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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Govt taking multiple initiatives to streamline governance structure of Balochistan: PM

Govt determined to conduct free, fair polls: Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that the government had taken multiple initiatives to bring about reforms in bureaucracy in order to improve overall governance structure of Balochistan province.

Addressing a press conference, he said the province had some chronic and complex issues which ought to be resolved by deputing a blend of upright and hard-working bureaucrats from civil service as well as from

the provincial structure. "Our issues are linked with the bad governance, that had been badly affecting the performance of the province for the last few decades," he said. On the request of the Balochistan government, he deputed a competent bureaucrat Shakeel Qadir Khan along with a team, to ensure meritocracy and to streamline the overall structure of bureaucracy. He said he specifically instructed the team to fully support the Chief Minister and the provincial

government in this regard. PM Kakar said there was an axis of some corrupt bureaucrats and other stakeholders who had crumpled the whole province, thus adversely affecting the national economy.

He hoped that the incoming elected government would also remain vigilant in this regard and would continue the process of reforms in future.

To a question regarding reservations of the nationalist parties to hold free and fair elections in the prov-

ince, the prime minister said it was just a routine matter as these parties had something to say to their voters. Reiterating the government's resolve to hold free and fair elections across the country, he said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would perform its duty to conduct the elections in an appropriate way. "It is our task that we run the day-to-day affairs of the government, implement the state affairs, and then conduct the election," he said.



QUETTA: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar along with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki and Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi addressing a Press conference



Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir meeting with Gen Michael Erik Kurilla, the Commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM).

COAS, US Centcom discuss joint training, enhance cooperation avenues

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir called on Commander United States Central Command (US CENTCOM), General Michael Erik Kurilla during his visit to the Headquarters Central Command at Tampa Bay, Florida.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Tuesday, during the meet-

ing, matters of shared interests, particularly cooperation in regional security matters came under discussion.

Both the sides discussed avenues of joint training and reiterated the need for enhancing training interactions between CENTCOM and the Pakistan Army. The COAS also visited the CENTCOM Joint Operations Center during the visit.

Domki meets Kakar, discusses matters about Balochistan

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki had meeting with the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar here on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, different matters about Balochistan were discussed.

US supports free, fair elections in Pakistan: State Department

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States (US) reiterated its stance for free and fair elections in Pakistan.

US will continue to support free and fair elections in Pakistan, said US State Department spokesman, Matthew Miller said in a weekly press briefing.

"That is the - and engage with Pakistan on a bilateral basis to discuss our support for free and fair elections," Matthew Miller said and reiterated that the US does not take sides while speaking about Pakistan's politics and they would engage with elected representatives. "As I've said before, we don't take a position as it comes to - when it comes to political parties in Pakistan, and we will engage with the leaders that the Pakistani people select," Miller said.

ECP orders removal of Ahad Cheema from the post

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has ordered the immediate removal of Ahad Cheema from the post.

According to the announcement issued by the ECP, Ahad Cheema can influence the elections, he has been instructed to immediately separate the post of advisor. In this regard, the Secretary Cabinet Division was ordered to remove Ahad Cheema.

It may be recalled that in the petition filed last week by Advocate Syed Azizuddin Kakakhil, it was requested to remove caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar and some other members of his cabinet including Ahad Cheema, Fawad Hasan Fawad and Syed Tauqeer Hussain.

PM directs to accelerate rehabilitation of flood affected families in Balochistan

Anwaarul Haq Kakar directs to resolve issues of water supply in Balochistan at the earliest besides forming special patrolling force for prevention of illegal fishing in at coasts of all

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar has issued standing directives to the concerned authorities for expediting process of rehabilitation of the flood affected families and their houses in Balochistan.

He also directed to resolve the issues of water supply in the province at the earliest.

In this regard, he directed to the provincial administration to ensure water supply in all areas of the province.

