

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIII No. 293 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Monday October 16, 2023, Rabi-ul-Awwal 29, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

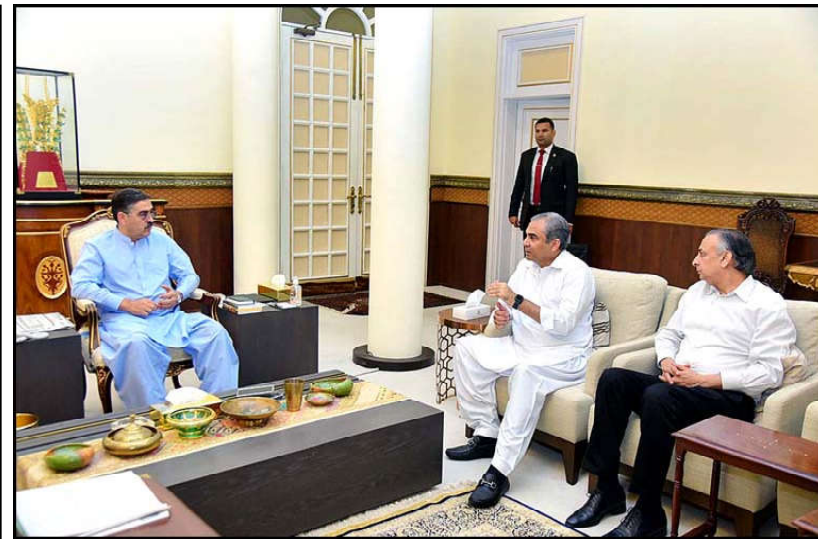
In major relief, govt slashes petrol price by Rs. 40 per litre

The finance ministry reduces tariffs of high-speed diesel by Rs15 per litre

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: In a relief for the inflation-hit masses, the caretaker government on Sunday reduced the price of petrol by Rs40 per litre and that of high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs15 for the next fortnight. Sharing the latest rates of petroleum products on its official X handle, formerly known as Twitter, the Ministry of Finance said that the new price of petrol is Rs283.38 and Rs303.18 for HSD. It said that the government has revised the con-

sumer prices of petroleum products in the wake of variations in international prices of the commodity and improvement in the exchange rate. The new prices will come into effect from 12am (tonight, October 16) and remain in place till October 31. New prices of petroleum products for the fortnight starting from October 16 will be as follows. In addition to this, the government also cut the prices of light diesel by Rs19.59 per litre and kerosene oil by Rs22.43 for the next fortnight. After the

massive reduction in the prices of petroleum products, the rates of kerosene oil will drop to Rs214.85 per litre. The interim government, led by Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, is charging zero general sales tax (GST) on all petroleum products while the rate of petroleum levy (PL) on petrol is Rs60 per litre. In order to generate additional revenue to achieve the tax collection target for this fiscal year, the authorities, however, increased the levy on diesel by Rs5 to Rs55 per litre.



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Chief Minister of the Punjab Mohsin Naqvi calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

President urges UN & OIC to meet urgently for cessation of brutal Israeli action

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday strongly condemning the brutalities and massacre of Palestinians in Gaza, urging the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to meet urgently for cessation of the ruthless actions.

He said the UN and the OIC should ensure that necessary medical aid, food and other supplies are urgently sent in to prevent further devastation and the human catastrophe in Palestine.

"Human history has never witnessed such cruelty and barbarism being committed by Israel at a massive level; even water, electricity, food supply and medicine have been cut off," the president said in a statement issued by the President House.

He said Israel had crossed all limits by killing children, women and innocent people.

Pakistan equates Israel's siege, bombardment of Gaza with genocide of Palestinians

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Sunday said that Pakistan condemned the siege of Gaza as poor Palestinians were facing unabated Israel aggression and had been without water, food and power, leading to a severe humanitarian crisis. He said Israel committed a genocide against the people of Palestine and the grave situation arising out was the result of seven decades of illegal occupation of the Palestine territories. Addressing a press conference, the foreign minister said Israel should respect and implement the international laws, the United Nations Security Council and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) resolutions over the Palestinians' rights to self-determination for an independent state.

He said that an emergency and extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of the OIC would be held in Jeddah on October 18 to

discuss the ongoing situation in Palestine.

Israel had committed aggression and conducted aerial aggression over Gaza which resulted in the deaths of scores of women and children, he said, adding that any attempt to equate Israel, an aggressor, with the Palestinians' struggle for self-determination was unacceptable. Foreign Minister Jilani further stressed a separate status of Palestine under the two-state policy as accepted by the international community with an independent state of Palestine having pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

He also categorically maintained that there was no change of Pakistan's policy with regard to Israel, it would continue pursuing the same policy as adopted in the past and would continue in the future till Palestinians get right their right to self-determination under the UNSC and OIC resolutions. To a question regard-

ing the humanitarian aid to besieged Palestinians, he said that they were in touch with the international community and the Muslim countries, but unfortunately, there was a complete siege of Gaza.

He said this aspect would be highlighted during the upcoming OIC executive committee meeting in which they would consider the coordinated response of the OIC member countries as to how to bring an end to the violence perpetrated by Israel and how to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Palestinians. Pakistan was ready to provide humanitarian assistance and had been in touch with the Egyptian authorities, he added.

He said the OIC committee meeting would make a forceful case for the early resolution of the issue. About Caretaker Prime Minister's upcoming visit to China on October 17-18 to attend the third Belt and

Road Forum for international cooperation, he said that the prime minister would hold meetings with the Chinese leaders, global leaders and top Chinese top business leaders. Prime Minister Kakar would also discuss joint ventures with the Chinese companies and a number of MOUs regarding agriculture, health, industrial, green energy and space technology cooperation would be signed during the upcoming visit. The foreign minister further said that the visit would enhance the ongoing strong bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and China as 'Iron Brothers' and would help strengthen the bilateral ties. "The visit will also provide an opportunity to review the entire gamut of entire cooperation and Pak-China strategic cooperation. The visit also marks the ten years of CPEC and Belt and Road Initiative," he added.

The foreign minister further informed that the caretaker prime minister would also visit the Xingjian region bordering Pakistan and eight other countries of the region. He termed the CPEC as an economic success story for both sides and a model of excellent economic cooperation despite external dimensions to certain security challenges.

Both countries coordinated to blunt the terrorist activities and the both sides had expressed satisfaction over the ongoing bilateral cooperation. They had completed the first phase of CPEC and entering into the second phase which related to industrial, technological and agricultural cooperation, he added.

The foreign minister, to a query, advised not to heed to propaganda about the CPEC, adding the railways project was the part of ongoing negotiation between the two sides and had been in the advanced stage and expressed the hope that an agreement in this regard would be concluded soon.



MARRAKECH: Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, participated in a high-profile meeting of Finance Ministers with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Marrakech.

