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Govt. believes in freedom of media as an 'important state pillar': PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said the government believed in the freedom of media and considered it an "important pillar of the state".

He expressed these views as Information Minister Murtaza Solangi called on him here at the PM House.

The meeting discussed the problems concerning the All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS), the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and the media industry.

PM Kakar on the occasion directed for resolving the legitimate demands of the media industry and taking necessary steps in that regard. He said he would continue his interactions with journalists and media persons. The meeting was attended by Federal Information Secretary Zahoor Ahmed, Principal Information Officer Tariq Mahmood Khan, and Managing Director Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Muhammad Asim Khichi.

Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said

the recently signed accords between Pakistan and China would open up new opportunities of employment and economic development for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The prime minister expressed these views as Chief Minister GB Gulbar Khan called on him here at the PM House.

The meeting discussed the memorandum of understanding signed during the prime minister's visit to China and other measures to further increase trade relations between GB and Xinjiang.

Difference of opinion hallmark of democracy, says Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that difference of opinion was a hallmark of democracy. Talking to media persons at the Parliament House after he met with the President Parliamentary Reporters Association Usman Khan and other journalists he said he belonged to the journalistic community.

"I have always been a supporter of freedom of expression and I am still fully committed to it," he added.

Stating that journalism and politics go hand in hand, he said he always had a respectful relationship with all the journalists.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Abdul Wali Khan Kakar and Provincial Ministers leading a rally in connection with Kashmir Black Day.



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Pakistan reaffirms support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD (INP): As the nation observes 'Kashmir Black Day' today, marking the 76 years of Indian armed forces' illegal occupation in Kashmir, President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi and Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar have assured the Kashmiri people of Pakistan's unwavering support for their legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination.

According to Kashmir Media Service, President Arif Alvi in his message said that October 27 1947 was one of the darkest days in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. "Over the last seventy-six years, India has not only reneged on its obligations to the people of Jammu

and Kashmir but has also disregarded multilateralism by backtracking on UNSC resolutions," he added.

He said the people of occupied Kashmir have endured endless oppression during this period, however, India has failed to weaken their resolve to realize their inalienable right to self-determination.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in his message noted that over the last 76 years, India had employed various methods to perpetuate its illegal rule over Kashmir. However, since Aug 5, 2019, there has been an intensified campaign to "Indianise" Kashmir and disempower the Kashmiri people in their own land, he lamented.

PM condoles death of China's ex-PM Li Keqiang

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday expressed deep sorrow and shock over the death of former Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.

"Our thoughts and sympathies are with Late Premier Li, his family and with the Chinese nation at this hour of grief," he posted on social media platform, X.

PM Kakar termed Li Keqiang "a great friend of Pakistan."

"We fondly remember his visit to Pakistan in 2013," he said.

China's former premier, Li Keqiang died of a sudden heart attack in Shanghai in the early hours on Friday morning, according to China's Xinhua news agency. He was 68.

Decision to deport 1.3m illegal immigrants to be implemented: Jan Achakzai

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Information Jan Achakzai on Friday said that the state would implement its decision to deport 1.3 million illegal immigrants with full force and no one would be allowed to enter Pakistan without valid visa.

Addressing a press conference, he said that action would be taken against those who had rented out their properties and provided shelter to illegal immigrants. Jan Achakzai ruled out the news to review the decision taken for the repatriation of undocumented immigrants and said that after the deadline, all relevant institutions will work to deport the unregistered immigrants.

He said that a control center would be established, in which officials of institutions concerns would be present.

The government will set up detention centers in Haji Camp Quetta, Chaman and Pishin to accommodate foreign nationals residing in the country without identity documents before deportation to their respective countries, he said and added that the illegal immigrants would be kept at these centres with respect and provided with meals and medical facilities.

He said a part from Chaman, crossing points are being opened in Killa Saifullah and Chagai to report illegal immigrants to Afghanistan.

Governor Balochistan says: Pakistan to continue supporting suppressed Kashmiris, Palestinians

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, reaffirmed the government's resolve to support the suppressed people of Kashmir and Palestine, urging immediate intervention by the international community and an end to gross human rights violations.

He was addressing the participants of a protest rally on Friday, which was organized to mark October 27 as the Black Day when the tyrant forces of India illegally occupied the then princely state of Kashmir in 1947.

The Governor of Balochistan said the provincial government is mourning the illegal occupation of fascist India by holding rallies, protest demonstrations, and other events, while calling on the UN and other civilized countries to stop the barbarism of the illegally occupied forces in IIOJK. "We also support the just demand of the people of Palestine and urge the international community to take notice of the looming humanitarian crisis and unjust blockade causing more deaths in Gaza," he emphasized.

Reiterating Pakistan's firm stance on the burning issues of Kashmir and Palestine, the governor said that Pakistan will continue its moral, political, and diplomatic support for the suppressed people of Kashmir and Palestine. The government of Pakistan has always raised its voice on every international forum, stressing the need for a resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with UNSC resolutions.

The tyranny of the occupied forces has crossed its limits, and now it is high time for the international community and champions of human rights to come forward and play their role in the permanent resolution of the issues faced by the innocent civilians in the illegally occupied regions.



QUETTA: Provincial Home Minister Mir Zubaid Khan Jamali presiding over a meeting regarding law and order

Illegal, Non-registered foreign persons to go home before dead line: Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti on Friday said that non-registered and illegal foreign persons will have to leave Pakistan before dead line.

We will launch operation against the illegal foreigners including Afghan people after the dead line of Oct 31, he said while talking to a private television channel.

In the second phase, he said crackdown will be made against the facilitators of illegal people in Pakistan.

Commenting on Afghan people doing business in this country, he said any body can do business in

Pakistan with valid documents. The Caretaker government will facilitate all the foreign investors in Pakistan, he added. About elections, he said, it is the duty of election commission of Pakistan to announce date for general elections. He said, we will provide security to ECP for holding next elections in a peaceful and transparent manner.

In reply to a question about facilities extended to Nawaz Sharif on arrival, he said that Caretaker government had provided maximum security to Ex Prime Minister to avoid any untoward incident on his arrival to hometown.

Senate passes resolution strongly reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Friday unanimously passed a resolution strongly reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for right to self-determination.

The resolution moved by Senator Kamil Ali Agha, reiterated Pakistan's moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people.

The resolution strongly condemned the Indian brutalities and killing of thousands of innocent Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

It urged the International community for the expeditious formation of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the gross human rights violation in IIOJK.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai addressing a Press conference

India, Israel resorting to identical tactics to change demographic composition of Kashmir & Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Muhammad on Friday, drawing parallels between Kashmir and Palestine issues, said India was resorting to the same tactics that had been employed by Israel to suppress the voice of people of occupied areas over the decades.

He said India was now attempting to radically change the demographic composition of the occupied Jammu & Kashmir by settling non-Muslim outsiders on the same pattern the Israel patronized the settlers to occupy the Palestinians' lands over the years. "India is attempting to change the demographic composition of the State of Jammu & Kashmir by set-

tlng non-Muslim outsiders in the Muslim majority areas in the same way the Israeli settlers have forcefully evicted Palestinians from their homes in the land grab activities sanctioned by the Tel Aviv regime," Dr Mahathir, in his video message played at an event organized by the Pakistan High Commission in Malaysia to mark the Kashmir Black Day 2023.

He said India's revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's autonomy unilaterally four years ago saw the deployment of hundreds of thousands of soldiers into the illegally occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Along with that, atrocities were committed, while placing the whole population under siege."



ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Bail plea of Imran Khan rejected in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has rejected bail plea of PTI chairman Imran Khan in cipher case.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq had reserved judgment on bail plea of chairman PTI in Cipher case on October 16 which was announced on Friday.

During previous hearing, counsels of Imran Khan and special prosecutor of FIA had given arguments.

IHC had reserved judgment after hearing the arguments.

Special prosecutor had said the counsel for the petitioner has not interpreted or defined section 5 of Official Secret Act (OSA) correctly. Chairman PTI transmitted the information about cipher to people while he was not authorized to do so.

He said this is statement of former foreign secretary, Sohail Mehmood, deputy director Imran Sajid and Haseeb bin Aziz under 161 that cipher reached assistant Noman.

He had said there is statement of Shammooon Qaisar, cipher officer in Prime Minister (PM) house, Haseeb Gauhar DSP M office, Sajid Mehmood DSP PM house and Azam Khan under 161.

They had said Azam Khan appeared before investigation officer and recorded his statement before respective magistrate. He had gone some where else for some time for peace of mind.

Special prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi said it is clear in the statement of witness this was secret classified document. There is no circulation of secret document.

ECC approves Rs8bln bridge financing for PIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet approved a Rs. 8 billion bridge financing package for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Friday.

The financing will be provided through the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) resources to meet PIA's urgent overdue payment obligations.

The ECC allowed the Aviation Division to proceed with the bilateral arrangement between the CAA and PIA.

The Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over the meeting, according to news statement issued by the finance ministry.

The Aviation Division submitted a proposal for provision of financial support to PIA through the Civil Aviation Authority for certain emergent needs of the airline.

Thousands participate in dozens Kashmir Day events across Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Dozens of events including protest rallies, seminars, speech competitions were organized across the Balochistan province on Friday to mark Kashmir Black Day.

Thousands of people participated in the events to pay tribute to Kashmiris against Indian atrocities.

As Indian troops had invaded Jammu and Kashmir on 27th October in 1947, the day is observed by Kashmiris as 'Black Day' to convey a strong message to the world that they reject the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding development projects, betterment in traffic management and building code

Govt taking multifaceted measures to accelerate ICT growth: Dr Umar

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif distributed annual ICT Awards 2023 among IT professionals for ground breaking achievements and visionary contributions in the technology sector.

HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023 featured 34 remarkable Gold Awards and 40 Merit Awards in different categories, including Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Fintech, Business and Industry, etc. with a total of 727 nominees, showcasing the remarkable growth and advancements

within the Pakistani tech industry.

The 21st version of ICT Awards 2023 was jointly organized by the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) and HBL late Thursday night.

Addressing the ceremony Dr. Umar Saif said the government was taking multifaceted measures to accelerate the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Pakistan.

He said that though the tenure of interim government was short, "we, in the available time, will lay the foundation of sustainable measures under the right line of action,

which will provide the required benefits of ICT sector to the up-coming government".

