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PM asks terrorists to make 'unconditional surrender; rules out any negotiations

Says no person would be allowed to take the law into his hands, only the State had the legitimate right to use armed power through its security forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday warned terrorist groups in the country to make an "unconditional surrender", saying the State would not negotiate with them.

"The State will not show any leniency towards the terrorists who committed violence and killed innocent citizens," he said in an interaction with the families of martyrs here at the Interior Ministry, where he earlier launched the country's new visa policy.

PM Kakar categorically said that no person

would be allowed to take the law into his hands, adding that only the State had the legitimate right to use armed power through its security forces.

"No one should have any doubt about the stance of the State against terrorists," he said. "All organs of the State have the clarity to remain persistent against militancy."

He said any damage incurred in the past by giving a lenient space to the militants would be mitigated.

The prime minister said if someone wanted to denounce terrorism must seek forgiveness from the families of the martyrs, who had

paid the ultimate price. "We cannot compensate those who lost their loved ones, but can make a gesture to acknowledge and honour their invaluable sacrifices," he added.

PM Kakar said the reward for the martyrs' souls rested with Allah Almighty, however, it was the responsibility of the society to honour them with a distinguished status.

"I pay tribute to all the martyrs - an unending list of heroes from all segments of the society, including police, politicians, journalists, soldiers, and even children," he said.

Earlier, at the launch of the new visa policy, the

prime minister congratulated the Ministry of Interior on the achievement of a "good milestone". He said the country needed to further rationalize its visa policy with the target of attracting investment. "Unless we open up to the world, we cannot attract investment and develop connectivity," he said, adding that a country's visa policy was the cornerstone of its economic roadmap.

The minister was briefed that the new visa policy includes the introduction of investor visas and the revision of the existing business visa category.

The investor visa has been introduced in line with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) initiative. The hassle-free process allows visa approval within 24 hours with a short-term (1-3 years) and long-term entry visa (5 years).

The process requires minimal documentation with the option of converting the entry business and investor visa into a long-term investor visa.

The prime minister was informed that the business visa category was revised with the introduction of SIFC Business Entry and its extension.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar while inaugurating the Martyrs' Wall in the Ministry of Interior, placing a portrait of Shaheed AIG Safwat Ghayur.

'Travesty of justice': Pakistan rejects Indian SC's verdict on Kashmir

India has no right to make unilateral decisions on the status of this disputed territory against the will of the Kashmiri people and Pakistan: FM Jilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Monday categorically rejected the judgement, announced by the Supreme Court of India on the status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), terming it "another manifestation of the pliant judiciary under India's ruling dispensation."

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, during a press conference at the Ministry of Jammu and Kashmir,

termed Jammu and Kashmir an 'internationally-recognized dispute, which remained on the agenda of the UN Security Council for over seven decades."

Jilani said the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir was to be made in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and as per the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

'India has no right to make unilateral decisions on the status of this disputed territory against the will of the Kashmiri people and Pakistan,' he said.

The foreign minister said Pakistan did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Indian Constitution over Jammu and Kashmir. "Any process, subversive to the Indian Constitution, carries no legal significance," he said.

Mainstreaming of deprived segments, fast decision-making vital for Pakistan's progress: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mainstreaming of the deprived segments including women and differently-abled women, leveraging artificial intelligence and fast decision-making were inevitable for the progress and prosperity of the country.



The president, addressing the Members' Convocation of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA), urged the new graduates to play their role for the welfare of their employees and environmental protection besides fulfilling their responsibilities to their respective industries as well as the society. He urged the educational institutes to produce leaders as the country faced an acute shortage of leadership which should be honest to the people and the nation besides being capable of addressing the prevailing issues.

The president reiterated his condemnation of the ongoing killings in Gaza and rejected the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of Article 370 in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

He questioned the conscience of the developed world over the barbarism in Gaza and said the world was in dire need of an order anchored on morality which legacy of the Muslims.

He said, unfortunately, the vested interests had overpowered the humanitarianism in world affairs.

President Alvi, who earlier awarded certificates to the new graduates and medals to the council members, said that around 28 million Pakistani children were out of school and needed support to brighten their future.

He said the country faced a shortage of professional graduates so the approach of encouraging them to go abroad and send remittances was unjustified.

The president said after joining the practical life, they should strive to provide a secure working environment to the women in their businesses as well as their respective fields besides creating opportunities for the differently-abled women.

President Alvi says Indian judiciary succumbed to fascist Hindutva ideology

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday strongly rejected the Indian Supreme Court's (ISC) decision to uphold the revocation of the special status of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He expressed dismay over the decision, saying the Indian judiciary had succumbed to the fascist Hindutva ideology giving decisions suited to the Indian government.

He added that such decisions could not legitimize the occupation of IIOJK by India as the Jammu and Kashmir issue was an internationally recognized dispute that remained on

the agenda of the UN Security Council for over seven decades.

While condemning the decision, the president said that it was unfortunate that Indian courts had a history of giving decisions against Muslims as in the cases of Babri Masjid, Samjhuta Express, Hyderabad Mecca Masjid blast and Naroda Gam massacre during the 2002 Gujarat riots etc. He added that the verdict of the ISC could not change the status of the IIOJK.