Caretaker govt to ensure elections in peaceful manner: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said concerted efforts were underway to ensure the upcoming election in a peaceful and amicable environment. Talking to Dawn News Television in a programme titled "In Focus", the minister said the caretaker government had been performing its duties and responsibilities in accordance with the constitution and law. He said the political activities should be observed in a way that did not affect the day-to-day affairs of the general public. "If anyone is facing harassment, they can approach the Election Commission," he said, adding the ECP was a constitutional body. Solangi said the caretaker government wanted good terms with all the political parties. "We want to create a pleasant environment for

elections and we want elections that are acceptable to everyone," he added. The minister said the electoral history of Pakistan suggested that the polls were held in the country during extreme weather. The first election was held in December 1970, he added. The Election Commission of Pakistan had announced the date for elections in the last week of January, he said while ruling out any problem in holding the election vis-à-vis weather conditions. "After the completion of delimitation, political parties will be given 54 days for the electoral campaign," he responded to a query. Solangi said the caretaker government was taking effective measures to address economic issues. The administrative measures taken by the caretaker government had stabilized the rupee, he added.

Actions were being taken against smuggling, the minister noted. To another query, he ruled out any official protocol to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo Nawaz Sharif in London. "Nawaz Sharif has not received any official protocol in London," said the information minister, adding the matter related to return of Nawaz Sharif was not taken up by the caretaker cabinet at all. "I do not believe in assumptions and speculations since things are very clear in front of us," the minister remarked. He said there was no restriction on mentioning any individual in the media since the caretaker government firmly believed in freedom of expression. Maulana Fazlur Rehman was a seasoned politician, he said while responding to another query. A large number of illegal immigrants had started returning to their countries, he stressed.

Pakistan hosting Afghans without any monetary benefit in return: UNHCR

GENEVA (INP): United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has said on Sunday that Pakistan has been hosting Afghan refugees for the last over 40 years without receiving any funds in return. On the other hand, the European Union Agency of Asylum and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) have termed the presence of millions of illegal immigrants on Pakistani soil a threat to the country.

The report says that 1.7 million Afghans are living in the country illegally without any proof and registration.

"Pakistan is not the only country which has decided to evict illegal Afghan nationals," it says, adding, "Iran, too, in 2021 had ordered over one million Afghans to leave the country."

Afghan nationals living in Pakistan have been facing the ire of the authorities after the apex committee a few weeks ago asked them to leave the country by October 31 or else face the music.

The decision was taken in view of their participation in incidents of violence of May 9 as well as involvement in incidents of terrorism.



KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-i-Islami Siraj ul Haq addresses "Al Aqsa Palestine March" organized by JI at Shahrah-e-Faisal.

Caretaker CM Punjab calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar. During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the province, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Dr Shamshad Akhtar meets UAE Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar on Sunday met with Minister of State for Financial Affairs of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohamed bin Hadi Al Hussaini and discussed matters relating to the mutual interest. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund at Marrakech, said a press release issued here.

The discussion focused on further strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and the UAE, exploring avenues for enhanced cooperation in finance and revenue matters, promoting investment and mutual economic growth.

Sirajul Haq urges Muslim rulers to act before Gaza faces desolation

KARACHI (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq stated Sunday Israel and the United States will encounter a fate similar to that of NATO and Russian forces in Afghanistan.

The JI chief, while addressing the participants of the Palestine March, affirmed that Muslim rulers should not wait until Gaza was reduced to rubble, urging them to take immediate action to prevent such a dire outcome. Haq asserted that the people of Pakistan had demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the Palestine cause, stressing that this spirit had the potential to challenge Israel and America.

The JI chief urged Army Chief Gen Asim Munir to consider the consequences of remaining silent in the face of

world events, cautioning that silence might be construed as support for America.

Haq stressed the need for action to safeguard Al-Aqsa Mosque, citing Saudi Arabia's decision to sever ties with Israel and the budding diplomatic contacts between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"Now, it's our turn to contribute what we can. It's time we protect Gaza," avowed the JI chief while highlighting the urgency of the situation. He expressed that the death of honor was preferable to a life of humiliation.

He preached to the participants of the march the insignificance of worldly life in comparison to the hereafter, and argued that the Palestinian mujahideen held the right to protect the Al-Aqsa Mosque by all means.

Indian youth arrested for 'illegally crossing' into RYK

RAHIM YAR KHAN (INP): The local authorities have arrested an Indian youth for allegedly crossing the border into Rahim Yar Khan.

Reportedly, 17-year-old Bipin allegedly entered the Pakistani side of the border from Rajasthan, India late on October 13. Bipin was arrested by

the Cholistan Rangers and an FIR registered against him on Saturday. He was handed over to the Islamgarh police station for further action.

The FIR was registered against him under the Foreigners Act 1946 and upon searching 110 Indian rupee notes seized from his possession.

Aneeq warns against undermining youth with religious misconceptions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed expressed concerns over certain elements attempting to sow doubts and misconceptions among the nation's youth. Addressing students in a recent event at Rawalpindi Arts Council, organized by the Sufia Sweet Home, he emphasized the need for young individuals to be equipped with knowledge

and wisdom to tackle contemporary challenges. Minister Aneeq stressed the importance of fostering a strong connection with Almighty Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). He outlined the three phases of the life of the Prophet (PBUH) as the pursuit of truth, its proclamation, and its implementation, paralleling these phases to Allama Iqbal's poetry and the interpretation of

Quranic verses. He noted that the Holy Quran holds the solution to all of humanity's issues. The minister also pointed out that Muslims should not only be social workers but also leaders. He highlighted the significance of a united Islamic community and noted that Muslims constitute 25 per cent of humanity, making their global impact undeniable.

Cylinder explosion at F-7 CNG station leaves two dead

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a devastating incident at a CNG station in sector F-7 of Islamabad, a cylinder explosion rocked the area leaving two women dead and injuries to two others including a child.

According to police and eyewitness accounts, the explosion occurred as gas was being filled into a vehicle, causing immediate panic and injuries to four

persons including two women and a child.

Law enforcement authorities swiftly responded to the scene, coordinating the rapid transfer of all four injured individuals to the nearest hospital for urgent medical attention. Despite the concerted efforts of medical staff, the two women, critically wounded in the blast, tragically succumbed to their injuries.



ISLAMABAD: Women participants enjoying during 16th annual Rural Women Leadership Conference, in connection with International Day of Rural Women, at Lok Virsa in Federal Capital.

REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

15 DAYS REMAINING

15

in f @ GovtOfPakistan

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Dirty energy

Sindh Industry Minister Younus Dagher's recent call for the 'aggressive' use of coal in the country's energy mix — given its low cost — is problematic on several counts. Although affordability is an important consideration for a financially strapped country like Pakistan, reliance on coal would be worrisome given the environmental implications. Coal is considered the dirtiest of all fossil fuels. When burned, it produces sulphuric acid and nitric acid which cause acid rain and other forms of pollution. Coal also produces the least energy for every CO2 molecule it emits into the atmosphere, thus enhancing the greenhouse effect and leading to global warming. Even if we consider Mr Dagher's argument that after the Ukraine war, Europe, China and the US increased their coal dependence, comparing Pakistan's carbon footprint to larger nations can be a misleading premise. Just because our footprint is 'miniscule' in comparison, it shouldn't give us a free pass to increase it further. And while it is easy to point out that growing economies such as India and China are heavy coal users, it must also be considered they are actively exploring and investing in renewable energy to shed their reliance on coal. Pakistan should focus on harnessing the vast potential of its own renewable resources.

It is heartening to note that according to the 10-year Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan, the country aims to produce 60pc of electricity through non-fossil fuels by 2030. However, maximising the use of coal for the remaining 40pc would nullify these very efforts. Given our potential in hydel, wind and solar energy — with hydel already contributing 37.6pc to the energy mix according to August data — these indigenous, renewable sources should be further explored and optimised. While coal might offer a temporary economic respite, the environmental repercussions are far-reaching and long-term. Pakistan must carve out an energy strategy that not only caters to its immediate needs but also ensures a green and sustainable future. Published in Dawn, October 15th, 2023.



By Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Of late, there has been a rapid growth of think tanks in Pakistan. These organisations carry out policy-related research and are a platform for dialogue to facilitate informed decision-making. The growing community of think tanks in Pakistan is linked to the larger global research community. According to the Global Go To Think Tank Report 2020, published by the Think Tank and Civil Society Programme (TTCSPP) of the University of Pennsylvania, there are 11,175 think tanks in the world, more than half of them in North America and Europe. The US has 1,872, the highest number for any country, according to Statista, a global data and business intelligence platform. Washington, DC, alone houses 397.

While some US think tanks have a longer history like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (established in 1910) and the Brookings Institution (1916), 58 per cent of American think tanks were founded in the last 25 years, according to TTCSPP's programme director, Prof McGann.

Asia is catching up, as manifested by a dramatic rise in the number of think tanks since the dawn of the 21st century. Some have become iconic names in the research community, such as the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, which is a composite of 15 institutes, and India's Observation Research Foundation.

In Pakistan, most think tanks are sponsored

by the government while some operate with assistance from institutional or private donors, exercising considerable autonomy. The new trend is for Pakistani universities to establish research institutes as an integral part of their academic programmes. Most think tanks in Pakistan deal with strategic studies, while some focus on sectoral issues.

As elsewhere in the world, input from think tanks is increasingly engaging the attention of public policy practitioners in Pakistan. The Brookings Institution published a book titled The Fifth Estate: Think Tanks, Public Policy, and Governance in 2016, arguing that think tanks constitute the fifth estate, the other four being the clergy, nobility, labour, and the press.

However, in Pakistan, academia and the research community often complain that their research work is not being utilised by the government to reform public policies, while government functionaries feel their time is spent mostly firefighting and handling the information overload rather than benefiting from the research community's creative work. They also don't find research products created by academia attractive enough because most research papers are voluminous and follow tedious research methodologies.

Think tanks are, therefore, increasingly producing short and understandable policy briefs to get information "in the right form, in the right hands, at the right time", thus effectively influencing public policy, a key aim for them. In that sense, they are a useful bridge between the government and academia.

In the age of social media, AI, and big data, information flows can be overwhelming. Political leaders and other policymakers tend to absorb

only concise pointed messaging. Public and private donors also provide funding only for project-specific ideas. However, the information age can be transformative if data is handled well. For instance, ideas generated by some think tanks influence public policy in a revolutionary manner. Some research articles, such as 'End of History' or 'Clash of Civilisations' generated debate amongst academics as well as policy practitioners in nearly every country.

More recently, the US National Security Strategy of December 2017, which announced strategic competition with China as its top priority, was preceded by a flurry of research articles on spheres of influence and even a 2017 book *Destined for War* by Graham Allison. Likewise, considerable research work on climate change has influenced global action on mitigating its adverse impacts. Given that Pakistan is confronted with monumental political, economic and social challenges, new ideas and out-of-the-box thinking are crucial. The National Security Policy announced in January 2022 had embraced many of the ideas discussed in various think tank settings. It would be important to rejuvenate the waning enthusiasm of many think tanks which were ready to build on the six-point agenda of the NSP.

Pakistan's think tanks and academia need to persevere in generating ideas that can pull the country out of testing times. Government-sponsored think tanks should not spend their energies validating the official narrative but focus on creating ideas that can galvanise national potential in a country that has a rich civilisational, religious and archaeological heritage. — Courtesy Dawn

Revolt of the hopeless



By Abbas Nasir

Since 2008, UN figures show that some 250 Israelis and over 5,500 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip, which equals a ratio of one Israeli to 22 Palestinians killed during the occupation. (It is safe to assume that most of the deaths occurred during military operations.)

If this ratio does not tell the story then the number of wounded would, as that figure is staggeringly worse. You can google the graph as also a related graphic which shows the progressive expansion of the occupation since the Nakba (the catastrophe — of expulsion) in 1948.

Neither fact is surprising because Israel's Western backers, particularly in the US, have armed it with state-of-the-art weaponry, which far exceeds the arsenals of even the most powerful militaries in the Middle East, let alone ragtag Palestinian militant groups. Israel's military superiority is so overwhelming that it may have sapped any desire for a peace deal based on the return of some Palestinian land for a separate Arab homeland in return for security guarantees for the Jewish state.

In addition, unconditional US support has emboldened extreme right-wing Israeli political parties in power, including the one headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to rely only on military solutions and continue with the unabated expansion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land. — Courtesy Dawn

This expansion has seen centuries-old Palestinian olive farms and agricultural fields obliterated and concrete poured down their natural water sources to seal them, under the eye of the heavily armed soldiers of the Israeli Defence Forces.

Palestinians have also been forced out of their homes during the ongoing expansion which has taken the Jewish settlement population to about 700,000. These settlements are emerging all over Israel whose 9.3 million people have over 21,000 square kilometres to inhabit.

The settlers, who are all heavily armed, treat the Palestinians in the same manner as occupation forces treat the vanquished. This is seen not only in the case of the settlements but of late also in the access to Al Aqsa Mosque. It is an unbearable daily humiliation.

Gaza is 365 square kilometres — 41km long and 12km at its widest, shrinking to 6km for a long stretch. It is fenced in on three sides and faces the Mediterranean Sea on its west. Squeezed into this 'strip' are the homes of 2.2m Palestinians.

The Jewish state's sense of military superiority and the impunity with which the US and some Western allies almost unconditionally back it, regardless of the nature of its transgressions, such as the rapid expansion of settlements in recent years, seem to have led to hubris.