The fast developing IT sector possessed an enormous growth potential and it could play a significant role in economic stability, he said, adding that the government was doing its part to provide facilities and the industry should play its part by increasing its capabilities.

Pakistan with its significant youth bulge, resources, skills, grit and every ancillary factor had a vast potential to grow in the ICT sector, the minister noted, adding that the ICT sector with steps in right direction could

leave every traditional industry behind.

It was evident from the fact that foreign investment in start-ups had crossed the \$800 million mark while a number of global companies were investing in Pakistan, he added.

Terming the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) an imperative initiative, Dr Saif said the need of a high level powerful forum was being felt for a long time that could play a central role in framing a sustainable policy and its implementation, with carrying out necessary changes when required.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique inaugurating Germs and Mineral exhibition at Centaurus Mall.



Vice President FPCCI and Chairman Capital Office Aminullah Baig talking with Consul General of Ghana Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul and renowned businessman Umar Shahid Butt.

Amin Ullah Baig says: Ghana is vital African country that can help Pakistan find space in the \$4 trillion African market

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Ghana's Consul General Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul and well-known businessman Umar Shahid Butt met Vice President FPCCI and Chairman Capital Office, Islamabad Mr. Amin Ullah Baig at Islamabad. In the meeting, they discussed the promotion of bilateral, economic, and trade relations. Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office said that Ghana is an important African country that can help Pakistan find space in the \$4 trillion African market. Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with all the African States and is equally keen to build up trade & economic relations with Ghana.

Pakistan and Ghana are steady trading partners and over the years, the market of Ghana has proved to be a good destination, especially for Pakistani exports. We need to maintain a consistent rise in exports to Ghana to be able to take that to at least 500 million dollars.

We can easily take the level of Pakistan exports to Ghana up to 500 million by acquiring the desired share in the market of Ghana.

Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office further said that there are huge trade opportunities between Pakistan and the African nation. This should be taken advantage of along with establishing relations of brotherhood between the peoples of the two countries. Pakistan has made a lot of progress in various sectors including IT, and agriculture, and can cooperate with Ghana in these areas.

Vice President of FPCCI also called for establishing close relations between the national chambers of the two countries and said that the business community of the two countries should play its role. They should actively promote trade relations so that the economies of the two countries could improve as well as employment opportunities.

Furthermore, he stated that Pakistan looks forward to promoting bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and multilateral sectors with African countries, including Ghana, under economic diplomacy. Pakistan's business community would extend all possible cooperation with Ghana's counselors to promote bilateral trade and investment.

Honorary Consul General of Ghana in Pakistan Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that Bilateral relations between Ghana and Pakistan are gaining momentum as cooperation between the two countries is being extended in various fields, various Pakistani companies have started business with Ghana where investment policies are favourable and liberal just as they are in Pakistan. Ghana is fast developing with impressive GDP growth. Therefore, Ghana is actively seeking experts in every field, which represents a golden opportunity for Pakistan, Butt stated.

Pakistan should focus on Africa for business promotion: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a farewell reception in honor of Muhammad Bello Abioye, High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan at his residence here Friday.

Ambassadors of different countries including Morocco, Ethiopia, Algeria, Somalia, Mauritius and Director General Foreign Affairs Shahid Ali Bhutto, Asif Luqman Qazi and many other dignitaries and notables of the city were also present.

Speaking on the occasion Commissioner of Nigeria Muhammad Bello Abioye High said that Africa was being termed as the continent of future by the trade experts and

Pakistan should focus on it to promote its trade by developing close cooperation with Nigeria.

He said that direct flights between Nigeria and Pakistan had the potential to make significant increases in bilateral trade. He said that Nigeria and Pakistan can cooperate in many sectors including transportation, tourism, trade and commerce and industry. He said that during his tenure in Pakistan, he had taken several steps to facilitate the exchange of information, foster business-to-business meetings, and implement a simplified visa policy to support the entrepreneurs.

Visa applications have been processed within 48 hours over the past two years, streamlining the process for business-related travel.

SECP initiates consultation on voluntary ESG

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft guidelines on ESG disclosures for consultation as part of its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Regulatory Roadmap issued in June 2022.

The guidelines have been prepared to encourage listed companies to enhance their ESG disclosures in a fair and transparent manner on voluntary basis. Since the guidelines are non-mandatory in nature, non-listed companies may also seek guidance from the draft guidelines for embarking on their journey towards adoption of ESG standards. The draft guidelines cover a wide range of topics under the E, S and G pillars including

the recommended metrics related to climate change, Green House Gases emissions, energy usage, gender diversity, executive compensation, non-discrimination, health and safety, board diversity, incentivized pay and internal controls etc. Under the draft guidelines, the companies have the liberty to disclose their ESG performance by issuing a separate sustainability report, integrating it with the company's annual report or publishing it online on their website.

The SECP is committed to promoting sustainable and responsible business practices in Pakistan and issuance of the draft ESG guidelines is a significant step forward in this direction. By improving ESG disclosures,

Governor SBP stresses RMB use for Pak-China trade and investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad on Friday highlighted the strong and long-lasting economic and financial ties between Pakistan and China, and said using Renminbi (RMB) for settling cross-border trade and investment transactions with China can further strengthen these ties.

He said while addressing a ceremony on "Promoting the use of RMB in Cross-Border Settlement", organized by ICBC Bank here to mark the bank's designation as the RMB clearing agent in Pakistan by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), said a news release here.

Governor SBP elaborated that given the importance of Pakistan's economic ties with China, the SBP has put in place the required regulatory framework that facilitates use of RMB in trade and investment transactions, such as opening of L/Cs and availing financing facilities in RMB.

In terms of regulations in Pakistan, RMB is at par with other international currencies, such as the US Dollar, Euro and Japanese Yen, he asserted.

Both public and private sector enterprises in Pakistan are free to choose RMB for bilateral trade and investment activities.

As a result of the Central Bank's efforts to promote use of RMB in trade with China, RMB denominated imports of Pakistan from China have increased from about 2 percent in FY18 to around 18 percent in FY22.

He also discussed the benefits of local RMB clearing system and denominating trade in RMB, including fast turnaround time and reduced cost for local banking system; easy access to the RMB settlement for the local banking system; improved and more competitive pricing of bilateral trade transactions; and opening up of new markets for Pakistani businesses.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, losing 241 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 241.44 points, a negative change of 0.47 percent, closing at 50,943.84 points against 51,185.28 points the previous day.

A total of 350,834,756 shares valuing Rs10,607 billion were traded during the day as compared to 364,039,493 shares valuing Rs.10,928 billion the previous day.

As many as 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 110 of them recorded gains and 226 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 17 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 45,278,652 shares at Rs.3.24 per share, WorldCall Telecom.

Kitchen items' prices eases by 0.33 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed decrease of 0.33 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 26, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 277.11 points as compared to 278.04 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.65 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential

items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.25 percent and went down to 283.77 points from last week's 284.47 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 declined by 0.31 percent, 0.33 percent, 0.36 percent and 0.33 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14 (27.45%) items increased, 17 (33.33%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-over-week (WoW) included chicken (10.19%), onions (4.4%).

Jazz, Careem extend partnership to enrich customers' experience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's largest digital operator and Careem, the pioneer of ride-hailing services in Pakistan, has extended its longstanding partnership to bring unparalleled benefits and innovation to their mutual customers. The collaboration, rooted in a shared commitment to empowering Pakistanis through technology, continues to strengthen, exemplifying the mutual dedication of both organizations, a press release said on Friday.

To reiterate their shared ambition to leverage technology to improve the lives of Pakistanis, the leadership of Jazz and

Careem recently organized got together at the Jazz headquarters in Islamabad where they pledged to strengthen these ties and explore more avenues to better serve Pakistanis utilizing the best of the available digital experiences. On this occasion, Kazim Mujtaba, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of Jazz, said, "We believe in the power of partnerships for creating innovative solutions that enrich the lives of millions of Pakistanis. Such collaborations are also in line with our DO1440 strategy through which we become relevant to our users all through their digital interactions.

Gold rates dip by Rs.50

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.50 and was sold at Rs.211,300 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs.211,350 the previous day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.42 to Rs.181,156 from Rs.181,198 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.166,060 from Rs.166,098, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,550 and Rs.2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2007 from \$2010, the Association reported.

SCCI President calls for offering special incentives to foreign investors

PESHAWAR (APP): President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Fuad Ishaq, called for offering special incentives and facilities to foreign investors to promote foreign investment in the country.

During a meeting at the chamber's house with the president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Nasir Awan, SCCI's chief stated that a conducive environment should be provided to both local and foreign investors to attract maximum foreign investment in the country. The chamber's president stressed the need for

signing a 'charter of economy,' taking into account the prevailing economic situation.

Jaz Khan Afridi, the vice president of the chamber, and senior journalist Aftab Ahmad, also known as Lala, were also present during the meeting. The meeting agreed to make joint efforts to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This includes the exchange of business delegations, launching joint ventures, implementing programs, and benefiting from each other's experiences for business expansion and the removal of obstacles in the way of mutual trade.



LAHORE: People are buying dry fruits from shop at Akbari mandi as people like such things especially during winters in Provincial Capital.

Rupee sheds 48 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed a 48-paise depreciation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.57 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.09.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.5 and Rs 283 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 65 paise to close at Rs 296.17 against the last day's closing of Rs 295.52, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.86, whereas an increase of Rs 1.22 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 339.94 as compared to the last closing of Rs 338.72.

Rs.415.1m imposed on 3,281 electricity thieves in 49 days: FESCO

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) claimed imposed a fine of Rs.415.1 million on 3,281 electricity thieves caught during last 49 days of anti-power-theft campaign in FESCO region.

FESCO spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Friday that FESCO had launched a vigorous anti-theft drive on special direction of Minister of Energy (Power Division) and during 49 days of this campaign the anti-theft teams of the company caught 3,281 power pilferers from its eight districts. The company had imposed a total fine of Rs.415.1 million on the pilferers under the head of detection units of 8,938 million in addition to getting Rs.237.3 million recovered from them.

FESCO had also got cases registered against 3155 accused whereas the police had arrested 2636 electricity thieves so far, he added. Giving further details, he said that the FESCO teams continued checking of power pilferage round the clock and caught 28 electricity thieves during last 24 hours who were stealing electricity through various modes including direct supply.

The company had imposed a fine of more than Rs.2.278 million on these electricity thieves in respect of more than 48,000 detection units.

