

Independent

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Sarfraz Bugti says Govt wants to solve Chaman sit-in issue through negotiations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Monday said that the government wanted to solve the Chaman sit-in issue through negotiations. Responding to concerns raised by senators regarding the sit-in staged by local residents and businessmen against the recently implemented border regulations, the minister said, "We held a detailed discussion with the representatives of the sit-in, and our preference is to resolve the issue through negotiations." The minister said that it was not possible to allow around 40,000 people to the cross border daily without proper travel documents. The government wanted to implement a unified document regime in line with previous practices, he added. Bugti said the Afghan nationals would only be permitted to enter Pakistan through legal documents. The minister outlined plans to regularize borders with Afghanistan, similar to the Torkham and Wagah borders, emphasizing the government's commitment to treating all borders equally. He said that it was not possible for the government to allow foreigners to travel and establish businesses anywhere in Pakistan without following proper procedures. Earlier, senators had drawn attention to the sit-in issue at Chaman by local residents and businessmen, expressing concerns about its potential adverse impact on the livelihoods of nearly 40,000 people who rely on daily border crossings.

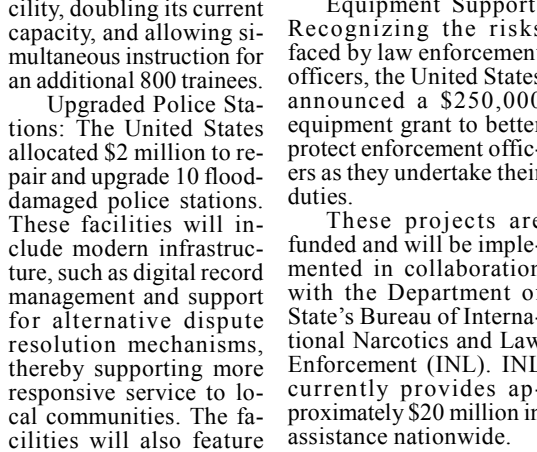


ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairing a meeting of ministerial committee on enforced disappearances.

U.S. Ambassador announces new Initiatives to Strengthen Counter Terrorism Cooperation

QUETTA (Online): U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald A. Blome unveiled four important initiatives on Monday to bolster the capabilities of Pakistani law enforcement in their efforts to safeguard local communities. Anti-Terrorist Force Training Facility Expansion: A \$4 million assistance package will facilitate the expansion of Balochistan Police's Anti-Terrorist Force training facility, doubling its current capacity, and allowing simultaneous instruction for an additional 800 trainees. Upgraded Police Stations: The United States allocated \$2 million to repair and upgrade 10 flood-damaged police stations. These facilities will include modern infrastructure, such as digital record management and support for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, thereby supporting more responsive service to local communities. The facilities will also feature dedicated gender desks that will provide a private space for vulnerable populations to report crimes and receive special care for problems or injuries resulting from those crimes.

Construction of New Police Stations: An additional \$2 million will be dedicated to constructing 10 new police stations to improve service to women, girls, and all Pakistanis. Equipment Support: Recognizing the risks faced by law enforcement officers, the United States announced a \$250,000 equipment grant to better protect enforcement officers as they undertake their duties. These projects are funded and will be implemented in collaboration with the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL). INL currently provides approximately \$20 million in assistance nationwide.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan and Director General Public Relations Muhammad Noor Khetran meeting with Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai

Jan Achakzai pledges to fight scourge of terrorism

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan's caretaker Minister for Information Jan Achakzai warns that if militant activities from Afghanistan continue, Pakistan will take action against terrorist hideouts. He expressed concerns that despite hosting Afghan refugees for 40 years, Afghanistan is providing shelter and advanced weaponry to militants. Achakzai emphasised Pakistan's opposition to all forms of militancy and stated that if the situation doesn't improve, Pakistan will raid terrorist hideouts to address the issue. He highlighted the link between the Tehreek-i-

Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Afghan commanders, citing recent terrorist incidents. Pakistan has engaged with Afghanistan at the Foreign Office level and is addressing repatriation plans for illegal immigrants. Achakzai criticised what he sees as a double game by Afghanistan. The surge in terror activities in Pakistan, especially in KP and Balochistan, is attributed to the TTP which ended its ceasefire in November last year, with the caretaker prime minister linking recent attacks to the Taliban government in Afghanistan and its deportation policies.



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar launches ZARRA mobile app on the eve of Universal Children's Day

PM sees killing of Palestinian children as 'holocaust'

Says govt committed to ensure children's inclusive development, safety, education & health

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar says a professional army never targets civilians and children, expressing deep concern over the tragic events evolving in Gaza, particularly the "holocaust" of Palestinian children. During his address at the launch of "Zara Alert App" in Islamabad, PM Kakar reiterated the government's commitment to safeguarding children's rights. He urged all segments of society to actively contribute to the improvement of children's well-being, emphasising the government's continuous efforts towards their welfare. Highlighting the importance of children as the future's assets, Kakar stated that the implementation of the app would play a crucial role in safeguarding their rights. He condemned the ongoing massacre of children in Gaza, stressing that the killing of innocent children by the Israeli army reflected a severe violation of international laws and human rights. Expressing deep concern over the plight of Gaza's children, the interim prime minister urged an immediate halt to the holocaust. He stressed the need to view the situation in Gaza through the lens of human rights rather than religious colours, predicting that the ongoing crisis in Palestine could become a crucial factor in future conflicts.