For what else could explain what the militant group Hamas was able to do last week? No, this is by no means to endorse the killing of unarmed civilians. Israel has long prided itself on its exceptional intelligence, proudly claiming to have penetrated the ranks of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad and having a plethora of information about their plans, capabilities etc. If the scale and

brutality of the Hamas blitz had not shocked the Israeli nation and forced it to close ranks, accusations would have reached a crescendo by now and heads may have rolled. It was a massive intelligence failure.

If a survey in Saturday's Jerusalem Post is an accurate representation of the sentiment in Israel, once Israel's military retribution phase is over, during which Palestinians — overwhelmingly the civilian population, half of whom consist of children — are being targeted, Netanyahu's and his allies' political career may be in jeopardy as they are being blamed squarely for the Oct 7 events.

And if the ferocity of the Hamas attacks, which targeted unarmed civilians, besides military establishments, were not enough on their own, the propaganda war that was unleashed drowned out any sane voice in the outrage over unsubstantiated claims, regurgitated by no less than US President Joe Biden, that babies were beheaded and burned.

A week on, the global outrage over the Hamas atrocities is being slightly tempered with a realisation in some Western capitals, most notably Washington, DC, that their full support to Israel in the latter's 'self-defence' actions may destabilise the region if Israel tries to achieve its historical kill ratio of 1:22. It has overwhelming numerical and technological superiority over the Palestinians. Some right-wing Israelis have hinted at "cleansing" Gaza of Palestinians. I know of several who have decided to stay on in the north, saying they have nowhere to go and they won't facilitate a second Nakba. Like you, I watch in horror. The images are heartbreaking. Humanity seems dead. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

GCC states attain remarkable 7.3% GDP growth in 2022

MARRAKESH (SPA/APP): The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, emphasized that despite economic disruptions, policymakers in GCC countries have successfully alleviated the economic consequences of these challenges.

The GCC nations experienced substantial growth in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reaching 7.3% in 2022.

Al-Budaiwi's remarks came while attending the Arab Governors' meeting with the President of the World Bank Group, Ajay Banga. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the

annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank on Saturday in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco. During his speech, the GCC Secretary-General emphasized that economic challenges present a risk to the mutual objective of a poverty-free world characterized by sustainable development and widespread prosperity. He pointed out that the global economy is currently traversing a precarious course, with the World Bank forecasting a substantial deceleration in global economic growth in the years ahead.

Al-Budaiwi also underscored that tackling global challenges demands a dedication to shared values and objectives, recognizing that the interdependence of nations necessitates collaborative efforts and synergy. Furthermore, he emphasized that global economic challenges call for sustainable solutions to alleviate their impact. This, he said, can be achieved through collective actions and measures taken by the international community, in cooperation with global financial institutions, as well as through bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries and international

organizations. These efforts are essential to secure a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable global future, he noted. Concluding his remarks, Al-Budaiwi praised the advancements resulting from the structural reforms implemented by GCC countries in response to economic challenges. These reforms have yielded favourable outcomes, including economic growth, an improved business environment, increased competitiveness, and a substantial rise in women's workforce participation. Furthermore, the non-oil sector experienced a notable increase of 4.8% in 2022.

These efforts are essential to secure a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable global future, he noted. Concluding his remarks, Al-Budaiwi praised the advancements resulting from the structural reforms implemented by GCC countries in response to economic challenges. These reforms have yielded favourable outcomes, including economic growth, an improved business environment, increased competitiveness, and a substantial rise in women's workforce participation. Furthermore, the non-oil sector experienced a notable increase of 4.8% in 2022.



Marrakech: Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar held a meeting with a high-level delegation of Moody's, the global financial services company, during her visit to Morocco for the annual meeting of WB/IMF. During the meeting, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar reiterated the government's commitment to transparency in order to foster investor confidence and maintaining a positive credit rating of Pakistan in the global financial markets.



SWAT: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing office bearers of Chamber of Commerce & Industry and trader community during his visit of Swat.

New representative body registered to further cause, interests of industrialists

PESHAWAR (APP): The industrialists of Peshawar have registered a new representative body named Hayatabad Industrialist Association Peshawar to further the cause of stakeholders and to give them a proper platform to inform authorities about their issues.

The Hayatabad Industrialist Association (HIA) has been registered with Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa in greater interest of industrialists and registration certificate has been received by former President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Muhammad Ishaq. In a statement issued here on Sunday, Muhammad Ishaq who is also group leader expressed gratitude to industrialists and said their cooperation and continuous support helped in materializing of this achievement.

Pakistan's exports to China surged by 100%

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's exports to China in September 2023 have surged by an impressive 100.5% compared to the corresponding month during the previous financial year, according to the Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP)'s latest report. The total value of Pakistan's exports to China in September 2023 amounted to \$350.2 million, marking a robust 100.5% increase.

Govt offers easy loans to SMEs to boost economy

MULTAN (APP): About 5.2 million Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in strengthening the country's economy by contributing 40 percent of exports and job opportunities to 78% industrial workers.

This was stated by Assistant Director State Bank of Pakistan Kiran Amjid while addressing an awareness seminar, arranged by All Pakistan Bed Sheets and Upholstery

Association in collaboration with a leading private bank.

Ms. Amjid passionately pointed out that out of the colossal 5.2 million SMEs operating in the country, merely six to seven percent are currently benefiting from loans provided by financial institutions. She emphatically emphasized that this number could soar to new heights, allowing these SMEs to further amplify their businesses.

Railways earn over Rs 6 million from saloons

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has generated revenue worth Rs 6,340,156 million through utilizing its 23 saloons and inspection coaches for commercial purposes, during the last three and half years.

"At present, Pakistan Railways has only 23 saloons and inspection coaches with different dignitaries of the country who are entitled to use

these saloons when needed," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

Giving the details, he said, "Two highly luxurious coaches have been allocated for the Prime Minister's Secretariat while four coaches have been allocated for the Minister for Railways, Secretary/Chairman of Railways, and another senior official in the ministry."

Punjab CM, Federal Food minister agree to stabilize cotton price

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Abdullah Kausar Malik on Sunday met caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and exchanged views on steps aimed at increasing yield of Rabi and Kharif crops.

According to official sources, Dr Abdullah Kausar Malik congratulated the Punjab CM on record production of cotton in Punjab.

The prices of wheat and other commodities were discussed while proposal to keep wheat price same was reviewed.

Special steps for keeping cotton price stable was also discussed. There was a consensus to keep price of cotton stable through support of Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP).

The CM said that stability in cotton prices was essential for providing reasonable return to cotton

growers. He said the federal government should play its role in stabilizing cotton price by purchasing cotton through TCP.

