewed claims that his life is in danger, saying that the incumbent rulers wanted to kill him and a trap was laid at the Islamabad Judicial Complex on the occasion of the Toshakhana hearing on Saturday. The PTI chief survived an assassination attempt last year and had blamed senior figures in the government and military for it. Immediately after arriving in court, Imran first appeared before Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh as the court took up PTI's contempt petition against the police operation at his Zaman Park residence on March 18. As the hearing commenced, Justice Sheikh inquired about the guards present in court along with Imran to which Fawad replied that they were a part of Imran's personal security.

However, the judge instructed the guards to leave the courtroom, saying that police officers were already present for

security. At one point during the hearing, Imran appeared at the rostrum and recalled the events of March 18. He said that his wife was alone at home that day, yet the police broke down the windows of his house.

"I reached the Islamabad Toll Plaza and they attacked my house. My wife is a ba parda [modest] woman... her voice is recorded in the camera," the PTI chief stated. "Obstructions were set up in multiple places only so that I could not reach court," he told the court. At that, the court instructed the government lawyer to seek directions regarding the Zaman Park operation and appear in court. "I will initiate contempt proceedings against all those who are sitting in the media and making a joke of the judiciary," Justice Sheikh said.

He also warned that action would be taken if the respondents in the case did not respect the court. "We have to work as per the law, we only listen to what the law says," the judge added. Earlier, the police presented a report in court, which said that six cases were lodged against Imran in Punjab. Three of these FIRs were registered at Lahore's Race Course police station, while others were filed at Sarwar Road police station, Rawalpindi's New Airport police station and Faisalabad's Madina Town police station.

However, Justice Sheikh instructed the police to submit details of cases against Imran registered by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIR) and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as well. The judge also inquired about the dates of the FIRs and if the report included all the latest complaints as well, saying that "FIRs are being lodged every day". The police replied that the report included all the FIRs lodged until yesterday.

## Imran, wife ignore NAB notice

RAWALPINDI (PPD): PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi on Tuesday again skipped their appearance in NAB in connection with the Toshakhana case. The NAB Rawalpindi had summoned Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi to appear before its investigation team today. It may be mentioned here that this was the second call-up notice from the NAB which the former prime minister has ignored.

## KP CM takes financial issues with federal govt

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: As an important step towards steering the province out of current financial crunch, caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has in writing taken up the financial issues related to federation with the incumbent federal government.

The caretaker Chief Minister has sent a formal letter to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to this effect in which he has requested for special support in order to minimize the financial difficulties faced by the province, said an official hand out issued here on Tuesday.

According to details, it has been stated in the letter to the Prime Minister that the federal government had agreed to fund current and development budget of the merged areas. However, there has been a gap in the transfers to Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa ever since the merger, for previous years as well as the ongoing financial year. Cumulatively the funding gap against federal budgetary committed allocation for NMDs for both current and development budget for the years 2019-20 to 2022-23 has reached an amount to Rs. 144.4 billion. Similarly, only Rs. 75.5 billion has been received in the past four years for Accelerated Implementation Plan of NMDs against the total committed amount of Rs. 400 billion which results in the funding gap exceeding Rs. 469 billion whereas the funding shortfall in federal tax assignment is amount to Rs. 25 billion. Besides Rs. 49.5 billion in terms of Net Hydrel Profit (NHP) and Rs. 2.5 billion in terms of oil and gas royalty are also due with the federal government. It was also stated in the letter that Rs. 935 million are required for timely

completion of four irrigation dams being constructed under Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) in the province.

These dams can play a major role towards food security of the province. The chief minister further requested for provision of Rs. 10 billion in flood relief assistance which was announced by the Prime Minister during his visit to the flood hit areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Similarly, re-allocation of 100 MMCFD gas from power to the industrial sector was also requested in the letter. It was further requested in the letter that the matter regarding payment of Net Hydrel Profit as per the AGN Qazi Committee methodology may be placed in the next meeting of CCI. The Chief Minister hoped that the Prime Minister would extend special cooperation for financial stability of the province.

## Govt announces PM's Ramadan Relief Package

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday announced a Ramadan Relief Package worth Rs 5 billion to provide maximum relief to the poor segment of society during the holy month of Ramadan across the country.

While addressing a press conference, Minister for Industries and Production

Syed Murtaza Mahmud said that the first priority of the federal government is to save the people from hardships and inflation. He said that the package has come into force from today (March 21) and would continue till the last day of the holy month. The Federal Government, he said, is already providing five basic food items to the public at subsidized rates through

the Utility Stores Corporation.

In order to facilitate the public the Prime Minister has extended the scope of the relief package by increasing the number of subsidized items to 19. The items to be provided at subsidized rates include flour, ghee, sugar, cooking oil, tea, dates, besan, dal mash, dal mong, milk, drinks, and spices.

## Ramazan moon not sighted in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (Agencies): The Moon-Sighting Committee of Saudi Arabia announced that the Ramazan moon had not been sighted as the holy month will begin on March 23 (Thursday).

According to details, March 22 (Wednesday) would be the last day of the month of Sha'ban, and the holy month would begin on Thursday, March 23. The Saudi Arabia's moon sighting committee will meet again on Wednesday evening to confirm the sighting of the moon.

Ramazan is the month in which the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and the faithful observe the ninth month of the Islamic calendar with prayers and fasting. During Ramazan, Muslims fast from sunrise (Fajr) to sunset (Maghreb).

## Court grants remand of Hassan Niazi

ISLAMABAD (INP): A session court in Islamabad has sent Barrister Hassan Khan Niazi, the nephew of former prime minister Imran Khan on two-day judicial remand for resisting the force at a police picket.

As per details, the sessions court heard the case against Hassan Niazi. His counsel told the court that Hassan Khan Niazi was abducted in front of senior lawyers. He said that remand cannot be accepted on baseless FIR. The Prosecutor told the court to look at the case from a political angle as well. The PTI workers have been pelting stones and beating the police workers with sticks. In order to not affect the investigation the court is requested to accept the judicial remand plea, the prosecutor added. The court announced the reserved verdict and sent Hassan on two-day judicial remand.





## Book fair held at UVAS

LAHORE (APP): Central Library of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) arranged a day-long annual book fair 2023 in the City Campus here on Tuesday.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmad inaugurated the book fair while Librarian Muhammad Aslam, Prof Dr Kamran Ashraf, Prof Dr Asim Aslam, Ms Abeer Zia and a large number of students, faculty members and book sellers were also present.

As many as 12 stalls were set up and publishers displayed a variety of books, including livestock, literature, information technology, social science and on relevant fields of veterinary sciences like anatomy & histology, animal nutrition, clinical medicine & surgery, dairy technology, public health, fisheries aquaculture, food sciences human nutrition, livestock production, microbiology, parasitology, pathology, poultry production, wildlife and ecology, biochemistry biotechnology, pharmaceutical science, leather & fiber technology, statistics & computer science, environmental science and policy management etc.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Dr Nasim Ahmed said that book fair was aimed to provide a platform to promote book reading habit among students, researchers and teachers. He urged to promote such activities not only in city campus rather in other campuses of the UVAS.

## 'Swift resolution of complaints'

LAHORE (APP): Commissioner Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab Syed Khadim Abbas has said that overseas Pakistanis are playing key role in the economic development of the country and their remittances are supporting millions of families. It is a responsibility of the administration and the police to protect interests of hardworking Pakistanis living abroad and provide them with swift solution to their problems.

He expressed these views while addressing the review meeting on pending applications of overseas Pakistanis related to the Commissioner's Office Gujranwala Division, here on Tuesday.

OPC Intiaz Ahmed Khan, along with deputy commissioners of districts, district police officers and officers of departments concerned participated. The commissioner OPC directed officers to process the pending applications of overseas Pakistanis. He expressed concerns over illegal occupation of the properties of expatriates and said that the government could not tolerate occupation of others' property, built by their hard-earned money.

The meeting was informed that 4,222 applications of overseas Pakistanis were received in Gujranwala division, out of which 3,325 have been resolved. At present, only 293 applications are pending across the division, out of which 12 are related to Gujranwala district, 41 to Gujranwala district, 109 to Mandi Bahauddin district, two to Narowal district, 125 to Sialkot district and three to Hafizabad district.

# CM visits Data Darbar Complex, orders reopening of car parking facility

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited the Data Darbar Complex and ordered reopening of the car parking facility for visitors, which had been kept closed since 2010 due to security reasons.

To ensure a smooth reopening, a committee was constituted to develop standard operating procedures for resuming the parking operation after a gap of 13 years. He also inspected the almonry and said that the preparation and distribution of food should be done according to international standards.

The CM expressed his commitment to renovate the original hujra and verandah of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh shrine. A committee had been set up to provide final recommendations in this regard.

Additionally, he lauded the agreement with the Madina Foundation, which would expand the corridors around the shrine, increasing visitors' capacity from three thousand to five thousand.

The CM chaired a meeting at Hajveri Hall to review the expansion plan of Data Darbar, parking and security arrangements for visitors. He also laid a wreath at the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh and prayed for the country's development and prosperity and stability.

Provincial Auqaf Minister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, Minister Information Amir

Mir, chief secretary, Mian Muhammad Rasheed of Madina Foundation, Muhammad Aslam Tareen, Addl IG (Special Branch), CCPO Lahore, secretary auqaf, commissioner Lahore, CTO, GM NESPAK, Khateeb Data Darbar Masjid Mufti Ramzan Sialvi, Administrator Data Darbar and others attended the meeting.

**CM seeks report on hurdles in supply of free flour:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed concerns over reports of disorder in certain cities related to distribution of free flour under the Ramazan relief package.

In response, he directed the provincial administration to provide a detailed report on the matter.

The CM also ordered to improve arrangements for supply of free flour so that citizens do not face any difficulties.

Commissioners, regional police officer, deputy commissioners and district police officers have been directed to visit the distribution centres in their respective areas to promptly address any issues and submit a report.

Moreover, any complaints regarding provision of free flour should be resolved immediately, he said and emphasised the need to expedite verification process for citizens while ensuring that they receive their flour supply without any delay.

## Maj (R) Naem Khan Ex Chief Secretary passed away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Chief Secretary KP and Balochistan Maj (R) Naem Khan breathed his last at Peshawar.

His Janaza prayers will be offered at 11am today i.e Wednesday at his ancestral village Khairabad in Mardan District. Maj (R) Naem Khan had an illustrious career spanning over decades while serving at various important positions both at Federal and Provincial level.

He was an upright officer who was known for taking stands on principles. As Chief Secretary KP he made commendable efforts to professionally strengthen civil bureaucracy during testing times.

As chief Secretary Balochistan he not only initiated and implemented various welfare and developmental projects for uplift of the Province but also effective-

ly handled sensitive security issues.

Born in the village of Khairabad in district Mardan, he was the eldest son of Brig (R) Mahboob Khan. Before Joining Civil Service, he had served in Pak Army by joining FF Regiment as Second Lieutenant in 1966 and valiantly fought during Pak-India war in 1971.

During his long and distinguished career as a civil servant, he served on various important positions like DC Quetta, PA Zhob, Commissioner Malakand, Kohat and Peshawar before being posted as Home Secretary KP. He also served as Chief Secretary, Azad Jammu Kashmir before retiring as Federal Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas in 2008.

He has been survived by a widow, two sons and a daughter. His eldest son serves in the Foreign Service of Pakistan and is working in the Embassy of Pakistan at Greece.

## HEC holds declamation contest to mark Constitution's golden jubilee

LAHORE (APP): In connection with celebrations of the golden jubilee of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, an inter-university bilingual declamation competition-2023, was organised by the Higher Education Commission (Regional Center Lahore) at School of Chemistry of the Punjab University, here on Tuesday.

The students of various universities across Punjab participated in the competition and delivered speeches in Urdu and English on the topic of 'My Constitution: Guarantee of My Freedoms'. PU Law College Principal Shazia Noreen Qureshi was the chief guest, while Chairman History Department Prof. Dr. Mehboob Hussain and HEC Director Ghafoor Amir were the guests of honour at the ceremony.

Students highlighted the importance and salient features of the Constitution of Pakistan. Through their inspiring and motivational speeches, the students highlighted that it was the constitution that ensures the basic rights for its citi-

zens. They also stressed the need for implementation of the Constitution in letter and spirit to ensure provision of all rights to the people of the country.

In Urdu speech contest, Haza Tahir from the University of Central Punjab (UCP) Lahore secured the 3rd position, Azhan Sadique from UVAS secured the 2nd and Syed Kamal Ahmad got the 1st position. Zoya Adnan from Fashion and Design Institute Lahore got the 3rd position, Malik Usama Abbas from Rawalpindi University stood 2nd and Tuseef from Lahore College got the 1st position in the English declamation competition.

Eminent educationists Dr. Danishwar Malik, Syeda Rozy Rizvi, Dr. Taimoor Kiani, Dr. Atar Rizvi, Dr. Shabbir Sarwar and Akmal Soomro were the judges of the competition and acknowledged the participants' hard work. Around 50 students participated in each English and Urdu competition panel. At the end, certificates and shields were awarded to the winners.



KARACHI: A man clean Masjid e Khizra at Sindh high court ahead of the Holy Islamic fasting month of Ramadan.

## Minister announces construction of 250 mini sports complexes

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has announced construction of 250 mini sports complexes across the country to encourage youth participation in sports activities.

Addressing the launching ceremony of PM's Youth Development Initiatives under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Tuesday, the Minister said empowerment of youth through education, employment and engagement is inevitable for development of the country. "If we want to lead the country towards progress, then we need to ensure political stability and continuation of policies," he said. Ahsan Iqbal said that youth form two-third of country's population, hence there was dire need to provide them opportunities of education, skill development and employment for brighter future.

He said, being the minister for planning it was his responsibility to lead them to better future so that they could play due role in the economic

development of the country.

Terming the youth as future of Pakistan, the planning minister urged the young generation not to pay heed towards anybody's propaganda, adding that they should take steps keeping in view their goals and objectives. He said, Pakistan was recognized in the world by its youth who have been getting education in top educational institutions across the world. The minister underlined the need for providing sports facilities to young people saying as many as 250 mini-sports complexes would be established in the country to help them harness their talent.

He said, under the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor Project, thousands of Pakistani students would go to top institutions of America for Ph.D on scholarships. The minister also announced establishment of 21 sub-campuses of top universities in different districts of country.

Meanwhile, the minister reminded that Pakistan was facing scourge of

terrorism in 2013 and no foreign investor was ready to invest here. However, when the PML government took over, it worked on three Es (Energy, Economy, Education) and rid the country of power shortage and consequently the country was able to stand on its own feet.

He said, his government had added 11 megawatt electricity in the national grid system in 2018 and also rid the country of menace of terrorism. In addition, it also introduced many successful projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The situation, he added, was so encouraging that even United Kingdom and United States were seeking investment opportunities for their companies in CPEC. The minister lamented that the journey of progress was intentionally halted in 2018 when one person was being taught how to run the country. He said the situation was so grim that in 2022 the finance ministry had announced that there were no funds available for third quarter.

## Speakers stress implementing Islamic philosophy of Zakat

LAHORE (APP): Speakers at a conference, organised under the auspices of Zakat and Ushr Department on the topic of 'Importance and usefulness of Zakat system in the present era', emphasised the need for implementation of the Islamic philosophy of Zakat in letter and spirit.

The conference, held at the auditorium of Services Institute for Medical Sciences (SIMS) Lahore, was presided over by Caretaker Minister for Zakat and Ushr Punjab Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir, while Caretaker Minister for Specialised Healthcare Dr Javed Akram and Education Minister Dr Mansoor Qadir attended the event as special guests. Secretary Zakat and Ushr Mian Abrar, Administrator Zakat Punjab Rana Sajjad Babar, Ulema Maulana Raghib Naimi, Maulana Yusuf Khan, Maulana Ramzan Sialvi and others were also present.

The speakers stressed that along with the government, the rich of society must come forward to help the deserving people.

Barrister Azfar Ali Nasir, in his speech, said that payment of Zakat was included in the five basic pillars of Islam. "During the month of holy Ramazan, we must help out the deserving people and follow Islamic teachings to create a welfare state," said the minister.

## FPO for promoting cause of ombudsmanship, good governance

ISLAMABAD, Mar 21 (APP): The 27th meeting of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO) have decided to establish a dedicated FPO secretariat to plan, implement and coordinate its activities as well as to act as a platform for promoting cause of ombudsmanship and good governance in the country.

According to a release received here, the meeting was held in the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Islamabad on Tuesday under the chair of Federal Tax Ombudsman/President FPO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah. The FPO meeting coincided with the 40th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the institution of Federal Ombudsman in Pakistan.

The forum appreciated that the ombudsmanship has come of age in the country and the institution is working as an effective mechanism for providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the general public against maladministration by the government agencies. The meeting took important decisions with a view to strengthening mutual cooperation in promoting core values of administrative propriety, rule of law, good governance and inviolability of human dignity. Moreover, the forum agreed to take concrete steps to create greater awareness among the public about their

rights and obligations and the availability of the ombudsman institution for provision of speedy and inexpensive relief against administrative excesses by the governmental agencies.

The FPO meeting reiterated its resolve to act as a platform for promoting the cause of ombudsmanship and robust public opinion against maladministration, discrimination, favouritism, corruption and alike. The forum agreed to maintain regular interaction among its member institutions with a view to sharing knowledge and best practices in carrying out

statutory role in their respective fields. It also decided to establish a dedicated FPO Secretariat to plan, implement and coordinate its activities in a professional manner on sustained basis.

The meeting took note of Pakistan's pivotal role in promoting ombudsmanship at international level. Currently, Pakistan holds the positions of the President of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), Secretary General of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) and Directors in the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).

## RAHMAN COTTON MILLS LIMITED TAKHT-E-BHAI, MARDAN ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

In pursuance of Section 159(4) of the Companies Act, 2017, the shareholders of Rahman Cotton Mills Limited (the "Company") are hereby notified that the following Seven (7) individuals have filed with the Company, notices of their intention to offer themselves for election as directors at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the Company, scheduled to be held on Friday, March 31, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. at the registered office Takht-e-Bhai, Mardan.

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Ali Kuli Khan Khattak | 2. Mr. Ahmad Kuli Khan Khattak  |
| 3. Mrs. Shahnaz Sajjad Ahmed              | 4. Dr. Shahin Kuli Khan Khattak |
| 5. Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan                    | 6. Mr. Muhammad Zia             |
| 7. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, FCA            |                                 |

Since the number of persons who have offered themselves for election as directors does not exceed the number of directors fixed by the Board of Directors under Section 159(1) of the Companies Act, 2017, all the above named persons shall be deemed to have been elected as directors of the Company for the next term of three (3) years commencing from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2023.

Mardan  
22 March 2023

By Order of the Board  
(Malik Javed Hassan)  
Company Secretary



LAHORE: Principal of Government Queen Mary College Prof. Dakar Samra Imran Najjar presenting the souvenir to Education Minister Mansoor Qadir on the occasion of the convocation.

## PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b)) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-

S.#.	Description & Bid No.	Bid Fee (PKR)	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place	Last date for issuance of Bidding Documents	Basis (Price)
01	Procurement of Card & Module P/o Alcatel OMNI PCX (OXO) Connect Installed at P&D Directorate Karsaz, Karachi HQCAA/1992/176/XXLN	Rs.500/-	Rs. 18,600/-	06-04-2023 1100 Hours 1030 Hours	06-04-2023 1100 Hours Log.O.Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	05-04-2023	F.O.R
02	Procurement of Qty. 12 Layer-3 WAN Switches for Nationwide Connectivity Network HQCAA/1992/187/XXLN	Rs.1000/-	Rs. 1,237,500/-	11-04-2023 1100 Hours	11-04-2023 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	10-04-2023	F.O.R

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents obtainable from under mentioned office through request letter which must be attached with bank deposit slip, proofs of Active Taxpayer, GST/NTN certificates of the bidder. Bidding documents can be obtained on any working day between 0900 Hrs to 1300 Hrs by paying Bid Fee (non-refundable) through bank deposit slip in Account No. 6-1-2-20614-714-115525 (Title of account "Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority") in Habib Metropolitan Bank Ltd. Star Gate Branch, Karachi, Pakistan. No Bidding Documents would be issued on the Bid opening date. Bids must be dropped in Bid drop Box placed at under mentioned office by or before due date as per schedule. Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period. PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk), and CAA website [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk). **Warning:** Any financial instrument submitted by bidder, if found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR, LOGISTICS (ANS),  
LOGISTICS CENTER (SOUTH), HQS CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY,  
JIAP KARACHI PAKISTAN TEL: 021-9907-2265 FAX: 021-99242675

PID(K)2711/22

[www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk)





# KP govt unveils social protection policy to tackle poverty, vulnerability

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa unveiled its Social Protection Policy at a dissemination event organized here on Tuesday.

The event was jointly organized by the Public Policy & Social Protection Reforms Unit, Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme funded by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) UK, GIZ Pakistan funded by Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Germany, International Labour Organisation (ILO), and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

The policy aims to extend social protection to the poor and vulnerable people in the province, providing them with a safety net to overcome the adverse effects of

poverty, unemployment, and marginalization.

Adil Saeed Safi, DG of Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), P&DD Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while welcoming the guests said that the Social Protection Policy is more critical now than ever, given the recent rise in poverty and vulnerability due to COVID-19.

The policy seeks to address traditional challenges around poverty, low human capital, gender gap, unemployment, and marginalization that have persisted and increased despite the enhanced focus of the current Government on alleviating poverty through economic growth and redistribution. He thanked SNG, GIZ, ILO, and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for their hand holding in the process.

Dr. Raheel Siddiqui,

SNG's Provincial Team Lead, and Dr. Franz Von Roenne, GIZ SP – SHP Team Lead appreciated the colleagues especially the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that started work on this policy and helped formulate it for the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The merger of FATA with the province has further necessitated urgent policy action to address the spatial dimension of poverty by promoting equitable regional development and broadening the scope of social protection for excluded individuals, households, and communities.

The Social Protection Policy was developed under the technical support of the Sub-National Governance Programme (SNG) and German Cooperation (GIZ), which stepped in

when the Government sought technical support during COVID-19. SNG reviewed the past work on developing the social protection system in the province and developed a Social Protection Roadmap, which the Government approved in December 2020. The Social Protection Policy was an essential milestone of SNG's Social Protection Roadmap.

The policy formulation process was led by Dr. Sohail Anwar jointly with SNG and German Cooperation (GIZ), and International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s expert, Mr. Khalid Mahmood, provided support in conducting Focus Group Discussions. SNG's Social Protection Advisor, Shahid Farooq, facilitated the policy formulation process and authored the chapter on "Implementation Framework."



PESHAWAR: Vice Chancellor SBBW Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed and Care Taker Education Minister Daar Shad Qaiser awarding a degree to students during 7th Convocation of SBBW.

## PHC acquits alleged smuggler Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has acquitted alleged smuggler from charges while turn-down imprisonment of 10 years and Rs0.5 million of fine, on Tuesday.

According to prosecution, Khalid Khan was booked for smuggling drugs at Nasir Bagh police station on 9th January 2022. The trial court has convicted petitioner for 10 years imprisonment while imposed Rs5 lakh fine on him.