Addressing an event in connection with the Universal Children Day, the prime minister said the government was fully devoted to the well-being and safety of the children. APP adds: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said the government was determined to ensure inclusive development, education, healthcare, participation, dignity and security for "all our children, as envisaged in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child". He said the children were the most precious asset of any nation and the sole guarantee for its future prosperity.

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QUETTA: A delegation led by chief of Balochistan Youth Alliance Bahadur Khan Lango meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Women are grace and honour of our society: Women couldn't be given equal status in different sectors even today, regrets Governor

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that women are grace and honour of society, but it is a sorrowful fact that we couldn't have given equal status to them in different sectors even today despite they are half of our country's population. Therefore, on one hand, they are being deprived of their due rights, while the society is not benefiting from the potential of its half of the population fully. Under the given circumstances, there is a need to make comprehensive planning to utilise potential of the youth and women. The Governor was speaking to a delegation who called on him under leadership of head of Balochistan Youth Alliance, Mir Bahadur Khan Lango on Monday. The Governor on the occasion said that there is a key role of welfare organizations in the backward societies and the spirit of service of the people associated with them are really appreciable.

He said that we are proud of all those political and social personalities who remain in forefront in service of the ailing humanity. The Governor said that it is big achievement of the social workers to become voice of the voiceless of the society and get them to the rulers for resolving them. He said that the importance of learning modern skills is increasing along with education. However, we need to take concrete measures to make the technical and vocational institutions functional, adding he stressed.

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Protest dharna ends after assurance: Sirki road firing incident to be probed, assures Minister Information

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has assured that the Sirki road firing incident claimed life of a person would be thoroughly investigated and the responsible would taken to task. The Minister Information was speaking to the participants of dharna observed at Zarghoon road on Monday. The participants were observing dharna against killing of a person in an alleged police encounter on Sirki road. As a result of protest, the traffic remained block on Zarghoon road and adjacent areas. Jan Achakzai said that the Inspector General of police has given assurance to conduct transparent inquiry of the incident. He assured that action would be taken on getting evidences against the police. On assurance made by Jan Achakzai, the protesters were dispersed from the site of dharna.

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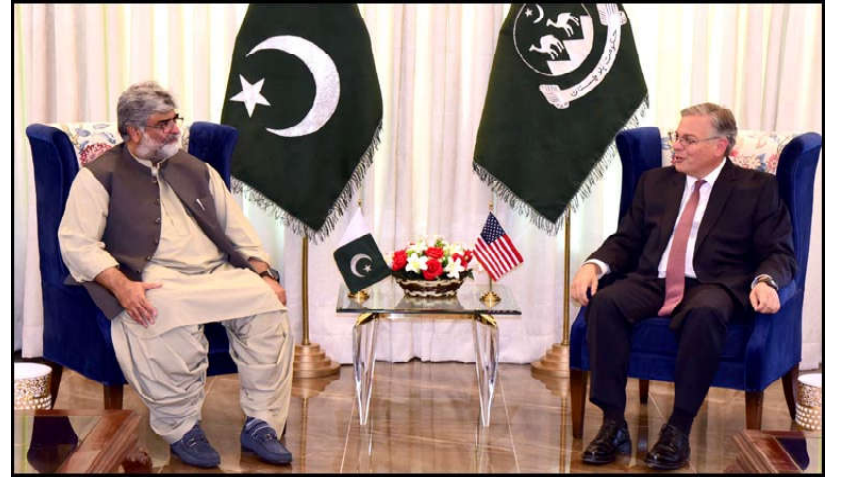


QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding implementation on decisions taken in Apex Committee presided by Prime Minister

US Ambassador visits CM secretariat, meets Caretaker CM: American investment in Balochistan to help promote mutual relations between Pak & US, says Domki

Chief Minister appreciates US cooperation in different sectors in Balochistan; Donald Blome assures US assistance for promotion of tourism and preservation of ancient civilization of Balochistan province

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that Balochistan is a suitable region for investment and the American investment in the province would help promote mutual relations between Pakistan and USA. He strongly believed that both the countries (Pakistan and USA) should increase volume of trade in future. The Chief Minister was speaking to the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Armin Blome who called on him along with the US Consul General Conrad Tribble here at the Chief Minister Secretariat on Monday. Earlier, the Chief Minister welcomed the US Ambassador and Consul General upon their arrival at the CM's secretariat. During the course of meeting, the matters about Pak-US relations, cooperation in different sectors and opportunities of investment in Balochistan were discussed. Later, speaking to the US ambassador and Consul General, the Chief Minister said that there are sustainable and longstanding diplomatic and defence relations between Pakistan and USA. He said that his country values these relations with USA, and appreciates USA's endeavours for establishing peace in the world.



QUETTA: US Ambassador Donald A. Blome meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Police cop shot dead by armed men in Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: A police constable was shot dead by unknown armed men near Nawan Killi bypass in Quetta suburb on Monday morning.

According to the police sources, the jawan of Police Eagle Squad, Ghulam Murtaza was on his way to duty when he was attacked by the armed men with fire arms. As a result, he died on the spot. The police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the body of martyred police jawan to the Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital. Meanwhile, the police officers and other personnel reached the Sandeman Hospital. Investigations have been started into the cold blooded murder of police cop. Later, the funeral prayer of Ghulam Murtaza was offered at the Police Lines Quetta the same afternoon. The Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other senior police officers attended the funeral prayer.