He said that in Faisalabad district, up till now, 1071 electricity thieves were caught and handed down with a fine of more than Rs.134.4 million under 2.879 million detection units.



LAHORE: Heavy machinery is being used for harvesting rice crop in the field.

Markets diverge with US inflation in focus

LONDON (APP): European stock markets struck a mixed note Friday after a rally in Asia in the wake of strong US tech earnings, while traders steered themselves for key US inflation data.

The showing comes at the end of a rollercoaster week for equities, but the Middle East crisis continued to cast a shadow as Israel said ground forces had raided central Gaza for a second day.

And while figures showed the US economy enjoyed its best growth since late 2021 during the third quarter, observers said there was a belief it had peaked and the new year

would see a slowdown.

However, questions remain over how long the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates at elevated levels.

All three main indexes sank Thursday, with the Nasdaq again the worst performer owing to tech firms' susceptibility to higher borrowing costs.

But blockbuster earnings from Amazon and Intel after the markets closed—and a surge in after-hours trade—provided Asian traders with a boost.

In Europe, Frankfurt and London pushed higher but Paris lapsed into the red.

Saturday October 28, 2023

Finding the 'missing'

Over the last two decades — and counting — Pakistan has seen many of its citizens go 'missing', a euphemism for enforced disappearances believed to have been carried out by the state.

Individuals have been targeted across the country, hauled away with no recourse to due process. In many cases, there is no news of their whereabouts for months, even years.

Even though the highest court of the land has criticised this despicable practice, elements within the state have refused to abandon it. Those suspected of having separatist sympathies in Balochistan and Sindh, or seen as religiously inspired militants as well as political cadres and activists, have all been 'disappeared'.

The latest to be added to this list are leaders and supporters of the PTI, who have faced the state's wrath in the aftermath of the May 9 violence.

Many of these individuals, after being off the radar for weeks or months, have resurfaced to address press conferences or make TV appearances to denounce their erstwhile party in what can only be described as a tragicomic spectacle.

In this regard, lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan has filed a petition in the Supreme Court asking the latter to direct provincial governments to provide lists of missing persons, and identify those behind their disappearance.

It is hoped this effort succeeds where several past endeavours have failed, including the SC-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

It is crucial for the state to investigate such cases, especially as 'short-term disappearances' have picked up pace over the recent past. But it is also essential that aggrieved parties, for example the PTI, provide lists of missing supporters so that these can be tallied with official numbers and be probed.

Moreover, the missing persons of Balochistan, KP and other peripheral areas should not be forgotten. The interim prime minister recently told a foreign media outlet that there were only 50 missing people in Balochistan according to UN figures.

This is a classic example of denialism that nearly all ruling set-ups have indulged in, for, according to the missing persons' commission's own figures, the number of the missing from Balochistan is over 450. It is these attitudes that must change for enforced disappearances to end.

As the petition has highlighted, some key questions need to be answered by the state: where have the missing been held? Under which law were they detained? Why were they not produced before the courts?

It is hoped that the SC can instruct the authorities to provide satisfactory answers to these queries. Moreover, there is also merit in the petition's observation that the current commission on missing persons "does not adequately comply with legal and international standards".

An empowered commission is required that can locate the missing, and identify those involved in their illegal detention.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Ankara, Turkey - October 29, 2023, marks a historic date in the annals of time, commemorating the centenary celebration of the Republic of Turkey since its monumental inception in 1923. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the visionary architect of modern Turkey, laid the cornerstone for a nation that not only shines as a beacon of hope and prosperity for its people but also resonates as an emblem of progress across the Muslim world. This momentous milestone underscores Turkey's incredible journey toward socio-economic development and its vital role in nurturing profound bonds with nations worldwide, most notably its deep-rooted connection with Pakistan.

Turkey has endured the tumultuous winds of history, facing five successful military coups since the birth of the Republic in 1923. However, the events that unfolded on that fateful Friday marked a daring attempt at the sixth coup, with soldiers marching against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party, known as the A.K.P.

Nestled within the heart of this remarkable nation is a constitutional secular state, a unique blend of history and modernity. Turkey, with more than ninety-five percent of its population adhering to the Muslim faith, carries the legacy of once being the seat of a mighty Islamic empire. Throughout its storied history, the Turkish military has often stood as a stalwart guardian, shielding the cherished principles of secularism and the Constitution, diligently preserving the vision of its founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Turkey also shares a profound connection with the Indian subcontinent, which reviews the complexities of Muslim identity.

As time flowed on, the dynamics of Muslim identity in India underwent significant transformations. Following the reign of Shah Alam II, a practice emerged that held deep symbolism - the recitation of the name of the Ottoman caliph during the Khutba, the Friday sermon. This seemingly subtle act signified a profound shift in perception, indicating that the mantle of safeguarding and defending the Muslim community in India had passed from the Mughal emperor to the Ottoman Caliph, the spiritual leader of the Ottoman Empire.

The passage of a century has borne witness to Turkey's remarkable metamorphosis into a regional powerhouse, replete with a robust economy and a rich cultural heritage. It stands as a dynamic and influential global player.

The transformation of Turkey's economic landscape across the past century is nothing short of extraordinary. Its commitment to diversification, innovation, and visionary leadership has catapulted it into the echelons of emerging economic giants. Straddling the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey's strategic geographical position has amplified its global significance. Embarking on ambitious endeavors such as Vision 2023, Turkey is poised to continue its journey toward becoming one of the world's leading economies by its centennial anniversary. While the path ahead is laden with challenges, it also brims with opportunities for further progress, stability, and prosperity.

Over the course of the century, Turkey has borne witness to a remarkable economic transformation. This evolution has been marked by diversification, innovation, and technological advancement across various sectors. In recent years, Turkey has been ardently working toward establishing itself as a regional hub across a spectrum of fields, encompassing

finance, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture, to name a few. Its geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has conferred upon it a unique advantage, facilitating international trade and beckoning foreign investments. Under the sagacious leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has embarked on a series of comprehensive reforms aimed at fortifying economic growth and stability. Initiatives like the Vision 2023 plan, unveiled in 2011, have set audacious targets, envisaging Turkey as one of the world's top ten economies by its centennial anniversary. These reforms have fostered an environment conducive to foreign direct investment, nurturing both domestic and international trade.

This journey is nothing short of miraculous. Turkey's path to progress is emblematic of relentless pursuit - of growth, modernization, and diversification. It has transitioned from a primarily agrarian economy into a dynamic and multifaceted one.

Diversification stands at the heart of Turkey's economic prowess. The nation has been unwavering in its promotion of innovation and technological advancement across a spectrum of industries. This strategic approach has enabled Turkey to diversify its economic foundation, transcending traditional sectors and embracing novel opportunities.

In recent times, Turkey has been zealously endeavoring to establish itself as a regional hub, spanning various sectors from finance and manufacturing to tourism and agriculture. Its geographical juncture at the intersection of Europe and Asia has played a pivotal role in its regional ascent.

Turkey's unique geographical position bestows a strategic advantage, bridging two continents and serving as an ideal conduit for international trade. This geographic centrality has enticed businesses and investors

eager to leverage Turkey's role as a gateway to both Europe and Asia.

The visionary leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been instrumental in steering Turkey's economic transformation. His administration has championed far-reaching reforms aimed at enhancing economic growth and stability. The commitment to creating an environment conducive to investment and innovation remains unwavering.

Among the most notable milestones in Turkey's recent economic history is the inception of the Vision 2023 plan in 2011. This ambitious plan laid out a series of goals and targets for Turkey to attain by its centennial anniversary. These targets spanned an array of economic facets, from GDP growth to foreign trade, infrastructure development to educational and healthcare reforms.

Central to Turkey's economic transformation is its prowess in attracting foreign direct investment. The Vision 2023 plan, coupled with other reform initiatives, has nurtured an environment that is alluring to international enterprises. This has precipitated a surge in foreign investments, fueling economic growth and job creation.

Moreover, Turkey's economic evolution is underscored by a substantial increase in both domestic and international trade. The nation's enhanced infrastructure, streamlined trade regulations, and strategic geographical position have rendered it an attractive destination for businesses seeking to expand their markets.

While Turkey's economic progress is indeed commendable, it has not been devoid of challenges. Economic stability and growth have, at times, been juxtaposed with the need to address issues such as inflation, fiscal deficits, and currency fluctuations. However, the nation's leadership remains steadfast in their commitment to sur-

mounting these challenges and pursuing opportunities for further growth.

Pakistan, a nation intertwined with Turkey through deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, has played an integral role in this journey of progress. The bilateral relationship between these two nations has burgeoned over the years, encapsulating various sectors, including trade, defense, education, and cultural exchange.

Pakistan and Turkey have joined hands in a plethora of initiatives, forging closer economic ties. The Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement, inked in 2013, has played a pivotal role in augmenting the volume of trade between the two nations, with a shared aspiration to reach \$5 billion by 2023. Furthermore, collaborative projects such as the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) train service and the Pakistan-Turkey Cultural Year have fortified people-to-people interactions and deepened cultural understanding between the two nations.

Turkish businesses have made substantial investments in Pakistan, significantly contributing to its economic development. Turkish companies have played a pivotal role in diverse sectors, including construction, energy, telecommunications, and textiles, imparting valuable expertise and creating employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce.

Furthermore, educational and cultural exchanges have cemented the bond between Turkey and Pakistan. Countless scholarships, exchange programs, and cultural festivals have offered opportunities for students and citizens from both nations to immerse themselves in each other's rich heritage, thus fostering enduring ties.

As Turkey commemorates its extraordinary centenary, we find ourselves compelled to applaud the nation's unwavering dedication to socio-economic advancement. In

this remarkable journey, Turkey's partnership with Pakistan emerges as a shining exemplar, epitomizing the immense power latent within robust international bonds.

With an unshakable sense of purpose, Turkey boldly embarks on its next century, poised to achieve even greater feats. Turkey's epic journey of a century is a guiding light, not just for its people but for nations worldwide. It stands as an enduring testament to the extraordinary outcomes that arise from unwavering dedication to progress, socio-economic growth, and international cooperation. The luminous torch of inspiration ignited by Turkey's journey reaches far and wide, casting a hopeful glow on what can be achieved when vision, determination, and unity converge.

