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PM directs all stakeholders to pursue SIFC initiatives to reap dividends

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday directed all the stakeholders to vigorously pursue the Special Investment Facilitation Council's (SIFC) initiatives through a collaborative approach to reap the dividend in short to medium terms, besides initiating processes for long term endeavours in the larger national interest.

high level government officials.

The meeting was held to review various initiatives being led through the SIFC forum, a PM Office press release said.

In the meeting, the ministries presented progress on projects identified in key sectors and gave plans to further improve the ecosystem for realizing the envisaged investments in a timely manner.

It reviewed progress on various measures undertaken to improve investment climate and approved policy level interventions to further improve investors' confidence including repatriation of profits, strengthening domestic dispute resolution mechanism, infrastructural and human resource development, and

operationalization of EXIM Bank.

The committee also directed to make a comprehensive strategy to address oil and gas issues in a sustainable manner by investing in relevant industries.

The apex body reviewed and appreciated the progress on privatization of State-Owned-Enterprises and directed to keep the process at fast pace.

The Chief of Army Staff reassured undaunted resolve of the Pakistan Army to backstop government initiatives in various domains for sustainable recovery of the economy.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 7th meeting of Apex Committee of SIFC.



ABBOTTABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to workers convention.

OIC calls Israeli aggression against Palestinians 'war crimes', asks world to step in

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Thursday said that the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip constituted a war crime under international humanitarian law and called for the immediate cessation of the aggression.

Israeli aggression," a statement issued by the OIC headquarters in Jeddah said.

The statement urged the international community to ensure the opening of humanitarian corridors for the safe and sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. The OIC strongly condemned the incursion into the Al-Shifa medical complex by the Israeli occupation forces and their continued siege of hospitals in Gaza City.

Younus Dagher surrenders salary, allowances as Caretaker Minister

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Minister for Revenue, Industries and Commerce Muhammad Younus Dagher has surrendered his salary, allowances and TA/DA entitled as Caretaker Minister.

partment, Younus Dagher stated that he had been notified as Caretaker Sindh Minister on August 19, 2023.

The Minister stated that he was surrendering his monthly salary, allowance and TA/DA as admissible under rules and shall work for province of Sindh on honorary basis.

In his letter addressed to Secretary Services, General Administration and Coordination De-



KARACHI: Leaders and members of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, held at Moach Goth area in Karachi.

4 terrorists killed, 1 officer martyred in Peshawar IBO

RAWALPINDI (Online): Security Forces have conducted intelligence based operation on report of presence of terrorists in Budh Bir area of Peshawar.

4 terrorists were killed including most wanted terrorists as a result of effective operation of security forces.

Officer was martyred during another operation in Kalachi area of Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan).

According to Pakistan Army Public Relations Department (ISPR), Security forces have effectively tar-

geted the hideouts of terrorists and as a result of this 4 terrorists were killed.

Caretaker PM's assets revealed

ISLAMABAD (Online): The details of assets of Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar have come to light.

According to received documents, Caretaker PM Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar owns assets worth RS 4, 81, 82,580. Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has 20 acres of inherited agricultural land worth RS 80 lakh.

Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has 50,000 shares in Pakistan Chagai Mining Limited. Caretaker PM has disclosed the price of 10 tola gold at 80,000 rupees. Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has more than 2 crore and 20 lakh rupees in 2 banks. Caretaker PM has disclosed the amount of this house furniture to be 4 lakh rupees.

Minister Khalil Emphasizes Education for Positive Impact

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Human Rights Minister George Khalil Thursday highlighted the need to prioritize education for presenting a positive and a soft image of Pakistan and combating child violence on World Children's Day.

During a ceremony commemorating World Children's Day, the minister emphasized that the media can play a crucial role in putting an end to violence against children. The minister expressed that celebrating World Children's Day serves the purpose of advocating for children's rights.

"We are creating opportunities for children and young individuals to voice their concerns on matters important to them."

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach at \$ 12.53 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of the country on Thursday stood at US\$ 12,535.5 million while the central bank held the reserves of \$ 7,396.7 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 115 million to \$ 7,396.7 million due to debt repayments during the week ended on November 10, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,138.8 million, it added.

COAS calls on Caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Head of Pak-Army General Syed Asim Munir met with Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar in Prime Minister House on Thursday.

According to sources of PM House, matters related to national and internal security have been discussed in the meeting.

Caretaker PM has expressed satisfaction over the success achieved in ongoing intelligence based operations (IBOs) in various cities of country to eradicate terrorism and paid tribute to martyrs of Pakistan army.

He said that the sacrifices that the security forces and the Pakistan Army are making for the defense of the homeland and the eradication of terrorism will not go in vain.

Army Chief has also taken PM into confidence on the ongoing operations regarding the evacuation of illegal immigrants and on which PM expressed his satisfaction.

PM said that Pakistan will take all steps to protect its security and borders.

The situation of security in region and other matters were also discussed in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George, addressing seminar on "Universal Children's Day 2023" and "Child Rights of Invisible Children in Pakistan".

Intelligence reports are there terrorists are in contact with foreign nationals residing in Pakistan illegally: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said that it has intelligence information that terrorists are in contact with foreign nationals residing in Pakistan illegally.

"international institutions of justice will have to be active on Israeli war crime. Israeli army is perpetrating atrocities against unarmed people of Palestine. Attacking hospitals is brazen violation of human and war laws, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly briefing here Thursday. We have asked Afghan

interim government to take action against terrorists targets on the basis of intelligence reports, she added.

Talking on Kashmir issue she said India is engaged in occupying lands in Occupied Kashmir. India took into possession lands of protectors of human rights in Pulwama.

Pakistan will continue its support to Kashmir for resolution of Kashmir issue, she reiterated.

Indian forces brutalities are continuing in illegally occupied Kashmir by India. Pakistan will set up contacts in all regions.

Sindh government moves SC against the decision of stopping trial of civilians in military courts

ISLAMABAD (Online): Sindh government has filed appeal in Supreme Court (SC) against the decision of stopping trial of civilians in military courts.

Sindh government has requested the court to nullify decision of stopping the trial of civilians in military courts.

It has been said in appeal that Supreme Court

(SC) decision be suspended till the decision of appeal. It was further said in the appeal those accused in attacking military installations should be tried in military courts. SC has not made correct review of law and facts.

Sindh government has requested for restoration of nullified clauses of army act and official secret act.



KARACHI: Afghan refugees wait to get registered for verification, in Karachi.

Bilawal Bhutto vows to double wages, fight inflation, empower youth

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed determination to establish a government prioritizing youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, and inflation control, with plans to double wages over a five-year period.

While addressing a PPP workers' convention in Abbottabad on Thursday, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari thanked the party's supporters, particularly the women, and highlighted the deep-rooted relationship between the PPP and the people spanning three generations. He also expressed gratitude for the warm welcome during his Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tour.

Bilawal acknowledged former President Zardari's

accomplishments and the party's contributions, emphasizing the need to continue the mission of Quaid-e-Awam, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He called for a collective effort in the upcoming elections to implement the PPP's manifesto and ideology.