These directives were issued by the caretaker Prime Minister while presiding over a review meeting on the administrative matters and development here on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister was briefed about different initiatives taken during the period of incumbent caretaker government in the province.

The PM was also briefed about the water resources, construction of

houses, minerals, communication, law and justice, fisheries and different other sectors.

In addition to this, he was also informed about the progress made on upgrading the mining sector.

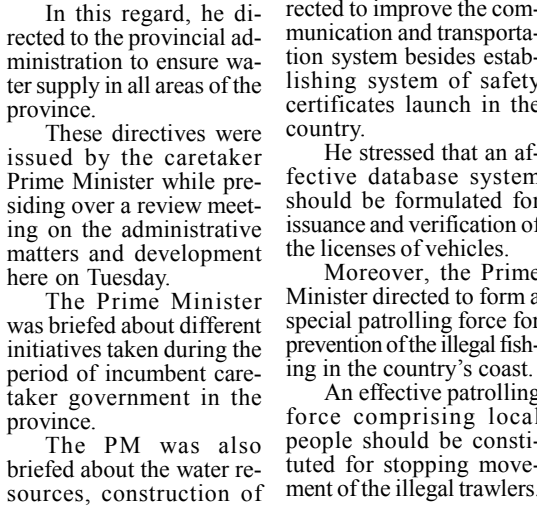
Addressing the meeting, the Premier said that the future of people of Balochistan is linked with the local and international investment in the mining and minerals sector.

He on the occasion directed to improve the communication and transportation system besides establishing system of safety certificates launch in the country.

He stressed that an affective database system should be formulated for issuance and verification of the licenses of vehicles.

Moreover, the Prime Minister directed to form a special patrolling force for prevention of the illegal fishing in the country's coast.

An effective patrolling force comprising local people should be constituted for stopping movement of the illegal trawlers.



QUETTA: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar launches the Electronic Public Procurement System of Balochistan.

Properly educated people can transform society: PM

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday pointed out the seriousness of out-of-school children issue which warranted collective efforts for its redressal as properly educated people could transform a human society.

He said in the future, no society would be able to exist without education and knowledge, and stressed that students should have realization for the changes shaping the human societies. During an interaction with the students of different universities of the Balochistan province, PM Kakar said that the out-of-school children issue was a social issue which had two aspects and according to his view, they required to ponder as to what steps should be taken to make the education accessible to such kids.

He stressed upon utilization of existing infrastructure and enhancement of teachers' capacity building, besides increasing the outreach of education.

The prime minister suggested that about 10 million Pakistani diaspora, living in different parts of the globe, could play their

part in overcoming the out-of-school children issue. If they gave commitment to educate at least five children with their minimum donation, that amount could prove huge for catering to the needs the uneducated children.

With such initiative, the other countries and stakeholders would look towards the move as positive and would be supplementing in those efforts, he opined.

The caretaker prime minister, to another query, replied that career counseling should be introduced at universities, keeping in view the contemporary needs of the local industry and particularly in the region, and cited the massive construction work being undertaken in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which required skilled manpower.

He also expressed the hope that the upcoming government would focus and improve the skill development capacity of the people by taking different steps.

The caretaker prime minister, referring to the trade and economic potential of the region, said trillions of dollars trade was expected in the region.

No delay will be accepted in election: Supreme Court

Suspends BHC verdict regarding constituencies; Delimitation cases be heard after elections

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday suspended another decision of Balochistan High Court (BHC) pertaining to the delimitations and said all appeals, would be taken up again after the general elections.

The court reiterated that it wouldn't spare any hindrance with regard to general polls in the country. There was no chance to delay the electoral process, it added.

A three-member bench of the top court, headed by Acting Chief Justice Sardar

Tariq Masood and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah, heard the various appeals against the delimitations in Balochistan.

Secretary ECP Umar Hameed appeared before the court.