Good yield of cotton was welcoming and value-added products would help in fetching good amount of forex, he added. Federal minister Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik said that releasing of sewerage water in River Ravi, canals and other rivers was harmful for water inhabitants and environment.

LESCO recovers Rs 830m from defaulters

LAHORE (INP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has recovered over Rs 830 million from over 26000 defaulters in its five districts during a recovery campaign.

According to a statement issued by LESCO spokesperson, the campaign was launched under the direction of Chief Executive Engineer of LESCO Shahid Haider and was assisted by Tehsiladars in all five districts.

Gems & Jewelry Show set to attract potential investors: experts

LAHORE (APP): Experts believe that the Gems and Jewelry Show 2024 would be a lead to the showcase of precious stones and gems in the international market.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, they said the aim of the event is to promote mineral and mining part of Pakistan, which is enriched with 80 per cent of Pakistan's mineral base and this exhibition is expected to

play a major role in exploring the mineral potential of the country.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said the role of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is commendable in bringing all related trade bodies on one platform and supporting Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to organise a suitable show to attract foreign investors and buyers.

Italian ambassador, Punjab CM discuss trade, investment

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Italy Mr. Andreas Ferrarese met with Punjab Caretaker Minister Mohsin Naqvi at Punjab House, Islamabad. Matters pertaining to enhancing cooperation in culture, tourism and trade sectors were discussed. Steps with regard to exchanging a great number of trade and cultural delegations were also discussed, said a handout issued here on Sunday. The Italian ambassador also reiterated his resolve to continue supporting Pakistan for acquiring extension in the GSP+ status. Mohsin Naqvi thanked the Italian ambassador for his country's support for Pakistan. "Pakistan and Italy are friendly countries and time has arrived to transform their friendship into a fruitful economic relationship," he added. He highlighted that cultural and trade sectors were interlinked, adding that the Punjab government aspired to further enhance its collaboration with Italy in the sectors. "We welcome the Italian cooperation for imparting training to police liaison officers" he said. He maintained that a proactive role by the Trade Commission was significant for enhancing trade along with providing ease in acquiring work visas. "We are launching a one-window operation for the promotion of investment in Punjab," he said, adding that Italian investors should visit Punjab and the government would provide them all possible facilitation.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali distributing appreciation certificates among participants of a ceremony organized by All Private Sector Universities Pakistan (ASUP) at Governor House.

Foolproof security ensured for Christian worship places

LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of Inspector General Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, foolproof security was provided to Christian worship programs in churches across the province including Lahore on Sunday. Police teams were on high alert and performed their duties for the provision of peaceful environment to the Christian citizens. Earlier, the IG Punjab had ordered security arrangements for churches and said that SPs and supervisory officers should check the security arrangements for churches and important places by themselves, additional police personnel and snipers should be deployed at sensitive churches. Dolphin squad, PRU, elite teams should do effective patrolling around the churches, IG Punjab said and directed that police officers and men posted on security should be on high alert, keep a close watch on evil elements around churches.

Vote casting is national obligation, Zia-ur-Rahim

MARDAN (APP): District Election Commission Officer Mardan Zia-ul-Rahim said that vote casting is not just a necessity but it is a national obligation of every citizen to choose the best candidate. For the benefit of the nation, he said that according to the constitution of Pakistan, women, men, youth, disabled persons, transgender and minorities, all have equal rights to vote. Raise awareness that they should register their vote before the elections and use it properly during the elections.

Punjab, Sindh CMs discuss mutual strategy for cotton prices

LAHORE (APP): Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Maqbool Baqar met with Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi at Punjab House, Islamabad, on Sunday. Essential steps to bring stability in the cotton price were discussed during the meeting, said a handout issued here. It was decided during the meeting to contact the federal government to bring stability in the cotton price. Both chief ministers agreed that farmers in Sindh and Punjab would be facilitated in obtaining real profit of their crop and the Prime Minister would be formally requested for purchasing cotton through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan. CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that farmers of Sindh and Punjab should not at all sell their cotton crops at a low price. "We will not let the labour of farmers go waste" he added. Naqvi vowed that Punjab and Sindh would take every possible measure in this regard.

3,953 FIRs, 1,131 tickets issued for violating dengue SOPs

RAWALPINDI (INP): As many as 3,953 FIRs had been registered on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from January 1 to date in various areas of the Rawalpindi district, said District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood here Sunday. Giving details of the penalty actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had sealed 607 premises, issued tickets to 1,131 and a fine of Rs 73,26,000 was imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023. Dr Sajjad informed that around 1,855 confirmed cases had been reported in the district this year, while the number was 738 in 2021, and 3,507 in 2022 during the period. The health officer further stated that presently 126 patients were admitted to the district's hospitals.

184 new infections reported in Punjab

LAHORE (INP): As many as 184 new dengue fever cases were reported in Punjab on Sunday, according to the latest data from the Health Department. This year has seen a concerning rise in dengue cases, with a total of 6,615 confirmed cases across 36 districts in Punjab. Lahore leads the tally with 2,624 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 1,842 cases, Multan with 716, Gujranwala with 392, and Faisalabad with 287 cases.

Turbat attack injured labourers brought to Multan hospital

MULTAN (INP): Two injured labourers of Turbat attack have been brought back to Multan and admitted at Nishtar Hospital on Sunday. Gunmen had killed six and injured two labourers in Balochistan's Turbat city in an overnight attack. Two injured have been brought back in a special flight to Multan, assistant commissioner said. Injured labourers have been identified as Mohammad Toheed from Narowal and Ghulam Mohammad from Shuja Abad. "Both of them being provided medical attendance at hospital," the official added. Commissioner Multan Amir Khattak on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has contacted Balochistan provincial administration for return of mortal remains of six slain labourers from Turbat. Punjab CM had directed the Commissioner to arrange return of the labourers in personal supervision. Local officials said that the attack took place in Satellite area of Turbat city. The accused entered in the under-construction house of a local contractor Naseer and committed the heinous crime leaving six labourers dead and two injured, police officials said.

Dr. Jamal emphasizes empowering special persons

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr. Jamal Nasir highlighted the government's commitment to enhancing services for persons with disabilities in his address at an event marking "World White Cane Safety Day," here on Sunday. He emphasized the remarkable progress made in this regard, stating that individuals with disabilities have demonstrated their capabilities across various aspects of life. Over recent years, concerted efforts in Pakistan have aimed to empower persons with disabilities, making them more productive citizens, he added.