Addressing pressing issues like inflation and unemployment, Bilawal advocated for a new mindset and leadership focused on serving the people rather than engaging in divisive politics. He underscored the PPP's commitment to empowering farmers, workers, and the common people, proposing initiatives like the 'Kissan Card' and 'Benazir Mazdoor Card.'

He emphasized the

PPP's historical role in combating poverty and called for a departure from past politics to pave the way for a prosperous, modern Pakistan.

Bilawal insisted on the people's right to choose their representatives. He criticized the politics of the past and stressed the need for a new political system that serves the people.

Bilawal announced the continuation of party conventions in Mardan, Peshawar, Naushera, Dir, and Chitral, expressing confidence in the PPP's victory and its role in forming the next government.

In the face of challenges during past elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bilawal asserted that the PPP would triumph this time.

British High Commissioner pays courtesy call on PML (N)'s Quaid

ISLAMABAD (Online): Ambassador Jane Marriott, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan paid a courtesy call on PML (N)'s Quaid, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in Lahore, on Thursday 16 November 2023.

Warmly welcoming the British High Commissioner, the PML (N) Quaid spoke of Pakistan's historic relations with Great Britain, that have grown into one of Pakistan's most important trade, economic and investment ties.

3. The former Prime Minister also recalled his warm and cordial relations with many British leaders, going back to Prime Minister John

Major, with whom he had the pleasure of playing cricket on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Summit, in Harare in October, 1991.

4. Mr. Nawaz Sharif also requested BHC to convey his facilities on the Birthday of King Charles III

4. Mr. Nawaz Sharif also spoke of his pleasure at the return of former Prime Minister David Cameron to the Foreign Office, recalling that he had great respect for the former Prime Minister, who had been the first foreign leader to visit him, only weeks after he had been sworn into Office in June 2013.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked we will hear the case on Monday morning.

He remarked capital punishment can be awarded under the clause included in the case.

Attorney General (AG) replied while smiling Yes I know it. But I don't think death sentence is awarded.

Bushra Bibi regrets to appear before NAB in 190 million pounds case

ISLAMABAD (Online): NAB has summoned Bushra Bibi again today in 190 million pounds case while Bushra Bibi has regretted to appear.

According to sources Bushra Bibi has filed her written reply through her counsel Naeem Haider Panjtoha.

Regretting from attending NAB she said in written reply she cannot appear today due to her personal engagements. Date be given for appearing in next week.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salmaan Abdullah Murad, People's Party Central District President Masroor Ahsan, General Secretary Dil Muhammad, Saif Yar Khan, Shahzad Majeed and other elected representatives and workers were also present on this occasion.

Earlier, Murtaza Wahab along with Deputy Mayor Karachi inaugurated the Iqbal Park to be built on an area of about 5 acres

Journey of development will continue: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Thursday said that 32 roads would be inaugurated in the next ten days and the journey of development will continue.

He expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of Iqbal Park in Block 14 Gulberg Town here.

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Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab accompanied with Deputy Mayor Salmaan Abdullah Murad and others visiting the newly developed Iqbal Park in Gulberg Town, Federal B area.

He said that he laid the foundation stone of this park at the end of June this year and inaugurated it today.

He said that this project was part of the provision of civic services in Karachi.

Quality facilities should be provided at local level, this park is an asset of the people here and you have to support us to maintain it, he said.

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Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Repeat telecast

Six years may have passed since the engineering experiments that spoiled the 2018 general election, but no lessons have been learned and little has changed. With another poll approaching, old turncoats are now being ushered to the ranks of a new 'chosen one'. The opportunists, too, seem to have sensed the mood and will soon start rushing to pay obeisance to the PML-N's rising sun. With a new 'selected' being prepared to take Imran Khan's place, one cannot help but feel sorry for the PPP and the others who had cast their lot with the Pakistan Democratic Movement. After all, wasn't the entire raison d'être of the movement to prevent undemocratic forces from planting deeper roots in the political landscape?

Instead, the same forces seem to have ended up taking an even more central role in national-level decision-making. As for the PDM's component parties, they are now being co-opted into what looks like 'hybrid 2.0', or being turned against each other.

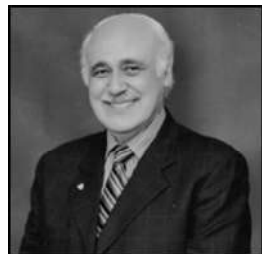
Considering how the 2018 election played out, it seems unlikely that 2024 will yield any different results. Whoever will take over will constantly be looking over their shoulder, wondering when the winds of favour will start blowing in a different direction.

Eventually, today's beneficiaries may realise that they were played; that a 'victory' that came from a tainted contest is never meant to endure. At some point, historians will ask: what was the point of removing one malformed government if it was only going to be replaced with a similar system of governance?

It will be a difficult question for political actors like the PML-N to contend with, who have played and lost this game too many times before and should have known better. Such arrangements only suit those who wish to rule without accountability; to whom politicians are a front, to be used and discarded at will.

Pakistan's democracy lies in tatters. Those who promised to be its saviours have dealt it a grievous blow. Is there hope for a better future? Once again, only principled politics can yield an answer. Until legitimacy and power are derived from the vox populi, no civilian government can hope to deliver. At best, it can be a pliant tool in the hands of institutions whose ideas about good governance, foreign policy and economic management, etc. have repeatedly failed the test of time. Politicians should, as one of them recently put it, rely on their own politics instead of looking to the country's security establishment to keep lending them a hand.

They should also learn to work with each other instead of turning politics into a zero-sum game. Lastly, they must yield to the people's will. Elections cannot be turned into a rubber stamp for backroom deals. All such efforts must be resisted.



F.S. Aijazuddin

The dead die when ceremony replaces memory. Ask the souls of those millions who sacrificed their lives throughout the history of human conflict. They lie interred beneath the earth they fought over. They fertilise the flowers that are plucked into wreaths. They are beyond the sound of vainglorious trumpets. They lie deep, "too deep for tears".

There was a time when news of victories or defeats in battle took days, often weeks, if not months, to reach families at home. How long, one wonders, did it take for news of Alexander's victory over Porus near the Jhelum in 326 BCE to reach Greece and the anxious Macedonians? It took over a month in 1776, after the Declaration of Independence of July 4, for the British King George III to learn that he had lost his American colonies. News of Wellington's victory over Napoleon in 1815 reached London's Whitehall after three days. The telegraph and the radio, however, brought modern wars into real time.

In May 2011, news channels via satellite television allowed president Obama, secretary of state Hillary Clinton and their cast of hawks in Washington, D.C. to watch US Navy SEALs invade Pakistan, and then assassinate Osama bin Laden in distant Abbottabad.

Today, death strides with bloodied boots directly from the battlefield into our family lounges. It does not wait for a casus belli. Retaliation now precedes the provocation.

Crimson chronicles

There are many today who suspect that the attacks on America's homeland on 9/11 were pre-planned by forces within the US, with Saudi help. Out of the 19 Al Qaeda terrorists who hijacked four US commercial airliners on Sept 11, 2001, 15 were Saudi citizens.