The counsel Itaf Khan Advocate argued that both evidences produced and statements of witnesses are self-contradictory which shows that the case has initiated on manipulation and Mala Fide.

The counsel further added that laboratory reports are also contradicts with police and prosecution narrative while the petitioner has no previous criminal history, however, requested to turn down the conviction of trial court. Justice SM Attique Shah of PHC has acquitted alleged smuggler from charges after conclusion of arguments.

## PCSP to construct protection walls for flood mitigation

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Community Support Project (PCSP) has initiated field activities in a proactive manner for the construction of flood protection walls in the flood-prone areas of Khyber and Nowshera districts. The flood protection walls are being constructed in Ali Masjid, Landi Kotal and Lala Cheena areas of Khyber and Jalozai in Nowshera that will make the communities more resilient to monsoon floods which have caused substantial damages in the past.

The flood protection walls will span over 3,100 feet in Ali Masjid, 3,170 feet in Lala Cheena, and 3,160 in Jalozai to ensure protection to a large number of villages that are located in these populated areas. Furthermore, the 4,562 feet lengthy flood

protection wall in Landi Kotal ranging from Khyber Khwar to Lala Cheena will benefit the communities in 8 villages.

All the preparations to that effect have been completed by the PCSP teams in coordination with the district authorities and local communities.

As part of the community-driven development model of the PCSP, the communities will be involved in the construction activities to ensure monitoring and supervision throughout the process. With the recent increase in monsoon floods in Khyber and Nowshera districts that caused severe damage to agricultural land, cattle, and infrastructure, the PCSP team stepped up to address the issue in line with the community needs and priorities.

The flood protection walls in Ali Masjid, Lala

Cheena, Landi Kotal, and Jalozai will provide a reliable solution to prevent flood damage to homes and crops while also ensuring the safety of communities in the project areas.

This is being done in response to the demands made by the local communities through Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach. The community members themselves identified the sites where flood protection walls were needed.

This approach will ensure that the community's needs are being addressed and that the project gets implemented in a collaborative manner. By involving the community in the decision-making process and allowing them to take ownership of the project, the PCSP is also creating a cohesive effort to protect these vulnerable areas from future floods.

## 14th Spring Festival kicked off



### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 14th

Spring Festival has officially kicked off in Peshawar with the opening ceremony

held today at Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Stadium (SKSS).

Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat, Commander Peshawar Corps graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The Chief Guest interacted with the people and visited various stalls.

The festival featured display of different types of flowers, performances by kids, Luddi, and Khattak Dance, which entertained the audience.

The Chief Guest distributed prizes among the winners.

An impressive fireworks show marked the end of the ceremony.

The festival venue will remain open to the general public from 21 to 23 March.

## Citizen Integration Forums to ensure good governance: RTPSC

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Public Services Commission (RTPSC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has arranged citizen integration forum to obtain feedback from public for delivery of services and ensuring good governance in the province, on Tuesday.

The citizen integration forums were held at Battagram and Mansehra districts in which Chief Commissioner RTPSC Muhammad Salim Khan along with both Deputy Commissioners, public office holders, civil society

and local government members were present in large number.

Chief Commissioner Muhammad Salim Khan said that government has made amendment RTPSC Act which has compelled all provincial departments to notify their respective services within three years. He added that within five all services should be available online which will minimize cost and time consumption.

Chief Commissioner RTPSC claimed that women and people with disability has been prioritize in amendments made by provincial government

recently.

Governance Policy Project representative Ashraf Khan throws light on holding citizen integration forums and decision taken on public's feedback which will ensure good governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He added that in previous two years RTPSC has taken momentum to ensure accountability and provision of public services within stipulated timeframe.

Moreover, opinion and recommendations of participants from civil society was taken for consideration for good governance and provision of public services.

However, public's servants addressed questions and grievances of participants during the forum.

Chief Commissioner Muhammad Salim Khan said that RTPSC holding public forums at every district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while he is personally participating to listen public's opinion for assuring good governance in public sector.

He added that RTPSC granting 70% of fine to applicants which is obtained from public's servant as punishment for failure in delivery of services within stipulated timeframe.

## KMC honored with ISO certificate

PESHAWAR (APP): The renowned and historic Khyber Medical College (KMC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been honored with ISO certificate here on Tuesday.

The decision of awarding certificate was taken after the visit of the ISO auditor team to KMC.

On this occasion, the Dean of Khyber Medical College Prof. Dr. Mahmood Aurangzeb and the Director of Quality Assurance of Khyber Teaching Hospital

accompanied the ISO team.

They conducted an inspection and briefing regarding the standards, procedures and SOPs of various departments of the college.

Dean Professor Dr. Mahmood Aurangzeb said that KMC has history in the country and produced talented doctors who are a source of pride for us. The achievement of such goal is a proud moment for all the KMC family.

This achievement

reflects the dedication and hard work of the faculty and staff of Khyber Medical College. This will not only enhance the reputation of the college but also increase confidence in the quality of education offered in the college, he said.

He said that KMC has always been an institution with long-standing values that are deeply rooted in its academic culture.

It may be noted that Khyber Medical College

was established in 1954 with a history spanning over 70 years. About 280 male and female students enroll in the College every year and currently about 1400 male and female students are studying. While these students also benefit from Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) which is an affiliated hospital of Khyber Medical College.

The Khyber Teaching Hospital has obtained ISO 9001:2015 certification in 2022.

## SSP pays visit to PS

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police Operations, Capital City Police Haroon Rasheed paid a surprise visit to Police Station University Town to review security arrangements in the context of the prevailing situation, said a press release issued on Tuesday.

The SSP Operations also met with visitors and directed the police personnel for exhibiting good behavior towards complainants and remaining alert while keeping in view the prevailing situation.

He further directed the staff of the police station for the resolution of the problems of senior citizens and women on priority basis. He also checked the residential barracks of police and met with the people in lockups and collected first-hand information from them regarding the attitude of the police.

The SSP Operations got himself acquainted with the problems faced by the police personnel in the police station and checked records, registers, attendance, arms & ammunition and cleanliness.

## Partly cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted partly cloudy to cloudy weather in most districts of the province.

However, scattered to widespread rain-wind and thundershower with isolated heavy falls (isolated hailstorm) is expected in Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, North & South Waziristan districts.

During the last 24 hours, partly cloudy and cloudy weather occurred over most districts of the province while rain-thunderstorm occurred over Chitral, Swat, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Bajaur, Khyber and Kurram districts.

Rain recorded (in mm): Kakul 12, Parachinar 05, Malam Jabba & Balakot (each) 04, Saidu Sharif 03, Pashat (Bajaur) 02, Mirkhani 01 and Tirah (Khyber) Trace.

The minimum temperature recorded in the province was 0°C in Kalam.

## Food Deptt and KPITB to launch Wheat/Atta Supply Chain System

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Food Department and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) have collaborated to develop a comprehensive and efficient supply chain system for wheat/atta in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The training session was attended by 30 focal persons and DFCs from across the province. The session provided participants with a comprehensive overview of the new supply chain system and how it will help in the efficient distribution of Wheat/Atta during the month of Ramadan.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Secretary Food KP, Muhammad Abid Khan emphasized the importance of this initiative in ensuring the availability and affordability of wheat/atta to the citizens during Ramadan. He highlighted that the system would help in streamlining the supply chain, reducing wastage, and eliminating any discrepancies in the distribution process.

The Managing Director KPITB, Dr. Ali Mahmood, added that the Wheat/Atta Supply Chain System is a state-of-the-art application that would enable the authorities to monitor the entire supply chain in real-time.

The aim of the session was to introduce an efficient and transparent trackable supply chain system for Wheat/Atta in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The training session was attended by 30 focal persons and DFCs from across the province. The session provided participants with a comprehensive overview of the new supply chain system and how it will help in the efficient distribution of Wheat/Atta during the month of Ramadan.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Secretary Food KP, Muhammad Abid Khan emphasized the importance of this initiative in ensuring the availability and affordability of wheat/atta to the citizens during Ramadan. He highlighted that the system would help in streamlining the supply chain, reducing wastage, and eliminating any discrepancies in the distribution process.

The Managing Director KPITB, Dr. Ali Mahmood, added that the Wheat/Atta Supply Chain System is a state-of-the-art application that would enable the authorities to monitor the entire supply chain in real-time.

## First ever grand photo walk held in City



### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The first grand photo walk of its kind was organized in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Project Head of Grand Photo Walk Muhammad Ali in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism

Authority, Board of Investment and Trade and Directorate of Archeology and Museum.

More than 70 vloggers, YouTubers, content creators and photographers from different cities of the province participated in the walk including internationally renowned photographer Sony

brand ambassador Asmar Hussain, Information and public relations photographer Ali Imran Khan Orakzai and Co-Lead Capture of Umar Farooq Orakzai participated. The Grand Photo Walk started from Peshawar Museum to Mohabbat Khan Mosque passing

through Ghanta Ghar, Bazar Kalan to Sethi House, Sethian Haveli, Gorgahri then Islamia College and ended at Bab-e-Khyber.

During this walk the participants along with photography and videography also enjoyed the information about these historical places as well. Project Head of Grand Photo Walk Muhammad Ali said that the purpose of this walk is to promote the culture, history, archeology, tourist places of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He further said that the Grand Photo Walk is an excellent platform for information and research.

This walk is not just a photo walk but a series of positive activities to promote the culture and heritage of Peshawar. Director of KP Board of Investment and Trade Dr. Iqbal Sarwar eulogized the efforts of the photowalk participants and said that it is a positive activity through which we all have to convey the message to the world that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially Peshawar is our ancient heritage. He said that there are excellent opportunities for business and industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.





## In brief

### Speeches competition held F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: An Inter-board speech competition on the topic of 'my constitution is the guarantor of my freedom' was held at the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Malakand Chakdara here the other day. Rumaisha Malik, a student of Peshawar Board, won the English speech competition, while Aqdas Saleem of Mardan Board won the Urdu competition. The event was arranged in connection with 50th anniversary of the Constitution of 1973 on the topic of "My Constitution is the guarantor of my freedom". Two students from each board participated by giving speeches in Urdu and English languages. The District and Session Judge (R) Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Malakand University Professor Dr Qaiser Khan, Akhtar Munir Kamal Advocate, Prof Jalaluddin and Professor Waris Khan, the jury members decided the position holder among the students who participated in the speech competitions. Secretary Malakand Board Saeed Ahmed, Secretary Mardan Board Muhammad Rehman and others were also present. Addressing the ceremony, Chairman Malakand Board Professor Zamin Gul said that the 1973 constitution was the guarantor of the rights of every citizen of the country and all the institutions of the country were working under this constitution. He said that being citizens of Pakistan we all should strictly follow this constitution.

### Anti-polio teams seek support F.P. Report

PABBI: Member of the civil society Azakhel Lower, Abdul Habib on Tuesday asked his villagers to cooperate with polio teams and help them in their efforts to eradicate this crippling disease from the society. In a statement issued here, he said that polio teams are working to protect our children from future disabilities for decades and it was our duty to help them in their endeavors. He lauded the role of polio teams, especially female and policemen as the frontline workers of polio eradication teams. He said that polio teams have received serious threats in district Nowshera but despite they are working in order to save the future of our generations. He asked the people of the area to support polio teams and administer polio drops to their children to save them from lifetime disability.

### Jehangir defends PhD thesis F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jehangir Khan, PhD Scholar in Department of Chemistry, UoM has successfully defended his PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr. Maria Sadiq, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, UoM & Co-supervision of Dr Syed Wadud Ali Shah, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy, UoM. According to a UoM report on Tuesday, the External Examiners were Prof. Dr. Zahid Hussain, Department of Chemistry, UoM Prof Dr. Sultan Alam Kakakhel & Faculty Members have congratulated Dr Jehangir Khan & research supervisors for successful PhD Public Defense.

# World Water Day observed in Mardan

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: World Water Day is observed in Mardan to raise awareness in order to motivate and mobilize the citizens to conserve water. Water and sanitation services company Mardan (WSSCM), Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) and Water Aid jointly organized various events on World Water Day in which people from different walks of life participated. An awareness seminar and awareness walk were held in which students, faculty members of environmental sciences and other departments and WSSCM staff participated.

The main objective of these event was to raise public awareness about water conservation, safe drinking water and sanitation systems. Professor Dr. Dilawar Farhan Shams, chairman environmental sciences department (AWKUM), Director Administration Muhammad Idris, Associate

Professor Dr Shams Ali Baig, Dr. Waliullah, Luqman Khan, Deputy Manager Customer Relations Rahatullah and other delivered their speeches on aims and objectives of the day.

The speakers said in Pakistan 4.5 million people have no access to water while 141 million have no access to safe water. 15.5 million people are living without sanitation services and 4.5million have no access to hygiene service. The day reminds people of taking action to conserve water and change their habits while using water.

The speakers said by using safe water we can reduce the budget of health. They said that every member of the society should play their role in cleaning the environment and water safety.

Speakers said due to poor sanitation practices, human waste contaminates water resources by getting into rivers, lakes, and soil. 79 million people in Pakistan lack

of decent sanitation and about 92pc of the wastewater is untreated and goes directly to water bodies. Water reservoirs are rapidly depleting but we are still not taking serious steps to prevent water wastage which is a matter of concern. They added

Dr. Dilawar Farhan shams has said in a statement that three lac and fifteen thousand children died every year due to poor sanitation. Thirty Eight workers die every hour from a disease caused by lack of sanitation. He added, Dr Shams Ali Baig has said, in 1951, Pakistan had five thousand cubic meters water available for every citizen, while in 2016, one thousand cubic meters of water is available for every citizen. Deputy Manager Customer Relations Rahatullah said that wsscm is providing safe drinking water to five thousand households in ten union councils of Mardan city while in fourteen uc's wsscm provide sanitation services.

# QWP for ensuring flour, other items in Ramadan

## F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Provincial Chairman of Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao on Tuesday asked the government to introduce a mechanism to ensure the availability of all commodities, particularly wheat flour in Ramadan and take action against hoarders and profiteers.

Speaking at a press conference held at Sherpao village in Charsadda district, he asked the authorities concerned to put in place a mechanism to provide relief to the people by bringing down the prices of the daily use food items. Piran Village

Council nazim Sahib Shah announced joining the QWP along with his family members and supporters on this occasion.

"The government must order a crackdown against the hoarders and profiteers to provide relief to the have-nots during Ramadan," he said, adding that the skyrocketing inflation had made life miserable for the people. He said that one year had passed but no funds had been issued to the elected members of the local government, which was a grave injustice to the people and it also amounted to a violation of the constitution.

Criticising Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan, Sikandar Sherpao said it seemed the country had two laws keeping in view what the PTI leader did. He demanded that the rule of law should be ensured in the country so that nobody would avoid facing the courts. He said that the previous PTI-led provincial government did not safeguard the constitutional rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the PTI leaders did not take up with the Centre the release of the net hydel profit arrears. The QWP leader said that his party would continue raising voices for the rights of the oppressed segments of society.

# Three days health festival kicks-off

## Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Health department Hafizabad launched three-day Health Festival at District Headquarter Hospital while Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich inaugurated the festival. CEO Health Hafizabad Dr. Fareha Akram Malik and other officers were also accompanied by him.

DC said on the occasion that health festival was held to provide better health facilities under same roof on the directions of the Punjab government. He said that all diagnostic and treatment facilities were being given to patients free of cost in the festival at same place instead of visiting different rooms and places in the hospital.

DC also visited emergency, outdoor, CCU ward, Laboratory, X-ray room etc. to review availability of medicines and other

facilities to patients in the hospital. CEO Health Dr. Fareha Akram Malik informed on the occasion that health festivals were also arranged at THQ Hospital Pindi Bhattian, RHCs Sukheki Mandi, Vaneke Tarar, Rasulpur Tarar and Ramke Chatha.

**Lawyer held tent pegging competition:** Tent pegging competitions held under a species of District Bar Association Hafizabad in connection with celebrating 'Jashan-e-Baharan,' District and Session Judge Malik Mushtaq Elahi Bingi, President Bar Malik Waqas Raza and General Secretary Bar Muzamal Aziz Gujjar gave away to position holders.

On the occasion, District and Session Judge Malik Mushtaq Elahi Bingi appreciated the Bar Association to arrange tent pegging competition to provide free of cost recreational opportunity to people. Sports activities play important

role in mental and physical growth of the youth as well as to create sportsman spirit among the youth which prove helpful to prove helpful to make the youth useful and responsible citizens in future life, he added.

**Youth commits fratriicide:** Real son murder his father to refuse money for purchasing drugs in village Thatha Bhattian in precinct of Police station Sukheki Mandi. According to details, Mujahid son of Bashir resident of village Thatha Bhattian was demanding money for procuring of narcotics or share of his property. But his father Bashir could not fulfill his demand.

The last night, when family members of Bashir were sleeping, accused Mujahid attacked with big knife on his father and murdered him. Sukheki Mandi police have registered a case against accused and shifted dead body to hospital for autopsy.

# Typhoid fever turns into epidemic

## F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Typhoid fever has become an epidemic in Rabat region. Dozens of people are hospitalized. Some patients are in critical condition and have been transferred to Swat hospitals.

According to details, Rabat in Lower Dir, typhoid fever has become an epidemic and many people in each house, including students and children, have been infected with typhoid fever. And the injection use in typhoid are cost of 1450 ,2000 or upto twenty-six hundred rupees and the patient has to get three injections in a day, which is not enough for the poor people. According to doctors, typhoid fever can be caused by dirty water. Medical teams should be sent to the affected area Rabat and the water should be tested in the laboratory and the affected people should be treated officially.

**RPO commits to curtail extremism:** Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand Nasir Mehmood Sati has said that there is no go area in Malakand

Division and the border areas of Upper Dir and Lower Dir with Afghanistan are closely monitored so that no terrorists and miscreants can enter Pakistan from Afghanistan. Police can't establish peace without people. There will be an early crackdown on drug dealers in Lower Dir and drug dealers and suppliers will be destroyed to make Malakand division drug free.

Peace will be established in Malakand division. His first priority is his first priority and he expressed these thoughts while addressing the area elders and DRC members in Timergara police line. DPO lower Dir Tariq Iqbal DSP Fakhr Alam Khan were also present before Anjum Tanjan Timergara Haji Anwar ud din, Central Vice President of ANP Hussain Shah Yousafzai, Syed Hasan Advocate of DRC, Habibullah, former Nazim Lal Qila Bakhtiar Khan, Ubaidullah Anwar, Imran Nazir of the Chamber and others expressed their views on peace and drug and other issues in the area.

RPO Nasir Mehmood Sati said that the police are for the protection of the people and the police and the people are side by side and without the cooperation of the people, the police cannot establish peace.

## Free medical camp held F.P. Report

GHALANAI: A free medical has been arranged by Frontier Crops (FC) North in which quality facilities were provided to 625 patients in the Mohmand district, on Tuesday.

Efforts are being made by the security forces to provide basic health necessities to the tribal people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the far-flung areas.

In this regard, a free medical camp was organized by Frontier Corps North in Mohmand district with a total of 625 patients treated, including 190 males, 225 females and 210 children. 83 lab screenings were also conducted during the camp.



QUETTA: A view of stalls established for Ramadan bazaar at Meezan Chowk.

## Arrangements for provision of free flour reviewed F.P. Report

MARDAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Engineer Syed Shahzeb held meeting to review arrangements for provision of free flour to the beneficiaries in Ramadan, on Tuesday.

A meeting regarding establishing free flour distribution points at the level of attended, a detailed briefing was given to the Additional Deputy Commissioner regarding the establishment of flour points at the village council level and the main distribution point at the tehsil level.

He directed other departments including the corporation to implement the orders issued by the provincial government and to take necessary steps by utilizing all the resources. He said that under this program low income families Free flour will be provided. The selection of the beneficiaries will be done through the prevailing eligibility criteria linked to NADRA and Benazir Income Support Program data.

**Police arrests five alleged culprits:** Police recovered over 3kg hashish and arrested five persons in the district on Monday. A Police spokesman said that on the directive of the district police officer more than 2kg of hashish was recovered from one accused and some quantity of ice drug was seized from another accused in the city.

One accused identified as Hazrat Khan was arrested in TakhtBhai area 310 grams of ice recovered from him while another proclaimed of fender was arrested in saroshah area of the district. Meanwhile one person was arrested in chura area and all most 1kg of hashish was recovered from his possession.

Police team arrested Noor ul Amin Mardan Hoti accused of selling drugs during the blockade and transferred him to the Hoti police station. During the search, 1182 grams of hashish and 175 grams of heroin were recovered from the possession of the arrested accused and a case was registered under the prevailing Act.

## Media role key for good governance F.P. Report

SHANGLA: District Police Officer (DPO) Shangla said that media role is critical for good governance and provision of speedy justice to public at doorsteps, on Tuesday.

This he said while talking to media personnel in introductory session during his visit to Shangla press club while SDPO and Station House Office Alpuri were also present. DPO Shangla Sajjad Ahmad Sahibzada said that security of livelihood and property is top priority of police while indiscriminate action shall be initiated against outlaws.

DPO claimed that Shangla is tourist destination for both local and foreign visitors while police facilitating them at every spot by aiding and guidance to them. He claimed that Shangla peaceful place with natural aesthetics.

**Student stabbed to death:** A young student was stabbed to death over a petty clash in Puraan tehsil of Shangla district, police informed on Tuesday.

# Tribesmen sensitize of Dengue disease

## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: To create consciousness regarding Dengue an open court (Khuli Kachehri) was held here in Raza Khan Kelley, Wali Khel subdivision Landi Kotal, district Khyber. The Kuli Kachehri was attended by Assistant Commissioner, (AC) Landi Kotal Irshad Mohmand, Dr Hidayat of headquarter hospital, Dr Isfaq focal person of Dengue, councillors, teachers, elders and people from different walks of life participated in the moot.

Addressing on the occasion, AC said that the purpose of the gathering was to educate the residents prior to the breaking of the disease and to collectively adopt effective initiatives to curtail it. The subdivision administrative officer said that they were well aware of the problem and would adopt all necessary steps to halt the spread of the Dengue. He stressed upon

the laymen to strictly follow precautionary measures and symptoms of the Dengue so that it could be treated on time.

The health representative shed light on causes, symptoms and cures of Dengue and said the disease that caused biting of a special mosquito could be curtailed by use of net while going to sleep, covering ponds of water in the locality to halt breeding of the mosquito larva and wearing of full sleeves dress. He urged the masses that in case of getting flu, fever, pain in body etc. immediately contact the nearest doctor because it might be Dengue disease.

Earlier, the participants apprised the AC of their problems who pledged to resolve it. Meanwhile, a Dengue awareness session was also organized that was attended by large numbers of residents. The health experts delivered fruitful speeches and voluble information

was shared with the attendants to curtail Dengue disease. It is to be stated here that last year dozens of residents were affected by the disease when it broke out in the village Wali Khel.

**Rare leopard poisoned:** A rare leopard of endangered species was allegedly poisoned to death for attacking a herd of goats in Landi Kotal's Shulman Valley of Khyber district on Tuesday.

According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, the symptoms of the leopard's body showed that the animal may have been poisoned. It was learnt that earlier this year two leopard cubs had died in Tirah Valley of Khyber district for unknown reason.