During the course of proceedings, the court said that the decision wouldn't affect the cases of all petitioners. It said that the court couldn't accept any delay in the conduct of the general elections.

Justice Sardar Tariq Masood remarked that there was a bit of stability

in the country after the announcement of election date. Whether the petitioners didn't want stability, he asked, adding that announcement of election schedule was not an ordinary issue.

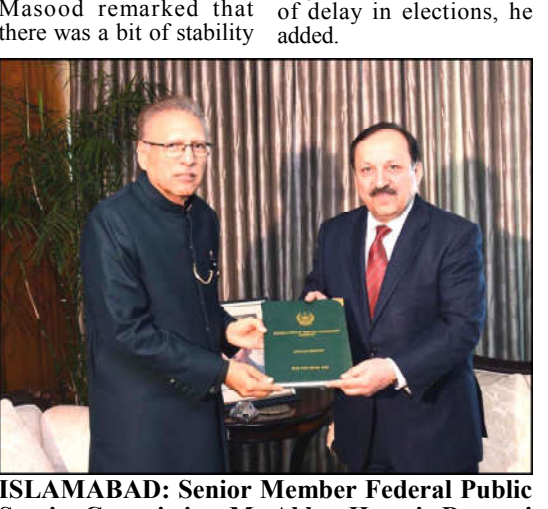
Justice Athar Minallah remarked that it was not the duty of high court to see the maps, rather it was the job of ECP. He said that it could derail the process of polls if the court allowed the changes in the delimitations at this stage. There was no chance of delay in elections, he added.

Bilawal calls for end to traditional politics, cites need for justice in fake cases

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari urged for a shift away from traditional politics, emphasizing the need for justice in cases he believes are politically motivated.

Addressing the Lahore High Court Bar on Tuesday, Bilawal reiterated his gratitude for the hearing of a graft case against him, lodged over a decade ago.

"Two generations have been oppressed and victimized," Bilawal stated, expressing his appreciation for judges, including Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, who are presiding over the case. He expressed hope for a fair resolution after years of waiting, highlighting the importance of justice not just for himself and his party members, but for setting a precedent against political persecution.



ISLAMABAD: Senior Member Federal Public Service Commission, Mr. Akbar Hussain Durrani presenting Annual Report-2022 of FPSC to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

GoB decides to establish Skills Development Fund

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki on Tuesday said the provincial government has decided to establish 'Balochistan Skills Development Fund' under the supervision of Planning and Development Department to provide technical education and training to the youth of the province.

He expressed his views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Prime Minister's Youth Skills Development Program here.

The chief minister said that the existing infrastructure of the Labor and Manpower department would be utilized where the youth will be trained in artificial intelligence, hoteling, tourism, health care, nursing, fashion designing, film making in order to produce quality technical human resource.

He said that the ob-

jective of the program is to provide skills in various fields of technology to the youth of Balochistan to secure employment opportunities worldwide upon completion of their training.

Domki said that the purpose of providing the training program was to equip them with much-needed valuable skills that will enable them to contribute to the economic development of the province and send remittances to family.

He said that on the direction of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, the youth of Balochistan are being provided with skill training in various fields so that they can support their families and work abroad.

Caretaker chief minister said that more than 60 percent of the total population of the country consists of youth which are a valuable asset of any country and society.

PTV Bolan fulfills Hazara community's demand with Hazargi broadcast: Solangi

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that long standing demand of Hazara community had been fulfilled by start of Hazargi language programmes at Pakistan Television Bolan from today.

Delivering his speech at the opening ceremony of "Hazargi language" programme on PTV Bolan, he said the PTV Bolan was already broadcasting pro-

grams in Balochi, Pashto and Brahvi languages.

PTV Bolan broadcasts were available on cable and satellite, Murtaza Solangi said adding it could also be accessed through terrestrial antennas that would help people in remote areas too.

"We are grateful to Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar for encouraging us to take this initiative," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

The minister said that PTV Multan telecast's duration had been extended to 24 hours earlier this month.