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'Campaign against me an attack on judiciary': Justice Mazhar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi Monday has challenged the proceedings of the complaint against the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). He pleaded that disclosed assets cannot be the basis of action against the judge and prayed there was never any notice of his assets from the tax authorities.

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Policy decisions on major issues, mandate of an elected govt: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that it was the mandate of an elected government to make policy decisions on major national issues. Responding to a motion suggesting that State Bank take steps to demonetize Rs 5000 currency note, as a reason of inflation and corruption, he said: "Can the government, with limited duration and powers, should make policy decisions? It would be appropriate if we wait for the next parliament to decide on the issue."

He called for a comprehensive debate on the important issue in the presence of the caretaker Finance Minister. The minister said Rs 5000 current notes were issued in May 2006, and currently, around 905 million currency notes of Rs 4525 billion were in circulation in the country. Solangi clarified that the State Bank of Pakistan issued or discontinued currency notes as per the State Bank Act. He also said that during the tenure of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, the SBP had been granted more autonomy.

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Teachers shortage leads to closure of 3,500 schools in Balochistan: Qadir

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Balochistan Education Minister Abdul Qadir Bakhsh Baloch has said that some 3,500 schools in the province had been closed due to shortage of teachers during the last two months. "The Provincial Education Department has been facing acute shortage of teachers. Due to political and departmental constraints, the department has not been able to recruit the teachers since 2019. Moreover, over 300 teachers are retiring every month," he said while talking to APP. The minister said, "Without enrolling children in schools, it is impossible to increase the literacy rate in the province."

He said the caretaker government had decided to upgrade 150 primary schools to middle in the province, four each in every district. To a question, Qadir Bakhsh said due to the last year's flood, more than 5,500 schools in the province were destroyed, and only 50 of them had been repaired so far. "The international organizations have assured their all-out support to repair the damaged schools," he added.

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NAUSHERA: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to workers convention in City.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Familiar message

Only the state has a monopoly on the use of force, while armed action by non-state actors is out of the question. Moreover, intolerant behaviour against minorities and other disadvantaged groups cannot be countenanced, while religious, sectarian and linguistic differences need to be overcome. This was the gist of the message the army chief gave to an assemblage of divines who had gathered at GHQ on Friday. The COAS also reiterated the salient features of the 2018 Paigham-i-Pakistan fatwa that over 1,800 clerics belonging to all confessional backgrounds had endorsed to shun militancy and extremism. It is assumed the conclave was arranged in the context of the rising terrorist violence across Pakistan, in which large numbers of security personnel, as well as civilians, have been martyred. It is hard to disagree with the message of this meeting, and it needs to be amplified further.

However, it appears that the army chief was preaching to the converted. Pro-state ulama are not the problem; extremist preachers who wish to dismantle the state and replace it with their own polity are the main hurdles to peace.

Along with kinetic operations, it is the facilitators of militancy in Pakistan who must be confronted. For example, amongst the sectarian groups and hard-right outfits in the country, many are sympathetic to the aims of terrorist groups like the TTP and IS-K.

Yet these outfits remain active, free to organise and operate. While sectarian death squads that were very active up till a decade ago may have been neutralised by the state, their political and ideological supporters remain free to preach their toxic views.

Hence the establishment's wish to deradicalise the nation will remain unfulfilled as long as these elements are operating at will. Secondly, a catharsis is needed within the establishment. For decades, the state encouraged jihadi actors, firstly in Afghanistan and then held Kashmir.

Changed geopolitical realities, and the fact that many of these groups went rogue and brought their battle to Pakistan, forced a U-turn, first during the Musharraf era, and then again after the APS Peshawar atrocity. Therefore, the establishment needs to acknowledge that mistakes were made when it supported jihadi actors, and learn from its errors.

Yet beyond the kinetic, legal and administrative actions against extremism, the underlying factors that fuel militancy must also be examined. While there have been numerous cases of 'educated' militants, it is mostly the dispossessed and the disadvantaged that become cannon fodder for terrorist groups. When an uncaring, distant state does nothing for their welfare, many feel that religious militancy is the only solution. Therefore, were the state to ensure rights, education, jobs and above all respect to deprived segments, it could go a long way in quelling militancy.

Decorating Karachi



Dr Noman Ahmed

In a recent meeting, Sindh's caretaker chief minister expressed his resolve to 'beautify' Karachi. Addressing bureaucrats, heads of civic agencies and architects, he spoke about the poor state of the entrance to the city from the airport. It is important to note that the so-called beautification has come about on many occasions with almost negligible results. Despite spending hundreds of millions of rupees, no enhancement in the aesthetics of the urban built environment could be achieved. These attempts should be reviewed in an objective and dispassionate manner before moving ahead with interventions also likely to meet with failure.

During Farooq Sattar's tenure as mayor, the Karachi Beautification Committee, comprising municipal managers, civil society members and architects, was created. One of its tasks was to conduct design competitions for traffic roundabouts — thematic and general monuments were to be crafted for an artistic environment. As a result, dozens of structures were built, but with the exception of a few such as Allah Wali Chowrangi at the Tariq Road and Shahrah-i-Quaideen intersection, most were eyesores wrapped in concrete and steel. A conspicuous flaw was the absence of trees and foliage. Experts say Karachi was nicer without them. In contrast, the simple yet pleasing New M.A. Jinnah Road roundabout is worth emulating; lined with appropriately spaced palm trees it's a precious piece of urban

landscaping.

