



Sanjrani condemns attack on police checkpost in Lakki Marvat

Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Sunday strongly condemned the attack on a police checkpost in Shehbaz Khel area of Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a statement, the chairman said the entire nation is united against terrorism and nefarious designs of anti-state elements to impede ongoing progress will never succeed. (Report on Page 8)



Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui shows outrage over Bilawal's speech

Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui expressed outrage over the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) attitude regarding the delimitations of Sindh local government (LG) polls. An emergency meeting of the MQM-P Rabita Committee meeting was chaired by Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in which the convener expressed outrage over the PPP's stance over the delimitation of Sindh LG polls.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Children's interest

KARACHI: Youngsters are enjoying with Crocodile in Dalfa cattle show at Expo Center in Provincial Capital.

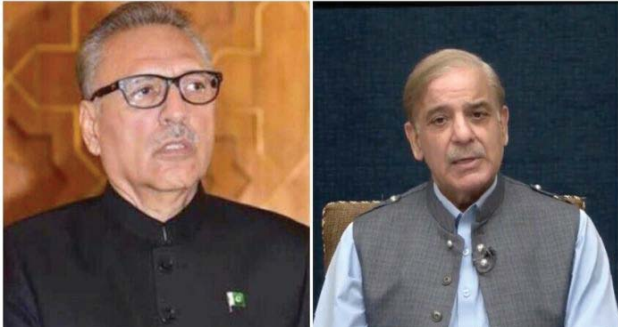


Photo: Online

President, PM grieved over loss of security personnel in Bannu operation

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed their grief over the shahadat of security personnel in Bannu operation. The president and the prime minister expressed their condolences and prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul.



They also paid tribute to shaheed sepoy Muhammad Waseem for sacrificing his life for the motherland.

The prime minister said that the sacrifices of the personnel of the armed forces for the protection of the motherland were unforgettable.

The president and the prime minister also prayed for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

President returns ICT Local Government (Amendment) Bill unsigned

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has returned the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2022 unsigned in terms of clause (1) (b) of Article 75 of the Constitution.

The Bill was returned by observing that it would further delay the Local Government elections. "Actions of the Federal Government taken in hurry on resulted in delaying election process twice, which was anathema to democracy," President Secretariat Press Wing in a press release on Sunday quoted the president as saying.

It was further stated, "elections could not be held in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) due to the following malafide actions of Federal Government :-

i) After completion of delimitation of 50 Union Councils, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced elections of Local Government in ICT on 31st July 2022. Despite announcement of polling date, Federal Government increased number of Union Councils from 50 to 101, resulting into postponement of elections.

ii) After demarcation of 101 Union Councils, ECP decided to hold elections in ICT on 31st December 2022. Section 2 of current Bill provides for 125 Union Councils in the ICT. Therefore, elections scheduled for 31st December 2022 have been again postponed.

iii) As per Section 3 of current Bill, mode of elections of Mayor and Deputy Mayor has been changed after announcement of schedule of elections."

Technocrats can only work as advisers, says Ahsan

Correspondent

SHAKARGARH: Senior Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz leader Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday technocratic government cannot be successful and technocrats can only provide support to the government through their expertise.

Talking to media, he said Pervez Musharraf also ruled the country for nine years with the help of experts and some people again were spreading rumors of the same styled government.

He added political government was required for economic reforms and long-term policies were needed to steer the country out of crisis.

Pakistan, India swap annual N-installations, facilities lists

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have officially swapped annual lists of their nuclear installations and facilities under the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.

"Pursuant to the Agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in

Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today. Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Sunday.

The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between

Pakistan and India was signed on 31st December 1988 and ratified on 27th January 1991.

The Agreement, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year.

The practice of exchanging the lists had been continuing since 1st January 1992, it was further added.

FM Bilawal says making efforts to further broaden ties with friendly countries

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday said that the coalition government was making efforts to broaden Pakistan's ties with the friendly countries, besides forging beneficial relations with other countries for the benefits of the people of Pakistan.

In a video message on the advent of new year, the foreign minister said that the government had focused to enhance its relationship with the old friends and forge new ties with others.

He said "Whenever any allegations were levelled against Pakistan, they befittingly responded to them. In the UN, the Indian side was made to face the reality."

The foreign minister said they knew how to represent Pakistan and defend it.

The prime minister had undertaken



different foreign visits to increase country's outreach in the world, he said, adding Pakistan chaired the G77 and succeeded in the inclusion of 'loss and damage' fund in the COP 27 agenda for the developing countries. It was not only a big achievement for Pakistan, but also for the developing world and those championing for the cause of climate.

Highlighting the efforts of the ministry of foreign affairs, the foreign minister said

due to their efforts, Pakistan successfully met the action plans of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) ahead of time and had been the only country to be removed from its grey list.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said in the year 2023, they aimed to improve bilateral and multilateral ties at all regional and global fora and organizations and would pursue the agenda of economic diplomacy.

About the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) for Pakistan, he said they would seek its renewal through diplomatic channels as it had seen an increase of Pakistan's export to the EU countries by 80 percent while those of EU countries to Pakistan by 60 percent.

Felicitating the nation on the new year, he said the new year would be a harbinger of success for the foreign office and the foreign policy.

PM discusses Punjab's political imbroglio with Zardari



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and co-chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari held a telephonic conversation on Sunday.

Sources privy to the development reveal both bigwigs talked over the current political predicament of Punjab while the issue of the expected vote of confidence of chief minister Pervaiz Elahi was also discussed.

Earlier, members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs) Chaudhary Ashraf Ali Ansari and Malik Ghulam Qasim Hunjra on Sunday separate-

ly called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The ongoing political crisis in Punjab has led to parties gathering their workers and in this regard both MPAs came to the Prime Minister's office.

There is an expected vote of confidence to be taken by the Punjab chief minister and the PML-N leader is meeting its party members to give the tough time to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Muslim League (Quadi).

"During the meetings, the political situation in Punjab province was discussed," PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Imran blames establishment for interfering in Elahi's vote of confidence

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan claimed on Sunday that the establishment asked three lawmakers from his party to remain neutral in the matter of Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi's vote of confidence.

Speaking to journalists, Mr Khan claimed that General Bajwa hired Hussain Haqqani in America for lobbying, and that Donald Lu was taught a lesson from Pakistan. He further said that Hussain Haqqani continued to campaign against him and promote General Bajwa. Mr Khan said that the Trump administration gave him a historic welcome during his visit to the United States as Prime Minister.

Speaking on his last meeting with Qamar Javed Bajwa, Mr. Khan said, "General (Retd) Bajwa called me a playboy, and in reply I said to him that yes, I had been a playboy. Qamar was stabbing us in the back and also showing sympathy."

Mr Khan claimed the setup of General (Retd) Bajwa was still working in the establishment. He also claimed that the MQM's various factions were coming together in Karachi, and that the BAP was joining the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Mr Khan slammed Najam Sethi, saying he didn't even know the basics of cricket, and that the PCB's constitution was changed to accommodate Sethi's appointment. On the other hand, PTI Chairman and former prime minister Imran



Khan has said he is hoped the party will win 2023 elections despite disappointing [political] situation of the country.

"The country reign was handed over to criminals after dethroning the best performing government [of the PTI] through a conspiracy," he said in a tweet on the eve of the New Year.

"Year 2022: it was the best of times and it was the worst of times. A gov't with one of the best econ performances was removed through a conspiracy triggered by supreme self-interest and Pakistan was handed over to a bunch of criminals. They ran economy to the ground and gave themselves NRO-2," Khan said in the tweet.

The PTI stalwart said a massive public support helped the PTI win 75 per cent of by-elections and that the party established itself as a truly national party.

"Despite the gloom right now, especially of a possible default, I have faith in Almighty Allah and confidence in our people that without any doubt in 2023 through elections the PTI will form strong government and bring about substantive structural reforms to get Pakistan out of the crisis the imported government and its backers have plunged the country into."

Marriyum slams Imran's senseless tweet on occasion of new year

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday castigated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan for his "senseless tweet" on the occasion of new year.

Using her Twitter handle, she said that Imran Khan was a strange person having no feelings for happy occasions like Eid, Shab Raat or new year.

She said that Imran had no prayers or good wishes for any occasion.

"Imprisoned in his own self,"

she said he had no forward thinking, no thought for anyone's grief and no feeling for anyone's happiness.

She said that a person like Imran who did not know how to share others' happiness and sorrow, how would he think about the betterment of 22 million people.

Welfare of overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a meeting with UK/USA Humanitarian Delegation for Pakistan and Khubaib Foundation at Parliament House on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Welfare of overseas Pakistanis top priority of incumbent government: NA Speaker

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that overseas Pakistanis have always proved themselves as an asset to Pakistan and their welfare is the top priority of the incumbent government.

Talking to UK/USA based Humanitarian group here he said the welfare of expatriate Pakistanis was a priority of the government.

Appreciating the role of overseas Pakistanis, he said these are overseas Pakistanis who always come forward to support Pakistan in difficult times.

Addressing the delegation, Raja Pervez Ashraf said that Pakistan is destined for progress and development as our nation is determined and

adamant to rise above the present challenges.

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a group photo with UK/USA Humanitarian Delegation for Pakistan Led by Lord Qurban Hussain Member of House of Lords at Parliament House

He said it is time to adopt policies of harmony, reconciliation and dialogue as outlined by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

The speaker also expressed his unwavering confidence on the capabilities of Pakistani Armed forces to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country.

He said that the masses are facing challenges of terrorism, extremism and inflation and being public representatives the onus of responsibility

falls on politicians to lead this nation out of these quagmires.

The Speaker said there is need to rise above politics and by adopting tolerance, love, and dialogue as key principles in present politics in Pakistan.

He said that the nation would rise above all these challenges by adopting self-respect, determination, consistency and tolerance for all as key principles in life and society.

Overseas Pakistanis have also witnessed that Pakistan have always come out victorious from these challenges, he said adding that nations learn from their past and rise above challenges by adopting the principles of unity.

While talking about parliamentary performance, he said it was the first time in the history of Pakistan that

the doors of parliament were opened for all, especially for downtrodden and marginalized segments of the population like women, children, youth and transgender.

He said that the parliament has been at the forefront to fight the case of climate justice for Pakistan and it remained active to legislate for the common people. The Speaker also resolved that the incumbent parliament would continue to focus on resolving present challenges.

Federal Minister for overseas Pakistani Sajid Hussain Turi was also present in the meeting. He said that addressing the challenges of overseas Pakistanis has been his chief focus as special courts would be established in the coming month to decide about property issues of overseas Pakistani.

Chairman NADRA also informed the delegation regarding National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) initiatives to facilitate Pakistani immigrants like online issuance of attorney.

Members of UK/USA Humanitarian Delegation for Pakistan led by Lord Qurban Hussain Member of House of Lords appreciated speaker's initiatives for record legislation this year. They also expressed their solidarity with the flood affected people.

They also said that they visited Pakistan to support the flood affected people. They also said that Khubaib Foundation is providing immaculate services to orphans and destitute. They expressed their resolve that they would continue to support Pakistan till their last breath.