Process of training of ROs and DROs completes: Election Rules and Act to be implemented in true letter and spirit, maintains PEC

QUETTA: The Provincial Election Commissioner, Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan has categorically stated that the Election related rules and Act would be imple-

mented in true letter and spirit, and there would be no thing against the law. He pledged that all political parties would be provided level playing field and treated equally ensuring free, fair and transparent elections in the province.

The PEC was speaking to the media persons on occasion of the training of District Returning Officers (DROs) here at a local hotel on Tuesday.

Also present on the occasion were Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat and Election Commissioner's senior officials. The PEC said that the training of DROs and ROs has been completed in the province. He said that it is mandate of the ECP to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the province and it is responsibility of the DROs to implement the mandate of ECP on ground.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Kakar, Principal Asif Jan, Dr. Waheed Yousaf, Madam Yasmeen Joseph and others cutting cake during anniversary of Saint Mar's School

PTI won't ally any party in general elections: Gohar

NEWSHAWAR (Online): Newly elected chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, has said that he will not form an alliance with any party in the general elections. If DCs are ROs, they are part of the government which has not been transparent.

Speaking to the media after appearing in the Peshawar High Court, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that taking the election symbol from us would be an injustice to the people.

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part in overcoming the out-of-school children issue. If they gave commitment to educate at least five children with their minimum donation, that amount could prove huge for catering to the needs the uneducated children.

With such initiative, the other countries and stakeholders would look towards the move as positive and would be supplementing in those efforts, he opined.

The caretaker prime minister, to another query, replied that career counseling should be introduced at universities, keeping in view the contemporary needs of the local industry and particularly in the region, and cited the massive construction work being undertaken in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which required skilled manpower.

He also expressed the hope that the upcoming government would focus and improve the skill development capacity of the people by taking different steps.

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Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Balanced ballots

The latest voter data by the ECP is a harbinger of progress. The electoral gender gap in Pakistan has notably shrunk to below 10m. With the overall voter count soaring beyond 128m, women now represent 46.13pc of the electorate. This shift, while heartening, underscores an ongoing challenge: the need for sustained efforts to further reduce this gap and enhance women's participation in our democratic processes.

The reduced gender gap, albeit significant, is unevenly distributed across the provinces. Punjab, with a disparity of over 5m, leads in gender disparity among voters, followed by Sindh, KP, and Balochistan. While Punjab boasts districts with more than 48pc female voters, areas like South Waziristan (Lower) in KP report considerably low female voter percentages, as little as 34.54pc.

This contrast not only reflects the varied sociopolitical landscapes of these provinces but also signals where targeted interventions are most needed. The responsibility to further narrow this gap rests significantly on the shoulders of political parties. Their role extends beyond mere competition in elections; they are, in essence, the stewards of our democracy and must lead the charge in initiatives aimed at encouraging and facilitating women's voting. This duty encompasses a range of actions, from awareness campaigns to the implementation of measures such as ensuring the availability of safe and accessible polling stations, and addressing the sociocultural barriers that impede women's political participation.

The current reduction is a clear indication of the concerted efforts by various stakeholders, including the ECP. However, the objective extends beyond merely decreasing numbers; it aims for the achievement of gender parity in voter participation. As we approach future elections, the narrowing of this gap marks an important milestone, signalling progress yet reminding us that there is a considerable journey ahead. It is crucial to recognise that the true strength of a democracy is reflected in the inclusivity of its processes. Political parties, civic groups, and communities must persist in their collaborative work to ensure that every citizen's voice, regardless of gender, is heard and valued at the ballot box. This journey towards an inclusive, equitable democracy demands unwavering commitment and concerted action from all sectors of society. Let this be the legacy we aspire to create and solidify for future generations.