Inter-Universities Skit Competition to Mark Global Hand washing Day

PESHAWAR (Online): The Local Government Department's Water and Sanitation Cell (WatSan), in collaboration with the University of Peshawar, UNICEF, and other sector partners will hold the Inter-Universities Skit Competition, an event that aims to raise awareness about Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WatSan) issues and their possible solutions, in commemoration of Global Handwashing Day on 17th October 2023 in Agha Khan Auditorium University of Peshawar. According to the issued press release, seven universities from Peshawar, Mardan and Charsadda are participating in the inaugural round. Furthermore, they will creatively communicate vital ideas about water, sanitation, hygiene, and the importance of handwashing in preventing disease by utilizing the art form of skits. Furthermore, the competition will not only showcase the talents of the students but also serve as a platform for advocating for better hygiene practices. Likewise, the event will be attended by students, sector partners, and media representatives, all of whom will play an integral role in furthering the cause of clean water, improved sanitation, and enhanced hygiene practices.



HYDERABAD: Human Rights Activist Sadia Baloch, Shahnaz Sheedi, Ghufra Araeen Cotton Workers Partee and Bakhtawar site stage during Women Climate assembly during World International Rural Women day organized by Sindh Community foundation at Sindh Language Authority.

International News

US secretary of state meets Saudi crown prince in Riyadh amid Israel-Gaza war

Monitoring Desk RYADH: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has been busy on a crisis tour of the Middle East for this week, sought support on Sunday from Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, who has warm ties with Israel but has delayed normalisation. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the senior US diplomat had a nearly hour-long early morning meeting at the royal's property near Riyadh, according to a US official. "Very productive," Blinken said when asked about the meeting after returning to his hotel. Blinken has been touring the region after Hamas fighters attacked and entered Israel from the blockaded Gaza Strip on October 7 and killed 1,300 people, mostly civilians, AFP reported. The attack sparked a massive retaliation campaign targeting Hamas in Gaza that resulted in the killing of more than 2,300 people. For the past few months, before the violence in the Gaza Strip region started, the Saudi crown prince had spoken of progress in US-led diplomacy to normalise relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saudi Arabia has put the process on hold after the violence, and Blinken has said that disrupting Saudi-Israeli normalisation efforts may have partly motivated the Hamas attack. The kingdom is home to Islam's two holiest sites, making recognition a historic coup for Israel, which in 2020 normalised relations with three other Arab states, according to AFP. As part of a package, Saudi Arabia — which like Israel has tense relations with Iran — has been seeking security guarantees from the United States, its long-time partner and consumer of its oil. However, Prince Mohammed is deeply controversial in the United States, where intelligence linked him to the 2018 killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a US-based Saudi journalist, which Riyadh has denied, blaming rogue operatives.



People hold a demonstration in support of Palestinians in New York City.

Putin says Russian forces improving positions along front line in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said Russian forces have bolstered their positions along the entire front line in Ukraine after what he said was the failure of Ukraine's counter-offensive this year. Putin's decision in 2022 to send tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine started a war that has left swathes of Ukraine devastated and hundreds of thousands of people dead or injured. Russia currently controls about 17.5% of Ukrainian territory and a four-month-old Ukrainian counter-offensive this year by Moscow. President Vladimir Putin said Russian forces have bolstered their positions along the entire front line in Ukraine after what he said was the failure of Ukraine's counter-offensive this year. While Ukraine took back territory taken by Russia last year, the Ukrainian army has struggled to penetrate Russian lines which have been bolstered with minefields and thousands of extra Russian troops. "As for the counter-offensive, which is allegedly stalling, it has failed," Putin said in video remarks posted to social media by Kremlin journalist Pavel Zarubin.



Palestinians queue as they wait to fill cans with fuel, amid shortages of fuel, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues, at a petrol station in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

At least 2 dead, over 100 wounded as earthquake jolts Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk KABUL: A powerful 6.3-magnitude earthquake has hit western Afghanistan, killing at least two people and wounding more than 100 others, in the same region where thousands of people died in tremors last week. According to the US Geological Survey, the latest quake's epicentre was about 21 miles (34km) outside Herat, the provincial capital. The quake hit just after 8:00am (0330 GMT). The aid group Doctors Without Borders said two people were reported dead while Herat regional hospital received more than 100 people injured in Sunday's quake. Residents in the city of Herat had just begun returning to their homes again when the quake hit, after days of sleeping outside fearing aftershocks from last week's tremors. "Herat's people are panicked and scared," said 27-year-old shopkeeper Hamid Nizami.

UAE and South Korea complete talks for trade deal

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and South Korea have concluded talks towards a bilateral trade deal, known as a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the two countries said on Saturday. Trade and investment ties between the Gulf state and South Korea have been steadily advancing; in the first half of 2023, bilateral non-oil trade reached \$3 billion, similar to the same period last year, but up 21pc over 2021, a statement said. The Korea Electric Power Corporation and a consortium of Korean firms also constructed all four units of the \$20 billion nuclear Barakah Power Plant in Abu Dhabi, which became operational in April this year, to help support the UAE's domestic electricity needs. South Korea was one of the first countries with which the Gulf state launched talks for a CEPA in 2021. Three months later however, the Asian state revived dormant Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council bloc, of which the UAE is a member. "We resumed talks with Korea earlier this year as we were both keen to conclude a deal and advance our respective economic agendas," Thani Al Zeyoudi, UAE minister of foreign trade, said, adding the GCC FTA talks remained ongoing. "There were about 178 South Korean firms doing businesses in the UAE as of 2022, and the Korea-UAE CEPA would enhance stability of South Korean firms entering into the UAE, while it would also support South Korean firms' activities in the Middle East and North Africa," South Korea's trade ministry said in a statement.



United Arab Emirates' Minister of Foreign Trade Thani Al Zeyoudi and South Korea's Trade Minister Dukgeun Ahn meet in Seoul, South Korea.

France to deploy 7,000 soldiers after teacher's fatal stabbing

Monitoring Desk PARIS: France said it will deploy 7,000 soldiers after declaring a top-level alert following the fatal stabbing of a teacher by a Chechen-origin man, who also severely wounded three others at a school. The attack took place in the northeastern town of Arras, home to large Jewish and Muslim populations. Police arrested the suspected attacker, Mohammed Moguchkov, who had cried the Arabic phrase "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest), according to the preliminary el-

55 US lawmakers want Israel to follow laws

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: As many as 55 US lawmakers have sent a letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, calling for Israeli military operations to follow the rules of international humanitarian law, and urging the Biden administration to continue working towards peace in the region. "We strongly believe that Israel's response must take into account the millions of innocent civilians in Gaza who themselves are victims of Hamas and are suffering the consequences of their terror campaign," said the letter, which was released to the media by Congressional Progressive Caucus Chairwoman Pramila Jayapal. Fellow Democratic lawmakers — Jan Schakowsky, Mark Pocan and Jim McGovern — joined Congresswoman Jayapal in initiating the letter, which also condemns "the terrorist attacks by Hamas on the people of Israel." This letter noted that more than 1,800 Palestinians in Gaza and more than 1,300 Israelis have already died in the ongoing conflict while more than 423,000 people have been displaced across the Gaza Strip.