PM to provide clean drinking water to Karachi soon: Amir Muqam



City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political, Public Affairs & National Heritage and Culture Division, Engineer Amir Muqam Sunday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would provide clean drinking water to the residents of the metropolitan city Karachi soon.

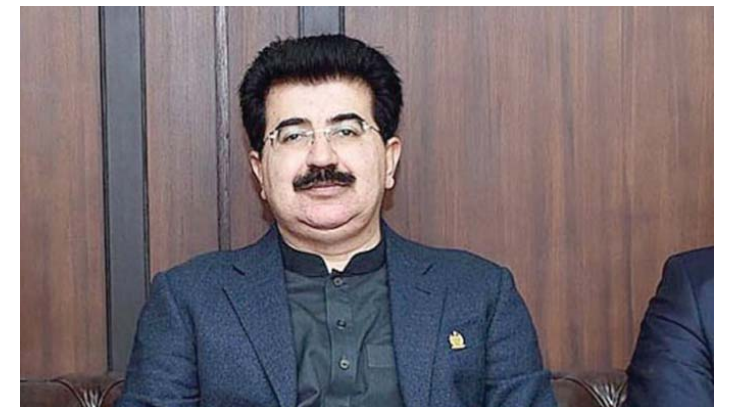
"I am well aware of the problems being faced by the people of Karachi," he said while addressing a grand meeting in Karachi Kemari through

a video link.

He also appealed to the people of Karachi to abandon Imran Khan for being a liar, whose four-year rule has brought nothing but the destruction of the country's image internationally and his politics based on mere lies such as the provision of two crore jobs and five million houses.

He said starting with the foreign funding case, the watch theft and the dissolution of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab assemblies were all lies.

Sanjrani condemns attack on police checkpoint in Lakki Marvat



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Sunday strongly condemned the attack on a police checkpoint in Shehbaz Khel area of Lakki Marvat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement, the chairman said the entire nation is united against terrorism and nefarious designs of anti-state elements to impede ongoing progress will never succeed.

Expressing his heartfelt sorrow and regrets over the loss of precious life in the attack, the chairman

sympathized with the bereaved family of the martyred constable Tahseen, adding that Pakistan is determined to fight terrorism to ensure peace and tranquility in the region.

The sacrifices of the security forces for sustainable peace in the region will not go in vain, he said adding that such cowardly acts by inimical elements cannot sabotage the hard-earned peace and our determination to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

Senate Deputy Chairman Mirza Muhammad Afridi also strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the police check-post in Lakki Marvat

Indian troops martyred 214 Kashmiris in 2022

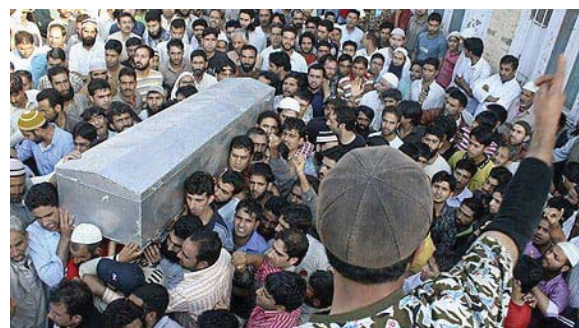
Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred 214 innocent Kashmiris, including one woman and five young boys, during the year 2022 in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to a report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, today, 57 of the martyrs were killed in fake encounters and custody. The jailed APHC leader, Altaf Ahmed Shah also died during his continued illegal detention in the infamous Indian Tihar Jail. The authorities did not allow people to offer his funeral prayers.

The troops also killed two Hindu labourers in a fake encounter in Rajouri town in the year.

The report said, the killings by the troops, paramilitary and police personnel rendered 13 women widowed and 35 children orphaned



while 10 women were molested, abused or disgraced by the men in uniform during the year. It said that Indian forces destroyed 44 residential houses and structures.

The report pointed out at least 134 persons were injured due to the use of brute force on protesters while 1,350 people, including Hurriyat activists, human rights activist, Muhammad Ahsan Untoo, APHC leader, Molvi Bashir Ahmed, Mush-taq-ul-Islam, Dr Hameed Fayaz, Muhammad Shareef Sartaj, Maulana Mushtaq Veeri, Maulana Abdul Rahid

Dawoodi, Maulana Abdul Majid Dar, Mualana Abdull Waheed Kishitwari, students, young boys and women were arrested during house raids and crackdown operations by Indian troops and police personnel in the territory. Many of those were arrested under black laws, Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The Indian authorities did not allow people to offer Friday prayers 14 times at the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar besides disallowing other religious func-

tions like Muharram processions, Shab-e-Baraat, Shabe Qadr and Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) gatherings in the occupied territory.

The report said that resistance leaders, including APHC Chairman Masarrat Aalam Butt, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Aasiya Andrabi, Naheeda Nasreen, Fehmeeda Sofi, Ayaz Muhammad Akbar, Peer Saifullah, Raja Merajuddin Kalwal, Shahid-ul-Islam, Farooq Ahmed Dar, Syed Shahid Yousuf, Syed Shakeel Yousuf and human rights defender Khurram Parvaiz continue to remain in detention in Delhi's Tihar Jail in fake cases.

The report maintained that over 4,000 of people, including Muhammad Yousuf Mir, Muhammad Yousuf Falahi, Muhammad Rafiq Ganai, Dr Muhammad Qasim Fakhtoo, Ghulam Qadir Butt, Dr Shafi Shariyate, Showkat Hakeem, Assadullah Parrey, Merajuddin Nanda, Hayat Ahmad

Butt, Feroz Ahmad Dar, Noor Muhammad Fayaz, Abdul Samad Inqilabi, journalists Asif Sultan and Fahad Shah, remained in different jails of IIOJK and India under the black laws, Public Safety Act (PSA) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The report said that in the month of December 2022 alone, the Indian troops martyred seven Kashmiris. At least 43 youth were arrested in the month, it said, adding that the Indian forces' personnel destroyed a residential house during the period.

The report pointed out that since 5th August 2019, when Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government revoked the special status of IIOJK, Indian troops, paramilitary and police personnel have martyred 730 Kashmiris till date.

It added that 96,163 Kashmiris have fallen to the Indian bullets during the last 34 years in the occupied territory.

Five women die in car-tractor collision

Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Five women were killed while several others sustained injuries when their car collided with a tractor-trolley head-on near Tando Muhammad Khan city of Sindh province, ARY News reported on Sunday.

According to details, the incident took place on Buli Shah Karim Road near Tando Muhammad Khan city, where a car collided with tractor-trolley head-on, resulting in casualties.

Rescue sources told ARY News that five women were died on the spot in car-tractor collision. Sources added that four women belonged to the same family. All the deceased belongs to Hyderabad's Nara Jail Colony.

Balochistan Home Minister to head missing persons commission

Spokesman Report

QUETTA: Balochistan's Home Minister Ziaullah Langau on Sunday has been appointed as the chairman of the high-powered commission to recover and investigate the cases of missing persons.

The home ministry formed a high-powered missing persons commission following the orders of the Balochistan High Court (BHC) under the Balochistan Tribunal Inquiry Commission 196 of Section 3.

The statement issued by the court stated the commission is responsible to support the families of missing persons besides devising a legal procedure for their recovery.

It added that the commission will provide legal assistance to the families of the missing persons who are not involved in any act of terrorism.



It is pertinent to mention here the notification of the commission was issued after the approval of the cabinet.

Earlier, the Balochistan home ministry formed a parliamentary commission on missing persons on the orders of the Balochistan High Court (BHC).

The interior minister of Balochistan Mir Ziaullah Langau will be the chairman of

the parliamentary commission. Whereas, the member of assembly Asad Ullah Baloch, Zahid Raiki, Malik Naseer Shahwani, and Zamrak Achakzai will be members of the commission.

The additional chief secretary will be the secretary of the commission.

The commission will probe the missing persons' case and it will also look into the activities

of these missing persons against the state, the notification stated.

The missing person commission received a total number of 9,133 complaints from the residents of Balochistan.

During the last month of November 101 more cases were received by the Missing Person Commission and the total number of cases reached 9,133.

The report submitted with the SC further said that the commission overall solved 5,574 cases and 3,743 missing persons have been recovered so far including 81 in the month of November. Overall, 241 bodies of the persons declared missing were received, while 974 people are in the custody and 616 people, who have been declared missing, are currently jailed.

Furthermore, the SC was informed that as of November 30, overall 2,207 cases of missing persons are pending.

Devcom-Pakistan Webinar

Pakistan's firm geopolitical repositioning crucial by next year: Speakers

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a webinar opined that Pakistan needs to revisit its geopolitical strategic and economic framework in the context of the changing landscape of the world, especially of the Asia-Pacific region. The country is being surrounded by many severe security and economic challenges, and remains undecided to which side it shall be. Meanwhile, political instability is playing an enemy within economic growth, foreign investment and dynamic foreign policy.

They said, Pakistan will be marking ten years of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in 2023, which is pivotal to our economic security, and 25 years since Pakistan went nuclear in 1998, which has strongly protected our national security.

The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday, the new year eve. The subject of the webinar was "Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning in 2023". The key speakers included chairman Senate Standing Committee of Defense Production Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, former speaker Balochistan assembly Rahila Durrani, Senior Research fellow at East-East Institute (London) Dr. Najam Abbas, development expert Tahir Shamshad, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and a well-known



geopolitical analyst Munir Ahmed, and an Indian journalist Ayan Mitra (Bengal).

Senator Mushahid Hussain mentioned three key global changes that Pakistan will be affected by. The present era is marked by profound changes in the global and regional order, which has strategic implications for Pakistan. There's the retrenchment of US power in the Muslim World, the resurgence of Asia led by China and the rise of Hindutva, bidding goodbye to Nehruvian secularism, in neighboring India.

Senator Mushahid Hussain said, the other two elements include the return to two global camps; the US-NATO versus China-Russia while the Ukraine War has led to a North-South divide. President Xi Jinping's historic visit to Saudi Arabia has further added to

the divide. Pakistan now has strategic space and more autonomy to pursue a realistic foreign policy with clarity on its relations and goals.

Pakistan must pursue its role as a hub of regional connectivity, while strengthening ties with its core partners like China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. It shall maintain economic and cultural outreach to the West, especially to the USA and Europe, and avoid repeating the old mistakes it did in Afghanistan. Most importantly, Pakistan needs a 'political ceasefire' at home on key issues like economy, extremism, education, so that people get a respite from this unending polarization and continuing quest for power.

Munir Ahmed said with the rise of China and the resurgence of Russia the world has moved into a new era of great power competition. China is

the primary rival to the US supremacy and in Asia the two superpowers are contenders for hegemony in the same geographical space. The US is vying to maintain its decades-old supremacy in the region while China has built up partnerships and projected its influence by using the huge resources at its disposal. The Ukraine and increasing Indian influence at Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and G-20 is worrisome for internally divided and economically weaker Pakistan. In the fast reshaping geopolitical landscape, Pakistan has to gain back its decades old significant position and international trust deficit.