Today, Turkey stands as a vibrant tapestry of diversity and dynamism, a bridge between two continents, effortlessly weaving together a mosaic of cultures. With a thriving economy, a youthful population, and a strategically vital geopolitical position, Turkey emerges as a pivotal force on the global stage. Its role in regional politics, acting as a vital link between Europe and Asia, remains pivotal. Turkey continues to be a key influencer in international affairs, shaping the destinies of nations while cherishing its rich heritage.

The leadership of Turkey, rooted in an unshakable belief in the enchanting power of dreams, unwavering dedication to progress, and an unyielding commitment to modernity, stands as an enduring testament to the limitless potential residing within the hearts and souls of the Turkish people and the great nation they proudly call home.

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Turkey at 100: Inspiring Progress in a Changing World

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

The sacred



Jan-e-Alam Khaki

The concept of the sacred (muqaddas) means 'sanctified' due to association with holiness and religious veneration. The sacred evokes a lot of mystery that needs to be reflected upon to better understand its meanings. Often associated with faith traditions, the notion of the sacred is a concept that goes back in antiquity, found in many parts of the world. Statues, or artefacts, though created by human hand, once placed in a sacred place may even command respect and veneration, often assuming the status of the 'sacred'.

The word 'sacred' refers to anything which transcends the humdrum of everyday life that typically takes the form of collective representations which are set apart from society (spiritual places such as mosques or churches are the most obvious examples of sacred spaces). As French sociologist Emile Durkheim put it, "anything can be sacred (or rather, a society can determine that anything is sacred): there is nothing in any object or action that makes it inherently sacred: anything can be sacred: not only churches, mosques, and religious books, but in some cultures, trees, or even rocks may be regarded as sacred".

This argument leads one to believe that the idea of the sacred is not given by any authority as such, but actually it is a human process whereby a certain community grants the status to something it venerates. Therefore, if a place of worship is demolished, we build

another one over it and give the same regard to it. Sacredness is also described as something that is "... considered worthy of spiritual respect or devotion; or inspires awe or reverence among believers". Many world faith traditions have numerous holy personalities, sacred places and artefacts they cherish and venerate. But they are not always shared by other faiths. A Jewish believer, for example, may revere the Western Wall; a Christian, the Edicule (known as the Tomb of Christ); a Muslim, the Holy Kaaba; a Hindu, Varanasi; a Buddhist, Bodhgaya; a Sikh, Kartarpur Sahib.

So, there are no universally accepted personalities, places or things that all revere as 'sacred'. Also, within the same faith, there may be many personalities, places, and artefacts that are particularly sacred to that community, but not necessarily to others. Each tradition justifies its 'sacred' tradition by referring to stories, sacred books, and beliefs.

A recent personal communication with a friend visiting some of the holy places of his faith tradition in a neighbouring country articulated his experience in these words, and I quote: "... it was an exhilarating experience. It was truly a divine experience; it is difficult to describe in words. ... The spiritual peace I felt ... (It was instructive to experience the) cultural differences and similarities with (similar places of) our ... neighbour". The italicised words and phrases highlight the key points of the discussion.

Let me highlight one particular phrase, that is the 'neighbouring places' of a different tradition being similar, as well as, different. 'Neighbour' in Urdu has a very apt equivalent, ie, 'hum

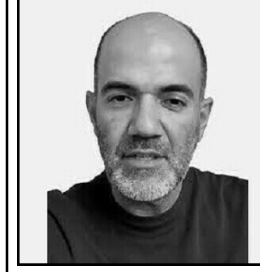
saaya,' meaning, self-shadow. Traditions other than our own are similar in many ways and different in others. While similarities are instructive, it is often the differences that enrich us more about others' traditions and sensitise us more deeply about our own tradition, provided these are seen positively, constructively, and empathetically.

The sacred personalities or places have a history, a tradition, a story, or even a myth, that makes it 'meaningful' and 'relevant' to the community concerned. Outsiders (of that tradition) do not necessarily have any such experience or meaning attached to it; they are unable to see the same meanings in them. The value of these sacred places is not so much in their real or oral history but it is the way the believers ascribe 'meanings' to these venerated objects.

Significant in this regard is the fact that each sacred place or object is not an island unto itself but is inter-related. One sacred artefact is a mirror through which other histories could be related to, and learnt from. This is why UNESCO regards many historical places as 'human heritage', and rightly so.

Each faith community owns diverse symbols of veneration. Learning more about diverse traditions helps understand our own traditions better as we, humans, are deeply interconnected, as sacred books, such as the Holy Quran (49:13) and poets (such as Sheikh Saadi) tell us. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the sense of the sacred is in the minds and hearts of those who revere it. A believer's experience of a sacred person or place may spur transformative moments, making the person a Buddha or Rumi of their time. -- Courtesy Dawn

New world order?



Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

As Palestinians are slaughtered to death by the Israeli war machine, rulers of Muslim-majority countries scramble to depict themselves as principled supporters of the Palestinian national movement. The posturing has included an 'extraordinary' meeting of the OIC in Jeddah last week, which concluded with an ostensibly 'powerful' condemnation of Israeli aggression.

We've seen this all before. Closer to home, a choreographed waving of the Palestinian flag was a highlight of Nawaz Sharif's trumped-up return to Pakistan on Oct 21. Meanwhile, the army chief has met the Palestinian ambassador, issued at least two statements in favour of Palestinian statehood and called for an immediate ceasefire.

Yet beyond symbolic statements and photogenic moments, the rulers of the 'ummah' are largely despised by their own people; they worship at the altar of profit and geostrategic power in world affairs. Insofar as the contemporary nation state is largely synonymous with dominant ideas of political community, there is no singular Muslim ummah. Consider the way in which the Pakistani mainstream is vilifying Afghan refugees after the government's horrific decision to deport them back to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

The Taliban's original patron, Saudi Arabia, has historically propagated a totalitarian worldview at home as well, although the crown prince's reign has coincided with the Saudi

monarchy's 'opening up' in ways similar to the Gulf kingdoms of the UAE and Qatar.

Qatar has at least spawned the Al Jazeera media network, which offers some respite from the virtually unrestrained support of Zionism by Israel which characterises mainstream Western media. But on the whole, Gulf monarchies, countries like Egypt and Jordan, which border historic Palestine, as well as most other Muslim countries couldn't care less about the democratic aspirations of their people, let alone colonised Palestinians. Turkey prides itself as an exception, but Ankara's treatment of the Kurds and role in Nagorno Karabakh is despicable.

On the other hand is the standard Western liberal refrain that Israel is the only democracy in the region. Laughable and sickening at the same time, it mirrors the broader claim of Western states that they are beacons of freedom. All of this stands exposed (yet again) in the face of the genocidal violence against Palestinians. Between the imperialism of the so-called Western 'rules-based order' and the sloganeering of the 'ummah', a majority of the world's people — including but not just Muslims — are today ruled by despots, profiteers and opportunists.

What of our immediate neighbours India and China, which together are home to almost three billion people? The former is increasingly dominated by a majoritarian and hateful political ideology whereby Muslims, oppressed castes and dissident voices are subject to increasingly violent purges. Sadly, New Delhi has not taken a principled stand on the carnage in Palestine, turning its back on India's history as a leader of the Non Aligned Movement and supporter of national self-determination for all

colonised peoples.

China appears relatively stable, has been arguably the biggest beneficiary of the era of neoliberal globalisation and is potentially the single-most obvious challenger to centuries-old Western hegemony. But China is not democratic, and is far less egalitarian than it was a few decades ago. Neither is there conclusive evidence yet that it is pursuing a global worldmaking project which breaks with the financialised capitalist system that is dispossessing billions and exacerbating an already acute climate crisis.

Then there are dark horses like Russia as well as another big Muslim country, Iran. The latter is close to Hezbollah, and by extension Hamas as well. There is a real possibility that the brazen support of Western powers for Israel since Oct 7 could create the conditions for a bigger conflagration in which Iran and Russia come together. Quite aside from the clearly disastrous effects if there were to be a more substantive war in the region — and world — an emancipatory and progressive horizon is conspicuous by its absence on all sides. Latin America bucks the overall trend, to some extent at least. Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil have at least pushed back against the imperialist-backed ethnic cleansing of Gaza. The fact that some sane voices continue to exist in the so-called international community is no mean feat, given how hegemonic the logic of capital and authoritarian statecraft have become. There have been similarly dark interregnums throughout the history of the modern world. Palestine represents an aspiration for something different, and it is the world's ordinary people and not their rulers who are leading the way. -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab, Sindh CMs inspect work on Rawalpindi Ring Road project

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi along with Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Maqbool Bqar on Friday visited the Rawalpindi Ring Road Project to review progress of the construction work. Chief Minister Naqvi appreciated the Commissioner Rawalpindi and Frontier Works Organization over their performance.

The work on the project should be completed swiftly, he said and directed the authorities to provide necessary project drawings to NESPAK as soon as possible. The Sindh CM appreciated the ongoing projects in Punjab, especially the construction work of Rawalpindi Ring Road. He said the problems being faced by the commuters in Karachi could be resolved through the Lyari Expressway and Karachi Circular Railway projects.

Mohsin Naqvi offered full support of the Punjab government to his Sindh counterpart in the execution of different projects in the province. CM Naqvi drove the vehicle himself and inspected the project site with the Sindh chief minister.

They also reviewed the progress of the project at Union Council Trahia. In order to speed up the work on the Ring Road, CM Naqvi directed the authorities to use additional road leveling machinery at the project site. He said the Rawalpindi Ring Road was an important project of public interest and all-out efforts should be made to complete it before the stipulated time frame. He directed the authorities to ensure construction work on the project in three shifts so that the targets could be achieved as soon as possible.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman leading a rally on eve of Kashmir Black Day organized by Information and Culture Department.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan talking with media on eve of Kashmir Black Day in front of Governor House.

KP Governor, CM led central protest rally condemning India's illegal annexation of IIOJK

PESHAWAR (APP): The central protest rally led by KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here on Friday strongly condemned an illegal annexation of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by India on October 27, 1947.

The rally attended by people from all walks of life, was started from the Chief Minister Secretariat and culminated at Governor House Peshawar. Besides others, the rally was also attended by

the caretaker ministers, advisers, officials, civil society and students in large number. The participants holding placards and banners condemned state terrorism, human rights abuses and repression at IIOJK and expressed solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiris of the held valley.

13 dead, 1,320 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE: At least 13 people were killed and 1,320 others injured in 1,228 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 669 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 651 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The statistics show that 277 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 301 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 95 in Faisalabad with 103 victims and at third Multan with 81 accidents and 75 victims.