Another attempt was made during Niamatullah Khan's term. Many municipal agencies were merged to form the now defunct City District Government Karachi. Parks and playgrounds in various localities were among CDGK's feats: some 300 parks were renovated, 24 model parks were developed in different neighbourhoods, including Gulshan-i-Iqbal, North Nazimabad, F.B. Area, Metroville-1 and Nazimabad, and older large-scale parks, such as the Safari Park and Zoological Gardens, were restored considerably.

Positive land-use conversion of the old Sabzi Mandi into a park with executive assistance from military authorities was a step in the right direction. I.I. Chundrigar Road was also revamped by a committee led by the State Bank governor, but the move made little impact due to limited support from powerful stakeholders for this crucial artery. More recently, in July 2023, a face-lift of Sharea Faisal was announced; with a hefty budget of Rs195.71m, the project aims to improve facilities for pedestrians, landscaping and installation of artistic works along the Metropole Hotel-Jinnah terminal corridor. A wall is being constructed at Moria Khan Goth and another Gaza-like façade is under consideration. Perhaps, the wall's purpose is to 'hide' the mundane and provide a pleasing impression to those entering Karachi from the airport.

Meanwhile, locals are struggling to convey to city authorities that the wall will ruin business and retail activities as it will sever the visual connection between shops and customers. One hopes that good sense prevails and a treelad metallic fence is installed at this junction. Also, numerous over-

head pedestrian bridges are in a shambles and the absence of railings and balustrades makes them perilous for users. Concerned agencies must repair them before an accident occurs.

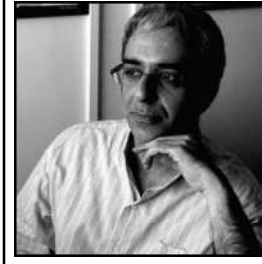
Another variety of bizarre structures built in the name of beautification are the mighty gate complexes found at the entrances of gated communities, defence establishments, universities and educational institutions. Cheap copies of existing monuments in distorted proportions abound; for instance, Bab-i-Khyber is possible in Karachi instead of KP. A dubious real estate development along the M-9 Motorway is mar-ked by a giant gated complex created to display the financial strength and political clout of the developer.

If our chief minister cares for Karachi, he should expedite the process of preparing the Greater Karachi Region Plan 2047. The process began during the previous government but is facing snags. It must be an appropriate plan that can tackle the aesthetic challenges and offer a range of solutions, incorporate the feedback of beneficiaries and affectees of all development works, and be a binding statute.

An empowered and independent urban planning agency should be established to implement it as the present situation of Karachi's management is proof of essential prerequisites being a long way away. These challenges are not insurmountable with the induction of competent planners, architects, engineers, demographers, sociologists, cartographers, IT specialists, field surveyors and others in the proposed agency. The capacity to take on these assignments can be shored up.

-- Courtesy Dawn

South remembers



Zarrar Khuhro

In the world of WhatsApp, Muslim and Arab countries have taken a serious stance against Israel. In that little chamber — isolated from fact, reason and logic — the emir of Qatar has threatened to cut off global LNG supplies if the West keeps supporting Israel the way it always has and likely always will.

More recently, Turkish President Erdogan sent a medical task force, accompanied by a special forces unit and dared the Israelis to shoot at them.

Nothing of this sort actually happened, or is likely to happen outside the world of WhatsApp. In the real world, Saudi Arabia is annoyed the screams from Gaza are interfering with its ongoing coming out party, while the UAE — which spearheaded normalisation with Israel — is pretending nothing is happening.

Iran, for all its bluster, reportedly isn't happy with Hamas taking such action on its own, and as far as Jordan and Egypt go, the less said the better. That leaves Turkey which, despite Erdogan's rhetoric, hasn't yet taken anything that even remotely resembles concrete action.

Instead, we see that states further physically removed from the theatre of murder have shown greater moral fibre: Belgium openly condemned Israel's collective punishment of the Palestinians, while also expressing support for the International Criminal Court's role and its ongoing investigation into the Palestine crisis.

Norway's parliament has called on its govern-

ment to be ready to recognise a Palestinian state, and Spain's Ione Belarra, minister for social rights and leader of the leftist Podemos party, has not only called for an end to the genocide but also for Spain to end all diplomatic ties with Israel.

But the strongest response so far has come from Latin and South American states: Bolivia has cut ties with Israel while Chile, Colombia and Honduras have withdrawn diplomats from Tel Aviv. Brazil's left-wing President Lula has said that Israel is "killing innocent people without any criteria".

Even Argentina, which hosts the largest Jewish community in South America, called Israel's attack a "violation of international humanitarian law". Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden carries on quoting 'evidence', that has long since been debunked, in support of Israel's barbarous actions.

What explains the support for the Palestinian cause in so many Latin and South American countries? The Palestinian diaspora has played a part, given that some 700,000 people of Palestinian descent live in that continent — the progeny of those expelled by Israel — with the largest contingent in Chile.