Rahila Durrani said Balochistan's strategic role is not being understood, and the indigenous voices remain out of the mainstream agenda. The federal doesn't show the required seriousness on Balochistan problems. I feel that we do not get the time required to resolve them.

Dr. Najam Abbas said, Predictions made for 2023 by major consultancy firms point to the world economy heading towards recession. This is especially troubling when the world has faced nearly two years of a pandemic which slowed down the economies, and heavily slowed down growth rate and widely disrupted the supply chains.

Deputy Commissioner visited the fish market



Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Deputy Commissioner, Imran Hamid Sheikh reached the fish market under the Novelty bridge to review the cleanliness situation on public complaints and expressed his anger at the presence of sewage and garbage piles. He called WASA, Metropolitan Corporation and Waste Management Company and development officers on the spot. The Deputy Commissioner ordered the concerned departments to formulate an immediate plan to make the fish market neat & clean.

He assigned the task and set timeliness to restore the sewage system and asked WASA to clear the standing water by installing soccer machines daily till the disposal station is functional, Metropolitan Corporation to construct disposal and drains and speedy steps for road construction and rehabilitation and directed FWMC to make cleanliness in three shifts besides lifting garbage regularly. He also met with the shopkeepers of fish and urged them to avoid throwing garbage and waste outside to maintain a clean environment while the district administration is determined to provide them with all possible services and the relevant departments have been mobilized. He clarified that

Settlement of Kashmir dispute imperative for regional peace: Hurriyat leaders

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders Syed Bashir Andrabi, Khawaja Firdous and Farida Behenji have said that a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute is imperative for regional peace.

Syed Bashir Andrabi, Khawaja Firdous and Farida Behenji in their joint statement issued in Srinagar said that unless the Kashmiri people are given the right to decide their future, peace cannot be established in the South Asian region.

They emphasized that on January 5, 1949, the United Nations had passed a very important resolution, the purpose of which was to let the Kashmiri people decide their future. He said that since then, due to India's stubbornness, this dispute is still unresolved.

The APHC leaders said that the Kashmiri people had rendered unprecedented sacrifices for the Kashmir cause and the international community had to play an active role for the solution of the lingering Kashmir dispute because without it, the dream of peace in South Asia could not be fulfilled. If the United Nations does not give the Kashmiris the right to referendum, South Asia will face a terrible disaster, he feared.

Indian side urged for early release, repatriation of Pak civilians

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday urged the Indian government for the early release and repatriation of its 51 civilian prisoners and 94 fishermen, who had completed their respective sentences and whose national status stood confirmed.

"Furthermore, a request for a grant of consular access to missing defense personnel of the 1965 and 1971 wars, and special consular access to 56 civil prisoners have also been made," the foreign office spokesperson said in a press release.

The requests were made as the two countries exchanged, through diplomatic channels, the lists of prisoners in each other's custody.

"The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on 1st January and 1st July, every year," the spokesperson said.

The government of Pakistan shared with the Indian High Commission in Islamabad a list of 705 Indian prisoners detained in Pakistan, including 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen.

The Indian government also shared with the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi a list of 434 Pakistani prisoners in India, including 339 civilian prisoners and 95 fishermen.

Baldyati Convention

HYDERABAD: Women activists of Jamat-e-Islami are attending "Baldyati Convention" at Bagh-e- Mustafa ground in the city.



Photo: Online

Govt taking steps to overcome crises: SAPM

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Rana Mubashir Iqbal on Sunday said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif led federal government was putting efforts to steer the country out of crises including economic inherited by the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and bring betterment in peoples' lives.

Addressing the media at a gathering with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz workers at Khayaban-e-Amin here, he said the PML-N government during its previous tenure had launched significant development projects besides carrying out motorways' network across the country as Lahore to Sukkur motorway project was started during this period, but when the PTI government came into power, it steered the country towards

destruction.

The SAPM said that during the period from 2013 to 2018, the PML-N government under the leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif had overcome the electricity outage by putting in place effective measures to steer the country out of darkness as it added more than 11,000 megawatt electricity into national grid.

Rana Mubashir Iqbal said that as per international monetary institu-

tions, the GDP growth rate was about 5.8 percent from 2013 to 2018 but when PTI chief Imran Khan came into power, he led the country towards ruin, adding that Pakistan's debt doubled during the 44 months of Imran Khan's government. Similarly, the PTI government had increased the circular debt of hundreds of billions of rupees, which created more economic woes in the country, he maintained.

PM should implement the announced financial assistance for newspaper vendors: Azim Sheikh

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Muhammad Azim Sheikh, the Patron-Chief General of newspaper vendors organization, has appealed to Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan to play his own role in implementing the announced financial assistance for newspaper vendors. Percy and are suffering from difficulties, especially the newspaper vendors belonging to the defense areas are forced to bear the rigors of winter. After the news of objecting to the summary of the sum of money from Finance department what did he do while talking to the media including newspaper vendors.

He said that newspaper vendors are the backbone of the newspaper industry, so it should have been a special legis-

lation to provide the basic facilities of life to the newspaper vendors and for the education and training of children including their treatment. The establishment of newspaper vendor markets along with funds would have been implemented throughout the state, but despite the passage of more than 76 years, newspaper vendors are still trapped, neither they have a place to hide their heads from the state nor they are given treatment facilities and Neither are there any facilities for education and training for the children of newspaper sellers

He said that Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan was the first Prime Minister of the state who

made a historic announcement of financial assistance to newspaper vendors, but the bureaucracy was obstructing the release of the financial funds announced by him. Muhammad Azeem Sheikh said that currently more than 500 newspaper sellers in Muzaffarabad division are performing their duties to keep the newspaper industry alive while enduring all kinds of weather conditions. There are many newspaper sellers in 10 districts of Azad Kashmir



who are Neither housing facility nor basic amenities of life are available. He said that newspaper vendors are also a part of the state and it is the responsibility of the state to provide them with the basic facilities and necessities

of life, but unfortunately the state has failed miserably in fulfilling its responsibility and now fortunately the state A pro-poor and humanitarian personality has been made available as the prime minister, but over the years, the unbridled bureaucracy has started using dirty tactics to prove the pro-poor actions of the prime minister of Azad Kashmir for the poor people. Condemning this, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and other leaders demand that immediate steps should be taken to implement the announcement made by the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir for newspaper vendors. Otherwise, we will be forced to protest using our democratic right. Fulfillment of the financial aid announcement made by Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan for newspaper vendors.

PM AJK reiterates his commitment to fight for the freedom of IIOJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has reiterated his commitment to fight for the freedom of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir with all his sincerity and raise his voice at every forum.



The PM said this during his address which was webcast live at the beginning of the New year.

The PM started his address by reciting Durood Ibrahim and asked the viewers to repeat the same.

In his speech, the Prime Minister highlighted the background of the first day of the Islamic year, which starts from 1st Muharram-ul-Haram. The PM Khan extended the new year greetings to the people of Pakistan and Kashmiris living on both sides of the LoC.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while referring to his government's performance and achievements said that the holding of local body elections in Azad Kashmir was a historic achievement of the PTI government.

"According to the vision of Chairman Imran Khan, Azad Kashmir will be turned into a social welfare state", the PM said, adding that it was a big tragedy that local body elections

were not held in Azad Kashmir for 32 years. Postponement of Municipal elections, he said, had virtually paralyzed the democratic system in Azad Kashmir.

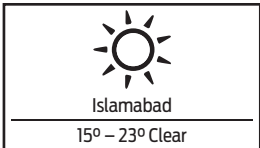
The basic concept of Madinah state, he said was to establish an egalitarian system which aims to put everything in its place.

He said that a welfare state comes into existence by providing people with all their basic rights amenities of life.

He said that the PTI Chairman Imran Khan enlightened people about the concept of Madinah State.

Referring to peaceful conduct of LG polls he said that during a short period of time the PTI government had done what previous governments could not do in 32 years.

He said that the role played by the people, police and civil bureaucracy of Azad Kashmir during the local body elections was commendable he added.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:43 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 3:32 pm
Maghrib 5:10 pm
Isha 6:39 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 116
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

ECP likely to hold Islamabad LG polls this week

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is likely to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls this week, citing sources.

The election commission issued orders to the concerned returning officers (ROs) to start transportation of polling material on an emergency basis.

ECP sources told Media that the new date of the Islamabad local government polls will be announced at the earliest.

On Saturday, the federal government filed an intra-court appeal in Islamabad High Court (IHC) against holding Islamabad local government polls.

As per details, the intra-court appeal was filed by additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Duggal in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The appeal urged the court to suspend the IHC verdict to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls today (December 31).

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) also filed an intra-court appeal against the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls on December 31.

New Year starts with great zeal and enthusiastic resolution

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: As the year 2022 departed and a new year of 2023 begins, the people of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad have welcomed the new year with great zeal, new hopes and enthusiasm.

The residents especially youngsters are excited for the new year making commitments and resolutions to adopt a healthy lifestyle, read more and concentrate on studies or professions in the days to come.

The new year brings new hopes and motivations, it's like a new beginning for us and we all friends are very much excited and enthusiastic about our new year resolutions and making commitments to



follow our resolutions throughout the year, said Shiza Ali, a student of BS, while talking to Media.

Shahid Saleem, another university student said that I am much excited about the new year as this year I have decided to start my professional life along with my studies to support my parents

Salman Karim, a youngster said that this year, he made only one resolution that he will reduce his screen time and ensure to spend more and more time with his family which was more important but being neglected due to excessive use of mobile phone and social media.

Shazia Khan, a house wife while sharing her views said that the new year was a great opportunity to make positive changes in her life and thinking.

Call for promoting Pakistani art, culture abroad

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Actor and former Director General of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Tauqeer Nasir has called cultural departments for promoting art and culture abroad to project a soft image of the country.

"Cultural centers should be established in New York and London as Pakistan has a great historical and cultural heritage that needs promotion at the international level," he said while talking to APP in an interview.

He lamented that we are not giving due importance to our art and culture which is negligence that results in intolerance and extremism.

Tauqeer Nasir who was also awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz for acting during the current year said that 22 years ago, he got



Tamgha Imtiaz while he was the youngest actor to get this award in the year 2000. Now he was awarded the second highest award Sitara Imtiaz.

He said that he worked for 40 years and served Pakistan drama with great dedication to promote Pakistan art and cultural values. He termed the migration of his parents during

partition of sub continent as a source of inspiration during his whole career and life.

He told that he recently met with Former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in UK and discussed matters of art and culture. He said there was a need to restore our art, culture and values to promote positivity in society

through art.

Replying a question, he said that the current dramas have the missing script with lack of quality content, adding that there is big difference in dramas of 80s and 90s. "At present there is enough technology and money but the dramas lost its standard.

There was a time when PTV was the only channel and producing upto standard plays and served as a big set up with experienced people. Today the artists are deprived of royalty and in last 25 years, we lost norms and values," he added.

He claimed that Bollywood famous film director had copied his drama serial and another super star actor had also copied as it is his 13 episode serial "Parwaz" and acting and it was pride for him that famous actors of Bollywood copied his acting and serials.

