

**Qavi Khan laid to rest**  
LAHORE (INP): Legendary actor Qavi Khan has been laid to eternal rest in Canada. The funeral prayers of Qavi Khan, renowned Pakistani actor, has been offered in Canada after his body was buried in the graveyard of Muslim Community. Former legendary actor's funeral was attended by his close relatives and large number of Pakistani community. He had passed away yesterday at the age of 80 years.

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**Buzdar's bail extended**  
LAHORE (INP): An accountability court on Tuesday extended the interim bail of ex-Punjab CM Usman Buzdar in the assets beyond means case. The court extended Buzdar's interim bail till 16th. The former Punjab CM appeared before court in assets beyond means case. At the outset of the hearing, the NAB prosecu tor informed the court that questionnaire was sent to Buzdar but the anti-graft watchdog did not get a reply from the accused.

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# Govt announces free wheat flour

## PM directs authorities to devise policy for relief to inflation-hit people's during Ramadan

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: In a big relief for poor, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced a Ramadan package providing free wheat flour to the inflation-hit people. The package is first of its kind aimed at facilitating the poor population. Chairing a review meeting, the prime minister said after its launch in Punjab, the federal government would extend cooperation to provinces to replicate the programme. The prime minister directed the authorities concerned to complete the comprehensive strategy for the supply of flour to the poor families as soon as possible. Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Finance Secretary Mujahid Sherdil briefed the prime minister about the Ramadan package. Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi, the Secretary Food and other senior officials attended the meeting. **Imran trying to disrupt economic revival with political instability:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, in a veiled reference to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan, said that the one who had ruined the country's economy was now conspiring to scuttle its revival through creation of political instability.

In a brief press statement shared by PM Office Media Wing, the prime minister said that he (IK) was hesitant to appear before courts and was repeating the same which he did with the IMF programme. Whatever he (Imran) had done with the national interests, friendly countries of Pakistan, constitution, parliament, institutions, media and with the people by price hike, was now repeating the same with the courts, the prime minister added. Shehbaz urges society's joint support for women's emancipation: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that the government is committed to ensuring equal and just rights for women in the country by providing them opportunities in all fields of life. The prime minister, in his message on the International Women's Day being observed on Wednesday (March 8), said joint support by the government, civil society and media was crucial in protecting the rights of women in the country. Terming women the 'pride of the nation', he said the country needed their services and skills to progress.

# Marriyum lashes out at PTI chief for not appearing in court

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday called for bringing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan to justice for his crimes, including massive corruption. "Till date, Imran Khan has not appeared before courts in any case whether it is related to Malam Jabba, Billion Tree Tsunami, BRT Peshawar, Toshakhana, foreign funding or Trian White's parental issue," the minister said while talking to the media. Imran Khan, she said, had been avoiding the courts as he had nothing in defence to escape from punishment for the crimes. She said Imran Khan was a "foreign agent", who had "indulged in laundering

money through his cronies and using charity in his politics". By evading court appearances, Imran Khan, in fact, had made fun of the law and the Constitution, the minister said, adding he was the first accused who despite being summoned repeatedly, was not appearing before the courts. It would be better that Imran Khan should be arrested and produced in the courts. If Imran Khan were not brought to justice for his crimes, then it would set a precedent for other accused to stop appearing before courts, Marriyum said. She said ironically, Imran Khan had run his government through video links and now wanted to face the law in the same way. The minister said,"Like a jackal, he had hidden at his Zaman Park residence while his workers were

receiving bullets in the long march." She said Imran Khan had announced to start another movement, aiming to escape from accountability. His "save judiciary" movement was, in fact, an "Adalat Sy Bacho Tehreek" (movement for escaping from courts), she added. Marriyum said Imran Khan would never appear before the courts as he was bent on creating chaos in the country to hamper the economic stabilization process. The PTI chief was afraid of the police and got himself hidden whenever the policemen visited his home, she added. Marriyum said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif had appeared before the courts along with his daughter regularly as he knew that he had not committed any crime.

# KP CM reviews economic situation of province

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: An important meeting to discuss and review the current economic situation of the province was held here on Tuesday with the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammed Azam khan in the chair. The forum was briefed in details about the financial issues related to federation including share of the province under National Finance Commission Award, arrears of the province under Net Hydrel Profit, food security of the province, Oil and Gas royalty, issues regarding water resources and other related matters. Advisor to Chief Minister for finance Himayatullah Khan, Chief Secretary Imdadullah Bosal, Additional Chief Secretary Ikrumullah Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of concerned departments and other rele-

vant officials attended the meeting. The forum held a detailed discussion on the prevailing economic situation and took a detailed review of the proposed strategy to take up the issues with the Federal Government effectively. To put an end to the financial crunch faced by the province, the finance department presented various recommendations to be taken up with the federal government which include and not limited to; an immediate revision of the share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 7th NFC Award, in the context of the merger of the erstwhile FATA with the province by adding the population of 2017 census to the 7th NFC formula, strict implementation of Article 151 of the constitution by all the federating units so that no unit should take any arbitrary legislative or executive action restricting fear trade and interprovincial move-

ment of goods especially wheat, immediate rehabilitation of CRBC and Gomal Zam Dam command area and construction/completion of Tank Zam Pezo Dam, Baran Dam and Kurram Tangi Dam. It was decided on the occasion that all the financial issues of the province related to federation would be taken up with the incumbent federal government in writing. The chief minister directed the quarters concerned to prepare proper cases of aforementioned issues for Council of Common Interests and other relevant forums. Muhammad Azam khan made it clear that he has already taken up these issues with the Prime Minister of Pakistan adding that caretaker set up will go all out to steer the province out of current difficult situation. "There would be no compromise on the legitimate rights of the province" he concluded.

# Shab-e-Barat observed with religious fervor, zeal

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Religious festivities for Shab-e-Barat, a night of forgiveness or Day of Atonement, are being carried out throughout the country with traditional zeal and fervor on Tuesday night.

On this particular night, the majority of faithful seek forgiveness from the Allah Almighty and the people whose rights were usurped consciously or unconsciously. They prefer to keep fast on the very next day to express submissiveness in the court of Allah Almighty and beg His countless blessings for both the worlds.

A large number of people hailing from all schools of thought offer the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him by paying homage at the graves of their loved ones on Shab-e-Barat. Shedding light on the significance of this sacred night, Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi urged the people not to block the roads adjacent to the graveyards due to wrong parking which causes nuisance to rest of the motorists.

Ashrafi who is also special representative to the prime minister on interfaith harmony and Middle East urged the people to visit the graveyards to pay homage to the departed souls of their kith and kin from time to time. Visiting graveyards time and again gave the sense of life hereafter where one had to stay till doomsday as per Islamic concept, he added. He proposed the faithful to recite the Holy Quran and Darood Sharif besides offering Nawafil to seek maximum blessings of the Allah Almighty on Shab-e-Barat.

# Six of family die in gas cylinder blast

QUETTA (INP): Six people were killed including women and children and four others got hurt in a cylinder blast in a house in Quetta on Tuesday.

According to Provincial Disaster Management Authority, a gas cylinder was exploded in a house in Sarki Kalan in Quetta near 4:30am. As a result, the house was completely destroyed and six persons including 2 women and four children were killed. Four other people also sustained critical injuries during the blast.

The dead included: Ibad Ullah (3), Misbah (7), Hammad (8), Tanzeela (9), Gul Zareen (28) and Tahira Bibi (35). The injured were identified as: Ghazali (3), Imdad Ullah (12), Siddique Ullah (27) and Maulvi Abdul Aziz (45). The injured and dead belonged to the same family. The PDMA was busy in relief activities.

# Explosion kills 15 in Dhaka market

DHAKA (Agencies): At least 15 people were killed and several others injured in an explosion in a crowded market area in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka on Tuesday, a local fire service official said. The blast occurred inside a seven-storey building, causing heavy damage to two floors, the official added.

"There were several shops selling sanitary ware and household goods. A bus standing on the opposite side of the building was also damaged in the blast," fire service official Dinomoni Sharma said. The cause of the blast was unclear, Sharma said, adding that the death toll could rise as rescue operations were ongoing. Images from the scene showed extensive damage to the building and nearby structures, with items that were once inside the shops piled up on the street. Some pedestrians were hurt by falling rubble and broken glass.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on Ramadan Package.

# Toshakhana case against Imran Khan IHC suspends PTI chief's arrest warrants

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday suspended the non-bailable arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan — issued by a local court in the capital in the Toshakhana case.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq accepted the PTI chief's plea against Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal's decision and directed Khan to ensure that he appears before the lower court on March 13. Following the high court's decision, the sessions court, which was also hearing the Toshakhana case, ordered the former prime minister to appear before it, where he will be indicted.

At the outset of the hearing presided by CJ Farooq, Khan's lawyer Qaisar Imam started his arguments, saying that an attempt on the PTI chief's life was highly likely during his appearance at the local court. CJ Farooq remarked that the arrest warrant had been issued to ensure Khan's presence, not for his arrest. "Imran Khan should have appeared before the court," the justice said. He asked Khan's lawyers to suggest a way to summon the deposed premier to the court. Issuing arrest warrants is the only way in the law to ensure a suspect's appearance in court, he added.

Meanwhile, Khan's lawyer requested the court to suspend the arrest warrant. At this, the CJ asked what would the suspension do. "The court is summoning you to conduct a trial. I wouldn't issue any order that is out of common practice. Imran Khan would have to appear in person for indictment," he remarked. CJ Farooq further stated that Khan should appear in the lower court as he has to appear in IHC on March 9. Lawyer Imam maintained that Khan had serious security threats.

IHC CJ told the lawyers to consult with Khan about his appearance in court. At this, CJ Farooq referred to last week's appearance of Khan at the Lahore High Court. "There was a huge crowd. Who knows who has come with what intention," the justice said, adding that bringing thousands of people would make things

worse. The CJ then asked the lawyer to consult with the PTI chief and adjourned the hearing for 30 minutes.

"Stay fair with the system, don't ridicule the system," he remarked while asking the lawyers if he should suspend the trial in the lower court by giving a two months date. The lawyers appeared in court upon resumption of the hearing for the second time, after consulting with Khan as per IHC CJ Farooq's directive.

"Imran Khan should be given four weeks to appear in court," Khan's lawyer requested the court. Meanwhile, the Islamabad advocate general contended that Khan doesn't want to face trial. The court then reserved the verdict and announced it hours later.

Meanwhile, Imran Khan skipped the hearing in the Islamabad sessions court in the Toshakhana case despite a non-bailable arrest warrant against him. At the outset of the hearing earlier in the day, Sardar Masroof Khan, a junior lawyer of Khan's legal team, appeared before the lower court. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha and the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) lawyer Saad Hasan also appeared in court.

Additional sessions Judge Iqbal inquired whether Khan wouldn't appear in court again today. The lawyer said it was not known whether the PTI chief would appear or not and that a senior legal team of the PTI chair would appear before the high court on March 9. However, Khan's lawyer maintained that he had been informed that it would be easier for the former premier to appear in the lower court next week. At this, the judge remarked that in other words, it meant Khan wouldn't appear in the sessions court on March 9.

# Zardari vows to make Pakistan strong for people

**F.P. Report**

VEHARI: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari has vowed to serve the people of Pakistan and make the country strong again. He said that he, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari will continue to serve the poor people of Pakistan. He said that the PPP is a party of the poor people of Pakistan.

President Zardari said this while addressing the gathering at a reception in his honour hosted by Nawab Shaharyar Ali Khan and Nawab Shahzad Ali Khan at Vehari on Wednesday afternoon. President Zardari said that the PPP always served the people of South Punjab whenever it got the opportunity. The PPP made Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani a prime minister from South Punjab. He said that he is aware of the fact that Multan was once the capital of Sindh. We have to increase the price of sugarcane to benefit the growers of South Punjab, President Zardari said.

Regarding the economic woes the country is passing through, Zardari said that Pagal Khan [Imran Khan] pushed the country into an economic quagmire but we will steer the country out of the current situation. Pakistan is a country not a limited company. There is hue and cry about default which is a temporary situation. Other countries have in the past also defaulted like Japan and the United States. The Great

Britain is also in a situation of default. Once India had left only one billion dollars in its reserve. Countries come out of difficult situations. Pakistan has resources and the country is neighbors like China, Iran and central Asian countries. This was the reason we had given Gwadar port to China.

President Zardari said that thousands have offered their lives for this country and democracy. Hundreds were martyred with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. We designed the Benazir Income Support Card at our home so that poor women get some amount to their names. President Zardari promised to award stipend to the fresh graduates when the party comes to power.

Some people in the gathering requested President Zardari to contest elections from their constituency. President Zardari said that he will ask his party's permission in this regard. Office bearer of the PPP Multan Division and District Multan and Party ticket holders met with Zardari. President Asif Ali Zardari was briefed on the political situation of Multan area by these office bearers.

Khalid Hanif Lodhi, Mian Kamran Abdullah Marr, Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Niazi Soomro, Rao Sajid Ali, Chaudhry Yasin, Sheikh Ghiyasul Haq, Arif Shah, Mir Asif Dasti, Shahnaz Lodhi, Raja Salim, Abbas Gorchani, Ashiq Bhatta, Abdul Qadir Shaheen, Malik Naseem, AD Baloch, Manzoor Qadri, Khawaja Imran, Shakeel, Usman Bhatti were among

the office bearers and ticket holders of the party who met President Zardari.

Office bearers and ticket holders of PPP Lodhran, Vehari and Khanewal organizations also met the President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Zardari. President Asif Ali Zardari was briefed by the PPP officials of Lodhran, Khanewal and Vehari regarding the political situation of their areas. Imdadullah Abbasi, Shah Nawaz, Mahmood Babar, Kamran Ghuman, Dr. Shamshad, Inayat Wasir, Soumi Gujjar, Irshad Ahmed Gadi, Mir Wasiq Sharjeel Haider, Malik Naheed Dhadla, Mazhar Rukhsar Sial, Rana Khalid Advocate and others met President Zardari. Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, PPP South Punjab President Makhdoom Ahmed Mehmood and South Punjab General Secretary Natasha Daulatana were also present on the occasion.

Later in the afternoon President Zardari addressing the PPP workers' convention in Mailsi said that we removed the PTI government to come out of the economic quagmire it had pushed Pakistan into. The PTI did not have the agenda to work for Pakistan. We were aware that at the time of the removal of the PTI government, Imran Khan's popularity was zero but we removed him because it had no agenda for Pakistan. The staggering high inflation during Khan's tenure made people remember our 2008-2013 government.

# PAC seeks record of SC judges' salary, privileges

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the National Assembly on Tuesday sought a record of the Supreme Court judges' salary, perks and privileges within a month. The meeting of the PAC was held with its chairman Noor Alam Khan in the chair in Islamabad.

Noor Alam Khan asked why the Auditor General of Pakistan failed in presenting a report related to SC judges' salary, perks, and privileges. The report was to be submitted in today's meeting, Alam maintained. The PAC chairman said the masses should know what salary, perks and privileges are being enjoyed by the judges of the Supreme Court.

Khan ordered the AGP to complete an audit of the Supreme Court within 30 days and present the report. In the last meeting, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Pakistan ordered the collection of toll tax from everyone, including politicians, judges and generals. The exemption will be given to on-duty personnel of the armed forces and police only.

# Parvez Elahi appointed PTI president

LAHORE (Agencies): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Tuesday appointed Chaudhry Parvez Elahi as the party president weeks after he was roped in with the promise of the same post. "Ch Pervez Illahi is hereby, designated as President [of the] Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf," a notification signed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan read.

In response to the appointment, Elahi thanked the PTI chief and said that "no one has respected me like Imran Khan, and we all have to work together to strengthen him". In a major development late last month, the former Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader announced joining the Imran Khan-led party along with 10 of his party's former MPs. Khan and Elahi enjoy close ties as the former Punjab chief minister vowed to stand by the ex-prime minister and ensured they remained in power in Punjab — the major hub of the country's politics.

The development comes as Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa head towards polls. The elections in the former will take place on April 30, while the date for the latter has not yet been decided. "After lengthy discussions, Parvez Elahi and other leaders have finally decided to join PTI today," PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said on February 21 during a press conference alongside Elahi in Lahore after the ex-Punjab CM's meeting with Khan.

On the directions of the PTI chief, Elahi had dissolved the Punjab Assembly in January and subsequently lost his post as the province's chief minister. "I have supported Imran Khan during difficult times and proved my loyalty through chief minister-ship," Elahi had said during the same presser.



# Science, tech to solve issues of poverty, food, climate change: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that science and technology can be effectively used to solve enduring problems of poverty, food insecurity, and climate change in the Muslim world.

This he said while speaking at the Inaugural Ceremony of ‘The 24th Scientific Conference of Islamic World Academy of Sciences’ On ‘Challenges to Promote Science & Technology for Socio-Economic Development in OIC Countries’ organized by the University of Karachi.

The conference was attended by the President of The World Academy of Sciences Prof. Dr Adnan Badran, Prof. Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, Coordinator General COMSTECH Prof. Dr Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Vice Chancellor Karachi University & Patron-in-Chief of International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) Prof. Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, Chairman Hussein Ebrahim Jamal Foundation Mr Aziz Latif Jamal, Chairperson Dr Panjwani Memorial Trust Ms Nadira Panjwani and Foreign and Local Delegates. Mr Shah said that the major science event was an important step forward toward a better understanding of how science and technology can be effectively deployed to solve enduring problems of poverty, food insecurity, and climate change, in the Muslim world.

He said that the conference represented the growing interest and commitment of Muslim Ummah towards science and technology for human wellbeing. Being a professional Engineer, the CM said that he was very much aware of the importance of the need for research in science and technology.

“It is only through the applications of science and technology that we can handle the enduring challenges of poverty, climate change, food insecurity, and increasing disease burdens, that world faces today,” he said and added we needed to not only solve many local issues, but also partner with other nations in handling global challenges.

Murad Shah said that he was happy to see that our research institution, the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences constantly was striving to upgrade its capacity and human resources for frontier research and graduate training in chemical, bio-

medical and biochemical sciences.

He added that the centre was an excellent example of the strong commitment of our private sector, federal and provincial governments, international donors, and our scientists and researchers toward the science and technology-based development in Pakistan. The CM said that his government has placed the ICCBS at the centre of its science and technology-based initiatives.

“Various departments of my government are working closely with the ICCBS management to establish research centres, upgrade the existing laboratory infrastructure of the province, as well to conduct some of the enduring issues in health and agriculture that the province is facing today,” he said.

He added that the establishment of the Sindh Serology and DNA Forensic lab, the upgradation of the Chemico-bacterial lab in Karachi, and the establishment of the Traditional Medicine Research Center were the institutions where ICCBS was supporting the provincial government.

Mr Shah said that he was delighted to know that his idea of the establishment of a seamless

learning platform for the universities has been implemented as the SIREN (Sindh Innovation, Research, and Education Network) by the ICCBS which connects leading universities of Sindh. “My government has also decided to declare five centres of the ICCBS as Sindh Health Care Research facilities in fields such as regenerative medicine, disease genomics, and pharmaceutical research,” he said.

Talking to the media the CM said that his government has enhanced the annual grant of the public sector universities by three times.

“But the public-private partnership initiative of his government has produced the best results in education and health sectors,” he said.

To a question, Mr Shah said that the NICVD was performing well. “Yes, there are some issues of foreign exchange, therefore some equipment/gadgets might have not been procured but those issues would be resolved,” he said.

Replying to another question, the CM said that the director of finance would be appointed in all government universities and institutions for which the method was being evolved.



KARACHI: Provincial Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon chair meeting in Information Department.

## Sindh govt to launch FM Radio for guidance of public

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Big development has emerged on Tuesday as Sindh government decided to launch FM radio channel for immediate, accurate awareness and guidance for general public in natural calamities, emergency situations, traffic accidents and terrorism incidents. The broadcast of radio channel will be launched across the province. The decision to this effect is taken in a meeting of the Information Department chaired by Provincial Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon at his office.

Secretary Information Nadeer-ur-Rehman Memon, Director Admin Muhammad Yousuf Kabooro, Director Advertisements Intiaz Joyo, Director Press Information Hassan Asghar Naqvi and others attended the meeting. The provincial minister directed to activate all the directorates of the information department to publicize the development projects of the Sindh government. He added that Sindh government had completed hundreds of mega projects for the public welfare across the province but these projects not highlighted effectively.

He said that the best hospitals

were functioning in Sindh including NICVD, SIUT, Cyber Knife and Gambat Hospitals which are not only serving Sindh but also the whole of Pakistan and people of neighboring countries.