This diaspora has been politically active, has deep cultural roots, and has made common cause with indigenous groups and left-leaning political groups. The links go beyond South America. In fact, one South American activist recalls that during his exile in Germany, it was a Palestinian who taught him the German word for 'refugee'.

Another reason is that the Cold War and its legacy conditioned leftist leaders in the region to support the Palestinian cause; Fidel Castro was the first Latin American leader to snap ties with Israel.

Then there is the shared experience of being ground under the boot heels of empire, an experience that is personal for many of these leaders who have seen the US attempt to depose them and destabilise their countries — ushering in murderous right-wing regimes — in order to serve its imperial interests.

So, you may say that on one level at least it is a shared history and experience that draws them closer. Having suffered colonialism and West-backed dictatorships, the people of these countries — understand the Palestinian struggle.

Ideology plays a part too. In Colombia's case, it has been prioritised over strategic interests. By condemning Israel, Colombia has jeopardised its military deals with Tel Aviv, which suspended arms sales to Colombia.

However, before the 'pink tide' swept these states, the right-wing governments that had taken power had tilted towards Israel. Jair Bolsonaro was a prominent supporter of Israel, which has always been a close friend of regressive forces in South America.

Colombia's military — often accused of murder — was well armed and trained by Israel, and when in Venezuela Juan Guaidó attempted to take power in a US-backed coup, Israel was one of the few countries that recognised him as a legitimate ruler. As usual, Israel is not shy to make alliances with even the most anti-Semitic of countries, such as Alfredo Stroessner's Paraguay. A Nazi sympathiser, Stroessner made Paraguay a haven for Nazi war criminals and despite this, was courted by Israel for the simple reason that the left, with its emphasis on decolonisation and rights — was a greater threat to Israel than the Nazis. The world may have willingly forgotten, but the South remembers. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

ML-I project consistently remains on top of govt's priorities: Shahid Tarar

Pakistan, China vow to successful implementation of ML-I project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communications, Maritime Affairs and Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Monday reiterated that the Main Line-I (ML-I) project has consistently been on top of the government's priorities.

In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the minister reiterated the current political will to translate these priorities into tangible on-ground developments.

"We are determined to expedite the implementation of ML-I and with the political will in place, we are poised to

transform plans into action."

The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the realms of transport and communication, with a particular emphasis on advancing the crucial ML-I project.

During the meeting, both parties engaged in constructive dialogue on various topics of mutual interest, affirming the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China.

Expressing admiration for the Chinese expertise and participation in the ML-I project, the minister commended the collaborative efforts

between the two countries. Jiang Zaidong highlighted the project's foundation on mutual understanding and underscored its integral role in fostering cooperation and development.

"We are fully committed to working with the Pakistani side, and our joint efforts aim to accelerate the realization of the ML-I project," he added. The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their dedication to the successful implementation of the ML-I project, a symbol of the enduring friendship and strategic partnership between Pakistan and China.



QUETTA: A school-going boy selling eggs to support his family at a roadside near Koyla Patkha.

Zeba Hai assures APTMA of removing all irritants of EFS for promoting exports

LAHORE (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Member (Customs) Ms. Zeba Hai Azhar has assured the APTMA of removing all irritants in Export Facilitate Scheme (EFS) and other customs procedures, formalities to facilitate exporters by helping them focus on how to boost exports.

She visited APTMA Lahore office-bearers on

Monday to hold an interactive session on exports and other Customs related issues. She was accompanied by Ms. Rabab Sikandar, Chief Collector Customs Lahore, Ms. Azmat Tahira, Collector Customs Lahore, Mr. Saeed Wattoo, Collector Customs Lahore, Ms. Saima Inam, Collector Customs Sialkot, Asdaq Afzal, Sensor Collector Faisalabad.

LCCI President appointed as board member of Punjab Council of Arts

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar has been appointed as member Board of Governors of Punjab Council of Arts and an official notification has been issued in this regard. Director General of Punjab Council of Arts, Information and Culture Department Punjab Dr. Syed Bilal Haider met Kashif Anwar at LCCI on Monday and congratulated him on his appointment.

Dr. Syed Bilal Haider said that the board of directors of Punjab Council of Arts was very important. Chief Minister Punjab was the Chairman of the boards of governors. He stated that by taking some measures, Pakistan's arts and culture could be turned into a billion dollar industry.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Railways & Maritime Affairs Mr. Shahid Ashraf Tarar hosting a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Mr. Jiang Zaidong at the Ministry.

Pakistan exports textile products worth \$5.565 bln in 4 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan exported textile products worth \$5,565.079 million during the first four months of the current financial year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The exports of the product however witnessed a decline of 6.33 percent during July-October (2023-24) when compared to the exports of \$5,940.992 million during July-October (2022-23).

WAPDA launches project for 300 MW floating solar power generation

TARBELA (APP): The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Monday has embarked on a groundbreaking project aimed at producing 300 megawatts of cost-effective electricity through solar panels. A delegation from approximately 21 foreign companies keenly interested in securing contracts for the project conducted on-site inspections at the Ghazi Barotha Dam and Barotha Jail locations.

The project, set to be completed within 27

months, secured a substantial financial boost from the World Bank (WB), with a funding allocation of \$326 million. WAPDA has taken significant measures in advancing the initiative, focusing on the utilization of floating solar panels, also referred to as floating solar panels.