Ombudsman directs gas companies for more responsive

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed gas providing agencies i.e. SNGPL & SSGCL to make more responsive and effective mechanism to deal with citizen complaints. He was presiding a high-level meeting to discuss the working of gas companies and their administrative arrangements to address citizens' complaints. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Petroleum Capt.(R) Muhammad Mahmood, Chairman OGRA, Mr. Masroor Khan, MD SNGPL, Mr. Ali Javed Hamdani, MD SSGCL, Mr. Imran Maniar, Secretary WMS, Mr. Afzal Latif and senior officers from both sides. The Ombudsman said that it was important that due attention and prompt administrative measures were required on the part of the utility companies while Ministry & OGRA had to



exercise proper supervision to resolve public grievances.

In this respect, proposals developed by the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat were discussed and vital decisions taken to provide prompt relief to the consumers in

their genuine grievances. It was agreed that focal persons in BS-20 will be designated on behalf of the Federal Secretary Petroleum and top management of SNGPL & SSGCL within one week to coordinate with Wafa-

qi Mohtasib Advisors and remove bottlenecks, where necessary.

The Ombudsman also asked to make slabs of outstanding dues so that low income consumers may pay it in easy instalments.

Faisal Kundi extends New Year greeting to nation

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi announced to launch "new dynamic survey" under the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) early this

year. In a video message released on Sunday, the SAPM extended his greetings to the nation on the occasion of New Year and said that last year, Pakistan had suffered a lot due to Corona and floods but we are making all possible efforts to provide maximum facilities to the deserving people at gross root level.

He said that this year transgenderers are being included in Benazir Kafalat program which is an excellent step towards ensuring financial independence of this marginalized community.

He said that at the beginning of the year, 580,000 beneficiaries of BISP were going to get the new installment of Kafalat program while the educational stipends of the children of these beneficiaries will also be delivered.

He said that we as a nation, always joined hands during natural climates and difficult time and faced all the challenges with unity.

He expressed his hope that like before, the nation will emerge with a new spirit and hope this year.

Huge crowd witnessed in Murree



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: As the recent rainspell occurred in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, number of people thronged to Murree and Galliat with their family and friends to enjoy snowfall.

When Pakistan Meteorological Department predicted snowfall in Murree and adjoining areas, the tourists started arriving in this picturesque landscape to witness extraordinary weather conditions, a private news channel reported.

There were thousands of tourists from all over the country who had arrived in Murree to enjoy the snowfall of winter at Pindi Point, Kashmir Point, the Mall, and Ayubia.

The hotels' business was at its peak in this freezing season. Almost all small and big hotels were booked. The Mall Road, considered the hub of Murree, was flooded with tourists in this cold weather. There was a great rush in restaurants and cafes that people had to wait for hours to get seats for tea and meal.

The traffic snarls were seen at Jhika Gali, GPO Chowk, Guldana, Kashmir Point, and other roads causing unending difficulties for the tourists.

21 fresh Covid-19 cases reported in 24 hours: NIH

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Sunday said that 21 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last 24 hours across the country.

As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio is 0.51 percent while 19 patients were in critical condition.

No death was reported from the Coronavirus in the last 24 hours while 4,135 Covid-19 Corona tests were conducted.

Around 430 tests were conducted in Karachi, 251 in Gilgit, 803 in Lahore and 447 in Peshawar.

As many as eight confirmed cases with a 1.86% case positivity ratio were reported from Karachi, one case with a 0.40% case positivity ratio was reported from Gilgit, three cases with a 0.37% case positivity ratio from Lahore, and one case with a 0.22% ratio from Peshawar was reported.

Meanwhile, Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said that the government has strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19.

The minister said that there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. He said that there will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports.

He said that the situation was completely under control and asked the general public to avoid listening to rumors. He added that the Corona case passivity ratio was just 0.3 to 0.5 in the country while 90 percent of the country's population already got the COVID-19 vaccine.

He said that an efficient system with a proper management team was fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and was ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19.

He said that Border and Health Services Pakistan was ensuring the implementation of international health regulations.

He added further steps were being taken to strengthen the role of Border and Health Services Pakistan.

He said that in case of any untoward situation the health system was fully prepared to deal with any sub-variant of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 including BF.7 in the country.

Prices of naan and roti have been jacked up in Capital

Tooba Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prices of naan and roti have been jacked up in Islamabad, citing an increase in the flour rates



As per details, the prices of naan, and roti of different types have been increased by Rs2 to 10. The tandoori roti price has been fixed at Rs20 against the earlier of Rs18.

With the increase of Rs5, the tandoori naan's new price has been fixed at Rs25 in the federal capital, while tandoori kulcha is to be sold at Rs30 against the earlier price of Rs25.

The rate list further stated that the price of roghani naan has been increased by Rs10 and its new price will be Rs50.

Meanwhile, the flour crisis has intensified in Sukkur, as the commodity is being sold at Rs140 per kg in the open market.

According to details, the prices of flour have skyrocketed in Sukkur. The price of flour in the open market has reached Rs140 per kg. Meanwhile, a 10-kg bag of flour was being sold for Rs1,1300 in the local market, which was being sold at Rs900 few days earlier. Masses are finding it hard and facing difficulties in buying flour as their purchasing power is already affected by the record-inflation.

Pakistan Sweet Home organizes blood donation camp

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Sweet Home (PSH) Blood Bank in collaboration with the Rawalpindi district administration organized a grand blood donation camp at Food Street Saddar Rawalpindi Cantt on the occasion of New Year to save innocent lives.

Head of Pakistan Sweet Home Zamarud Khan visited the blood camp and strongly encouraged the volunteers who donated blood.

Speaking on the occasion Zamarud Khan said that the donation camp was far better than fireworks and other activities at the beginning of the new year. He said blood donation was a practical expression of love for humanity as well as a great act of worship.



more than 30,000 lives. He said the blood bank was determined to collect another 25,000 blood donations in the year 2023.

He expressed his determination

for expanding the blood donation campaign for the children fighting against thalassemia, hemophilia, and blood cancer. He expressed gratitude to all the donors who came to donate

blood on the call and supported the noble mission.

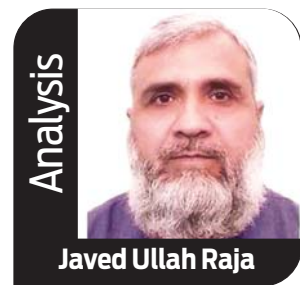
On this occasion, while giving a briefing, Director Project Asad Bin Azam of Pakistan said that the team of PSM Blood Bank organized various camps to ensure free blood supply to deserving patients.

He said PSM Blood Bank was regularly delivering blood donations to PIMS Hospital Islamabad, Jameela Sultana Foundation Rawalpindi, Sundus Foundation Islamabad, and Pakistan Thalassemia Welfare Society Rawalpindi from thousands of patients are getting the benefit.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Marzia Saleem, Assistant Commissioner City Rawalpindi Shagufta Jabben along with District Health Officer Dr. Naveed Qasim also participated in the blood donation camp and appreciated the social services of PSM Blood Bank and Zamarud Khan.

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Happy New Year!



Javed Ullah Raja

Analysis
 If we look at the countries of the world, the studies of some of them show that some countries have advanced in the race of development and some have been left behind, left far behind. In fact, the world is dominated by a few superpowers and these countries hold the smaller countries in their grip and do not allow them to advance. It is clear that as long as their influence remains on the smaller states, they will if they remain under their influence, these countries will said to be great powers in the world. To maintain their position, they try in every way to use their influence as they wish. Namely, they are tied in debt and the greed of debt on top of debt continues to push these countries back they keep diverting their attention from the main purpose by using different herbs inside. When small countries want to take help from aids, they will accept everything, even if they are left behind in the race of the world.

Our beloved country has been exposed to internal and external disturbances and problems since its inception. The reason is instability in internal politics. Till date we have not supported any ruling government but are responsible for harming our own country by dancing on the cues of foreign powers. This is because we only care about our own interest. They do not hesitate to use all kinds of tactics to make their politics shine and fool the public. Because of the situation in the region, foreign investment has been lost, In fact why are we moving our capital abroad.

We were talking of foreign powers, whenever small countries come together and share developing projects with each other. As previously the oil and gas projects seem to agree, the big powers are set in motion as their eyes are always fixed on the movements for which their think tanks work on a regular and regular basis. Sending delegations to different countries to prevent and imposing economic restrictions on these types of profits is not only their job but their goal is great. Small and big countries such as Japan, China, Taiwan, Turkey, Korea and India have also been under threat. It is a different thing that Turkey and Iran reject the sanctions as illegal. Developing countries are forced to They are surrounded by debts. It is certain that unless

the developing countries are content to stand on their own feet, they will not tolerate difficulties and it will be very difficult to move forward. The examples of some developed countries of the world are in front of us. Development is not possible. At the present time, our country is suffering from all kinds of big problems. The biggest responsibility of which is our politicians, who till today are the country

goal in comparison to public service, then this political process becomes a hostage in the hands of the rich. The burden of debts, electricity, water, gas, economy, internal and external disturbances, poverty, unemployment, terrorism, resources, imports and exports is to pay attention to all of them to take a step in development, but until now all of them have been limited to papers has been fulfilled.

Readers! As you know, the nations that develop in the world are those who learn from the past and benefit from the present and worry about the future, but unfortunately, due to our shortcomings, most of the time was spent in martial law. Even if they met, they kept pulling each other's legs. Whoever holds the power here keeps crying about the previous governments that all the troubles have come from the previous governments and they complete their time under this deception and guise. It will be better for them. Implementation of the issues that were going on with the neighboring countries is the guarantee of the development of the country. It will be possible. There will be possibilities of change in the region through mutual projects with neighboring countries. All the countries, including the superpowers, in whose eyes Pakistan is stuck, can never see Pakistan growing in these interests.

Rather, they won't stop hanging on. According to a previous report of the United Nations, the development of Pakistan in 2019 was less than that of Nepal and Maldives. Now India and Bangladesh are also seen to be moving forward. Therefore, in this difficult time, we all have to think for the betterment of the country and make decisions for the betterment of the country. Time is second only to energy problems, which are the main reason behind economic growth. Exchange of trade products and improvement of bilateral relations will solve the problems. Superpowers will never want Pakistan to enter into agreements with neighboring countries. Our Leaders have to leave aside their differences and make decisions for their own development and interest. Debt burden, electricity, water, gas, economy, internal and external disturbances, poverty, unemployment, terrorism, resources, imports and exports all these are gifted to us in every coming New Year.

Today, despite being Muslims, we are imitating the West. We are celebrating New Year's Night and Happy New Year, perhaps because this nation has not had any happiness from any ruler or government till date. Pakistan is an independent country and it has to fulfill the dreams of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal.

Exchange of trade products and improvement of bilateral relations will solve the problems. Superpowers will never want Pakistan to enter into agreements with neighboring countries.

and nation, decisions were not made in the interest.

A recent report warned that if a wall is not erected between politics and money games, a system based on transparency will simply it will remain a dream. Because when politics becomes a game of wealth and with the help of it, earning financial profit becomes the

Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)



Rasmi

Deforestation: A major challenge to combat climate change

Fakhar Alam

Smile is back on the face of 70 years-old Amanullah Khan after his 'wood taals' started roaring business in the wake of a significant decline in mercury level during the ongoing harsh cold weather that gripped the Peshawar valley.