Similarly, he added that exemplary work has been done in the fields of road network, education, social protection and sectors. He directed that the Sindh Government's narrative of development, prosperity and public welfare should be built effectively, this is the primary responsibility of the Information Department of Sindh.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No. CCB/DIK/AB/Tender/783      Date: 06-03-2023

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited as per PPRA procedure "Single Stage Single envelope" for the following development works on percentage basis on Pak PWD Schedule of rate 2022 from Pakistan Engineering Council Registered contractors / firms should also be registered with income tax Department and available on Active Taxpayers list of Federal Board of Revenue. The applications for tenders with the documents as per terms and conditions below well be received in the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day up to 24-03-2023 and tender documents will be issued till 27-03-2023, after verification of documents. The individual applicants for each work should be submitted on written request at company's letterhead accompanied with attested copies of CNIC, PEC, Firm Documents, NTN & Bid Security. The tenders should reach in the office of undersigned on 28-03-2023 up to 12:30 PM and will be opened on the same day at 2:30 PM in the presence participants or their authorized representatives.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

- Bid Security as mentioned below in the shape of CDR/Pay Order in favor of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division, D.I.Khan issued by any scheduled bank must be submitted at the time of purchase of bidding documents.
- The applicant firm should have completed similar nature projects of the same quantum, within last three years. Documentary evidence to this effect in the shape of work order and completion certificate duly attested by the concerned Project Incharge with the application.
- An affidavit on original judicial paper worth Rs. 100/- to the effect that the contractor/firm is not in any dispute/litigation with any Government Department is a mandatory requirement for issuance of tenders.
- The Contractor/Firm have to provide documentary evidence of Account Maintenance Certificate by the Scheduled Bank.
- The tenders would be issued only to the owner of the firm or his authorized representatives having legal Authority Letter/Power of Attorney.
- No applications for issuance of tenders through e-mail, fax, Telex will be entertained.
- No tender will be sold on the specific opening date.
- Any information/clarification regarding details of work, specifications etc., can be seen in the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours.
- The submission of bid implies that the bidder is fully conversant with the nature of work, scope, site conditions applicable rules, Federal, Provincial and Local Taxes etc.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules 2004, the Competent Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all bids/tenders at any time prior to of bid/tender acceptance.
- Tender notice can also be downloaded from PPRA Website ([www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk))

| Sr. No. | Name of Schemes  | Estimated Cost Rs.(M) | Bid Security Rs. (M) | Completion Period (months) |
|---------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1       | Construction of Shingal Road At Shamajan Korona To Minawar korona Naik Muhammad  | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 2       | Ameer Zada shangarai kalai, Ashraf Kalai Tangarai, M . Asim Hamad khon khela kalai, Sarwakai   | 2.40                  | 0.050                | 1.5                        |
| 3       | Construction of PCC / Jeepable Track from Nashpa to Wacha dara c/o Ibrahim, Shingle track mir khonai kalai shakto, Tehsil Ladha.   | 1.60                  | 0.032                | 1                          |
| 4       | Saidan Janjol sohail, wadood and nazir kalai,i Rehabilitation of Shingle road in Sher Alam kalai and shingle road to Naveed alam kly, sararogha                            | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 5       | Shigle Road to Ahmed korona, To Abdullah kalaiSarelaSaplatoi, To Naweed Alam kalai, Shingle road to tangikalai, Sarwakai. Sarwakai.  | 2.20                  | 0.044                | 1.5                        |
| 6       | Construction of 1 KM Balck Top Road fron Mhin Road to Khawaja Muhammad and Irfan alay sub Division Ladha.No1   | 33.17                 | 0.65                 | 4                          |
| 7       | Construction of 1 KM Balck Top Road fron Mhip Road to Khawaja Muhammad and Irtan alay sub Division Ladha.No2   | 33.17                 | 0.65                 | 4                          |
| 8       | Construction of PCC/shingle road at Moulana Adil Sarwakai.   | 1.00                  | .020                 | 1                          |
| 9       | Construction of PCC shingle road or street pavement at Jamshed Korona, Haider Khan Korona, Amjad Korona, Shayan kot kai(0.9m), Sararogha                                   | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 10      | Construction of PCC road at Moula Khsuhal Barorh Badiwae, Moulana Muhammad Zaman Korona, Abdullah Khan, Noor Alam Bahadar Khail, Sararogh                                  | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 11      | Construction of PCC road at Abdullah Korona, Zahid Fazal Hussain Kotkai, Subedair Badshah Khan Moulana Shareef Hashim Marki Khail, Sararogha.                              | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 12      | Construction of PCC road at Saad Ameen Kalai, Landy Karama, Abdullah Korona Gorgora Shamerai, Muhammad Ramzan and Muhammad Younas Markikhel, Afhan Shaikh Abad, Sararogha. | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 13      | Construction of PCC road at Ameeruddin Younas Dawatoi Galishahi, Ishaq Korona Piazza, Naik Badshah Tabeh Galishahi, Subedar Shareefullah, Sararogha.                       | 3.00                  | 0.060                | 1.5                        |
| 14      | Construction of PCC Road at Shahzada Kot Bari Khel and Muhammad Nawaz Kot Piazza, Sararogha.   | 2.00                  | .040                 | 1                          |
| 15      | Construction of PCC road at Shan Gul kalai, Habeeb Khan Shaboozai, Sher Khan Seezha  | 2.70                  | .055                 | 1.5                        |

|    |   |      |        |     |
|----|---|------|--------|-----|
| 16 | Construction of PCC/shingle road at Sher Baz tangi bodinzai, Maqsood ur rehman shabikhel, Moulana Saeed ur Rehman Karama, Ladha.  | 2.70 | .055   | 1.5 |
| 17 | Construction of PCC/shingle road at Uzaifa Umar I Kalai and at Sher Hameed kalai, Ladha.  | 2.40 | .0480  | 1   |
| 18 | Construction of PCC road at Sata Abakhel Ateeq Kalai, Shah Faisal Kanigoram, Irfan Anmed Karama, Ladcha.  | 2.00 | .040   | 1   |
| 19 | Construction of PCC Road at Hussain Bodar Khel Wacha Khawara via Dr. Naveed Korona, Ladha.  | 2.00 | 0.040  | 1   |
| 20 | Construction of PCC road at wajid Kalai and Khan Rasool Tangi Kalai, Tiarza.  | 2.80 | .030   | 1.5 |
| 21 | Construction of PCC road at Torwam Qabristan,Shams Badar Keekarai, Moulana ZiaUlah Kala Khaisora, Seer Kalai Machi Khel Junaid Usman Korona, Tiarza.                                    | 3.00 | .060   | 1.5 |
| 22 | Construction of PCC road at Abdul Khaliq Korona   | 3.00 | 0.060  | 1.5 |
| 23 | Mazarah, Noor Muhammad Gorgore Abbas Khel Mehmood Khan, Moulana Sher Zaman Jataria Lalezhai, Minhaj Shams Kalai, Tiarza.  | 3.00 | 0.060  | 1.5 |
| 24 | Construction of PCC road at Landai Kalai Fazal Qadic, Shaga Anekkel Kalai, Abdullah Korona , Malik Ali Nashpa, Shakirullah, Shaktoi.  | 3.00 | 0.060  | 1.5 |
| 25 | Construction of PCC road at Ahmed Abdullah Korona, Barathi Khatim Kalai Nashpa Mashal Shabeer Korona, Marsanzai, Shaktoi.   | 3.00 | 0.060  | 1.5 |
| 26 | Construction of PCC/shingle road at Khushal Meer khonai, Zareen Shah Malik Shahi. Shaktoi,  | 1.00 | .0200  | 1   |
| 27 | Construction of PCC /shingle road at Tahir Kalai Speen Qamar, Nasarudin Kalai Dara Pul, Badshah Khan nasri khel Kalai, Makin.   | 2.00 | .0400  | 1   |
| 28 | Construction of PCC road at Gulkajand Korona Gula Khale,Ehsam uddin, Raza Khan Korona, Nazeer-Ullah Ashkar kot Makin  | 3.00 | .0600  | 1.5 |
| 29 | Construction of PCC road at Rehman Ullah Dashka Dar mandech, Hassan Rogh Tangi, Moulana Ziatullah (1.5m).Makin  | 3.00 | .0600  | 1.5 |
| 30 | Construction of PCC/ shingle road at Falak Naz Bandkhel and Najeeb ullah and Khairzaman malikshai kala Kalai, Makin.  | 3.00 | .0600  | 1.5 |
| 31 | Construction of PCC/shingle road at Gulimar khan Ghuzikakai and Hafiz Inyatullah malikshai, Makin.  | 2.00 | .0400  | 1.5 |
| 32 | Construction of PCC road To Mufti Rehan And Asgha r Kalay Makin   | 2.40 | .050   | 1.5 |
| 33 | Construction of PCC road, street pavement and, sanitation ine for Mansoor Abad, Sub Division Ladha.   | 2.50 | .050   | 1.5 |
| 34 | Construction of PCC road, street pavement and sanitation line for Zafran Abad, Sub Division Ladha   | 2.50 | .050   | 1.5 |
| 35 | Construction of PCC road street pavement and sanitation line for Amin Abad, Sub Division Ladha.   | 2.00 | .040   | 1   |
| 36 | Construction Of DWSS/ Water Storge Reservoir Ziaratzay Bakhti khan Kali Sarwakai  | 1.80 | .0036  | 1   |
| 37 | Construction Of DWSS/Water Storge Reservoir Zar badshah kalai Spin Qamar (1.2m) at Sai fur rehman kalai Ghulam Ullah Dara Makin   | 2.4  | .050   | 1   |
| 38 | Construction of DWSS at M. Imran Korona piazza, gravity scheme Areen khola, c/o Abdullah, at Nizamud dm korona Piazza Gul Khon, at M. Shoaib namri khel, Sararogha.                     | 2.40 | 0.050  | 1   |
| 39 | Construction of DWSS/ gravity at ketori Abdullah korona, shabozai Bolandi Dela Mad khan, Sararogha.   | 2.40 | 0.0500 | 1   |
| 40 | Construction of DWSS/gravity at Zia urrehman kalai, DWSS/gravity at Gur Gura shamirai Eng. Irfan ullah kalai, Sakandar kalai Bangiwola Sararogha.                                       | 3.00 | 0.0600 | 1.5 |
| 41 | Construction of DWSS/gravity at M.Tayyeb koron amaal khel, DWSS at Anaskot kai, Sararogha.  | 2.20 | 0.0450 | 1   |
| 42 | Construction of DWSS at kaniguram m. Alam Korona, gravity at Sadig momi karam, Hazrat ali spina mela alman shah kali, dwatoi Abdullah kalai, dod khan abid korona sharkai kalai, Ladha. | 2.40 | 0.050  | 1.5 |
| 43 | Construction of DWSS/Gravity at Asghar kot, burqa pandy khel kalai arif krona, Ladha.   | 1.20 | .0024  | 1   |

Farhad Ali, Executive Engineer

Central Civil Division, D.I.Khan

PID(P) 082/23





**PESHAWAR:** Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting regarding financial issues of province.

## Caretaker minister for timely completion of Auqaf projects

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Public Relations, Awqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kaka Khel has directed the officers of the Awqaf Department to complete all the ongoing projects on time adding that in this regard, any kind of negligence will not be tolerated. He issued these instructions while presiding over the departmental review

and introduction meeting at the head office of the Department of Awqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the other day. Secretary and Additional Secretary of Awqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs Department, Administrator of Awqaf and other relevant officers were also present in the meeting.

On this occasion, Secretary Awqaf Department and Administrator Awqaf briefed the caretaker provincial minister about the department's goals, rules

and regulations, Awqaf properties, ongoing and proposed projects, including staff details, while the pending steps and measures to be taken regarding the rules and regulations, including those of cemeteries.

They informed about the purchase of land, issuance of scholarships for students belonging to the minority community and the program of giving monthly honorarium to imams and preachers at the level of all districts and tehsils. The caretaker provincial minister, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah

Kakakhel, while expressing his satisfaction over the performance of the department, directed that the officials of the department should work diligently to improve their performance and take concrete steps to provide maximum relief to the people.

He also directed the administrator of the department to provide complete details about Awqaf Properties Ordinance 1979, Charitable Act 2021, Shrine Act 1991, Quran Board, Qiyam Quran Mahal, all boards, land and lease policy of Awqaf Department.

## Health and education govt's top priorities: Haji Manzoor Afridi

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Labour, Excise and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has said that the welfare of workers is among the top priorities of the provincial government while his department will ensure the protection of their rights besides providing maximum benefits to the working class that included health and education facilities of workers and their wards, he added.

He was chairing a meeting on the performance of Employees Social Security Institution (ESSI), a subsidiary of his ministry at his office Civil Secretariat Peshawar. On this occasion, Secretary Labour, Ruhollah Khan and ESSI officials

said light on the goals and objectives of the institution and the performance of the health centers established under it in major cities of the province.

The provincial minister expressed his satisfaction that this institution, established for the treatment and welfare of workers, is not only running with its own resources but also has a good balance in its income and expenditures. However,

he emphasized the need to link all the health centers of the institution with the health card scheme.

Haji Manzoor Afridi said that due to the health card, on the one hand, the duality of treatment will be eliminated and the family members of the workers will have the best medical facilities, while on the other hand, its income and specialization will also increase continuously. Henceforth after proper preparation, it has been decided to call a joint meeting of ESSI, Health, Labour Departments and

the relevant insurance company.

The Minister also directed to link the Education Department and Working Focus Grammar Schools under the Workers Welfare Board with the Education Department and convene a joint meeting of the relevant authorities after proper preparation for this purpose so that the quality of education can be improved as well as duplication of the institutions ends and all government departments are able to work in a coordinated and functional manner, he concluded.



**PESHAWAR:** KP Caretaker Minister for Labour Haji Manzoor Afridi chairing a meeting on performance of Employee Social Security Institution.

## KPRA collects 20.21b in eight months

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) records 31% growth in the first 8 months of the financial year 2022-23 compared to the same period of the last year.

According to details shared by the KPRA media wing, the KPRA has collected Rs20.21 billion in taxes until February in the current financial year. Last year, the KPRA collected Rs15.4 billion in the same period which shows 31% growth rate in the current fiscal year.

KPRA is mandated to collect and administer Sales Tax on Services and Infrastructure Development Cess in the province. This year KPRA has managed to collect Rs17.8 billion from the sales tax on services and Rs2.4 billion in the IDC.

The Director General KPRA Mr. Raja Fazal Khaliq, while chairing a

progress review meeting, appreciated the efforts of the KPRA team for their performance and directed them to increase their efforts to not only achieve their targets but to surpass them with good margins.

"Your efforts are indeed commendable and the figures show that we will show encouraging growth as compared to the last financial year but our efforts should be to achieve our targets," he said.

The Director General was given a detailed presentation on the performance of all regions and progress in the court cases. He was told that the government has assigned KPRA a target of Rs35 billion for the year 2022-23 out of which Rs20.21 billion has been collected in the first 8 months and they are optimistic about achieving

the target as the collection increases in the second half of the financial year. The figure also does not include the amount of the input tax adjustments which is yet to come from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the KPRA is expecting to get around 3 billion rupees in the input tax adjustment from the FBR in the current fiscal year.

The DG KPRA stressed on operationalizing the E-hearing system in the Collectorate of Appeals and Appellate Tribunal to facilitate the taxpayers. The DG also stressed on increasing interaction with the taxpayers and general public to improve their awareness and directed the headquarters and regional offices to regularly conduct training workshops on monthly bases for taxpayers' education.



**PESHAWAR:** Minister for Food & Irrigation KP Fazal Elahi addressing during a workshop on Edible Oil Fortification.

## 'Controlling malnutrition govt's top priority'

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Food and Irrigation Fazal Elahi on Tuesday said that elimination malnutrition through food systems is a top priority of the government and efforts are being made to sustain it using all available resources.

The minister expressed these views during the closing ceremony regarding one day provincial workshop organized by Nutrition International on institutionalizing mandatory edible oil fortification in Pakistan in collaboration with KP Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, Health Department and Pakistan Vanspati Manufacturers Association in Peshawar.

"KP government has now made it mandatory to fortify edible oil and wheat flour with essential nutrients," said the Minister, adding the KP government has passed 'Food Fortification Bill' in this regard.

Fazal extended that the bill would contribute directly to the improvement of the nutritional status of people. The minister added further that the flour and oil industry should come forward in respect of how to overcome malnutrition, provincial government would extend its support for further legislation in the best public interest.

Fazal, at the end also thanked participants for their time and interest in the workshop and appreciated the efforts of NI and its contribution towards edible oil fortification.

While addressing on the occasion Secretary Food, government of KP Abid Wazir, stressed upon the need to address malnutrition and mentioned food fortification as one of the most effective interventions including oil and wheat flour fortification as these commodities are used by the large population.

Dr. Fazal Majeed, Director Nutrition, government of KP at movement also shared his thoughts about malnutrition and requested stakeholders to play their role in addressing this situation across the country particularly KP province.

## Shopkeepers arrested for profiteering

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar arrested 14 shopkeepers and issued warning to 35 others during a crackdown against profiteers on Tuesday. The operation against profiteers was carried out against profiteers for overcharging consumers at various localities on Warsak Road.

During the crackdown 93 shops were inspected, out of which 14 were arrested for lacking official price list, selling under-weight roti and unhygienic conditions. 35 shopkeepers were issued warnings for bringing improvement in cleanliness conditions in their shops.

DC Peshawar, Shah Fahad has said that the officers of the district administration are used to visit fruit and vegetable markets during the wee hours of the day to witness the bidding process and then issue an official price list.

He has directed the officers of district administration to pay consecutive visits to bazaars within the areas of their jurisdiction and implementation of the official price list in letter and spirit.

## CEO tenders resignation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Executive Officer TransPeshawar, Fayyaz Ahmad Khan has tendered resignation from office, said a spokesperson of the company here on Tuesday.

She said that Fayyaz Khan, who has served in the TransPeshawar, for a period of two and a half-year has tendered his resignation as per policy and regulations of the company. TransPeshawar is the operator of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Peshawar.

For the acceptance of his resignation, it has been sent to the provincial government to complete the process and appointment of an acting CEO and also initiate the process for hiring a permanent head for the company.

## Mining damages everything while govt left Chitral on fate of nature: PHC

### Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that mining department has damaged everything including forests and rivers while government left Chitral to the fate nature, on Tuesday.

During hearing Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed, secretary forest Abid Majeed, Director General Galyat Development Authority Khalid Mehmood, Malik Ajmal Advocate, Additional Advocate General Syed Sikandar Shah, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Additional Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali, Deputy Attorney General Ubaid Ullah, secretary mining Amir Lateef, Commissioner Hazara Amir Sultan, DG Mining

Muhammad Naeem, Barrister Asad-ul-Mulk and Ali Gohar Advocate along with officers appeared before PHC in cases regarding issues of forest and fuel in Chitral district.

PHC inquired from Secretary's forest regarding report submitted by NAB's prosecutor Muhammad Ali and Tariq before court while Abid Majeed answered that the department is member of Mining committee while files appeal against issues relating to environmental impacts.

However, Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid observed that submitted report is enough to open eyes because deforestation has not only increased chances of floods but has also created several environmental issues and become a threat to extinct 'Markhor' from the region.

NAB's prosecutor general Muhammad Ali it is revealed that four lakh and

80 thousand are cutting annually for fuel in Chitral during his visiting with forest's department. Although, secretary's forest informed that cutting of trees are carried in private capacity and it is neither cutting from government forest land. He added that local Tehsildar is granting permit to private persons in this regard because there are no available sources for fuel in Chitral.

Barrister Asad-ul-Mulk argued that he is resident of Chitral and aware of problems facing by local populace while Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid ordered secretary's forest to prioritize protection of national assets in the form of forests.

Secretary's forest assured protection of woodlands and shouldn't allowed cutting of trees in his jurisdiction while PHC has adjourned further hearing in this regard.



**PESHAWAR:** IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Gandapur addressing media during his visit to PPC. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## MoU inked for youth economic empowerment

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center for Excellence, Hashoo Foundation, Akhuwat, and Swat and Chitral universities on Tuesday inked an agreement for the economic empowerment of youth in Swat and Chitral districts to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The agreement signed under the "Da Kali Ranra" project (Light of Village) would focus on promoting business capabilities and reducing poverty among the youth of the two selected districts of the Malakand division.

A press release issued here after the ceremony said that the basic aim of "Da Kali Ranra" project was to augment community

resilience against radicalization and extremism by culminating push factors of unemployment and poverty.

The other aims included raising a safer charity and social reciprocity at the grassroots level, connecting the rural communities for social cohesion and national integration, and social mapping and need assessment for CVE intervention at the grassroots level.

Under this agreement, soft loans would be given to many families in the villages of Chitral and Swat to launch their own local businesses that would benefit about 2,000 young males and females.

Universities of Swat and Chitral would provide training facilities to youth, while Hashoo Foundation would provide skill requirements

for at least three years, technical support, and guidance for a business idea.

The project is a pilot initiative in the Malakand division and is expected to help prevent and counter violent extremism by promoting business and reducing poverty by economically empowering the youth in the area.

The signing ceremony was held here at the Higher Education Archives and Libraries Department wherein Secretary of Education Dawood Khan, Chief Coordination Officer KP Center for Excellence on Countering Violent, Dr Ayaz Khan, Senior Advisor Hashoo Foundation Ehsanullah, Director Hashoo Foundation Khalida among others were present.

## Dean KMC visits KTH



### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dean KMC Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb along with Hospital Director, Dr. Zafar Afridi, Medical Director, Dr. Muhammad Siraj, Associate Medical Director Dr. Asghar, and Managerial staff paid a detailed visit to Khyber Teaching Hospital on 7th March 2023.

He visited various wards, OPD, OT, and Clinics and was very delighted to see that the 50-Year-Old hospital performing its functions as per the latest healthcare standards and guidelines with state-of-the-art infrastructure development and operational efficiency. He visited the newly established complex of ICUs under one roof equipped with modern facilities. ICUs included 16-bed sur-

gical, 15-bed medical, and 8-bed Peads ICU.

He also visited the new Philips Premium End Cardiac Catheterization lab with a Premium 4K imaging chain having as low as 150micro meter detector with size fit for all studies including Cardiology and all peripheral studies and Pakistan's first Helium-free 1.5 Tesla (Philips Ingenia Ambition) top-of-the-line model MRI machine. Philips engineers from Singapore and Turkey installed this innovative machine.

He also visited the IBP - Clinics (Institutional Based Practice) and expressed his satisfaction to see the high influx of patients in IBP - Clinics which shows that the people have full confidence in the IBP. He appreciated and was amazed to see the progression in IBP

and large numbers of patients were facilitated. He visited Consultants' Clinic, Procedure Rooms, and Physical Therapy Department.

Furthermore, he said that this is all possible because of the hard work of KTH - Management, the vision of the Board of Governance, and staff dedication towards improving patient safety and providing 'exceptional compassionate patient care with quality services'.

Dream of making KTH an ISO 9001:2015 certified hospital into reality through commitment and passion as it takes sweat, determination, and hard work. We are hoping these quality healthcare standards will maintain in the coming years as well and I am feeling so proud to be part of the Khyber Teaching Hospital family.





## In brief

### PML-N initiates uplift projects F.P. Report

PABB: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) has completed several developmental projects in Nowshera district especially in power sector, on Tuesday. This was claimed by Mukhtarram Khan and Naseer Khan while talking to media personnel and claimed that the projects were initiated by PML-N Nowshera chapter president Sahibzada Hamza Khan for larger public interests. They added that Hamza Khan has resolve various dispute across the district irrespective of political affiliations. The political activists claimed that Hamza Khan has mobilized public across Nowshera which will be helpful for upcoming elections. They claimed that public will support PML-N in upcoming general elections which will change political discourse in the country.

### 10 POs arrested at Kohat F.P. Report

KOHAT: Launching a search and strike operation in city and its environs, Kohat Police has arrested 430 suspects including 10 Proclaimed Offenders (POs) during last week. According to police, the operation has been conducted on the directives of District Police Officer Kohat Shehzada Umer Abbas Baber. During operation, police also recovered of three Kalashnikovs, two rifles, seven shotguns, two repeaters, 60 pistols, 98 chargers and 1500 cartridges of different bores. Police also arrested sixteen drug dealers and recovered contraband including 230 grams of ice, 16 kilograms of hashish and 80 grams heroin form their possession. Cases have been registered against arrested persons in relative police stations and investigation is underway.

### Police arrest 97 POs, 87 suspects F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Charsadda Police have arrested 97 proclaimed offenders and 87 other suspects during a crackdown against anti-social elements during the month of February, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. On the directives of the District Police Officer (DPO) Charsadda, Mohammad Arif, district police carried out crackdown arrested several notorious narcotics sellers and collectively recovered 29,557 kilograms of hashish, 2,022 kilograms of heroin powder, 23,376 kilograms of ice drug and one bottle of liquor. The police have also recovered 16 kalashnikovs, 8 rifles, 24 short-guns, 309 pistols, 2 kalakovs, 2 hand grenades and 5520 cartridges of various weapons from their possession. Formal cases have been registered against the accused and further investigations are in progress.

### Rescue 1122 holds training F.P. Report

SWABI: Emergency Rescue Service 1122 Training Wing here on Tuesday arranged a fire safety training and orientation session for paramedics and security staff of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Topi. The training was conducted by District Emergency Officer Swabi, Rafiullah Marwat. Trainers apprise hospital workers about methods to deal fire emergencies and to procedures to reduce injuries and mortalities during any situation. Workers were also informed about modern ways to douse and restrain fire from spreading besides first state techniques.

# Four suspects shot, arrested after two encounters

KASUR (INP): Four robbery suspects were arrested in an injured condition after separate encounters with police of Mustafabad and Khudian police stations. In the first incident, two robbery suspects suffered injuries after an exchange of fire with Mustafabad police near Vehgal village while six of their accomplices allegedly managed to escape. Police said eight bandits snatched a motorcycle, a mobile phone and cash from Muhammad Imran who made a call at emergency 15.

Responding to the call, police reached the spot and chased the suspects. On seeing the police, the robbers opened fire that was retaliated. After a brief exchange of fire, the suspects fled, leaving two of their accomplices in an injured condition. The injured were later identified

as Abdul Hameed and Asif. Police claimed to have recovered the snatched motorcycle, illegal weapons and booty from the injured suspects. Police shifted them to district headquarters (DHQ) hospital. They claimed that the outlaws were wanted in over a dozen cases of robberies and bike lifting. In the other incident, Khudian police arrested two robbery suspects following an encounter near the Canal Colony.