Detailed briefings on the project's specifics were presented by the General Manager and Project Director (PD) Tarbela Dam Zahoor Atiq, along with Waseem Raza, Chief Engineer of the Tarbela Expansion Project.

The textile commodities that witnessed positive growth in trade included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 137.13 percent, from \$9.845 million last year to \$23.346 million this year.

Likewise, the exports of cotton yarn increased by 42.85 percent, from \$285.315 million last year to \$407.564 million this year, cotton carded or combed by 142.76 percent, from \$0.213

No change in local gold price, international rate declines by \$2

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed no change in prices on Monday and was sold at Rs.215,100.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold and 10 grams of 22-karat gold remained stagnant at Rs.184,414 and Rs.169,046 respectively, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram Silver also witnessed no change and was sold at Rs.2,550 and 2,186.21 respectively.

International trade data FPCCI supports transparency, security & monitoring: Irfan

KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that it is very important to establish transparency, security and monitoring mechanisms in the global trade. It creates confidence among trading nations; and, ultimately enhances bilateral, regional and multilateral trade. He was addressing the high-profile session of the International Centre for Trade Transparency & Monitoring (ICTTM) as a key speaker.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh pointed out that Pakistan needs to adopt Advanced Data Analytics & Modeling for Foreign Trade Data (ADAMfmd) — which is an

ICTTM initiative — in particular these have the scope to revolutionize and influence both historical & real-time trade data to decode world-wide trading patterns.

ADAMfmd platform will ensure transparency, security, and efficiency in international trade operations, he added. It is pertinent to note that Pakistan's apex body, FPCCI and ICTTM have crossed a significant milestone by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) — and, this partnership underscores a shared commitment to enhance the transparency and compliance in international trade, Mr. Sheikh added.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying peanuts to attract the customers at Rawat.

SCCI, Iranian diplomat agree to further strengthen Pak-Iran trade ties

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Fuad Ishaq and Consul General of Iran in Peshawar, Ali Banafsheh Khah have agreed to start a series of online meetings to bring Pakistan-Iran business community closer to each other and bringing duties/tariffs structure equal between Pakistan and Iran.

On the occasion, Fuad Ishaq emphasized the need to trade in local currency and sign free trade agreements with Iran, Afghanistan and China.

Consul General of Iran in Peshawar, Ali Banafsheh Khah held a meeting with President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fuad Ishaq here at the Chamber House, said a press release issued on Monday. On this occasion, Commercial Attaché Peshawar Consulate Hossein Maliki, Senior Vice President of the SCCI Sanaullah Khan, Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and the translator of the Consulate of Iran were present on this occasion.

Punjab Governor says: Prosperous and sustainable future depends on modern knowledge and research

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today attended the closing ceremony of All Punjab Universities Innovation Expo 2023 organized by the Punjab Higher Education Commission and provincial universities as a special guest at the Expo Center Lahore. Around 450 research projects were exhibited on this occasion.

Chairman Punjab Higher Education Commission Dr. Shahid Muneer, Chairman APSUP, Chaudhry Abdul Rahman, Vice Chancellors of Universities, Deans of various departments of the

universities, local industry owners, officials, government policy makers, students and a large number of people belonging to the different walks of life were present.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that organizing such an exhibition is very important for our educational institutions to understand the modern industrial and contemporary needs and to develop the talent of their students and guide them accordingly.

He said that it is very gratifying that the students have come up with new

projects and ideas, adding that this platform will foster new opportunities for them. He said that the young population is the demographic dividend of the country, and we should capitalise on it. He further said that Pakistani youth are very talented.

Governor Punjab said that in 2013-18, the funding of research grants of universities was increased. The laptop scheme yielded good results.

This reduced the digital divide and created employment opportunities for the youth. He said that Pakistani youth have made a name for themselves in gaming apps in the world.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman addressing the closing ceremony of All Punjab Universities Innovation Expo 2023 organized by the Punjab Higher Education Commission and provincial universities.

Naqvi approves package for families of martyred employees of all depts

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in principle, granted approval for a relief package equivalent to that provided to police martyrs to be extended to the families of officers or employees who sacrificed their lives while serving any government department.

The CM emphasized extending a comparable aid package to injured government employees. Directing the formation of a committee led by the Additional Chief Secretary, Mohsin Naqvi tasked it with reviewing cases and formulating final recommendations.

The 13th meeting of the Cabinet Standing Committee on Finance and Development, chaired by the chief minister, addressed the financial assistance case for the family of Excise Inspector Muhammad Rafi, martyred in the line of duty, and the injured Inspector Sanaullah Bhatti.

Prompted by the incident, the CM ordered an immediate review, approving an aid

package equivalent to the police martyrs package for the family of the late Inspector Muhammad Rafi and the injured Excise Inspector Sanaullah Bhatti. Notably, Inspector Rafi lost his life, and Inspector Bhatti sustained severe injuries and disabilities due to gunfire by drug dealers in Rahim Yar

Khan. Provincial Ministers SM Tanveer, Amir Mir, and Mansoor Qadir, along with Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Chairman Planning and Development Board, and secretaries of relevant departments attended the meeting.