Busy like a honeybee in cutting timber of native and indigenous species with a big saw in his 'wood taal' with the support of five laborers located at Pabbi station on main GT Road in Nowshera, Amanullah Khan was working against the time to complete orders placed by hundreds of households, tandoors, hotels and marriage halls during the harsh winter.

Amanullah's sons were seen helping his father in preparing bundles of endangered Shisham, Phulai, Ber, Kikar, Poplar, Neem, Amaltas, Saru and Jaman in his wood taal spread on nearly two acres with trees' trunks spread everywhere on his business place.

"The price of one mound (50kg) of firewood starts from Rs 600 to Rs 700 depending on the quality of the timber," said Amanullah, adding that firewood demand increases manifolds in December-January due to shortage of natural gas and high prices of LPG cylinder.

"We prefer customers from tandoors, hotels, and marriage halls due to high purchase and profit margin because of wedding season," he said, adding these timber were being transported from far-flung areas of Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, and Mardan districts after its purchase from farmers on relatively less price than the government's timber markets.

A visitor can see a large number of cut timbers and even uprooted trunks of trees at wood taals while moving on the main GT Road between Tarnab Peshawar to Azakhel Nowshera depicting the high rate of deforestation in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to National Forest Policy 2015, Pakistan's total forest-covered area was five percent and the country was losing about 27,000 hectares of forests per year mainly occurring in private and community-owned

natural forests. The policy revealed that forest resources in all provinces, especially in KP and Gilgit Baltistan were under tremendous pressure, particularly in the communal lands, shamalats, guzara, and privately owned forests.

It said that deforestation in watershed areas has adversely impacted agriculture yield and quantity of water at outlets besides triggering land degradation, and loss of biodiversity, and wildlife in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In riparian and coastal areas, especially in Sindh and Balochistan, deforestation amplified floods and facilitated sea water intrusion thus inflicting huge economic losses due to the government kitty as evidenced by the devastating 2010 and 2022 floods.

Comparing Pakistan's deforestation rate with the world, Dr. Mumtaz Malik, former Chief Conservator of Wildlife KP said that globally around 10 million hectares of forest were deforested every year – equal to the area of Portugal, adding that around half of this deforestation was counterbalanced by re-growing of forests, which means that an overall around five million hectares of the green gold was lost per year worldwide.

"Overpopulation, poverty, and unnecessary trees logging was one of the major causes of deforestation in KP," said Dr. Mumtaz Malik, adding in 1947, Pakistan's population was only 37 million that jumped to a record 223 million in 2022 and if it continued growing with such high pace it is expected to touch 260.3 million in 2030 and 330.8 million by 2050 resulting vanishing of the green gold, wildlife, and bees population.

Dr. Mumtaz said that about 68 percent of forests in the country were being used as firewood and 15 percent of trees were being lost due to urbanization and community-driven demands. He warned, "If we do not change our green sector policies and shift to the adaptation of alternative energy resources including solar, hydroelectric, biomass and wind then there was every possibility of losing the existing forests in next two decades besides witnessing frequent climate change's disasters," he added.

Dr. Mumtaz said deforestation was a national challenge and there was a need to impose a 'green emergency' to conserve and protect the green gold by looking above the party politics. He also suggested an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to control the smuggling of timber.

Wajid Ali Khan, former Minister for Environment and Forests said that thousands of trees planted under the billions tree afforestation project were prematurely cut in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was a violation of the agreement signed between the KP forest department and farmers.

Rekindling the art of self defence in the city of lights

Arisha Irshad Ali

Since 1981, Ameer Dragon Martial Arts Academy has been in operation. Ustaad Ameer Ahmed founded Mix Martial Arts Academy, which Sir Ghulam Mohammad aka (Jago) later continued. This academy teaches civil defence, Shotokan, Bando, and yoga, among other things.

Males as well as males are trained at this institute. Despite having lesser resources, this academy produces such amazing players for Pakistan. They lack a private location where they can practice their training due to limited funds.

In comparison to earlier years, the Pakistan Karate Federation is now a constantly developing organisation has not screeched its roots across the country. An illustrious organization AKDC instructors that serve as a link for the pupils in the Pakistan Karate Federation is headed by master trainer Mr Jago who has spent half of his life teaching the art of self defence. Shedding light on the importance of this art He said that youth, teenagers as well as females should be encouraged by the society as well as the governments to learn the art of self defence as it was the need of the day.

Currently, AKDC graduates are employed by the NAVY, POLICE, WAPDA, and RAILROAD; He said and added that a number of his students were serving in security agencies of various countries. These young

people receive guidance and inspiration from this academy, which help them shape their lives and excel on right path. As far as sports is concerned Karachi is far behind other parts of the country but despite of that the art of civil defence, Shotokan, Bando, and yoga is sprouting here amid inadequate resources.

Here, students learn about the significance of these educational institutions that support Pakistan's youth. Due to their commitment and hard work, they are known on an international level for showcasing magnificent skills. The instructors at this academy take great pride in preparing their pupils for karate competitions abroad. Many boys and girls are well-known for their work and win gold medals at various events. This Shotokan instills self-assurance and aids in developing discipline, which enhances other facets of life. There are hardly any girls participating in these sports. It is quite encouraging that a female trainer Mobeena sheikh Hameed is also rendering services in this institute. At the age of 22, she began practising karate and competing on a national level. She remains affiliated with the Karate federation even after being married. She now mentors thousands of females on this route so they can succeed as well. She is a blazing light because of this intense yearning. "We want Pakistani girls to be resilient, brave, self-sufficient, and bold. We want a Pakistan where mothers are mothers are black belts and a king maker"; She hopes.

Photovoltaic village in Zhejiang, China

News Desk

BELJING: In the square of Photovoltaic Village, Longguan Township, Ningbo, Zhejiang, men and women of all ages gathered here, beating gongs and drums lively. As the New Year approaches, the village will distribute money to everyone. Every household sent representatives to receive red envelopes from the village party secretary. The money comes from the earnings of the solar-powered sun room.



"Dream of sunshine" let the small mountain village "be basking in the sun and strive for a well-off life". This village, which is famous for being a "photovoltaic village", not only allows each villager to have 50 kWh of free electricity per month but also increases the income of the collective economy of the village by more than 60,000 yuan.

The village has also set up a "Sunshine Fund", from which students can get "Sunshine Red Envelopes" when they are admitted to the university and when they visit the elderly on the Double Ninth Festival.

Everyone in the square was filled

with happy smiling faces. Villager Hong Guofang took the red envelope handed over by the village party secretary and counted them carefully.

She said with emotion, "I never thought that the roofs in the village could bring us real money. In the past, the old houses were low and dilapidated. Nowadays, the villas are tall and bright, and the quality of life is totally different."

Low-carbon life has also attracted

urban residents to move in one after another. Cai Yinhua, left the urban area to settle here in 2016.

There are more than 60 households like hers in the village. They either live or open homestays, driving the flow of people, logistics and business. "Photovoltaic power generation is green and pollution-free and here is picturesque scenery. I was immediately attracted when I came here." Cai Yinhua said. "I used to think that life would get

better and better, but I never thought it would be this good." Holding a red envelope, 55-year-old Wang Zhiguo walked briskly towards his four-story villa, and ran into two tourists who recently moved into his home.

It turned out that life was settled, and the village began to encourage villagers to vigorously test the homestay economy, featuring in rural traditions, and to make full use of the vacant rooms in the new buildings to increase income. Wang Guozhi became the first batch of "crab eaters" (it means the first person who dares to do something).

Under the guidance of the local power supply company, the homestay implemented an electrification transformation.

All equipment such as cooking, heating, lighting, and hot water supply relies on electricity for energy supply, which is green and low-carbon as well as economical and environmentally friendly. Wang Zhiguo did some calculations that his annual net income was more than 100,000 yuan after deducting the cost and his wallet got bigger.

Kyiv rocked by explosions amid Russia's New Year attacks

News Desk

KYIV: A fresh round of explosions rocked Kyiv less than an hour into 2023, after Russia had attacked Ukraine with missiles targeting the capital and other cities ahead of New Year's Eve celebrations.

The first blasts of the new year began roughly 30 minutes after midnight, hitting two districts, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram, adding there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Earlier in the evening, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainians would fight until victorious.

"We fight and will continue to fight. For the sake of the main word: 'victory,'" he said in an address, as his country saw the old year out hours after the new wave of



strikes.

"I want to say to all of you: Ukrainians, you are incredible! See what we have done and what we are doing!" Zelenskyy said in the emotional speech.

"We fight as one team -- the whole country, all our

regions. I admire you all. I want to thank every invincible region of Ukraine," he continued.

The defence ministry also announced the capture of the village of Dorozhnyanka in the southern Zaporizhzhia region — a rare gain

claimed as Russia suffered a string of defeats on the ground in Ukraine.

The ministry also said that 82 Russian servicemen were freed as part of a prisoner exchange with Ukraine, while Kyiv said that it returned 140 people.

Pak Consul General attends Sanya International Cultural Industry Fair

News Desk

BELJING: Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, China, Dr. Diyar Khan represented Pakistan in the 7th Sanya International Cultural Industry Fair in the China's Hainan coastal city of Sanya.

The Consul General visited Pakistani stalls at the Fair and gave an interview to China Global Television Network (CGTN) to introduce Pakistani handicrafts and cultural items at the stall and Pakistan's relations with China, particularly Hainan province.

On the sidelines, the Consul General met with Deputy Party Secretary of Sanya, Shanglin and exchanged with him views on issues relating to Pakistan-China and Pakistan-Hainan friendly relations and cooperation in various fields, particularly in the cultural domain.

Ukraine shoots down 45 drones: Air Force



News Desk

KYIV: Ukraine shot down 45 Russian drones overnight as the pro-Western country rang in the New Year, the air force said on Sunday.

In a New Year's Eve assault, Moscow attacked Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with missiles and Iranian-made drones.

Ukraine's air force said in a statement that air defences destroyed 45 "Shahed" drones.

Thirteen drones were shot down at the end of 2022 and another 32 in the new year, the statement said.

Ukrainian authorities did not say if some of the drones reached their targets.

Andriy Nebitov, the head of the Kyiv police, posted on Facebook a picture of wreckage of a downed drone that featured the words "Happy New Year" in Russian.

"That is everything you need to know about the terror state and its army," he wrote.

The attacks came as Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine enters its 11th month.

After a series of humiliating military defeats, Russia in October began targeting Ukraine's infrastructure, leaving millions in the cold and dark.

Cuba wins lawsuit with US over Cohiba Cigars



Spokesman Report

HAVANA: Cuba has won the latest round of a 25-year old legal spat over US trademark rights to its famed Cohiba cigars, the smokes once favored by Fidel Castro, the company that markets them said Friday.

The US Trademark Trial and Appeal Board on December 20 cancelled the US-based firm General Cigar's trademark registrations for the term 'Cohiba' for cigars, said Habanos SA, a joint venture between Altadis of Britain and state-owned Cubatabaco.