He said the Judgement would further strengthen the resolve of the people of IIOJK in their just struggle against Indian illegal occupation.

No hurdle in holding elections in-time: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that there was no hurdle in holding the general elections in the country in accordance with the schedule issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Speaking in a private news channel talk show, he said that the announcement for the election date should end all the speculations.

He also ruled out any change in the polling date and said that the elections would take place on February 8, 2024.

The environment for holding the polls was con-

ducive, he said, recalling different sort of situations during various general elections including 2008, 2013 and 2018. Solangi said it was responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold the general elections and the government would provide all-out assistance in that regard.

He said the government had been releasing the required funds to the ECP for holding the polls. Security would also be ensured for conducting the general elections in a free, fair and transparent manner. All political parties were fully allowed to carry out their political activities in all the four provinces, the minister noted.



QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai, FPCCT's Ex, President Dawood Khan Achakzai and Eyes Organization's Executive Director Sami Shark signs a MoU regarding border trader.

Bail granted to Imran in 3 cases, Qureshi in 2 cases

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has approved bail of former chairman PTI Imran Khan in three cases and bail of Shah Mehmood Qureshi in two cases.

Judge Abual Hasanat Zulqarnain approved bail pleas of Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Prosecutor Raja Navid

and PTI counsels Sardar Masroof and Khalid Yousof appeared in the court.

Prosecutor Raja Navid took the plea PTI leaders staged protest deliberately. PTI founder tried to provoke people. Unnecessary leniency is being shown to PTI leaders. The bail pleas of Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi are dismissed.

Customs authorities get smuggle, seize vehicles themselves: Supreme Court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked Customs Authorities get smuggle the vehicles themselves and then get them seize themselves.

He further remarked this truck is not a match box that Customs authorities are ignorant of it came from what way.

He gave these remarks while hearing the case of seizure of smuggled truck by KP customs authorities here Monday.

The CJP while rejecting customs appeal reprimanded counsel for customs.

The CJP remarked you are neither giving arguments in the court nor are talking in law. The vehicle was seized inside 400 kilometers away from Peshawar border without the knowledge of customs authorities. He observed customs authorities get smuggle the vehicles by taking money and then they get seize them by themselves.

The CJP remarked as to why the inquiry should not be got conducted against customs department. Truck was manufactured in 1996 and was seized in 2016. Where it kept on running for 22 years.

See in Peshawar how the vehicles are smuggled. As to why Collector customs are not summoned.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with Caretaker Minister of Interior Sarfraz Bugti talking to media persons during press conference after inaugurating Martyrs Wall at Ministry of Interior in Federal Capital.

Bilawal Bhutto says Wall of Martyrs - a good initiative to remember sacrifices of martyred heroes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday visited 'Wall of Martyrs' at the Interior Ministry and commended the step to remember the sacrifices of the martyred heroes.

Talking to the media after hoisting the picture of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at 'The Wall of Martyrs', Bilawal said he was grateful to Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti for the initiative.

"The 'Wall of Martyrs' is an initiative we appreciate,

as it has immortalised the sacrifices of the martyrs," he added.

The martyrs of the country, he said, included politicians, policemen, lawyers, judges, and the army soldiers, who had been a target of terrorism and they all rendered great sacrifices. As a result of their struggle, peace was achieved and terrorism was eradicated from the country, he added. Unfortunately, a decision was later taken which undermined the efforts of the martyrs.

Nawaz Sharif vows to put country on road to progress

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said time has come to put Pakistan on the road to progress.

He expressed these views while addressing a PML-N meeting in Lahore on Monday.

Sharif highlighted the need for national unity and emphasised the responsibility of overcoming self-interest for the greater good. Addressing the PML-

N's ticket contenders, Sharif recounted the past achievements and expressed concerns over the halted journey of development. He called for merit-based ticket allocations and stressed the importance of serving the nation above personal interests.

Sharif acknowledged current challenges, including the soaring cost of electricity, meat, flour, and sugar.

Zubair Jamali calls on Health Minister Dr. Amir Jogezeai

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Caretaker Home Minister Mir Zubair Jamali on Monday met with Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Jogaizai.

In the meeting, security, health sector including organization of health card in province and issues of mutual interest were discussed.

The Provincial Home Minister while appreciating the organization and initiative of health card said that the steps taken by the caretaker provincial government for the welfare of the people are commendable.

Governor Balochistan emphasizes: Political leadership ought to keep close & effective rapport with masses every time & situation

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has emphasized that the political leadership should keep close and effective coordination with the masses every time and every situation so that they are well aware of the issues and hardships being faced by them, and thus resolve the same timely.

The Governor was speaking to different delegations who called on him here at the Governor House on Monday.

The Governor said that political philosophy deals with the service and welfare of the people without discrimination so as to protect their basic rights and dignity. He was of the view that we get thoughtful guidance along with practical policies for bringing real development and prosperity in the society and country.

He said that we have learnt from our political elders that the public service is the guarantor of dignity of political leadership. If we our politics is based on the increase of rights and empowerment of the people then the democratic values, behaviour and public democracy can be strengthened, the Governor believed.