No one has been allowed to plumb the alleged role of the then Saudi ambassador to the US Prince Bandar bin Sultan. (He served both masters in D.C. for 22 years.) It has been alleged he indirectly funded some of the hijackers. His name is believed to be included in the 28 sensitive pages redacted from the final version of the 9/11 Commission report. How did Saudi and UAE nationals with US pilots' licences agree to commit such a well-planned suicide? And who is looking after their families? (In India, Bimal Kaur — the widow of Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassin Beant Singh — was later elected to the Lok Sabha.)

Some ask how Hamas could have amassed unaided 5,000 rockets to launch its preemptive attack on Israel? Whoever planned that assault must have anticipated its devastating consequences. They could foresee that the resultant punishment would not only fit the crime but was intended to exceed it. And after the present apocalypse, what? Many years ago, the comedian Peter Sellers starred in a satirical film *The Mouse that Roared* (1959).

In it, a fictional tiny European Duchy of Grand Fenwick "declares war on the United States, surrenders and takes advantage of American largesse towards its defeated enemies to rebuild the defeated nation's economy". If only Palestine had been another Grand Fenwick: its rehabilitation would have been assured. Instead, before the close of 2023,

Palestine as a state will have been obliterated. Its rubble will be pulverised to cement the foundation for a dollar-funded reconstruction, a phoenix rising out of the ashes of Palestine into a larger Israel. Ironically, Palestine's annihilation will be the final solution to the Palestinian problem. This would suit everyone: an ambitious Israel, its ever-loyal patron the US, a re-proving but impotent UN, and a quiescent Muslim ummah which has less the properties of a camel than of an ostrich with its head buried in the sand. Such a solution would suit everyone — except the innocent infants who fight for every breath, not for land. They are as-sure-d enough inches for a grave.

Will these atrocities pass into history unchronicled? In 1945, World War II had hardly ended when the Western media began a barrage of propaganda aimed at extolling its victories and denigrating its enemies. Quick off the mark were Lord Russell of Liverpool's charge-sheets of German and Japanese atrocities. The first — *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes* — appeared in 1954. (It avoided the word 'German'.) It was followed by *The Knights of Bushido: A Short History of Japanese War Crimes* (1958). No embarrassment there.

If there are any comparable volumes on the war crimes committed by the US and its allies since 1945, the White House library certainly does not have them. It would not have enough space. A resident — president Ronald Reagan — once said: "There is no cause more important than affirming the transcendent right to life of all human beings, the right without which no other rights have any meaning." But then, Ronald Reagan began his Hollywood career as a comedian. — Courtesy Dawn

Balochistan politics



Rafiullah Kakar

Balochistan has again captured the spotlight, courtesy of Nawaz Sharif's strategic foray into the province to court electables from BAP and other parties in a bid to solidify PML-N's position ahead of the polls. The influx of over two dozen electables into PML-N begs a critical evaluation of Islamabad's approach towards Balochistan. The national discourse has almost always attributed the plight of Balochistan to its own predatory and corrupt political elite, particularly the tribal sardars. While Balochistan's people generally agree with this assessment, they stress a crucial exception: these predatory elites owe their sustenance primarily to the patronage emanating from Islamabad.

The genesis of the predatory political behaviour of traditional elites in Balochistan can be traced to the tribal governance system of the British. Popularly known as the 'Sandeman system', the colonial frontier governance model corrupted tribal social structures and fortified the position of tribal sardars by extending to them patronage in exchange for performing specific administrative functions. Tribal sardars thus became integral to a two-way patron-client relationship, acting as both clients of the colonial state and patrons of their tribal subjects.

The postcolonial state perpetuated this policy of 'indirect rule' through the tribal sardars. Although the introduction of representative democracy opened avenues for commoners to enter

the political arena, the de facto power of the sardars endured, courtesy of the patronage received from Islamabad.

The Islamabad-sardar alliance symbolises a marriage of convenience, with the state providing patronage in return for sardars' countering assertive Baloch nationalists and downplaying thorny issues straining Baloch-Islamabad ties.

Since Balochistan's establishment as a province in 1970, it has predominantly witnessed rule by Islamabad-backed tribal elites. In the period from 1970 to 2023, Balochistan experienced civilian rule for only 28 years, with countrywide parties governing for approximately 22 years (82 per cent), leaving ethno-regional parties with a mere six years (18pc). Countrywide parties like the PML-N, PPP, and PTI have remained primary conduits for the traditional sardars and newly emerging electables, generally hailing from the mercantile class. They have switched political allegiances frequently. Despite their penchant for political nomadism, these turncoats find ready acceptance in the very parties they had deserted previously.

In the current scenario, the influx of electables into the PML-N raises eyebrows about the party's strategy for the restive province. Given the proclivity, and proven track record, of these electables to change political loyalties opportunistically, the PML-N leadership should prioritise the medium- and long-term goal of cultivating a genuine support base among the masses. Of all the parties, the PML-N should know better that these electables are trustworthy neither in the short nor medium term.

It was only in 2018 that the PML-N chief minister in Balochistan, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, was deserted by more than two-thirds of his own party members in support of a no-confidence motion filed by the opposition. Requiring a simple majority (33 votes) to continue as Leader of the House, the PML-N, with 21 members in the provincial assembly, should have comfortably thwarted the motion with the support of coalition partners whose combined strength was 25. However, it couldn't retain the loyalty of even nine out of 21 members and collapsed like a house of cards. Despite this experience, the PML-N leadership appears reluctant to learn from the past. The opportunistic and inconsistent behaviour of countrywide parties to—wards political turncoats renders them susceptible to ex-ternal ma—nipulation when political fortunes reverse.

This province of ruling electables has hindered the organic growth of political parties and fostered the growth of non-partisan, predatory political behaviour in the province. Further, it has fostered and cemented patronage-based provision of public goods and services at the expense of systemic reforms and service delivery. Lastly, it has weakened the public accountability of elected representatives, who increasingly rely on state patronage rather than popular support to enhance their chances of re-election.

In conclusion, the embrace of proven turncoats carries damaging implications for both political culture and public service delivery. Moving forward, the countrywide parties and the ruling elite in Islamabad, at the minimum, must acknowledge their complicity in Balochistan's crisis of political leadership rather than shifting the blame onto the province's citizens. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Government approves Telecom Infrastructure sharing framework

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has approved the Telecom Infrastructure Sharing Framework (TISF) developed by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The Framework was developed in consultation with the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) and the telecom industry, said a news release. This Framework provides a regulatory mechanism for licensees to share their active as well as passive telecom infrastructure in a fair and competitive manner.

The approval of the Telecom Infrastructure Sharing Framework is a

major step forward for the growth & sustainability of the telecom sector in Pakistan. It is expected to lead to significant reductions in the cost of deploying (CapEx) and operating (OpEx) telecom networks, which will ultimately benefit consumers in the form of lower prices and better as well enhanced services. There was a great need for telecom infrastructure sharing in Pakistan due to increasing inflation, low Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), rising fuel prices, revenue challenges, massive CapEx demand for 4G & 5G expansion, connecting remote areas, and cost-effective capacity

growth for nationwide coverage.