The wildlife department has taken the body of the leopard into custody and said those responsible for the leopard's death will be held to face justice.

# Progress on Swat motorway Phase-II reviewed

## Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah Khan presided over a meeting regarding Swat Motorway Phase second at Commissioner's Office Saidu Sharif on Tuesday. In the meeting, the progress in the construction of the Swat Motorway Phase second was reviewed.

Project Director Swat Motorway phase second Barkatullah briefed Commissioner Malakand Division on various aspects and the overall progress of the project. The meeting was informed that the land for the project has been acquired and payments are progressing as per the project timeline. It was informed in the meeting that the length of the motorway

with its unique design is 80 km, in which 10 km will pass through Malakand district and 70 km will pass through six tehsils of Swat district, in which eight bridges and nine interchanges will be constructed.

The motorway running along the right and left banks of the Swat River will start at Chakdara Interchange and end at Chakrai. While presiding over the meeting, Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah Khan expressed his satisfaction with the progress and said that the completion of the project will promote tourism and commercial activities related to horticulture in Swat and the project will help in faster and better transportation.

**FIA arrests shopkeeper over selling pirated books in Mingora:** Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team conducted raid on Tuesday and arrested a shopkeeper over selling Oxford pirated books in Mingora Swat.

The raiding team, comprising SI Naheed Bilal, ASI Tahir, HC iftikhar, FC Saqib, and FC Adnan, was constituted by Nadeem Zafar, Deputy Director FIA ACC Peshawar, under the supervision of SI Naheed Bilal.

The team arrested book seller Ikram Ullah and also recovered 300 pirated books of Oxford University Press. Case has been registered under 66, 66A copyright ordinance against the arrested accused and further investigation is underway.

# D&SJ administer oath from new Bar's cabinet

## F.P. Report

BUNER: The office bearers of District Bar Buner cabinet for the year 2023-24 have taken oath of their respective offices here at Bar Hall in Daggar Buner, on Tuesday.

The district & Session Judge Haq Nawaz administered oath to them in a graceful gathering. The Buner Bar members the ATC Judge Arshad Khan, ADJs, SCJ, SCJ Admin, Civil Judges, public prosecutors the media heads the petitions writers union leaders and judicial employees leaders largely attended.

The chief guest District & Session Judge Haq Nawaz Khan the ATC Judge Arshad Khan the elections board chairman Israr Advocate general

secretary newly elected general secretary Mehboob-ur-Rehman Advocate the outgoing president Said Jamil Shah the newly elected president Rafiq Ahmed Khan Advocate general secretary Hazrat Husain Advocate addressed.

The chief guest congratulated the newly sworn up cabinet and hoped for best working relationship between the bar and bench in the larger interest of the litigants to make sure justice well in time. He also shared huge amount was approved for bar library and its others requirements besides judicial complex in Daggar and courts building in Tehsil Khadukhel.

The outgoing president S. Jamil Shah Advocate and general secretary Mehboob Advocate assured all out

support in larger interests of lawyer's community. The elections board chairman Israr Ahmed Advocate extended thanks for support during electioneering process and praised lawyer's community for giving an unopposed cabinet.

The newly elected president and general secretary Rafiq Ahmed Khan Advocate and Hazrat Husain Advocate thanked all of lawyers for supporting and participation in the oath taking ceremony and assured all out efforts for the wellbeing of the community. The cabinet extended special thanks to district and session judges and judicial officers staff petition writers and media for honoring this auspicious occasion and made it historical.

## Four bike lifters arrested

MULTAN (INP): Police on Tuesday arrested four bike lifters who were involved in stealing motorcycles from different areas.

According to an official spokesman, on a tip-off, in charge check post stopped two suspicious bike riders

when they were crossing Ghazi Ghat check post in DG Khan. When asked about the vehicle's documents the riders failed to prove the ownership to the police.

The accused confessed that they had stolen the bike

from Muzaffargarh while another two accused were also arrested from Sakhi Sarwar on tip of the arrested accused, said the police. SHO Darhuma Police Station said legal action was being taken against them.





## Beijing still seeking answers a year after China plane crash

BEIJING/WASHINGTON (Reuters): China's aviation regulator said that investigators were still looking into the cause of the crash of China Eastern Airlines Flight MU5735, almost a year after the plane came down, killing all 132 people on board. The Boeing 737-800 crashed into a mountainous region in the southwestern Guangxi region on March 21, 2022, in China's deadliest aviation disaster in 28 years.

On the eve of the anniversary, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) issued a three-paragraph statement that provided little detailed information and no data from the plane's so-called "black boxes" that would offer clues into its sudden plunge from cruising altitude. "Because the accident is very complicated and extremely rare, the investigation is carrying on in an in-depth manner," the CAAC said, adding that experts had inspected more than 100 pieces of wreckage. "Following on this, the technical investigation team will continue to carry out work such as cause analysis, experiments and verification, and will release relevant information in a timely manner according to the investigation's progress."

International Civil Aviation Organization rules require countries probing plane crashes to make a final report publicly available within 12 months or if that is not possible, to publish an interim statement on each anniversary, detailing the progress of the investigation and any safety issues identified. But Greg Waldron, Asia managing editor of industry publication FlightGlobal said the brevity of the CAAC's one-year statement was unusual, noting that one-year reports published by other Asian countries were often dozens to hundreds of pages long and included detailed analysis. "The objective is not to attribute blame, but rather to improve the safety standards of the industry in general," he said.

While the MU5735 tragedy like all aircraft disasters was complex, the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder of the

aircraft were recovered days after the crash, he added. "This data from this equipment should have yielded detailed insights into conditions with the aircraft and in the cockpit at the time of the crash." The Chinese regulator said investigations so far had focused on how key components were performing before the crash, and looked into air traffic control, the passengers and what the plane was carrying. Investigators looking into the crash were examining the actions of the crew on the flight deck with no evidence found of a technical malfunction, two people briefed on the matter told Reuters in May 2022.

In a response to internet rumours of a deliberate crash, the CAAC said at the time the speculation had "gravely misled the public" and "interfered with the accident investigation work." A final report into the causes of the crash could take two years or more to compile, Chinese officials said last year. Boeing declined to comment and China Eastern did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A summary of a preliminary report issued last year before the jet's black boxes were analysed gave no indication of the focus of the investigation. It noted the crew were qualified, the jet was properly maintained, the weather was fine and no dangerous goods were onboard.

The cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder were sent to a US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) laboratory in Washington, a move Beijing had supported despite rising political tensions between the two countries. NTSB investigators also travelled to China. The NTSB said it continued to support the Chinese-led investigation. NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy said last week the agency has had a "really good working relationship with China" during the investigation. "Our investigators went to China. We got what we needed," Homendy said. The 737-800 is a widely flown predecessor to Boeing's 737MAX and has been in service since 1997 with a strong safety record.

## Blinken offers US support to Armenia

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken offered US support in helping Armenia toward having peace discussions with Azerbaijan, the US State Department said. Blinken and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a phone call, which was about two weeks after Azerbaijani troops and ethnic Armenians exchanged gunfire in Azerbaijan's contested region of Nagorno-Karabakh, killing at least five people.

Blinken "reiterated US support for direct talks and diplomacy to support a lasting and sustainable peace in the South Caucasus and stressed that there is no military solution," the State Department said in a statement. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Pashinyan have met several times as part of attempts to resolve the conflict, but periodic violence has hurt peace talks. Nagorno-Karabakh was the focal point of two wars that have pitted Armenia against Azerbaijan in the more than 30 years since both ex-Soviet states have achieved independence. Russia and Armenia are officially allies through a mutual self-defence pact, but Moscow also seeks to maintain good relations with Azerbaijan.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but populated mostly by ethnic Armenians. In December, Azerbaijanis claiming to be environmental activists started a blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only road linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia says the blockade has led to food and medicine shortages, and that the protesters are government-backed agitators. Azerbaijan denies those claims and says the protesters are campaigning against illegal Armenian mining.

## One dead in Texas school shooting

ARLINGTON (AP): A student opened fire at a Dallas-area school, killing one student and injuring another before being arrested on a capital murder charge, police said. The shooting began on a high school campus in the suburb of Arlington around 6:55 a.m., before many students arrived for the first day back to classes after the spring break, according to police and school district officials.

Arlington police Chief Al Jones said that a male student who was shot died at a hospital and a female victim was receiving medical care after being "grazed" by shrapnel, causing injuries that aren't life threatening. He declined to give their ages or grades. Another male student was arrested at the scene and charged with capital murder, Jones said at an afternoon news conference. The police chief declined to identify the suspected shooter because he is a minor, but said he is being held at a juvenile detention center in the area. The gunman ran from the scene without ever entering the Lamar High School building and was taken into custody by responding officers "within minutes," Jones said.

"There's very little way we will be able to avoid crossing 1.5 C sometime in the 2030s," but the big issue is whether the temperature keeps rising from there or stabilizes. Guterres insisted "the 1.5-degree limit is achievable." Science panel chief Hoesung Lee said so far the world is far off course. If current consumption and production patterns continue, Lee said, "the global average 1.5 degrees temperature increase will be seen sometime in this decade."

Experts estimate that many hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, may have died in China's wave of COVID - far higher than the official toll of under 90,000, but still a much lower death rate than in Western countries. However, 200,000 to 300,000 deaths could have been prevented if the country was better vaccinated and stocked with antivirals, according to modeling by the University of Hong Kong and scientist estimates. Some scientists think even more lives could have been saved. "It wasn't a sound public health decision at all," said a China CDC official, declining to be named to speak candidly on a sensitive matter. "It's absolutely bad timing ... this was not a prepared opening." Toward the end of 2021, many public health experts and leaders began thinking about how to exit from the zero-COVID policy. The less lethal but far more infectious omicron made curbing COVID-19 harder and the risks of its spread lower, and nearby Korea, Japan and Singapore were all loosening controls.

That winter, the State Council appointed public health experts to a new committee tasked with reviewing COVID-19 controls, which submitted a report in March 2022, four people with knowledge of it said. The existence of the document is being reported for the first time by the AP. It concluded it was time for China to begin preparations for a possible reopening. It ran over 100 pages long and included detailed pro-

## Ukraine's other frontline 'fortress' resisting Russian capture

KYIV (AFP): There's a second frontline town in eastern Ukraine that the Russians are trying to batter into submission just like Bakhmut, but locals say Avdiivka is unlikely to fall anytime soon. Pounded by artillery and latterly by air strikes, Avdiivka is another flashpoint in the Donbas region that Moscow's forces are trying to surround, just like in Bakhmut, 60 kilometres (40 miles) to the north. "Every day is the same with these bombs and missiles," said 70-year-old Nadezhda.

She and a neighbour headed home with bags of food aid, passing close to a 15-storey residential tower ripped open during an attack the previous day. "When I saw it, I was just staggered," said Nadezhda. The Russian army has been trying to conquer Avdiivka since 2014 when fighting broke out between Kyiv's forces and Kremlin-backed separatists. The town lies just 13 kilometres (eight miles) from Donetsk, the Russian-held capital of the eponymous region. Before the February 2022 invasion, the town had a population of 30,000.

After more than a year of fighting, only 2,300 people are left, including 1,960 living off aid, said local military administration chief Vitaliy Barabash. "Over the last three weeks, with the help of the police and volunteers, we have evacuated about 150 people. "We had 47 children in the town, today only eight remain," he told AFP. A few people still survive in the basements of buildings in the town centre. Some have stayed in the hundreds of homes spread across the east side.

They have had no running water, gas or electricity for months. Outside a building destroyed by a missile, an old man is trying to cut up a doorframe and branches from a tree with a saw and an axe. He refuses help and works steadily. He loads up his bag with wood and swings it on his arched back. He sets off slowly on old wooden crutches, his right leg limping. "The situation is just getting worse. Now, (the Russians) use X-59s, X-101s, X-555s, C-300s," said Barabash, listing long range weapons.



"That was never the case before. They are hitting us with about 10 to 12 missiles a day, if not 14." For Ruslan Sumov, who runs an aid centre, "the missiles are getting bigger and bigger, just like the damage. Buildings literally collapse... They will probably destroy everything here. "We were not really frightened before, we had become used to the GRAD rockets, even if they are designed to kill people. "But now, we are bombed by missiles, we are under aerial attack," he said. When the Ukraine conflict erupted back in 2014, pro-Russian separatists took Avdiivka before Kyiv's forces wrestled back control. Its closeness to the front line made the town a focus of the fighting before last year's full invasion. The town is now the theatre of some of the hardest fighting along the front, along with Bakhmut.

Last June, north of Avdiivka, Russian forces cut off one of the two main access roads and took up positions to the east and south. They have advanced over recent months taking the villages of Vodiane and Opytnye to the southwest as well as Krasnogorivka and Vesele to the north, creating a pincer movement to capture Avdiivka, if it cannot be seized by a frontal assault. In the fields bordering the only access

road, shells have left behind small, blackened craters. For Barabash, missile strikes are the "biggest problems... obviously another problem is that they are still trying to surround the town". All the same, Avdiivka does not look likely to fall. "The town has been on the front line for more than eight years. It's a very serious line of fortification, all concrete, with bunkers," said Ruslan Sumov.

"It's a real fortress. It's better protected than Bakhmut. "Bakhmut mostly has trenches, here we have bunkers," he noted. As the fighting rages, even the main hospital has not been spared. "On March 8, our canteen was hit," but no one was hurt, said hospital director Vitaliy Sytnyk. A surgeon still operates there, but the most seriously wounded are taken to other towns. "Most people come to look for medicine, because all the chemists are closed," said Sytnyk, adding that some "ask for sedatives, sleeping pills" to cope with the stress. Nadezhda has another worry. "We would like to have a bit of rain for the garden," she said. "We should already have already started planting but the soil is dry... All these explosions even affect the rain clouds. The result is we have nothing."

## Some Trump supporters ambivalent on calls for protests

WASHINGTON (AP): Former President Donald Trump's calls for protests before his anticipated indictment in New York have generated mostly muted reactions from supporters, with even some of his most ardent loyalists dismissing the idea as a waste of time or a law enforcement trap. The ambivalence raises questions about whether Trump, though a leading Republican contender in the 2024 presidential race who retains a devoted following, still has the power to mobilize far-right supporters the way he did more than two years ago before the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol. It also suggests that the hundreds of arrests that followed the Capitol riot, not to mention the convictions and long prison sentences, may have dampened the desire for repeat mass unrest.

Still, law enforcement in New York is continuing to closely monitor online chatter warning of protests and violence if Trump is arrested, with threats varying in specificity and credibility, four officials told The Associated Press. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included calls for armed protesters to block law enforcement officers and attempt to stop any potential arrest, the officials said. Around the time the Manhattan courthouse complex opened, a New York Police Department truck began dropping off dozens of portable metal barricades that could be used to block off streets or sidewalks.

The New York Young Republican Club held a small protest in Lower Manhattan, and incendiary but isolated posts surfaced on fringe social media platforms from supporters calling for an armed confrontation with law enforcement at Trump's Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago. But nearly two days after Trump claimed on his Truth Social plat-

form that he expected to be arrested on Tuesday and exhorted followers to protest, there were few signs his appeal had inspired his supporters to organize and rally around an event like the Jan. 6 gathering. At the Lower Manhattan protest, reporters outnumbered pro-Trump demonstrators. And a prominent organizer of rallies that preceded the Capitol riot posted on Twitter that he intended to remain on the sidelines. Ali Alexander, who as an organizer of the "Stop the Steal" movement staged rallies to promote Trump's baseless claims that Democrats stole the 2020 election from him, warned Trump supporters that they would be "jailed or worse" if they protested in New York City.

"You have no liberty or rights there," he tweeted. One of Alexander's allies in the "Stop the Steal" campaign was conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who amplified the election fraud claims on his Infowars show. Alexander posted that he had spoken to Jones and said that neither of them would be protesting this time around. "We've both got enough going on fighting the government," Alexander wrote. "No billionaire is covering our bills." Roger Stone, a longtime Trump adviser who spoke at rallies on the day before the insurrection, also advised caution.

"If you you do choose to publicly protest, it is vitally important that you keep your protest peaceful, civil, orderly and completely legal," he said, alleging some on the left want to foment violence and blame it on Trump. "Do not under any circumstances step into that trap," Stone said. "Please keep your protest peaceful and respectful." That stands in contrast to the days before the Capitol riot when Trump stoked up supporters when he invited them to Washington for a "big protest" on Jan. 6, tweeting, "Be there, will be wild!"

Thousands of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol that day, busting through windows and violently clashing with officers in an ultimately failed effort to stop the congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory. Since then, about 1,000 participants have been arrested, many racking up steep legal bills and expressing regret and contrition in court for their actions. Some have complained of feeling abandoned by Trump. And conspiracy theories that the riot was fueled or even set up by undercover law enforcement informants in the crowd have continued to flourish online, with Trump supporters citing that angst as a basis for steering clear of a new large-scale protest.

"How many Feds/Fed assets are in place to turn protest against the political arrest of Pres Trump into violence?" tweeted Rep. Marjorie-Taylor Greene. The Georgia Republican also invoked a conspiracy theory that an FBI informant had instigated the Jan. 6 riot. "Has Ray Epps booked his flight to NY yet?" she tweeted. Epps, an Arizona man, was filmed encouraging others to enter the Capitol. Conspiracy theorists believe Epps was an FBI informant because he was removed from a Jan. 6 "wanted" list without being charged. In January, the House committee that investigated the Capitol attack said the claims about Epps were "unsupported." John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab who has tracked the "Stop the Steal" movement online, said anxiety over being entrapped by so-called agent provocateurs feeds a "paranoia that if they go and do violence, they may get caught and there may be consequences." "It seems to reduce a lot of people's willingness to make big statements about being willing to go out" and engage in violence, he said.

## Ignoring experts, China's sudden zero-COVID exit cost lives

BEIJING (AP): When China suddenly scrapped onerous zero-COVID measures in December, the country wasn't ready for a massive onslaught of cases. Hospitals turned away ambulances, crematoriums burned bodies around the clock, and relatives hauled dead loved ones to warehouses for lack of storage space. Chinese state media claimed the decision to open up was based on "scientific analysis and shrewd calculation," and "by no means impulsive." But in reality, China's ruling Communist Party ignored repeated efforts by top medical experts to kick-start exit plans until it was too late, The Associated Press found.

Instead, the reopening came suddenly at the onset of winter, when the virus spreads most easily. Many older people weren't vaccinated, pharmacies lacked antivirals, and hospitals didn't have adequate supplies or staff - leading to as many as hundreds of thousands of deaths that could have been avoided, according to academic modeling, more than 20 interviews with current and former China Center for Disease Control and Prevention employees, experts and government advisors, and internal reports and directives obtained by the AP. "If they had a real plan to exit earlier, so many things could have been avoided," said Zhang Zuo-Feng, an epidemiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "Many deaths could have been prevented."

For two years, China stood out for its

tough but successful controls against the virus, credited with saving millions of lives as other countries struggled with stop-and-start lockdowns. But with the emergence of the highly infectious omicron variant last year, many of China's top medical experts and officials worried zero-COVID was unsustainable. In late 2021, China's leaders began discussing how to lift restrictions. As early as March 2022, top medical experts submitted detailed proposals to prepare for a gradual exit to the State Council, China's cabinet.

But discussions were silenced after an outbreak the same month in Shanghai, which prompted Chinese leader Xi Jinping to lock the city down. Zero-COVID had become a point of national pride, and Beijing's crackdown on dissent under Xi had made scientists reluctant to speak out against the party line. By the time the Shanghai outbreak was under control, China was months away from the 20th Party Congress, the country's most important political meeting in a decade, making reopening politically difficult. So the country stuck to mass testing and quarantining millions of people, even as omicron evaded increasingly draconian controls. Unrest began to simmer, with demonstrations, factory riots, and shuttered businesses. The pressure mounted until the authorities suddenly yielded, allowing the virus to sweep the country with no warning - and with deadly consequence.

Experts estimate that many hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, may have died in China's wave of COVID - far higher than the official toll of under 90,000, but still a much lower death rate than in Western countries. However, 200,000 to 300,000 deaths could have been prevented if the country was better vaccinated and stocked with antivirals, according to modeling by the University of Hong Kong and scientist estimates. Some scientists think even more lives could have been saved. "It wasn't a sound public health decision at all," said a China CDC official, declining to be named to speak candidly on a sensitive matter. "It's absolutely bad timing ... this was not a prepared opening." Toward the end of 2021, many public health experts and leaders began thinking about how to exit from the zero-COVID policy. The less lethal but far more infectious omicron made curbing COVID-19 harder and the risks of its spread lower, and nearby Korea, Japan and Singapore were all loosening controls.

That winter, the State Council appointed public health experts to a new committee tasked with reviewing COVID-19 controls, which submitted a report in March 2022, four people with knowledge of it said. The existence of the document is being reported for the first time by the AP. It concluded it was time for China to begin preparations for a possible reopening. It ran over 100 pages long and included detailed pro-

posals to boost China's stalling vaccination campaign, increase ICU bed capacity, stock up on antivirals, and order patients with mild COVID-19 symptoms to stay at home, one of the people said. It also included a proposal to designate Hainan, a tropical island in the country's south, as a pilot zone to experiment with relaxing controls. But then things began going awry.

A chaotic, deadly outbreak in Hong Kong alarmed Beijing. Then in March, the virus began spreading in Shanghai, China's cosmopolitan finance hub. Initially, Shanghai took a light approach with targeted lockdowns sealing individual buildings - a pioneering strategy led by doctor Zhang Wenhong, who had been openly calling on the government to prepare to reopen. But soon, officials in neighboring provinces complained they were seeing cases from Shanghai and asked the central leadership to lock the city down, according to three people familiar with the matter. China CDC contact tracing reports obtained by the AP show that a nearby province was detecting dozens of COVID-19 cases by early March, all from Shanghai. Provincial officials argued that they lacked Shanghai's medical resources and capacity to trace the virus, risking its spread to the entire country before China was ready. At the same time, China's flagging vaccination rate for older residents and the deaths in Hong Kong spooked authorities, as did reports of long COVID-19

abroad. When Shanghai failed to get control of the virus, the top leadership stepped in. Partial lockdowns in Shanghai were announced in late March. On April 2, then-Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, a top official known widely as the "COVID czar," traveled there to oversee a total lockdown.

"They lost their nerve," said an expert in regular contact with Chinese health officials. Shanghai was ill-prepared. Residents exploded in anger online, complaining of hunger and spotty supplies. But Beijing made it clear that the lockdown would continue. "Resolutely uphold zero-COVID," an editorial in the state-run People's Daily said. "Persistence is victory," said Xi. After Shanghai locked down, Chinese public health experts stopped speaking publicly about preparing for an exit. None dared openly challenge a policy supported by Xi. Some experts were blacklisted from Chinese media, one told the AP. "Anybody who wanted to say something that is different from the official narrative was basically just silenced," the blacklisted expert said.

In early April, China's State Council leaked a letter from the European Chamber of Commerce urging relaxation of zero-COVID controls. Council officials wanted to spark debate but didn't feel empowered to raise the issue themselves, according to a person directly familiar with the matter. The State Council's information office did not respond to a fax requesting com-

munication. Gao Fu, then head of the China CDC, also hinted at the need to prepare for an exit. At a mid-April internal panel discussion recently made public by the Beijing-based Center for China and Globalization think tank, Gao was quoted as saying "omicron is not that dangerous," that there were public discussions on whether zero-COVID needed to be adjusted, and that they "hope to reach a consensus as soon as possible."