CM, Australian High Commissioner discuss bilateral cooperation

Independent Report
LAHORE: In a meeting held at the Chief Minister's Office, Australia's High Commissioner Mr. Neil Hawkins engaged in a productive meeting with Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

The CM extended congratulations to the Australian High Commissioner and the people for Australia's 6th World Cup win. As a gesture, the High Commissioner presented a cricket ball signed by Australian captain Pat Cummins and Mark Taylor to the chief minister, said a handout issued here. During the conversation, the Australian High Commissioner commended Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi as a diligent and active leader, noting his continuous efforts, including visible work on parks and the upgradation of Lahore Zoo, Safari Park, and Gardens. Expressing pleasure over Naqvi's commitment, he pledged steps to provide kangaroos to Lahore Zoo and affirmed Australia's readiness to enhance cooperation with Punjab across various fields.

CM Naqvi emphasized the implementation of measures to combat smog, making masks mandatory for citizens and securing advanced technology through collaborations with friendly countries.

KP CM emphasis need for development of merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (ret'd) Arshad Hussain Shah here Monday said that merged districts need special attention to its development and redressal of its deprivations.

He said that all-out efforts would be made to steer the province out of this financial crisis.

The CM said this while presiding over an important meeting regarding financial issues of the province held here at Chief Minister's House on Monday.

The meeting discussed in detail the financial issues of the

province, especially of the merged districts related to the federal government, and decided to take up those issues with the caretaker prime minister for redressal.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Senior Member Board of Revenue Ikramullah Khan, Secretary Finance Aamir Sultan Tareen and other relevant officials attended the meeting.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali administered the oath from Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakahel as caretaker Provincial Minister at Governor House.

CS Punjab inaugurates e-Procurement System

Independent Report
LAHORE: The e-Procurement System developed by the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) in collaboration with the Federal and Provincial Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Boards, was inaugurated by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) on Monday.

The system has been introduced by the Punjab government in departments to streamline the public procurement process.

The ceremony presided over by Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar

Zaman was attended by state officials and stakeholders, including SMRB Nabeel Javid, Additional Chief Secretary Ahmed Raza Sarwar, Planning & Development Secretary Mazhar Sial, PPRA Punjab MD Waqar Azim, PITB Chairman Faisal Yousaf and DG e-Governance Sajid Latif.

Addressing the ceremony, the chief secretary highlighted that the e-procurement system was a significant step toward good governance, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and time-saving in procurements.

Smog in Punjab: LHC orders to keep all educational institutions closed till end of January

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has ordered to keep all educational institutions closed on Saturday till end of January due to smog.

Court has directed to issue notification to close schools, colleges and universities.

Justice Shahid Karim has issued a written order on the petitions filed for elimination of smog.

It is said in written order that Punjab government is taking steps regarding working from home on 2 days in the week. The word of gym closure is suspended in the notification. In the written order of the court, it is said that the meteorological department should take departmental action against officers who do not take action against smog.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Dadu are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of police, at Hyderabad press club.

A meeting of district voter education committee held

LARKANA (APP): A meeting of the District Voter Education Committee Kashmore-Kandhkot was held here on Monday, under the chairmanship of District Election Commissioner Kashmore-Kandhkot Sattar Sardar, at the election commissioner's office.

The meeting was attended among others by the Members of the district voter's education committee. Addressing the meeting, the District Election Commissioner informed the participants about the constitutional duties and responsibilities of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the forthcoming general election-2024.

He urged all the members present to make efforts to highlight the importance of voting in their communities.

At the end of the meeting, the participants appreciated the constitutional duties and responsibilities of the ECP and assured their full cooperation.

International News

China welcomes Arab and Muslim foreign ministers for talks on ending the war in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's top diplomat welcomed four Arab foreign ministers and the Indonesian one to Beijing on Monday, saying his country would work with "our brothers and sisters" in the Arab and Islamic world to try to end the war in Gaza as soon as possible.

The ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Indonesia chose to start a tour of world capitals in Beijing, a testament to both China's growing geopolitical influence and its longstanding support for the Palestinians.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the for-

ign diplomats that their decision to start in Beijing shows their high level of trust in his nation.

"China is a good friend and brother of Arab and Islamic countries," Wang said in opening remarks at a state guest house before their talks began. "We have always firmly safeguarded the legitimate rights and interests of Arab (and) Islamic countries and have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people."

China has long backed the Palestinians and been quick to denounce Israel over its settlements in the occupied territories. It has

not criticized the initial Hamas attack on Oct 7 — which killed about 1,200 people — while the United States and others have called it an act of terrorism. However, China does have growing economic ties with Israel.

The Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, called for an immediate cease-fire and the entry of humanitarian aid and relief to the Gaza Strip.

"There are still dangerous developments ahead of us and an urgent humanitarian crisis that requires an international mobilization to deal with and counter it," he said.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi attends a family photo session with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary-General Houssein.

US Defense Secretary Austin meets with Zelensky in Kyiv to show steadfast support for Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made an unannounced visit to Kyiv on Monday in a high-profile push to keep money and weapons flowing to Ukraine even as U.S. and international resources are stretched by the new global risks raised by the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Austin, who traveled to Kyiv by train from Poland, met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov and was scheduled to meet with Chief of Staff Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi.

In Kyiv, Austin said Ukraine's effort to defeat Russia's invasion "matters to the rest of the world" and that U.S. support would continue "for the long haul."

Zelenskyy said Austin's visit was "a very important signal for Ukraine."

"We count on your support," Zelenskyy said, thanking Congress as well as the American people for their backing.