Telecom Infrastructure Sharing acts as a jump-start for new services with a larger coverage footprint and early Time to Market (TTM) of innovative products.

The Framework heightens competition among operators to focus on service differentiation and enhancing customer experience since part of the underlying network is shared.

PTA appreciates MoITT for its support in the development and approval of the Telecom Infrastructure Sharing Framework.

Rupee gains 77 paise against Dollar

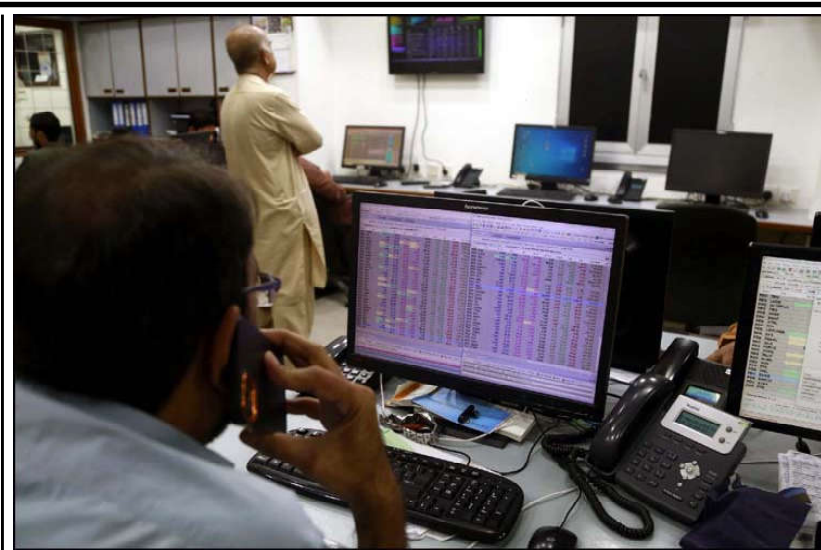
ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 77 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 287.37 against the previous day's closing at Rs 288.14.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 287.2 and Rs 290 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.55 to close at Rs 311.60 against the last day's closing of Rs 313.15, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen depreciated by 02 paise to close at Rs 1.89; whereas a decrease of Rs 3.26 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 355.90 as compared to the last closing of Rs 359.16.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 21 and 20 paise to close at Rs 78.24 and Rs 76.62 respectively.



KARACHI: Brokers are busy in trading at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark index and rupee recorded gains on Thursday.

Govt needs to curb soaring energy rates, hike in gas price to lift inflation: Ali Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Presidential candidate of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries' (FPCCI) upcoming election for 2024 Muhammad Ali Sheikh has called for keeping check on soaring energy prices, as the recent hike in gas prices will lift the average Consumer Price Index further, hitting all sectors of the economy.

In a statement on Thursday, FPCCI's Presidential candidate said

that the government had increased gas tariff with effect from this month 2023 just before the first IMF review under the \$3 billion short-term loan program. This is the second gas price increase in 10 months. The gas price hike is a condition attached to the loan program. It may pave the way for the release of second IMF tranche of \$700 million.

Calling to revert the decision, Muhammad Ali

Sheikh said that the industries that may resort to price increase include fertiliser, cement and steel, which will make agricultural production and construction material more expensive. The inflation forecast was higher than the State Bank of Pakistan's projection of 20-22 percent. The central bank governor has said that the expected gas price hike has been incorporated into the inflation forecast.

Zong 4G celebrates UAE National Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the UAE's National Day approaches, Zong 4G's UAE Roaming Bundles, truly embody the spirit of celebration and unity.

These bundles not only provide seamless connectivity for travellers but also serve as a testament to Zong 4G's commitment to fostering connections during this special occasion.

In the spirit of celebration, Zong 4G has simplified the activation process for UAE Roaming Bundles. Users can easily subscribe to these bundles through the My Zong App (MZA) or by dialing *4225#,

ensuring hassle-free connectivity. Zong 4G remains committed to providing a seamless experience for users, allowing them to focus on the celebrations rather than the logistics of staying connected.

The UAE Bundle gives users 2GB of data coupled with 120 minutes and SMS for just Rs 1999 + tax with a validity of 7 days. The UAE Roaming Bundles empower users to connect with their families, friends, and colleagues. By offering cost-effective international communication, Zong 4G ensures that users can share the joy of the occasion and celebrate the spirit of unity.

Gold rates dip by Rs500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs 214,300 on Thursday as compared to its sale at Rs 214,800 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 428 to Rs 183,728 from Rs 184,156 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 168,417 from Rs 168,810, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs30 to Rs 2,550 whereas that of ten gram silver declined by Rs25.72 to 2,186.21.

CDNS achieves Rs 515b targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 515 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to 15th November September.

The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Thursday.

He said this was Rs 200 billion additional annual targets than the target of Rs 1300 billion for

the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said.

In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said.

He said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.

VP FPCCI says: Tourism is hidden treasure of Pakistan, has potential to transform the economy

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Amin Ullah Baig, Vice President of FPCCI and chairman Capital Office said that Gilgit-Baltistan has a great potential to generate 40,000 megawatts of hydropower. Apart from this, the province also has attractive business and investment opportunities in tourism, minerals, agriculture, and dry fruit

high-quality hotels, roads, and other infrastructures in the area can be developed on modern lines that will attract tourists from all over the world to the region.

Mr. Amin Ullah Baig expressed above while talking to the meeting of all chambers and associations of Gilgit-Baltistan. Group Leaders, Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Executive



Members of the Gilgit Chamber, Hunza Chamber, Ghazir Chamber, Skardu Chamber, Hunza Small Chamber & Gilgit Women Chamber & PGMA were present at the meeting. All Members of Chambers and Associations of Gilgit-Baltistan expressed their full confidence in President FPCCI Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Vice-President and Chairman Capital Office Aminullah Baig, and other team members they further expressed that the business,

sectors. The economy of Gilgit-Baltistan, a region in northern Pakistan, is primarily based on agriculture, tourism, and mining. The area is rich in natural resources, including forests, minerals, and water, which present opportunities for economic growth and development. Federal & GB Governments should consider providing more attractive incentives to investors, especially in the tourism sector, so that



LAHORE: General Secretary of Pakistan Kisan Rabta Committee Farooq Tariq addressing press conference along with others at press club in Provincial Capital.

SCCI calls for further cementing Pak-US bilateral trade, economic ties

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president, Fuad Ishaq said discoveries made in oil, gas and other natural resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but a geological survey hasn't been conducted in the last two decades, therefore, urged the U.S. to assist in conducting a geological survey in the province.

Emphasizing further cementing Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations, the SCCI chief invited US

companies and investors to make investments in a potential sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He made these remarks during a meeting with U.S. Consul General in Peshawar Mr. Shante Moore, who visited the chamber house on Thursday, according to a press release issued here.

On the occasion, the SCCI senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal.