Land of Afghanistan being used for terrorism against Pakistan: Jan Achakzai

Caretaker Minister Information terms COAS's visit to USA very important at critical juncture; says Ministry of Information sign MoUs with two NGOs for promotion of E-education & E-commerce

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has pointed out that the land of Afghanistan is being used for terrorism against Pakistan, and it (Pakistan) is also confronting this critical situation too.

However, the brave armed forces of Pakistan would defend every inch of the country and the terrorism would be rooted out.

The caretaker Minister Information was addressing a hurriedly called press conference at Quetta press club on Monday.

Jan Achakzai spoke about the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Muneer's visit to United States of America, besides terrorism from Afghanistan, protest rally of the Baloch Yekjehti committee from Turbat, besides the Memorandum of Understanding reached between Ministry of Information, Government of Balochistan and Educational and Youth Empowerment Society.

The Minister Information said that the Army Chief has embarked on US visit, and he is a first COAS

who has been visiting US after a long time.

He said that the Army chief's visit to US has come at an important juncture when the war is continued in Ukraine and Ghaza. On the other hand, Afghanistan under Taliban failed to fulfill its commitments with the international community and has been source of terrorism in Pakistan.

While it is also important to mention that elections are about to be conducted in Pakistan and India, adding he mentioned further.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over meeting of Provincial Steering Committee regarding implementation on Gwadar Safe City Project

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Future plans

Nawaz Sharif is planning ahead. Perhaps confident of his chances in the next election, he seems keen to want to avoid the run-ins he has had with security establishments during past stints in power.

In general, it seems like he wants to take a strong stance on civilian supremacy and wants some guarantees that he will be able to run the country unhindered this time around. It is a carefully calculated power move.

The state seems to have all but run out of options, and Mr Sharif is leveraging the opportunity to push back on the issues that are most important to him. For example, he has repeatedly tested the waters by reiterating his demand for the accountability of those who 'conspired', in his view, to push him out of power in 2017.

Demanding such accountability just months ago could have rapidly backfired on the PML-N. Younger brother Shehbaz Sharif would always be quick to soothe nerves each time Mr Sharif publicly put forth this demand.

Not so more recently, while Mr Sharif has gradually grown more insistent on this 'accountability drive'. "Who ruined the country? Who brought the country to this point today? Why are the poor starving today? [...] All these things are eating up the country," Mr Sharif noted while addressing party leaders on Friday.

On Saturday, with Shehbaz Sharif by his side, he went further. "Those who have brought the country to this point, they should also be held accountable. They should be asked how you meted out such treatment [to] this country."

In the same gathering, the former prime minister also defended his position on the Kargil issue, while stressing the need to improve ties with neighbouring countries, especially India.

He also recalled the visits of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999 and Narendra Modi in 2015, rhetorically asking if anyone had come to Pakistan before them. It was clear that the thrice-ousted prime minister was keen to assert himself from the outset this time around.

It is encouraging to see that Nawaz Sharif remains committed to a strong civilian government and an independent foreign policy, and he is fully entitled, as a former chief executive, to pursue accountability and push the overreaching arms of the state back into their respective domains.

However, Mr Sharif should perhaps not consider himself the 'ideal' candidate just yet. It is clear that he still has a weak understanding of the Pakistani economy, which seems heavily influenced by the thoroughly discredited ideas of Ishaq Dar.

Therefore, while his ideas about civilian supremacy and assertive policymaking are commendable, until both he and his party figure out what good fiscal management entails, there is not much they can offer inflation-weary Pakistanis desperate for growth and meaningful change.

Taxing agri incomes



Aijaz A. Nizamani

Pakistan's inability to generate enough revenue means it invariably finds itself at the mercy of international lenders. Currently, we are signatories to an IMF deal that binds the government to increase overall revenue generation and improve the tax-to-GDP ratio which, in our case, is among the lowest in the world. This cannot be possible unless the state starts taxing all sectors of the economy equitably. This includes the rural sector, where great potential lies in efficiently taxing agricultural output.

Agriculture accounts for about one-fifth of Pakistan's \$350 billion economy. If the sector was contributing its fair share, a fifth of the current year's tax collection target of Rs9,415bn would be coming from farm output. However, actual collection is a tiny fraction of the ideal amount. There is a need to correct the common misconception that agriculture is exempt from income tax. It is not. Income from agriculture is taxed like any other income as per the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001. The only difference is that this tax is collected by provincial authorities and not the Federal Board of Revenue. Farmers and other interest groups advance various arguments against agriculture income taxes. They generally feel that since they are already heavily taxed indirectly, they should not be made to pay income taxes as well. They also complain of controlled commodity prices, which is an implicit tax on their incomes. However, while such complaints are not unreasonable, the

doubling of wheat prices in 2022 has rendered price controls ineffective. In any case, other commodities like cotton and rice are free for export; in fact, the latter is encouraged for export under government policy. Sugar, among the major crops, is the only exception. It remains subject to strict government controls and usually faces export restrictions. To offset this, sugar import is heavily taxed in order to benefit local industry and large farmers.