Egypt's President Sisi in talks to get aid to Gaza, presidency says

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Egypt's president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is in talks with international and regional partners to enable aid deliveries into Gaza and to de-escalate the fighting there, his office said on Sunday. Israeli bombardments on the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing into Egypt, the main crossing out of Gaza not controlled by Israel, have disrupted operations there. Aid from several countries has been building up at Egypt's Sinai peninsula due to a failure to reach a deal enabling its safe delivery to Gaza.

Thousands rally in London, New York in solidarity with Palestinians

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Thousands of people rallied on Saturday in London and other UK cities for pro-Palestinian protests, amid police warnings that anyone showing support for Hamas could face arrest. Attendees, who marched through the heart of the British capital as well as Manchester in northern England, Edinburgh in Scotland and other cities, were shadowed by a heavy police presence. Some held Palestinian flags and placards — bearing slogans including "freedom for Palestine", "end the massacre" and "sanctions for Israel" — as they made their way towards the end-point for planned speeches. Chants of "Rishi Sunak, shame on you" could be heard. "I think all just people around the world, not just in Britain, must stand up and call for this madness (to end)," Ismail Patel, chairman of the Friends of Al Aqsa campaign, said. In New York City, thousands rallied to show solidarity with Palestinians and draw attention to Israeli airstrikes in Gaza. Demonstrations occurred in various city neighbourhoods on Friday, where participants echoed the call for "Free Palestine" and an end to Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestinian territories.

Interaction between top leadership of China, Pakistan to propel bilateral ties to new heights: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has said that interaction in China between the top leadership of Pakistan and China would further enhance the bilateral relationship to the new heights as the caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar would leave for China tomorrow to participate in Belt and Road Forum being hosted by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

Speaking at a seminar "CPEC and My Life" the other day, the minister said he was happy to know that people from the gross-root level were invited to speak about the positive impact of the CPEC on their lives.

The people had immensely benefitted from various CPEC projects such as Orange Train in Lahore, Thar Coal in Sindh and Gawadar in Balochistan, he added.

Talking about the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council by Pakistan to provide one-window facilities to the investors, the minister said that as the CPEC was entering into the new phase, adding Pakistan was keenly looking forward for more and more bilateral cooperation in mining, agriculture, IT and other sectors.

He said enhancement of geographical linkages through improved road, rail and air transportation system would boost frequent people-to-people contacts and enhance understanding through academic linkages.

The higher volume of trade and businesses would result into integrated development which would eventually promote, harmony and sustainable development, he added.

"CPEC is the journey towards economic growth in the globalized world", he maintained.

Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong expressed his country's readiness to further promote CPEC in partnership with Pakistan, adding "We are ready to work with our Pakistani colleagues from all walks of life to further promote the projects in the next ten years of CPEC."

"What was agreed between President Xi Jinping and the Pakistani leaders for a high-quality sustainable and enhanced cooperation and support in the fields of security and development, we can implement with mutual consensus", he said.

The ambassador was of the view that Pakistan and China could jointly make the CPEC, a corridor of love and peace.

He said that mutual cooperation in new fields such as industry, agriculture, mining, science and technology and IT sectors could be increased.

"Thus a new chapter can be added in the CPEC which will bring the people of China and Pakistan closer to each other in the common future", Jiang Zaidong maintained.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted petrol pump at Melody in Federal Capital, As Petrol prices drop below Rs290 per litre, in Pakistan, an anticipated move in response to global oil price fluctuations.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki getting detail of Turbat firing incident from relatives of labourers

14 nation air exercise, Indus Shield-2023, in full swing at PAF operational air base

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Air Force (PAF)'s 14 nation air exercise, Indus Shield 2023, is in full swing at an operational air base of PAF.

The top-notch exercise stands out as one of the mega aerial warfare exercises of the region and is marked as a significant milestone in the realization of PAF's commitment to enhance its aerial capabilities alongside bolstering international cooperation, a PAF news release said.

The participation of the exercise encompasses

fighter jets alongside pilots, ground crew and Air Defence Controllers from the leading Air Forces of the world.

Indus Shield-2023 has brought together elite air forces from 14 countries and will serve as a platform to showcase their professional prowess.

The participating nations include Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Egypt, Oman, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Morocco, Uzbekistan, China and Hungary.

Caretaker PM takes notice of purchase price of cotton crop

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday took notice of purchase of cotton yield below the prices fixed by the government to support the farmers and directed Trading Corporation of Pakistan to take cognizance of the issue and submit a report in this regard.

The government had fixed prices of the cotton crop, but it was being observed that the crop was

purchased below the fixed minimum price at some places, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that yielding of bumper cotton crop was a blessing for the country and its maximum profit should be reaped by the farmers. The government had clear instructions over its purchase price so that the farmers' community could be protected against any losses, he added.

Use of principle of universal jurisdiction must be in line with int'l law: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Emphasizing that the principle of universal jurisdiction not be viewed as a license to infringe upon state sovereignty, Pakistan has said its application should be in compliance with international law and the UN Charter.

Speaking in the United Nations General Assembly's Sixth (Legal) Committee, Ambassador Usman Iqbal Jadoon, Deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, the principle of universal jurisdiction, in fact, was a call for the cessation of impunity, to ensure that jurisdictional loopholes are not exploited as a means to dodge justice.

(The principle of universal jurisdiction allows any state to investigate and prosecute people for serious international crimes

even if they were committed in another country.)

Participating in a debate on "The scope and application of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction", the Pakistani envoy said this principle was not a primary form of jurisdiction, but to be invoked only under exceptional circumstances.

"Universal jurisdiction is supplementary to territorial and national jurisdictions, not a replacement for them," he said, adding that emphasis should be placed on domestic legal remedies, which should always be the first line of response.

Universal jurisdiction should only apply to severe crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, which have international repercussions, Jadoon said.

Annual Rural Women Conference held Empowering rural women key for sustainable development: Raja

ISLAMABAD (Online): On this International Day for Rural Women, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that today, we celebrate and honor the invaluable contributions of rural women worldwide. Their dedication and hard work in agriculture, food security, poverty alleviation, and rural development are the backbone of sustainable progress.

Rural women play a crucial role in shaping our societies and economies. It is imperative that we not only recognize their pivotal contributions but also take concrete steps to ensure their well-being. This includes providing them with access to essential facilities, such as healthcare and education, which are vital for their empowerment and the progress of rural communities.

I would like to recall with pride that October 15 was declared 'National Day for Rural Women' back in 2009 by the then federal government. However, it is regrettable to note that the practice was discontinued later. Our joint endeavor should be to revive the tradition, hence bringing back

the focus on the challenges and contributions of rural women in social, economic and political landscape of Pakistan.

Let us renew our commitment to supporting rural women and acknowledge their resilience, strength, and determination in the face of challenges. Together, we can create a brighter and more equitable future for all, where the voices and contributions of rural women are valued and uplifted.