Issues with BRT



Dr Noman Ahmed

While meeting an Asian Development Bank delegation earlier this month, Sindh's caretaker chief minister said that 180 solar-powered buses will be introduced to support the operations of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Karachi. These imported buses are meant to provide urban commuters with a cleaner, more efficient public transport option.

However, questions arise: can these expensive buses operate as efficiently as promised, given the rundown state of our roads? Not too long ago, the government launched electric buses on three routes, most of which were out of service in less than a year. Issues of charging facilities and other operational difficulties were cited as the main reason.

In fact, one can question the financial model of the entire BRT system. Currently, the Green Line is operational. It was developed by the federal government-owned Sindh Infrastructure Development Company. Will this service continue when it has been unable to generate revenue amounting to even a fraction of the sum spent on its operations? The under-construction Red Line is a \$503 million undertaking. Life in many neighbourhoods has been adversely impacted by the slow pace of construction.

Do we need the BRT system? Five arguments justify a negative answer. One, the proposed

BRT's cost and management needs serious review. According to a document prepared by the relevant authorities, the total cost of the Karachi Circular Railways and seven BRT corridors is Rs520.6 billion. An investment plan has also been prepared to justify the undertaking based on the possible enterprises evolving from the BRT. However, the performance of local and provincial bodies is at a record low, and the level of professional handling and follow-up needed for a project of such magnitude is difficult to expect from them. The BRT may also cause enormous physical displacement. Besides, capable traffic management would be necessary during its construction.

Two, the BRT will cater to only nine per cent of total passenger trips, if all seven lines become operational. Such trips are currently over 30m per day. As Karachi's population grows, the trips will expand proportionally. The net benefit to the commuter population would be minuscule.

Three, the BRT's development and operations won't reduce the existing congestion on the streets. The corridors are being built on the major arteries of the city. In many cases, exclusive right of way for BRT buses shall reduce available road space for other modes of transport. This will be a challenge for motorcycles, cars, delivery vans, water tankers, oil tankers and other vehicles, besides adding to air pollution.

Four, ordinary folk consider owning a motorcycle or a car a social attainment. Thus it is very unlikely that people will stop using cars or motorcycles once the BRT becomes functional. In North Nazimabad and adjoining locations along the Green Line, no visible reduction in motorcycles or cars has been noticed. Perhaps the

absence of feeder services and long and inconvenient walks will leave people with little choice but to continue to use private vehicles. Many people have outdoor employment, including delivery services where possessing a vehicle is necessary. Thus the BRT offers little solace to them.

Lastly, there is little interconnectivity between the existing paratransit and the BRT system. While those managing the BRT claim that this will be ensured, there have been no indications of this so far.

One must also study other examples. For instance, the Lahore BRT runs on a huge subsidy with a limited passenger trip load. The Peshawar BRT was hit by allegations of malpractice and corruption. Several investigations were carried out by various agencies to ascertain the charges of cost overruns and operational inefficiencies. Across the border, the Delhi BRT was dismantled by the state government due to rising congestion and its own relative ineffectiveness.

From a macroeconomic perspective, the government can focus on road development and maintenance, while bus operations are left to local bus operators without any subsidy.

The people of Karachi need short-, long- and medium-term solutions to their commuting woes. The immediate increase in buses and mini buses, and removal of encroachments from roads for the smooth flow of traffic should be undertaken as a low-cost, short-term action. The revival of ordinary Karachi buses on designated routes and alignment of larger rickshaw routes to connect the modes of mass transit with neighbourhoods may be undertaken in the medium term, while the planning and development of grade-separated BRT mass transit should be started as a long-term option. -- Courtesy Dawn

Ambitious outcome



Aisha Khan

The recently concluded Conference of Parties, COP28, held in Dubai delivered a package of agreements setting out the pathway for global climate action in the years to come. The outcome of the Global Stock-Take (GST) under the UAE COP presidency, was historic in many ways. It called for action to transition away from fossil fuels for the first time, made headway in the operationalisation and initial capitalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund and saw record breaking (\$85 billion) pledges in climate action.