Police claimed that three suspects were signaled to stop at a picket near the Khudian Police Station. Seeing the police party, the suspects tried to escape while police chased them. After an exchange of firing, two suspects surrendered while their accomplice managed to escape. Police detained them and started investigations.

Police identified the suspects as Muhammad Akram of Divalpur and Usman Zaki of Mandi Ahmedabad, saying that they were wanted by Kasur police in several cases of robberies and theft. The suspect who escaped was identified as Khalid Mahmood of Hujra Shah Mugeem. The victim was identified as Qamar Ashraf. Separately, two robbers snatched a motorcycle, cash and cell phone from one Adeel Ali outside a private hospital.

A gang of seven robbers allegedly deprived scores of factory workers of cash and valuables in the limits of Sara-i-Mughal police. The robbers intercepted the bus of a factory on the Head Baloki Road and took away cash, cell phones and other valuables from the workers at gunpoint. Police were looking into the matter.

## JUI-F stands for rule of law: Attaur Rehman

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Provincial Amir of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F) Senator Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman has said that he respects the judiciary. The country is currently going through a critical period.

Due to inflation, the poor people are forced to commit suicide. It is unwise to give rupees. He expressed these views while talking to the leaders of Mardan district at the residence of Jamiat Ulema Islam leader and former candidate of Mardan mayor Kaleemullah Khan Toru. General Secretary Maulana Amanat Shah Haqqani, Maulana Qaisaruddin and Saifullah Khan of Hatian were also present. Maulana Attaur Rehman strongly condemned the bomb blast in Balochistan and said that terrorism is once again ris-

ing in the country.

All political parties should formulate a strong and comprehensive strategy to end terrorism together. He said that taking suo moto action on the conduct of elections is an attack on the rights of the people. Supreme Court and other institutions should remain within their limits. People's interest should be taken care of. He said that those who put the country's economy at stake in no way does it deserve concession.

Everyone should be held accountable along with the politicians so that the people can know who is in the water. Maulana Attaur Rehman said that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam is trying to implement the Islamic system in the country. And the problems that Pakistan is facing at this time and its end can be only by the implementation of Islamic

system. He said that our workers are always ready for elections and they will defeat the Jewish agent badly in these elections.

**Excise seizes truck full of liquor:** A truck full of country liquor was seized while conducting an operation near Swabi Interchange Police Station on Tuesday.

While the driver and conductor of the truck were arrested on the spot. More than 4,000 bottles of alcohol and 20 large gallons were recovered from 70 cottons in the truck. There was a total of two thousand four hundred liters of wine in bottles and gallons. Both the accused were arrested and a case was registered in Mardan Excise Police Station, while the investigation against the other involved accused is going on.

## ‘Entire nation unites in war against terrorism’

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Balochistan Constabulary men and innocent citizens in a suicide attack on a Balochistan Constabulary van near Dhadar in Bolan District Tehsil Kachhi.

In her condemnation statement, she condemned the incident in strong expressions and termed the incident as a very cowardly act and said that the cowardly attack of the terrorists on the security personnel who are on the duty of protecting the homeland is open terrorism. Terrorists want to sabotage the peace of Balochistan with their cowardly acts. The people of the province stand by their army and other security forces in this war against terrorism.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri has said that the increasing incidents of terrorism are worrisome and the fabric of these acts is linked to India, which is using some fearless people to carry out such cowardly

acts and does not want peace to be established in Pakistan especially in Balochistan. This dream of enemy will never be realized. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri said that this incident is a heinous act of sabotaging the situation of law and order and those responsible for the suicide attack will not escape from the clench of the law. She said that the terrorist elements are trying to establish an atmosphere of terrorism in the country under a well-thought-out conspiracy, which will not be allowed to succeed in any case.

The determination and courage of the Pakistani nation against terrorism cannot be weakened by the cowardly acts of terrorists and the morale of the law enforcement agencies and the nation cannot be undermined by such cowardly acts. She further said that terrorism throughout the country is the part of the activities of terrorists for the nefarious purpose of disrupting the peace and order situation in the country, which will be

thwarted in any case. She said that a handful of terrorists cannot shake the firm resolve of the nation. Our brave security forces are always active against terrorists and terrorists will never be allowed to succeed in their nefarious purposes. She said that the whole nation is standing by the side of our security forces; we will all defeat the ambitions of the enemies. Expressing deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of the security personnel in the incident, she said that the cowardly acts of the terrorists will prevent law enforcement. The morale of the security agencies and the nation cannot be lowered.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zahri said that the sacrifices of the security agencies for the country are unforgettable and we will not let them go in vain. She prayed for those martyred and injured in the suicide attack that Allah Almighty grants the martyrs a high place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and speedy recovery to the injured and gives patience to the bereaved.

## WHO hands over latest ambulance to BHU Bomburi

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: A latest and well equipped ambulance recently donated by World Health Organisation (WHO) was handed over to the only Basic Health Unit (BHU) Bomburiti, Kalash Valley here.

In this regard, a function was held at the BHU Bomburiti, wherein Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali was the chief guest while District Police Officer Ikramullah, Additional Assistant Commissioner Adnan Haider Maloki, Sub Divisional Police Officer Hasanullah, SHO Bomburiti, District Health Officer Dr Fayaz Rumi, Dr Salim Saifullah, Dr Farman

Nizar and Dr Willi Kalash and other guests were also present.

Mohammad Khalid Shaikh, the elected chairman of this valley, while welcoming the guests, highlighted the problems of this area. On the occasion, Dr Wali Kalash, who belongs to the Kalash tribe and was the first Kalashi doctor from this valley, said that there were many heart diseases here and he wanted to establish a diagnostic centre here and send its report to Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar where Senior Cardiologist could treat heart patients free of charge.

Similarly, he said that by providing wheelchairs to

disabled children, the smiles on the faces of children could be restored, adding that the local people and Muslim community contribute and collect funds for the welfare of Kalash people and provide it for the treatment of the poor and deserving people. Bibi Shahra, a female social worker of Kalash tribe, welcomed the donation of WHO and said that it would benefit the people of this area in general and women in particular.

A large number of local Muslim and Kalash people including women folk attended the ceremony, while Dr Asad and other staff of the World Health Organization were present on the occasion.



SIALKOT: Inland Study Tour of Officers of 36th MCMC to Sialkot under training at National Institute of Management Islamabad.

### Kabal Press Club elects new cabinet F.P. Report

MINGORA: Kabal Press Club (KPC) has elected new cabinet for 2023 session Ali Sher along with Salah-u-Din as president and general secretary respectively, on Tuesday.

According to details, the newly elected cabinet KPC comprising of senior vice president Syed Asalah-u-Din, vice president Shah Khan, finance secretary Habib Khan and Sardar Khan as press secretary to sever the journalist's community. The newly elected cabinet committed to uphold grievances of media personnel at every forum. KPC president said that public interest issues should be prioritize in media coverage as social responsibility.

### Helpline for legal assistance established Saqib Mushtaq

LODHARAN: A helpline has been established for legal assistance of women on harassment and physical torture by LPP organization as a polit project at Lodhran, on Tuesday.

LPP founder Jahangir Tareen and president Ali Tareen visited several programs regarding International Women Day and especially Head office for legal assistance for Women at Lodhran and committed to play their role in this regard.

LPP Chief Executive Dr. Abdul Saboor along with his team briefed the participants regarding the organization and its working for legal assistance to marginalized segments of society. The participants hopeful for expansion project for welfare of women folk to ensure their legal assistance across the board in the country.

### CT scan facility opened F.P. Report

SHANGLA: CT Scan machine has been installed at Shangla Medical Complex which will provide diagnosing facilities to local populace at their doorsteps in the mountainous region, on Tuesday.

In this regard, Shangla Medical Complex has issued a statement that the residents of the premises can avail CT Scan facilities at their doorsteps. The residents were earlier compelled to visit adjacent districts for obtaining the facility.

The residents and civil society appreciated establishment of CT Scan facility at Shangla Medical Complex and hopeful that the facility will benefit populace at their doorsteps which will ensure quality services in health sector.

### Jail warden killed

SAHIWAL (INP) A jail warden was killed after unidentified persons opened fire near Pul Barsan area of Sahiwal. Yasin, the warden of Central Jail Sahiwal, was on his way home when three motorcycle riders signaled him to stop and upon not stopping they shot him from behind, hitting him in the head.

## Police to fulfill responsibility: DPO

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: District Police Officer Kohat Shahzada Umar Abbas Baber attended the Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat Program "Da Oolas Awaaz" on Tuesday. Talking in the program, he said that protection of people's lives and property and the establishment of lasting peace is the prime responsibility of Police adding that the police will fulfill its that responsibility at all cost.

DPO maintained that police always remained on front line in the war on terror and hundreds of personnel had lost their lives for this sacred cause. The police would play its role to end terrorism in the future as well, he added. In response to a question regarding aerial firing, the DPO said, for effective control of aerial firing, the civil society and the parents have to play its due role side by side the law enforcement agencies. He clarified, in case of casualties by aerial firing Section 302 will be filed against the responsible persons.

Referring to the online FIR, he said, coming to the police station in person for registration of FIR was the best option assuring that people would not have any

problem in registration of FIR. Referring to the role of police in the merged areas, he said, since the Khasadar/Levy Force was not properly trained like the Police Force due to which there were some problems but it would improve with the passage of time. In response to another question on drugs, he said that it was a big social issue which could not be fully addressed without the involvement of the civil society and parents and devising joint strategy by ANF, police and excise & anti-narcotics department. So each and every one should play its part in this regard, he said.

Umar Babar asserted that citizens could contact him in the office hours on any issue/complaint without any hesitation. He announced the reactivation of the Gasht System for maintaining the law and order situation and discourages street crimes. Regarding the overcharging by passenger vehicles, he said it was intolerable and such elements would be dealt severely. DPO Kohat appealed the people to cooperate with the Police in combating the crimes. Strict action would be taken in case of non-cooperation



or negligence on the part of police, he assured. People would not be harassed unnecessarily by Police, he concluded.

**DC inspects facilities in Kohat Central Jail:** Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Dr Azmatullah Wazir Tuesday visited Central Jail Kohat and inspected its various sections.

He also met with prisoners and inquired about their problems. He also visited medical and surgical wards of jail and checked records. He inspected kitchen and food items and reviewed security arrangements. The Deputy Commissioner directed administration to start computer classes in jail and focus on the education of juveniles enabling them to become a useful part of society after release.

## Essay & speech competition organized

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Haripur University organizing competitions among male and female students regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day, the competitions were organized in collaboration with the Provost's Office and the International Bachelor's Society.

According to Jamia Haripur Spokesperson, Saqib Awan, the purpose of the speech and essay writing competitions was to highlight the importance of the Kashmir issue and solidarity with the Kashmiri brothers.

As many as 25 students participated in essay writing while 35 students participated in speech competition. Ayesha got the first position in the Urdu speech competition, while Atiqur Rehman got the second position and Holy Nazeer got the third position. Noor Khalid won the first position in the English-speaking competition. Urwa Saeed was on the second position and Fatima was on the third position in the Urdu essay writing competition. Ifat Saeed won the first position, while Zainab

took the second position and Ihtisham took the third position.

Maryam Rukhsar got the first position in the English essay writing competition, while Noorul Ain got the second position and Muhammad Zakir got the third position. The students showed great interest in the competition.

Professor Sajid Ulumi and Taimur Riyaz in the Urdu essays, while in the English speech competition, Professor Amdar and Professor Soheb of the English Department performed the duties of essays. Dr. Andalib Akhtar in Urdu essay writing and Rubina Shaheen in English essay writing performed the duties of editors.

The guests of the closing ceremony of the competitions were Dr. Ali Raza Gormani and Dakar Rashid Ahmed. Dakar Ali Raza Gourmani in his closing remarks thanked Assistant Provost Saqib Awan and the Ajaqi Bachelor Society and said that such competitions should be held so that leadership skills develop among the students. At the end of the competition, the chief guest distributed the

prizes to the winning students and took a group photo.

**Industrialists meet with DPO:** Officials of Hattar Industrial Estate met District Police Officer Haripur Muhammad Umar Khan. Officials of Hattar Industrial Estate congratulated Haripur on the placement and informed about the issues.

District Police Officer Haripur while talking to officials of Hattar Industrial Estate said that the role of Industrial Estate is important in the development and prosperity of the country. The Haripur police deployed its resources to allow the industrialists to continue their business activities in a peaceful environment.

If capital investments are made and industries are set up, more employment opportunities will be provided to the people, which will also reduce the crime rate in the society. For the establishment of industrial peace, the police and industrialists have to play their role together so that peace can be established in the area and employment opportunities can be provided.

## Inflation a threat for public order: Mardan Mayor

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mayor Mardan City Himayat Ullah Mayar has said that due to inflation, the life of a poor man has become difficult, which is also harming public order.

Full attention should be paid so that the law and order situation in the province is improved, the illegal load shedding of electricity and gas should also be eliminated so that the people can spend the

blessed month of Ramadan in worship without any inconvenience.

He expressed these views while addressing the meeting of the City Local Council. The meeting was presided over by Presiding Officer Zar Wali Khan Akakheal, officers of various departments were present in the meeting, Standing Committees consisting of Council members were approved in the meeting, and will soon be

formed for various departments in consultation with various political parliamentary parties so that the people justice can be delivered to their doorsteps, the chairmen of various committees gave detailed speeches regarding the inflation and law and order situation, City Local Council Mardan mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar while addressing the meeting said that the law and order situation.





## Austin aims to reassure Mideast allies, deliver tough message

AMMAN (Reuters): US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, in Jordan to begin a three-country Mideast visit, is aiming to reassure key allies of American commitment to the region despite Washington's recent focus on Russia and China, officials said, but plans frank messages for leaders of Israel and Egypt.

The Pentagon chief, who arrived in Amman, is expected to press Israeli leaders to reduce tensions in the West Bank and work to strengthen ties in talks with Egyptian leaders while touching on human rights concerns. "We've demonstrated over and over again that we can rapidly surge capability to any part of the globe that we need to, but especially here in the Middle East, because we've operated here for 20-plus years," Austin told reporters while visiting a joint training center near Amman.

The United States has about 30,000 troops in the region and is seen as pivotal in helping counter Iranian influence. Retired US Marine Corp General Frank McKenzie, who headed American forces in the Middle East until last year, said the region is significant to the United States in part because of China's growing role. "I think this trip is an excellent example of an opportunity to continue to tell people in the theater (region) that they remain important to us," added McKenzie, now leading the University of South Florida's Global and National Security Institute.

Ties between China and Middle Eastern countries have expanded under the region's economic diversification push, raising US concerns about growing Chinese involvement in sensitive infrastructure in the Gulf, including in the United Arab Emirates. The United States last week demanded that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repudiate a call by his hardline Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich for a flashpoint Palestinian village to be "erased" - a comment that Netanyahu called "inappropriate." The US State Department has called Smotrich's comment "repugnant." "He (Austin) will also be quite frank with Israeli leaders about his concerns regarding the cycle of violence in the West

Bank, and consult on what steps Israeli leaders can take to meaningfully restore calm before the upcoming holidays," a senior US defense official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The Pentagon said Austin had discussed his concern about the escalation in tensions in the West Bank and Jerusalem during a meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah. With the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish Passover holiday weeks away, foreign mediators have sought to reduce tensions that rose after Netanyahu regained power at the head of a hard-right coalition. Austin is poised to send a clear message on the need for Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to respect human rights, underscoring Washington's concern on the issue. "I fully expect him to bring up human rights, respect for fundamental freedoms," the US defense official said.

Under Sisi, who as army chief led the 2013 ouster of Egypt's first democratically elected president, there has been a long crackdown on political dissent that has swept up liberal critics as well as Islamists. The United States has withheld small amounts of military aid to Cairo, citing a failure to meet human rights conditions. Advocacy groups have pushed for more to be held back. The United States, long an important player in the Middle East, has been preoccupied with other international matters during President Joe Biden's administration, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine and concern over Chinese military activity near the self-ruled island of Taiwan. The United States has committed more than \$32 billion in weapons to Ukraine, including sophisticated air defense systems and tanks.

Mistrust toward the United States among some in the Middle East has built up since the 2011 "Arab Spring" uprisings when Gulf rulers were shocked at how President Barack Obama's administration abandoned then-Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak after a decades-old alliance. The United States pulled out the last of its troops from Afghanistan in a chaotic withdrawal in 2021, further raising questions in the broader region about Washington's commitment.

## Georgia nuclear plant begins splitting atoms

ATLANTA (AP): A nuclear power plant in Georgia has begun splitting atoms in one of its two new reactors, Georgia Power said, a key step toward reaching commercial operation at the first new nuclear reactors built from scratch in decades in the United States. The unit of Atlanta-based Southern Co. said operators reached self-sustaining nuclear fission inside the reactor at Plant Vogtle, southeast of Augusta. That makes the intense heat that will be used to produce steam and spin turbines to generate electricity.

A third and a fourth reactor were approved for construction at Vogtle by the Georgia Public Service Commission in 2009, and the third reactor was supposed to start generating power in 2016. The company now says Unit 3 could begin commercial operation in May or June. Unit 4 is projected to begin commercial operation sometime between this November and March 2024. The cost of the third and fourth reactors was originally supposed to be \$14 billion. The reactors are now supposed to cost more than \$30 billion. That

doesn't include \$3.68 billion that original contractor Westinghouse paid to the owners after going bankrupt, which brings total spending to more than \$34 billion.

The latest set of delays at Unit 3 included a pipe part of a critical backup cooling system that was vibrating during startup testing. Construction workers had failed to install supports called for on blueprints. The company has also said it had to repair a slowly dripping valve and diagnose a problem involving water flow through reactor coolant pumps. Georgia Power said Unit 3 would continue startup testing to show that its cooling system and steam supply system will work at the intense heat and pressure that a nuclear reactor creates. After that, operators are supposed to link the reactor to the electrical grid and gradually raise it to full power. "We remain focused on safely bringing this unit online, fully addressing any issues and getting it right at every level," Chris Womack, chairman, president and CEO of Georgia Power, said in a written statement. "Reaching initial criticality is one of the final

steps in the startup process and has required tremendous diligence and attention to detail from our teams."

Georgia Power owns a minority of the two new reactors. The remaining shares are owned by Oglethorpe Power Corp., the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and the city of Dalton. Oglethorpe and MEAG would sell power to cooperatives and municipal utilities across Georgia, as well in Jacksonville, Florida, and parts of Alabama and the Florida Panhandle. Georgia Power's 2.7 million customers are already paying part of the financing cost, and state regulators have approved a monthly rate increase of \$3.78 a month as soon as the third unit begins generating power. The elected Georgia Public Service Commission will decide later who pays for the remainder of the costs. Vogtle is the only nuclear plant under construction in the United States. Its costs and delays could deter other utilities from building such plants, even though they generate electricity without releasing climate-changing carbon emissions.

## Atlanta police arrest 23 on terrorism charges

ATLANTA (Reuters): Two dozen people face domestic terrorism charges in Atlanta after they were arrested during violent clashes between officers and protesters at a police training center construction site, authorities said. The 23 people who face charges were part of a group detained by police who said they launched bricks, rocks, Molotov cocktails and fireworks at officers after they breached the construction site, where a new Atlanta Public Safety Training Center is being built.

Only two of the people listed on the Atlanta Police Department website are from Georgia. The remainder were from other states, including three from Massachusetts and two from Wisconsin. One person is from Canada while another is from France, according to police. It is unclear if any of the people have been formally charged by the DeKalb County District Attorney, whose office was not immediately available for

comment. Surveillance camera footage of the incident provided by the City of Atlanta Police Department showed what appeared to be police officers trying to lock a gate as fireworks exploded around them. Other video clips showed protesters throwing rocks over a fence, several small fires burning at the site and heavy construction equipment on fire.

"We will not rest until those who use violence and intimidation for an extremist end are brought to full justice," Governor Brian Kemp said in a statement. The site, derisively called "Cop City" by opponents, has been the scene of escalating confrontation as demonstrators oppose both the increasing militarization of police and the development of the forest that its defenders call the "lungs of Atlanta." The police and fire training center is being built on 85 acres (34.4 hectares) of a 400-acre property in unincorporated DeKalb County that is owned by the city,

according to the facility's website.

It is within the larger South River Forest, also known as the Weelaunee Forest. Opponents of the site say they want to save an important green space near the greater Atlanta metropolitan area of 6 million people. Events began with a music festival that was part of a week of demonstrations against the construction and in support of police reforms. Hundreds of people attended events, and a group broke off from the concert to start a protest. With more activities planned in coming days, Atlanta police said they and other law-enforcement agencies had "multi-layered strategy that includes reaction and arrest." The site was subject to a protest in January that briefly turned violent as demonstrators set a police car on fire and smashed windows of buildings. Demonstrators at that time gathered to protest the law enforcement killing of an activist during a raid to clear the construction site.

## NK warns US against shooting down missile tests

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea said any move to shoot down one of its test missiles would be considered a declaration of war and blamed joint military exercise between the United States and South Korea for growing tensions, state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, warned in a statement that Pyongyang would see it as a "declaration of war" if the US took military action against the North's strategic weapon tests. She also hinted that the North could fire more missiles into the Pacific Ocean. The United States and its allies have never shot down North Korean ballistic missiles, which are banned by the United Nations Security Council, but the question drew new scrutiny since the North suggested it will fire more missiles over Japan.

"The Pacific Ocean does not belong to the dominion of the US or Japan," Kim said. Analysts have said that if North Korea follows through on its threat to turn the Pacific Ocean into a "firing range", it would allow the isolated and nuclear-armed state to make technical advances in addition to signalling its military resolve. In a separate statement, the chief of the Foreign News Section at North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused the US of "aggravating" the situation by conducting a joint air drill with a B-52 bomber and planning US-South Korea field exercises. The United states deployed the B-52 bomber for a joint drill with South Korean fighter jets, in what South Korea's defence ministry said was a show of force against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

The two countries will conduct more than 10 days of large-scale military exercises known as the "Freedom Shield" drills starting next week. Around 28,500 US troops are stationed in South Korea as a legacy of the 1950-1953 Korean War, which ended in an armistice, rather than a peace treaty, leaving the countries technically at war.

## Japan launches H3 rocket

TOKYO (AP): Japan's space agency intentionally destroyed a new H3 rocket moments into its launch Tuesday after the ignition for the second stage of the country's first new rocket series in more than two decades failed. Coming three weeks after an aborted launch due to a separate glitch, the H3's failure was a setback for Japan's space program - and possibly for its missile detection program - and a disappointment for space fans who were rooting for Tuesday's retrial.

The rocket was carrying an Advanced Land Observation Satellite, tasked primarily with Earth observation and data collection for disaster response and map making, and an experimental infrared sensor developed by the Defense Ministry that can monitor military activity including missile launches. The H3 rocket with a white head blasted off and soared into the blue sky from the Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan as fans and local residents cheered. It followed its planned trajectory and the second stage separated as planned, but the ignition for it failed, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said.

JAXA said it sent a command to destroy the rocket as there was no hope for it to complete its mission. Officials are investigating the cause of the failure, and expected to give early findings at a news conference later Tuesday. The failure is the second in six months since a smaller Epsilon-series solid-fueled rocket designed to launch scientific satellites failed in October. The H3 launch had also been delayed for more than two years because of an engine development delay. During a launch attempt in February, an electrical glitch after the main engine ignition aborted the launch just before its liftoff and narrowly saved the rocket.