General Cigar sells a non-Cuban version of the Cohiba brand in the United States, where Cuban Cohibas cannot legally be sold because of the US trade embargo.

The ruling means Cubatabaco can register the Cohiba brand trademark — considered the best of its 27 kinds of cigars marketed in more than 100 countries — in the US even though it cannot sell them there.

General Cigar said it will appeal.

Cubatabaco said the fight over the trademark in the US goes back to 1997.

Cohiba cigars were first rolled in 1966 and owe their name to the word used by Indigenous people centuries ago to refer to the tobacco leaves they smoked.

Castro, who died in 2016, puffed on Cohibas until he kicked the habit in 1985.

Tobacco is one of Cuba's main sources of export revenue. Tobacco income grew 15 percent in 2021 to total 568 million dollars, according to Habanos S.A.

Kim Jong Un orders new ICBM, bigger nuclear arsenal

Web Desk

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles and a larger nuclear arsenal to counter U.S.-led threats, state media said on Sunday, amid flaring tension between the rival Koreas.

At a meeting of the ruling Workers Party, Kim highlighted the need to secure "overwhelming military power" to defend its sovereignty and security.

The meeting came amid cross-border tensions over last week's intrusion by North Korean drones into the South, and the North's series of missile launches, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol, during phone calls with military chiefs, called for "solid mental readiness and practical training" to ensure any North Korean provocations will be met with retaliation, according to a statement from his office.

Kim accused Washington and Seoul of trying to "isolate and stifle" Pyongyang with U.S. nuclear strike assets constantly deployed in South Korea, calling it "unprecedented in human history."

He vowed to develop another ICBM system "whose main mission is quick nuclear counter-strike" under a plan to bolster the country's nuclear force, the official KCNA news agency said.

"The prevailing situation calls for making redoubled efforts to overwhelmingly beef up the military muscle ... in response to the worrying military moves by the U.S. and other hostile forces," it said.

South Korea has become "our undoubted enemy" being "hell-bent on imprudent and dangerous arms buildup" and hostile military moves, Kim said.

Several Killed, Wounded in Blast near Kabul Military Airfield: Official

News Desk

KABUL: An explosion at the entrance to a military airfield in the Afghan capital killed and wounded several people on Sunday, an official told AFP.

The cause of the blast at the gate of the facility next to Kabul's international airport was unclear, interior ministry spokesman Abdul Nafy Takor said.

"A number of our compatriots have been martyred and wounded in the blast," Takor said, adding that authorities were investigating the incident.

The Taliban authorities claim to have improved security since storming back to power in August 2021 but there have been scores of bomb blasts and attacks, many claimed by the local chapter of the Islamic State group.

South Korea is the first major exporting economy to release trade data each month

Spokesman Report

SEOUL: South Korea's exports in December fell from a year earlier for the third consecutive month, data showed on Sunday, with the outlook clouded by a Chinese economy fighting a surge in COVID-19 cases at a time of slowing global growth.

South Korea is the first major exporting economy to release trade data each month, providing an early glimpse into the state of global demand.

The trade ministry data showed exports fell in December by 9.5% from a year earlier, as sharp declines in shipments to China and Southeast Asia more than offset modest growth in sales to the United States and the European Union.

The decline was slightly less than a median 10.1% drop forecast in a Reuters poll and a 14.0% slide in



November, but marked a third straight month of falls—the longest such spell since late 2020.

President Yoon Suk-yeol said in his New Year's address that his govern-

ment would make boosting exports a top policy priority in 2023, saying exports are the basis and source of jobs for the trade-reliant economy.

"We must get over the complex

crisis through exports," Yoon said during the televised address, pointing to a global economy faced with a mix of many, diverse sources of instability ranging from supply, demand and political factors.

The trade ministry has said it would provide strong policy support to exporters to avoid a decline in exports in 2023, which the government officially projects will fall 4.5% due to the global economic slowdown.

Exports for the full year of 2022 rose 6.1% to \$683.9 billion, but imports grew 18.9% to \$731.2 billion, resulting in a record trade deficit of \$47.2 billion.

Official data from China on Saturday showed that factory activity shrank in December at the sharpest pace since the pandemic emerged three years ago following a decision to drop its strict zero-COVID policy that set off a wave of infections.

Trump rings in 2023 facing headwinds in his White House run

WebDesk

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump began 2022 on a high. Primary candidates were flocking to Florida to court the former president for a coveted endorsement. His rallies were drawing thousands. A bevy of investigations remained largely under the radar.

One year later, Trump is facing a very different reality.

He is mired in criminal investigations that could end with indictments. He has been blamed for Republicans' disappointing performance in the November elections. And while he is now a declared presidential candidate, the six weeks since he announced have been marked by self-inflicted crises. Trump has not held a single campaign event and he barely leaves the confines of his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

Instead of staving off challeng-



ers, his potential 2024 rivals appear ever more emboldened. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, fresh off a resounding reelection victory, increasingly is seen as Trump's most formidable competition.

Trump's subdued campaign

announcement has left even former stalwarts wondering whether he is serious about another run for the White House.

"There was a movie called 'Failure to Launch.' I think that's what Donald Trump's process of running has been

so far. He had the announcement, and he hasn't done anything to back it up since then," said Michael Biundo, a GOP operative who advised Trump's 2016 campaign but is steering clear this time.

"What campaign?" asked longtime GOP donor Dan Eberhart, who gave \$100,000 to Trump's 2020 reelection effort but is now gravitating to DeSantis. "Trump's early launch seems more a reaction to DeSantis' overperformance and a legal strategy against prosecution than a political campaign."

Trump campaign officials insist they have been spending the weeks since his Nov. 15 announcement methodically building out a political operation. Trump, they note, announced just before the holiday season, when politicians typically lie low, and he did so unusually early, giving him plenty of time to ramp up.

CMG to continue improve its global news gathering network: President Shen



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of Chinese President Xi Jinping, the China Media Group is working towards improving its global news gathering network and honing its capability to report on top world news stories.

CMG President Shen Haixiong in his new year address said President Xi Jinping emphasized on many occasions that China firmly stands on the right side of history and the side of human progress, and strives to contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to the cause of human peace and development.

"The capacity for communication is one essential metric for an international media outlet, and truth is the source of vitality of all media organizations," he said.

The CMG president mentioned that CMG broadcast in 68 languages, up from 44, with a coverage of 233 countries and regions.

He highlighted that when reporting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, the CMG abandoned prejudices, stayed with truth and made China's objective and impartial stance and solutions heard by the international community.

He said CMG presented the grand and magnificent congress to the world, and produced a host of quality features such as "Trailblazer" and "Decoding the Past Ten Years" to tell China's remarkable stories during the past extraordinary decade, winning wide acclaim from audiences at home and abroad.

In broadcasting the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, he said, CMG adopted cutting-edge technologies to present a "Chinese style romance" where the Olympic Spirit mingled with Chinese culture and the spark of technology lit up ice and snow.

He also mentioned other programmes produced by CMG including "China in the Classics" and "China in Poetry and Painting", "China Documentary Festival" and "The Bond" for Latin American and African audiences.

About next year, he said on the 10th anniversary of the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative, CMG will continue to make friends through media cooperation, advance exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

FBR collected Rs3,428bn in six months of FY23



Commerce Reporter

LAHORE: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collected a tax of Rs3,428 billion in the first two quarters (six months) of the current fiscal year.

The tax income of FBR has increased by 17 percent compared with the previous year, according to the statement of the FBR.

The tax collected in December 2022 alone was Rs740 billion while tax amount of Rs149 billion was collected in December 2021.

A tax refund of Rs176 billion was given in the first six months of the ongoing fiscal year compared with the tax refund of Rs149 billion during the same period of the previous fiscal year.

China home prices fall at faster pace in December, private survey shows

BELJING: China's home prices fell at a faster pace in December, according to a private survey on Sunday, reflecting persistently weak demand amid rising COVID-19 cases despite a slew of support measures.

China's property market crisis worsened this summer, with official data showing home prices, sales and investment all falling in recent months, adding pressure on the faltering economy.

Home prices in 100 cities fell for the sixth month in a row in December, declining 0.08% from a month earlier after falling 0.06% in November, according to the survey by China Index Academy (CIA), one of the country's largest independent real estate research firms. Reuters

'Hijab' didn't impede Pak girls to reach 'Huawei ICT Competition 2022'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: It is generally considered that women cannot excel in their profession until they are not dressed up as per requirement of the modern-day life, but the three Hijab wearing Pakistani girls not only made way to the 'Huawei Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Competition 2022' but also showed their prowess at an international forum.

After going through various multiple-choice questions and situational judgment tests, the three girl students of low-ranked universities of Pakistan were selected for the Regional Finals held in Muscat, Oman from December 21, to 22, 2022.

The girls along with three male counterparts were chosen from 12,000 students of 135 universities who had taken nationwide test.

Fatima Shafique from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro, and Eman Yaqoob, and Maryam Fareed from Lahore College for Women University (LCWC), all Hijab wearing girls, have excelled their skills in the ICT sector as evident from their selection for Huawei competition.

The three girls, in an interaction with APP, expressed their gratitude to the Huawei Pakistan for providing them an international platform and necessary training to refine their ICT skills in order to compete in the mega event.

They said it was just the beginning of their



professional career. They had been offered for an internship programme by the Huawei Pakistan, which would help polish their ICT skills and make considerable progress in the practical life, they added.

Dispelling the impression that wearing Hijab

could be a barrier to their professional life, they claimed that they were making significant advancements in the technology industry and Hijab was no more a hindrance in that regard.

Vice President of Huawei Middle East and Central Asia Shunli Wang told APP that his

organization was working on 'women empowerment' by providing equal opportunities to the girl students across the region.

He said there were 15 teams comprising 45 students from 11 countries, out of them 19 girls were given 'Women in Tech' awards to acknowledge their ICT skills.

He said the novel initiative, besides opening new vistas of opportunities, would help bring the women in the mainstream of the society professionally and economically.

Shunli Wang further said, "Huawei is committed to supporting and nurturing young ICT talent in the region. Through this mega event, Huawei aims to empower the youth to advance their ICT skills, hence contribute to the talent ecosystem, and support accelerating digital economies."

He said, "We believe in the power of open collaboration with our partners in the public and private sectors, alongside academia to nurture the skills of the young ICT talents and encourage them to participate in achieving the national goals and visions of their respective countries."

He further informed that the competition was one of several corporate social responsibility initiatives undertaken by Huawei in the region to train the youth of the day in the ICT sector. Over 80,000 students across the region had participated in the contest since its launch in 2017 and it witnessed a remarkable increase in students with every passing year, he maintained.

Terrorism is a serious threat to the economy

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday said terrorism is resurfacing in the country which should be eradicated as it poses a serious threat to the economy.

The terrorism restarted soon after the political and economic situation worsened which is pointing towards hostile nations, he said.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said that authorities should take action against miscreants to crush them.

Elimination of terrorism should be the first priority so as to reduce the threats to the people, economy and image of the country.