The narratives emerging at COP28 reflect a climate regime struggling to come to terms with the need for urgency in climate action and maturing to move to an era of 'implementation'. However, despite consensus and incremental gains, COPs remind us that negotiations are part of a broader agenda and not an endgame, with some wins, some disappointments and a few loopholes carried forward to the next meeting. The ultimate arbiter of COP's significance will be the delivery of emissions cut, adaptation action, and finance through the Dubai-Baku-Belem roadmap.

The GST has set the stage for accelerating action between now and 2025 when parties are expected to submit their next Nationally Determined Contributions. This will make finance the central focus of COP29, highlighting need for mobilising and aligning financial flows with Article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement and finding a way to

incorporate Means of Implementation in the finance package to address debt burdens and forward thinking in strengthening resilience. The seriousness of the GST decision can be seen in its call for a follow-up, including a two-year dialogue on implementing its outcomes to start at COP29 and a 'Roadmap to Mission 1.5' to enhance global cooperation under the guidance of the presidencies of COP28, COP29 and COP30. Notwithstanding the lack of detail on transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, the use of 'just', 'orderly' and 'equitable' in the text language raises hope of significant emissions reductions in this decade and the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel-dominated era.

COP28 also saw many new announcements and pledges, ranging considerably in their significance and credibility. The UAE-led Finance Framework, along with record-breaking pledges to the Green Climate Fund and new finance for loss and damage of around \$655.9 million can be interpreted as a shift in politics of finance.

The UAE announced a package of finances as a contribution to delivering on the framework with a \$30bn investment fund for clean transition, \$4.5bn for energy transition investment in Africa, and a new announcement plan to re-channel \$200m equivalent in special drawing rights to the IMF Resilience and Sustainability Trust Fund. The gap between adaptation finance pledges and the need for implementing adaptation plans signal a need for heightened political attention. Significantly, COP president Sultan Al Jaber called on the need to inject more capital into multilateral development banks to support mobilising and distributing finance for transition.

Other highlights of COP28 include pathways for alignment on climate, food and nature goals ahead of Brazil's COP30 and a High Ambition Coalition to serve as the centre of gravity for pushing outcomes on fossil fuels, adaptation and finance. The US-China Sunnylands statement ensured a basis of support for the final package, but without a major shift in their pre-COP positions.

The fiercely contested negotiations went into overtime to reach consensus but successful shuttle diplomacy in the last 48 hours played a role in gaveling the agreement. For Pakistan, it's important to translate GST into NST (National Stock-take) and convene a multidisciplinary discussion on the impact of global climate agreements on the country and the region. An analytical review to assess the impact will help in setting the course for coping strategies, inclusive of economy-wide impacts and options, for increasing revenue streams to meet mitigation commitments and adaptation needs.

The climate change ministry-led delegation at COP28 marked a new start by taking a 'whole of society' approach, working closely with all relevant stakeholders to foster collective ownership in framing Pakistan's stance. The 29 events hosted at the Pakistan Pavilion included high-level segments with diverse themes that provided opportunity for expanding outreach and showcasing the impact of climate calamities, as well as networking opportunities for deepening engagement and forging new partnerships. The next steps include balancing national gaps with international obligations and moving towards a point of convergence, where complementarities create an enabling environment for long-term investments. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pakistan exports first shipment of dried Chillies to China: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Commerce and Industries Dr Gohar Ejaz, on Tuesday, announced a significant breakthrough in Pakistan's agricultural exports to China with the inaugural shipment of dried chillies.

The minister extended best wishes to Litong Food Co. Ltd. for their extraordinary feat and expressed sincere appreciation for the unwavering support of the Chinese government in creating a substantial market for Pakistani goods within China.