Arshad pledges support for legal community

PESHAWAR: Justice, retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, the caretaker minister for Law and Human Rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing the concerns of the legal community as a top priority. He encouraged unity within the Bar Association and emphasized the importance of resolving any misunderstandings between the legal bar and the judiciary.

Justice Shah stressed the need to prioritize respect for both the bar and the bench, acknowledging the pivotal role that lawyers play in upholding the rule of law and delivering justice. These statements were made during the oath-taking ceremony for the newly elected cabinet of

CS condemns forcible Indian occupation of IIOJK

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry here on Friday condemned forcible Indian occupation of IIOJK. He said the right to self-determination of Kashmiris could not be suppressed through use of force.

Kashmir Black Day observed

FAISALABAD (APP): The Kashmir Black Day was observed across the district here on Friday to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In this connection, the district administration had arranged a rally which started from Zila Council and the participants holding banners and placards marched on various roads up to Kutchehry Bazaar Chowk.

World peace hinges on Kashmir and Palestine resolution: Feroze Shah

Independent Report PESHAWAR: To express unwavering support and solidarity with people of Occupied Kashmir, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and members of the caretaker cabinet came together to lead a solidarity rally in Peshawar on October 27. Imtiaz Iqbal Wani, the Information Secretary of All Parties Huriyat Conference, also attended the rally.

Shah Kakakhel, to extend heartfelt appreciation to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its people for their resolute support of the oppressed Kashmiri population. During the meeting, Minister Kakakhel delivered a poignant message, emphasizing the profound pain felt on October 27 as he stated, "Our hearts shed tears of blood for the sufferings endured by our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. The atrocities they face, one day, we believe that the government of India will have to reckon with them, and Kashmir will find its rightful place within Pakistan."



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi talk to media person.

CM Naqvi visits controlled Access Corridor project

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited under construction Controlled Access Corridor project here on Friday and reviewed progress being made on the mega project from Niazi Chowk up to Babu Sabu. Mohsin Naqvi inspected ongoing development work at the site. The CM shook hands with the labourers working on the project and urged them to continue working with more hard work. The CM directed the contractors of both packages to speed up their work.

While talking to the media after visiting the Controlled Access Corridor project, he apprised, "We are going to launch an operation against foreigners residing illegally and 31st October is the deadline. All preparations have been completed with regard to sending foreigners to their homelands. No leniency will be meted out to any foreigner residing unlawfully. A strict crackdown will be launched against those trying to provide shelter or hiding the foreigners residing unlawfully in Punjab."



GILGIT: IGP Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt giving away certificate to Tariq Ali and Hassan Abbas after completing the training of computer forensics and latent fingerprint from the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA).

KPCTA carries out rally to mark 27th October as Black day

PESHAWAR (Online): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) carried out a walk on Friday to mark October 27th as a black day when Indian forces illegally landed in Srinagar in 1947, starting a chapter of occupation, subjugation and oppression for the innocent people living in the occupied valley. The walk started from Peshawar sports complex and was participated in by a large number of people from various sections of society. Staff from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and

Tourism Authority, Tourism Police, Sports Department and students from different schools took part in the walk. Black Day is observed every year to protest against the Indian illegal occupation and to remind the world community of its commitments regarding the implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions that advocate the right to plebiscite for Kashmiris. The participants of the walk tied black bands on their arms and carried flags of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir.

Governor urges world community to check atrocities against Kashmiris

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said the international community should play its role in checking Indian army's atrocities against innocent Kashmiris. Addressing a ceremony in connection with the Kashmir Black Day at Alhambra hall here on Friday, he said durable peace could not be established in the Subcontinent without resolving the Kashmir issue, urging the international community to pay attention to just solution to Kashmir and

Palestine issues so that the future of the world could be secured. The Kashmir Black Day is marked to condemn illegal occupation of Kashmir by the Indian occupying forces on October 27, 1947 and the ceremony was held under the auspices of the Punjab Information and Culture Department. Balighur Rahman also inaugurated a photo exhibition at Alhambra Art Gallery and led a rally to mark the black day. He said today people of Pakistan and Kashmiri people living in the world are observing Kashmir Black Day against India's invasion and

occupation of Jammu & Kashmir on October 27, 1947. He said the purpose of observing the day was to draw the attention of the international community to the Indian occupation and oppression of Kashmiris so that the oppressed Kashmiris get their right to self-determination. He said people across the country are protesting against the Indian armed aggression against the Kashmiris. He said the protest was a clear message to the world that India was a belligerent country that has destroyed the peace of the Subcontinent.

Rangers, police arrest target killer in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): In a joint intelligence-based operation, the Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police arrested an accused allegedly involved in target killings, street crimes, and other robbery cases in Azizabad, Karachi. The accused was a member of Faizan alias Bhori Group, identified as Zohan alias Sanwal. He was involved in over 800 street crimes in different areas of Karachi, including Tariq Road, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Jamshed Road, Manzoor Colony, Sindhi Muslim Society, New Karachi, Gulshan Iqbal.

Govt employees should work diligently for people welfare

MANSEHRA (APP): The Provincial Minister for Communications, Construction, and Irrigation Engineer Ahmed Jan Khan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Friday said the government employees should work diligently and collaborate with the provincial government for the betterment and welfare of people. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting with administrative officials in Circuit House Manshera. The minister mentioned that work on the Mansehra

Water Supply and Siran Right Bank expansion will commence soon. During the visit, the minister was briefed about various ongoing projects, their status, challenges, and future impacts. Commissioner Hazara Division Syed Zaeher-ul-Islam encouraged government officials to improve their performance and work more efficiently in the transitional government. He specifically addressed the NHA officials, urging them to swiftly improve road conditions in the Hazara Division.



MUZAFFERABAD: Teachers and students of different schools holds placards and shouting slogans during protest at Azadi Chowk to mark the Black Day against the cruelty of Indian Army on oppressed Kashmiris of IOJK.

Smuggling bid foiled, 2550 litres Iranian diesel seized

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera police during successful operations, foiled a smuggling attempt, resulting in the seizure of 2550 litres of Iranian diesel and arrested two accused within the jurisdiction of Kirri Khasor police station on Friday. According to the police spokesman, following the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, police station Kirri Khasor under the leadership of SDPO Peharpur Circle Kashif Sattar along with SHO Malik Imran thwarted the attempt of smuggling of NCP diesel. During the checking

DG NAB announces crackdown against illegal housing societies

LAHORE (APP): Lahore vigilantly listened to every complainant and issued appropriate directives to concerned investigation officers. The complainants against Al-Haram Garden stated that the society administration sold out plots without obtaining approval from relevant regulating authorities. The DG NAB informed the complainants that the Bureau intends to take strict action against said society, however, the other projects i.e. Safari Garden and Hijwari Homes of said administration are also under NAB radar. Talking about Khayaban-i-Amin Housing Society.

UAF holds rally, seminar to mark Kashmir Black Day

FAISALABAD (APP): The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) took out a rally and held a seminar here on Friday to mark Black Day against the illegal Indian occupation of Kashmir, and express solidarity and support with Kashmiri people in their struggle for their right.



HYDERABAD: Students participated in a rally on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day at Thandi Sarak.



KARACHI: A group photo of Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab along with the employees who received the appointment letter under death quota in Municipal Corporation.

Govt taking multifaceted measures to accelerate ICT growth: Dr Umar

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif distributed annual ICT Awards 2023 among IT professionals for ground breaking achievements and visionary contributions in the technology sector.

HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023 featured 34 remarkable Gold Awards and 40 Merit Awards in different categories, including Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Fintech, Business and Industry, etc. with a total of 727 nominees, showcasing the remarkable growth and advancements

within the Pakistani tech industry.

The 21st version of ICT Awards 2023 was jointly organized by the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) and HBL late Thursday night.

Addressing the ceremony Dr. Umar Saif said the government was taking multifaceted measures to accelerate the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Pakistan.

He said that though the tenure of interim government was short, "we, in the available time, will lay the foundation of sustainable measures under the right line of action,

which will provide the required benefits of ICT sector to the up-coming government".

The fast developing IT sector possessed an enormous growth potential and it could play a significant role in economic stability, he said, adding that the government was doing its part to provide facilities and the industry should play its part by increasing its capabilities.

Pakistan with its significant youth bulge, resources, skills, grit and every ancillary factor had a vast potential to grow in the ICT sector, the minister noted, adding that the ICT sector with steps in right direction could

leave every traditional industry behind.

It was evident from the fact that foreign investment in start-ups had crossed the \$800 million mark while a number of global companies were investing in Pakistan, he added.

Terming the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) an imperative initiative, Dr Saif said the need of a high level powerful forum was being felt for a long time that could play a central role in framing a sustainable policy and its implementation, with carrying out necessary changes when required.



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique inaugurating Germs and Mineral exhibition at Centaurus Mall.



Vice President FPCCI and Chairman Capital Office Aminullah Baig talking with Consul General of Ghana Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul and renowned businessman Umar Shahid Butt.

Amin Ullah Baig says: Ghana is vital African country that can help Pakistan find space in the \$4 trillion African market

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Ghana's Consul General Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul and well-known businessman Umar Shahid Butt met Vice President FPCCI & Chairman Capital Office, Islamabad Mr. Amin Ullah Baig at Islamabad. In the meeting, they discussed the promotion of bilateral, economic, and trade relations. Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office said that Ghana is an important African country that can help Pakistan find space in the \$4 trillion African market. Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with all the African States and is equally keen to build up trade & economic relations with Ghana.

Pakistan and Ghana are steady trading partners and over the years, the market of Ghana has proved to be a good destination, especially for Pakistani exports. We need to maintain a consistent rise in exports to Ghana to be able to take that to at least 500 million dollars.

We can easily take the level of Pakistan exports to Ghana up to 500 million by acquiring the desired share in the market of Ghana.

Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman of Capital Office further said that there are huge trade opportunities between Pakistan and the African nation. This should be taken advantage of along with establishing relations of brotherhood between the peoples of the two countries. Pakistan has made a lot of progress in various sectors including IT, and agriculture, and can cooperate with Ghana in these areas.

Vice President of FPCCI also called for establishing close relations between the national chambers of the two countries and said that the business community of the two countries should play its role. They should actively promote trade relations so that the economies of the two countries could improve as well as employment opportunities.