The business leader said that all the peace agreements made with terrorists



have failed therefore instead of negotiations, an action should be launched.

A new strategy should be adopted to defeat the terrorists because in the past despite the heavy loss of lives and money

this disease has not been cured and terrorism resurfaces after some time.

He lauded the resolve of the National Security Committee (NSC) to respond to terrorists with full force to those who challenge the country.

Pakistan's national interests should not be compromised and no one would be allowed to harm the country's national security, the basic interests of Pakistan's survival, security, and development should be protected with great courage, consistency, and steadfastness.

He also paid tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs against terrorism, expressed sympathy and condolence to their families, and prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said that terrorists are enemies of Pakistan; the entire nation is united on this issue.

Job seeking

ISLAMABAD: Labourers waiting for their daily job while sitting at roadside setup along Lehtrar Road.

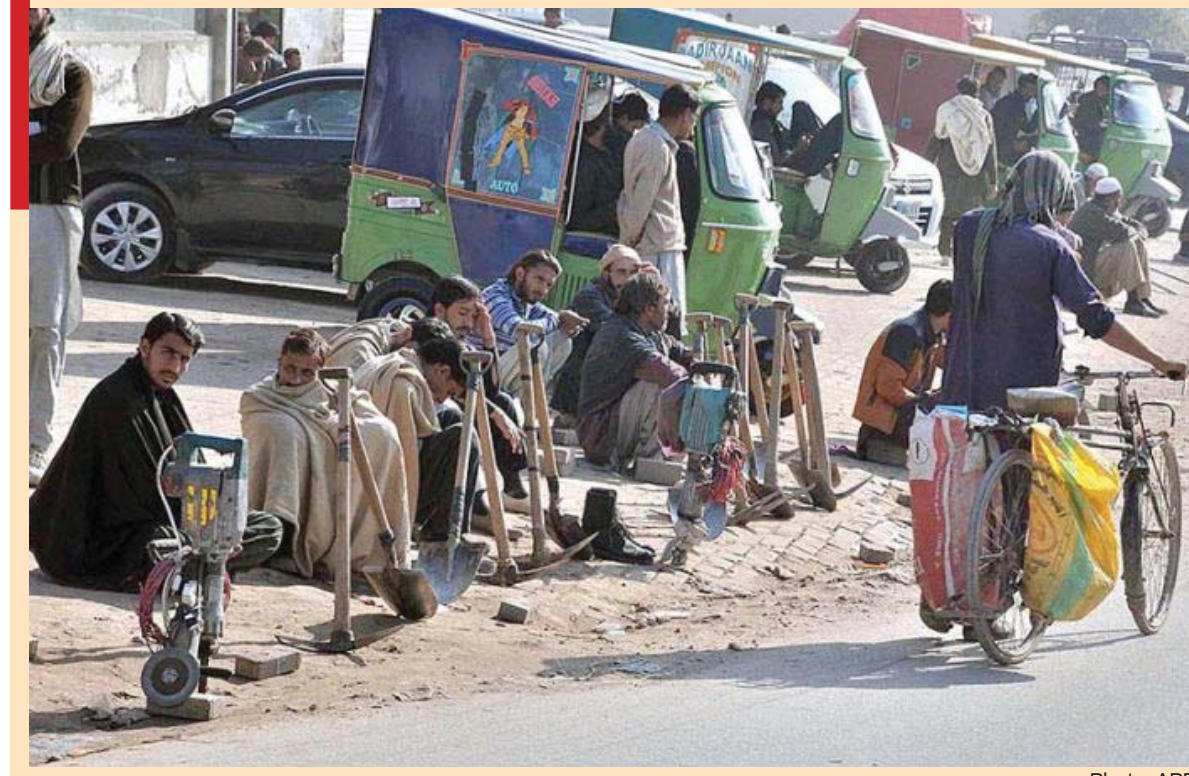


Photo: APP

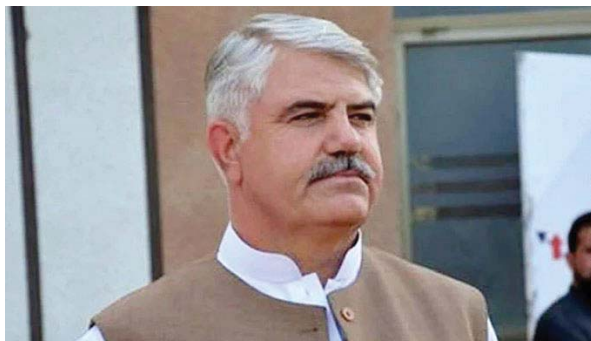
KP govt establishes 9 new economic zones, revives 167 units

News Desk

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has said that the provincial government during last four years had established nine new Economic Zones (EZs) and revived 167 sick industrial units.

In a statement issued from the Chief Minister's Secretariat here Sunday, the chief minister said that the new economic zones include Jalozi Economic Zone, Nowshera Economic Zone (extension), D.I Khan Economic Zone, Rashakia Special Economic Zone, Chitral Economic Zone, Hattar Special Economic Zone, Bannu Economic Zone, Ghazi Economic Zone and Mohmand Economic Zone. Additionally, Daraband Special Economic Zone, Salt and Gypsum City Karak, Buner Economic Zone, Katlang Economic Zone and Mansehra Economic Zone will also be launched soon.

An investment of around



Rs. 338 billion has been made in the above-mentioned economic zones wherein 167 sick industrial units have been revived and 366 new industrial units established.

The chief minister termed industrial development as vital importance for economic stability and said that the incumbent provincial government was paying special attention to the industrial sector with the aim of creating employment and livelihood opportunities. He added that

the provincial government was striving hard to provide a conducive environment for industrialists and attract investment.

Introduction of the industrial policy 2020, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commerce & Trade Strategy 2020 and investment promotion strategy are amongst the important policy initiatives of his government aimed at promoting the industrial sector as per contemporary needs, he expressed.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government was also taking steps to promote self-employment in the province, adding that loans of Rs one billion had been provided to youth under the first phase of the Insaf Rozgar Scheme for launching small and medium scale businesses while the second phase of Rozgar scheme had also been launched.

It is pertinent to mention here that 71 development schemes have been reflected in the current Provincial Annual Development Program to ensure development of the industrial sector on a sustainable basis.

In order to promote small and medium entrepreneurs in the province, Saaf Finance Scheme worth Rs. 12 billion has been launched. To promote international investment in the province, 44 MoUs worth \$8.0 billion have been signed at Dubai Expo 2020.

Dr Murtaza Mughal appointed as Director RDF



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Rural Development Foundation (RDF) has appointed Dr. Murtaza Mughal as member board of directors.

RDF, founded in 1978, is a non-political, not-for-profit organization recognized at the national as well as international levels.

Speaking at the occasion, President of the RDF Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan hoped that the new member of the board will discharge his duties with full dedication and add value to the entity.

Dr. Murtaza Mughal is known in social circles, has an impressive professional record and his social services need no introduction, he added.

Currently, he is Group Country Manager of United International Group (UIG), Chairman of Nazaria e Pakistan Center Trust, and President of the Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW).

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that he is feeling honored and will leave no stone unturned to come up to the expectations of the superi-

ors in RDF.

He said that recent floods have inflicted heavy losses on the rural populations and pushed people decades back while they badly need support to start their economic activities again.

The devastating floods have inundated hundreds of villages across much of the country's fertile land. The floodwater has transformed large parts of farmland into large lakes sowing wheat and other crops difficult, he informed.

The flooding is the worst to hit the country in recent history and it may take months for the floodwaters to recede, he informed.

Dr. Mughal said that we are sensitive to the needs of the rural population, we trust the capabilities and potential of the rural poor, and want to play role in stimulating rural development which is central to national development.

He said that strengthening the educational, social, and economic sectors in rural areas is crucially vital to national progress and human advancement which cannot be ignored.

USC jacks up prices of sugar, flour, ghee

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Despite the Prime Minister's relief package, the government-run utility store corporation (USC) has jacked up the prices of sugar, flour and ghee and other food items.

According to the notification issued here, the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) have increased the price of sugar by Rs19 per kg, ghee by Rs75 per kg, and a 20-kg bag of flour by Rs496.

The new prices would be effective at Utility Stores across the country from January 1, 2023, said the notification.

The new prices would not apply to the deserving beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme

(BISP), it added.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif had announced to provision of targeted subsidies on basic food items through Utility Stores Corporation. These items included flour, sugar, ghee, rice, and pulses.

Consumers enrolled in the Benazir Income support Program are eligible to get the food items on subsidized rates from the Utility Stores outlets.

Meanwhile, the Utility Stores Corporation has asked its all consumers and customers to SMS their Computerized National Identity Card numbers from their mobile phones to 5566 and they will receive a one-time password after which they can avail subsidy and purchase items.

Babar and Bismah review 2022 in 42nd edition of PCB Podcast

News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan men and women captains Babar Azam and Bismah Maroof have reviewed 2022 in a special edition of the PCB Podcast, which is now available here for viewing and free downloading for editorial purposes.

According to information provided by the Pakistan Cricket Board here on Sunday, the year 2022 was an incredibly busy year for the national men's and women's cricketers in the international arena. The men's side played a total of 44 international matches (nine Tests, nine ODIs and 26 T20Is) and reached the finals of the ACC Asia Cup and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup besides hosting Australia, West Indies, England and New Zealand, while the women's side featured in 32 internationals (13 ODIs and 19 T20Is) and participated in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup, besides hosting Sri Lanka and Ireland.

Babar Azam, who appeared in all 44 internationals and finished as the most successful batter in the world with 2,598 runs, reflecting on the year said: "Our performances in white-ball cricket upstaged our achievements in red-ball cricket. We reached the finals in the UAE and Australia, and though



we didn't perform the way we had expected in red-ball cricket, three sides ranked above Pakistan played in Pakistan that provided us a huge learning opportunity and also entertained our fans.



"In T20 cricket, my favourite match was the win against India in the repeat fixture of the Asia Cup as it was a crucial game for us in terms of a place in the final. In Test cricket, victory in the first Test

against Sri Lanka in Galle was outstanding as we chased down 342 for the loss of six wickets on a difficult track. Abdullah Shafique was magnificent in the second innings when he scored 160 not out."

Bismah Maroof said: "The highlight of our World Cup campaign was the victory over the West Indies, which was our first in 13 years in the pinnacle event.

We also won five of the six ODIs against Sri Lanka and Ireland at home to move up to second in the ICC Women's Championship, while we defeated India in Sylhet for the first time since 2014 though we missed out on the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup final after losing to Sri Lanka by one-run in the semi-final."

The women's team performance was also reflected in the ICC Player of the Month awards when Tuba Hassan (May), Nida Dar (October) and Sidra Ameen (November) won international recognitions.

In 2022, Bangladesh U19 also visited Pakistan, former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali announced his retirement from international cricket, Lahore Qalandars won their maiden HBL Pakistan Super League title in front of home fans at the Gaddafi Stadium, Sindh clinched the National T20 silverware, Northern lifted the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, while AH Kardar and Yousif Khan were inducted into the PCB Hall of Fame.

Balochistan moved into the final of Pakistan Cup, 2022.