Weeks later, at a private event at the German Embassy in Beijing, Gao agreed with foreign experts urging China to plan a reopening and then strode off the stage, according to three attendees who declined to be named because they weren't authorized to speak to the press. Gao did not respond to an email requesting comment. There were also hints that opinions differed high in the party. In private meetings with Western business chambers in May, then-Premier Li Keqiang, who was head of the State Council and the party's No. 2 official at the time, appeared sympathetic to complaints about how zero-COVID was crushing the economy, according to a participant and another briefed on the meetings. It was a stark contrast with pre-recorded remarks from Xi that listed defeating COVID as the top priority. But under Xi, China's most authoritarian leader in decades, Li was powerless, analysts say. Public health experts split into camps.



**The Frontier Post****JALIL AFRIDI**  
*Managing Editor*

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.  
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001  
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573  
E-mail: [fp@peshawar.thefrontierpost.com](mailto:fp@peshawar.thefrontierpost.com)  
Lahore Office: 0335-4026284  
Email: [fp@lahore.thefrontierpost.com](mailto:fp@lahore.thefrontierpost.com)  
Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253  
Email: [mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com](mailto:mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com)  
Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907  
Email: [fp@karachi.thefrontierpost.com](mailto:fp@karachi.thefrontierpost.com)  
"USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747"

# Xi's peace diplomacy and the next

**CHINESE President Xi Jinping met his Russian counterpart President Vladimir Putin in Moscow during his first visit to Russia since Russia launched its so-called Special operation in Ukraine. Both leaders greeted each other as dear friends and sought to deepen their bilateral economic ties as a useful counterweight to the Western animosity toward them. Putin told Xi that he views Beijing's proposals for a negotiated solution to the Ukraine conflict with respect and admires China's rapid economic growth in recent decades. Chinese Strongman reciprocated similar views regarding Russia and expressed good faith in a future partnership between the two nations.**

The landmark and momentous diplomatic maneuver of the top Chinese leader came at a very crucial movement in Global politics and an utmost frenzy geostrategic environment in the region and beyond. The war in Ukraine is in full swing, with no distinct achievement by either side, and no end in sight despite massive economic, military, and human losses of belligerent nations over the past more than one year. Ahead of Xi's arrival in Moscow, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for his host and dear friend Vladimir Putin over the alleged deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia during the war in Ukraine. Thus the situation became more delicate for Beijing to play its proposed role of a peace broker as Kiyv and its western allies accused China of backing Russian aggression against its weak neighbor.

Apparently, President Xi Jinping has transformed China's role from an Economic influencer to global diplomacy mobilizer and peace broker after securing the Chinese Presidency for a consecutive third term. Earlier Beijing facilitated the peace deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, successfully bridged the gap between the two staunch rivals, and channelized its economic and political influence in the broader Middle East region. Currently, President Xi set the stage for its newest diplomatic outreach to resolve the years-long conflict in Ukraine and to make face-saving for his dear friend who had been trapped in teeth grinding battle, an acute diplomatic and economic isolation after igniting conflict with his neighbor. Recently, China has presented a broad 12-point proposal to solve the Ukraine crisis that will be negotiated between the two heads of state during their next meetings during the ongoing visit.

The Ukrainian conflict has become the center stage of the global rivalry between the United States and its competitors. Meanwhile, the warring sides are satisfying their hostility in the neighbor's backyard and innocent Ukrainians are paying price for it. There is no military solution to the Ukraine issue and belligerent nations would have finally come to the negotiating table to end this conflict. In the present scenario of mistrust and animosity, Turkey and China are the two peace brokers who can seize a win-win peace deal that sufficiently address the concerns of the combatant nations and ensure peace and stability in the war-hit region.

Presently, Beijing perceives itself as a key proponent for the peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict, while its global stature, nonpartisan position in the Ukraine conflict, and good terms with Moscow could significantly mold Putin's intolerant position over the Ukraine issue if western nations do not manipulate the situation on political reasons. At the same time, China needs to play an unbiased and apolitical role to prove the sustainability and effectiveness of its diplomatic outreach.

In fact, China's economic and peace diplomacy has opened up new avenues of cooperation, and bright chances of CPEC extension and the formation of an economic bloc encompassing the whole of western, South, and East Asia have emerged after the Saudi-Iran deal. The Chinese leaders must implement this doctrine on the ground to maximize the dividends of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that will not only revive the regional economies but also ensure peace and prosperity in entire Asia.

# An ICC warrant against Putin is good - and hypocritical

**Andrew Mitrovica**

**A S faithful readers of this column may know, I write a lot about hypocrisy. Sometimes, it disappoints me. Sometimes, it offends me. Sometimes, it angers me. But state-sanctioned duplicity, in particular, never surprises me. Still, I try to call it out wherever and whenever I see and hear it, if only to let the hypocrites and their enablers know that someone, somewhere, has exposed their, at times, infuriating insincerity.**

I will begin with the career hypocrites at the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the Hague which will then lead me to the career hypocrites at the US White House, State Department and Pentagon. Late last week, the ICC made out an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin after the global court concluded that the Russian leader had committed war crimes in connection with the abduction and deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children since Russia's invasion in February 2022. The ICC found that Putin and another Russian official bore personal criminal responsibility for the forced "resettlement" of Ukrainian children.

The ICC defended its decision to charge Putin with a war crime and seek

his arrest by insisting "that the public awareness of the warrants may contribute to the prevention of the further commission of crimes". Western and European capitals and establishment news media have universally cheered the ICC for taking the necessary step of issuing - for the first time - a warrant against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Officials and diplomats described the ICC's tricky gambit as "the start of the process of accountability" that confirms that Putin is "a pariah" responsible for "crime[s] of aggression."

This, despite the fact that the unprecedented move is largely symbolic since Moscow does not recognise the court's jurisdiction or extradite its nationals. Now, before I am accused of being a Putin "stooge" or "lackey" by commentators or readers more interested in hyperbole than the truth, I have written often of my deep and abiding antipathy towards Russia's grotesque, crimes-against-humanity-happy president who is little more than a thug. I am glad that the ICC has charged Putin with a war crime. He has earned it. But here's the hypocritical rub. There are other leaders of other

nations - including the United States and Israel - who regard themselves as exempt from the ICC's authority and who have also earned being charged with war crimes by the court.

Apparently, according to the ICC, a string of American presidents and soldiers who launched a string of disfiguring wars on several still scarred continents and set up a covert, international abduction and torture racket have never, ever committed a war crime of any sort. Apparently, according to the ICC, a cocksure British prime minister and his soldiers who joined their evangelical American cousins to invade Iraq and Afghanistan, destroying countless towns and cities and killing and making refugees of millions of innocents, have never, ever committed a war crime of any sort. Apparently, according to the ICC, so-called "elite" Australian soldiers who murdered scores of Afghan civilians, including slicing children's throats as part of a sick initiation ritual, have never, ever committed a war crime of any sort.

Apparently, according to the ICC, a slew of Israeli prime ministers, soldiers and their proxies who have,

for generations, targeted Palestinian kids, women and men and "civilian infrastructure" in the occupied West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza, Lebanon and beyond, have never, ever committed a war crime of any sort. If the ICC found the belated courage to accuse the US, Britain, Australia or Israel of war crimes and serve arrest warrants for any number of current and former heads of state, that could, in the court's words, "contribute to the prevention of the further commission of crimes". Of course, like Putin, the US and Israel would dismiss any charges instantly as having no legal merit. Give it a try, I say. Let the Americans and Israelis wail like colicky babies, too.

In any event, the hypocrite-in-chief, US President Joe Biden, welcomed the ICC's actions as "justified" and having made "a very strong point". In the next sentence, Biden revealed his and America's blatant hypocrisy when he qualified his congratulatory remarks by reminding reporters that the US does not recognise the ICC's jurisdiction. "But the question is - [the ICC is] not recognised internationally by us either," Biden said. Indeed, on September 2,

2020, the US slammed the ICC as "broken and corrupted" and derailed a probe into possible war crimes in Afghanistan by imposing sanctions on the court's top prosecutor who had the audacity to investigate the dubious conduct of American soldiers. In an obscene quid pro quo, the ICC dropped the probe after then-US President Donald Trump and company dropped the sanctions.

Then, on March 3, 2021, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken blasted the ICC prosecutor in a press release for having opened an "investigation into the Palestinian situation". "The United States firmly opposes and is deeply disappointed by this decision," Blinken howled. "The ICC has no jurisdiction over this matter. Israel is not a party to the ICC and has not consented to the Court's jurisdiction, and we have serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise its jurisdiction over Israeli personnel." Well, well, well.

The US applauds the ICC when it charges Russia with war crimes and excoriates the same body when it starts looking into whether America committed war crimes in Afghanistan and Israel against besieged Palestinians. The Pentagon

has compounded the president's hypocrisy by reportedly refusing to share with the ICC evidence gathered by US intelligence services of Russian atrocities in Ukraine for fear that providing the court with such incriminating information may set "a precedent that might help pave the way for it to prosecute Americans". Translation: Yes, the Pentagon believes that Putin is a bad guy who has done bad things to good people in Ukraine. The Pentagon also believes that if it gives the ICC stuff that may help prove that Putin is a bad guy who does bad stuff to good people, it might lead to America's "good guys" in battle fatigues ending up in the same dock in the Hague because the court might suddenly discover that they have done lots of bad stuff to good people, too. And America can't have that. The New York Times says that President Biden hasn't decided yet whether he agrees with the Pentagon or not. My guess is that the hypocrite-in-chief will side with the hypocrites-in-uniform. Otherwise, other hypocrites-in-suits in Congress and newsrooms will cackle that the president has betrayed America and its good guys in battle fatigues.

*Aljazeera*

# How US propaganda won Iraq's 'battlespace'

**Ross Caputi & Richard Hil**

**WITH the 20th anniversary of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq upon us, the politics of memory are sure to resurface along familiar fault lines. Did the Bush administration do irreparable damage to American prestige by leading the country into another quagmire? Did the Obama administration withdraw too soon and allow al-Qaeda in Iraq to rebuild and morph into ISIL (ISIS)?**

Apart from a few notable exceptions, the collective memory of the Iraq conflict in the United States falls within the narrow parameters of these debates. The military campaign was largely framed in the news media by US military information operations to meet specific strategic objectives. The upshot was a range of skewed media narratives which continue to conceal many truths. Some will remember the deceit surrounding the weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that allegedly justified the invasion, but far more prominent is the memory of insurgency that became synonymous with the occupation. The assertion that the US-led coalition liberated Iraq from a vicious dictator obscures the antidemocratic process of state building conducted by an occupying power. The myth of civil war hid the reality of a dirty war.

Meanwhile, the so-called surge of 2007 presented a renewed counterinsurgency strategy as military genius, conveniently side-stepping the fact that the armed fighters the US troops were battling had been armed and trained by America in Iraq's Ministry of Interior. Propaganda has been a bed-fellow of war for the entirety of the 20th century, but the

sophistication and violent impact of US information operations have come a long way since the Uncle Sam posters of World War I.

In Iraq, propaganda did much more than dress up battlefield events in polite language. It also invented targets and set operational objectives. Propaganda is now a powerful and direct instrument of warfare, an integral part of combat operations. This transformation has been so profound that the very concept of a battlefield has become outdated. The invasion and occupation of Iraq took place within a battlespace - an unbounded, multi-domain battlefield that reaches into the abstract realms of information and cyberspace. Drawing lessons from the American war in Vietnam, the US mission in Iraq defined victory as the winning of Iraqi and American hearts and minds. To that end, the media was enlisted as a force multiplier in the exercise of soft power, unlike in Southeast Asia, where it was often viewed as a fifth column.

In Vietnam, it was clear to ordinary Americans that a militarily inferior enemy embarrassed the world's most powerful army in good part because it had the support of its people. In Iraq, therefore, "perception management" became a strategic priority. This involved carefully crafted press conferences and press releases as well as the selective leaking of information, which together structured assumptions about the basic facts on the ground. The embedding of journalists within military units helped control the perspective from which Americans viewed the conflict, with the experiences of US soldiers foregrounded and those of Iraqis relegated to the background.

Sometimes information operations exaggerated the threat of enemies or even invented one altogether. A significant consequence of battlespace thinking was that it afforded US military commanders the rationale to treat purveyors of information as combatants, even individuals and institutions protected by the Geneva Conventions, such as journalists reporting American atrocities, hospitals releasing civilian casualty figures and Iraqi mosque leaders calling on able-bodied men to defend their communities.

While the suffering of US soldiers figures prominently in America's memory of the conflict, the plight of Iraqis is almost entirely ignored. This is no accident; it's how the conflict was framed right from the outset. The death and trauma of US soldiers functioned as a surrogate for the ethical questions surrounding the Iraq mission. The American public could direct their empathy and attention towards the apolitical topics of treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder, the civilian-military divide, and the tribulations of readjusting to civilian life; rather than questioning the ethics of sending soldiers to fight an unjust war. Meanwhile, soft power required the containment of bad news. Few Americans are aware of how many civilians were killed alongside the so-called insurgents, most of whom saw themselves as defending their homeland from an aggressive invasion and occupation. Yet for all the narratives of military heroism, Iraq is remembered by Americans as a mistake - a tacit admission that it was a war of choice. The US chose to go to war on a cost-benefit analysis that pitted, what they hoped would be, a

low-risk operation with minimal coalition casualties against geopolitical gains.

The legitimacy of the American mission was itself a military objective. In the spring of 2004, the US changed its characterisation of the Iraqi partisans from being a combination of "Baathist loyalists" and "criminals" to an "insurgency." This choice of language denied the rebels the legitimate status of belligerents. By controlling the vocabulary, the US military was able to structure the American public's assumptions about facts on the ground. Set against the spirit of American exceptionalism, the sovereignty of the Iraqi state was never seriously entertained in the official propaganda. But for Iraqis, sovereignty was everything. Although the formal occupation of Iraq ended in June 2004 when the US ceremoniously handed sovereignty back and continued its mission under a Status of Forces Agreement; occupied Iraq and sovereign Iraq looked pretty much the same. Indeed, many Iraqis regard the period from 2004 to 2011 as a de facto occupation. They wish they could shake off the entire legacy of the US-led military campaign as easily as it was imposed on them - from the election in 2005 to the writing of Iraq's constitution and the widely unpopular muhasasa ethno-sectarian quota system that followed.

The success of US information operations in generating the perception of legitimacy is reflected in American attitudes about the invasion, itself. That the invasion was illegal under international law drew little comment in the mainstream press. The violation of Iraqi sovereignty, as

well as numerous war crimes committed in Fallujah and elsewhere, were simply filtered out of media coverage and political discourse. For Iraqis, the invasion wasn't a mistake. It was a crime, with dire consequences for their society. However, the stark difference in the US public's attitudes towards the invasion of Iraq and the Russian invasion of Ukraine suggests something deeper than ordinary hypocrisy. Voices of condemnation for Putin's aggression and calls to hold Russia accountable to international law have dominated American coverage of the conflict. But in 2002-03, little attention was given to the Bush administration's well-documented attempts to exaggerate the danger posed by Saddam Hussein and deceive the public on whether Iraq possessed WMDs.

While the American media has successfully highlighted the legal questions surrounding the invasion of Ukraine, the US propaganda apparatus distracted the public from asking similar questions about the Iraq invasion. That just a few months ago the US government could name a warship the USS Fallujah and get away with minimal criticism speaks of the power of this propaganda. The claims that the city had been overrun by al-Qaeda in Iraq, led by the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, were hardly even questioned, even after it was revealed in 2006 that the US had been running a psychological operation (PSYOP) campaign to exaggerate al-Zarqawi's role in the anti-occupation violence. No evidence of his presence in Fallujah was ever produced. Nonetheless, the claims of American propagandists were accepted as a casus belli for the second siege of Fallujah in November of 2004, in

which 4,000 to 6,000 civilians are estimated to have been killed. These figures never reached the American public, and the operation itself was celebrated as a liberation that opened the way for elections in January 2005, which many in Iraq's Sunni community were opposed to holding under occupation.

In reality, by decimating the local, nationalist armed resistance in Fallujah, the US paved the way for al-Qaeda to move in and take over the city. That the collective American memory of the 2003 invasion and its aftermath is so deeply flawed matters - because of the destruction and suffering in Iraq, and because of the consequences for the health of US democracy. After all, can clear, informed foreign policy decisions be made when propaganda intended to leverage short-term battlespace advantages fogs the collective mind? Ultimately, the invasion and occupation of Iraq proved calamitous for that nation's people, with estimates of excess civilian deaths surpassing a million. Iraqis continue to pay a heavy price for the war. Tens of thousands of American soldiers were also deceived into fighting an unjust war, and 4,500 paid with their lives. No politicians or military planners have been held to account.

As far as much of the mainstream media is concerned, Iraq is a forgotten country, the war a past occurrence. Even among peace activists and antiwar colleagues, we have found a reluctance to talk about the Iraq conflict, and in some cases point-blank refusal to engage in commemoration work. This thunderous silence points to a difficult truth: two decades after the invasion, American propaganda has conclusively won the Iraqi battlespace.

# This Nowruz may be a 'new day' for the whole ME

**Faisal J. Abbas**

**IT was in the first week of March 2020, only a few days before the global coronavirus outbreak was declared a pandemic - with the consequent lockdown - that a handful of prominent Iranian singers performed in the first ever Persian Culture Night in the historic Saudi city of AlUla. In the weeks before the event, there was much ado about whether this cultural soiree should take place in the Kingdom. The debate was completely understandable, with tensions between Riyadh and Tehran at their peak, a possible backlash by trolls on social media, and the likely politicization of the situation.**

Nevertheless, the bold decision was made at the time to separate culture from politics and press on as planned. Saudi media was invited to attend and cover. "This initiative is in line with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's focus on recognizing AlUla as a cradle of diverse civilizations and cultures throughout the ages," the Royal Commission for AlUla said. Of course, the

initiative was meant to prove a point - that Saudi Arabia doesn't have an issue with Persian culture or with Iranians as a people. The proof came in the form of a sold-out event, with many Saudis dancing and singing along to the Persian lyrics of stars such as Andy, Ebrahim Hamed, Leila Forouhar and Shadmehr Aghili.

In fact, the Kingdom's problem has always been the aggressive, expansionist foreign policy of the Iranian regime. Since 1979, the mullahs in Tehran have made it their mission to "export the revolution," to destabilize the region, and to undermine Saudi Arabia in particular. It was a bloody era that lasted over four decades and plagued the region with wars, extremism and a massive cost in both repairs and wasted opportunities. But on this Nowruz (the ancient traditional celebration that marks the beginning of the new Persian year) we are seeing the dawn of a "new day" - the literal translation of Nowruz - in Saudi-Iranian relations, and consequently the stability of the whole region. Ten days ago, in

response to a high-level Chinese initiative, representatives of the Saudi and Iranian governments signed a pact to restore diplomatic ties for the first time in seven years. Since then, further details have emerged about the inner workings of this potentially groundbreaking deal.

As Reuters reported a few days ago based on insights provided by two Iranian officials, frustration in Tehran at the regime's isolation reached boiling point last September. According to the news agency, "this was when Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei lost patience with the slow pace of bilateral talks and summoned his team to discuss ways to accelerate the process of restoring ties with Riyadh." This ultimately led to China's involvement, and Beijing showed willingness to take on the initiative and presented itself as a mediator to the Saudi leadership during President Xi Jinping's visit to Riyadh last December. In a recent briefing with Saudi journalists, a

Saudi source confirmed what Reuters subsequently published. He said the deal was based on three pillars: respect for the sovereignty of regional countries; the restoration of diplomatic ties within the next two months; and the revival of previously agreed treaties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, including a 2001 security agreement, which was signed by the late Saudi interior minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz and his counterpart at the time, Hassan Rouhani. Other details were that Riyadh and Tehran have agreed to a bilateral commitment of nonaggression, including military, intelligence and cyber, nor will they assist others or allow their land to be used to wage such attacks.

So what does all this mean? First, a "better late than never" realization by Iran (hopefully on a sincere and permanent basis) that it simply cannot continue in isolation and be at odds with all its neighbors. In addition, hopefully it also means that Tehran has sincere willingness to abandon its malign

activities. Should that be the case, then the biggest winner wouldn't be Saudi Arabia alone, but the region as a whole. All along, the Kingdom has been the victim in this conflict, not the villain. For decades, Saudi Arabia had to invest constant time, energy and money in ramping up its defenses and offsetting Tehran's undermining activities within its borders and in neighboring countries. This included the Tehran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen firing drones and missiles at Saudi civilians and cities, and constant threats to maritime security in a part of the world crucial for global energy security. So who has won this battle that has not stopped since 1979? The truth, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder. What I can say with certainty is that Saudis today have a lot to celebrate, given that the Kingdom has - at least on paper for now - managed to protect and safeguard the massive achievements of its ambitious reform program.

This year, Saudi Arabia is set to become the fastest growing economy in the G20. As recently as Monday

there were two significant pieces of news. The first is that Saudis are officially the second-happiest people on the planet; the second is that Saudi entertainment events attracted total audiences of more than 120 million (both local and international) since 2019. If all this is not worth protecting, I don't know what is. And if it can be protected thanks to the Chinese initiative - without fighting, then all the more reason to be happy. As for regional consequences, they are too long to list. But should Iran stick to the deal, we can only imagine waking up to a world in which Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon are at peace and thriving. Is this an ambitious outcome? Yes. Is it worth pursuing? Absolutely! Amid Saudi Arabia's reform environment, Arab News has celebrated Christmas, Jewish new year and Valentine's Day with special editions. With the dawn of a new day, or Nowruz, there is no better time to mark this ancient Persian ritual with inaugural coverage.

Sal-e-Nou Mubarak to all our Persian-speaking readers!

*Arab News*



# From Iraq to Ukraine: Reflections on imperial hubris

Marwan Bishara

**T**WENTY years ago, as the United States prepared to wage war on Iraq, then-Democratic Senator Joe Biden voted in favour of President George Bush's reckless adventure. On the other side of the world, in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin opposed it, denouncing it as a mistake and a major escalation that would destabilise the international system.

Today, it is the saviour and more seasoned Putin who is waging an imperial war in Ukraine - a blunder that now-President Biden has pounced on, warning of its destabilising implications for the world. Over these two decades, I have written extensively about the savage, arrogant and reckless wars the Kremlin and the White House have waged in a relentless show of imperial hubris, whether in Ukraine, Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

I have exposed the pretexs for the Iraq war and warned repeatedly against the dangers of Washington's Middle East adventures well before and after the invasion, as I have later done for Moscow's attack on Ukraine. As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Iraq war, instead of writing with hindsight or introspection, as many have done in the past few days, I would like to revisit some basic ideas exactly as I wrote them years ago and over the past year. They reveal how these imperial wars of choice are destined to fail and why they bring about destruction instead of democracy, chaos instead of stability and humiliation instead of victory. Here are excerpts from three articles I wrote for the International New York Times (previously known as the International Herald Tribune) about the invasion of Iraq and three I wrote for Al Jazeera English about the invasion of Ukraine.