KP Governor announces establishment of KMU's campus in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali on Thursday has announced the establishment of a Khyber Medical University (KMU) campus in Dera Ismail Khan (D.I. Khan) during the 5th convocation of Gomal Medical College.

This decision was taken in view of the region's remote and backward status and the need to provide accessible medical facilities to the local population.

The governor has instructed the Vice

Chancellor of KMU and the Commissioner of D.I. Khan to resolve all issues related to the establishment of the campus within a month and to commence operations temporarily in a rented building.

The governor awarded degrees to 50 male and female students who completed their medical studies during the session 2009-13 and 2017-22 and presented gold medals/silver medals/bronze medals to 18 male and female students for their excellent performance.

During his address at the convocation, Governor

Ali appreciated the performance of Gomal Medical College and congratulated the successful students, parents, and faculty members.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the federal and provincial governments to addressing the challenges faced by educational institutions and providing the best possible medical facilities to the people.

He also assured the audience that efforts are underway to equip hospitals with the latest infrastructure and modern

technology.

Governor Ali urged the newly graduated doctors to treat patients with utmost respect and compassion. He highlighted the provincial government's ongoing efforts to bring development to the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The governor commended the management and faculty members of Gomal Medical College for their dedication to improving academic standards and organizing curricular and extra-curricular activities.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with students of Government Boys High School and Government Girls High School established here at Governor House during free uniforms and school bags distribution ceremony.



DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates Dental Block at Gomal Medical College DI Khan.

Chief Justice PHC stresses accountability and legal commitments

HARIPUR (APP): Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Muhammad Ibrahim Khan underscored the shared responsibilities of the bench and bar, highlighting the crucial role lawyers play in upholding justice.

He expressed these views while addressing lawyers at the District Bar Haripur where he inaugurated the new building for lawyers' offices and the Bar Club here Thursday.

The CJ expressed the court's unwavering commitment to providing support to lawyers whenever judicial expertise

is required, emphasizing the fundamental nature of legal practice in the profession.

Chief Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan assured that the selection and appointment of judges would adhere to principles of complete merit and transparency.

Reflecting on his philanthropic endeavors during his tenure as Additional Session Judge and Session Judge in Haripur, he outlined the contributions such as establishing a Blood Donation Center in a hospital and providing X-ray machines.

District administration removes encroachment near school on public complaints

HYDERABAD (APP): The district administration has taken action to remove illegal encroachment on public complaints near a school in Qasimabad.

According to a hand-out issued on Thursday, Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi took note of public complaints and directed Assistant Commissioner (AC) Qasimabad Abdul Wahid Channa to address the issue of encroachment near a private school in Al-Rahman Society Qasimabad.

Dr. Saqib stresses need of skill development for 8.3m children getting Wazaif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib Thursday emphasized equipping beneficiary children of BISP Taleemi Wazaif initiative to make them self-sufficient in the future.

Addressing a gathering of dedicated BISP staff at Jamia Masjid Qasim ul Aloom in Sargodha, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib said that serving 9.3 million needy families is a noble cause and equivalent to worship,

according to a news release.

Acknowledging the mission of BISP to alleviate poverty and empower vulnerable populations, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib commended the impact of BISP's efforts in education by providing educational scholarships under Benazir Taleemi Wazaif to 8.3 million children ensuring their regular attendance in schools.

He also stressed the need to provide technical skills education to the interested children from these needy families.

Punjab Governor says: Seeking knowledge obligatory for every man, woman in our religion

LAHORE: The Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended a ceremony of free uniforms and school bags distribution among the students of Government Boys High School and Government Girls High School established here at Governor House as chief guest. Begum Governor, Ayesha Baligh, renowned industrialist, Chairman Rumi Foundation, Jalaluddin Rumi, Principal Boys High School, Principal Girls High School, Najam Rumi,

teachers and students were present. Addressing the ceremony, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that seeking knowledge is obligatory for every man and woman in our religion. He said that when the Holy Quran was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH, the first word was Iqra (Read). Punjab Governor said that the process of learning should continue throughout life. He called upon the students to develop positive character traits in themselves. Addressing the

students, he said that parents hold the status of spiritual parents and they should respect them. Governor Punjab appreciated the announcement by Rumi Foundation to award merit scholarships to the top three boys and girls. Chairman Rumi Foundation, Jalaluddin Rumi said that the children are our future. He said that Rumi Foundation will bear the higher education expenses of the top three students. He said that Rumi Foundation will distribute uniforms.

Fact sheet on newer nicotine, tobacco products unveiled in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins, a non-profit organization dedicated to public health and social development, has unveiled a comprehensive policy brief and fact sheet addressing the growing concerns surrounding newer nicotine and tobacco products. This initiative aims to equip policymakers with crucial insights into emerging trends, key challenges, and necessary policy actions for regulation.

The policy brief, compiled by Blue Veins, draws upon information from a multitude of

reputable sources, including briefing papers, research studies, fact sheets, and analytical reports from entities such as the World Health Organization (WHO), international health institutions, academic and educational studies, credible media outlets, and news sources. The document serves as a valuable resource for policymakers seeking to make informed decisions regarding the regulation of newer nicotine products. Qamar Naseem, Program Manager of Blue Veins, emphasized the importance

of banning e-cigarettes in Pakistan, stating, "E-cigarettes pose a significant threat to public health, especially among our youth. Banning these products is essential to protect the well-being of our citizens and to counter the misleading narratives promoted by the tobacco industry."

The policy brief offers evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to effectively regulate heat-not-Burn

products (HTPs) and ban e-cigarettes. It underscores the pressing need to address the lack of conclusive evidence regarding the long-term health effects of these products. The recommendations include seamlessly integrating newer nicotine products into existing tobacco-free policies, strengthening enforcement of relevant laws and regulations, expanding vendor licensing mechanisms to ensure strict compliance, and launching public awareness campaigns that emphasize

the health risks associated with HTPs and e-cigarettes. Furthermore, the findings highlighted in the policy brief underscored the urgency for the Pakistani government to generate comprehensive local evidence concerning the impacts of HTPs and e-cigarettes. It calls for amendments to current legislation to encompass a broader spectrum of tobacco products, including HTPs, in line with the guidelines set forth by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

International News

Biden, Xi restore military ties despite 'dictator' comment

Xi says China ready to be 'partner and friend' of US

MONITORING DESK CALIFORNIA: US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed at their first summit in a year on Wednesday to restore military communications between the two countries, even as Biden went off script by saying he still considered Xi a "dictator".

The leaders shook hands and strolled around a garden at a historic California estate during four-hour talks aimed at preventing growing tensions between the world's largest economies from spiraling into conflict.

They also agreed that China would crack down on the production of ingredients for fentanyl, responsible for

a deadly epidemic of opioid abuse in the United States, with Xi saying he "sympathises" with US victims of the deadly drug, which has ravaged communities across the country.

But Xi and Biden remained far apart on the wider flashpoint of Taiwan, with the Chinese president telling his US counterpart to stop arming the island and that reunification was "unstoppable". Beijing claims sovereignty over the self-ruling democracy and has not ruled out seizing it by force. The two leaders had not met in person since they held talks in Bali in November 2022, and relations nosedived after the

United States shot down an alleged Chinese spy balloon in February this year.