Meanwhile During the second session of the 1st day of 16th Annual Rural Women Conference held here in Islamabad, recognizing the alarming lack in birth registration of girl children and marginalized segments of the society, the speakers and the participants urged the government to devise effective mechanisms involving communities, while taking into account innovative solutions utilizing digital technologies.

Today (Sunday) is the 1st day of the conference. Every year 15 October is celebrated as international Rural Women Day according to the UN General Assembly's resolution A/

RES/62/136 of 18 December 2007.

Through the resolution, member states recognized the significance of the role that is played by the rural women admitting their contributions in rural development, improving food security and end poverty. On Tuesday 17th October, the conference will culminate on award ceremony and celebrating the successes of the rural women who are participating actively in the 3-day conference representing 150 plus districts of the country. PODA's 3-day conference is a regular feature in Islamabad since 2008. The theme of the ongoing conference is "Stop Child Marriages for Sustainable Development, Climate and Democracy". "Due to lack of official identity (ID) girls are deprived of their fundamental human rights including right to legal identity, citizenship, education, marriage, reproductive health, inheritance, government assistance, services and lead a dignified life as these are the rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan," said Sameena Nazir.

CDA retrieves 750 kanals land in Sector I-12

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has retrieved as many as 750 kanals of its precious land from the land grabbers in Sector I-12/1, 2 and 3 of the federal capital during the last week. "The authority has launched a comprehensive operation to curb encroachments in the federal capital on the directives of CDA Chairman Capt Anwar ul Haq," an official told APP on Sunday.

He said that the Enforcement Directorate of CDA had launched the operation in collaboration with

CTD releases list of most wanted 128 terrorists

PESHAWAR (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Sunday published the list of 128 more wanted criminals with the head money of each of the criminals enlisted in the released list.

The price on the head of wanted terrorists has also been fixed, along with the pictures, CNIC number, place, father record. The head money of the terrorists has been fixed from Rs. 300,000 to Rs. 10 million, the document issued by CTD here on Sunday.

Massive voter registration drive underway for upcoming General Elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 800,000 new voters are being enrolled by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in voter lists using data obtained on October 1, 2023, enabling them to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming general elections.

According to an ECP spokesperson, the Commission has already obtained data from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) on October 1, 2023, regarding individuals who received new computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs).

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has already removed restrictions on voter lists across the country. This allows eligible individuals to register, transfer, or correct their

votes until October 25.

The suspension of electoral rolls, enacted through clause 39 of the Election Act 2017, was in effect since July 20 this year.

Following the unfreezing of electoral lists, eligible individuals now have the opportunity to update their voter information.

He urged all eligible citizens to ensure the correctness of their voter registration, modifications, and transfers, and align their particulars with their computerized national identity card details by October 25, 2023.

Answering a question, he explained that the law mandates voter registration to align with an individual's permanent or current address, as indicated on their CNIC. Voting from a third address is prohibited.

Solangi meets Anchorperson Masood Raza to inquire after his health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday met Anchorperson of Dunya News Masood Raza to inquire after his health.

During the meeting, the minister inquired about Masood Raza's health and prayed for his speedy recovery, said a news statement.

Elimination of land-grabbing mafias is top priority: ICCPO

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Tarnol Police team has apprehended a land grabber during an operation against land grabbing mafias and recovered weapons with ammunition from his possession, a public Relation Officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has initiated a grand operation against land grabbers in the federal capital in order to eliminate this menace.

Following these directions the Tarnol police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending an

accused involved in illegal occupation of citizen's lands and harassment activities.

The accused was identified as Wali Khan. Police team also recovered weapons with ammunition from his possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that land grabbing activities would not be tolerated and indiscriminate action would continue against those who illegally occupy land of others. He thoroughly directed all zonal police officers to intensify this crackdown until the elimination of land grabbing from the federal capital.

Gunmen open fire on police patrol in Sector E-12

ISLAMABAD (APP): A police patrol from Golra police station came under gunfire from unidentified assailants on Saturday in Sector E-12 which later succeeded to arrest an injured attacker.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said. He said that during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about

the problems faced by the citizens. In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 167 house servants and tenants of 459 houses from Bhara Kahu Police Station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements involved in any kind of suspicious activity.



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Japanese Children Park in Federal capital.

Pakistan's crackdown on Afghan migrants: balancing security and refugee rights

By Mahmood Baloch Earlier this month, the Caretaker government issued an order mandating the departure of all "illegal" migrants. This directive has left millions in fear of being repatriated to the country they had fled. According to the United Nations, approximately 3.7 million Afghans, who have been escaping war, poverty, and political instability in their home country, currently reside in Pakistan. However, Islamabad's official estimate puts the number as high as 4.4 million.

Pakistani authorities argue that only around 1.4 million Afghans possess the necessary documentation, primarily the Proof of Registration (PoR) card, which permits them to re-

main legally in Pakistan. Essentially, the crackdown is aimed at addressing the issue of illegal immigration, targeting individuals who entered the country through unauthorized means and lack registered refugee documentation.

Regarding Balochistan, it ranks as the second-largest host province for refugees, housing 26% of the total Afghan refugee population after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

This crackdown serves the greater interests of both the host nation and the refugees, particularly in light of the upsurge in terrorism following the fall of Kabul in 2021. To illustrate, out of the 24 suicide attacks that have occurred thus far, 14 of the perpet-

trators have been identified as Afghan nationals. These individuals entered Pakistan through illegal means and settled in the country under the guise of being refugees, lacking any Proof of Registration (PoR) documentation. Incidents of this nature have raised doubts about the Afghan population residing in Pakistan. Those who are registered as refugees with complete documentation possess legal rights and refugee status, which makes them eligible to reside in Pakistan. In contrast, individuals lacking any form of documentation to substantiate their refugee status are subject to deportation.

Pakistan is not closing its doors to Afghan refu-

gees; rather, it will only admit those who undergo a registration process to enter the country legally, in accordance with established international refugee standards. This situation underscores the importance of striking a balance between security measures and humanitarian obligations. The upsurge in terrorism incidents involving some illegal Afghan residents has heightened the urgency of addressing these issues, but it is essential to distinguish between those who genuinely pose a threat and those who are fleeing dire circumstances.

The crackdown on illegal residents should serve as an opportunity for Pakistan to streamline its refugee policy, ensuring

that it aligns with international standards and respects the rights of registered refugees. The emphasis should be on providing a pathway for legal entry, which safeguards both the interests of the host nation and the well-being of refugees. It is crucial for Pakistan to continue extending a helping hand to Afghan refugees in their time of need while maintaining the rule of law and security within its borders.

Ultimately, the challenges surrounding Afghan migration to Pakistan are complex, but with thoughtful and comprehensive policies, the nation can navigate this issue while upholding its humanitarian values and maintaining its national security.