Those who advocate an attack on Iraq have short memories. Since World War II, the use of force by the United

States has consistently failed to neutralize its adversaries beyond the short term. And in the Middle East, wars and covert operations have only produced further conflict. Washington's logic of force has failed in the Middle East and elsewhere. All three major American wars of the last half a century - in Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf - ended in stalemate or defeat. A global response to Sept. 11 could usher in a new era of multilateral cooperation and revamped international law to deal with the new transnational threats. An attack on Iraq would do exactly the opposite. The immediate threat to world stability is coming not from the Iraqi dictator but rather from the democratically elected government of the world's superpower. Americans, the ball is in your court.

The Bush administration should be careful when it talks about democracy in the Middle East. The idea is too valuable, and too vital, to be used as cynical camouflage for other agendas, whether those are based on oil interests, or Israel's, or the desire to have a solid military beachhead in a volatile region. It's time for democrats - Westerners, Arabs and others - to confront warmongering politicians with a geo-ethics, to oppose war with the same unwavering opposition they oppose dictators. Democrats the world over, foremost among them American democrats, must put their values above their interests, their humanity above their fear, to help create coalitions across continents and religions to make peace and democracy possible for all. For the past few months I have watched with bewilderment as America has adopted Israel's mistaken strategy in the Middle East. Will America take as long as Israel to realize that starting a war is nothing like finishing it, and that military occupation does not bring about peace or security?

Attaining national security in a transnational world means accepting and respecting interdependence. Once security is understood as a universal right, interdependence becomes a sign of wisdom, not weakness. If America must draw on another tradition, why not look to the long history of Jewish tolerance and survival - or to America's own constitutional tradition? It is time to dust off those great documents sitting on the White House shelves. The much-anticipated war in Ukraine may have not started, but it has already achieved most of its objectives. Which begs the question: why persist on the path to war, a bloody destructive war with assured blowbacks, when diplomacy could finish the job?

The main protagonists, Russia and the United States, are cynically using the good old Cold War playbook to advance their national interests at the expense of Ukrainian, indeed European, and international security. The Biden administration could certainly accommodate the Russian red line since Ukraine is not even on the path for NATO membership. In return, Russia may provide the necessary assurance and commitment to an independent and free Ukraine. Presidents Putin and Biden have shown clever brinkmanship; they should not let it get out of control because of personal and national pride. It is high time to reject warmongering and embrace appeasement; yes appeasement; mutual strategic appeasement to avoid another devastating European war and dreadful world crisis. Russia's justifications for its invasion of Ukraine, like the United States' excuses for its invasion of Iraq two decades earlier, prove that world powers have failed to learn the lessons of imperial hubris - theirs and others. From the ancient Greeks and Romans

through to the more recent French, German and British powers, geopolitical arrogance is notorious for breeding fatal political stupidity. So why then do world powers continue to make the same costly mistakes, expecting different results? Does arrogance breed madness too? Remember, the smart learn from their own mistakes, the wise learn from the mistakes of others, but only the foolish learn from neither, as we see in Ukraine today.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been catastrophic. It has led to the loss of tens of thousands of precious lives, the displacement of millions of people, and the destruction of countless homes, civilian buildings and infrastructure. It has also unravelled Russia's moral and strategic standing in the world, as it has become clear just how badly prepared the Russian army really is, and how exaggerated Russian economic might has been. The war has also been disastrous for the rest of the world. Not only has it destabilised energy markets, fuelled inflation and disrupted the supply of foods and commodities, but it has also exposed and aggravated the poor state of world affairs, accelerating nuclear proliferation, fuelling an arms race, crippling the United Nations, and undermining international law, multilateral cooperation, and humanitarian assistance.

Although we have made major strides forward as a human civilisation, culminating in healthier, richer, better-educated generations, we seem attracted, if not addicted, to destructive conflicts that could set us back generations. History teaches us that great powers decline or perish because of reckless wars, but to no avail. For decades, Russia and America have followed in each other's footsteps, fighting wars they could not finish except in humiliation and massive destruction. And then came Ukraine, alas. Stupid, indeed.



## Paris is still burning

**A**N American visitor to Paris emailed me **After her stroll Thursday night: "I was walking home from dinner in rue du Cirque when I saw the cars on fire. At Rue Royale, they were hurling tear gas. To get to my hotel in the Rue des Capucines, the street was on fire from both ends! Is Paris burning? In my street YES!! Now in my room I can smell smoke."**

France is burning - Paris particularly, the city that is already gearing up to host next year's Summer Olympics. And the nation's hitherto Teflon president appears caught in the middle of a host of competing political currents and the nation's fiscal realities. But don't count Emmanuel Macron out - not yet. Not that his most die-hard political opponents aren't circling on all sides across the vast French political spectrum.

From the far-right acolytes of Marine Le Pen to the far left of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise (unbowed) party, the political sharks are all smelling blood on the water, even though the next elections aren't for another four years. At issue is Macron's decision that the nation needs to bite the bullet and raise the national retirement age from 62 to 64 years - which would still leave it in the lower half of European Union nations. At the current 62 years, only Slovenia at 60 is lower. In the 13 years since the retirement age in France rose to 62 from 60, the average life expectancy has also risen by two years to 83 from 81, according to UN population figures.

Not surprisingly, the moment of the first announcement of tweaks to their treasured pension system two months ago, the French began to protest. When the measure reached the halls of Parliament, the nation took to the streets in earnest, walking off their jobs in a time-tested manner that has all too often proved both utterly disruptive to life and at the same time somewhat successful in moderating political behavior - as the case has been since mass student protests in 1968 down to the yellow vest movement more than four years ago. Buses, subways and public works across France shuddered to a halt, barricades went up in streets and were set ablaze. Garbage collectors walked off, protesting the rise in their retirement to 59 from 57 - among the many exceptions for earlier full retirement due to the nature of their jobs. More than 7,000 tons of garbage have piled up on the streets of Paris - a pungent smorgasbord for the city's rat population that, among the world's most prolific, is said to be thriving.

Of course, this is not the first such conflagration Macron has weathered. The yellow vest movement sent French demonstrators into the streets, troubled by rising fuel prices. Macron calculated, rightly, that the French eventually lose patience with extended strikes and unrest. That worked before. Macron met with union leaders, addressed the nation, laid out the costs and dropped fuel taxes that were a core of the protests. It's not unreasonable Macron could find a similar path out of this crisis, though the stakes are higher. But pensions have long been a flashpoint for the French who are congenitally reluctant to give up any of a host of such traditional perks, some tracing back to the time of Louis XIV in the 17th century. Dancers in the Paris Opera can still retire with full pension at age 42. Much of today's current pension struc-

David A. Andelman

ture dates to the post-World War II rule of Charles de Gaulle.

Ironically, it was de Gaulle who also provided Macron with the tools - dangerous though they might be to his political future - to ram through the pension reform that he believes is vital to the survival of the French economic system. The constitution that de Gaulle insisted upon as a condition for him to return to office in 1958 and rescue the country from a morass of weak, revolving-door governments, contained Article 49.3. It gives the French President the right to push a bill through the

National Assembly must go before voters. In theory, this gives enormous power to the political extremes - supporters of Le Pen and Mélenchon, respectively on the far right and extreme left - to shape any future government or even stand for election themselves on a platform that much of the French people seem to embrace wholeheartedly: no pension reform, or even a rollback to a 62-year retirement age.

There still remains an appeal to the nation's constitutional council, which opponents have immediately filed. The moment the vote was announced, demonstrations broke out across Paris, with tear gas being launched

***"It's not unreasonable Macron could find a similar path out of this crisis, though the stakes are higher. But pensions have long been a flashpoint for the French who are congenitally reluctant to give up any of a host of such traditional perks, some tracing back to the time of Louis XIV in the 17th century. Dancers in the Paris Opera can still retire with full pension at age 42. Much of today's current pension structure dates to the post-World War II rule of Charles de Gaulle. Ironically, it was de Gaulle who also provided Macron with the tools - dangerous though they might be to his political future - to ram through the pension reform that he believes is vital to the survival of the French economic system. The constitution that de Gaulle insisted upon as a condition for him to return to office in 1958 and rescue the country from a morass of weak, revolving-door governments, contained Article 49.3."***

National Assembly without submitting to a vote. The provision has been invoked on 100 occasions since its establishment, according to official records of the French republic. As it happens, it has already been invoked 11 times under Macron's prime minister, Elisabeth Borne, more times than under any of her 15 predecessors except for one - Michel Rocard, who used 49.3 some 28 times against an utterly hostile Parliament. Even de Gaulle's three prime ministers only invoked the provision 10 times in 10 years. This same Article 49.3, however, carries with it a potentially guillotine-like provision. The opposition filed two no-confidence motions against the government - one by the Le Pen faction and the other by a coalition of moderates.

Both were defeated on Monday, clearing the way for Macron's pension reforms to be implemented. The broader centrist motion failed by just nine votes out of 577 members of Parliament, while Le Pen's motion won only 94 votes. The prime minister and her government will continue in power. Macron, of course, does have the right to dissolve Parliament and call for another election. His presidency is secure for another four years. By using the constitution, Macron bestowed a marvelous gift on his own plurality, indeed really any members of Parliament who might have even considered voting for the pension reform, by removing the need for them to declare themselves publicly for a deeply unpopular piece of legislation. While the President is term-limited out of standing for election again in four years, members of the

by police. And opponents have threatened a nationwide general strike for Thursday that would shut down the country. But the fundamental question remains: Would France do better with its status quo, a retirement age of 62? Not at all, in my view, nor in Macron's. The President is quite correct in pointing to the strains going forward on the entire national budget. When the Fifth Republic was created in 1958, there were more than four workers for every retiree. By 2020, that figure had fallen to 1.7 workers per retiree, and over the next decade, without an adjustment an increasingly aging population will be relying on barely 1.5 workers to fund each retiree's pension. The nation will likely be going increasingly into deficit, or taxes will be forced to skyrocket. France already spends 14.5% of its gross domestic product on pensions, nearly double the 7.5% in the United States. The French budget deficit of 5% of GDP is already nearly double the EU target of 3%. And facing the war in Ukraine, Macron still wants to boost the nation's military budget beyond the somewhat anemic 1.9% today.

For Macron and France's partners and allies, the stakes may be even higher. Once seen as the new leader of a united Europe, stepping into that role with the departure of Angela Merkel, the powerful former German chancellor, Macron is now mired in controversy at home. Still, he and his successors or failure to reform his nation's pension system could be a test case for a host of other countries facing aging workforces and widening deficits.

CNN

## Yoon's bid to improve Japan ties faces backlash from South Korean left

William Gallo & Lee Juhyun

**S**OUTH Korea's left-leaning opposition forces blasted the country's president, Yoon Seok Yeol, on Friday as he returned from a summit aimed at opening a new era in South Korean-Japanese relations. Yoon on Thursday became the first South Korean president in 12 years to hold a bilateral summit with his Japanese counterpart when he met Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo.

The two agreed to restore regular visits to each other's countries, took steps to ease trade tensions, and vowed to strengthen security cooperation to deal with shared threats such as China and North Korea. The summit results were not enough to satisfy the South Korean left, which fiercely opposes Yoon's efforts to look past historical disputes that have long strained relations with Japan.

"Yesterday's Korea-Japan summit was the most embarrassing and disastrous in South Korea's diplomatic history," said Lee Jae-myung, the head of the main opposition Democratic Party. Speaking at a party meeting, Lee said it looked "as if we were paying tribute to Japan, begging for reconciliation and surrendering." The backlash, though largely expected, highlights the challenge Yoon faces in moving ahead with efforts to improve Japan ties.

Last week, Yoon unveiled a plan to resolve one of the thorniest disputes between the two countries - Japan's use of forced labor during its brutal 1910-1945 occupation of the Korean Peninsula. Under Yoon's plan, Seoul dropped a demand that Japanese companies compensate South Korean forced labor victims; instead, South

Korean businesses will offer compensation through a government-backed foundation. About 60% of South Koreans oppose the plan, according to multiple opinion polls.

A collection of left-leaning politicians and activist groups have called for demonstrations against Yoon's forced labor proposal, recalling large anti-Japan protests in Seoul in 2019, during the peak of the forced labor dispute. It is not clear how much any backlash will hurt Yoon, whose approval rating is already relatively low - just 33%, according to a poll released Friday by Gallup Korea. Yoon still has more than four years left in his five-year presidential term. Like all South Korean presidents, he is constitutionally barred from running for a second term.

He may be betting that political pressure related to the forced labor issue will lessen by the time his party must field a candidate for the 2027 presidential elections, according to Mason Richey, associate professor of international politics at Seoul's Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. "That's the gamble Yoon is making - I think he's pretty much willing to take the heat for the moment," Richey said. The question is whether the Democratic Party will eventually stop using the issue to attack Yoon - and whether the country's next liberal president will undo the forced labor proposal. Recent history suggests Yoon's efforts are on shaky ground.

In 2015, South Korea's last conservative president, Park Geun-hye, reached an agreement under which Japan would compensate South

Korean women who were forced into sexual slavery. President Moon Jae-in, a liberal, later repudiated the deal. If Yoon is unable to convince his political opponents of the merits of the proposal, then it will meet a similar fate, predicted Robert Kelly, a political science professor at South Korea's Pusan National University. "This is a pretty big rock that Yoon's got to roll up the hill," Kelly said. "And Kishida's got to give him some help or it's not going to work." So far, there are few signs Japan will agree to the kinds of concessions demanded by South Korean progressives, such as a fresh apology over wartime atrocities or direct compensation for forced labor victims.

At Thursday's summit, Kishida did not offer a new apology. Instead, he reaffirmed that the Japanese government "inherits on the whole the historical perceptions of past governments," including a 1998 declaration that included an apology. Speaking alongside Kishida, Yoon said he has no plans to seek reimbursement from Japan. Japan insists the forced labor and all other compensation issues were resolved by a 1965 treaty that established relations between Japan and South Korea. Under the treaty, South Korea received \$300 million in economic aid and \$500 million in loans from Japan.

However, South Korean forced laborers began demanding compensation starting in the 1990s and subsequent South Korean court rulings have sided with the victims. For many South Korean conservatives, there are bigger issues at stake - such as dealing

with the rapidly expanding North Korean nuclear missile threat and securing global supply chains. "This is why Yoon proposed a solution to the issue of forced labor despite huge political risks," read an editorial in the conservative Chosun Ilbo newspaper. "This summit offers a chance to make things right again."

Choi Eun-mi, a researcher at the Seoul-based Asan Institute, said Yoon's proposal was not meant to be a comprehensive solution to the forced labor issue, but represents an important first step. "There is no way to satisfy everyone," Choi said. "I wish we could, but it's not that easy." US President Joe Biden last week praised Yoon's proposal, saying it marks "a groundbreaking new chapter of cooperation and partnership between two of the United States' closest allies." Improved Japan-South Korea relations could be hugely beneficial for the United States, which has long sought greater trilateral cooperation on regional threats. Some US analysts believe the Japan-South Korea rapprochement may outlast Yoon and Kishida, given China's increased military assertiveness and North Korea's near-constant missile tests and other threats.

At least for now, many South Korean opposition politicians seem to disagree. Ko Min-jung, a senior Democratic Party lawmaker, told VOA on Friday it is possible for South Korea to both deal with its security challenges and avoid what she called "surrender diplomacy." "There is good reason to question the benefit of South Korea giving up everything, unconditionally, to Japan," she said.

VOA

## Real change between Saudi Arabia and Iran would benefit all

Hassan Al-Mustafa

**O**VER the past few months, during my visits to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and my discussions with different people on the developments of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran, I realized there was a general agreement that the Islamic Republic of Iran, a neighboring country, should have normal diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, that there is nothing against the Iranian people, and that the only way to resolve the existing differences is transparent and practical dialogue.

So, there is a prevailing agreement among important elites that good relations between Tehran and Riyadh are a Saudi interest in the first place, and that they would support the stability and security of the Arab Gulf and help to address the roots of regional tension. Without such relations, the region will continue to suffer from turmoil and security crises, which may develop into a direct armed confrontation, with dire consequences for everyone. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan expressed this Saudi conviction in an interview with Ashraq Al-Awsat newspaper last week. He said: "We, in the Kingdom, hope to open a new chapter with Iran and bolster cooperation that would consolidate security and stability and push forward development and prosperity, not just in both our countries, but the entire region."

But why this Saudi position? In my opinion, there is a big project called Saudi Vision 2030 and, for this vision to succeed, it needs an atmosphere of security and economic stability. This vision cannot achieve its goals if tensions persist in the Arabian Gulf and acts of piracy, terrorism and the targeting of vital oil installations continue. In addition, the

Saudi government does not want to deplete its budget with conflicts and wars, but rather it wants to invest in infrastructure and projects such as NEOM, Qiddiya, Riyadh Air and The Red Sea project that will bring more tourists, create new jobs, contribute to advancing the local economy and diversify the Kingdom's sources of income.

Moreover, there is a decades-old Saudi diplomacy based on avoiding external clashes and the desire to reach peaceful solutions as much as possible. Even when Riyadh severed its relations with Tehran in 2016, it took this measure only after angry Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. The Yemen war was also not the preferred option for Saudi Arabia, but the Houthi group's occupation of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, its threat to Saudi Arabia's borders and the Kingdom's worry of real danger prompted it to defend its national interests. Saudi Arabia cannot accept the presence of an armed group linked to a foreign country on its borders, nor allow the Hezbollah experience in Lebanon to be replicated in Yemen, giving Iran, and specifically the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a security and military depth that can be exploited to harm Saudi interests.

Therefore, while the Saudi armed forces protected their homeland and struck the military capabilities of the Houthis, the Kingdom continued, at the same time, efforts to solve the problem through political dialogue, consolidation of the armistice and ceasefire, and entering into direct talks aimed at stopping the Yemeni war and forming a government of national unity in Yemen that includes the Houthis to start the

process of rebuilding. Returning to the discussions that took place during my visits to Saudi Arabia, there was, as I indicated, a desire to solve problems with Iran. However, at the same time, there was a history of distrust due to the multiple centers of power in Iran on the one hand and its failure to abide by its commitments more than once on the other. This made supporters of dialogue prefer to slow down and ask whether the Iranian leaders were serious this time about reaching permanent good relations with Saudi Arabia.

It is not possible to predict what the Iranian leadership is thinking. However, what is certain is that the agreement announced in Beijing on March 10 between Saudi Arabia and Iran, under Chinese auspices, would not have taken place without a strong Iranian desire to ease tensions with neighboring countries. It must have realized that, for years, it suffered from regional isolation, its economy declined and it lost much of its reputation, which reflected negatively on the internal situation, causing several social and economic disturbances.

Hassan Fahs, a Lebanese researcher specializing in Iranian affairs, said in an article published on the Independent Arabia website that the Iranian side "has reached an implicit conviction and recognition of the strategic mistake that the regime contributed to making about seven years ago, when it allowed some extremist groups to violate all diplomatic norms and international covenants that protect diplomatic representations and attack the Saudi embassy in the capital, Tehran, and its consulate in the city of Mashhad. This attack complemented the support that

Tehran was offering to the Houthi group in Yemen, which posed a threat to the strategic and national security of Riyadh." Therefore, according to Fahs, "Iranian officials, especially in the diplomatic apparatus, did not hesitate to confirm their serious desire to restore relations and resolve the dispute with Riyadh and resume diplomatic and political relations with it."

This analysis is consistent with the data of the current reality, especially since such a strategic step could not have taken place without the approval of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who in turn entrusted the task of negotiation to the Supreme National Security Council and its Secretary-General Ali Shamkhani, who communicates directly with Khamenei. This shows Khamenei's desire to follow the smallest details and prevent any interference that may obstruct the agreement, given his knowledge of the existence of revolutionary forces that have extremist rhetoric against Saudi Arabia. This supreme political will in Iran will be effective if the IRGC adheres to the political decision and stops supporting armed militias and spy cells in the Gulf, or at least lifts the lid on the anti-Saudi groups in the region. The noncompliance of all state institutions in Iran, including the IRGC, would harm the Saudi-Iranian agreement and impede the building of trust, which is the basis for any future development or cooperation. The Arab Gulf region has suffered greatly in recent years from security incidents and racist and sectarian rhetoric. Citizens in different countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran, want to live in peace and therefore it is necessary to work for the success of dialogue and push for a real change in the relationship, which would be in the interest of all countries.

### Important Notice

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





## PSX loses 40.47 points, closing at 40,877.98

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) declined by 40.47 points on Tuesday, showing a negative change of 0.10 per cent, closing at 40,877.98 points against 40,918.45 points the previous day.

A total of 142,804,015 shares were traded during the day as compared to 195,477,553 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 4.177 billion against Rs. 5.007 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 334 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 146 of them recorded gains and 165 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 6,046,419

shares at Rs.1.22 per share; Energyco PK with 4,848,036 shares at Rs.3.73 per share and Unity Food Ltd with 4,691,640 shares at Rs.14.12 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.200.00 per share price, closing at Rs.8000.00, whereas the runner-up was Nestle Pakistan with an Rs.66.00 rise in its per share price to Rs.5181.00.

Pak Services witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.104.10 per share closing at Rs.1283.90; followed by Sapphire Fiber with Rs.71.70 decline to close at Rs.888.18.

**Rupee gains 11 paise against dollar**

The Pakistan rupee gained 11 paise against the dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs 283.92 against the previous day's closing of

Rs 284.03

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 283.7 and Rs 286.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.04 and closed at Rs 304.87 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.83, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen decreased by 02 paise to close at Rs 2.14, whereas a surge of Rs 1.45 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 347.74 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 346.29.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham decreased by 03 paise to close at Rs 77.30 and Saudi Riyal went down by 05 paise each to close at Rs 75.56.

**Gold prices decrease by Rs.3100 to Rs. 204,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3100 and was sold at Rs. 204,200 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs. 207,300 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 2658 to Rs.175,068 from Rs. 177,726, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.160,480 from Rs.162,916.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2,200 whereas that of ten-gram silver went down by Rs.42.86 to 1,886.14 respectively. The price of gold in the international market dipped by US\$14 to \$1968 against its sale at \$1982, the association reported.

## Carrefour and Alkhidmat Foundation sign agreement



### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Carrefour, owned and operated by Majid Al Futtaim in Pakistan, has teamed up with Alkhidmat Foundation for the provision of humanitarian aid. The collaboration is set to provide meals to the less privileged during the month of Ramadan in Pakistan and to support the victims of recent earth-

quakes in Türkiye and Syria. The bipartite memorandum of understanding was signed by Majid Barzegar, District Manager of Carrefour Pakistan and Engr. Ahmad Rashid, President AlKhidmat Foundation Lahore during a special ceremony held at Head Office of AlKhidmat Foundation in Lahore.

Customers have the opportunity to give back to

tomers to buy and donate at all Carrefour stores.

Umer Lodhi, Country Manager of Carrefour Pakistan at Majid Al Futtaim Retail said, "We believe in the power of collective action and community support. We are greatly pleased to join hands with Alkhidmat Foundation to play our part in eliminating food hunger in the country, whilst providing relief to those affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria. We hope our combined efforts will make a positive impact on those who need it the most."