But Biden told a press conference at the Filoli estate that his talks with Xi, whom he has known since 2011, were "some of the most constructive and productive discussions we've had".

The United States would compete "vigorously" but "responsibly" with an increasingly assertive China "so it doesn't veer into conflict or accidental conflict," Biden said.

"He and I agreed that each one of us could pick up the phone, call directly and we'll be heard immediately."



US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping walk together after a meeting during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' week in Woodside, California.

Turkish parliamentary committee delays decision on Sweden's NATO membership bid

MONITORING DESK ANKARA: The Turkish Parliament's foreign affairs committee on Thursday opened debate on Sweden's bid to join NATO, but adjourned the proceedings until a later date without reaching a decision.

It was not immediately known when the committee would resume its discussions on Sweden's accession protocol or when it would reach Parliament's general assembly for the last stage of the legislative process.

The meeting was adjourned after legislators from Erdogan's ruling party submitted a motion for a

postponement on grounds that negotiations with Sweden had not "matured" enough, Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Turkey has stalled ratifying Sweden's membership in NATO, accusing the country of being too lenient toward groups that Ankara regards as threats to its security, including Kurdish militants and members of a network that Ankara blames for a failed coup in 2016.

Turkey has also been angered by a series of demonstrations by supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in Sweden as well as Quran-

burning protests that roiled Muslim countries.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lifted his objection to Sweden's bid during a NATO summit in July and sent the accession protocol to Parliament for ratification last month.

Turkey's reversal of its position came after Stockholm pledged deeper cooperation with Turkey on counterterrorism and to support Turkey's ambition to revive its EU membership bid. In addition, NATO agreed to establish a special coordinator for counterterrorism.

Labour rebellion as UK MPs vote on Gaza ceasefire

MONITORING DESK LONDON: With a massive pro-Palestine demonstration taking place outside parliament, UK's House of Commons voted on Wednesday on a divisive amendment calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, with nearly 70 Labour MPs going against the party leadership.

However, both motions on Gaza were defeated, as majority MPs voted against them.

The Labour motion on Gaza called for a humanitarian pause whereas

the Scottish National Party (SNP) motion sought release of Israeli prisoners, end of the Gaza siege and an immediate ceasefire.

During the debate, the drama unfolded live as Labour MPs voting for the SNP's ceasefire motion simultaneously tweeted resignations from their frontbench posts. Labour MP and shadow minister for women and equities Yasmin Qureshi was the first to resign from her post as she supported a ceasefire vote.



Keir Starmer, leader of Britain's Labour Party, speaks during the Prime Minister's Questions, at the House of Commons in London, Britain.

David Cameron visits Ukrainian port of Odesa in first overseas visit as top UK diplomat

MONITORING DESK KYIV: David Cameron traveled Thursday to the Ukrainian port of Odesa in his first overseas trip as Britain's new foreign minister, and pledged that the U.K. would continue providing military support until Ukraine is victorious in its war with Russia.

Cameron, a former prime minister who returned to government in a surprise appointment Monday in a Cabinet shuffle, said he wanted to make Ukraine his first diplomatic destination, and met Wednesday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"I admire the strength and determination of the Ukrainian people," he told Zelenskyy in a video

posted by the president. Cameron said the U.K. would continue to provide moral, economic and diplomatic support "but above all, the military support that you need not just this year and next year but however long it takes."

The two-day visit came as Ukraine faces several challenges on and off the battlefield.

Zelenskyy has struggled to capture the world's attention as focus has shifted to the Middle East and Israel's war against Hamas. Additional U.S. funding for Ukraine is jeopardized by political fights in Washington and the European Union says it can't provide all the munitions it promised.



Protesters hold placards and flags during a rally in support of Palestinians, outside the Houses of Parliament in central London.

Qatar seeks deal for prisoners' release, three-day truce

MONITORING DESK DOHA: Qatari mediators were on Wednesday seeking to negotiate a deal between Hamas and Israel that includes the release of around 50 prisoners from Gaza in exchange for a three-day ceasefire, an official briefed on the negotiations said.

The deal, under discussion, which has been coordinated with the US, would also see Israel release some Palestinian women and children from Israeli jails and increase the amount of humanitarian aid allowed into Gaza,

the official said.

Hamas has agreed to the general outlines of this deal, but Israel has not and it is still negotiating the details, the official said. It is not known how many Palestinian women and children Israel would release from its jails as part of the agreement under discussion.

The scope of the Qatari-led negotiations has changed significantly in recent weeks, but the fact that the talks are now focused on the release of 50 prisoners in exchange for a three-day truce.

Cuba blames US sanctions for fomenting irregular migration amid exodus

MONITORING DESK HAVANA: Cuban and US officials met in Havana to discuss migration, the second such meeting this year as both countries grapple with how best to slow the record-breaking flow of Cubans north to the United States.

The United States - the top destination for Cuban migrants - in 2022 renewed talks with Cuba and has since increased legal pathways for migration for Cubans, including visa access in Havana, family reunification and humanitarian parole programs aimed at stemming illegal migration.

But the problem won't go away, said Cuban vice foreign minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, until the United States eases sanctions on the island, which Cuba blames for devastating its already-ailing state-run economy.

Iran's nuclear enrichment advances as it stonewalls UN, IAEA reports show

MONITORING DESK VIENNA: Iran has enough uranium enriched to up to 60% purity, close to weapons-grade, for three atom bombs by the International Atomic Energy Agency's definition and is still stonewalling the agency on key issues, confidential IAEA reports showed on Wednesday.

Iran's steady progress in enriching to very high levels while failing to provide the International Atomic Energy Agency with the cooperation it demands on a growing list of

issues presents a challenge to both the agency and Western powers that have repeatedly called on Iran to reverse course.

Iran's stock of uranium enriched to up to 60% grew by 6.7 kg (14.8 pounds) to 128.3 kg (282.9 pounds) since the last report on Sept. 4, one of the two reports to member states seen by Reuters said. That is more than three times the roughly 42 kg (92.6 pounds) that by the IAEA's definition is theoretically enough, if enriched further, for a nuclear bomb.

Voter support for Japan PM Kishida slides to record low

MONITORING DESK TOKYO: Public support for Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government slid to a record low, a poll conducted by Jiji news agency showed on Thursday, as Kishida's tax cut plans to help cushion the blow of rising inflation left voters unimpressed.

In the research conducted from Nov. 10-13, 21.3% of those polled said they supported Kishida's government, down from 26.3% in October.

Solution to political instability lies in joint efforts by politicians, executive & establishment: Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said Pakistan could overcome its challenges relating to political stability if its politicians, executive and the establishment make a joint commitment to address the issues.

He, in an interview with Voice of America (VOA), was responding to a question if the upcoming general polls would bring political stability in the country.

President Alvi expressed confidence that the result of the polls as an outcome of the public opinion would lead to an environment ensuring stability and prosperity of the country.