This is Austin's second trip to Kyiv, but he's making it under far different circumstances, as the world's attention is drawn to the Middle East and signs of fatigue set in with the almost 21-month Russia-Ukraine war.

Austin's first visit occurred in April 2022, just two months after the start of the war. At the time, Ukraine was riding a wave of global rage at Moscow's invasion.

Austin's first visit occurred in April 2022, just two months after the start of the war. At the time, Ukraine was riding a wave of global rage at Moscow's invasion.

Nearly 200 Gaza evacuees to arrive in Turkey

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Nearly 200 evacuees from Gaza are set to arrive in Turkey on Monday, including dozens of patients who will receive medical treatment there, Turkey's health minister and foreign ministry spokesman said.

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said 61 patients, accompanied by 49 relatives, had arrived in Ankara on Monday afternoon after being brought out to Egypt on Sunday. Footage showed Koca at the Esenboga airport in Ankara greeting the people who

were taken to hospital on ambulances. "In terms of protecting human dignity, I think the steps we have taken provide a contribution, though very small," Koca told reporters at the airport. The priority for evacuations was now Gazan children, babies, and wounded civilians, he added.

Koca said last week that Ankara wanted to bring back as many as possible of nearly 1,000 cancer patients from Gaza - most of whom are former patients of a Turkish-Palestinian hospital that shut down due to Israeli attacks.

Turkish ship, 12 crew missing in storm

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: A Turkish cargo ship and its 12 crew are missing in a storm off the northwest coast of the country, Turkish authorities said on Sunday.

The Kafkametel vessel sent out a distress signal at 10:29am, according to a subdivision of the ministry of transport, which added that it gave off its last signal off the northwestern city of Eregli. "Our efforts to contact the vessel and its crew have been unsuccessful," the General Directorate of Maritime Affairs said.

Al Shifa Hospital a 'death zone': WHO

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: A joint UN team, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), discovered evident signs of shelling and gunfire at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza, designating it a "death zone".

The hospital, with 24 health workers and 291 patients, including 32 critically ill infants, is no longer operational, resulting in recent patient deaths.

Due to time limits associated with the security situation, the team spent only an hour inside the hospital, describing it as a "death zone," and the situation as "desperate."

"Signs of shelling

and gunfire were evident. The team saw a mass grave at the entrance of the hospital and was told that more than 80 people were buried there," said a WHO report released on Sunday.

"Patient deaths have occurred over the previous two to three days due to the shutdown of medical services," it said. "Lack of infection control measures and antibiotics has resulted in severely infected wounds, particularly in trauma patients," it added.

The report expressed deep concern, urging immediate efforts to restore functionality to Al Shifa and other hospitals.



U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, right, speaks to employees of the U.S. embassy in Kyiv.

Seoul warns North Korea not to launch spy satellite and hints 2018 military deal could be suspended

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea's military warned North Korea not to go ahead with its planned spy satellite launch, suggesting Monday that Seoul could suspend an inter-Korean agreement to reduce tensions and resume front-line aerial surveillance in response.

North Korea failed in its first two attempts to put a military spy satellite into orbit earlier this year and didn't follow through with a vow to make a third attempt in October. South Korean officials said the delay was likely because the launch was likely to

follow through with a vow to make a third attempt in October. South Korean officials said the delay was likely because the launch was likely to follow through with a vow to make a third attempt in October. South Korean officials said the delay was likely because the launch was likely to follow through with a vow to make a third attempt in October.

with necessary measures to protect the lives and safety of the people, if North Korea pushes ahead with a military spy satellite launch despite our warning," a senior South Korean military officer, Kang Hopil, said in a televised statement.

South Korean Defense Minister Shin Wonsik said in an interview with public broadcaster KBS on Sunday the launch was expected later this month and that South Korean and U.S. authorities were monitoring North Korea's moves.

The U.N. Security Council bans any satellite launches by North Korea because it views them as a disguised test of its missile technology.

NATO's Stoltenberg concerned by secessionist rhetoric in Bosnia

Monitoring Desk
SARAJEVO: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Monday the alliance was concerned by secessionist rhetoric in Bosnia, as well as by Russian influence in the country, after months of Serb leaders increasingly saying they want to split away.

Bosnia emerged from a 1992-1995 war with a federal structure uniting a Serb-dominated republic with a federation of Croats and Bosniak Muslims. The leader of Serbian entity, Milorad Dodik, has increasingly said in recent months that he aims to secede and

join neighbouring Serbia. "We are concerned by secessionist and divisive rhetoric as well as... foreign interference including Russia," Stoltenberg told reporters in Sarajevo, his first stop during a tour of the Western Balkans region. "This undermines the stability and hampers reform," Stoltenberg said, adding that all political leaders must work to preserve unity, build national institutions and achieve reconciliation. Nearly three decades after the war that claimed 100,000 lives, the deadliest of the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Kremlin notes Argentina President-elect Milei's comments on Russia, but hopes for good ties

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday it had taken note of statements about Russia from Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei who has said he wants to pull back from relations with Moscow, but still hoped the two countries could maintain strong ties.

Milei, a right-wing libertarian who on Sunday won almost 56% of the vote in the election's second round, has previously said he would retreat from ties with countries including Russia, China and Brazil, citing disagreement with their governments' policies.

Milei has also expressed support for Ukraine in its conflict with Russia and has said he sees the United States and Israel as Argentina's main partners.