He emphasised that the exports of Pakistan's products to China have the potential to exceed \$20 billion in the coming years. However, achieving this ambitious goal requires concerted efforts from Pakistani agricultural exporters.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz encouraged the exporters to uphold high-quality standards, increase productivity, and implement effective marketing strategies to meet the expectations of the Chinese market. Acknowledging the crucial role of the Chinese companies in the process, the minister expressed optimism about the prospects of collaboration.



QUETTA: A delegation of the Zamindar Action Committee of Balochistan call on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hassan Fawad.

PCJCCI suggests export of Pak honey

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki said on Tuesday that certificated Pakistani honey could triple its value, enhancing its export to other countries. Sharing his views in a think-tank session held here at PCJCCI Secretariat, he added, "Our honey is sold for merely USD 20 or USD 25 per kilogram but the price can rise to USD 100 per kilogram when it is packaged at other countries. The situation could improve if we establish labs and certification systems and implement management

PSX stayed bearish, loses 2,371 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 2,371.64 more points, a negative change of 3.64 percent, closing at 62,833.03 points against 65,204.68 points the previous trading day. A total of 1,513,931.019 shares valuing Rs.29,099 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,890,424,261 shares valuing Rs.24,595 billion the last day. Some 386 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 31 of them recorded gains and 351 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 4 remained unchanged.

PM directs Balochistan govt to resolve farmers' issues

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan chief secretary to ensure electricity supply for the agriculture tube wells in the province. The delegation members apprised the prime minister of the issues confronting the agriculture sector as well as the power load-shedding in Balochistan. Prime Minister Kakar said that the welfare of the farmers was among the state's priorities.

Pakistan's current account deficit enters into surplus after 6 six months

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan's current account deficit entered into surplus for the first time in six months. The current account deficit narrowed to 64% in the first five months of the current financial year. In November, the first month after four months, when the current account surplus raised to \$9 million, exports rose by 12 percent. As a result of tight monetary and fiscal policy and stringent administrative measures taken by the government, the current account balance has declined substantially in the first 5 months of FY2024. As a

AJK PM directs for focusing on reducing disparity between filers and non-filers

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has directed the State Inland Revenue Department to pool in all its efforts to achieve the tax collection targets besides reducing the disparity between filers and non-filers. Chairing a high level meeting of the AJK Inland Revenue Department here Tuesday, he said that the government would provide the required resources to the department but negligence in duties won't be tolerated under any circumstances. The meeting discussed in detail the taxation related matters, setting up taxation targets and implementing fiscal policies to widen the tax base in the region. The Commissioner of Inland Revenue (North), on the occasion, briefed the prime minister, in detail of the tax collection targets in Muzaffarabad, Neelum and Jhelum Valley and the problems faced by the department. The prime minister further directed the IRD officials to collect the data of all the private hospitals, hotels, tourism resorts, business centers, shops, local industries, marquees and private schools and furnish the report to the PM office within next couple of weeks. The meeting was attended among others by senior Minister Colonel Retired Waqar Ahmed Noor, Communications Minister Azhar Sadiq, Health Minister Ansar Abdali, Special Secretary Masoodur-Rahman and officers of the Inland Revenue Department.

Gold rates up by Rs 400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 400 and was sold at Rs 217,600 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 217,200 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 343 to Rs 186,557 from Rs 186,214 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 171,011 from Rs 170,696, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and 10 gram silver remained stagnant at Rs 2,670 and 2,289.09 respectively.

FGEHA all set to initiate new residential projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is all set to initiate new residential projects in eight major cities of the country to provide housing to government employees and the general public. "The authority has already received several applications from land owners, companies and firms interested in the mega projects," sources in the FGEHA told APP. They said the applications were invited from land owners, developers, firms and eligible individuals for the supply of land for housing schemes (plots, houses and apartments) projects in major cities of the country. The procedure for applications and selection was being followed as per Joint Venture Regulations 2020, they added. They said the authority was planning to launch new residential projects in eight major cities of the country.