Dismissing doubts about delay of general election, he said the judiciary,

executive and politicians held a unanimity on holding general elections on the announced date of February 8.

He maintained that the provision of level-playing field to all political parties was the mutual responsibility of the government and the Election Commission of Pakistan. "The government has already given assurance about providing level-playing field to all parties," he said, adding that the nation had full trust in the government's commitment in that regard.

The president said that through his letter, he invoked the government's attention towards the apprehensions of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

To a query, he said the

Constitution did not allow the President to take a "practical" action to ensure the transparency of an election.

"The President has no other way but to bring such issues to the notice of the government," he said.

He said though the office of the President did not have an administrative authority, however the points raised by it held a significant value. "There can be many expectations [from me to act in a particular way], but I will not take any unconstitutional step," he said.

The president said he was not the spokesperson of any party, but of all Pakistanis, adding "However, I will continue to identify and point out whenever see any issue."



ISLAMABAD: Astronaut Ms. Namira Saleem called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

No weapons sale to Ukraine or Russia as Pakistan maintains "strict" neutrality: FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday reaffirmed that it had not sold weapons to Ukraine or Russia as the country had maintained "strict" neutrality in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"I reaffirm what we have said in the past that Pakistan has not sold weapons to Ukraine or to Russia as we have adopted a policy of strict neutrality in this conflict," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her

weekly press briefing. Asked to comment on a media report that Pakistani weapons were being used in the Ukraine battlefield, she said, "We are not in a position to confirm what weaponry is being used by the parties in the conflict."

She said that Pakistan's exports of weaponry to countries were accompanied by end-user certificates and "we expect the parties which import Pakistani weapons to re-

spect those end-user commitments".

To a question whether such media reports were aimed at targeting Pakistan for its position on Palestine, the spokesperson said Pakistan, like most of the international community, had condemned the ongoing atrocities in Gaza.

"We believe that drawing comparisons to the ongoing situation in Gaza with any other conflict is not warranted," she remarked.

Belgium embassy commemorates 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Belgium in Pakistan commemorated the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Belgium and Pakistan. This momentous occasion reaffirms the enduring friendship and collaboration that has characterized the relationship since its inception.

The genesis of diplomatic relations between Belgium and Pakistan can be traced back to the Joint Communiqué issued on November 26, 1947. This historic document encapsulated the mutual desire of both governments to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual interest. Following this pivotal decision, diplomatic missions were established in 1948, laying the foundation for a fruitful and enduring partnership.

of diplomatic relations between Belgium and Pakistan has been marked by a consistent upward trajectory, deeply rooted in strong people-to-people connections and frequent high-level engagements between leaders. The establishment of the 'Bilateral Political Consultation' mechanism has provided a robust platform for multifaceted dialogue, fostering deeper understanding and cooperation.

Economic ties between Belgium and Pakistan have witnessed remarkable growth over the years, with bilateral trade consistently expanding to the mutual benefit of both nations. Belgium stands as the sixth-largest European importer of Pakistani goods, underscoring the vibrant economic exchange that underpins the relationship.



HYDERABAD: Former Sindh Minister, Syed Sardar Ali Shah addresses during a ceremony on the eve of Latif Shanasai organized by Latifabad Shanasai Divisional Committee held at Sindh Museum in Hyderabad.

UK announces AI system for Pakistan designed to detect, track early forest fires: Jane Marriott

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bold move to address environmental challenges in Pakistan, British Commissioner in Pakistan, Jane Marriott OBE, has announced a groundbreaking artificial intelligence (AI) system for Pakistan designed to detect and track early forest fires.

"By spotting early forest fires, we'll be able to help protect communities and save livelihoods," said the High Commissioner in Pakistan in an interview with APP.

The initiative, part of a comprehensive climate financing effort, aimed to safeguard communities and protect livelihoods, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region and around the Margala Hills in Islamabad.

The High Commissioner said that the UK would also provide financial assistance to support climate initiatives in Pakistan. "This includes the development of an innovative AI system dedicated to the early detection of forest fires, a technology set to revolutionize the way communities respond to environmental threats," she added.

The High Commissioner highlighted the ongoing collaboration between the UK and Pakistan under the Financial Accelerator program. "The UK is supporting eight different projects, eight innovative Pakistani enterprises in a climate-friendly way," she explained.



ISLAMABAD: Special representative to PM for Religious Harmony & Islamic Counters and Chairman Pakistan ulema Council Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference.

Ashrafi declares Palestine situation as most burning int'l issue

ISLAMABAD (INP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and the Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Thursday declared the prevailing situation of Palestine as most burning international issues of the time.

Addressing a press conference here, he empha-

sized that the Pakistani Government's stance was unequivocal—Palestinians must receive their rightful justice.

Tahir Ashrafi highlighted the dire conditions at the Al-Shifa Hospital with Israelis even not sparing new born kids, and asserted that the conflict was not a religious war but a battle between the oppressors and the oppressed.

Solangi rebuts reports regarding visits of Int'l organizations' officials to Imran Khan in jail

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday rebuffed the claim made by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Leader, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi regarding the routine visits of representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union to Imran Khan at Adiala Jail.

"There is not a single grain of truth in this fantasy and it is truly nothing but a figment of imagination by the senior politico," he wrote in his post on X formerly twitter.

DC Larkana visits government dispensary at bhamanplot village

LARKANA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Larkana, Javaid Ahmed Kumbhar on Thursday visited the Government (PPHI) dispensary at Bhamanplot village of Ratodero Taluka (Larkana) and inspected facilities being provided to the patients.

During the visit, he checked the various sections PPHI dispensary and found all the staff available at the time of the visit.

He directed the dispensary administration to the provision of better healthcare facilities to the patients and also to ensure cleanliness in the dispensary so that patients may not face problems. The DC said that providing basic health facilities to every citizen was the top priority of the Sindh government, adding that no compromise would be made on healthcare facilities.

AC cracks down on unregistered stores and weight fraud

MIRPURKHAS (APP): In response to public concerns, Mirpurkhas Assistant Commissioner Shahryar Habib, along with under-trainee Mukhtiar Kar Abrar Ahmed and officials from the Measurement and Weighing Department, launched a crackdown on unregistered commercial activities and computerized scale fraud in Anaj Mandi and other commercial areas on Thursday.

The inspection uncovered widespread irregularities, with multiple stores and corners facing fines totaling Rs 35,000 on the opening day of the operation. AC Shahryar Habib personally examined the scales and imposed fines on those found engaging in malpractices. Speaking to the media, AC Mirpurkhas Shahryar Habib explained that the initial phase of the operation targeted unregistered stores lacking verification from the Department of Weight.

Commissioner ask to provide relief to masses in Hyderabad Division

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Hyderabad, Syed Khalid Haider Shah asked the Deputy Commissioners to provide maximum relief to the people, particularly in the health and education sectors of their respective districts.

Presiding over a meeting here at his office on Thursday, the Commissioner asked the Deputy Commissioners to ensure daily visits to health and education centres in persons and point out the issues being faced by the people of their respective districts.