Sports Reporter

LAHORE: Defending champions Balochistan stormed into the Pakistan Cup 2022-23 final when they defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 38 runs on Sunday to set Monday's final date with Central Punjab.

In a repeat of last year's final, Balochistan, batting first, recovered to post an imposing 302 for eight in the allotted 50 overs and then dismissed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for 264 in 47.1 overs in front of PCB cameras at the State Bank Sports Complex.

No.10 batter Kashif Bhatti belted five fours and four sixes in a 48-ball 69 not out and dominated the 89-run unbroken ninth wicket stand with Yasir Shah (17 not out) to lift Balochistan

to 302 for eight after they have slipped to 213 for eight. He then picked up a wicket conceding 43 runs to walk away with the player of the match award.

Earlier, Balochistan, put into bat, were in dire straits when they plunged to 138 for six with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa captain Ifikhar Ahmed picking up the scalps of the top three batters—Imran Butt (29), Mohammad Junaid (22) and Haseebullah (20)—to finish with three for 52.

At that stage, Bismillah Khan and Amad Butt put on 70 runs for the seventh wicket to take their side to 208 for six. Bismillah scored a 53-ball 65 with six fours and two sixes, while Amad contributed 27 from 21 balls with two fours and two sixes. However, the departure

of Bismillah and Amad in a space of five runs, shifted the pressure back on Balochistan before Kashif Bhatti came to the party and not only helped his side post a commanding score but also entertained a decent holiday crowd with his lusty hitting.

In their run-chase, three Khyber Pakhtunkhwa batters reached half-centuries but none of them were able to convert these scores into match-winning performances as Balochistan's Amad Butt returned figures of 8.1-1-52-4 to steal the limelight.

No.7 batter Adil Amin top-scored with 76 (67 balls, 6x4, 3x6), followed by Mohammad Harris (63, 54b, 6x4, 1x6) and Sahibzada Farhan (57, 55b, 5x4, 1x6). The highest partnership

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's innings was for the sixth wicket when Adil and Harris put on 72 runs for the sixth wicket after their side had slipped to 127 for five.

Scores in brief: Balochistan beat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 38 runs, State Bank Sports Complex Balochistan 302-8, 50 overs (Kashif Bhatti 69 not out, Bismillah Khan 65, Imran Butt 29, Amad Butt 27; Ifikhar Ahmed 3-52)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 264 all out, 47.1 overs (Adil Amin 76, Mohammad Harris 63, Sahibzada Farhan 57; Amad Butt 4-52, Khuram Shahzad 2-38, Mohammad Junaid 2-64)

Player of the match — Kashif Bhatti (Balochistan) Monday's final: Central Punjab v Balochistan, State Bank Sports Complex

Al Nassr fans chant 'Ronaldo, Ronaldo' in stands

A Sports -

DAMMAM: Electrified Al Nassr fans chanted Cristiano Ronaldo's name and performed his signature celebration style, dubbed as 'Siiii', in the stands as they eagerly await the Portuguese star's arrival in Saudi Arabia.

Star footballer signed a historic \$75 million a year deal with Saudi club Al Nassr on Friday with a contract of two years, following his bitter exit from Manchester United.

While the sales of Ronaldo's new jersey skyrocketed just hours after the deal was signed, the club fans are very excited to watch their new



hero in action.

In a viral video doing rounds on Twitter, Al Nassr fans can be seen chanting 'Ronaldo, Ronaldo' and shouting Siiii, his famous style of goal celebration,

during the Saudi Pro League match on Saturday.

Ronaldo, 37, left Premier League giants Manchester United last month following an explosive television interview in which the forward

said he felt betrayed by the club and did not respect their Dutch manager Erik ten Hag.

He represented Portugal in Qatar, where he became the first player to score in five World Cups after netting a penalty in his side's opening Group H game against Ghana. Portugal were knocked out in the quarter-finals by Morocco.

Ronaldo said Qatar would probably be his last World Cup as he plans to retire at 40, with a move to Saudi Arabia likely to mark the swansong in the career of one of the game's greatest current players alongside Lionel Messi.

Joselu's penalty denies Barcelona victory in Catalan derby

A Sports

BARCELONA: Marcos Alonso went from hero to zero as Espanyol held topers Barcelona to a 1-1 draw on Saturday yet the Catalan giants still claimed the top spot on goal difference.

Referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz, however, took the centre stage he handed out fifteen yellow cards and two red cards in the game at Camp Nou.

After Alonso gave Barcelona an early lead Lahoz sprang into action and before the break, he booked four players besides awarding Espanyol a



penalty in the second half, which Joselu converted to equalize for his side.

Jordi Alba was laid off in the final half after getting two yellow cards inside four minutes for his protests to Mateu

were clearly unhappy with the chaotic refereeing decisions, Lahoz, however, used his card once more, booking Barca's manager and Raphinha, for protesting his decisions.

Lahoz and two minutes later Esoanyol's Vinicius Souza was also brandished a red card by the Spanish referee.

In minute 81, he awarded Souza's teammate, Leandro Cabrera, a red card after adjudging that the defender had deliberately hit a boot on Robert Lewandowski's head but a VAR review forced him to change the decision.

While Xavi's men

Andreescu topples Muguruza in Adelaide



ADELAIDE: Bianca Andreescu staged a dramatic comeback Sunday to topple Garbine Muguruza in a battle of former Grand Slam champions on day one of the Adelaide International.

The Canadian, who won the 2019 US Open, was crushed in the first set and slipped 2-5 behind in the second before surging home 0-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-1 to get her 2023 season off to a winning start.

It maintained her perfect record against two-time Grand Slam winner and former world number one Muguruza, improving to 3-0.

"In the second set I really had to change my game plan," said the 22-year-old, who has slipped to 46 in the world.

"I told myself to go for it, whatever happens happens. I put more returns in the court, more serves in the court. I'm so glad I pulled that out, I have no idea how."

Spain's Muguruza, who won the French Open in 2016 and Wimbledon a year later, claimed the first set in commanding fashion, outnumbering Andreescu in winners eight to two, not facing a break point.

Andreescu started the second set more strongly, only for Muguruza to break for 4-2 then consolidate for 5-2 with serve.

But she couldn't close out the victory and Andreescu took it to a tie-break where a sizzling backhand winner gave her pivotal 4-2 lead.

A demoralised Muguruza had no answers as the Canadian swept her aside in the third set to set up a second-round clash against either fourth seed Veronika Kudermetova or Amanda Anisimova.

In other singles action, Estonian veteran Kaia Kanepi also came from behind to outlast Belarusian Aliaksandra Sasnovich 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 and will next meet either Ekaterina Alexandrova or Marketa Vondrousova.

Americans Shelby Rogers and Claire Liu also progressed.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic headlines the men's field and is set to play France's Constant Lestienne on Monday in his first match in Australia since being deported last year over his Covid-19 vaccination stance.

President Lahore Regional Cricket Association congratulates to Najam Sethi

Sports Reporter

LAHORE: President Lahore Regional Cricket Association Shahrez Abdullah Khan, Secretary Wasim Anwer, General Body and Executive Committee LRCA has congratulated to Najam Sethi Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board to restore the Regional and District Bodies according to PCB Constitution 2014. Shahrez said "Mr Najam Sethi has won thousands of hearts by restoring the department, regional and district cricket along with elected set up which was declared defunct on 19 August 2019 by the then Chairman PCB Ehsan Mani. He added that grass root level cricket and international cricket of Pakistan were going down since Aug 2019 by enforcing undemocratic PCB constitution 2019.

Shahrez added Najam Sethi organized inaugural PSL successfully and also restored International Cricket in Pakistan in his tenure. He added that Najam Sethi and other Management Committee Members especially Sheikh Shakil Ahmed and Aizad Hussain Sayid has guts to lead Pakistan Cricket in real manners.

He said all Regional and District Bodies of Pakistan are firmly stand with Najam Sethi Chairman PCB for betterment of cricket in Pakistan

Iran police detain top-tier football players in raid at party



News Desk

DUBAI: Iranian police briefly detained several unidentified top-tier football players in a raid on a party on New Year's Eve where alcohol was served in violation of an Islamic ban, Iranian media reported.

Mingling between sexes outside marriage and drinking alcohol are banned under Iran's Islamic laws. Social restrictions are among issues that prompted mass unrest in recent months, following the death in custody of a woman accused of violating the strict dress code.

The semi-official news agency Tasnim said several current players and former members of an unidentified top Tehran soccer club had been detained at the party east of the capital.

"Some of the players were in an abnormal state due to alcohol consumption," Tasnim reported, without giving further details.

The YJC news agency said the gathering was a birthday party, and added that all those detained had been released except one person, who is not a soccer player. Fars news agency cited a prosecutor as saying a case had been filed against those who had been detained, and details would be released later.

The was no immediate comment from Iran's football federation.

No more flat surface, bouncy pitch prepared to help pacers in second Test

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: After severe backlash on the bowling unfriendly and lifeless nature of the pitch in the first Test between Pakistan and New Zealand, a fast and bouncy track has been prepared to make the second Test a lively contest between bat and ball.

According to the details, a vibrant pitch was prepared on the special instructions of the chief of the Men's Interim National Selection Committee Shahid Afridi, who paid a visit to the National Cricket Bank Arena on Saturday when the pitch preparation was underway.

Meanwhile, a special curator named Ashraf came to Karachi from Rawalpindi for the task.

On Sunday, the New Zealand side held a full-strength training session at the venue and keenly assessed the revamped pitch ahead of the second Test, commencing tomorrow.

"It does look different from the first Test. A little bit more moisture in there at the moment" said New Zealand batting coach Luke Ronchi in a press talk after the practice session.

He added both teams would first evaluate the pitch tomorrow before making the decision whether they wanted to go with an extra fast bowler.

"I reckon both teams will be in the same position where they'll wait to see what it's exactly like in the morning," he said.

BCCI to increase focus on player fitness ahead of ODI World Cup

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: India's cricket board (BCCI) will increase its focus on player fitness and consider who have played a substantial domestic season when making selections for the national team, it said on Sunday following a review meeting ahead of the 2023 World Cup.

The board said that the National Cricket Academy will work with teams in the Indian Premier League (IPL) to monitor the targeted Indian players participating in the Twenty20 league this year.

The review meeting was held in Mumbai to discuss the



roadmap and was attended by BCCI president Roger Binny, India captain Rohit Sharma, head coach Rahul Dravid and others.

Issues of player availability, workload management and fitness parameters were also discussed at the meeting in

the build-up to the World Cup, which will be held in India in October and November.

"The emerging players will have to play a substantial domestic season to be eligible for selection to the national team," the BCCI statement said. "The Yo-Yo test and Dexa

will now be part of selection criteria and implemented in the customised roadmaps of the central pool of players," it added.

The Yo-Yo test demands players run back and forth between cones spaced 20 metres apart with increasing speed and reduced time available to complete each shuttle, while a dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA scan) is an imaging test that measures bone density.

Last month after India's ODI series defeat in Bangladesh, captain Rohit had raised concerns over players pulling up injured repeatedly despite being passed fit.