Many tax experts feel agricultural taxes are unenforceable due to a lack of documentation of the economy and its vast geographic spread. Perhaps this is the reason why our colonial overlords levelled presumptive taxes on agricultural revenue and based it on land rental value instead of actual production or productivity potential. However, assuming there is sufficient commitment at the policy level, taxing agriculture should no longer be an issue in the age of satellite imagery and machine-learning technologies. In fact, farmers should advocate for such an approach if they want agriculture in Pakistan to formally be considered part of the larger economy and documented as a part of national supply chains.

It is preposterous that agricultural revenue collection is still done manually by revenue staff as it was 100 years ago. In the prevailing system, if someone does not pay or is overcharged, there is no way of monitoring or to redress the injustice. Therefore, the time has come for the entire system to be modernised. In this regard, the lead has to come from the IMF, international lenders and bilateral donors, as our domestic system seems too subservient to vested interests which are unlikely

to allow tech-enabled transparency in the farm and rural economies.

International lenders and development partners should provide grants to digitalise the farmlands and make land records easily searchable. As a second step, all imagery of farmlands should be made available year-round to individual farmers (irrespective of their landholding size) as well as to the government. The imagery service should enable farmers to assess the condition of their crop on a periodic basis (ideally, daily), and help the government monitor and aggregate crop data. This will greatly help the government in its tax collection, as not much can be hidden in this digital age. Lastly, machine-learning can help the government and farmers interpret this satellite imagery in depth and even assess the yield potential of various crops at the time of harvesting if the systems used to analyse the imagery are properly trained in this task.

Given Pakistan's resource constraints, agricultural taxation as well as fiscal transfers need to be technology-based. At the farmer level, those who refuse to pay taxes must be penalised, for example by not being able to sell or gift their property to low family members without first clearing their dues with the government. This is only possible when farm and land records are diligently digitalised. Technology will also help net the large farmers, who account for merely four per cent of all cultivators but own nearly 40pc of all farmland. It will help recover hundreds of billions of rupees in agricultural income tax while also enabling modernisation of farming practices. — Courtesy Dawn

Conflict and climate



Huma Yusuf

Promises are meant to be broken. That's why we should respond to the outcome of COP28 with a healthy dose of scepticism. The headlines will focus on the language agreed regarding the fate of fossil fuels: 'abate', 'phase down', 'phase out'. Whatever the agreement, it is unlikely to be fettered with concrete targets or firm deadlines and will rely on fantasies of how quickly we can scale carbon capture technologies. In all scenarios, you can expect the ongoing, unapologetic use of fossil fuels.

But let's not fully dismiss COP28 yet. In other areas, the summit has been more productive. Foremost among these is the new Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace, which calls for "bolder collective action to build climate resilience ... in highly vulnerable countries and communities, particularly those threatened or affected by fragility or conflict".

Seven out of 10 of the most climate-vulnerable countries are also ranked as fragile states. COP28's focus on intersections between climate and security is thus a welcome addition. The declaration enshrines a two-fold recognition: one, that climate change exacerbates security challenges; two, that state fragility and conflict impede climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. This is a vicious circle, leaving the most vulnerable further exposed to both violence and climate risk. These topics have relevance to Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Institute for

Conflict and Security Studies, our country witnessed a 34 per cent increase in militant attacks in November as compared to the previous month, bringing the number of attacks this year until Nov 30 to 599. Security concerns are also cited as the reason why Pakistan is expelling undocumented Afghans in a controversial move. Though under-researched, there can be no doubt that cycles of drought and flooding in Pakistan and Afghanistan are exacerbating these trends.

The links between climate change and security challenges are increasingly better understood. Until now, the focus has primarily been on resource competition, the idea that food and water scarcity drives competition between different groups (for example, Kenya's herders, farmers and conservancy owners) leading to conflict. But other factors are at play too.

In an article titled How Climate Change Helps Violent Non-State Actors, Noah Gordon underscores how climate change undermines state legitimacy by reducing states' capacity for service delivery and creating more space for non-state actors. Gordon discusses how the spread of inhospitable environments, particularly in agricultural economies, will lead to farmers being desperate and more susceptible to militant recruitment. He also points out how climate migration will increase the demand for illicit activities such as people smuggling, which will provide militant groups with a new funding stream. Most importantly, climate injustice post-disasters will further weaken state legitimacy and spread anger that can be channelled through non-state actors' narratives. There is also growing awareness that climate disasters distract security forces from their

prime aims as they are increasingly pulled into rescue and reconstruction efforts. This year, from Spain to the US and East Africa, militaries were involved in responses to wildfires and floods, tapping resources and blocking capacity in unpredictable ways. In this context, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at COP28 that climate change would be at the top of Nato's agenda and that member states would be more cautious about considering issues such as food and energy security while supporting the just transition.

Including a climate lens to security policymaking is arguably more easily achievable than ensuring that insecure areas receive adequate access to climate finance and adaptation and mitigation initiatives. A UNEP report released ahead of COP28 found that there is an adaptation finance gap in low-income countries of between \$215 billion and \$387bn per year, at least 50pc larger than thought. The issue is worse in fragile and conflict-affected areas, due to concerns about funding flows and project viability in these areas.