The leading retailer recognises its role in providing support to the less privileged in the country and maintains its mission to uplift its surrounding communities. This collaboration joins international appeals to help the victims of Türkiye and Syria, demonstrating Pakistan's efforts to be at the forefront of extending all possible relief assistance despite facing its own challenges.

the local community this Ramadan by purchasing special, pre-packed boxes filled with essential food items such as rice, flour, oil, dates & pulses. These will be distributed to families to stop them from worrying about their next meal. In addition, earthquake relief boxes comprised of shelter supplies, clothing, and non-perishable food items are available for cus-

## Adamjee Life launches nationwide Nigehbaan Ramzan Drive

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Adamjee Life, one of the fastest growing and leading life insurance company in Pakistan has launched its Nigehbaan Ramzan Drive in collaboration with humanitarian and social welfare services organizations including The Indus Hospital & Health Network, SIUT and JDC Foundation.

The Adamjee Life Nigehbaan Ramzan Drive aims to create awareness and empower the individuals to contribute to the society through multiple charitable organizations impacting millions of lives in various segments of society.

To further facilitate this cause, Adamjee Life will be conducting a social outreach program through its social media platforms that will help in mobilizing the general public, specially the youth.

Mr. Manzar Mushtaq, CEO Adamjee Life said "Adamjee Life has always been a firm believer of corporate social responsibility. Through our Nigehbaan Ramzan Drive, we aim to provide a platform where people can easily contribute to support those in need. We are honored to partner with Indus Hospital & Health Network, JDC Foundation, and SIUT, who are already making a

significant impact in our society each day. We will be also contributing to the cause and will continue spreading the awareness among people to take a step forward and participate as well."

Dr. Syed Adilul Hasan Rizvi, founder and director of SIUT said "We are grateful to Adamjee Life and it's encouraging to see such passion from credible private sector organizations that act as a catalyst to our continuous efforts in uplifting lives of many around us."

From JDC foundation - Zafar Abbas said "Such organizations as Adamjee Life, that focus on working

for the greater good to benefit the community, are the platform which will help us to further enable us to provide health and medicine related services far and wide. We hope to collaborate with Adamjee Life on future endeavors too."

Dr. Saba Jamal - Senior Director, Pathology & Blood Transfusion Services - The Indus Hospital & Health Networks said "Adamjee Life has been our long standing partner which has extended its support on various occasions. This will not only help us in generating resources but it'll also help us in reaching out to a bigger segment of the population."

## IMARAT Builders Mall announces signs with Smart Innovations



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: IMARAT Builders Mall (IBM) is pleased to announce signing with Smart Innovations, the best smart living solutions brand in the market. Since its founding in 2015, Smart Innovations has established itself as Pakistan's leading supplier of all-inclusive, cutting-edge, open, and adaptable solutions.

With its offices in different parts of the world including Dubai, Pakistan, KSA, and China, Smart Innovations has marked its brand strengths internationally with best-in-class products e.g. VDA, Italian (GRMS & IPTV); Salto, Spanish (Access Control); Lilin, Taiwan (CCTV); Excel, UK (Data Cables & Fiber), and many more.

Smart Innovations is set to provide scalable and customised smart solutions for the hospitality, commercial, education, healthcare, and residential sectors, allowing people to make their daily tasks easier, more productive, and efficient.

The aforementioned signing will offer a diverse range of solutions, including security and surveillance, AIOT and automation, lighting, critical power, and thermal management.

It is worth noting that IBM aims to take on famous construction brands from all over the world and provide its customers with top-notch smart living solutions.

Smart Innovations is a renowned brand known for its world-class smart solutions for different industry verticals. They have a strong reputa-

tion for delivering high-quality products and services to their customers, making them the perfect inclusion for IBM. Together, they will be able to provide unparalleled smart living solutions that cater to the needs of homeowners and businesses alike.

IBM, developed under the umbrella of the IMARAT Group- the leading real estate company in Pakistan- offers an all-in-one destination for all construction needs. Smart Innovations is set to enhance IBM's offerings, providing customers with a complete range of smart living solutions that are tailored to their needs.

"With the addition of Smart Living's portfolio, we are a step closer to our goal which is to offer our customers the best smart living solutions that the market has to offer," said Mr. Shafiq Akbar, Chairman IMARAT Group.

"This collaboration is a significant step forward in the smart living industry in Pakistan. It is a reflection of IBM's unwavering dedication to offering customers cutting-edge and inventive solutions in the market. Without doubt, customers can anticipate obtaining state-of-the-art smart living solutions customised to their distinct requirements," said Farhan Javed, Graana.com and IMARAT Hospitality.



ISLAMABAD: Women purchasing vegetables at Vegetable Margalla Ramzan Bazaar Peshawar Morr.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, namely MSC Marina, MSC Monica, CMA CGM Rabelais and STI Gramercy carrying containers and mogas, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and FOTCO Oil Terminal the other day.

Meanwhile, three more ships, Lisa, MSC Maria Elena and ES Valor carrying containers and palm oil also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three containers vessel CMA CGM Rabelais, MSC Marina and MSC Monica left the port on Tuesday morning, whereas another chemicals carrier Easterly Beech Galaxy is expected to sail on today.

Cargo throughput during the last 24 hours stood at 59,983 tonnes, comprising 32,222 tonnes of import cargo and 27,761 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,577 containers (944 TEUs Imports and 1,633 TEUs export) was handled at the port.

There are four ships at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, three ships, Lisa, MSC Maria Elena and ES Valor carrying containers and palm oil, are expected to take berths at the Container terminal and Liquid terminal later today while two more ships, Wide Juliet and EM Astoria are due to arrive on Wednesday.

### LCCI urges govt to issue policy

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday urged the government to issue policy on import of raw materials.

Acting LCCI President Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry said in a media statement that industrial closure due to shortage of raw materials would be a new phenomenon in coming days. He said that the banks' refusal to issue LCs (Letters of Credit) was delaying the industry's access to raw materials. He claimed that as a result, the industry's ability to meet local market demand and the volume of exports were declining.

He said that lack of available raw materials was causing businesses to lay off employees and shop owners to stop employing new employees, which had doubled the jobless rate.

Zafar Mehmood feared that economy would suffer if the raw material shortfall was not addressed.

### Bank AL Habib declares 70% Cash Dividend F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Annual General Meeting of Bank AL Habib Limited was held at its Registered Office in Multan on March 21, 2023. The shareholders approved the Annual Accounts for the year ended December 31, 2022. The payment of 70% Cash Dividend (Final) was also approved.

Deposits of the Bank as on December 31, 2022 were Rs.1,568 trillion and Profit after tax was Rs.16,570 billion.

## Ghurki: Pakistan restores mangroves under CPEC

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki said on Tuesday that Pakistan has a lot to learn from China's experience in addressing climate change issues.

Sharing his views during a think-tank session here at PCJCCI Secretariat, he mentioned that recently 16 acres of mangrove forest had been successfully restored in the Sonmiani Marsh Dam area of Balochistan under the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). It has made smooth progress in the construction of the mangrove biodiversity and mangrove restoration demonstration zones in Pakistan.

Ghurki said that China had come a long way in its fight against climate change and environmental degradation, and Pakistan will benefit from China's experience, including the use of new techniques to counter climate change at home. "Pakistan will take a

leaf out of China's book on the successful greening of degraded grasslands, deserts, and restoration of forests," he added.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong said that according to China Economic Net (CEN), SCSIO was leading a project titled "Database Construction of Mangrove Biodiversity in South Asia and Southeast Asia, and Construction of Anti-pollution Ecological Restoration Demonstration Zones," which is being conducted in collaboration with the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) in Pakistan.

As part of this project, the research team utilized the R&D technology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to apply the mangrove anti-pollution ecological restoration technology to restore damaged coastal wetlands in Pakistan.

He added that Pakistan had over 5,000 large and

small glaciers and more than 100 lakes, which jointly make up the world's largest fresh water reservoir. But Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries facing the risks of climate change, including the melting of glaciers; it is high time for Pakistan to seriously value its natural resources to combat the negative impacts of climate change.

On this occasion, Vice President Hamza Khalid said that mangroves, as one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems on earth, play a crucial role in preventing floods that could affect 39 per cent more people annually if they were absent.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), mangroves are exceptional carbon sinks, with three to five times greater carbon storage capacity than tropical forests, so restoration of such an incredible forest is one of the major milestones of the CPEC.

## COMSATS and WBAF to cooperate in S&T, sign LoI

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the World Business Angels Investment Forum (WBAF) to set in motion a process towards formalizing cooperation in science and technology through concluding an MOU, subsequently. The MOU, to be concluded, would be a framework aimed at supporting R&D institutions, research scholars, innovators, start-ups, academics and entrepreneurs in COMSATS member states.

The LoI was signed by Amb. Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director COMSATS, and Mr. Baybars Altuntas, Chair WBAF, on behalf of their respective organizations. Federal Secretary Ministry of Science and Technology, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Memon, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. He along with Ambassador Shahid Kamal, a seasoned diplomat, who has served as Advisor to the COMSATS,



witnessed the signing ceremony. Senior officials of COMSATS were also present on the occasion.

COMSATS is an inter-governmental organization of 27 developing countries with its Secretariat hosted in Islamabad by the Government of Pakistan. Founded in 1994 with overarching objective of bridging the knowledge and technological gap between the global North and South - an idea propounded by Pakistani Nobel Laureate and Theoretical Physicist Prof. Dr. Abdus Salam -

COMSATS has embarked on a journey with greater thrust on promoting R&D, entrepreneurship, innovations and aligning research with the industry.

WBAF - an affiliate partner of G-20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) - engages policy makers and partners to develop smart policies that will provide financial support to startups, scale-ups, SMEs and all entrepreneurs to help them transform their business. It has ten country offices in five continents.

## Youth awareness, capacity building seminar held

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Transparency International Pakistan organized Youth Awareness and Capacity Building Seminar on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) in collaboration with Sindh Madressatul Islam University and Thinkers Tribe.

The seminar brought together speakers from academia who emphasized on the role of Sustainable Development for the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Mr. Kashif Ali, Executive Director Transparency International Pakistan briefed the participants that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 is dedicated to strengthening governance through

the promotion of peaceful societies, rule of law, access to justice, building effective governance institutions and reducing corruption in all forms. He emphasized that the ambitious vision of SDGs is challenged by risks, the most serious of which is that all 17 unanimously adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be severely undermined by corruption. He encouraged young students to play their active role in monitoring the adoption and implementation of SDGs in Pakistan.

Dr. Hashim Zuberi, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, SMI University discussed in detail Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) and the need to make

climate action inclusive.

Dr. Kamran Ahmed, Assistant Professor, SZABIST University Karachi and Co-Founder Thinkers Tribe emphasized that Sustainable Development goals need to be the benchmark for every citizen in Pakistan as the achievement of these goals represent the future prosperity of Pakistan.

Dr. Jamshed Adil Halepota, Dean Faculty of Management, Business Administration, and Commerce, SMI University encouraged students to take keen interest in sustainable development goals and thanked Transparency International Pakistan for organizing youth centric seminar on SDGs. He said there is a need to raise awareness about SDGs among young people and the communities.





## In brief

Sports  
Championship

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The closing ceremony of the University of Engineering Technology (UET) Peshawar Inter-departmental Sports Championship 2022-23 was held at VC Lawn UET Peshawar after the week-long sports events organized by the Directorate of Sports and UET Sports Society here on Tuesday. Prof. Dr. Sahar Noor, Dean Mechanical, Chemical and Industrial Engineering and Chairman Sports Committee were the chief guest on the occasion. He said the Championship was a great success and provided a platform for the students to showcase their talents and sportsmanship. He appreciated the efforts of the Directorate of Sports and UET Sports Society for organizing the event and providing the students with an opportunity to participate in a healthy competition. Prof. Dr. Afzal Khan Provost of UET Peshawar also spoke on the occasion while Prof. Dr. Abdul Shakoor, member Sports Committee, Director Sports Muhammad Ali, Dr. Shamaila Farooq, Director Media and other senior faculty gave away shields to the winning teams.

## Work to lay FIH approved turf

**LAHORE (APP):** The work to install shock pads and final leveling of the surface have started for laying modern FIH approved synthetic turf in the National Hockey Stadium here on Tuesday. Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi thoroughly inspected the shock pads and final leveling work. Concerned officials and the contractor of the project gave a detailed briefing to Director General Sports Punjab about the ongoing work. Speaking on this occasion Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said that the latest synthetic turf approved by FIH is being laid in the National Hockey Stadium. "After the completion of shock pads work, the phase of synthetic turf laying will begin. Modern synthetic turf is a gift for young talented hockey players," he added. He said that the game of hockey will be promoted to a great extent after the laying of new synthetic turf in the National Hockey Stadium. "Now our talented hockey players will be able to improve their game skills as per international standard," he added. He further said Sports Board Punjab has always given great importance to hockey. "Our hockey past was glorious and now we are striving hard to regain the lost prestige in this game," he added.

## Delhi Capitals beat UP Warriorz

**DELHI (BBC):** Delhi Capitals reached the Women's Premier League final with a five-wicket win over UP Warriorz. England's Alice Capsey took 3-26 and then scored 34 as Delhi reached their target of 139 with 13 balls to spare. Warriorz, who had already qualified for the knockouts, must now play Mumbai Indians in the eliminator on Friday. Mumbai and Delhi both finished on 12 points but Delhi's superior net run-rate ensured they ended top of the table. Mumbai had an opportunity to take top spot in the earlier fixture against Royal Challengers Bangalore, but took 126 overs to chase 163 which dented their net run-rate further. Delhi will face the winner of the eliminator in the final on Sunday 26 March at 15:00 GMT.

# Afghanistan recall Nabi for T20I series against Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Afghanistan on Tuesday announced a 17-member squad with three reserve players for their three-match T20I home series against Pakistan, commencing this week in Sharjah. Rashid Khan will lead a side that has some familiar names, including former skipper Mohammad Nabi, who had stepped down as captain after the 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup. However, senior batters Rahmat Shah and Hazratullah Zazai were not considered for the squad.

The 37-year-old Nabi, was dropped for the series against UAE where the ODI mainstay Rahmat Shah earned a call-up to the T20I side. However, Shah was dropped from the squad for the Pakistan series without making his

T20I debut.

"Our team has been working hard in training camp and selectors have selected the best available players for the series," Afghanistan Cricket Board CEO Naseeb Khan said as quoted by the ICC on its website. "I am confident that our team will perform at their best and make our nation proud. We wish our team the best of luck for the series and hope to see them emerge victorious."

Nabi, a veteran of 104 T20Is, returns to the squad. Qais Ahmad, Darwish Rasooli and Mohammad Saleem, who were part of the UAE series, do not feature in the squad.

The series, marked to be the first multi-match bilateral series between these sides, will begin on March 24. "We look forward to an exciting competition

between two great teams. Both nations have passionate fans who support their teams with enthusiasm and pride," Naseeb Khan said.

"As neighbors, we have a special bond and we hope to showcase not only our cricketing skills but also the spirit of friendship and sportsmanship," he added.

**Afghanistan Squad:** Rashid Khan (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Usman Ghani, Sediqullah Atal, Najibullah Zadran, Afsar Zazai, Karim Janat, Mohammad Nabi, Azmatullah Omarzai, Gulbadin Naib, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Noor Ahmad, Mujeeb Ur Rehman, Fareed Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi and Naveen Ul Haq.

**Reserve players:** Nangyal Kharoti, Zahir Khan and Nijat Masoud.

## Nidamanuru hits 110 not out from No. 7 to give Netherlands unlikely win over Zimbabwe

**HARARE (Agencies):** Teja Nidamanuru's unbeaten 96-ball 110 from No. 7 did the job for Netherlands as they pulled off a come-from-behind three-wicket win over Zimbabwe.

Chasing 250 for victory in the first of three ODIs, Netherlands were staring down the barrel at 110 for 6 in the 32nd over before Nidamanuru first wove partnerships with Shariz Ahmad and Paul van Meekeren and then finished off the game with some fireworks.

Nidamanuru walked in after Richard Nagarava and Wellington Masakadza had dismantled Netherlands' top

order. Colin Ackermann was still there, though, and put up a 46-run stand with Nidamanuru, but Masakadza knocked Ackermann over for 50 in his final over.

It was the bottom few left then, and Nidamanuru and Shariz picked up a boundary each in the first ten balls of their partnership before a quiet period left Netherlands needing 108 off 72 balls. They found the odd boundary, and Nidamanuru went past 50, but it wasn't till the 43th over that things started to get a bit desperate.

Zimbabwe bowled five bowlers between the 43rd and the 48th over but the

rotation didn't work in terms of stemming the flow of runs. It did, however, involve Shariz being run out for 30 to end a 110-run stand off just 94 balls.

Nidamadaru brought up his century in the 48th over, with a four off Nagarava and with van Meekeren hitting another four in the same over. Netherlands needed 19 from 12. That became just four from the last over after Nidamadaru smacked a six and van Meekeren a four in the 49th over, bowled by Blessing Muzarabani.

It went down to the penultimate ball, before van Meekeren hit Brad Evans for six to finish the job.

## Pakistan Day Sports Festival begins in Charsadda

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Pakistan Day Sports Festival organized by District Administration Charsadda and Frontier Corps got under way at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex Charsadda in a colourful opening ceremony with more than 500 athletes in four different.

The Festival would continue till March 23. More than five hundred athletes from three Tehsils of district Charsadda will participate in this festival including Tangi, Shabqadar and Charsadda.

The aim of the festival is to celebrate Pakistan Day in a grand manner. More than 500 players are participating in badminton, cricket, football and volleyball. The

Badminton and football competitions will be held at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex. The volleyball and cricket matches will be held at Parang Sports Complex. Prior to this, the start of the Pakistan Day Sports Festival was held in a grand and colourful opening ceremony.

A total of 32 teams will participate in badminton while 16 teams each are taking part in football, volleyball and cricket competitions.

Major Faizur Rehman was the chief guest on this occasion who formally inaugurated the Festival with Captain Naveed, District Sports Officer Tahsinullah, Badminton National Coaches Nadeem Khan and

Hayatullah, Volleyball Secretary General Khalid Waqar and Cricket and Football officials were also present.

Addressing the players on this occasion, Major Faiz-ur-Rehman said that the purpose of the Pakistan Day Sports Festival is to provide awareness to the youth regarding the importance of 23rd March 1940 where a Resolution was passed unanimously about the creation of Pakistan.

He said that in connection with Pakistan Day, other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also organized, in which the youth participated fully. Later, Major Faizur Rehman formally inaugurated these games.



**PESHAWAR:** Students participating in Tug Of War competition during Jashn-e-Baharan Sports Festival at Government City Girls College.

### Dahani returns for Pakistan A tour of Zimbabwe

**LAHORE (Agencies):** Imran Butt will captain the Pakistan A side, known as the Pakistan Shaheens, for an upcoming tour of Zimbabwe to play Zimbabwe A. Shah Nawaz Dahani, who missed the PSL with a finger injury, has also been included in the 16-man squad. Hussain Talat will serve as the vice-captain, while wicketkeeper Rohail Nazir also returns to the national setup on this tour. Former Under-19 captain Qasim Akram is part of the travelling contingent. Mir Hamza, who recently played three Test matches against England and New Zealand, also travels with the squad, as does 20-year old batter Haseebullah Khan, who played for Zalmi in the PSL this season. The tour, which comprises two four-day matches and six 50-over games, will start on May 3.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Under-19 squad will travel to Bangladesh at the end of April to play a four-day game, five 50-over matches and a T20. Saad Baig, who captained the side against Bangladesh A in Multan, will reprise that role. The squad also includes fast bowler Aimal Khan, who featured prominently for Quetta Gladiators in the recently concluded Pakistan Super League. Slow left arm bowler Ali Asfand, who played for Central Punjab's 2nd XI side in 2022, will serve as vice captain. The Under-19 tour kicks off with a four-day match on 30 April in Chattogram, with the sole T20 capping off the tour on 17 May in Rajshahi.

Pakistan Shaheens: Imran Butt (captain), Hussain Talat (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, Haseebullah, Kamran Gulam, Mehran Mumtaz, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Huraira, Mubasir Khan, Muhammad Umar, Omair Bin Yusuf, Qasim Akram, Rohail Nazir (wk), Sahibzada Farhan, Shah Nawaz Dahani

Pakistan U19: Saad Baig (captain), Ali Asfand (vice-captain), Ahmed Hussain, Aimal Khan, Amir Hussain, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awaiz, Hamza Nawaz, Mohammad Ibtisam, Mohammad Tahir, Mohammad Tayyab Arif, Obaid Shahid, Sajjad Ali, Shahzaib Khan, Shamyl Hussain Wahaj Riaz

## ‘Pakistan a strong contender to win ICC World Cup in India’

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Former captain and fast bowling great Wasim Akram believes that Babar Azam-led Pakistan are a strong contender to win the ICC ODI Cricket World Cup 2023, to be hosted by India in October-November.

Talking to Sports Tak, Akram said that Pakistan had a formidable fast bowling attack, possessing the quality to help their team lift the coveted trophy. "Our captain is a great player and we have one of the best fast-bowling line-ups in the world," he said.

"Shaheen Afridi is currently in prime form. He has led his team to victory in the PSL-8 for the second time. He is developing pretty well as an all-rounder. Then there is Haris Rauf

and Naseem Shah. (Mohammad) Hasnain is there, Ihsanullah is an exciting young fast bowler," he added.

He said that as the nature of pitches in India was largely batting friendly, team with a strong bowling unit will eventually succeed in making it through.

"I think because the World Cup is happening in India, it is the team with the stronger bowling attack that will succeed because the pitches tend to be batter friendly," he said.

Akram also talked about the Indian batter's shortcoming to tackle the in-swinging deliveries. He said although the angling deliveries had troubled them, they would find a way to pass the problem. "It is the angle that makes it

difficult and especially when the ball comes in.

"At the same time, India have some great top-order players. Be it, Virat Kohli, be it, Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul, all of them are greats of the game and they will figure out the problems." Indian top-order faced a similar challenge against Mitchell Starc in the recently-held 2nd ODI Australia. Starc created troubles for them with his sharp moving deliveries and dismissed them in his first spell.

"Let's give credit to Mitchell Starc. He bowled brilliantly and the pitch was also very lively. And the way the ball was seaming around at one point I thought I am seeing a match in Australia or New Zealand", he added.

## Annual Janshn-e-Baharan Sports Festival ends at City Gulbahar

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The annual Jashn-e-Baharan Sports Festival at Government City Girls College Gulbahar concluded with colourful events and sweet memories under the aegis of City Management and Directorate Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here college premises on Tuesday.

Adviser to the Chief Minister on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Professor Dr Riaz Anwar was chief guest on this occasion. Deputy Director Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Arshad Hussain, Principal of the College Professor Tahira Dar, Principal and Director Sports Miss Afsheen Khan, Miss Huma, Miss Roheena, Miss Sadiya, Miss Maria, and Director Sports GGC, City Gulbahar Najma Qazi, players and officials from various colleges were also present.

Principal City Gulbahar College Prof. Tahira Dar in

his welcome address thanked the chief guest for gracing the occasion and extended support to the college management for organizing the Annual Jashn-e-Baharan Sports Festival organized wherein players from FA, FSC-I, FA FSC-II, BS Home Economics, BS Political Science, BS Islamiyat and a team of all Athletes who got admission on sports basis in various subjects.