## EU closer to joint arms-buying to aid Ukraine but hurdles remain

BRUSSELS (Reuters): The European Union is edging closer to a landmark move into joint procurement of ammunition to help Ukraine and replenish members' stockpiles but major questions regarding funding and scale remain to be resolved. EU defence ministers will this week discuss plans to speed up the supply of 155 millimetre ammunition to Ukraine, which is pleading for more such artillery shells to fight Russia's invasion, and to order more munitions together.

Hanno Pevkur, the defence minister of Estonia - which has led a push for the EU to order millions of shells - said he believed ministers would reach a "political consensus" to pursue joint procurement when they meet in Stockholm. But he noted key issues were still up for debate, such as how to pay for joint purchases. Pevkur insisted EU members could not rely on funds already committed for military aid to Ukraine.

"We need a clear consensus that there has to be new money for this initiative," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. Both sides in Ukraine are firing thousands of artillery shells daily but Russia can fire thousands more due to larger supplies, Kyiv and its allies say. They have also said Ukraine is using shells faster than its allies can produce them. Sending shells to Ukraine has also badly depleted the stockpiles of Kyiv's allies, according to officials, although the exact levels are secret.

Pevkur warned joint procurement must not get bogged down by infighting between EU bodies. Various parts of the EU bureaucracy have been jostling over the concept in recent days. If the project comes to fruition, it will be a significant step in EU integration as defence procurement has largely been the preserve of the bloc's individual member governments. "You can see the next potential quantum leap in European integration in the area of defence," said an EU offi-



cial in Brussels familiar with the discussions.

The official said things could move quickly, with a number of EU countries signing a so-called project arrangement - outlining the terms of a procurement plan - as soon as the end of this week and first contracts agreed around the end of April. "That's ambitious but I think it's also realistic," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. EU officials are focusing their joint procurement ideas on artillery shells, rather than weaponry, for now as Ukraine has identified them as a particularly urgent need and they are more straightforward to produce than complex weapons systems. Joint procurement is part of a three-track plan by EU institutions to be discussed by the ministers in Stockholm.

The first step would encourage EU countries to donate more ammunition to Kyiv from their own stockpiles immediately by offering a higher reimbursement rate from an EU-run fund that bankrolls military aid, the European Peace Facility. The EU would set aside one billion euros (\$1.06 billion) from the fund for this step, which is not without controversy. Pevkur noted it would put EU

members in different funding categories, with those who had been more generous with their ammunition earlier receiving less than those who donate now. Joint procurement is the second part of the EU plan, which suggests a fast-track procedure to sign contracts with manufacturers of 155 mm shells in EU countries and Norway. The proposal document, sent to EU member countries last week, says joint procurement would allow the bloc to "place a massive order to send industry a clear demand signal, enabling it to ramp up its production capacity". But the document does not set out how many shells the EU should order, at what cost, or when they might be available.

Estonia kick-started the current debate with a proposal last month for the EU to buy one million 155 mm rounds for Ukraine this year, at an estimated cost of four billion euros. The third part of the plan foresees using EU money to help European arms companies boost capacity and efficiency. After the talks in Stockholm, EU officials hope the plan can be firmed up for a foreign and defence ministers' meeting on March 20 and finalised at an EU summit later that week.

## Taiwan warns of China's 'repeated provocations'

TAIPEI/BEIJING (Reuters): Taiwan will not allow "repeated provocations" from China, the island's defence minister said on Tuesday, as China's foreign minister said Taiwan was the "first red line" that must not be crossed in Sino-US relations. Tensions over democratically governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, have spiked over the past three years as Beijing ramps up diplomatic and military pressure to get Taipei to accept Chinese sovereignty.

China staged war games near Taiwan in August to protest the Taipei visit of then US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen plans to meet current House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in the United States in coming weeks, two sources told Reuters. Speaking to reporters at parliament, Taiwan Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said he was not aware of a planned meeting between Tsai and McCarthy. "The Chinese communists use any reason to send troops," Chiu said. "But we won't just 'bring it on'. We will take a peaceful and rational approach."

Although it hopes this does not happen, Taiwan's military is prepared to fight, he added. "If the Chinese communists move again, the armed forces' job is to fight," Chiu said. "We won't allow repeated provocations against us. We can't accept that." Taiwan's government has not announced a Tsai visit to the United States, which previously she has made as stop-overs on the way to countries which maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan in Latin America and the Caribbean. Taiwan's foreign ministry said on Tuesday it will make an announcement at an appropriate time about any foreign travel for the president but that it had nothing to announce for the time being. McCarthy has also not confirmed a meeting with Tsai. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said it was "absurd" for US officials to say that Taiwan is not an internal affair of China's.

"The Taiwan question is the core of the core interests of China, the bedrock of the political foundation of China-US relations and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-US relations," he said on the sidelines of China's annual

meeting of parliament. "The United States has unshakable responsibility for causing the Taiwan question." China will keep working for "peaceful reunification", but reserves the right to take all necessary measures, Qin said. "No one should ever underestimate the firm resolve strong will and great capability of the Chinese government and people to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Taiwan's government strongly disputes China's territorial claims though has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing, and says only Taiwan's people can decide their future. One of the sources told Reuters that should the US meeting go forward - likely in April - it did not necessarily rule out McCarthy visiting Taiwan in the future. Four other sources - including US officials and people with knowledge of the US and Taiwan administrations' thinking - said both sides were deeply uneasy that a future visit by McCarthy would severely increase tensions across the Taiwan Strait at a time when the island is preparing for its own presidential election early next year.

## Drivers strike over plan to remove aging Philippine jeepneys

MANILA (AP): Philippine transport groups launched a nationwide strike to protest a government program drivers fear would phase out traditional jeepneys, which have become a cultural icon, and other aging public transport vehicles. Officials, however, braced with contingencies and deployed government vehicles to take stranded passengers in some areas. Other groups refused to join the week-long strike that could keep more than 40,000 passenger jeepneys and vans off the streets in the Manila metropolis alone.

Protesting drivers and supporters held a noisy rally in suburban Quezon city in the capital region, then proceeded in a convoy to a government transport regulatory office to press their protest. "We're calling on the public to support the transport strike in any way possible," said Renato Reyes of the left-wing political alliance Bayan, which was backing the strike. "The inconvenience of the transport stoppage is temporary, but the loss of livelihood of drivers and operators would be long-term." At almost noon, Transport Secretary Jaime Bautista said no

major transport disruption had been monitored. Other officials said government vehicles were deployed to carry commuters in some areas but did not immediately provide more details.

Morning rush-hour traffic was heavy as usual in major roads in Manila and nearby cities. "There is no disruption except in a handful of routes in the national capital region," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s office said by noon, citing reports from law enforcers. Bautista warned that protesting drivers who would resort to violence and coercion to stop passenger vehicles not joining the strike would face criminal charges. Vice President Sara Duterte, who also serves as education secretary, drew criticisms after saying the strike is a communist rebel-inspired action that may inconvenience students. The government transport modernization program, first launched in 2017, aims to replace dangerously dilapidated and old passenger jeepneys and vans with modern vehicles, which have safety features and conform with carbon emissions standards. Vehicle owners have to

join transport cooperatives and corporations by year's end for better transport management.

Opponents say most poor drivers could not afford to purchase new passenger jeepneys even with promised government financial aid. "It's OK to have modernization for those who have money," jeepney driver Benito Garcia told The Associated Press. "But for us jeepney drivers and operators, we cannot afford." Others said the program would mean the demise of the gaudily decorated and brightly colored jeepneys, which have been regarded as Manila's "King of the Road" and a showcase of Philippine culture on wheels. The diesel-powered jeepneys evolved from US military jeeps that American forces left behind after World War II. The vehicles were modified and then reproduced, many with second-hand truck chassis, and for decades were the most popular form of land transport among the working class, even though they cough out dark fumes that have been blamed for Manila's notoriously polluted air.

## Brazil probes undeclared \$3m jewelry gift to Bolsonaro

BRASILIA (Reuters): Brazilian Justice Minister Flavio Dino ordered police to investigate an alleged attempt to bring in undeclared jewelry, a gift from Saudi Arabia valued at \$3.2 million, to former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. The diamond necklace, ring, watch and earrings gifted to Bolsonaro and former first lady Michelle Bolsonaro by the Saudi government were seized by customs officials at Sao Paulo's international airport in October 2021.

The luxury jewelry, made by Chopard of Switzerland, were found in the backpack of a government aide who had traveled to Riyadh with then Energy Minister Admiral Bento Albuquerque. The Saudi embassy did not reply to a request for comment at the time. Bolsonaro, who left for the United States two days before his term ended in December without conceding defeat in his re-election bid, has denied committing any illegality, but his leftist successor President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called for an investigation. A cabinet minister called it "smuggling."

The investigation could add to the legal liabilities that Bolsonaro faces if and when he returns to Brazil, from probes into the inciting of violent protest by his supporters after he left office to criticism of Brazil's electronic voting system. Brazilians are allowed to bring in \$1,000 of goods or gifts and pay hefty taxes for anything over that value. Bolsonaro's critics said gifts to president belong to the state and must go into a presidential collection. It is not clear what the intention of the Bolsonaros was in this case. Dino ordered the federal police to investigate media reports that it was an attempt "to enter the jewels that would be delivered to the former president without complying with legal procedures" and could constitute a crime under the penal code.

The Folha de S.Paulo newspaper reported that there was a second package of Chopard items gifted by the Saudi government, including a pen, cufflinks, a ring and a rosary, that were in the luggage of another member of Albuquerque's delegation and were not found by the customs officials. Brazil's Federal Revenue Service also said on it will investigate whether customs laws were complied with for the entry into the country of the second package of jewelry. It said gifts to a president and his wife should were state assets.



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## Election-2023, alliances, and alignment

**RECENTLY, the former President and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari ruled out the possibility of contesting the next General Election for an alliance with the ruling coalition. According to the PPP stalwart, the PPP would contest the next elections on the arrow symbol and will not run under the PDM banner because his party was not a part of the PDM bloc, rather it is a partner in the coalition government.**

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a multi-party ruling coalition initially agreed on joint work to overthrow the PTI regime that vehemently and repeatedly challenged their ego and public rating after gaining power in 2018. Realistically, the PTI's politics of hate and name-calling brought the multiple political groups with diverging interests, conflicting ideologies, and sundry manifestos to a single-point agenda of regime change through the peaceful and democratic process, that was achieved by the alliance through a successful no-confidence motion nearly a year ago. The PDM leadership had been dragging the alliance and coalition government over the past year despite multiple political, administrative, and reputational challenges, yet some PDM confederating parties such as PML-N and JUI-F were in the favor of running the next general election through the PDM platform.

Unfortunately, the ruling PML-N-led PDM coalition government could not perform well and failed to deliver its single-point anti-inflation agenda after coming into power. During this time, the country has witnessed its worst economic turmoil, with the rupee at an all-time low, the foreign exchange reserves plunged almost every other week, and on top of it, a new wave of terrorism has also hit Pakistan. Although, the PDM coalition choose to keep its common adversary out of power, but the alliance particularly PML-N paid a heavy political price for the imprudent policies of its economic team that seriously hurt the masses and pushed the already dwindling economy to the brink of an imminent economic collapse.

As the election season began, PPP's top stalwart announced his party election strategy and vowed to keep an independent political identity during the upcoming general election in the country. So far, the PTI-led anti-PDM alliance including PML-Q and a one-man squad of PML-Awami have set a unified course for the general elections in Punjab and KP and the group is determined to go the same way in the grand contest for the National Assembly whenever it gets scheduled. On the other hand, after a poor performance over the past 12 months and the no-existence of any popular narrative, the majority of the PDM member parties are likely to contest the upcoming General election in their capacity, however, seat adjustment and party-to-party cooperation among the likeminded groups are possible at any level in the days ahead.

The current highly volatile geopolitical trends and all-time high aggressive politics coupled with persistent audio and video leaks of the senior leadership of both groups had caused fears among the parties regarding their public approval. In fact, all political groups have public support and no party is ready to sacrifice its political asset for the misdemeanors committed by others. Although the PPP Sindh government could not perform according to the expectations of its voters however the party has maintained its grip over rural areas while it delivered better in Karachi during the past year. Historically, PPP leadership has displayed political maturity and promoted the legacy of dialogue, accommodation, and political resilience in national affairs. Currently, our country is passing through a very critical phase that demands responsible politics, and transparent and merit-based political order to generate a positive political activity that ends hatred and fosters peace and tranquility in the country.

THE firestorm that engulfed Hawara was just the latest pogrom Israeli settlers have visited upon Palestinians in the West Bank. The rookie mistake would be to see this in isolation. This was premeditated, a core part of the settler war on Palestinians. The settlers are not shy in adopting the most extreme brutality. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich last week declared: "The village of Hawara needs to be wiped out. I think that the state of Israel needs to do that - not ... private individuals." His threat should be taken seriously. He is not on the fringes. He is at the center of the Israeli system.

Mini Hawaras occur routinely - an average of three a day this year, up from two last year. Settlers attacking Palestinians and smashing up Palestinian property is an age-old custom, particularly since the 1980s. The Israeli army increasingly facilitates their actions. Settler violence has evolved from a strategy of harassment and local land theft to an all-out assault on strategic areas of the West Bank. It is a settler war on Palestinians, who have nobody to protect them. But the biggest change is

been formalized. Last month, in an agreement between Smotrich and the defense minister, most of the day-to-day running of the West Bank was transferred to civilian control under Smotrich, himself a settler. His partner in crime, fellow settler Itamar Ben-Gvir, is the minister for national security. Why does this transfer matter? It is not shuffling the deckchairs. Occupied territory is meant to be temporary and under military control. Hitherto, the Israeli defense minister has acted as the sovereign power in the West Bank, the dictator over the day-to-day lives of Palestinians. Putting the West Bank under civilian control is tantamount to de jure annexation. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Smotrich and Ben-Gvir all openly work to end any possibility of a Palestinian state. This is not from the realm of the conspiracy theory but openly stated aims. International statesmen continue to spout their support for a two-state solution, seemingly oblivious to how dead set against it successive Israeli governments have been. Settlements are the key plank in denying any path to Palestinian statehood or

Chris Doyle

even the end of occupation. For a passing moment, the international community, with the US at the forefront, pushed for a halt to settlement expansion. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken raced to Israel and publicly declared settlements were an issue. At the Aqaba summit in February, it was agreed that Israel would make no new settlement plans for four months. Opposition leader Yair Lapid was quick to point out that, as prime minister, he had never buckled to American pressure to freeze settlements. Within minutes, Smotrich and Ben-Gvir mocked the summit and the reported freeze. Netanyahu then claimed the commitment to be completely false. The Israeli government was collectively mocking the Americans and others.

For those who still did not get the message, in the last week of February, an Israeli government panel advanced plans for 7,100 settlement units in the West Bank. This was the largest ever such decision at one meeting. In the whole of 2022, Israel approved "only" 4,427 units. To rub it in, they set a date for moving forward with the next stage of the doomsday

E1 settlement plan that will sever Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and split it north to south. And to top it all, 15 settlement outposts are being legalized. In Jerusalem, settlement plans are never static. This week, plans will be approved that will make the settlement enclave of Nof Zion part of the settlement network, linking it to larger neighboring settlements. It would become the largest settlement embedded inside a Palestinian community in East Jerusalem. Given all the brouhaha in early February, one might have thought Blinken et al would be seething and demanding these decisions be revised. Barely a whimper emanated from the State Department. Spokesperson Ned Price referred to a "terrorist attack" on Israelis, in contrast to mere "settler violence." If settler attacks are not terrorist, one wonders what is.

The settlers and their ilk are not just at war with Palestinians, but also much of Israel. The attack on the judiciary is also part of the settler strategy that links to Netanyahu's personal need to undermine it to keep himself out of jail. The Israeli protests are massive, but are they winning? It is conceivable that they could

bring down this coalition government, but this is energizing the settlers to maximize their advantage in power by accelerating every possible decision. They know time may be short in this political round and want to leave as many facts on the ground as possible. They will not waste their time. The settler movement has every incentive to escalate with the Palestinians. Palestinian attacks have largely been by individuals, but when they attack Israelis, the settlers will not hesitate in profiting to take more land and terrorize more Palestinians. The settler attacks have largely been by individuals, but when they attack Israelis, the settlers will not hesitate in profiting to take more land and terrorize more Palestinians. The settler attacks are and will be massive and are designed to inflame because, heavily armed as they are and backed by the state, this is not a fair fight. Most Palestinians hide in their houses as soon as any settlers approach. The settlers have started their war for the West Bank by pursuing their maximalist goals. Unarmed Palestinian civilians have every right to be scared of these heavily armed thugs. What is so astonishing is that the international community runs away from the settlers too. It is a policy of appeasement. Such extremism needs to be countered, not condoned.

## The existential question for climate activists: Have disruption tactics stopped working?

**ON a bright, chilly morning in January, seven women - some young, some older, all condemned as guilty by the state - gathered at Southwark crown court. The group had already been convicted of criminal damage following an Extinction Rebellion (XR) action in April 2021 that involved breaking windows at the headquarters of Barclays Bank: a financial institution responsible for more than £4bn of fossil fuel financing during that year alone.**

"In case of climate emergency break glass", read stickers they stuck to the shattered panes. Now they were being sentenced. After a long preamble, the judge eventually handed down suspended terms, sparing the defendants jail for the time being. But he used his closing remarks to condemn their protest as a "stunt" that wouldn't help to solve the climate crisis. "You risk alienating those who you look to for support," he warned.

Is he right? Outside the courtroom, that's a question XR has been pondering for some time. Two months ago, we received an answer of sorts: the movement released a statement on New Year's Eve, dramatically titled "We Quit", in which it announced it would "temporarily shift away from public disruption as a primary tactic" and promised that its next major action would "leave the locks, glue and paint

behind". Instead, it called upon anyone concerned about climate change to gather peacefully outside parliament on 21 April as part of a mobilisation that will "prioritise attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks". In response, Just Stop Oil and Insulate Britain - the high-profile environmental action groups that have outflanked XR in recent years when it comes to disruptive public protests - both reassessed their commitment to direct civil resistance. Debates over the pros and cons of different forms of activism are nothing new within the climate movement; see, for instance, fierce disagreements among supporters of Earth First! - arguably Britain's first direct action environmental group - over the relative merits of sabotage nearly 30 years ago. What lends this one a particular urgency is the scale and pace of planetary destruction under the status quo (last year, the IPCC issued its "bleakest warning yet" regarding humanity's future), as well as the specific conjunction of social, political and economic forces in the UK. After 13 years of Conservative rule, multiple and intersecting crises - from low pay and soaring inflation to unaffordable housing and a broken NHS - are engulfing the country, pushing more than a million people on to picket lines.

Rather than tackle the root causes of popular discontent, the government is seeking to criminalise those

Jack Shenker

who give voice to it via new legal restrictions on the right to protest or take industrial action. Against a backdrop of both creeping authoritarianism above and collective fightbacks below, this feels like a moment of real possibility for climate campaigners, albeit one fraught with dangers. Little wonder, then, that XR's statement has heightened some existing tensions within the wider environmental movement, a landscape that ranges from militant tunnel-diggers to the philanthropic arm of corporate giants such as Ikea. When it first burst into the public consciousness back in 2018, bringing parts of London to a standstill in a nonviolent riot of music, dance and colour, XR was described in the mainstream press as a radical force, particularly as its political strategy rested on maximising arrests of its supporters. The fruit of its first "rebellion" included a formal declaration by the British parliament acknowledging the climate emergency, but subsequent mass actions delivered diminishing tangible returns and fuelled mounting concerns in some quarters about the nature of the group's work.

One notoriously ill-advised intervention at London's Canning Town station in 2019, which resulted in an ethnically diverse and largely working-class group of commuters dragging XR pro-

testers from the roof of a tube train, seemed to visually embody the movement's blind spots and failure to engage local communities. In recent years, as prime-time news footage of pink boats at Oxford Circus has been supplanted by shots of protesters blocking the M25 or soup being hurled at (unharmd) Van Gogh masterpieces, other organisations have become the media face of supposedly extreme activism. Many of their supporters were once XR activists who have since broken away; at the same time, other prominent XR figures have moved in the opposite direction, calling for a less confrontational set of tactics that can command the broadest possible support base among the public. On the face of it, XR's We Quit declaration looks like a big win for the latter, including the former XR spokesperson Rupert Read, who argues against "polarising" forms of activism and now co-directs an incubator dedicated to growing the environmental movement's "moderate flank".

The reality is more complicated. In truth, few believe that when it comes to the climate emergency there is a binary choice between radical protests and less confrontational forms of activism. Whether acknowledged or not, the former often depend upon the latter to make themselves and their demands appear more palatable to

powerbrokers. There is already evidence of a positive symbiotic relationship between the "extreme" and "moderate" wings of the UK environmental movement, with Just Stop Oil interventions being found to increase public support for Friends of the Earth. A more salient faultline - and one that runs right through the middle of many climate groups, including XR - concerns what exactly is being named as the enemy here, and therefore what sort of changes are needed to vanquish it. It's easy enough to recognise that the environment is being devastated by human activity, but who is responsible: is it a generalised failure on the part of an entire species - or the result of specific actors, and specific political and economic systems built to enrich and protect them? If so, can we really expect concessions granted from within those systems to durably and meaningfully change our relationship with the natural world?

This question matters because alongside a healthy diversity of tactics and movement entry points, what the climate struggle needs is a clear, coherent narrative that knits together the many different ways in which those with enormous wealth are dispossessing the rest of us - including their war on the ecosystems that form the basis of our shared survival - and calls out the extractive, undemocratic structures that enable that process. Yes, there absolutely must be room in

the movement for people who would never dream of blocking a road or smashing a window, just as there must be for those willing to take on such risks. But there should be no space here for a "beyond politics" framing of the climate crisis (a slogan often and problematically espoused by XR, though its supporters insist that it has been misunderstood), because that would root the climate struggle in a fundamental lie. Without a compelling story that links rising sea levels with attacks on the right to strike, environmentalists will allow governments and businesses to pursue a slow, inadequate and ultimately ineffective decarbonisation programme.

Researching this article, I've spoken to people hailing from very different parts of the environmental movement, and what struck me most was the degree of mutual respect on display, rather than rupture. Rupert Read, for example, had positive things to say about some of Just Stop Oil's past interventions; Indigo Rumbelow, a co-founder of Just Stop Oil, encouraged anyone who criticises her group's tactics but supports their cause to join the XR mobilisation on 21 April. "The debate is not between those who want to take 'moderate' or 'radical' action," she told me. "It's between those who are standing by doing nothing at all, and those who are doing something. That's where the line is drawn."

The Guardian

## Why Israel is no longer able to control the narrative on Palestine

Ramzy Baroud

As long as these refugee children have the self-awareness to recognize themselves as Palestinian, as long as they continue to count as part of a larger whole and are recognized by others - for example, the patients and staff at a London hospital - this collective Palestinian identity makes it difficult, impossible in fact, for Israel to win. For Palestinians and Israelis, victory means two entirely different things, which cannot be consolidated. For Palestinians, victory means freedom for the Palestinian people and equality for all. For Israel, victory can only be achieved through the erasure of Palestinians - geographically, historically, culturally and in every other way that could be part of a people's identity. Sadly, the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital is now an active participant in this tragic erasure of the Palestinians; the same way that Virgin Airlines bowed to pressure in 2018 when it agreed to remove "Palestinian-inspired couscous" off its menu. At the time, this story appeared as if it was a strange episode in the so-called Palestinian-

Israeli conflict, though, in reality, the story represented the very core of this "conflict." For Israel, the war in Palestine revolves around three basic tasks: Acquiring land, erasing the people and rewriting history.