Given that Pakistan is eyeing Loss and Damage Fund support to build climate resilience, including in many parts of the country that would be categorised as fragile or conflict-hit, we should pay close attention to the plans for better partnering with local governments and community networks, such as schools and NGOs, to deliver climate finance in difficult contexts, groups that are sadly disempowered in our political set-up. Ultimately, vulnerable countries themselves will also have to play a role in tackling the vicious cycle of climate and security by improving democratic norms and prioritising climate-related concerns. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM directs to ensure supply of urea fertilizer on controlled rates

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed the departments concerned to prepare and submit an action plan immediately for uninterrupted supply of urea fertilizer on priority basis.

He also ordered to ensure its availability to the farmers at government controlled rate and submit a report in this regard by tomorrow (Tuesday).

"To ensure uninterrupted supply of urea fertilizer during crop sowing, a comprehensive

framework should be prepared and presented in consultation with the provinces and the relevant industry," he said while chairing an emergency review meeting regarding demand and supply, and price of urea fertilizer in the country.

During the meeting, the prime minister asked the district administrations to take immediate action against the hoarders of the fertilizer, and identify and punish those responsible.

He said the government subsidy on urea fertilizer must reach

the deserving farmers.

The prime minister directed the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Food Security to provide the production and supply statistics of urea fertilizer to the provincial governments, and ensure coordination in operations against its hoarders.

He said the transportation of fertilizer should be monitored at all provincial borders, while ensuring that no hurdle was made in its supply to meet the provincial requirements.

He said all the

provinces should bear the burden of subsidy on urea fertilizer in proportion to their consumption.

Earlier, a detailed briefing was given in the meeting on the recent production, demand and supply of urea fertilizer to farmers in the country. The meeting was told that the production and stock of urea in the country was sufficient for the wheat crop, whereas 220,000 metric tons was being imported for buffer stock, and its first consignment would reach Pakistan by next week.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting regarding uninterrupted supply of Urea fertilizer to the farmers on Government control rate.



BEIJING: Commerce Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz meeting Zhang Xinmin, Chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles (CCCT).

UAE Ambassador calls on Privatization Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabani on Monday called on the Caretaker Minister for Privatization, Fawad Hasan Fawad. Issues of mutual interest and cooperation came under discussion at length, said a press release.

The Ambassador recalled the recent visit to UAE by Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar as an outstandingly successful visit and conveyed the desire of His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al

Nahyan to extend full support and cooperation for the development of Pakistan. The envoy apprised that his government wants to move towards the implementation of recently signed MoUs on a fast track in order to enable Pakistan to meet its economic challenges.

The Ambassador also complimented the current government's policy initiatives for supporting economy and investment. The minister thanked the ambassador and the UAE government for their longstanding and continuous support for Pakistan.

Rupee sheds 02 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday weakened by 02 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs283.89 against the previous day's closing at Rs283.87.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs284 and Rs286.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 63 paise to close at Rs305.36 against the last day's closing of Rs305.99, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Gohar Ejaz holds meetings with Chinese businessman to boost trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz, who is leading a 20-member delegation to China, on Monday held meetings with Chinese businessman and exporters to boost trade and remove trade imbalances.

The minister met Chairman of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles (CCCT) Zhang Xinmin, and President of

the COFCO Group Luan Richeng - a key player in China's food processing sector, a Commerce Ministry press release said.

"The meetings denote the pivotal part of Pakistan's strategy to augment non-textile exports, leveraging the strength of COFCO Group's position as China's largest food processor, manufacturer, and trader," it added.

SCCI, CG agree to further improve Pak-US bilateral economic ties

PESHAWAR (INP): President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fuad Ishaq and Shante Moore, U.S Consul General in Peshawar on Monday agreed on further improving Pak-US bilateral trade and economic relations, besides the development of young entrepreneurs, enhancing their abilities and promotion of exports.

Fuad Ishaq invited U.S. companies and investors to invest in potential sectors in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through joint ventures to further cement mutual trade ties between the two friendly countries.

According to a press release issued here, a meeting was held between the U.S Consul General in Peshawar Mr Shante Moore and prominent members of the business community in residence of Mr Ammad Raashed, Honorary Consul General, Republic of Tunisia, Peshawar, Dean - Honorary Counselor Corps Peshawar KP chapter and former senior vice president of the SCCI.

ADB approves \$155m to help boost Pak women's access to finance

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$155.5 million in financing for Pakistan that will support policy reforms enhancing women's access to finance and provide credit to women-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. The financing comprises a \$100 million policy-based loan that supports legal and regulatory reforms that will help women to better access finance; a \$50 million financial intermediation loan that will enable participating financial institutions to

lend to women entrepreneurs; and a \$5.5 million grant that will finance related activities.

"Inclusive, resilient and sustainable development cannot be achieved if women do not have equal economic opportunities and benefits," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov.