The report regarding the non-availability of required facilities as well as a shortage of staff at health and education centres should be submitted to the Commissioner's

Office and the same data should also be updated at the portal of the Sindh Chief Minister, he added. The Commissioner also asked the Deputy Commissioners to review the progress of ongoing development schemes and ensure the quality of work with the utilization of granted funds on the projects.

The prices of essential commodities should also be checked regularly with imposition of fines and require legal action against the hoarders and profiteers, he added. The Commissioner also directed the Deputy Commissioners to visit petrol pumps in their respective districts, check the quality of petroleum products, prices and action against the owners of those petrol pumps.

Culture plays crucial role in promoting tolerance: Jamal Shah

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Thursday stressed that culture played a vital role in fostering tolerance within the society by influencing values, attitudes and behaviors.

In a message on the occasion of International Day of Tolerance, the minister said that the purpose of celebrating this day was to highlight the importance of societal norms based on the principles of harmony, tolerance and brotherhood and we should also make a commitment to play our active role in this regard.

Jamal Shah highlighted various avenues through which culture promotes tolerance, such as government policies endorsing



KARACHI: Vice Consul and Director of Russian Federation House, Ruslan M. Prokhorov along with Director Education Gulberg Town Muhammad Sharif Khan and other cutting ribbon during inauguration ceremony of the Grand Science Exhibition and Speech Competition in connection of the Allama Iqbal Day celebrations, held in Karachi.

Parvez Elahi reaffirms commitment to stand alongside Imran Khan

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi said that no body asked him for the press conference so far, making it

clear that he was with Imran Khan and would be there for him. "I stand by Imran Khan and will continue to be there for him," said Chaudhry Parvez Elahi while talking to the reporters in Lahore on Thursday. He said that he was jailed in a cell just next to Imran Khan in Adiala jail.

He stated that the delegations from the IMF and the European Union visited

Imran Khan in the jail. Elahi claimed that the PTI would get maximum votes in the upcoming elections that their rivals would surprise.

Elahi expressed confidence in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) securing a significant number of votes in the upcoming elections, reaffirming his commitment to stand alongside Imran Khan. Meanwhile, the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench summoned a comprehensive report within a week regarding the petition filed against the inadequate facilities provided to Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in Adiala Jail.

Karachi police register murder case of biomechanical engineer

KARACHI (INP): A murder case of a biomechanical engineer has been registered in the Sachal Scheme 33 area of Karachi on Thursday. According to the details, on the complaint of Fahimuddin Sheikh, the relative of the victim, a murder case of biomechanical engineer Sohaib Nasir has been registered in Sachal police station, Karachi.

Fahimuddin in his complaint stated that he received a call from his sister when he was on duty, informing him about his brother-in-law's accident, upon arriving at the hospital, he found his brother-in-law had passed away.

We have committed excesses with our parliament, prime ministers: Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE (Online): PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has said we ourselves have committed excesses with our parliament and prime ministers and country was handed over to whom.

"We develop this country and then we serve sentence and go in exile. We were not ready to go into government in 2022. But it was essential to save Pakistan from going default. Had policies of our era continued then Pakistan would have gone ahead in the race of development," he said this while addressing office bearers of Lahore Chambers of Commerce Industries Thursday.

He went on to say we understand the economic difficulties of Pakistan. Salvaging people from poverty and inflation is our duty and obligation. I always made consultation with the traders and we will go ahead in consultation with the traders now too.

He held India adopted our policies and gained economic development.

He added if people seek development, education, health then it is their right. Providing facilities to people is responsibility of government. He remarked we were not ready to join government in 2022. But it was essential to save Pakistan from going default. The speech for resigning by Shahbaz Sharif was ready. I had seen speech.

He added if people seek development, education, health then it is their right. Providing facilities to people is responsibility of government. He remarked we were not ready to join government in 2022. But it was essential to save Pakistan from going default. The speech for resigning by Shahbaz Sharif was ready. I had seen speech.



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

9,28,387 children aged upto five years to be vaccinated against polio

MIRPURKHAS (INP): To ensure that every child is vaccinated against polio, Divisional Commissioner Mirpurkhas Faisal Ahmad Uqaili has stated that during the campaign, particular attention should be given to the most vulnerable districts.

He voiced his opinions on Thursday while presiding over the Divisional Polio Task Force meeting via video link to discuss the plans for the anti-polio campaign that will begin on November 27 and run through December 1, 2023.

He went on to say that to eradicate the polio virus, excellent teamwork and monitoring are necessary. He also stressed that during the polio campaign, any form of neglect should not be accepted, and the work of the polio teams should be closely observed.

Commissioner Mirpurkhas Faisal Ahmad Uqaili gave instructions to relevant health departments to make the immunization and polio campaigns as successful as possible to improve the health of defenceless children.



KARACHI: Police officials show arrested street criminals and recovered mobile phones and weapons to media persons during press conference, at Kemari Police Station Dockyard in Karachi.

7th ICRC Humanitarian Reporting Awards held at CEJ

KARACHI (INP): The Centre for Excellence in Journalism at the Institute of Business Administration (CEJ-IBA), in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on Thursday conferred awards upon eight journalists for their outstanding contributions to the field of humanitarian reporting.

The 'Humanitarian Reporting Awards 2023', held for the seventh year running, were organized to highlight and promote ethical, accurate, and responsible reporting on humanitarian issues including, but not limited to, violence against healthcare workers, disaster reporting, issues related to persons with disabilities, disaster response/preparedness, population movement (refugees/IDPs), climate change impact, etc.,

a news release said.

This year, the awards were conferred in four categories: Mainstream Broadcast (Urdu & Regional languages); Mainstream Print (Urdu and regional languages); Mainstream Print (English), and Online (English, Urdu & Regional languages) for news stories written or produced between October 17, 2022, to September 25, 2023. Sidra Dar from Voice of America secured the top honour in Mainstream Broadcast (Urdu and regional languages), with Saher Baloch from BBC Urdu as the runner-up. Iqra Ashiq, Assistant Multimedia Producer at Dawn, emerged victorious in Mainstream Print (Urdu and regional languages), with Saadia Ubaid Khan from Jang Group as the runner-up.

Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi

Independent Report KARACHI: the Consulate-General of Japan in Karachi held "Japan Fest 2023" in collaboration with Pakistan Japan Cultural Association, Sindh (PJCA), and Arts Council of Pakistan (ACP) with the presence of Barister Murtaza Wahab Siddiqui, Mayor Karachi, as the chief guest.

The program of Japan Fest 2023 started with a Karate demonstration by Japan Karate Association Pakistan. The second act of the afternoon was kendo demonstration; the oldest Japanese martial art whose origin goes back more than 1000 years to the "Samu-



rai" warriors' arts of the sword, with an emphasis on fighting finesse as well as character building. The event further featured a cosplay show by cultural

group Geek Haven.

Cosplay is a significant aspect of Japanese pop culture, and has now become one of the most popular sub-cultures among Japanese anime lovers all around the world.

The results of the cosplay competition were announced thereafter, and the winners were awarded prizes.