The first task has been largely achieved through a process of ethnic cleansing and unhinged colonization of Palestine since 1947-48. The current right-wing extremist government of Benjamin Netanyahu is only hoping to finalize this process. The second task involves more than ethnic cleansing because even the mere awareness of Palestinians, wherever they are, and their collective identity constitutes a problem. Thus, the active process of cultural genocide. Finally, though Israel has succeeded in rewriting history for many years, that task is now being challenged thanks to the tenacity of Palestinians and their allies, and the power of social and digital media. Palestinians are arguably the greatest beneficiary of the rise of digital media, which has contributed to the decentralization of political and even historical narratives. For decades, the popular

understanding of what constitutes "Israel" and "Palestine" in the mainstream imagination was largely controlled through a specific Israeli-sanctioned narrative. Those who deviated from this narrative were attacked and marginalized, and almost always accused of antisemitism. While these tactics are still unleashed at critics of Israel, the outcome is no longer guaranteed.

For example, a single tweet exposing the "delight" of UK Lawyers for Israel has received more than 2 million views on Twitter. Millions of outraged Brits and social media users around the world have turned what was meant to be a local story into one of the most discussed topics worldwide on Palestine and Israel. Expectedly, not many social media users took part in the lawyers' "delight," thus forcing the group to reward its article. More importantly, millions of people were, in a single day, introduced to a whole new topic on Palestine and Israel: That of cultural erasure. The group's "victory" has turned into a complete embarrassment, never mind a defeat. Thanks to the growing popularity of the Palestinian cause and the impact of social media, ini-

tial Israeli victories now almost always backfire. Another recent example was the Harvard Kennedy School's decision to retract, before quickly reinstating, its offer of a fellowship to Kenneth Roth, the former executive director of Human Rights Watch. In January, Roth's fellowship was revoked due to his past criticism of Israel. A major campaign, which was started by small alternative media organizations, resulted in the reinstatement of Roth within days.

This and other cases demonstrate that criticizing Israel is no longer a career-ender, as was often the case in the past. Israel continues to employ old tactics to control the conversation on its occupation of Palestine. It is failing because those traditional tactics do not work in today's world, where access to information is decentralized and where no amount of censorship can control the conversation. For Palestinians, this new reality is an opportunity to widen their circle of support around the world. For Israel, the mission is a precarious one, especially when initial victories could, within hours, become humiliating defeats.

Arab News



# What will it take to end the war in Ukraine?

**MORE than a year after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the war appears to have reached a deadlock. Since the liberation of Kherson by Ukrainian forces last November, both sides have been engaged in positional warfare with only minor changes in territorial control. The widely expected Russian winter offensive barely moved the front line and failed to seize long-contested towns in the Donbas region, such as Avdiivka, Mariinka, Bakhmut and Vuhledar.**

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian army used heavily fortified positions and Western-supplied arms to successfully repel Russian armoured assaults. Even if Russian forces ultimately seize the largely destroyed Bakhmut, the heavily fortified Ukrainian positions around the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration would hinder any further movement. On the other hand, the Ukrainian counteroffensive will likely target the southern areas of the Kherson and Zaporizhia regions where Russian forces have been building layered defence lines since the fall. Given the increased density of Russian forces along the southern front line, it will be hard for Ukrainians to repeat the sudden pincer movements which allowed for the quick liberation of occupied towns in the Kharkiv region and parts of Donbas last year.

If there are no decisive shifts on the battlefield over the next six months, however, the pressure for peace talks from Western governments will most likely grow. So would Ukraine and Russia be ready for negotiations? The string of successful military operations that led to the humiliating retreat of the Russian army last year strengthened public confidence in Ukraine's eventual victory. In a January survey of Ukrainians residing in the country, 89 percent of respondents said they were optimistic about Ukraine's future. The majority explained their optimism with their anticipation of victory over Russia.

NATO's willingness to provide Ukraine with increasingly more advanced weaponry, such as long-range artillery, air defence systems and tanks, has further boosted such expectations. As a result, while in May 2022, 59 percent of survey respondents favoured negotiations with Russia, by January, the number had slumped to 29 percent, with 66 percent opposing such talks.

Most importantly, the Ukrainian leadership and the public have started defining victory in maximalist terms. For 82 percent of those surveyed, peace with Russia is possible only upon the return of all territories occupied since 2014, including Crimea and the Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. There is also overwhelming public support for joining NATO with more than 80 percent in favour of it in all regions of the country. Membership in the alliance is viewed by many as a non-negotiable position. Only 20 percent of respondents indicated they would support giving up on this goal for the sake of peace with Russia.

Territorial claims and foreign policy are not the only irreconcilable differences between Ukraine and Russia. Ukrainian leaders have also indicated that a complete victory would require the transforma-

tion of Russia's political regime and reparations from Moscow. As Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated during the 2023 Munich Security Conference, until Russia changes, the "war will continue in one or another form".

In a recent interview, the head of the Ukrainian military intelligence service, Kyrylo Budanov, claimed that the return of all territories would mark the end of the first phase of the war only. In the subsequent stage, Russia's territories bordering Ukraine would have to be demilitarised to establish a "security zone around Ukraine ... 100 kilometres in depth". These post-war scenarios, thus, presume Russian President Vladimir Putin's removal from power as the main condition for peace.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had already established this expectation in October when he signed a decree dismissing the possibility of talks with Putin. Such a position, in his view, should incentivise other members of the Russian political elite to "start thinking about what to do internally so that someone would agree to come to a negotiating table with them". While Ukraine is weary of negotiating personally with Putin, the Russian leader sees the war in broader terms as a conflict with the Western alliance and dismisses Ukraine as a Western puppet state. His press secretary Dmitry Peskov argued in a recent interview that by supplying arms to Ukraine, France, the United Kingdom and the United States had entered into a "direct military confrontation" with Russia.

Hence, the Kremlin is willing to accept only Western leaders as counterparts in peace talks. Moscow further rejects the legitimacy of the Ukrainian authorities on ideological grounds, accusing them of "favouring Nazis and promoting Nazi sentiments within the society". The only Ukrainian politicians that the Kremlin has indicated as possible negotiating partners have long fled to Russia and, hence, could not realistically represent Ukraine. Since the West insists that nothing about Ukraine can be discussed "without Ukraine", the prospect of such talks seems particularly remote at this point.

Another crucial obstacle to negotiations is Russia's rigidity in its war aims, which combine territorial, ideological, and strategic demands. The annexation of four Ukrainian regions last September, only partially controlled by Russian forces, established a pretext for additional territorial demands. At the same time, a law adopted by the Russian State Duma in 2020 precludes any consideration of territorial concessions by establishing criminal responsibility for calls or actual attempts to yield parts of Russian territory.

Ideologically, Russia remains committed to framing the war as the fight against Ukrainian "neo-Nazis", which has to end with regime change in Kyiv. Strategically, Putin presents the war as an existential fight to preserve the unity of the Russian state and prevent its subordination by the West. This, in his view, justifies the need to push back the Western presence from its borders and ensure that Ukraine remains outside of the Western alliance. The

Serhiy Kudelia

latter demand has been indirectly endorsed by China in its newly released 12-point peace plan. While recognising the importance of upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, it calls for respecting the "legitimate security interests" of other countries and rejects the pursuit of security by "strengthening or expanding military blocs".

Although public opinion has been a weak constraint on the Kremlin's decision-making, its immense propaganda efforts suggest that Russian leaders still take public attitudes seriously. Over the last year, at least a third of Russians have consistently preferred talks over continued military operations. This share reached a peak of 44 percent in the fall of 2022 when Russian forces suffered a series of defeats in the southern and northern parts of Ukraine. Similarly, in a February survey, 40 percent of respondents said they would like to see Russian troops withdraw from Ukraine without achieving their goals. Even more, about two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) indicated that they would support the signing of a peace agreement and an end to the military campaign if such a decision came from Putin. This suggests that the Russian leadership has a wider leeway in choosing the direction of this war, including a path of de-escalation, than its Ukrainian counterparts.

While both sides currently dismiss the possibility of negotiations, there are five factors that may make them more likely in the coming months. First, since the start of the war, Russia and Ukraine have repeatedly adjusted their expectations. For Russia, this meant yielding territories that it seized and giving up on certain operational objectives, such as the capture of Kyiv and Kharkiv. For Ukraine, it meant withdrawing from major cities, like Mariupol and Severodonetsk, and restraining its offensive operations. So far, these adjustments have left both sides confident that they could still achieve their goals through the continued use of force. If the battlefield stabilises and the front lines become static, the idea of talks may become more compelling, especially if the casualty rates remain high.

Second, a substantial escalation of violence and the rising threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction could also encourage the warring sides to engage in diplomacy. The signing of the two Minsk agreements in September 2014 and February 2015 was preceded by swift offensive operations that threatened one of the parties with total defeat. A similar turn of events may unfold if Ukraine manages to push the Russian army back to pre-2022 lines and threaten the capture of territories controlled since 2014. Alternatively, Russia could expand its offensive to the borders of the Donetsk and Luhansk provinces and threaten new regions in Ukraine's south or east. In either scenario - a Russian victory or a Russian defeat that could trigger the use of nuclear weapons - Western mediation efforts may be re-energised in order to push for de-escalation.

Third, Ukraine's continued fighting capacity has become highly dependent on further supplies of

advanced weaponry from NATO allies. Western countries, however, have been approaching the limits of their production capacity and have become concerned about the depletion of their own stockpiles. In addition, some US Congress members have become more outspoken about the need for greater oversight of arms deliveries to Ukraine. Meanwhile, public support for military aid provisions has declined, with a quarter of Americans (26 percent) saying that the US gives too much aid to Ukraine and only 48 percent explicitly in favour of providing it with armaments.

While Europeans largely support further assistance to Ukraine, many, particularly in Germany and Austria, have become increasingly impatient with the war and would like to see it end sooner. In a recent poll, 48 percent of respondents in nine European Union member states favoured quick peace even if Ukraine surrenders some of its territories as a result. Hence, Kyiv appears under greater pressure to achieve military success by the end of the year. Absent substantial progress on the battlefield, its Western allies might condition further assistance on tangible steps in seeking a negotiated ceasefire with Moscow.

Fourth, Russia may also be more willing to consider diplomatic paths out of the war if it faces a sudden resource shortage. The sharply rising energy exports to China and India have, so far, allowed Russia to offset the losses from the collapse in Russian energy supplies to Europe. Even more so, its total energy export earnings increased substantially in 2022. The Western economic leverage, thus, proved insufficient to limit Russia's resources for the war, but may still work if other countries, like China and India, join the effort. Even if Russia keeps receiving windfall profits from energy sales, its declining firepower on the battlefield point to munition problems, such as a shortage of artillery shells and ballistic missiles.

This means securing arms supplies from countries like China may be crucial for Russia's capacity to wage the war with the same ferocity. If Beijing maintains its current officially stated neutrality and abstains from direct military support to Russia, Moscow will be forced to re-evaluate the long-term viability of its military campaign. Finally, the moderation in the goals of the warring sides may be another factor leading to the launch of the talks. This, however, will likely require a change in the current leadership in Russia or a reversal of Zelenskyy's earlier stated positions on humanitarian or strategic grounds. Still, a shift from maximalist to moderate objectives may indicate the opening of a bargaining space for the two sides, which appeared non-existent for most of the previous year.

As it stands today, peace talks between Ukraine and Russia seem outside of the realm of the possible for both sides. However, the prospect of an endless war or a major defeat for one of the sides may make negotiations suddenly appear the only alternative available. Whether both sides then choose to pursue them will depend on the developments far away from the battlefield.

Aljazeera



## Ruling by fear is no way to govern

Tom Harris

**THE Lockdown Files have place renewed criticism on both the government and the opposition for basing many of their Covid policies on fear: the fear of infection, of contaminating others, of death itself. We were warned to stay at home, not to meet anyone outside of our family "bubble", not to go to work lest we contribute towards the downfall of society. As well as fear of the virus itself, our politicians planted a fear of police arrest, of the authorities' invading our homes to investigate any alleged breaking of Covid rules, even a fear that our neighbours would report possible breaches of lockdown restrictions. There might even have been a fear that our local community would judge us for not joining the weekly "clap for the NHS".**

"Project Fear" came into modern-day significance in the early 2010s, when Alex Salmond used the term as a useful shorthand for what he thought of the pro-Union campaign during the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. The phrase was then embraced by the campaign to leave the EU two years later. But the practice of denigrating politicians for casually exploiting voters' fears of hypothetical threats has a long history.

Fear is a highly motivating factor and has been deployed in a number of ways by tenacious politicians. Winston Churchill kicked off the 1945 general election campaign with a low blow against his former Labour partners in the wartime coalition, raising the spectre of a homegrown version of the hated

Gestapo should the socialists win power. Labour won a landslide victory. Fear of communism and of nuclear holocaust has worked for both sides of the political divide in the United States: Lyndon Johnson was elected president in 1964 thanks in part to the famous "daisy ad", depicting an innocent young girl removing the petals of a flower as the nuclear countdown progresses - an emotive warning against the alleged war-mongering tendencies of Johnson's Republican opponent, Senator Barry Goldwater. And in 1980, Ronald Reagan beat incumbent president Jimmy Carter thanks to various warnings about how an untrammelled Soviet Union was being allowed, through US inaction, to paint the globe red.

Threats to you and your family's future prosperity have delivered mixed results, though this hasn't put a stop to the tactic. Remember the Conservative posters depicting "Labour's tax double whammy" in the 1992 general election? Or the rather less impactful "New Labour, New danger" posters that sought to depict Tony Blair as some sort of demonic monster, which turned out to be about as useful to John Major in preventing a Labour landslide as Churchill's "Gestapo" smear had been half a century earlier? And it would be hard to forget some of the Remain campaign's more gloomy projections. Nevertheless, our politicians believe that fear can work and now risk, through overuse, making it less motivating a factor than it has been in the past. Voters

decided in 2014 that the fear of inheriting an economic basket case with no firm plan on the future of the currency, mortgages or pensions was enough to justify a No vote in the Scottish referendum. They chose to reject the many, varied and imaginative threats conjured up by the Remain campaign in its efforts on behalf of EU membership. Intriguingly, the electorate gave the benefit of the doubt to Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party despite many credible warnings about the threat his extremist opinions might post, only to dramatically withdraw it two years later. When it came to Covid and the authoritarian measures deemed necessary to keep us safe, fear again won out. Even after the successful and groundbreaking rollout of the Covid vaccine programme, politicians raised the spectre of mass deaths unless we returned to lockdown - a controversial measure that will be examined, one day, by a public inquiry. It is entirely possible that claims about the climate "emergency" will lead us to change our lifestyles in ways Greta Thunberg would approve. But while few contest the need for a low carbon transition, the language around Net Zero risks further lessening fear's potency.

There are times when it is perfectly legitimate to issue warnings, rooted in evidence, of the dire consequences of a policy or party. But ruling by fear is no way to govern. And to invent or exaggerate threats for the sake of political advantage represents a failure of leadership - and one which offers no guarantee of victory.

## Americans are broadly unsatisfied

**PRESIDENT Joe Biden will deliver his second State of the Union address next week to a country that has a pretty gloomy outlook on things. For the past two decades, Gallup has surveyed the American public on a collection of policy issues and broad perceptions of society in its annual "Mood of the Nation" poll. Average ratings hit record lows during the Covid-19 pandemic and have changed little in this year's report, responses for which were collected in January.**

In 2023, on average, only about a third (36%) of Americans said they were satisfied with a set of policy issues spanning all aspects of government. Among the lowest-rated issues was the state of the economy, which just a quarter of Americans said they were satisfied with. It had the largest year-over-year decline, dropping 8 percentage points. Satisfaction with gun laws dropped sharply this year, to a record low of 34%. Policies on abortion, efforts to control crime, quality of public education and efforts to combat poverty and homelessness also remained at or near low points.

"This notion of a sour mood that the country finds itself in -- a pretty persistent one since Covid

Deidre McPhillips

that the country hasn't really bounced out of -- is a challenge for our political leadership," said David Chalian, CNN's political director. "I don't know that a president alone can really upend this." Long-term trend data from Gallup suggests that there's a deeper undercurrent affecting the public's view of the country. Perceptions on specific issues can ebb and flow, said Lydia Saad, director of US social research at Gallup.

"These things bounce around a little bit more. It's about how much we trust each party and who's in power to handle these issues," she said. But satisfaction with broader aspects of American life have been generally trending down for decades, through multiple administration changes and political party shifts. "There's been a rise of polarization and decline in national harmony," Saad said. "Our baseline was a simpler time when people were more content with the country, before a lot of events happened that we know have eroded trust over time."

Perceptions of the overall quality of life in the US dropped to a record low in 2023, as did perceptions of wealth inequality. Less than a quarter of adults say they are satisfied with the

way income and wealth are distributed in the US, according to the Gallup poll. There is some room for optimism, experts say.

Despite the decline, nearly two-thirds of the country (65%) still say they are satisfied with the overall quality of life, and more than half (61%) say there is opportunity for a person to get ahead by working hard. "Those are things to build on," Saad said. "Despite all, people are still kind of gripping onto the American dream." Pessimistic attitudes can be a challenge for incumbent political parties, Chalian said.

"When he addresses the country at his State of the Union next week, how does the President tout progress while also still giving voice to this very, very real sensation among Americans that things are not going quite as well as perhaps they felt they have in the past?" But they're not always deterministic. "We just came through an election where the economy was issue number one and tended to favor Republicans," Chalian said. "But there were other issues, like the sanctity and security of our democracy and abortion, that Democrats really rallied around and overperformed expectations in the midterm election, despite the very negative views on the economy."

### 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.

## It's not enough to 'cancel' racists like Scott Adams

**FIRST, an apology. Loyal readers of this column know that, every week, I try to devote this space to consequential matters that are apt to resonate with Al Jazeera's global audience. I try to resist the easy temptation to address the outrage du jour that preoccupies the attention of so many myopic columnists writing for Western-based news organisations.**

I have made an exception this time because, while the central character of this column is another inconsequential white, American male, what happened to him and why it happened to him are too irresistible not to write about. It is irresistible since it is a welcomed and much-needed reminder that a moral compass - which seems as distant as a faint star - somehow continues to exist, albeit on life support, in parts of this mad, angry and depressing world.

So, forgive me, dear reader, for having to expose you to the likes of Scott Adams, a piddling cartoonist who doused himself in racism and, happily, has had to answer for it. Dilbert, the cartoon that Adams has sketched and derived a small measure of fame for, is, like the man, forgettable in my view. It is nowhere near as trenchant or funny as the dearly departed, single-pane comic strip marvel, The Far Side.

For the millions of discerning readers unfamiliar with Adams or his ugly attitudes that triggered his swift and delicious comeuppance, here is some important context. The first clue of Adams's malignant attitudes is that, with the occasional caveat, he reveres Donald Trump as, among his other

laudable qualities, a "master persuader". Figures. The second clue confirms the first clue. Adams said this recently on his popular YouTube channel: "Based on the current way things are going, the best advice I would give to white people is to get the hell away from Black people."

Beyond sharing this sickening slice of "best advice", Adams repeatedly referred in his diatribe to people who are Black as members of a "hate group" or a "racist hate group" and said he would no longer "help Black Americans". I am sure that Black Americans are relieved to learn that Adams - their self-appointed white saviour - has abandoned them finally in a fit of honesty about what, like so many other MAGA misanthropes, he thinks of them.

To recap: Adams believes Black Americans constitute a "racist hate group" that white Americans should "get the hell away from". That is racism 101 in, pardon me, black and white. Now, I do not know if Adams anticipated the righteous response his repellent remarks would provoke, but I am sure his wealth-fuelled privilege, gender and abiding sense of entitlement have cushioned the blows.

Chris Quinn, the editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, told the newspaper's subscribers that the decision to drop Adams's cartoon was "not a difficult one". "No, this is a decision based on the principles of this news organisation and the community we serve. We are not a home for those who espouse racism. We certainly do not want to provide them with financial support," he wrote. A cascade of

Andrew Mitrovica

other appalled editors followed in like-minded suit. They were soon joined by Adams's book publisher and syndication service.

The near blanket excommunication of Adams was necessary. It was, as well, a sign that despite the ugliness and bigotry that shadow us and often go unpunished, a sliver of decency, however fleeting, remains possible. A cynic like me might dismiss their wholesale condemnation of Adams as a business decision propelled by a self-serving, cost-benefit analysis. That may have been part of their calculation.

Still, the breadth and intensity of Adams's censure suggest that editors were motivated by a surprising conviction, not money. They all insisted that Adams was entitled to "free speech" and that the severing of their longstanding relationship with the cartoonist was not evidence of "cancel culture", but a tangible rejection of his odious beliefs. Sorry, if anyone warrants being "cancelled", it is Scott Adams. More than that, there are times and circumstances when "cancellation" is not enough and which demand that toxic, unrepentant racists be erased - figuratively speaking - from mainstream culture and consigned, if possible, to the diseased, obscure pockets of the internet where they belong. I can think of several other toxic, unrepentant racists who deserve such erasure as a tonic to the gusher of hate and intolerance they spew with such predictable illiteracy and coarseness.

And, for once, the irritating brigade of "free thinkers" seized with the career-consuming imper-





## Pakistan Stock Exchange's 100-index loses 99 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) lost 99.64 points on Tuesday, a negative change of 0.24 per cent, closing at 41,334.69 points against 41,434.33 points the previous day.

A total of 160,102,018 shares were traded during the day as compared to 221,551,717 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.338 billion against Rs7.252 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 322 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 141 of them recorded gains and 161 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Telecard Limited with 23,591,500 shares at Rs7.12 per share;

WorldCall Telecom with 12,349,275 shares at Rs1.29 per share and Maple Leaf with 10,086,629 shares at Rs25.51 per share.

Pak Tobacco witnessed a maximum increase of Rs46.35 per share price, closing at Rs712.45, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with an Rs23.52 rise in its per share price to Rs1,184.70.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs489.01 per share closing at Rs7,511.00; followed by Pak Services with Rs117.60 decline to close at Rs2,192.40.

**Rupee sheds 05 paise against dollar**

The Pakistan rupee weakened by 05 paise against the dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs277.86 against the previous day's closing of

Rs277.91.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs277.2 and Rs280 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.60 and closed at Rs297.13 against the last day's closing of Rs295.53, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs2.04, whereas an increase of 76 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs335.10 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs334.34.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 paise each to close at Rs75.65 and Rs74.03 respectively.

**Gold prices dip by Rs700 to Rs197,300 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs700 and was sold at Rs197,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs198,000 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs600 to Rs169,153 from Rs169,753, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold decreased to Rs155,057 from Rs155,607 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,140 and 1,834.70 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$7 to \$1,842 against its sale at \$1,849, the association reported.

## 46 organizations win Annual GDEIB awards 2023

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the eve of International Women's Day, Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) awards 2023 were held at Hotel Pearl Continental Karachi. 46 Pakistani organizations have won annual GDEIB awards 2023. HR Metrics conducts GDEIB awards on annual basis through a merit-based scoring process. Organizations from all sectors are eligible to take part in the awards.

GDEIB are the standards for organizations around the world. GDEIB Standards contain 15 categories, 275 benchmarks and 5 levels. It helps organizations determine strategy and measure progress in managing diversity and fostering inclusion for sustainable financial and social performance. The Centre for Global Inclusion USA is

the home of GDEIB.