"ADB's new program will help transform Pakistan's current financing ecosystem to help women to access much-needed finance and empower them to boost

their livelihoods while contributing significantly to the economy," Zhukov added. According to ADB press statement received here Monday, female labor force participation in Pakistan currently stands at about 23%. The country also has among the lowest rates of women's entrepreneurship in the world at 4% of female working age adults. While Pakistan's financial inclusion has been improving, women are increasingly left behind with a large gender finance gap which currently stands at 34%.

PSX loses 211 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 211.31 points, a negative change of 0.32 percent, closing at 66,012.33 points against 66,223.63 points the previous trading day. A total of 1,215,932,469 shares valuing Rs.33,423 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,329,550,091 shares valuing Rs.33,377 billion the last day.

Some 386 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 159 of them recorded gains and 224 sustained losses.

NBFC posts 35.9% growth in FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The collective base sector of the Non-Banking Financial Sector (NBFC) stood at Rs 2.87 trillion during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to Rs 2.11 trillion during the same period of last year, showing a promising annual growth of 35.9%.

According to the annual report issued by the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), within the NBFC sector, the Fund Management segment of the mutual fund industry emerges as a key player.

As of June 30, 2023, the Assets under Management (AUM) of the Mutual fund industry stood at Rs 1,675 billion, showing substantial growth from Rs 1,281 billion in June 2022, marking a remarkable 30.8% increase.

The report said that the surge in AUMS can be attributed to the prevailing monetary policy situation, the major thrust of investment remained vectored towards its flexible product structure and robust ability to incorporate dynamic shared compliant solution.

KP govt decides to launch Khushal KP programme

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah has said that the government is determined for the welfare of the people of the province in its short period, saying for this purpose, a Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Programme will be launched soon.

He expressed these views while presiding over the 17th meeting of the caretaker cabinet here on Monday.

Besides, members of the caretaker cabinet, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary

(P&D), Additional Chief Secretary (Home & Tribal Affairs) and administrative secretaries, other concerned authorities also attended the meeting.

Under the proposed programme, steps would be taken for the resolution of financial problems, bringing improvement in the law and order situation, service delivery system, guaranteeing of good governance, generation of employment opportunities for youth and provision of maximum facilities to the people.

The chief minister said that short-term measures would be

implemented with immediate effect while long-term steps would be proposed for the upcoming elected government. A roadmap would be provided to the upcoming elected government, so it could keep public welfare-oriented steps continuing.

He appreciated the efforts of the Chief Secretary and administrative secretaries in the preparation of Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Programme. He said that the Chief Secretary and his team had prepared a good and feasible programme within a short time.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering a plaque during the inauguration of the re-construction of Lady Willingdon Hospital Lahore.

Governor urges universities to focus on research & development activities

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has highlighted the critical importance of education focused on modern technology along with mental development and training of youth.

He emphasized that educated youth need to research the proper utilization of the province's natural resources. The

governor expressed these views as the chief guest at the 16th Annual Convocation of the Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology. During the event, degrees were awarded to 337 male and female students, with 68 outstanding students receiving gold medals.

Governor Ghulam Ali announced 80 scholarships for students from the

merged district's region to support their education. In his address, Governor Ghulam Ali stated that education must be aligned with the vision and research of students for the progress and prosperity of the province.

He urged universities to promote new research for increased production, industrial and commercial development.

Punjab cabinet approves amendments to Motor Vehicles Rules

Independent Report
LAHORE: The 34th meeting of the provincial cabinet held under the chair of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office.

The cabinet approved amendments to the Motor Vehicles Rules of 1969, extending legal recognition to Qingqi rickshaws. These rickshaws will now be categorized as three-wheelers, with the regional transport authority designated as a special registration authority for the temporary registration of existing motorcycle rickshaws.

Following temporary registration, motorcycle rickshaws will undergo a four-month window for specific size and redesign modifications. Subsequently, they can obtain a registration number from the excise department upon the issuance of a fitness certificate. The CM emphasized the need to streamline the registration process and requested the forms to be prepared in Urdu.

The meeting also sanctioned the permanent fortification of the infrastructure for 18 major roads.



KARACHI: Police officials carry out the combing search operation against criminals as security has been tightened in city due to security reasons at different areas of Lyari area in Karachi.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali addresses during Annual Convocation Day ceremony of the Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology held at SUSIT in Peshawar.

ANF seizes 1416 kg drugs in 12 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 12 operations across the country managed to recover 1416 kg of drugs and arrested 12 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 500 grams of hashish and three kg of opium were recovered from the possession of three suspects arrested from a bus at Chongi number 26, Islamabad.

18 kg hashish was recovered from three suspects coming from Quetta to Karachi on a bus intercepted on RCD Road Hub.

A total of 48 kg

hashish was recovered from two accused going in a vehicle and a rickshaw, netted from Ring Road Peshawar.

Three kg of heroin, 1370 grams Ice and 7 kg of 200 grams of hashish were recovered from a house in Rawat.

950 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Yaro Chowk Pishin while an accused was also arrested during the operation.

55 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Jamshoro Toll Plaza Sukkur and two accused were arrested. ANF also recovered 54 kg of hashish from the possession of an accused rounded up near Sher Shah Karachi.

Infuriated wife sends husband to jail for solemnizing second marriage

KARACHI (INP): An infuriated wife sent her husband to jail for illegally solemnizing the second marriage in Karachi on Monday.