Furthermore, he stated that Pakistan looks forward to promoting bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and multilateral sectors with African countries, including Ghana, under economic diplomacy. Pakistan's business community would extend all possible cooperation with Ghana's counselors to promote bilateral trade and investment.

Honorary Consul General of Ghana in Pakistan Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that Bilateral relations between Ghana and Pakistan are gaining momentum as cooperation between the two countries is being extended in various fields, various Pakistani companies have started business with Ghana where investment policies are favourable and liberal just as they are in Pakistan. Ghana is fast developing with impressive GDP growth. Therefore, Ghana is actively seeking experts in every field, which represents a golden opportunity for Pakistan, Butt stated.

Pakistan should focus on Africa for business promotion: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a farewell reception in honor of Muhammad Bello Abioye, High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan at his residence here Friday.

Ambassadors of different countries including Morocco, Ethiopia, Algeria, Somalia, Mauritius and Director General Foreign Affairs Shahid Ali Bhutto, Asif Luqman Qazi and many other dignitaries and notables of the city were also present.

Speaking on the occasion Commissioner of Nigeria Muhammad Bello Abioye High said that Africa was being termed as the continent of future by the trade experts and

Pakistan should focus on it to promote its trade by developing close cooperation with Nigeria.

He said that direct flights between Nigeria and Pakistan had the potential to make significant increases in bilateral trade. He said that Nigeria and Pakistan can cooperate in many sectors including transportation, tourism, trade and commerce and industry. He said that during his tenure in Pakistan, he had taken several steps to facilitate the exchange of information, foster business-to-business meetings, and implement a simplified visa policy to support the entrepreneurs.

Visa applications have been processed within 48 hours over the past two years, streamlining the process for business-related travel.

SECP initiates consultation on voluntary ESG

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft guidelines on ESG disclosures for consultation as part of its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Regulatory Roadmap issued in June 2022.

The guidelines have been prepared to encourage listed companies to enhance their ESG disclosures in a fair and transparent manner on voluntary basis. Since the guidelines are non-mandatory in nature, non-listed companies may also seek guidance from the draft guidelines for embarking on their journey towards adoption of ESG standards. The draft guidelines cover a wide range of topics under the E, S and G pillars including

the recommended metrics related to climate change, Green House Gases emissions, energy usage, gender diversity, executive compensation, non-discrimination, health and safety, board diversity, incentivized pay and internal controls etc. Under the draft guidelines, the companies have the liberty to disclose their ESG performance by issuing a separate sustainability report, integrating it with the company's annual report or publishing it online on their website.

The SECP is committed to promoting sustainable and responsible business practices in Pakistan and issuance of the draft ESG guidelines is a significant step forward in this direction. By improving ESG disclosures,

Governor SBP stresses RMB use for Pak-China trade and investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad on Friday highlighted the strong and long-lasting economic and financial ties between Pakistan and China, and said using Renminbi (RMB) for settling cross-border trade and investment transactions with China can further strengthen these ties.

He said while addressing a ceremony on "Promoting the use of RMB in Cross-Border Settlement", organized by ICBC Bank here to mark the bank's designation as the RMB clearing agent in Pakistan by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), said a news release here.

Governor SBP elaborated that given the importance of Pakistan's economic ties with China, the SBP has put in place the required regulatory framework that facilitates use of RMB in trade and investment transactions, such as opening of L/Cs and availing financing facilities in RMB.

In terms of regulations in Pakistan, RMB is at par with other international currencies, such as the US Dollar, Euro and Japanese Yen, he asserted.

Both public and private sector enterprises in Pakistan are free to choose RMB for bilateral trade and investment activities.

As a result of the Central Bank's efforts to promote use of RMB in trade with China, RMB denominated imports of Pakistan from China have increased from about 2 percent in FY18 to around 18 percent in FY22.

He also discussed the benefits of local RMB clearing system and denominating trade in RMB, including fast turnaround time and reduced cost for local banking system; easy access to the RMB settlement for the local banking system; improved and more competitive pricing of bilateral trade transactions; and opening up of new markets for Pakistani businesses.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, losing 241 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 241.44 points, a negative change of 0.47 percent, closing at 50,943.84 points against 51,185.28 points the previous day.

A total of 350,834,756 shares valuing Rs10,607 billion were traded during the day as compared to 364,039,493 shares valuing Rs.10,928 billion the previous day.

As many as 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 110 of them recorded gains and 226 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 17 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 45,278,652 shares at Rs.3.24 per share, WorldCall Telecom.

Kitchen items' prices eases by 0.33 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed decrease of 0.33 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 26, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 277.11 points as compared to 278.04 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.65 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential

items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.25 percent and went down to 283.77 points from last week's 284.47 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 declined by 0.31 percent, 0.33 percent, 0.36 percent and 0.33 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14 (27.45%) items increased, 17 (33.33%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-over-week (WoW) included chicken (10.19%), onions (4.4%).

Jazz, Careem extend partnership to enrich customers' experience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's largest digital operator and Careem, the pioneer of ride-hailing services in Pakistan, has extended its longstanding partnership to bring unparalleled benefits and innovation to their mutual customers. The collaboration, rooted in a shared commitment to empowering Pakistanis through technology, continues to strengthen, exemplifying the mutual dedication of both organizations, a press release said on Friday.

To reiterate their shared ambition to leverage technology to improve the lives of Pakistanis, the leadership of Jazz and

Careem recently organized got together at the Jazz headquarters in Islamabad where they pledged to strengthen these ties and explore more avenues to better serve Pakistanis utilizing the best of the available digital experiences. On this occasion, Kazim Mujtaba, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of Jazz, said, "We believe in the power of partnerships for creating innovative solutions that enrich the lives of millions of Pakistanis. Such collaborations are also in line with our DO1440 strategy through which we become relevant to our users all through their digital interactions.

Gold rates dip by Rs.50

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.50 and was sold at Rs.211,300 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs.211,350 the previous day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.42 to Rs.181,156 from Rs.181,198 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.166,060 from Rs.166,098, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,550 and Rs.2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2007 from \$2010, the Association reported.

SCCI President calls for offering special incentives to foreign investors

PESHAWAR (APP): President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Fuad Ishaq, called for offering special incentives and facilities to foreign investors to promote foreign investment in the country.

During a meeting at the chamber's house with the president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Nasir Awan, SCCI's chief stated that a conducive environment should be provided to both local and foreign investors to attract maximum foreign investment in the country. The chamber's president stressed the need for

signing a 'charter of economy,' taking into account the prevailing economic situation.

Jaz Khan Afridi, the vice president of the chamber, and senior journalist Aftab Ahmad, also known as Lala, were also present during the meeting. The meeting agreed to make joint efforts to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This includes the exchange of business delegations, launching joint ventures, implementing programs, and benefiting from each other's experiences for business expansion and the removal of obstacles in the way of mutual trade.



LAHORE: People are buying dry fruits from shop at Akbari mandi as people like such things especially during winters in Provincial Capital.

Rupee sheds 48 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed a 48-paise depreciation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.57 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.09.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 280.5 and Rs 283 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 65 paise to close at Rs 296.17 against the last day's closing of Rs 295.52, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.86, whereas an increase of Rs 1.22 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 339.94 as compared to the last closing of Rs 338.72.

Rs.415.1m imposed on 3,281 electricity thieves in 49 days: FESCO

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) claimed imposed a fine of Rs.415.1 million on 3,281 electricity thieves caught during last 49 days of anti-power-theft campaign in FESCO region.

FESCO spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Friday that FESCO had launched a vigorous anti-theft drive on special direction of Minister of Energy (Power Division) and during 49 days of this campaign the anti-theft teams of the company caught 3,281 power pilferers from its eight districts. The company had imposed a total fine of Rs.415.1 million on the pilferers under the head of detection units of 8,938 million in addition to getting Rs.237.3 million recovered from them.

FESCO had also got cases registered against 3155 accused whereas the police had arrested 2636 electricity thieves so far, he added. Giving further details, he said that the FESCO teams continued checking of power pilferage round the clock and caught 28 electricity thieves during last 24 hours who were stealing electricity through various modes including direct supply.

The company had imposed a fine of more than Rs.2.278 million on these electricity thieves in respect of more than 48,000 detection units.

He said that in Faisalabad district, up till now, 1071 electricity thieves were caught and handed down with a fine of more than Rs.134.4 million under 2.879 million detection units.



LAHORE: Heavy machinery is being used for harvesting rice crop in the field.

Markets diverge with US inflation in focus

LONDON (APP): European stock markets struck a mixed note Friday after a rally in Asia in the wake of strong US tech earnings, while traders steered themselves for key US inflation data.

The showing comes at the end of a rollercoaster week for equities, but the Middle East crisis continued to cast a shadow as Israel said ground forces had raided central Gaza for a second day.

And while figures showed the US economy enjoyed its best growth since late 2021 during the third quarter, observers said there was a belief it had peaked and the new year

would see a slowdown.

However, questions remain over how long the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates at elevated levels.

All three main indexes sank Thursday, with the Nasdaq again the worst performer owing to tech firms' susceptibility to higher borrowing costs.

But blockbuster earnings from Amazon and Intel after the markets closed—and a surge in after-hours trade—provided Asian traders with a boost.

In Europe, Frankfurt and London pushed higher but Paris lapsed into the red.

After finding south no safer, Gazans head back north

Monitoring Desk
Khan Yunis: When Israel warned civilians to leave northern Gaza, Rahma Saqallah and her family fled south. But after Israeli bombs killed her husband and three of her children, she decided to head back home.

"Wherever we go, we will die," Saqallah said, as she prepared to leave the city of Khan Yunis, in the south of the territory to return to Gaza City with her surviving child.

She is among roughly 600,000 Palestinians who went south in response to Israel's warning to evacuate "for your own safety".

But repeated deadly strikes on the south of the territory in recent days have prompted 30,000 of the displaced to head back home, according to UN figures.

Many were in any case struggling to find shelter in Khan Yunis, an al-

ready densely populated city which has been swamped by the influx of families fleeing the north.

Israel expects 'long' ground war in Gaza to destroy Hamas and its many tunnels

Monitoring Desk
DEIR AL-BALAH: Israel expects to launch a long and difficult ground offensive into Gaza soon to destroy Hamas, the country's defense minister said Friday, describing a campaign that will require dismantling a vast network of tunnels used by the territory's militant rulers.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant spoke to a small group of foreign reporters in Tel Aviv after Israeli forces backed by fighter jets and drones carried out a second, limited ground raid into Gaza in as many days, striking the outskirts of Gaza City.