HBL was declared as the most inclusive company. Top 10 companies were Engro Fertilizers, Engro Vopak Terminal, METRO Pakistan, Engro Polymer & Chemicals, Bank Alfalah, HBL Microfinance Bank, Engro Energy, Pakistan Tobacco Company, and Standard Chartered Bank. Overall winner companies were Jazz, AGP Limited, Aga Khan University, Faysal Bank, Soneri Bank, Allied Bank, HRSQ, Engro Corporation, PTCL, ABCUS Consulting, Novo Nordisk Pharma, National Bank of Pakistan, Greenstar Social Marketing, JS Bank, Hashoo Foundation, U Microfinance Bank, UBL, TPL Properties, TPL Corp, Foodpanda, Habib Metropolitan Bank, Mobilink Microfinance Bank, Martin Dow Group, Bayer Pakistan, Philip Morris Pakistan, PepsiCo,

Jubilee Life Insurance, Feroze1888 Mills, Nishat Mills, Telenor Pakistan, FFBL, ACT Engineering, Roots Millennium Education, FINCA Microfinance Bank and MITE. Nestlé Pakistan was the most inclusive company for the years 2018-2022.

Akif Saeed Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan presented GDEIB Awards winner companies. Distinguished speakers included Ms. Elizabeth Sunday, Consul Chief, US Consulate Karachi, Muhammad Aurangzeb, President HBL, Ghias Khan CEO Engro Corporation, Maheen Rahman CEO Infra Zamin, Moneeza Butt Partner KPMG, Ms. Fatima Asad-Said CEO Abacus Consulting, Mimi Bangash Consultant IFC Singapore and Zahid Mubarik, CEO HR Metrics.

Jury for GDEIB Awards

comprised of leading global DEI experts including Lynda White, President Mcleod White, Montreal Canada, Former Board Chair The Centre for Global Inclusion USA, Karen Francis PhD, Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer, American Institutes for Research USA, Moneeza Usman Butt, Partner KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co, Pakistan, Saad Amanullah Khan, Chairman of Public Interest Law Association of Pakistan, Dr. Jawad Syed, Professor of Organizational Behavior and Leadership at the Suleman Dawood School of Business Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Zahid Mubarik CEO HR Metrics. Awards were assessed on merit-based scoring method including Best Practice, Progressive, Proactive, Reactive, and Inactive.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Adventure, MSC Heidi, Lana and World Royal scheduled to load/offload Cement, Containers and Coal, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Qasim International Container Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile, another ship, MSC Asya scheduled to load/offload Containers also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port on Monday morning.

A total of 9 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships MSC Heidi and Scirocco left the Port on Tuesday morning, while three more ships 'Lana, Evoikos Theo and Pan Pride' are expected to sail on today.

A Cargo volume of 127,912 tonnes, comprising 99,290 tonnes imports cargo and 28,622 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,868 Containers (501 TEUs Imports and 1,367 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are 6 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, a containers ship MSC Asya& another Containers ship Maersk Pittsburg are expected to take berths at Container Terminal on Tuesday.

### Name Change

I want to change my name from Zohaid to Mian Zohaid Shah please make the required correction in my all documents including in CNIC # 21202-0168501-5 and Passport # DH5195013, Mian Zohaid Shah S/o Mian Shahin Shah.

### Name Change

I want to change my name from Rohaid to Mian Rohaid Shah please make the required correction in my all documents including in CNIC # 21202-7757514-7 and Passport # AD9195143, Mian Rohaid Shah S/o Mian Shahin Shah.

## PBF proposes economic manifesto to end crisis

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has proposed a 25-point economic manifesto, claiming that it will steer the country out of current financial and administrative problems.

Sharing the agenda with the media here on Tuesday, Forum's Vice President Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said that enhanced exports and recognition of taxpayers were key to economic development, while the politicians, bureaucracy and all other relevant institutions would have to agree on a charter of economy to rescue the nation from financial crisis and mismanagement, he added.

The PBF economic manifesto suggested huge investment in industrial sector to generate revenue for the government, employment for the youth, and profits for businessmen thus ensuring a win-win situation for everyone; therefore, the government should prioritise industrialisation. The industrialists and agriculturists should be facilitated with soft loans. There should be at least 20 per cent repre-

sentation of business community in the policy making at national, provincial and district levels for economic policies' implementation, besides privatisation of loss-making public entities.

Ahmad Jawad said, "We also want the FBR to implement digital policies, which are corruption-free and business-friendly. The exporters and businessmen should be given 25 per cent quota in the national awards and practical steps must be put in order to discourage smuggling."

He added that the PBF manifesto also advocated for establishing effective links between industry and academia through a new curriculum and facilitating the universities to teach entrepreneurship.

Industrialists should also be provided plots in the industrial estates on a ten-year easy installment plan and arbitration centres should be established in every district to resolve business disputes at the earliest.

PBF Vice President Ahmad Jawad also called for reforms to be implemented in the agricultural sector, adding that people

with more than 50 acres of land should pay income tax, but orchards and vegetable farms using modern farming methods should be exempted. Additionally, he advocated for granting cold storage chains of fruit and vegetables with concessional loans.

PBF Vice President Jahanara Wattoo demanded that industry status must be given to IT and agricultural sector. She also called for elimination of prize bonds and currency notes of 5,000 denominations, arguing that it would help redirect this money to businesses and eradicate corruption in Pakistan. She mentioned that the PBF manifesto also called for energy sector reforms and green energy promotion to help solve the energy crisis.

Ms Jahanara urged the government to consult private sector to address climate change with a defined strategy, and also the government must register all online stores in Pakistan with a mandatory fixed fee of Rs 100,000 to support e-commerce with a renewal licence period of three years in order to support consumer protection.

## British PM's Trade Envoy meets SM Tanveer

LAHORE (APP): Member British Parliament (MP) and British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Mr. Mark Eastwood called on Provincial Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer here at Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) on Tuesday.

Both the dignitaries agreed to enhance bilateral trade cooperation. The PBIT Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jalal Hasan Khan informed the visiting British MP about the investment opportunities and facilities being provided to investors in Punjab.

UK Trade Envoy Mr. Mark Eastwood said, "We want to develop strong

trade relations and partnership with Pakistan and Punjab. Investors from Punjab and UK can also start joint ventures."

He added that large number of Pakistanis residing in the UK were playing their full role in the development of the country.

Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer said that Punjab had a wide scope for investment in education, health, energy, textile and other sectors. "Local and foreign investors can also invest in 13 Special Economic Zones of Punjab," he maintained.

The Provincial Minister said that PBIT was provid-

ing all possible facilities to domestic and foreign investors under one roof. He said that there were deep friendly and commercial relations between Pakistan and UK. However, there was a scope to increase further that cooperation. Bilateral trade could be promoted by increasing links at the public level, he observed.

Mr. Alan Nibock, Head of British Prime Minister's Trade Envoy Team, Hamid Kamal Deputy Trade Director British High Commission, Additional Secretary Commerce Zohaib Mushtaq, PBIT Director Sohail Qadri and other relevant officers also attended the meeting.



KARACHI: General Manager Shared Services PPL Syed Mahmood ul Hassan receiving Corporate Philanthropy Award from Chairman SECP Akif Saeed at a distinguished ceremony organized by PCP.

## ICCI for strong academia industry linkages

ISLAMABAD (APP): The developed countries have achieved phenomenal economic growth by promoting strong academia-industry linkages and Pakistan has to adopt the same approach to promote industrialization and improve its economic growth.

This was said by Faad Waheed, Acting President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, during his visit to Centre of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) at Air University, Islamabad along with a delegation.

Faad Waheed said that universities were producing many research projects, but they were not benefiting the local industry as they were not oriented to resolving the industrial problems.

He said that with close academia-industry linkages, universities could help in improving the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of local industry, and in producing value-added products to boost exports.

He stressed that universities should focus on applied research that would help in addressing major problems of the society.

"The ICCI is ready to provide mentorship and career counseling to students, facilitate their placement as interns in local industry and help in commercialize innovative business ideas of students", he added.

He emphasized that the universities should focus on fostering entrepreneurship in students that would enable them to promote business start-ups and play an active role in the economic development of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Air Marshal (Retd) Javaid Ahmed HI(M), Vice Chancellor, Air University, Islamabad welcomed the ICCI delegation and said that close cooperation between Air University and ICCI would produce beneficial outcomes for students and industry.

He said that the industry should share its problems with universities so that academia could make efforts to resolve them.

He hoped that ICCI's efforts would contribute in improving linkages between the academia and the industry that would lead to accelerated growth of the economy.

Air Cdr (Retd) Afzaal Ahmed, Director ORIC, Air University gave a detailed briefing to the ICCI delegation on industrial laboratories and other industrial innovations.

## PPL wins Corporate Philanthropy Award

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has once again been adjudged as one of the largest corporate givers by volume of donations for 2020-21 and 2021-22 by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP). This is the 18th consecutive year since 2004 that the company has maintained this philanthropic tradition.

General Manager Shared Services PPL Syed

Mahmood ul Hassan received the award from Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan Akif Saeed at a distinguished ceremony organized by PCP at Marriott Hotel, Karachi attended by business leaders, civil society officials, bilateral donors and media.

PPL continues to uphold its seven-decades old legacy of sharing the benefits of development with deserving communities. The company's CSR programme

reaches deserving communities, from remote operational areas to urban centres across the country, to improve their quality of life. For this, the company works with reputable development organizations on need-based projects in education, healthcare, livelihood generation, infrastructure development, post-disaster relief and rehabilitation. PPL's CSR budget during 2020-21 crossed two-billion-rupee mark which is a record.

## Switzerland keen to boost trade ties with Pakistan

SIALKOT (APP): Ambassador of Switzerland in Pakistan Georg Steiner has stressed the need for making sincere efforts to strengthened mutual trade ties between Pakistan and his country.

Addressing a meeting of exporters at Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Tuesday, he said that Switzerland was keen to boost trade ties and enhance mutual trade volume between the two countries.

Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahab Jahangir, Vice President (VP) Amer Majeed Sheikh and Sialkot business community were also present.

The Swiss Ambassador promised full cooperation to ensure easy access of Sialkot exporters to Switzerland international

trade markets. He said bilateral trade and business relations among two countries should be further promoted with the exchange of trade delegations.

The ambassador said that both of countries had been enjoying the cordial relations.

He said that exchange of goods would facilitate creation of economic relations. "Our government fully supported Pakistan for rehabilitation of flood victims," he said.

Ambassador Georg Steiner said that the people of Pakistan were very hospitable. "I have come to Pakistan in September 2022, and found hospitality of Pakistan very impressive," he said. He said Switzerland is one of the most globalised countries in the world. He stressed

that contribution of women was crucial in society.

He also showed keen interest in SCCI's documentary "Sialkot, the City of Progressive People", which was screened during the meeting.

For improving bilateral trade, Sialkot business community suggested that exchange of trade delegations and one-to-one meetings of businesspeople should be arranged.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, in his welcome address, said that Switzerland and Pakistan enjoyed the most cordial relations since the independence of Pakistan. He said that the SCCI, a representative body of the private sector of the city, was greatly contributing to the economic uplift and development of the country.

## Pak-Germany trade witnesses over 78%

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's goods and services trade with Germany witnessed a surplus of 78.25 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$455.423 million against \$255.495 million last year, showing 78.25 percent growth.

The overall exports to Germany were recorded at US \$1010.323 million during July-January (2022-23) against exports of US \$992.295 million during July- January (2021-22), showing growth of 1.81 percent, SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Germany also witness a nominal

increase of 0.95 percent from \$128.054 million in January 2022, against the exports of \$129.277 million in January 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Germany dipped by 4.33 percent during January 2023 as compared to the exports of \$135.137 million in December 2022, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed a decrease of 7.40 percent in the seven months, from US \$ 17.742 billion to US \$ 16.429 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from Germany into the country during the period under review were recorded at US \$554.490 million against US \$736.800 million last year,

showing a decline of 24.74 percent in July- January (2022-23).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for Germany also witness a decrease of 29.16 percent from US \$109.840 million in January 2022, against the imports of US \$77.802 million in January 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Germany into the country however increased by 1.42 percent during January 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$76.710 million during December 2022, according to the data.

The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 20.91 per cent, from US \$42.297 billion to US \$33.451 billion, according to the data.

## Asian markets rise ahead of Powell testimony, US jobs data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly rose Tuesday as traders geared up for this week's release of key US jobs data and Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell's testimony to lawmakers.

His remarks will be closely followed for an idea about the central bank's plans as it ramps up interest rates to quell inflation.

A recent run of figures has suggested the world's top economy continues to

run hot and inflation is not coming down as quickly as hoped, putting pressure on the Fed to keep hiking borrowing costs.

Several officials have lined up to warn that rates would have to go higher and be held there for some time.

The prospect of more tightening has dealt a blow to investors who had grown optimistic the Fed would be able to cut rates by the end of the year.

OANDA's Edward Moya said traders were looking at two or three more quarter-point rises before the Fed holds fire.

He added: "This week will likely deliver a make-or-break moment for risk appetite as we will hear Fed Chair Powell's testimony to Congress and find out if the hot January jobs report was an aberration."

"Stocks probably won't be able to have a meaningful rally until we hear

from... Powell."

Powell is due to speak to lawmakers on Tuesday and Wednesday, while the closely watched non-farm payrolls report for February is set to be released Friday.

That comes after January's reading showed more than half a million new jobs were created, far more than expected, and another bumper figure could spark another sell-off in stocks.





## In brief

## Uzbekistan wins championship

FAISALABAD (APP): Uzbekistan won the International Girls Handball Championship, which concluded at the sports hall of the Government College University new campus, Jhang Road here. A spokesperson for the GCUF said on Tuesday that Pakistan's team remained runner-up, while Tajikistan stood third. Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony. Deputy Commissioner Ali Anan Qamar, General Secretary Handball Association Haji Muhammad Shafique and others were also present. The commissioner distributed trophies and prizes among winners.

## Over \$20,000 stolen from Hafeez's house

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Burglars broke into the residence of renowned Pakistani cricketer Mohammed Hafeez in Lahore, looting over Rs7 million in US dollars, euros, and other foreign currency from the former Pakistan captain's house, police said on Tuesday. Police said the burglary incident took place in Lahore's Defence Phase 4 area at the popular cricketer's residence where the burglars managed to steal USD \$20,000, 4,000 euros, and other foreign currency. The thieves looted other valuables items as well from the batsman's house, police added. The thieves reportedly cut the iron grills to enter the house through the boundary wall, they said. Defence police have registered a case against unidentified suspects.

## Boxing Championship

KARACHI (APP): Chairman Karachi Port Trust- KPT 40th National Elite Men & 4th National Elite Women Boxing Championship is all set to commence from March 9 at KPT sports Complex here. The 6-day event will conclude on March 14, in which 15 national teams are competing in various weight categories separately for men and women boxers, said a spokesperson of KPT on Tuesday. The teams namely Army, Navy, PAF, WAPDA, Railways, KPT, K Electric, Baluchistan, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and special invitees HEC & Sindh Police are participating in the tournament. KPT and national boxing has long association and KPT Sports Complex became the first Boxing Club of Pakistan in 1948 just after independence. Since, the facility at KPT has produced numerous athletes for the national and international arenas. Numerous players have since represented Pakistan at Asian Games, Common Wealth Games and Olympics which indeed a credit that KPT takes and enjoys.

## Neymar to undergo surgery

PARIS (Agencies): Neymar will undergo season-ending surgery on his damaged right ankle and will be out for up to four months, Paris Saint-Germain said on Monday. Neymar will miss PSG's Champions League match at Bayern Munich on Wednesday and will be operated on in the coming days at a hospital in Doha, the Qatari-backed club said. "Neymar Jr. has presented several episodes of instability of the right ankle in recent years," PSG said in a statement. "Following his last sprain on Feb. 20, the Paris Saint-Germain medical staff recommended a ligament repair operation to avoid a major risk of recurrence."



RAWALPINDI: Shan Masood and Tim David put on 80 off just 38 balls.

## Saim Ayub stars in Peshawar Zalmi's win over Lahore Qalandars

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): It was a sensational 68 in 36 balls from Saim Ayub and a solid 41-ball 50 from Babar Azam that helped Peshawar Zalmi beat table-toppers Lahore Qalandars by 35 runs at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in match 23 of the HBL Pakistan Super League 8. This was Peshawar Zalmi's fourth win in seven matches and it has extinguished Karachi Kings' hopes of Playoff qualification as all top four teams have at least eight points now. The maximum that the Imad Wasim's side can manage are six points, considering they win their last game on 12 March against Lahore Qalandars.

Left-hander Saim recorded his third half-century of the edition after being promoted to the top of the order. He smashed eight fours and three sixes in an innings defined by gorgeous stroke making. The 20-year-old made the most of the field restrictions in the first six overs, scoring 43 in 24 balls that propelled Peshawar Zalmi to 67 by the end of the Powerplay.

Babar, his captain, played the supporting role and the pair recorded a sparkling 107-run opening partnership. The two were separated in the 11th over when Saim fell to Rashid Khan. The leg-spinner added another wicket to his tally in his next over by

deceiving Mohammad Harris who top-edged a sweep to Sikandar Raza.

Peshawar Zalmi looked set to post a massive total with a hard-hitting middle-order given a platform to cut loose, but Lahore Qalandars made a decent comeback in the death overs, especially after Babar's wicket in the 16th over. They could add only 36 runs in the last over and lost seven wickets, four of which were taken by Shaheen Afridi, and were bowled out for 207 with three balls left in the innings.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore scored a quickfire 16-ball 36 with three sixes and two fours before being sent back in the 18th over by Harris Rauf. Shaheen finished with four for 31 and Harris, Zaman Khan and Rashid took two wickets each.

Lahore Qalandars' run chase was heavily dented in the Powerplay. Wahab Riaz showed why he is the most successful HBL PSL bowler when he delivered a double-wicket maiden. The left-arm pacer dismissed Fakhar Zaman and Sam Billings on consecutive deliveries in the fifth over. Abdullah Shafique mistimed the ball for Rovman Powell to take a fabulous catch at mid-off in the next over as Lahore Qalandars found themselves four down for 21. Shawaiz Irfan, marking his debut for Lahore Qalandars, played on off Arshad Iqbal in the

first over.

Hussain Talat and Shaheen provided some consolation fireworks for the Lahore Qalandars fans in their 114-run partnership off 65 balls. Shaheen struck five sixes and three fours in his 36-ball 52 before getting caught behind off Wahab.

That dismissal brought Sikandar at the crease who whipped the left-arm pacer for a four on the first ball and dispatched him for a six on the next. Sikandar would make 20 off seven before getting dismissed on the last ball of the 18th. Hussain fell in the 19th to Arshad after making 63 off 37 and smashing five sixes and four fours.

Lahore Qalandars were bowled out for 172 with two balls spare. Arshad and Wahab finished with three wickets each for 27 and 17 runs, and Azamatullah Omarzai returned two for 40. Scores in brief: Peshawar Zalmi 207 all out, 19.3 overs (Saim Ayub 68, Babar Azam 50, Tom Kohler-Cadmore 36; Shaheen Afridi 4-31, Zaman Khan 2-30, Harris Rauf 2-35, Rashid Khan 2-41).

Lahore Qalandars 172 all out, 19.4 overs (Hussain Talat 63, Shaheen Afridi 52, Sikandar Raza 20; Wahab Riaz 3-17, Arshad Iqbal 3-27, Azmatullah Omarzai 2-40).

Player of the match - Saim Ayub (Peshawar Zalmi).

## ACB announces schedule for home series against Pakistan

KABUL (Monitoring Desk): The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Tuesday announced the schedule for the upcoming T20I series against Pakistan, which will be played from March 25 to 29 in Sharjah, UAE.

Afghanistan's international home season 2023-24 will begin with a three-match T20I home series against Pakistan. The series will commence on March 25 in Sharjah, with the second and third games between the two teams taking place on March 27th and 29th, respectively, all at the same venue. ACB Chairman Mr. Mirwais Ashraf: "We appreciate Pakistan Cricket Board's willingness to play Afghanistan in March. This is a significant accomplishment for two neighboring countries."

"We are hopeful and looking forward to extending our ties with PCB, as well as continuing great partnerships and frequent cricketing assignments with them, which will help us further strengthen our team and our cricket altogether. Overall, we are excited to host and play Pakistan in what will be a thrilling series of cricket games between the two countries."

Chair of PCB Management Committee, Mr Najam Sethi: "I am delighted that inaugural Pakistan versus Afghanistan T20I series will be played later this month in a city that has a large ex-pat community and which has always supported cricketers from both countries."

"The PCB and ACB enjoy a strong and cordial relationship that goes back to the 1990s. Even today, Afghanistan players are hugely popular in the HBL PSL. I am sure when cricketers from both sides will wear national jerseys for the upcoming international series, they will demonstrate the highest levels of performances and entertain the passionate and cricket-loving crowds," he added.

Afghanistan has played Pakistan several times in ACC and ICC events in recent years, but this will be the first time the two countries meet in a three-match T20I series.

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Embassy of Japan in cooperation with the Japan Karate Association (JKA) of Pakistan organized Karate Workshop on March 7th at the Hamidi Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad.

This workshop was held under the title of "7th JKA national Karate Camp" and was participated by Pakistani people who love Karate from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Peshawar.

The Workshop with the presence of Mr. SHIINA Katsutoshi, leading Karate player from Japan and JKA official instructor, 7th Dan (The levels consist of "Kyu (10 to 1)" and "Dan (1 to 10)") offered opportunities for the participants not only to enhance their skills but also to explore the excitement of Karate as the

Japanese martial arts. Mr. SHIINA was assisted by his co-instructors Mr. KANDA Osamu, Ms. TANAKA Junko as well as the instructors from JKA Pakistan during the workshop.

Mr. ITO Takeshi, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Japan in Pakistan together with the Deputy Director General (Technical) Mr. Muhammad Shahid Islam from Pakistan Sports Boards inaugurated this one-day Workshop. Mr. ITO witnessed the training sessions and expressed his gratitude to Mr. SHIINA and his team for arriving all the way from Japan to supervise and give valuable tips to the young karate learners in Pakistan. Later Mr. ITO presented certificates to the participants for showing their keen interest in traditional Japanese martial arts of Karate. Mr. ITO said that the purpose of holding this karate training camp was to provide an opportunity to the Pakistani youth to learn "real" karate which requires courtesy as well as mental endurance together with physical strength.

He hoped that this training opportunity would prove beneficial for them to further polish their karate skills and also further strength ties between Japan and Pakistan through cooperation in various sectors including sports. Mr. ITO also thanked Japan Karate Association of Pakistan for holding Karate Workshop in Pakistan.

# Ashraf hits 20 off the final over to spark Islamabad United victory

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Sometimes crash, bang, wallop is fun. It is the principle on which T20 cricket was founded on (look away, haters) and it came to the fore in an entertaining bout that Islamabad United took by a mere two wickets. Faheem Ashraf produced a powerhouse performance, capped by his hitting three fours and a six in the final over to complete the second-highest chase in PSL history. Multan Sultans would've

been confident after putting up a total of 205, but they'll now be thinking back to their own last over which went for zero boundaries but cost two wickets. Until those incredible six balls, yorker specialist Mohammad Wasim had leaked 42 runs. He had to deal with a rampaging Tim David, who was on 60 off 27. Still, he backed himself, went for the blockhole and not only took out Sultans' biggest hitter, but he also accounted for David Miller off the last ball of the innings.

United do this a lot. They are pure T20, led by an all-rounder who loves his data and fuelled by batters who give no room for second

thought. They lost eight wickets through the course of this chase. They were 32 for 2, 99 for 4 and 159 for 7. But the longest they went without hitting a boundary after each of those dismissals was seven balls. And as penance for that, they hit the eighth and ninth for fours. United kept coming. They kept coming and coming and coming.