Reportedly, a local court in Karachi heard a case filed by a Christian woman against her husband who contracted a second marriage.

During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer Saleem Michael said that accused Joshua could not solemnize the second marriage under the Christian Marriage Act.

Relief for Qingqi rickshaws till January 2

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Transport department has provided relief to ensure fitness of 'Qingqi' and rickshaws till January 2.

According to official sources here on Monday it was a golden opportunity for rickshaw owners to get fitness of their rickshaws done and get immunity from fine. Immunity from fine had been given till January 2 and fine would be applicable once the relaxation date would end.

Minister reviews proposals to provide electric bikes to students

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Bilal Afzal, along with Chairman P&D Board Ifikhar Ali Sahu, presided over a meeting to review proposals from the committee established by the Punjab government to provide electric motorcycles to students, here on Monday.

The meeting was attended by Secretary P&D Board Muzaffar Khan Sial, Secretary Transport, Chairman PITB, Members P&D Board, and other officials.

Transport Secretary Ahmed Javed Qazi

provided a comprehensive briefing during the meeting, covering various manufacturers, prices, and market analysis of electric bikes.

He elucidated the proposed entry conditions for applicants, details of the computerized draw, and the online application process facilitated by PITB.

Additionally, the Bank of Punjab presented a briefing on a 'Post-Purchase Reimbursement Model' for the supply of electric motorcycles, offering different proposals for credit value and discount.

18th Karachi International Book Fair to begin on Dec 14

KARACHI (APP): The 5-day 18th Karachi International Book Fair (KIBF) 2023 featuring national and international publishers and exhibitors will open its door to the public on December 14, 2023, at Expo Center Karachi.

Besides 150 leading publishers from Pakistan and 40 exhibitors from 17 countries will participate in the KIBF being organized by Pakistan Publishers and Booksellers Association from 14 to 18 December. Convener 18th KIBF, Waqar Mateen Khan and Chairman Pakistan Publishers and Booksellers Association Aziz Khalid announced at a press conference here on Monday, along with members of the managing committee.

They said that Care-

taker Chief Minister Sindh Justice @ Maqbool Baqir was invited to inaugurate the Book Fair while Caretaker Minister Information, Minority Affairs and Social Protection Muhammad Ahmed Shah was expected to participate as Guest of Honor in the inaugural ceremony.

Karachi International Book Fair has now achieved the distinction of being Pakistan's largest consumer and trade fair since its inception in 2005. It brings together publishing and distribution houses, domestic as well as international publishers, booksellers, librarians, and institutional customers on a single platform.

Publishers from Iran, India, Turkey, Singapore, China, Malaysia, England, UAE, and other countries are

attending the Karachi International Book Fair where more than 330 stands display books on all subjects to disinterested readers including vast numbers of families, students, and book lovers from all over the country, they stated.

Waqar Mateen Khan hoped that, this year as in the past, a record-breaking number of visitors would participate in the 18th Karachi International Book Fair.

Aziz Khalid stressed that the 18th edition will be remarkable and distinctive as efforts were being made to establish effective working relationships with key international book fairs leading towards an exchange of professional expertise for highlighting the importance of book fairs at national and international levels.

International News

France, Germany, Italy back EU sanctions to target Hamas

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: France, Germany and Italy called for the European Union to set up a special sanctions scheme to target Hamas as EU foreign ministers met on Monday to consider possible next steps in response to the Middle East crisis.

Among the possible measures up for discussion at the meeting are a crackdown on Hamas' finances and travel bans for Israeli settlers responsible for violence in the West Bank.

In a letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, the foreign ministers of the bloc's three biggest countries said it was important the EU take "all

necessary measures against the terrorist group Hamas and its supporters".

"This implies a stronger European commitment both to combating Hamas' infrastructure and financial support, and to isolating and delegitimising Hamas internationally, which in no way represents the Palestinians or their legitimate aspirations," said the letter, seen by Reuters. Hamas is already listed by the European Union as a terrorist organisation, meaning any funds or assets that it has in the EU should be frozen.

It was not immediately clear from the brief letter the details of how sanctions would be broadened or

tightened. If EU members agreed in principle, the next step would be for experts to draw up the legal framework to figure out which individuals or entities would be targeted. The EU said on Friday it had added Mohammed Deif, Commander General of the military wing of Hamas, and his deputy, Marwan Issa, to its list of terrorists under sanction. It is also considering adding Hamas Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar to the list, according to diplomats.

The letter said a separate sanctions scheme targeting Hamas would send a "strong political message" about the EU's commitment against Hamas.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban during the inauguration of newly-elected President Javier Milei, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Israeli tanks blast their way into Khan Yunis

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Israeli tanks blasted their way into the heart of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip — the refuge for hundreds of thousands of civilians who fled other parts of the enclave on Tel Aviv's orders — as Hamas said Israeli forces were mounting "very violent raids".

At the opposite end of the Gaza Strip, residents also described some of the most intense fighting of the war so far.