Gallant said the ground invasion that follows weeks of airstrikes "will take a long time," and that it would lead to another lengthy phase of lower-intensity fighting, as Israel destroys "pockets of resistance."

In a sign of rising tensions in the region, U.S. warplanes struck targets in eastern Syria that the Pentagon said were linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard after a string of attacks on American forces, and two mysterious objects hit towns in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.



People rescue a survivor from the rubble of a building destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis.

EU summit turns its eyes away from Ukraine despite a commitment to stay the course with Zelenskyy

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: It was a good thing Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Zelenskyy had his videoconference address to the European Union summit pre-slotted for the opening session.

Immediately afterward, EU leaders switched off and went to the order of the day — the Israel-Hamas war.

They didn't come back to the issue of Russia's war in Ukraine again before Friday's closing day of the summit.

After dominating summit after summit since Moscow launched a full-

scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the timing alone, anecdotal as it was, underscored a deeper reality: Zelenskyy will be facing tougher times to get all the attention and political, economic and military aid that Ukraine wants.

Not only in Europe too, since the new U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson has shown little interest in providing additional money from Congress to support Ukraine and also said that now is the moment "we must stand with our important ally in the Middle East and that's Israel."

And it's not only geopolitics creeping up on Ukraine. EU politics too are no longer as kind to Zelenskyy.

"Ukraine is one of the most corrupt countries in the world," new Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said when he assessed the summit on his Facebook page on Friday.

After the summit, he added: "we are ready to help, but not militarily, because I do not believe in a military solution of this conflict in Ukraine." But military victory ahead of peace is the most precious thing to Zelenskyy.

EU leaders urge pauses in Gaza bombing to get aid in

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: EU leaders called on Thursday for pauses in Israeli bombing and Hamas rocket attacks to get humanitarian aid into Gaza after days of wrangling that highlighted divisions within the bloc over the broader Israel-Palestinian conflict.

In a declaration agreed at a summit in Brussels, the leaders of the Union's 27 nations expressed the "gravest concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza."

They called for "continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs."

The summit was the leaders' first in-person meeting since the deadly Oct. 7 assault on Israel by Palestinian militant group Hamas, which prompted Israel to bombard and blockade Hamas-run Gaza.

While EU leaders have strongly condemned Hamas' attack, they have struggled to stick to the same message beyond people rescue a survivor from the rubble of a building destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis.

China nudges Mongolia to join Eurasian security bloc

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Qiang said China will boost its cooperation with Mongolia under a Eurasian security bloc, which this year admitted its ninth member Iran, gently nudging its smaller neighbour to join a regional group that also includes Russia.

Mongolia has refrained from joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) for almost two decades, choosing to be an observer state since 2004 even as other nations such as India, Pakistan and Iran became full-fledged members.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the State Department in Washington, U.S.

Brazil scientists developing new 'vaccine' for cocaine addiction

Monitoring Desk
BELO HORIZONTE: Scientists in Brazil, the world's second-biggest consumer of cocaine, have announced the development of an innovative new treatment for addiction to the drug and its powerful derivative crack: a vaccine.

Dubbed "Calixcoca," the test vaccine, which has shown promising results in trials on animals, triggers an immune response that blocks cocaine and crack from reaching the brain, which researchers hope will help users break the cycle of addiction. Put simply, addicts would no longer get high from the drug.

If the treatment gets regulatory approval, it would be the first time cocaine addiction is treated using a vaccine, said psychiatrist Frederico Garcia, coordinator of the team that

developed the treatment at the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

The project won top prize last week — 500,000 euros (\$530,000) — at the Euro Health Innovation awards for Latin American medicine, sponsored by pharmaceutical firm Eurofarma. The vaccine works by triggering patients' immune systems to produce antibodies that bind to cocaine molecules in the bloodstream, making them too large to pass into the brain's mesolimbic system, or "reward center," where the drug normally stimulates high levels of pleasure-inducing dopamine.

Similar studies have been carried out in the United States — the world's top cocaine consumer, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Putin urges measures to stem illegal flow of weapons into Russia

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin called on Friday for measures to curb the illegal circulation of weapons and ammunition in Russia, including from Ukraine.

"We need to think about how weapons and ammunition enter the territory of the Russian Federation illegally... including from the territory of Ukraine," Putin told a meeting of Russia's Security Council.

"We need to look at all these channels, look at how departmental control measures are organised, and see what needs to be done additionally to strengthen the regulatory framework."

27 killed after hurricane lashes Mexico

Monitoring Desk
ACAPULCO: Hurri-cane Otis killed at least 27 people as it lashed Mexico's beach resort city of Acapulco as a scale-topping category 5 storm, officials said on Thursday, in what residents called a "total disaster."

The storm crashed into Acapulco with furious winds of 165 miles (270 kilometres) per hour, largely cutting off communications and road links with the region.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador arrived at the scene late on Wednesday, after his convoy found roads blocked by landslides and other debris, forcing top officials to abandon their vehicles and walk the final miles. The closures meant some residents slugged for hours through mud and debris in an attempt to find food and shelter.

"Acapulco is a total disaster. It is not what it was before. The park was totally destroyed, the buildings, all the streets."

China warns against 'empty slogans' at COP28 climate talks

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Countries must refrain from "empty slogans" and adopt a pragmatic attitude to climate change that reflects concerns such as energy security, employment and growth, a Chinese climate official said on Friday ahead of COP28 climate talks next month.

The latest round of global climate negotiations is set to get underway in Dubai in late November, focusing on the gaps in the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

A "global stocktake" published by the United Nations in September said the world had fallen behind on climate targets and action was required "on all fronts" to keep temperature rises within 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Richer nations should fulfill their pledge to provide \$100 billion in annual

climate finance for poorer countries, complete setting up a financial mechanism for "loss and damage" and double adaptation funds, said Xia Yingxian, head of the climate office at China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

"Developed countries have an unshirkable responsibility for global climate change and at the same time have the actual ability to deal with climate change," he told a briefing in Beijing.

More action on fossil fuels will be a major focus of attention, but China, the world's biggest coal consumer as well as the top emitter of climate-warming greenhouse gas, has been reluctant to commit to any phase-out.

Xia said the COP28 meeting needed to respect the "different starting points and national conditions of each country".



Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah of Perak, Sultan Muhriz Munawir of Negeri Sembilan, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin of Terengganu, Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor, Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar of Johor and Sultan Sallehuddin Badlishah pose for pictures before the election for the next Malaysian king at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur.

At UN, Iran warns US will 'not be spared' if war in Gaza continues

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian warned at the United Nations on Thursday that if Israel's retaliation against Palestinian militants Hamas in the Gaza Strip doesn't end then the United States will "not be spared from this fire."

"I say frankly to the American statesmen, who are now managing the genocide in Palestine, that we do not welcome (an) expansion of the war in the region. But if the genocide in Gaza continues, they will not be spared from this fire," he told a meeting of the 193-member General Assembly on the Middle East.

Israel has vowed to wipe out Hamas, which rules Gaza, in retaliation for an Oct. 7 attack that killed 1,400 people and saw hundreds taken hostage. Israel has struck Gaza from the air, imposed a siege and is preparing a ground invasion. Palestinian authorities say more than 7,000 have been killed.

Hamas has told Iran that it was ready to release civilian hostages.

US strikes two 'Iran-linked' sites in Syria, Austin says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US military struck two facilities in eastern Syria used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and affiliated groups, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Thursday.

"The precision self-defense strikes are a response to a series of ongoing and mostly unsuccessful attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-backed militia groups that began on October 17," he said in a statement.

Pope orders reopening of case of prominent priest accused of abuse

Monitoring Desk
VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis has ordered a review of the Church's handling of the case of an internationally known religious artist who was expelled from the Jesuit religious order after being accused of sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse of adult women.

A statement on Friday said the pope had asked the Vatican's doctrinal office to review the case of Father Marko Ivan Rupnik and had lifted any statute of limitations that would apply so that a complete process could take place.

Blinken, Wang meet as US-China gear up towards expected leaders summit

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and China's top diplomat Wang Yi reconvened for a second day of meetings on Friday as the two rival powers discuss how to manage differences while laying groundwork for an expected summit between President Joe Biden and his counterpart Xi Jinping.

Wang arrived at the State Department late on Thursday and held a meeting with Blinken followed by a dinner. The two diplomats engaged again on Friday morning, sitting across from each other at a wide table with their senior aides before journalists were ushered out of the closed-door meeting.

Wang is set to head to the White House and meet with U.S. National Security

Advisor Jake Sullivan later on Friday. He is also expected to speak with Biden, although it is unclear how substantial their interaction will be.

Wang's three-day visit is the latest in a flurry of diplomatic engagements between China and the U.S., and the trip primarily is to prepare for an expected Xi-Biden summit in November on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders meeting in San Francisco. China has yet to announce whether Xi will attend. The Israel-Hamas conflict has added a fresh dynamic to the testy relationship between the superpowers, and Washington is hoping Beijing can use its influence with Iran to prevent an escalation into a wider war in the Middle East.

Palestinians plead 'stop the bombs' at UN meeting but Israel insists Hamas must be 'obliterated'

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: "Stop the bombs and save lives!" the Palestinian ambassador pleaded at an emotional U.N. meeting Thursday on the war in Gaza. But Israel's envoy was adamant, declaring again, "We will not rest until Hamas is obliterated."

The war sparked by Gaza's Hamas rulers' surprise attacks on Israel on Oct. 7 played out in the vast hall of the 193-nation General Assembly, where Arab nations expected to adopt a resolution Friday calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza after the Security Council's four failed attempts to agree on any action.

At the assembly's resumed emergency session on Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories Thursday, speaker after speaker backed the Arab resolution's cease-fire call — except for Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan, who told the 193-member world body, "A cease-fire

means giving Hamas time to rearm itself, so they can massacre us again."

After quoting several Hamas statements vowing to destroy Israel and the Jews, he said, "Any call for a cease-fire is not an attempt at peace. It is an attempt to tie Israel's hands, preventing us from eliminating a huge threat to our citizens."

On another key issue — the more than 220 hostages taken from Israel — Iran's foreign minister said Hamas is ready to release civilian prisoners, and he said the international community must take responsibility for releasing 6,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Iran "stands ready to play its part in this very important humanitarian endeavor, along with Qatar and Turkey," Hossein Amirabdollahian told the assembly.