Colin Munro fixed a top-order wobble with 40 off 21. Usama Mir took him out. Shadab Khan regained the momentum with 44 off 25. Ihsanullah demolished his stumps. Ashraf popped up and with 18 needed off six balls, he went 4, 6, 2, 4, 4. The six in that sequence was a wide

yorker that went over deep third, after the left-hander had originally intended to paddle sweep the ball. It was bonkers.

Until those final few moments, it felt like Sultans' game. Shan Masood put on 75 at the top of the order, only he didn't hit a single six. David came in at No. 4 and compensated for that with a vengeance, clattering four of them off back-to-back balls in a 16th over from Rumman Raees that cost 30 runs. But just as it started to look really bleak, United snuck in an eight-run 19th over from Fazalhaq Farooqi and a six-run 20th over from Wasim and that turned out to be the difference.

## National Open Polo C'ship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup: two matches decided

LAHORE (APP): Master Paints/Newage Cables and Diamond Paints won the opening day matches of the National Open Polo C'ship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023 that commenced, here at the Lahore Polo Club on Tuesday.

Simon Prado's eight excellent goals guided Master Paints/Newage Cables to a 10-8 victory over Master Paints in the first match of the day. Besides Prado's excellent eight goals, Juan Cruz Greguol also played well and banged in a brilliant brace. For Master Paints, Manuel Crespo cracked a quartet while Agha Musa Ali Khan scored 2 goals and Pelagio Balazaldi and Sufi Mohammad Haroon struck one goal each.

The first chukker saw both the teams starting well against each other and it ended at 2-2. Master Paints dominated the entire second

chukker to take 5-2 lead. Master Paints/Newage bounced well in the third chukker by scoring two goals to reduce the margin to 4-5. Master Paints/Newage maintained their dominance in the fourth chukker as well to gain 7-6 lead.

The fifth and last chukker saw both the sides playing very well but Master Paints/Newage once again showed their class and dominance and converted a classic hat-trick of goals against two goals by Master Paints to win the encounter by a close margin of 10-8.

Mir Huzaifa Ahmad and Chulo Corti excelled in the second match, where Diamond Paints routed Remounts by 9-6. Both Mir Huzaifa Ahmed and Chulo Corti played brilliantly for Diamond Paints and hammered a hat-trick each while Ahmed Ali Tiwana struck a brace and Nico Roberts hit

one goal. For Remounts, Manuel Sundblad smashed five goal and Ahmed Zubair Butt scored one goal.

Diamond Paints started the match well and kept pressure on Remounts to take the lead in the first chukker. Remounts bounced back in the second chukker to level the score but Diamond Paints once again started aggressive polo and took a healthy lead, which maintained in the fourth and fifth chukker to win the match by 9-6.

Lahore Polo Club President Umar Sadiq, executive committee members, polo players and a large number of spectators and families were present to watch the exciting polo matches at Lahore Polo Club. Tomorrow (Wednesday), two important matches will be played. FG Polo and BN Polo will compete at 1:30 PM, while HN Polo will compete against DS Polo at 3:30 PM.



RAWALPINDI: Saim Ayub scored a 26-ball 50, Lahore Qalandars vs Peshawar Zalmi PSL.

## Embassy of Japan organize Karate Workshop at Pakistan Sports Complex

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pants of the training camp.

While appreciating the participants for showing their keen interest in traditional Japanese martial arts of Karate, Mr. ITO said that the purpose of holding this karate training camp was to provide an opportunity to the Pakistani youth to learn "real" karate which requires courtesy as well as mental endurance together with physical strength.

He hoped that this training opportunity would prove beneficial for them to further polish their karate skills and also further strength ties between Japan and Pakistan through cooperation in various sectors including sports.

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PESHAWAR: Mr. Asian Gem, Yahya in a group photo with chief guest Abdul Hameed Gorwara after winning of Mens Fasic and Saeed Classic Title. —F.P Photo

## Liverpool fans to get refunds after Champions League chaos

MANCHESTER (AP) — UEFA will refund Liverpool fans who bought tickets for last season's Champions League final, an event which led to crushes outside the Stade de France and innocent supporters being doused with pepper spray and tear gas.

The governing body of European soccer said Tuesday that a scheme has been set up to reimburse all

19,618 tickets purchased by Liverpool fans for the match against Real Madrid last May. The Spanish club won 1-0.

An independent review published last month found UEFA mostly responsible for the security failures which "almost led to disaster." "It is remarkable that no one lost their life," the investigation panel wrote in a 220-page document.

Refunds will also be paid out to Real Madrid supporters and neutral fans who meet certain criteria set out by UEFA.

"We have taken into account a huge number of views expressed both publicly and privately and we believe we have devised a scheme that is comprehensive and fair," UEFA general secretary Theodore Theodoridis said. "We recognize the negative experiences of those supporters on the day and with this scheme we will refund fans who had bought tickets and who were the most affected by the difficulties in accessing the stadium."

Tens of thousands of fans were held in increasingly crushed queues for hours before the game on May 28 at the 75,000-capacity Stade de France, which is a key venue for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Many fans were fired on with tear gas by police before the game, which was delayed by nearly 40 minutes. UEFA statements during the chaos and after the game wrongly blamed Liverpool fans for arriving at the stadium late and using fake tickets to try to gain entry. After Madrid's victory, dozens of fans were

robbed leaving the stadium by local residents.

An apology to Liverpool supporters for "the experiences of many of them" and the unjust blaming was made last month by Theodoridis. Fan group Football Supporters Europe praised to the decision to hand out refunds.

"UEFA's announcement of the ticket refunds is both unprecedented and hugely

welcome, and builds concretely on the apology they extended to Liverpool fans earlier."

FSE board member Kevin Miles said, "Every football fan who has traveled to support a team abroad will know that, while it may have been Liverpool fans who suffered last year, these events or something similar could have happened to any of us."





## In brief

### IRSA releases 94,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 94,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 55,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1444.90 feet and was 46.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 20,400 cusecs while outflow as 55,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1105.20 feet, which was 55.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 17,600 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 57,900, 40,500, 34,100 and 10,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Int'l Women Day on March 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa), National Heritage and Culture Division will hold a day-long celebrations here on Wednesday 8 to mark International Women Day. The event 'Tribute to Women Artisans and Folk Artists' focuses on promoting Pakistan's indigenous folk heritage and highlighting contributions of our eminent master artisans and folk artists in the development of the society, said the organizers. Major features would include an exhibition of women artisans at work and a live folk music show to pay tribute to the legendary women artists. A colourful opening ceremony with live performances will be held on 8th March at Lok Virsa Heritage Museum.

### Hoarders booked

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Tuesday booked hoarders who were illegally stocking government subsidies wheat flour sacks. According to a statement, the ICT Food department conducted a crackdown against illegal hoarders in different areas and arrested four absconders who were hoarding 600 subsidized wheat flour bags of 10 kilograms. The arrested persons were shifted to the police station and First Information Report (FIR) was lodged against the accused while flour bags were confiscated by the relevant authorities. The hoarded were attempting to smuggle the flour sacks to Peshawar which were collected from different sale points in ICT.

### Construction work of park project

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chhatta and Director General (DG) Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) here on Tuesday inaugurated the construction work of a park project by planting a sapling in GOR-1 area. According to a PHA spokesperson, the authority would construct a park in the GOR-1 area. She informed that the authority was striving to make the city green. Director Horticulture PHA Sheikh Tariq Mehmood briefed the commissioner about the park project. The Commissioner appreciated the performance of PHA and also issued instructions to make the park beautiful. The spokesperson informed that PHA had kicked off the construction work of the park.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Perviz Ashraf chairing the meeting on "Policy Dialogue on Climate Smart Agriculture & Food Security: Challenges and way Forward" organized by PIPS.

## Women's access to education, health critical for social development: Samina Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said guaranteeing equal rights to women, particularly their access to education and health, was critical for the development of society.

Speaking at a painting exhibition by former ambassador Naela Chohan in connection with Women's Day, Samina stressed empowering women by providing them equal opportunities to help them attain their full potential. The solo exhibition titled 'Art from the heart' at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) depicted the struggles of women. Chohan's statement artwork named 'Bosom' reflected the perils in the life of a woman in a 'triangle of death, suffering and hope'.

Samina Alvi emphasized raising awareness about the health issues concerning women, such as breast cancer and mental illness.

She mentioned that

breast cancer was one of the leading causes of death among women. Also, the country's 24 percent population suffered mild to moderate psychiatric issues, with the majority of it comprising women.

She mentioned that phenomenal work had been done by President Alvi and herself in the social sector, particularly breast cancer awareness, financial inclusion of women, persons with disabilities, and issues related to mental health.

Samina said the President's House had also initiated the task of improving access to mental health facilities in Pakistan through a collaborative effort towards the prevention of mental health disorders across the country. With the help of various stakeholders, she said, a mental health helpline and Artificial Intelligence-based chatbots were being launched to provide counselling. She said a recent study by a screening centre in a public sector hospital

revealed that 32 percent of the respondents mentioned that media was their prime source of information on breast cancer and the reason for getting themselves screened. Samina said art could prove as an effective tool of soft diplomacy and lauded the paintings by Naela Chohan that highlighted the issues pertaining to women.

Former Ambassador Naela Chohan, who served as High Commissioner to Australia besides her diplomatic assignments in 10 countries, said her paintings have a strong visual voice to create awareness about social and women's issues. In recognition of her strong advocacy for women's rights, she said, UNESCO held a solo exhibition of her paintings, which is kept on permanent display at its headquarters in Paris since 2002.

Director General PNCA Ayoub Jamali said PNCA was committed to promoting significant aspects of the country and encouraged community participation.

## Minister for developing strong voice of civil society in support of policy continuity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday called for developing a strong voice of the civil society and the common citizens in support of positive reforms especially in the education sector to ensure continuity of policies despite changes in the governments.

"Our civil society and citizens need to be given ownership of the reforms and the policies, if we can develop a strong voice of our citizens, they can probably guarantee that if there is political change, they can use their voice to tell the new government that we want to follow this policy and it should not be thrown out," he said while addressing a

two-day event titled "Decade of Learning" organized by the British High Commission Islamabad here.

Ahsan Iqbal recalled that he as a minister of planning had moved a Vision 2025 setting ambitious but achievable targets to be attained by 2025 but after the change of government, the new government has thrown the whole agenda out of the window.

He said the lack of stability and continuity of policies was one of the major challenges in Pakistan's development process. The minister said he was also in support of managing the education and health sectors are district level to promote professionalism in the sectors.

For this, he said each district should have a brilliant and highly professional person either from the government or from the private sector as a chief executive of the respective sectors. He said this move would also develop a culture of competition among the districts.

"We are not poor in policy-making but the real challenge is implementation," he said adding that lack of implementation of the policies and poor management system has led to poor performance in the public sectors. Ahsan Iqbal said he also had asked the education minister to hold a national summit to discuss and propose curriculum reforms, measures to improve the exams system, and teachers.

## CDA plants over 150,000 trees in federal capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has so far planted more than 150,000 saplings in the ongoing tree plantation campaign in the federal capital and surrounding areas with the help of residents since last two weeks.

"The campaign is in full swing on the directives of Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal and the children were engaged in planting saplings in different parks and free-of-cost fruit trees also distributed among citizens," an official told APP. He said that the CDA chief has given a target to officials concerned to plant around 500,000 saplings during the spring season and the plantation drive had already kicked off at the F-9 Park.

The official said that the authority was involving children to make the campaign a success, adding that, while the CDA, the private sector and civil society had an important role to make the tree plantation drive a success.

Last year, he said the Environment Wing of the CDA planted 250,000 plants and this year the target has been doubled.

The official said the fruit plants were being distributed among citizens for planting in their homes. Among them are

peaches, apricots, pomegranates and other fruit saplings that are compatible with the local climate and environment.

He said that 5,000 plants have been distributed free of cost during the week and about 20,000 plants during the next 15 days. Moreover, on the instructions of the CDA chairman, the authority would try its level best to meet the target of planting 500,000 saplings this year.

The official said the CDA has also decided to increase the city's green cover by planting saplings on billions of rupees of land it recovered from illegal occupants under the anti-encroachment drive.

"The authority has recently launched a massive drive in the federal capital against the land grabbers to recover its precious land that had been unlawfully occupied by the mafia," he added.

The official said the authority would carry out a comprehensive drive aimed at preventing re-encroachment of retrieved land and increasing green spaces across the capital.

He said Islamabad was the only city in the world that had been developed on the concept of green city and "the CDA is taking concrete measures for conservation and enhancement of its green character."

### Four bids to smuggle 1830 flour bags foiled

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police here on Tuesday foiled four bids to smuggle 1830 wheat flour and 'maida' bags.

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Potohar Division police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up four drivers namely Shehzad Rasool, Usman, Rukhsar and Afzal and recovered 1680 wheat flour and 150 'maida' bags.

He informed that the accused were trying to smuggle wheat flour bags out of the Rawalpindi division. The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and City Police Officer, Rawalpindi were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids, he added. He said, 18 bids were foiled during the last five days and teams recovered 5,874 wheat, flour and fine flour (maida) bags from the possession of the arrested accused.

### Jashan-e-Baharan to begin on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory is all set to celebrate Jashan-e-Baharan and International Women's Day on Wednesday which will feature colorful events, sports and cultural activities.

The first segment of Jashan-e-Baharan would be a sports gala that would be held at Multipurpose Ground F-6 and will feature Basketball, Lawn Tennis, and Football tournaments to mark International Women's Day.

The vibrant festivities would be organized by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration and Capital Development Authority (CDA) which would continue till March 12 (Sunday). The week-long activities would include Mazahiya Mushaira, a classic auto show, a Run and Walk Marathon, a Cycling race, and a rally to celebrate Women's Day in different venues of the capital, an ICT spokesperson told APP. He said that a 10 kilometers long 'Run and Walk' marathon would be organized on March 11 (Saturday) including short color-run activity.

## Why Imran evading trial if he had not plundered Toshakhana: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan did not appear in the court despite being summoned in the Toshakhana case.

Had he not plundered the Toshakhana gifts then why he was hesitant to face a trial, she questioned.

The minister, in a series of tweets, criticised the former prime minister for evading the court hearing.

"Imran Khan had said 'I am not at home, I will appear in court on 7th'. Today again, Imran Khan is flouting the judicial system and the law. This is the elite and mafia of the country who con-

sider themselves above the law," Sherry Rehman said. No criminal had ever got the same facilities and privileges from the court as the "Ladley (dear one) Khan" was getting, she added.

"For which criminal the court waits for a whole day?" she queried. "Our leaders were ordered strictly to appear in court. Why legal and judicial principles are not the same for all?"

"Why is Imran Khan, who demanded a public hearing of the Toshakhana case, refusing to answer questions in the court? All the time, why did those who shouted thieves and thieves run away from answering their thefts?" the minister raised questions.

## Faisal Kundi terms supporting disadvantaged segments as government top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Wednesday said that supporting disadvantaged segments of society has always been a top priority of the present government.

He was speaking during a surprise visit to the Benazir One Window Center in Islamabad.

The SAPM visited the offices of various programs at the One Window Center run under the Benazir Income Support Program.

He also interacted with the beneficiaries of differ-

ent schemes of BISP at the Center and addressed their concerns. Speaking on the occasion, Faisal Kundi directed the staff not to compromise on the operations of the center.

He also saw the process of the dynamic registry which was recently inaugurated by the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

He said that only those deserving persons are eligible to get register in the survey whose poverty score is below 32. Those having a poverty score over 32 cannot be included in the list of deserving.

The SAPM said that although this center is

catering to the needs of a large number of populations and sometimes get overcrowded but the BISP team is managing to facilitate them in an efficient way. He said that the strength of counters at the dynamic registry of BISP was also being enhanced while a 25 percent increase has been announced in the quarterly installment of Benazir Kafalat which would be implemented during the issuance of next installment.

Faisal Kundi reminded the beneficiaries that no one can deduct any fee while receiving the BISP quarterly installment.

## Mansehra road rehabilitation underway: NHA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has taken notice of the poor condition of the Mansehra road, Abbottabad, and has awarded two contracts for its rehabilitation. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, an official of NHA stated that the conditions of the road were not up to the standards set by the NHA however, the authority has taken swift action and has mobilized contractors to begin work on the road.

He said, "The rehabilitation work will be done in accordance with the standards and the road users will soon be able to see a noticeable change on the road once the work is complete."

"The NHA always strives to provide safe and efficient road networks to the citizen, said the official.

"The rehabilitation work on Abbottabad Mansehra road is another step in this direction," he added.

He informed that NHA has also floated tenders for rehabilitation of the Peshawar to Noshera N-5 road.

He stated, "Some patches of the road are in the worst condition which was causing inconvenience to the motorists."

The official further said, "The tender for the rehabilitation work has been floated and the NHA is currently in the process of issuing the bid acceptance. He said that the N-5 road is a vital link between Peshawar and Noshera, and the poor condition of the road has caused significant problems for motorists." He said, "The work is expected to begin soon, and the NHA the road will be restored to its original condition as per the standards set by the authority."

He retreated that NHA has always been committed to providing safe and efficient road networks to the citizens of Pakistan.

## ANF recovers over 168 kg drugs; arrests seven

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations managed to recover over 168 kg narcotics and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in an operation near Islamabad Motorway, ANF recovered 18 kg charras from secret cavities of a vehicle and arrested an accused, resident of Khyber.

In another operation, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to Punjab and recovered 12 kg charras from the possession of two drug smugglers.

In the third operation near G.T. Road Peshawar, ANF seized 200 intoxicated tablets and one kg charras from the possession of an accused, resident of Khyber. In a joint operation on Karachi Super Highway, ANF and Rangers recovered 12 kg charras from the possession of two smugglers. In a raid conducted near Lahore Bund Road Bus Stop, ANF seized Ice drug absorbed in bed sheets.

The spokesman informed that in sixth operation, a raid was conducted in the Gwadar Nagoor area and ANF recovered 90 kg charras buried underground.

Over six kg drugs including three kg opium, 1.2 kg charras, one kg Ice drug and one kg suspicious material were recovered from the secret cavities of a car intercepted on Quetta-Sariab Road.

In the eighth operation, ANF managed to recover 30 kg charras from a remote area in Dalbadin. He informed ANF also managed to net a Proclaimed Offender resident of Sheikhpura wanted in different drug smuggling cases. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he said.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.



### Electricity provided

BADGHIS (Agencies): With the expending of Qala-e-naw electricity satiation 200 family benefited from electricity in Badghis. The provincial head of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat, Mawlawi Khairullah Khairkha said that with the activation of 100K.B.A electricity transformer worth 2 million Afghanis, electricity provided to 200 families. A 16 Megawatts electricity is transported from Turkmenistan to Qala-e-Naw and supply electricity only to the resident of the capital of province.

### Hanafi meets scholars, elders

KABUL (Agencies): The elders of Faryab shared details on the social, security, education, health and the situation of religious madrassas in that province, with deputy prime minister, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi. These religious scholars called the current Islamic system a divine blessing and assured that they will support the Islamic Emirate in any situation, said a statement released by Deputy Prime Minister Office.

## Prime Minister IEA planted sapling



KABUL (Agencies): The Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, planted a sapling today, Tuesday on the occasion of the arrival of the New Year. Accompanied by several other officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, while planting a sapling, he prayed for a green and prosperous Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, wished for Afghanistan peace, grace and blessings, greenery and abundance.

## Hanafi called on investors to invest in Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in a meeting with the special representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for Afghanistan, called on the Islamic countries' investors to invest in the sectors of mines, energy production and transportation in Afghanistan. The Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, met with Tariq Ali Bakheet, the special representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for Afghanistan, according to a statement released by his office. Mr. Bakheet shared details, on the recent meeting of the foreign ministers of the member countries of the organization, in which the continuation of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan was stressed according to him. He said that a technical team to assess the needs for more humanitarian aid in Afghanistan will travel to Afghanistan in the near future. For his part, Mr. Hanafi, welcoming that OIC cooperation, said that Afghanistan need more attention for help in many sectors, including improving the capacity of human forces, health and other sectors. "The security has been maintained throughout the country, general amnesty has been announced, administrative corruption reached to zero and drug trafficking and dealing, which was a great calamity for the whole world, has been eradicated," Hanafi reminded. He said that if the representatives of the Islamic Emirate are invited to the assemblies of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at different levels and consult with them directly, it will have an effective result.

## Girls taking up tailoring due to education ban



JALALABAD CITY (TOLOnews): Following the ban on female education in the country, girls in Nangarhar province have turned to tailoring. They urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools and universities to female students in the new academic year. Maryam, a student at the School of Economics, said that she turned to tailoring to support her family when universities banned female students. "I graduated from university, but now that women are banned from working, that's why I came here to learn sewing," Maryam said. "They should give us an education and open our schools and universities," said Sili, a student. Nazia is the sole breadwinner of a family with 13 members. She asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools and universities for girls in the new academic year. "They should help the widows and reopen schools for girls," Nazia said. The officials of this tailoring center said that 150 students, most of whom are female students, are learning at the center. "The clothes we gave to these women to prepare, and sell, are worth 2 lakhs Afghanis and this program will continue," said Abdul Raziq Hamdard, head of the tailoring center. Meanwhile, the local officials of Nangarhar talk about efforts to reopen schools and universities for girls. "We hope that in the future, the Islamic Emirate will take measures to provide education opportunities for our sisters," said Farhad Ahmad Stankzai, the spokesperson of Nangarhar Education Department. Universities in the country's colder provinces reopened on the 15th of Hoot (Solar calendar) without any female students present. The new academic year will also start in all the country in two weeks, but it is unclear whether or not girls who are above third grade will be permitted to attend classes.

### Fresh \$40m cash arrives Kabul; DAB to auction \$16m today

KABUL (Khaama Press): Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) on Tuesday announced that a \$40 million cash aid package had reached Kabul, and has been transferred to a commercial bank.

Afghanistan's central bank welcomed the aid, as part of the United Nations humanitarian cash aid, and called on the international community for more cooperation across fields.

According to the central bank, this is the 60th aid package that has been dispatched to Afghanistan. Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, the international community's cash aid has reached nearly \$2 billion.

DAB has stated that the government appreciates the international community's support in shipping cash into the country aimed at helping vulnerable families during these difficult times. The central bank is trying its best to strengthen private banking and other sectors respectively.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan Central Bank will auction \$16 million on Wednesday, as part of the continuous efforts to stabilize Afghanis against foreign currencies in the local markets.

The winners of the auction are obliged to liquidate their accounts by the end of the day. As per the announcement, partial settlement of transactions is not allowed and the winners of the auction are obliged to transfer the payable amount to the central bank in cash within a certain time.

Despite the massive criticisms the ruling regime receives from the people of Afghanistan and the international community regarding the strict policies, the de facto authorities have been able to manage the economy and keep the value of the local currency stable. This positive sign highlights that efforts are underway to find solutions to the financial and economic challenges the country is currently faced with.

Compared to the Pakistani Rupee and Iranian Rial, Afghanis have remained quite strong over the past year and a half.

### Historical sites needs rehabilitation

BAGHLAN (Agencies): Local officials at the Information and Culture Department of Baghlan say that historical and cultural sites in some districts of the province are under threat of destruction.

29 historical and cultural sites in Baghlan, which have a history of thousands of years, but due to lack of preservation, they have been damaged to natural disasters and wars, which are now facing the threat of extinction, said official of the department of culture, Mawlawi Ezat Haqqani.

He said that the organizations, including UNESCO, which work in the sector of construction and restoration of historical and cultural sites, if they do not pay attention to the construction of these 29 ancient places, they may be destroyed by natural disasters after a short period of time.