Intense fighting was reported in Jabalia and Gaza City's Shejaiya district, while the Israeli army

said on Sunday that it had struck over 250 targets in the previous 24 hours.

The fighting has claimed at least 17,700 lives in Gaza since Oct 7.

Residents of Khan Yunis said tanks had reached the main north-south road through the middle of Khan Yunis after intense combat through the night that had slowed the Israeli advance from the east. Warplanes were pounding the area west of the assault. The air rumbled with the constant thud of explosions and thick columns of white smoke rose over the city.

Gazans say hunger is growing, fuelling fears of exodus into Egypt

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified across Gaza on Monday, fuelling fears flagged by the United Nations at the weekend of a breakdown in public order and a mass exodus of Palestinians into Egypt.

The narrow coastal strip has been under a full Israeli blockade since the start of the conflict more than two months ago and the border with Egypt is the only other way out. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes.

Ukraine allies provide ships to ward off Russia in the Black Sea

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: The U.K. and Norway will lead a coalition aimed at helping Ukraine secure its maritime export routes against Russian interference, the U.K.'s Ministry of Defence said on Dec. 11.

The long-term goal is to help Ukraine transform its navy to become more compatible with Western allies, and to bolster security in the Black Sea, the ministry said. The U.K. is transferring two minehunter ships to Ukraine as a first step.

"The rebuilding of the Ukrainian Navy has begun," U.K. Secretary for Defence Grant Shapps said in a post on X. "The U.K. will bring together our allies in a new coalition to give Ukraine the power to rule the waves."

The UN says commodity shipments in the Black Sea continue to face "significant risks" from air strikes and sea mines, and several cargo and grain ships reportedly hit mines in the area in recent months.



Boys hold containers while they line up, displaced Palestinians, who fled their homes due to Israeli strikes, shelter in a tent camp near the border with Egypt, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

Canada's surging cost of living fuels reverse immigration

Monitoring Desk
TORONTO: The dream of making it big in Canada is turning into a battle for survival for many immigrants due to the high cost of living and rental shortages, as rising emigration numbers hint at newcomers being forced to turn their back on a country that they chose to make their adopted home.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made immigration his main weapon to blunt Canada's big challenge of an aging and slowing population, and it has also helped fuel economic growth. That drove

Canada's population up at its fastest clip in more than six decades this year, Statistics Canada said.

But now a reversal of that trend is gradually taking hold.

In the first six months of 2023 some 42,000 individuals departed Canada, adding to 93,818 people who left in 2022 and 85,927 exits in 2021, official data show.

The rate of immigrants leaving Canada hit a two-decade high in 2019, according to a recent report from the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), an immigration advocacy group.



Licypriya Kangujam, an Indigenous climate activist from India, holds a banner during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

China's leaders meet to discuss growth targets for 2024, say sources

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's leaders started a closed-door meeting on Monday to discuss economic targets and map out stimulus plans for 2024, four sources familiar with the matter said.

The annual Central Economic Work Conference, during which President Xi Jinping and other top officials chart the course for the world's second-largest economy next year, is likely to end on Tuesday, the sources said.

Investors are closely watching for clues on next year's policy and reform agenda as China's economy has struggled to mount a strong post-pandemic recovery amid the deepening housing crisis, local government debt concerns, slowing global growth and geopolitical tensions. The Politburo, a top decision-making body of the ruling Communist Party, said on Friday that fiscal policy would be moderately strengthened.

Big US donors rally around Nikki Haley

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: A growing number of US business leaders are rallying behind former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley as the Republican Party's presidential hopeful, seeing her as more stable than rival Donald Trump, and more favorable to business interests than incumbent Joe Biden.

"Even if you're a very liberal Democrat, I urge you: help Nikki Haley too. Get a choice on the Republican side that might be better than Trump," said Jamie Dimon, who as head of JPMorgan Chase bank is often seen as one of the country's most powerful CEOs.

For the last month or so, a growing list of entrepreneurs and business leaders have been lining up behind Trump's former UN ambassador, stumping for her, swelling her campaign coffers or considering doing so as her standing in polls strengthens.

Nobel Peace Prize winner says Iranian people will prevail against rulers

Monitoring Desk
OSLO: The Iranian people will ultimately overcome authoritarianism imposed by a government that has lost legitimacy and public support, Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi said from prison in a speech read by her children on Sunday.

The Norwegian Nobel committee in October awarded the prize to Mohammadi, 51, for her non-violent fight "against oppression of women in Iran" and the promotion of human

rights for all, in a rebuke to Tehran's theocratic leaders. Her 17-year-old twins Kiana and Ali Rahmani collected the prize, a gold medal and diploma, at a ceremony in Oslo's City Hall attended by several hundred guests. The prize includes a cheque for 11 million Swedish crowns (about \$1 million).

In her speech, sent from Iran's notorious Evin prison, Mohammadi said continued resistance and non-violence.

China's actions in S. China Sea undermine regional stability, US says

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The United States has called out China for interfering in the Philippines' maritime operations and undermining regional stability, urging Beijing to stop "its dangerous and destabilising conduct" in the South China Sea. The Philippines and China have traded accusations over a ramming incident during the weekend while Manila's vessels were on a resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal.