During the Jashn-e-Baharan Sports Festival, she said, awards of achievements have also been awarded to the students in academics, Qirat, Naat, Speeches, outstanding players who excelled in different Games at national and international levels.

Principal Professor Tahira Dar said that the management of the college with the help of Directorate of Higher Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wants to involve the students in healthy sports activities besides providing them due opportunities to excel academically.

Miss Najma Qazi, daughter of gold medalist hockey Olympian Qazi Salahuddin, disclosed that FA, FSC-I, FA, FSC-II, BS English, BS Chemistry, BS Urdu, BS Home Economics, BS Political Science, BS Islamiyat and a team of all Athletes who got admission on sports basis in various subjects.

During the Jashn-e-Baharan Sports Festival, she said, awards of achievements have also been awarded to the students in academics, Qirat, Naat, Speeches, outstanding players who excelled in different Games at national and international levels.

Principal Professor Tahira Dar said that the management of the college with the help of Directorate of Higher Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wants to involve the students in healthy sports activities besides providing them due opportunities to excel academically.

## World Cup 2023 likely to start on October 5 and end on November 19

**MUMBAI (ESPNcricinfo):** The 2023 ODI World Cup is likely to start on October 5 and end on November 19. ESPNcricinfo has also learned that BCCI, the host for the 10-team marquee event, has shortlisted at least a dozen venues, with the final scheduled to be at the world's largest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

Ahmedabad aside, the shortlist comprises Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Dharamsala, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Indore, Rajkot and Mumbai. In all the tournament will comprise 48 matches including three knockouts across the 46-day period.

The title bout aside, the BCCI has not specified venues for any games as yet, or the two or three cities where teams will play the warm-ups.

The delay in finalising the venues is due to the complications posed by the monsoon season receding at different points in different parts of India.

Usually the ICC announces World Cup schedules at least a year in advance, but this time it has also

been waiting for the BCCI to get the necessary clearances from the Indian government. This includes two key issues: getting a tax exemption for the tournament, and visa clearance for the Pakistan team, which has not played in India except at ICC events since early 2013.

At the ICC's quarterly meetings last weekend, held in Dubai, the BCCI is learned to have assured the global body that visas for the Pakistan contingent will be cleared by the Indian government.

As for the tax exemption issue, the BCCI is expected to update the ICC soon on the exact position of the Indian government.

The tax exemption has been part of the host's agreement the BCCI signed with the ICC in 2014, when three men's events were awarded to India: the 2016 T20 World Cup, the 2018 Champions Trophy (later changed to 2021 T20 World Cup, which was moved to the UAE and Oman due to the pandemic) and the 2023 ODI World Cup.

As per the agreement, the BCCI was "obligated" to help the ICC

(and all its commercial partners involved in the tournament) secure tax waivers.

Last year the ICC was informed by the Indian tax authorities that it would be charged a 20% tax order (excluding surcharges) for its broadcast revenue from the 2023 World Cup. In a note distributed to its members - state associations - the BCCI pointed out that any tax "incurred" by ICC would be "adjusted" against the Indian board's revenues from ICC's central revenue pool.

In the note, the BCCI listed the ICC's estimated broadcasting income from the 2023 World Cup at USD 533.29 million. It said the "financial impact" it would suffer for a 10.92% tax order on that would be around UDS 58.23 million (the BCCI's note listed the figure as USD 52.23 million, which appears to be an error given the percentages listed). That would more than double to roughly USD 116.47 million if the tax component were to be 21.84%, as desired by the Indian tax authorities.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 72,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 72,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 64,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1424.54 feet and was 26.54 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 21,100 cusecs while outflow as 28,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1095.20 feet, 45.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 22,400 cusecs and 23,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 23,600, 34,200, 26,500 and 9,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 8,778 fine tickets issued

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) issued 8,778 fine tickets to road users for not fastening seat belts and 7,668 for using mobile phones during the ongoing month. Following the directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, a special campaign is underway to check violations. Various squads headed by Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer are performing duties at main roads and boulevards of the city and taking stern action against the violators. According to a police spokesman, a campaign is underway to ensure a disciplined traffic system in the city and citizens are also requested to follow the traffic rules to maintain a disciplined traffic system in the city. He said that personnel of Islamabad capital police have been directed to ensure the implementation of traffic rules and regulations irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience and politeness while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users. He said that police were ensuring strict legal action against other traffic rules violators as well. The force issues traffic violation tickets, not as a punitive measure but the purpose is to ensure a safe road environment in the capital and secure the lives of the people.

### ANF recovers 354 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations managed to recover over 354 kg of drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that ANF and FC in a joint operation near Takhat Baig Chowk, Peshawar recovered 50.4 kg charras and rounded up four accused residents of Khyber. In another raid near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 3.6 kg charras from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Khyber. The spokesman informed that in third operation ANF and FC conducted a raid in Musakhail Balochistan area and seized 240 kg opium and 60 kg charras. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Chaudhary Salik Hussain calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## NICVD, public health, and the peoples promise

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari

Providing free quality Public healthcare has been a cornerstone of the Pakistan Peoples Party manifesto. The advancements in healthcare in Sindh, where PPP is in government, bear testament to this commitment and its success has been unparalleled. Be it cardiac care, liver and kidney transplants, or bringing down infant mortality through pre and neo natal care, PPP remains at the forefront of providing free quality healthcare for all.

Under the Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh Government, the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD) has been strengthened into one of the strongest cardiac networks. It stands out as the largest network in the world, spread across 22 districts of Sindh with 10 hospitals and 24 chest pain units.

In addition to the ten hospitals across Sindh: Karachi, Tando Muhammad Khan, Hyderabad, Sehwan, Larkana, Sukkur, Nawabshah, Mithi, and Khairpur, the Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has laid the foundation stone of yet another hospital, in Landhi, Karachi. The Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Cardiovascular Disease is set to be the world's largest cardiac hospital with a 1,200 bed facility. Many opponents are quick to tarnish the hard work and achievements by the PPP by peddling outright lies that the health sector is in ruins. Contrary to those claims, an entire cardiac network has been established across

Sindh with the focus of giving free, quality cardiac care, not just to a few cities but across the entire province.

Treatments that cost thousands of dollars abroad have been made free and accessible due to the hard work of Pakistan Peoples Party and under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Take an angioplasty, a necessary medical procedure used to treat blocked or narrow blood vessels in the heart. Typically used for coronary artery disease, which occurs when there is a build up of plaque in the arteries, which reduces blood flow to the heart, causing chest pains or potentially life threatening heart attack. Abroad this procedure could cost anywhere between \$11,000 to \$30,000 or upwards. Cost ranges additional factors can be complexity of the procedure. The average cost of this procedure in the UAE can cost 45,000 AED for a single stent with 15,000 AED being the cost per each additional stent. It could be argued that why compare with international hospitals and not with a local private hospital. The reason is simply that the procedures available and standard of care at NICVDs across Sindh rivals international standards.

Just in the past 5 years approximately over 100,000 primary angioplasties and over 25,000 cardiac surgeries have been conducted in NICVDs across Sindh. Since 2021, stroke interventions are also available at NICVD, a first in public hospitals in Pakistan, and over a 100 successful stroke interventions have been conducted. And NICVD doesn't just cater to people from Sindh. Free quality

healthcare is provided indiscriminately to people no matter where they hail from. Every year the number of patients from provinces other than Sindh increases as NICVD continues to provide free treatment across board. Just in the last three years, over 800,000 patients from across Pakistan (excluding Sindh) have been treated at NICVD.

Despite the malicious allegations being circulated against the PPP and its leadership, the reality of the situation is that the PPP is the only party to have established such revolutionary treatment centers in Pakistan. PPP and its Sindh Government believe in improving public hospitals and today takes pride in having the best cardiac, liver, kidney, and children's hospitals in the country. These hospitals aren't restricted to one city, they are spread across various districts of the province; providing free, quality healthcare to peoples doorsteps. Whether it's Gambat Institute of Medical Science in Khairpur, providing free liver, kidney, bone marrow and cancer treatment, or the establishment of Child Life hospitals across Sindh, or JPMC CyberKnife robotic radio-surgery targeting cancer ranging from: brain, head, neck and spine, that abroad could cost \$60,000-\$90,000 is available in Karachi, Pakistan for free, or any of the other health initiatives established by the PPP, the fact remains that it is only the Pakistan Peoples Party that remains committed to serving the people of Pakistan, regardless of religion, cast, creed or ethnicity.

## Transparency International Pakistan organizes seminar



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Transparency International Pakistan organized Youth Awareness and Capacity Building Seminar on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) in collaboration with Sindh Madressatul Islam University and Thinkers Tribe.

The seminar brought together speakers from academia who emphasized on the role of Sustainable Development for the socio-economic development of

Pakistan. Mr. Kashif Ali, Executive Director Transparency International Pakistan briefed the participants that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 is dedicated to strengthening governance through the promotion of peaceful societies, rule of law, access to justice, building effective governance institutions and reducing corruption in all forms. He emphasized that the ambitious vision of SDGs is challenged by risks, the most serious of which is that all 17 unanimously

adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be severely undermined by corruption. He encouraged young students to play their active role in monitoring the adoption and implementation of SDGs in Pakistan.

Dr. Hashim Zuberi, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, SMI University discussed in detail Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) and the need to make climate action inclusive. Dr. Kamran

Ahmed, Assistant Professor, SZABIST University Karachi and Co-Founder Thinkers Tribe emphasized that Sustainable

Development goals need to be the benchmark for every citizen in Pakistan as the achievement of these goals represent the future prosperity of Pakistan. Dr. Jamshed Adil Halepota, Dean Faculty of Management, Business Administration, and Commerce, SMI University encouraged students to take keen interest in sustainable development goals and thanked Transparency International Pakistan for organizing youth centric seminar on SDGs. He said there is a need to raise awareness about SDGs among young people and the communities.

Students also worked in groups to come up with innovative ideas around SDGs implementation and drafted inputs on SDGs for policy makers.

## BISP Board approves piloting new payment model for beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Kafaalat beneficiaries will soon be able to receive their quarterly payments by opening accounts in the banks of their own choice.

This was decided in the 58th Board meeting of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) chaired by the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson BISP, Shazia Marri in Karachi.

The board gave the approval to pilot a new payment model under which the cash assistance will be transferred directly to the beneficiaries through their bank accounts. The pilot of this new payment model will be introduced in four selected districts of the country. After the success of the pilot, beneficiaries all over the country would be able to open up their accounts in banks of their choice.

The BISP board also approved the proposal of the indexation committee to increase the stipend given to the beneficiaries by 25 per cent. After the increase, the quarterly stipend will increase from Rs. 7,000 to 8,750.

The board also gave approval to a proposal of using mobile units for the registration of people in Balochistan and other remote areas where it was difficult for people to reach Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) centres. Members were of the view that

Balochistan needed special attention given the geographical aspect of the province.

Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik, who was also attending the meeting, was asked to make extra efforts to help people make CNIC cards in remote areas of Balochistan.

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Board was informed that under the new process of dynamic registration of the National Social Economic Registry (NSER), 575 centres were working in the BISP Tehsil offices throughout the country.

Further, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Board approved an internship programme for fresh graduates of universities intending to gain experience through working with the Benazir Income Support Programme.

The board members Dr Ashfaq Hassan Khan, Dr Qaisar Bengali, Sania Riffat, Secretary BISP Yusuf Khan and Secretary PA&SS, Ghufuran Memon were present in the meeting, while board members Haris Ghazdar, Chairman NADRA, Additional Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Samar Ihsan, and Additional Secretary Finance (Expenditure) Aamer Mahmood attended the meeting via Zoom-link. Whereas, DG NSER/CCT Naveed Akbar presented the agenda items before the board meeting.

## COMSATS Welcomes Veteran Academicians from Maldives, Libya, Uganda and Iran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) hosted high-ranking academicians of Maldives, Libya, Uganda and Iran here in Islamabad Campus on March 21, 2023. These dignitaries visited hosts COMSATS University Islamabad on the sidelines of the 5th Vice-Chancellors' Forum, held on March 19-20, 2023 in Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. Over 200 VCs, including 40 from 20 different OIC member states participated in the event.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad T. Afzal, Rector CUI extended welcome to the guests at a reception held on campus on Tuesday along with senior officials of CUI, who had assembled at the occasion.

Maldives' Minister of Higher Education appreciated CUI's milestones, progress and achievements and showed his keen interest for collaboration in the Faculties of Sciences and Health Sciences as well as in exchange programs not only between Maldives and CUI. Later on, participants from Maldives, Libya, Uganda and Iranian sides exchanged ideas on enhancing cooperation with CUI.

Visiting delegates included Dr. Ibrahim Hassan, Minister of Higher Education, Republic of Maldives, Farzana Zahir, High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamabad, Mariyam Fizaana Rashid, Director

General, Maldives Qualification Authority (MQA), Republic of Maldives, Prof. Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim M. Ghoma, President, Gharyan University, Libya, Prof. Dr. Ibrahim N. Jleta, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Libyan Academy for Post Graduate Studies, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Libya, Prof. Ismail Simbwa Gyagenda, Rector, Islamic University, Uganda, Dr. Wardah M. Rajab Gyagenda, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Kampala University, Uganda, Prof. Hamed Shah Rafati, Director General for International Affairs, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran, Prof. Ebrahim Amini, Director, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran and Prof. Seyed Mostafa Daryabari, Manager, International Institute for Culture and Civilization, Iran.

Later, Prof. Sajjad A. Madani gave a detailed presentation of CUI and highlighted milestone and achievements of the university. Officials of CUI present at the occasion included, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar, Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Shahzad A. Malik, Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Prof. Dr. Saqib Gulzar, Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, Prof. Dr. Sajjad A. Madani, Registrar, Dr. Tahir Naqem, Director (P. D and HRD), Prof. Dr. Shams ul Qamar, In-charge ORIC/ Academics and Mr. Ali Tawab Baloch, Head, International Office.



## NA Speaker emphasizes media's role in combating false information, promoting responsible journalism

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Tuesday emphasized the crucial role of media in combating the spread of false information, urging them to take responsibility for preventing dissemination of fake news to avoid harmful effects on society.

He congratulated the newly elected officials of All Pakistan Newspapers Society [APNS] and called for unbiased dissemination of information and urged media organizations to foster inclusion and tolerance.

The Speaker also highlighted the media's role in addressing economic and social problems facing the country, combating moral decline, intolerance, and societal uncertainty.

The Speaker expressed optimism about the newly elected officials of the

All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and their dedication to the development of media in the country.

National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf encouraged them to continue their efforts towards a vibrant and responsible media landscape that serves the interests of the people of Pakistan.

National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf congratulated the newly elected officials of the APNS, including Naz Afrin Sehgal Lakhani as President, Sarmad Ali as Secretary General, Amtan Shahid as Senior Vice President, and Muhammad Aslam Qazi as Vice President.

Additionally, SM Munir Jilani was congratulated for being elected as the Joint Secretary, and Shahab Zuberi was congratulated for being elected as the Finance Secretary of APNS.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Rana Sanaullah Khan being presented a souvenir by Commandant NPA, Allah Dino Khowaja.



Torkham revenue increased

KABUL (Agencies): Revenue collection at Torkham port increases by 3 billion Afghanis. Manager of Torkham Customs Office reported a surge in revenue collection at Torkham port, with an increase of 3 billion Afghanis compared to last year. Total revenue collected from imports of goods this year amounts to 5 billion Afghanis, while it was only 2 billion Afghanis last solar year. The manager attributed this success to the control of smuggling of goods through illegal routes to the country.

DAB to auction \$15m today

KABUL (Pajhwok): The central bank of Afghanistan is all poised to auction an amount of 15 million US dollars on Wednesday. In a tweet on Tuesday, Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) invited eligible lenders and money-exchange services to take part in the auction. The winners will have to settle their accounts by the end of the day, according to Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), which said partial payments were unacceptable.

## Kabul residents celebrate new solar year with flag-raising



KABUL (TOLONews): Kabul residents celebrated the start of the new solar year 1402 on Tuesday with a traditional flag-raising ceremony in the Shuhada-e-Saliheen area of the capital. At the ceremony, they urged the Islamic Emirate to provide equal rights to men and women and to offer work opportunities to residents in the new year. “The flag-raising ceremony is being held every year as usual in Mazar-e-Sharif of Balk province and in Kart-e-Sakhi of Kabul,” said Ahmad Fahim, a resident of Kabul. “We hope to have a year full of peace, serenity, inti-

macy and a good new year,” said Abdul Manan, another resident of Kabul. Some in Kabul celebrated the first day of the new year by going to entertainment venues, visiting friends, and praying for a year full of happiness and progress. “We hope that this year will be a happy year and that the economic situation of the people will improve and that schools will be opened for girls,” Aryan, a resident of Kabul told TOLONews. Only men and boys were present in the parks and entertainment areas, according to Fahim, a

father who celebrated Nowruz by bringing his three children to one of Kabul’s amusement parks. “There is a big difference, in the past years, there weren’t such bans. The only good thing about this year is that the security is ensured,” Fahim, a resident of Kabul told TOLONews. The Islamic Emirate cancelled the Nowruz holiday and forbade the celebration of the first day of the solar year. Despite restrictions, residents in the capital and the provinces celebrated Nowruz last year with more enthusiasm.

## Customs duty on essential food items cut: MoF

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Finance (MoF) reported that based on the leadership decision, import duties on essential foods have decreased by 50 and 70 per cent over the past solar year. Due to this decision, the ministry said customs duties had been reduced to 6.7 million Afghanis during the 1401 solar year. Customs taxes on food products such as flour, wheat, cooking oil, rice, and sugar were reduced to help keep prices down on the local market. Pakistan’s export to Afghanistan rose by 32 per cent from \$500 million to \$ 658 million in the first eight months of the fiscal year 2022-2023. Afghanistan imports most of its food commodities from neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian countries. Since Afghanistan’s takeover by the Taliban-led government, Pakistan’s export to Afghanistan has increased to 32%, according to media reports. Simultaneously, Afghanistan’s export to Pakistan has also increased than before. However, according to experts, border clearance delays cause food commodities costs to decrease.

## Nearly 200 people arrested for kidnapping in past year

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Interior said more than 100 abduction incidents were recorded in the nation in 1401 (the solar year), and close to 200 people were arrested in connection with these incidents. The Interior Ministry’s spokeswoman, Abdul Nafi Takour, said during a press conference that nearly 12,000 criminal incidents were recorded in the country in the past one year. Thirteen suspects have been killed as a result of clashes with Islamic Emirate forces. According to figures from the ministry, 44 citizens were released from kidnappers, while six people who were abducted were murdered. “During the year 1401 (the solar year), 106 incidents of kidnappings were reported to the police in the nation, and in relation to these cases, the police forces carried out 200 operations against the kidnappers,” Takour continued. The Interior Ministry reported that there were nearly 12,000 crimes



recorded nationwide in 1401. More than 16,000 people are being detained in custody in relation with these incidents, and the forces of the Islamic Emirate are still looking for more than 1,000 persons, according to a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. “During the year 1401, there have been 11,890 criminal incidents in the

nation, of which 9,444 were detected by the police and 2,446 are being investigated by police detectives,” said Abdul Nafi Takour. Meanwhile, some military analysts believe that security forces should become more professional to provide better security in the country. “Finding, prosecuting, and arresting offenders and violators of criminal cases

can be useful in reducing different crimes in the country,” said Sadiq Shinwari, a military analyst. According to figures from the Ministry of Interior, more than 4,000 operations in the anti-narcotics section were conducted in the last year, resulting in the arrest of more than 5,000 suspects and the destruction of more than 180 drug factories.

## Afghan girls going back to school ‘primary concern’, says Karzai

KABUL (Khaama Press): In an interview with Canada’s CBC TV, the former president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, said on Monday that allowing girls to return to school is the Afghan people’s ‘primary concern’.

He said banning women’s education is a very serious issue for Afghanistan and the children in our country.

He emphasized that “education is the foundation of a country’s well-being, not only for Afghanistan but for every other society as well, and our effort has been intensely increased to bring back our girls to school, not only secondary and high school, but university and the workplace as well, said Karzai.”

Meanwhile, he

expressed his concern about “leaving people from the country, especially young, educated ones adding that this is a disaster and a massive loss for the country, as it is already suffering the lack of proper human capital.”

Since August 15, 2021, the de facto authorities have banned girls from attending secondary education, limited women’s and

girls’ freedom of movement, excluded women from the majority of the workforce, and prohibited women from going to gyms and public baths. Simultaneously, the special envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, expressed concern about the restriction on Afghan women. She emphasized that the “Taliban’s gender-based human rights breaches constitute gender persecution, a crime against humanity, for which United Nations experts have urged the Taliban to be looked into and held accountable. “This cannot continue,” she said. Several international organizations, including the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, expressed concern over restrictions on women’s and girls’ education and work. However, still, the Taliban-led government has not brought any changes in their policies regarding women’s rights to education and work.

## AI govt reopens schools except for girls beyond sixth grade

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Tuesday, the Ministry of Education of the Afghan Interim government reopened schools except for girls beyond the sixth grade on 21 March 2021 (the first day of the new solar year 1402).

Ehsanullah Khattab, a spokesman for the Ministry

of Education of the de facto government, said on Tuesday that the new academic year for Boys’ schools and girls’ first to sixth grades started on Tuesday.

While speaking to Khaama Press, he confirmed that the schools have reopened without attending girls beyond sixth grade.

On Monday, Richard Bennett, the UN special representative for

Afghanistan and a group of experts expressed concerns, saying that “the ongoing unlawful denial for girls’ right to education in Afghanistan is impacting an entire generation and the country’s future,” a statement said. The statement added that the Taliban authorities “has no justification for denying the right to education, on any ground, including religion or tradition.”

The UN urged the de

facto government to immediately reopen schools beyond sixth grade and universities for young women in the country. Despite repeated demands by the people of Afghanistan and the international community on girls’ education and women’s work, the current administration has not changed or reversed its policies about women and girls’ fundamental rights.



## UN experts: No justification for denial of girls’ rights to education

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN experts said in a statement that the “Taliban de facto authorities” have no justification to deny the right to education, on any grounds, including religion or tradition for girls in Afghanistan. The statement said that the ongoing “denial of girls and young women’s right to education in Afghanistan marks a global nadir in education, impacting an entire gender, a generation and the future of the country.”

“On 22 March 2023, schools should be reopening to girls across Afghanistan. Instead, it appears that for the second successive school year teenage girls will be banned from resuming

their studies - making Afghanistan the only country in the world that forbids girls and young women from attending secondary school and places of higher education,” the statement said. “Education is an enabling right, which is crucial in and of itself and for realising other human rights such as the rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, to health, to participate in society and communities, to equality before the law and to fundamental freedoms. Denying this right to half the population effectively denies women and girls most other human rights.”