He said while his eyes were welled up: "I wished to become an engineer and serve the people but unprofessional approach of a so called physician in our area caused my disability which destroyed my life and now I am a disabled person and need support from others."

He added deprivation from health facilities in the remote areas caused patients to fall victims. Jan Mohammad asked the government to create health centers in remote areas to prevent such incidents and deaths of some

challenges his profession faced. He said currently there were only two glass melting furnaces that too operated limitedly. Ghulam Sakhi, while sitting close to the glass furnace, talked about the cold market of his products.

He said he lit his furnace once in every 35 or 40 days to melt glass because his sales were very limited. He inherited the profession from his ancestors. "Currently only one glass artisan is working in Herat province," he said.

Some of the older glass producers had died and others switched to other professions due to lack of sales, he said. Ghulam Sakhi could

## Govt meets every condition for recognition: Muttaqi

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the Taliban government meets every condition for recognition, and it is up to the international community to make a decision.

Amir Kham Muttaqi in an interview with BBC said that no single government in the world is not recognized due to the closure of schools or the existing conditions set by the world on the Taliban-run administration.

"We can see dictatorial, Kingdom, Republican, and Emirate governments being recognized by the international community. Is there a single regime in the world that is not recognized based on the conditions the world has put in place on the Taliban regime?" Muttaqi said.

He further added, that out of ten issues having been discussed by the foreign governments, only girls' education has not been resolved, and this is a



great achievement for the current regime.

In response to the question regarding the ban on female students' education, Muttaqi did not comment on whether the group will lift the ban or not.

In his remarks, Muttaqi highlighted that major challenges including drug and security issues have been resolved, there are no

cross-border issues with neighboring countries, and Afghani is the only stable currency in the region.

Furthermore, Muttaqi said that Afghanistan should not be compared to the first world countries, and despite all the odds, the achievements of the past year and a half definitely outweigh the drawbacks.

Contrary to Muttaqi's

remarks, security remains a major challenge for the ruling regime. Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) militants have launched several attacks targeting foreign embassies, diplomatic missions, hotels, and educational institutions, claiming the lives of scores of innocent civilians.

## Niklasson: IEA should prove public's support with forum

KABUL (TOLOnews): The European Union's special envoy for Afghanistan, Tomas Niklasson, said that the "de facto" officials in Afghanistan need to prove they have the people's support through an election or Loya Jirga.

Speaking to TOLOnews, Niklasson said that the recognition of the caretaker Afghan government has been delayed due to the "actions and sometimes inaction of the Taliban."

In response to a question on how could the "Taliban" show they have the support of the people of Afghanistan, Niklasson said: "They can show that through elections, they can perhaps show that through a Loya Jirga, they make a claim that Afghans support us. How do we know? How can they prove that? But what we do know and what we do see is that the human

rights situation is consistently moving with a few exceptions in a very negative development," he said.

But the Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said that the people have an affinity for the current government and that there is no need for election.

"The Islamic government was the ambition of everyone and the Afghans have fought for 40 years for this government. No one should show concern in this regard. We don't need elections or other programs but both we and the nation know that we are satisfied with each other," he said.

"The amount of satisfaction and support of the people from the government is only possible through the expression of people's will, and the holding of an election," said Sayed Jawad Sijadi, a political analyst. Niklasson also said that



the "de facto" Afghan authorities need to engage in talks with the non-Taliban Afghans.

"I think the first thing, as I mentioned, would be to find a way of entering into dialogue with non-Taliban Afghans. Bringing them on board in the government, giving them a voice over the future of the country. Continuing to make progress--and they have

made some progress in the fight against terrorist organizations inside the country-- respect human rights. Those three would be -- three very, very good starting points," he said.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesman said that they have fulfilled all conditions for recognition but some of the organizations are trying to find a way to interfere in Afghanistan.

## Unprofessional physician's medication left Jan Mohammad disabled

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Jan Mohammad, 30, from northern Takhar province says he wanted to become an engineer but due to an unprofessional physician he became a disabled person and had to depend on his family.

During his childhood when Mohammad felt sick he was taken to a hospital for treatment but due to the unprofessional administration of injection by a physician he was paralyzed.

He demanded government to establish clinics in the far-flung areas of the country.

The patients sometimes succumb to death because of the non-availability of health centers in remote areas and because of the lack of other facilities to evacuate patients to the hospitals in other areas.

Hailing from Rustaq district Mohammad told Pajhwok Afghan News: "I felt sick in my childhood, my family was had to take me to a non-profes-

sional physician because there were no professional doctors in the area where we lived to treat me. The physician administered an injection to me and which caused my disability and now I depend on my family."

With disabled leg, exhausted body, tired face, Mohammad searches for occupation on the roads and streets of Talqan City.

He said while his eyes were welled up: "I wished to become an engineer and serve the people but unprofessional approach of a so called physician in our area caused my disability which destroyed my life and now I am a disabled person and need support from others."

He added deprivation from health facilities in the remote areas caused patients to fall victims.

Jan Mohammad asked the government to create health centers in remote areas to prevent such incidents and deaths of some



patients.

He has also expressed his concern about the deteriorated economic situation of the country and said that his aged father was the only bread winner of their seven member family.

He said: "I knocked multiple times on the gates of the humanitarian institutions and on the department of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, but I got no assistance".

He asked the government to pay attention to the people with disabilities.

But Maulvi Ihsanullah, the head of Martyrs and

Disabled Affairs Department said, the inspection of the documents of the disabled and martyrs was still going on in Takhar province, but it was just paused because of the end of fiscal year, it will resume in the new year again.

Attempts are under way that no disabled will be deprived from his/her stipends, he said.

However, the provincial health department officials told Pajhwok that some health centers were established and funded in remote areas of Takhar province.

## Herat's ancient glass industry faces extinction

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): The glass industry in western Herat province, one of the oldest industries, is facing extinction due to stagnant market, glass producers said.

In addition to the glass art, some other ancient professions like coppersmith, shawl weaving, pottery, wool-weaving and some others are also disappearing.

Glass objects' producers in Herat are concerned about their fate and they blame the previous government for negligence to support them.

Ghulam Sakhi, who has been in the profession since 40 years, talked to Pajhwok Afghan News about the

challenges his profession faced. He said currently there were only two glass melting furnaces that too operated limitedly.

Ghulam Sakhi, while sitting close to the glass furnace, talked about the cold market of his products.

He said he lit his furnace once in every 35 or 40 days to melt glass because his sales were very limited.

He inherited the profession from his ancestors. "Currently only one glass artisan is working in Herat province," he said.

Some of the older glass producers had died and others switched to other professions due to lack of sales, he said. Ghulam Sakhi could

produce different items with some miniatures on them such as glasses, bowls, water jugs, saucers, vases, ash trays, pen trays and sweet trays.

Abdul Qader, a resident of Herat city, said the people of Herat would buy and use locally produced glass items in the past, but recently they used foreign products.

He said: "Foreign products are available everywhere and they are cheap, that is why their use is common among residents".

Mir Seddiq Mir, a historical items expert, said the glass industry in Herat dated back to the pre-Islamic era and it flourished at the eras of Timurid

empire and Ghaznavids dynasty and then spread to other areas as well.

The expert believed the imports of low quality glassware had badly affected the Herat glass industry, asking the government to support the industry.

But Zulmai Safa, head of historical monuments guarding unit, said the government of Islamic Emirate had given the responsibility for the Herat glass production industry to the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) which provided fuel for its furnaces.

Safa added currently two glass melting furnaces operated in Herat, one of them was run privately and

the second functioned under the Directorate of Information and Culture.

"The Information and Culture Directorate supports this traditional and historical industry and solves its problems", Safa said.

The glass producers say they are getting some sort of support from the incumbent government and hope their products will be sold because they toil enough.

It is worth mentioning that majority of Herat glassware customers are foreign tourists. The artisans ask the government to showcase their products in exhibitions in Kabul and other provinces.



# Govt in no hurry to arrest Imran, says Khawaja Asif

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday said the federal government was in no hurry to arrest Imran Khan rather it was dealing with restraint.

Addressing a news conference here, the Defence Minister said the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan was desperately running here and there. Khawaja Asif said he (Imran Khan) was exposed before his supporters and the common man has come to know that he is a coward.

Imran Khan, he said, had a chicken's heart, and courage cannot be bought with money. He suggested that Khan should learn to have some heart from Mian Nawaz Sharif. The Minister said for the past few days Imran Khan had staged a drama. "No criminal in the past 75 years of history of the country had denied appearing before the courts. Especially political leaders and workers who have rendered huge sacrifices for the protection and safeguarding of their ideology and politics," he added.

Khawaja Asif underlined that the biggest of the sacrifices was that of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto which was acknowledged by the judiciary. Justice Naseem Hassan Shah accepted Bhutto's judicial murder, he added. The trend of respect for the courts and adoption of legal and constitutional ways out for justice was set by Mian Nawaz Sharif, he said, adding, "No political leader and even a common citizen had defied the courts ever."

The Minister mentioned that Nawaz Sharif faced many court hearings along with his daughter and also got detained and disqualified. But, he said Imran Khan was defying the courts and provoking his workers and followers to violently resist the law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

Khawaja Asif said the government was handling this issue with restraint. The advocate of Imran Khan did not have legal documents prepared to appear before the courts, he added. "This is not the behavior of politicians and political workers but of an opportunist. He started his politics after receiving the political patronage of

General Musharraf. From Musharraf to Bajwa his politics is not without the support of the establishment," he added.

"He used to praise General Bajwa during his tenure and now criticises him," he alleged, adding, "What kind of people and breed they are? A politician should feel proud over his/her detention for his ideas and go to jail with pride for being victimized for his ideology," the Defence Minister said. Instead, he said they (PTI Leadership) started weeping on TV and some of them in courts. He has no regard for his own integrity, adding, "He is using a fake plaster, multiple fractures heal in this time period."

Imran Khan's political status was exposed after his dramas. "People have trust in Shaukat Khanam Memorial Hospital and he has not abstained from misappropriating its funds for using donations to fund PTI," he added. "He asks people to court arrests and gets bail himself. Leaders give courage to their followers by setting an example. Mian Nawaz Sharif, his family members, brother and nephews faced detentions. We have allegations and fight them with honor."

Responding to media queries, he said Toshakhana Committee was formed and its new rules and regulations were under way as no one would be allowed to keep those gifts except perishable items. "You can keep chocolates if someone gives you." The federal government would keep those gifts as state property and would hold a periodical auction of those gifts whereas that amount would be deposited in the national treasury or donated to recognized welfare institutions, he said.

Earlier, the Defence Minister condemned the terrorist attack in Balochistan and said this trend started over the past few months which was alarming and regrettable. He added that all the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) were fighting against terrorism as Pakistan Army, FC and others were rendering huge sacrifices. "We went to Afghanistan and got a positive response in this regard. A delegation is also expected from Afghanistan and there will be some development on this issue to stop its soil use for terrorism," he said.

## Qureshi, Fawad booked for inciting speeches

LAHORE (INP): Police have registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Fawad Chaudhry for making inciting speeches and accusing state institutions of hatching a plot to assassinate former prime minister Imran Khan, says in media reports.

The first information report (FIR) was registered on the complaint of Sub-inspector Waseem in the Race Course Police Station in the Punjab capital. Both PTI stalwarts, according to the FIR, held a press conference at Zaman Park in Lahore where they allegedly provoked public for violence. It said the presser caused traffic jam on the main canal road, adding that Mr Chaudhry attempted to spread hate among people for the state institutions.

FIR said the PTI leader also alleged the state institutions of hatching an assassination plot against Imran Khan. On March 5, a team of the capital police reached the Zaman Park, the residence of Imran Khan in the Lahore, after a district and sessions court of Islamabad issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for him in the Toshakhana case.

Later, Fawad Chaudhry took to social media and warned that any attempt to arrest the PTI chief would further deteriorate the situation. He also alleged that the government was pressing Mr Khan to appear before the court so they could execute a plan to kill him. He also urged people to start preparations for protests across the country in case the PTI chief is arrested. Meanwhile, Mr Qureshi told media that there were security threats to the PTI chairman but he appeared before the courts. He said the party would pursue the legal process in the case.

## ECP to approach PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to approach Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for assistance in holding elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as relevant ministries paid no heed to its requests.

According to media reports, the electoral body would ask the premier to release funds and take steps for provision of security in both provinces. The decision to write a letter to the prime minister was taken over non-cooperation from the Ministry of Interior and Finance.

The letter will be sent in light of the Supreme Court's ruling stating that elections in the both provinces must be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies. The PTI had dissolved the Punjab and KP assemblies in January, seeking fresh elections. Last week, President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday gave assent to April 30 date to conduct the all-important elections in Punjab. The president's announcement came minutes after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) proposed dates for holding general elections in Punjab following a landmark verdict of the Supreme Court.

In a letter to President Arif Alvi earlier, the electoral body recommended a day between April 30 and May 7 for elections in the province where assembly was dissolved in January last. The letter was dispatched after Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired a meeting of the ECP officials.

## Imran to lead rally today

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Musarrat Jamshed Cheema on Tuesday said the PTI would incept an election rally in the leadership of PTI chief Imran Khan from his residence at Zaman Park to Data Darbar today Wednesday at 1pm.

Taking to Twitter, she wrote that the whole nation was aware of "Save Judiciary, save Pakistan". "The judiciary attempted to save the country from anarchy and guard the Constitution, which brought them under fire", she added. In another tweet, she wrote, "Lahore has become a stronghold of the PTI and we shall prove it.



KARACHI: An illuminated view of a Masjid decorated with colourful lights in connection with Shab-e-Barat.

# Gallup survey finds Imran most popular leader

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): PTI Chairman Imran Khan is "positively rated" among 61 per cent of Pakistanis, whereas only 36 per cent have a "good opinion" about PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, according to a survey titled Public Pulse Report published by Gallup Pakistan on Monday.

The survey was conducted with around 2,000 respondents covering all four provinces, and urban and rural areas. It said that the error margin for such a survey was around 3-4pc at 95pc confidence level. According to the report, Imran received a positive rating from 61pc of the population while 37pc rated him negatively.

Further, 29pc from Punjab, 28pc from Sindh and 14pc from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa gave him a positive rating — the highest amongst the provinces for any politician. On the other hand, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was rated negatively by 65pc of Pakistanis while 32pc gave him a positive rating. However, people from Punjab rated him more positively as compared to other provinces. The data showed that almost three in five (59pc) gave his sibling Nawaz a negative rating while 36pc gave him a positive rating. Moreover, respondents from KP rated the PML-N supremo more negatively than people from other provinces.

As for Foreign Minister Bilawal, 36pc rated the PPP chairman positively while 57pc gave him a negative rating. Of all the provinces, he got most positive ratings from Sindh. PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz, however, was rated negatively by 61pc while 34pc gave her a positive rating. "People from Punjab see her in a positive light as compared to other provinces," the survey showed.

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman received a negative rating by 57pc while only 31pc gave him a positive rating. He received the least negative ratings from citizens from KP. Former president Asif Ali Zardari was rated negatively by 67pc while 27pc rated him positively. "Since 2022, Zardari has gained a more favorable opinion amongst the Public Pulse Report population. However, people from Punjab gave him the most negative ratings, followed by KP and then Sindh," the survey said.

The survey also noted that majority of the respondents, 62pc, blamed the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)/PML-N for the current economic crisis while only 38pc blame the previous PTI government. "It does not come as a surprise that an overwhelming majority of those who put the blame on PDM/PML-N had voting intentions for PTI and vice versa," the survey said. As far as

unemployment was concerned, 21pc reported that someone in their household has lost their job in the last six months.

The survey also said that 53pc of Pakistanis would leave their current party and vote for a new party if the latter had "honest political members and technocrats". "The highest proportion of people who said they would leave their current party and vote for the new, honest party were people aged 50 and above. Moreover, 8pc more males than females favored voting for the new party with honest political members," the survey said. "Surprisingly, among political party workers highest percentage of voters ready to leave their party for a new one were found in PTI where the figure was 52pc," it added.

It added that 61pc of the respondents were in favour of Nawaz's immediate return to Pakistan. The highest proportion of people in favor of the ex-premier's return were from KP (67pc), followed by Punjab (64pc). Regarding the PTI chief's decision to dissolve the Punjab and KP assemblies, 57pc supported the decision. "Of those who said that they support his decision, majority (83pc) intend to vote for PTI, while only 24pc of PML-N supporters think that Imran Khan's decision to dissolve the assemblies and hold new elections is right," the survey said.

## By-polls status quo extended PHC orders NA Speaker, ECP to submit reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar sustained status quo writ against by-polls scheduled on 16th and 19th March while ordered Speaker National Assembly and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit reply within week, on Tuesday.

PHC has turndown Speaker National Assembly request regarding provision of 15 days for submission of reply while Chief Justice Qaiser Rashid observed that Speaker should engage another lawyer because court cannot leave the instant petition unheard due to counsel foreign trip.

The court further observed that PHC will decide the petition on available record if Speaker National Assembly in submission of reply in this regard. During hearing Barrister Gohar for Sher Ali Arbab and Imran Khattak while Section Officer on behalf of Speaker National Assembly appeared before court. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Barrister Gohar Khan argued that Speaker National Assembly has accepted resignation without approval while party demanded to accept 123 resign as a whole but this demand didn't fulfill by Speaker.

The counsel added that PTI has decided to return to National Assembly following new developments on 14th January and requested for postponement of by-elections. He argued that Islamabad and Lahore High Courts had already granted status-quo in this regard. Barrister Gohar added

that one member of PTI approached Islamabad High Court while his notification was suspended but Speaker didn't allow him to participate in the National Assembly session. Section Officer requested PHC for provision of further time up to 15 days for submission of reply because Speaker's lawyer is aboard while Chief Justice remarked that court should provide seven days for comments and observed that Speaker may engage another counsel in the case.

The divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered Speaker National Assembly and ECP to submit comments within seven days otherwise court will decide the petition on available record while adjourned further hearing till 15th March.

## Legislators urge pro-women electoral reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The women legislators from the National and Sindh Assemblies have called for reforms in the legal and regulatory framework governing elections to fully realize the constitutional guarantees of women's full participation in all aspects of national life, including politics.

In a rare show of cross-party unanimity, legislators representing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMAP) and Tehreek-e-Labbai Pakistan (TLP) agreed on a range of legal and regulatory measures required to address the challenges facing women's electoral contestation and support their graduation from the reserved seats to general seats following the spirit of reservation, said a press release.

During a training workshop on the electoral framework, the women legislators urged the government, political parties, and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to prioritize women-specific amendments in the Elections Act, 2017, the Election Rules, 2017, and the electoral codes of conduct to enhance the quality and inclusiveness in the upcoming general elections.

The workshop was organized by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA) under its Women Leadership Development Program, which sought to support reserved-seat women legislators to contest general seats. As many as 11 MNAs including Ghazala Saifi, Munawwara Bibi Baloch, Nafeesa Inayatullah, Nusrat Wahid, Saira Bano, Shaheen Saifullah, Shahnaz Saleem, Shahida Akhtar Ali, Syma Nadeem, Uzma Riaz, Zill-e-Huma and 12 Sindh MPAs including Adeeba Hassan, Ghazala Sial, Heer Soho, Hina Dastagir, Kalsoom Akhtar, Naseem Rajpar, Shahana Ashar, Rabia Khatoon, Seema Zia, Sarwat Fatima, Shazia Umar, and Tanzila Umi Habiba participated in the workshops.

# Maryam rails against ex-CJ for ‘facilitating’ Imran

SHEIKHPURA (Agencies): PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday lambasted former chief justice Saqib Nisar for what she said was facilitating PTI Chairman Imran Khan to the prime minister's seat.

Addressing a rally in Sheikhupura, the PML-N chief organiser recalled how the ex-CJP took away the certificate of "sadiq and ameen" from the PTI chairman. She was referring to Nisar's statement from a day ago when he said that the Supreme Court had not declared Imran Khan "sadiq and ameen" (truthful and honest) unreservedly and in all aspects of his conduct in its 2017 verdict in favour of the PTI chief.

Maryam said that Nisar — whom she labelled a "liar" — had "put the fate of the nation in the hands of a narcotic user". "The person who is not in his senses was installed in the PM's office," Maryam said, terming Imran as the "biggest coward in the history of Pakistan".

The PML-N leader accused Imran of hiding at his home for the past six months on "the pretext of being unable to move because of the plaster on his leg". "If I was a PTI follower, I would have died of shame," she said, adding that Imran's lawyers informed the court that their client cannot appear because he has become "handicapped".

Maryam advised the PTI

chief to "borrow some courage" from her father Nawaz Sharif. "The one who made fun of back pain, platelets and cancer is now listing medical conditions that I am shameful of even mentioning". She asked the Sheikhupura crowd if they had ever seen Nawaz hide behind any illness.

The PML-N leader said Imran was "stuck in a conundrum and scared" because the cases against him were legitimate. "If he appears he will get caught and even if he doesn't appear, he will get caught." Maryam accused Imran of hiding his offshore company, the Toshakhana gifts and the foreign funding accounts. "He hid Rs55 billion not just from the public but also his cabinet".

# Students urged to enhance intellectual abilities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday asked the students to enhance their intellectual abilities and play their role in the development of the country. He said that it was essential to improve intellectual resources as well as IT knowledge and skills to help address the socio-economic challenges being faced by the country.

The president expressed these views while talking to the students and staff of the Cadet College, Jaffarabad, Balochistan, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Highlighting the importance of education, the President stated that nations had achieved progress by focusing on science and education.

He regretted that 22 million children were out of school whereas the countries in the region had achieved almost 100 per cent primary enrolment rate, adding that tangible and immediate steps needed to be taken to bring these children into schools. He also underlined the need to equip the youth with skills and education to improve the economic health of the country.

The president said that Pakistan had great potential in terms of both its natural and human resources that needed to be fully harnessed for the uplift of the country. He said that Balochistan was rich in natural resources and steps were being taken to bring the province at par with other provinces. He emphas-

sized the need for constructing dams and water storage to mitigate the impacts of floods and natural calamities.

The president also called upon the college management to train students in emerging technologies like the Internet of Things, Robotics, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence, which had vast applications in every sphere of life. He urged the students to focus on their studies and contribute towards the development of Pakistan. The president was informed that Cadet College Jaffarabad was established on 5th March 2009. The college runs classes from 7th till 12th class. Eight entries of 12 grade (around 570) have been passed out from college so far.

# LHC directs Aurat March organisers, DC to decide venue

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) directed on Tuesday the Aurat March organisers and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider to finalise a location for the march by 2pm.

The development came during the hearing of a plea filed by a citizen seeking permission to organise the Aurat March a women's rights movement in the country in Lahore on March 8. The district administration of Lahore, last week, denied the march organisers permission to hold a public rally. The local authorities were requested to grant permis-

sion for the event, however, the city's DC turned down the requests citing threat alerts from security agencies as the reason. During the hearing on Tuesday the court ordered both parties to hold consultations to decide on a venue.

The Lahore deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police (SP) Civil Lines appeared in the court. Justice Anwaar Hussain heard the petition and said that these matters are brought to the court every single time. The DC said that this time they were requested to grant permission to hold the march at Nasir Bagh. "PSL is also

taking place and hence, the teams also travel," she added. "Why are public gatherings taking place then?" questioned Justice Hussain. The court remarked that the police become active when a political leader makes an appearance. DC Haider said that a clash took place last year during Aurat March.

"You cannot stop them from organising Aurat March," remarked the LHC. The public prosecutor suggested that the march could be held outside Press Club. The court remarked that the administration is directed to maintain the law and order situation in the city.