Iran is a key backer of Hamas and Qatar has already played a key role in the release of four Israeli civilians.

US military says Chinese fighter jet came within 10 feet of B-52 bomber over South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: A Chinese fighter jet came within 10 feet of an American B-52 bomber flying over the South China Sea, nearly causing an accident, the U.S. military said, underscoring the potential for a mishap as both countries vie for influence in the region.

In the night intercept, the Shenyang J-11 twin-engine fighter closed on the U.S. Air Force plane at an "uncontrolled excessive speed, flying below, in front of, and within 10 feet of the B-52, putting both aircraft in danger of a collision," the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement released late Thursday.

"We are concerned this pilot was unaware of how close he came to causing a collision," the military said. China's Foreign Ministry put the blame on the U.S., suggesting the American aircraft was flying over the South China Sea as a deliberate provocation.

"The U.S. military planes traveled thousands

of miles to China's doorstep to flex muscle," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning.

"That is the source of maritime and air security risks, and is not conducive to regional peace and stability." The U.S. military said in its statement that the aircraft was "lawfully conducting routine operations" ahead of the intercept Tuesday, but did not immediately respond to questions Friday about specifically what the B-52 was doing over the South China Sea or whether it was with a group of planes.

After a similar incident in May, the Chinese government dismissed American complaints and demanded that Washington end such flights over the South China Sea. China has been increasingly assertive in advancing its claims on most of the South China Sea as its territorial waters, a position rejected by the U.S. and other countries that use the vast expanse of ocean for shipping.

US adds sanctions on Hamas, Iran's Revolutionary Guard members

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The U.S. on Friday issued a second round of sanctions aimed at Palestinian militant group Hamas following its attack this month on Israel, including a Hamas official in Iran and members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The measures target

additional assets in a Hamas investment portfolio and people facilitating sanctions evasion by Hamas-affiliated companies, the U.S. Treasury Department said in a statement.

A Gaza-based entity that Treasury said has served as a conduit for illicit Iranian funds to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) group was also targeted, the department said. Iran backs Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East.

"We will not hesitate to take action to further degrade Hamas's ability to commit horrific terrorist attacks by relentlessly targeting its financial activities and streams of funding," Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo wrote, adding the sanctions aimed "to deny Hamas the ability to exploit the international financial system."

Adeyemo said some firms in the digital asset space were not doing enough to stop the flow of illicit finance. Israel has bombarded the densely populated Gaza Strip following the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that Israel says killed some 1,400 people. The group took more than 200 hostages, some of them infants, in the assault. The Hamas-controlled Gaza health ministry said on Thursday that 7,028 Palestinians had been killed in Israel's retaliatory air strikes. Reuters could not independently verify the tolls. Friday's action freezes any U.S. assets of the targeted groups and generally bars Americans from dealing with them.



Mexican President Manuel Lopez Obrador looks out of the window as the vehicle transporting him is stuck in mud during a visit to Acapulco after the passage of Hurricane Otis.

President directs varsity to accommodate student who missed degree course due to COVID-19

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday asked Air University to reconsider the case of granting one additional year to its student for completing her degree which she was unable to complete the remaining courses due to suffering from COVID-19. He expressed displeasure that the university did not timely process her case, despite the fact that Higher Education Commission (HEC)'s Policy and University Regulations provided for remedies to resolve such issues by granting extension.

He said that there was no reason for the university

to deviate from the HEC's policy and recommendations, stating that instead of rectifying its maladministration, the university submitted a representation before realizing its implications in respect of public exchequer and wastage of study timeline of its student.

He advised the Air University to not let the student's devotion, hard work, and money go waste and take measures to help and guide students, especially in the case of women.

The president gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by Air University

against the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to place Ms Iqra Munir's case before the University Functional Committee (UFC) and reconsider it for allowing her one more year to complete her BS degree.

As per details, Iqra Munir (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Wafaqi Mohtasib alleging that she was a student of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Psychology Programme in one of the colleges affiliated with the Air University. According to her, due to Covid pandemic, she could not complete her degree in 2020. She approached the

university to allow her for completion of her degree but she was advised to contact HEC for grant of an additional year to complete her studies.

Later, HEC advised that the competent authority of the University to reconsider her case for extension keeping in view her medical history and the provisions already available in HEC Policy and University Regulations.

However, after a lapse of one year she was not given the extension.

Feeling aggrieved, she approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib, who passed the order in her favour.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Party Hurriyat Conference in Islamabad under the auspices of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell protest demonstration outside the United Nations Military Observer Group on the occasion of October 27 Black Day.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Ministers Amjad Rasheed, Jamal Raisani and Advisor Danish Lango meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Notified by the ECP PMAP under leadership of Mahmood Achakzai is a registered political party

QUETTA (PR): Pashtunkhwa Mili Awami Party in its press release, issued from the central secretariat of the party, stated that the petition filed by the expelled members of the party has been dismissed by the honorable Islamabad High Court. Earlier, the Election Commission of Pakistan, Peshawar High Court, and other civilian courts have given decisions in favor of PMAP. Pashtunkhwa Mili Awami Party, under the leadership of Mahmood Khan Achakzai, is a registered political party notified by the ECP. Issuing the statements of the expelled elements of the party as party

English Dept pays tribute to eminent Balochi poet and singer

QUETTA (APP): Department of English, University of Turbat held a commemorative literary event at the University's multipurpose hall to pay tribute to the eminent Balochi poets Waja Mubarak Qazi and singer Waja Shokat Safar.

No power on earth can crush Kashmiris struggle for freedom: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that no power on earth could crush the Kashmiris freedom movement, who were struggling for the right to self-determination promised by none other than the United Nations in its several resolutions.

AJK PM PM urges world to help resolve Kashmir issue in line with UN resolutions

MIRPUR [AJK] (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq said that it was on Friday that the international community to play its due role in helping to resolve the lingering Kashmir issue peacefully in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

He said that the move, which was rightly condemned as an act of aggression, had pushed the entire region into the throes of instability and perpetual violence.

He said that it was quite unfortunate that the United Nations and other international human rights organizations have failed to stop human rights violations and atrocities inflicted upon Kashmiris by the Indian occupation forces.

Referring to the attempted annexation of the state by the Modi government, the PM said that in stark contrast to the UN resolutions on Kashmir, India's fascist regime led by Modi wrapped up the region's political system, imposed a crippling siege on the state, detained the political leadership of all hues and shades, dissolved the state and reduced its status to a union territory.

Referring to the attempted annexation of the state by the Modi government, he said that the move was an atrocious assault on the Kashmiris' cultural and political identity.

Power distribution work starts for Gwadar Free Zone North

ISLAMABAD (INP): Power distribution work has commenced for providing 5 Mega Watts (MW) of electricity to Gwadar Free Zone North by erecting power polls and laying electricity wires in two phases simultaneously. It will take two months to complete the work, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. In the first phase, the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) has started installing power infrastructure from the grid station to the perimeter walls of Gwadar Free Zone North. In the second phase, local company SIGMA Engineering Ltd has started laying the electricity distribution system from the walls of Gwadar Free Zone to the buildings of various industrial sites.

Sigma Engineering Ltd has been outsourced by China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) Limited, a GPA official told Gwadar Pro. "After completion of the entire project, the per unit power tariff charged to factories will be around Rs 57 according to the government rate prescribed for industries. Currently, generator-based electricity is being provided to all operational factories in Gwadar Free Zone North temporarily," he added.

Samina Zehri says: Indian tactics to crush Kashmiris struggle for self-determination failed

QUETTA: Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Friday said the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) were resisting every conspiracy of India.

Five people killed in firing incident

LAHORE (APP): Five people were killed in firing at Shahpur 'dera' in Chung area. Police said that the persons were sitting at the 'dera' of Haji Shahzad Awam when suddenly some assassins appeared there and opened fire. As a result the five persons received serious bullet injuries and died on the spot. While a five years old boy named Abubakar was also injured in this incident. After the incident, the accused managed to escape from the scene. On information, concerned police reached the spot and took the bodies into custody.

China, Pak forge strong education partnership at CACIE Forum

BEIJING (APP): The International Industry-Education Cooperation Forum in the Context of Education Digitalization, part of the 2023 China Annual Conference & Expo for International Education (CACIE), was held on Friday at the China National Convention Center in Beijing.

IIJK, biggest prison in world: Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari said that the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIJK) is the biggest prison in the world. He said this on the 76th anniversary of the Black Day of Kashmir. Asif Zardari in a statement said that the freedom from Indian occupation is the fundamental and democratic right of the people of IIJK. It is not possible to silence the voice of the IIJK people by force. He said that the world is now aware that India is a terrorist country.

Anwar distributes 50 wheelchairs to persons with disabilities

QUETTA (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Quetta, Muhammad Anwar Kakar, along with the Regional Director of Muslim Hands International Balochistan, Malik Naeem Javed, distributed 50 wheelchairs to persons with disabilities (PWDs) on Friday.

NAB Balochistan arranged seminar at NUML

QUETTA: NAB (Balochistan), as per its mandate for Awareness Campaigns, organized a seminar on "Role of Students in Eradication of Corruption" at NUML University, Quetta. Dr. Muhammad Rashid, Director NAB, was the speaker at the seminar. Lt. Col (Retd) Nisar Ahmed, Regional Director NUML, faculty members and students of the university participated therein. The basic objective of the seminar was to aware the students about their role in eradication of corruption.



KABUL: Head of Mission, Ambassador, Ubaid Ur Rehman Nizamani addressing on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day at Pakistan Embassy.

Democrats panel, vows sustainable progress for BCS officers

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan Civil Service Officers Welfare Association (BCSOWA) on Friday vowed to scale up the struggle for sustainable progress and welfare of members of BCS (EB) through inclusive, democratic and legal ways with commitment and dedication.

for the just resolution of the issues of the Balochistan Civil Service's officers. Unveiling the manifesto of the groups, he said a Constitution, Election Act and Rules will be framed to dispose of BCSOWA business and Cabinet Elections in future. "Illegal induction of AEOS and any other Ex. Cadre into BCS will strongly be opposed, while any attempt for making of PMS Service on the desire of BSS through pressure tactics will also be discouraged.

Asghar Achakzai lauds people for holding peaceful protest

CHAMAN: Provincial President Awami National Party Asghar Khan Achakzai addressing participants of protest sit-in

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