“If the Afghan women this year, as the year before,

are deprived, we will see that the female generations of Afghanistan will be harmed seriously, including with a rise in forced marriage,” said Mariam Marouf Arveen, a women’s rights activist. Qatar hosted talks on the future of education in Afghanistan and the challenges and obstacles facing it, the Qatar foreign ministry said in a statement. The statement said that Assistant Foreign Minister Lolwah Al Khater, with the participation of the CEO of Education Above All Foundation, Fahad Al Sulaiti, represented Qatar in the talks held in Doha, where a delegation from the Afghan Ministry of Education, led by Education Minister Mawlawi Sayyid Habeeb Agha, a delegation of the UNICEF organization headed by UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia George Laria, and the Chief of Strategic Partnerships at Education Cannot Wait Organization Nasser Fakih also participated.

“The participants also agreed on the need to ensure the right to education for all, develop a common vision that deals with challenges, and provide high-quality education opportunities for all Afghan

students in all regions,” the statement reads. The US special envoy for Afghanistan, Rina Amiri, said on Twitter that a “stable and sustainable Afghanistan hinges on reversing extreme policies like the ones banning girls from schools above grade 6.” Female students have called on the Islamic Emirate to reopen their schools and universities. “The doors of the schools and universities should reopen for girls within Sharia law,” said Robina Poya, a student. The Islamic Emirate’s spokesman Zabullah Mujahid said that efforts are underway to facilitate the reopening of the schools and universities for female students. “There are relevant organizations—it would be better if (you) contact them on how much progress they have made. But in general, the education for girls is currently halted. We are searching for some solutions,” he said. Former president Hamid Karzai and the former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, also in separate tweets urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for female students.

## Wrestling completion gets underway

P U L - I - K H U M R I (Pajhwok): The wrestling completion titled “Da Azadi Pasarly” has started in the capital of northern Baghlan province. With the arrival of spring season, this wrestling competition kicked off on Monday afternoon and dozens of wrestlers from the provincial capital and 14 districts participated in the competition.

Maulvi Mustafa Hashimi, director of information and culture, said on the occasion that wrestling is the symbol of unity of these tribes. He added that besides health, sports and games were also prevent divisions among tribes and bringing unity and the Islamic Emirate was working to promote it. Qari Mohammad Amir Amiri, director of sports and physical training of the province, said that sports had developed in Baghlan and it was the third wrestling completion being held since last month in the province. Qari Abdullah, a wrestler who participated in this competition, told Pajhwok that he was happy that these competitions had been organized for the purpose of healthy engagement for the youth on the occasion of spring and new year.

## Afghanistan granted \$1.53b in humanitarian aid this year

KABUL (Pajhwok): In 1401 solar year, Afghanistan has received cash aid amounting \$1.53 billion as a part of the global fraternity’s humanitarian assistance. In last 16 months, a total of nearly two billion dollars cash aid reached Afghanistan.

After the regime change, the US imposed sanctions on the acting Afghan government and froze Afghanistan’s over \$9 billion reserves that triggered economic crises in the war-torn country but later the international community started giving humanitarian support to Afghanistan.

According to the central bank, in the last four

months of 1401 solar year, a total of these cash aid arrived Kabul reached \$454.4 million.

About 32 million cash assistance arrived 13 times and \$40 million 28 times in Afghanistan this year. The latest cash aid packaged reached Kabul on March 14.

Hasibullah Noori, deputy spokesman for DAB, told Pajhwok that US, European Countries and some other nations provided the aid. “As it is known from its name, its humanitarian assistances and spent in humanitarian areas,” he added. The United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said last month that the UN cash aid to Afghanistan was kept in a private bank. Economic Affairs Expert Qais Mohammadi said foreign humanitarian cash aid had a positive impact on the lives of the people of Afghanistan. “This is not important from where the amount comes, the important thing is its positive impact on the economy of Afghanistan. When the amount goes to the DAB, it has a positive impact on the value of Afghan currency and the fact that the afghani maintained its value was due to the arrival of this aid,” he said.

## On first day of new year, a book fair inaugurated in Kabul city



KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Information and Culture opened a book fair in a public place in the capital city of Kabul on the first day of the new year. On the occasion, the Deputy Publications of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Mohajer Farahi, said after a five-year delay the Baihaqi bookstore branch opened in

this location with the opening of this books fair. Farahi asked the citizens, mainly the youths, to dedicate a part of their lives to reading books, he urged that reading books and developing knowledge enlightens people’s thoughts and minds and is the only way to a pleasant life and development. He said that in this book fair, about 90,000 books

were displayed by the Baihaqi Book Publications Department and the book publishers, mainly the Holy Qur’an and religious science books. A number of the citizens during their visit to this book fair called such exhibitions valuable steps in promoting the culture of study and raising the level of people’s knowledge.

## Qatar to train Afghan health personnel for capacity building

KABUL (Agencies): During a meeting between Dr. Qalandar Ebad, Acting Minister of Public Health, and Dr. Hanan Mohammad Al-Kuwari, Minister of Public Health of Qatar, the two parties discussed bilateral cooperation. Mrs. Al-Kuwari confirmed that an agreement would be signed between the two parties to provide professional training for Afghan health personnel, which will help in the capacity building of Afghan healthcare workers. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization official assured that their technical team will visit Afghanistan within a month for the polio diagenesis laboratory center survey.





MOSCOW: Chinese President Xi Jinping shaking hands with Russian counterpart President Vladimir Putin prior to a meeting.

## Sindh cabinet approves Rs15.6b Ramazan package

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a cabinet meeting at CM House approved Rs15.6 billion Ramzan package to be given to 7,810,482 low-income families by transferring cash of Rs2000 to each family as a subsidy for purchasing 30 kilograms of wheat flour at a rate of Rs 65 per kg.

"The cash transfer to the targeted low-income families would be made through Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) for which the eligible families would receive a message on their cell phone and those who do not receive such a message and their average income is less than Rs50,000 per month can send a message/CNIC number on Toll-Free 8171 Facility for inquiring about eligibility for the subsidy," the CM said and added that approximately 7,810,482 families with BISP's Proxy Means test (PMT) score in the range of 01 to 60, for cash transfer of Rs. 2,000/family under the relief scheme, said a spokesperson of the CM House on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisors, Special Assistants, Chief Secretary, PSCM, and other concerned officers. In order to improve Price Control mechanism, particularly the price hike during the month of Ramazan 2023, the cabinet approved amendments in "Sindh Essential Commodities Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding Act-2005.

Under the amendments, the fine for the failure of the display price list of essential commodities has been increased from Rs50,000 to Rs100,000 for producers or dealers, Rs 20,000 for retailers other than pushcart vendors, and Rs10,000 to Rs20,000 for pushcart vendors. The fine for the retailer's failure to declare stock of essential commodities from Rs 50,000 to Rs100,000 and sale of different commodities at a higher price than the notified/company price the fine has been increased from 50,000 to Rs100,000. The cabinet decided to launch a drive against Profiteering and Hoarding.

Secretary GA told the meeting that in Karachi a network of existing Bachat bazaars was being utilized where Ramzan Bazars would be established while in other districts local councils, municipal committees/town committees, or Market Committees were being encouraged

and AC/DC would supervise the establishment. In some areas Fruits associations are being encouraged to establish their own stalls with lower prices. Association manufacturers and suppliers would be encouraged to provide discounts. The Sindh cabinet decided to establish Sindh Emergency Service Rescue 1122 for which a draft bill was presented.

The cabinet was told that Sindh did not have a dedicated Emergency Response service and only relies on charitable organizations/NGOs. The functions of Rescue 1122 include Ambulance Service, Water Rescue, Fire Fighting, Urban Search & Rescue, Building Safety, Motor Bike Rescue Service, Community Safety, Training of Community/Govt Institutions/ Schools Etc, Certification for Basic Life Support (CPR, Fire drills, safety standards, etc.)

The meeting was told that the New Uniform Cadre Rescue Service was introduced in the province. The two batches of Rescue Service Personal, comprising 405 cadets have been trained at National Rescue Academy Punjab. The meeting was told that a complete range of Fire Fighting, Ambulatory, Search & Rescue, Water Rescue, and Animal Rescue shall be provided through trained uniform personnel. Command & Control of Rescue 1122 is fully functional and responding the Emergency Situations. It is Fully Functional in the Karachi and Larkana Divisions and partially functional in the other nine districts of the province. Expansion in other Divisional HQs shall be completed within a short span of time. The CM directed the Rehabilitation dept to establish Satellite Stations within three months.

The cabinet approved the draft Bill 'Sindh Emergency Rescue Service-1122' and referred it to the assembly. The Sindh home department told the cabinet that under the Provincial Policy Directive for the security of the Oil Pipeline System approved by the Provincial Cabinet on February 6, 2023, the responsibility of neutralizing all threats posed to the National Network of Oil Pipeline System from short to long term basis has been assigned to the home department – the police and concerned district administration.

Monitoring critical, non-traditional security threats of terrorism posed to the National Network of Oil Pipeline System under NACTA the cabinet has assigned the task to the

police and district administration. The cabinet approved a draft Bill for the establishment of the Institute of Mother and Child Health at Shaheed Benazirabad Act-2023. It would be as an autonomous body to be made functional through its independent board of governors.

The Function of the institute includes treatment and carrying out investigation and treatment of various diseases in the field of gynecology, obstetrics, pediatrics, pediatrics surgery, and neonatology in the Institute and its branches. It would provide support to other mother and child health care facilities. It would strive towards the development of molecular sciences and genetic research both for diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive purposes for all diseases and disorders affecting mothers and children. The institute would hold examinations and award and confer degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic distinctions to and on the persons; and carry out and promote research, surveys, experiments, and demonstrations.

It would undertake the steps for implementation of the Sindh Newborn Screening Act and would develop a reference lab for the purpose of this Act, providing an advanced testing facility for newborn screening and providing guidelines to all relevant institutes dealing with newborns. The cabinet approved Sindh Resettlement and Rehabilitation (P&R) Policy 2023 with main features such as improving the conception, planning, and execution of projects and ensuring projects are socially sustainable.

Initial R&R assessment to be an integral part of project design where small parcels of land are required, a negotiated approach to be preferred for acquisition and where affected persons have lost the entire land parcel, the effort will be made to provide land-for-land of the same or better quality. Under the policy, the affected businesses will be compensated for the loss of income and aided in re-start businesses. Communities shall be given options including self-managed on-site resettlement where possible or project-sponsored sites with amenities. A Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) will be prepared for every project with compensation/resettlement options, budget, and implementation arrangements. A model entitlement matrix for 11 categories of affected people has been suggested – can be modified for project-specific needs.

### PPP to finalize candidates for PA polls

F.P. Report

ISAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party Tuesday kicked off the process of selection of party candidates to contest the forthcoming elections to the Provincial Assembly of Punjab.

In a statement Party secretary general Farhatullah Babar said that a zoom meeting of the Parliamentary Board of the Pakistan People's Party was held Tuesday evening to consider the applications from party hopefuls for Party tickets. With Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who presided over the meeting and MNA Faryal Talpur in Bilawal House Karachi other members of the Parliamentary Board participated via zoom from different locations in the country.

The meeting that lasted for over four hours completed consideration of applications for party tickets from South Punjab for constituencies from PP 203 to PP 297. The meeting was attended by former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani, Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood President PPP South Punjab, Secretary Generals Nayyer Hussain Bukhari and Farhatullah Babar, Divisional President Multan Khawaja Rizwan, Divisional President D. G Khan, Abdul Qadir Shaheen and Nawabzada Ifthikhar Ahmad Khan MNA.

Tickets will be formally issued to the contesting candidates in the next few days ahead of the allotment of symbols by the Election Commission to contesting candidates as provided under the Rules. Applications of candidates from central Punjab will be considered in the next meeting of the Parliamentary Board later this week.

### Imran's interim bail extended

ISLAMABAD (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Tuesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan till April 8 in a case pertaining to protests outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The court, presided by ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas, was hearing an application for interim bail and the request for exemption was filed by Imran's counsel. While extending Imran Khan's interim bail, the court also accepted the request for exemption from attendance in the case pertaining to protests outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

During the hearing, the PTI chief's counsel appeared before the ATC and stated that Khan's previous appearance in the judicial complex was available for all to see, adding that Imran would have been assassinated at the complex. He further said that Imran Khan himself wanted to go to the judicial complex, however, the current situation did not permit it. The judge inquired that if the request for exemption from attendance was approved today, was there a guarantee that the ex-premier would appear at the next hearing? Imran's counsel maintained that the ATC had not summoned Imran thus far.

### Religious leader shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI (PPI): Armed men shot dead a prominent cleric, Maulana Sufi Abdul Qayyum Naqshbandi, in Karachi on Tuesday.

According to police, Maulana Sufi Abdul Qayyum Naqshbandi was going home after offering Fajr prayers in a mosque when he was gunned down by some assailants riding on a motorcycle in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Block 9, Magasi Chowk. The assailants shot him in the head, killing him on the spot. The cleric was killed outside his home. His body was shifted to Jinnah Hospital Karachi for an autopsy.

Maulana Sufi was the principal of Madrasa Noorani Islamic Centre. He was also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Association. Police have started investigation of the incident. According to initial investigation. The people of the area staged a protest against the killing of the Maulana.

# Ukraine conflict to dominate Putin, Xi talks

MOSCOW (Agencies): Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping were set to hold a second day of talks on Tuesday, the Russian leader Vladimir Putin said he was open to discussing China's proposals on the fighting in Ukraine. The sit-down was to be unexpectedly mirrored in Kyiv, where Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was en route to meet Putin's nemesis Volodymyr Zelensky.

Xi's trip to Moscow has been viewed as a major boost for his strategic partner Putin, who is subject to an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant over accusations of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children. On Monday, Xi and Putin held four and a half hours of talks, calling each other "dear friends."

In a rare move, Putin escorted Xi to his car after the talks, and the two were seen smiling together. During the meeting, the Russian leader said he was open to talks on Ukraine and praised Beijing's 12-point position paper on the conflict, which includes a call for dialogue and respect for all countries' territorial sovereignty.

China has sought to portray itself as a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict, but Washington has said Beijing's moves could be a "stalling tactic" to help Moscow. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Xi's Moscow visit "suggests that China feels no responsibility to hold the president accountable for the atrocities committed to Ukraine." "And instead of even condemning, it would rather provide diplomatic cover for Russia to continue to commit those great crimes," he added.

Xi told Putin on Monday that China was ready to "continue to play a constructive role in promoting the political settlement" of the Ukraine crisis, according to the Chinese state news agency Xinhua. The United States has accused Beijing of mulling arms exports to Moscow, claims China has vociferously denied. Ukrainian President Zelensky has said he would welcome talks with Xi, though there has been no indication from Beijing of any such plans.

Meanwhile, Japanese leader Kishida was on his way to Kyiv on Tuesday, where he would offer "solidarity and support" in a meeting with Zelensky. Japan and China

are close trading partners, but Tokyo has been increasingly worried about Beijing's growing assertiveness in the region. Japan is part of the US-led security alliance known informally as the Quad, which also includes India and Australia, and positions itself as a bulwark against China's military ambitions in Asia and the Pacific.

Kishida is the last Group of Seven leaders to visit Ukraine and has come under increasing pressure to make the trip, as Japan hosts the grouping's summit this May. Moscow and Beijing have over the past years ramped up cooperation, both driven by a desire to counterbalance US global dominance. Beijing's stance on Ukraine has drawn criticism from Western nations, which have said China is tacitly supporting Moscow's armed intervention.

During their talks Monday, the Russian leader said the two countries had "plenty of common objectives and tasks", while Xi hailed their "close ties." Analysts say Xi's efforts in Ukraine are unlikely to yield a cessation of hostilities, but his trip is being closely watched in Western capitals. While Beijing has called for an "impartial" mediation in the conflict, Western countries have argued that China's proposals are heavy on grand principles but light on practical solutions. The United States said last week that China's proposals would simply consolidate "Russian conquest" and allow the Kremlin to prepare a fresh offensive. Xi's visit began a day after Putin visited Mariupol, his first trip to territory captured from Kyiv since the start of the assault in February 2022.

"We don't support calls for a ceasefire right now," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Friday. China and Russia have often worked in lockstep at the UN Security Council, using their veto power as permanent council members to counter the West. And China said Monday that the ICC should avoid what it called "politicisation and double standards" and respect the principle of immunity for heads of state. Russia's assault on Ukraine has also deepened fears among Western powers that China could one day try to take control of the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing sees as part of its territory.

## President stresses speedy relief to citizens

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday called for making fast decisions, being responsive to people's needs, and providing speedy relief to the citizens in their complaints against the maladministration of government officials and agencies.

He also urged government officials to be just in their dealings and adopt an open-door policy for the facilitation of the people and putting the country on the path of fast-paced socio-economic development. The president expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO)'s office in Sukkur.

Addressing the ceremony, the President stressed the need for instituting alternate dispute resolution mechanisms to reduce the case burden on courts, adding that this model had been quite successful in other countries and was also in line with our culture. He said that training in ADR mechanism should be provided to government officials for the early resolution of people's issues.

The president also emphasized the need for

introducing crop insurance schemes to provide coverage to farmers against natural calamities. He said that insurance coverage in Pakistan was quite low as compared to other regional countries, adding that insurance products needed to be introduced in Pakistan.

He stated that there was a lack of trust in insurance products in Pakistan, and Federal Insurance Ombudsman was playing its role in ameliorating this situation. He said that insurance companies had initiated pilot projects on crop insurance in Pakistan with the help of local and international funding. He added that the government would have to provide initial support and conducive environment in this regard.

President Alvi said that Federal Insurance Ombudsman and Banking Ombudsman were providing relief to people in cases involving insurance issues and bank frauds. He said that most people were unaware of the services and role of the five federal ombudsmen that were providing speedy justice within 60 days to people against the maladministration of government agencies, banks, insurance companies, tax authorities, and in

cases of sexual harassment at workplaces and provision of property rights to women.

He said that people needed to be informed about the services of the federal ombudsmen that had already provided quick relief in thousands of cases. The president said that modern communication means could help provide justice to greater number of complainants and help state institutions become more responsive to people's needs.

He said that responsiveness had become essential for modern day governments and digital technologies were helping states in becoming more efficient and improving service delivery. The president said that all the good decisions of the ombudspersons and government agencies should be publicized to create greater awareness about their services and role.

Federal Ombudsman Tax, Dr Muhammad Khawar Jameel highlighted the significant role played by the Insurance Ombudsman in facilitating the citizens. He also gave an outline of the steps taken by his office to address the grievances of general public regarding the insurance disputes.

## Lahore ATC grants interim bail to PTI leaders

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore Tuesday granted interim bail to three Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders in the case of attacking police and vandalism.

The interim bail was granted to Dr Yasmin Rashid, Aslam Iqbal, and Asim Zaman. The court prevented their arrest till March 28 next, and it also ordered them to submit surety bonds of Rs100,000 each. ATC Administrative Judge Abhar Gul Khan conducted the hearing. Rana Mudassar Umar Advocate presented arguments on behalf of the accused.

**ATC sends 98 PTI workers to jail:** An Anti-terrorism Court sent 98 arrested workers of PTI on 14 days' judicial remand to jail in Zaman Park rioting case. The court has sent the accused to jail for identification parade.

Police has arrested 98 PTI workers under the charges of rioting, violence against police and burning cars and other vehicles. Stringent security measures were

taken outside the anti-terrorism court during hearing of the case.

Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police in overnight raids arrested as many as 30 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers, PTI source said Tuesday.

As per details, the houses of Raja Basharat, Wasiq Qayoom and Arif Abbasi were also raided by the Rawalpindi police. Meanwhile, over 200 PTI workers have been booked in a separate case at Nasirabad police station under charges of interfering in state matters and violation of Section 144.

Earlier, amid the crack-down, the senior leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) asked the leaders and party workers to shift to safer places to avoid arrests. As per details, PTI issued an alert for all its workers and supporters after the government swung into action against the party workers. The houses of party leaders and workers are being raided as police have prepared a list of 1,000 people, the alert said.

### NAB summons Buzdar

LAHORE (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned the former chief minister Punjab Usman Buzdar in a corruption case.

As per details, the National Accountability Bureau issued a notice to the PTI leader and former chief minister of Punjab. The notice stated that Buzdar was summoned on March 3 but he could not satisfy the NAB authorities. Furthermore, the anti-graft body has also directed him to bring the complete record too while appearing before the NAB office.

The sources added that the PTI leaders, workers and supporters had been asked to be vigilant and shift to safer places to avoid arrests. It may be noted that Several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders had been arrested during police crack-downs in Islamabad and Lahore late Sunday night.

### Death toll in Havelian attack rises to 12

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Sheryar, who was among the attackers that had killed PTI Tehsil Nazim Atif Munsif Khan and nine others in an armed attack in Havelian, Abbottabad, succumbed to his wounds Tuesday, taking the death toll in the incident to 12, according to a report on Tuesday.

The police sources said that Sheryar had sustained bullet injuries during the attack. His accomplices had taken him to Rawalpindi where he succumbed to his wounds. It is to be noted here that PTI Tehsil Nazim Atif Munsif Khan and his nine colleagues and security guards were burnt to death in a rocket attack on the former's vehicle in Havelian, Abbottabad.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Tuesday expressed grief and sorrow over the killing of 12 persons at Havelian in Abbottabad district.

In a condolence message, the Caretaker Chief Minister expressed sympathies with the bereaved family members and prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace. He directed KP police for early arrest of the culprits involved in the incident.

## Not consulted on petrol subsidy: IMF

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan authorities did not consult with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff ahead of announcing their recent fuel subsidy proposal, the lender's resident representative said. "The IMF is seeking greater details on the scheme in terms of its operation, cost, targeting, protections against fraud and abuse, and offsetting measures, and will carefully discuss these elements with the authorities," Esther Perez Ruiz told, says in media reports.

The IMF's statement comes after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Sunday that the low-

income segment of the country will be given a fuel subsidy of Rs50 per litre as part of a new relief package. Unfunded and untargeted subsidies are frowned upon by the IMF that instead advocates scaling up social protection for the most vulnerable.

In a press conference the next day, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik said the premier has in fact "ordered the difference between fuel prices paid by the affluent and poor income segments to be Rs100", elaborating that the mechanism would be a cross subsidy that would be generated by raising fuel

prices for the rich segment. "As a general matter, the IMF sees strengthening support for those eligible for social assistance through the unconditional Kafalat cash transfer scheme as the most direct way to help the neediest in Pakistan," said Ruiz.

The development potentially means the staff-level agreement could still take some time as authorities remain engaged in talks with the IMF. The government has time and again expressed hope its bailout programme that has remained stalled at the ninth review since November last year would be revived soon.

## Zakat Nisab fixed at Rs103,159

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government has fixed Nisab for Zakat deduction from saving and profit and loss-sharing bank accounts for the current lunar year at Rs103,159 on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Security has issued notification for 1443-44 Hijri for

deduction of 2.5 percent Zakat from accounts having minimum of Rs103,159 in balance on the first day of Ramadan.

The first day of Ramadan is likely to fall on March 23 or 24, 2023 (subject to the moon sighting). Zakat will be deducted from saving, profit and loss-sharing and other similar bank accounts on the

first day of Ramadan, which has been notified as the 'deduction date'.

No deduction of Zakat at source shall be made in case of the Current Accounts, or the amount in the account will be less than the value fixed by the ministry. The Zakat Nisab fixed during the year 2022 was Rs88,000.