



CM KP directs for speedy rescue operation: Mehmood

The Business

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Ivanka Trump asked to cooperate with lawmakers

Culprits behind Lahore blast traced: Rashid

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Saturday claimed to have reached out to the accused in Lahore blast and said that he would defeat terrorism.

Talking to media in Islamabad on Saturday, he said that all the institutions have been issued alert by the Interior Ministry and directed to remain vigilant.

The minister said that thousands of lives have been sacrificed in the war against terrorism, adding that BNA is a small group and it is not known yet whether BLA has claimed responsibility for Anarkali attack or not.

Sheikh Rashid said that our security institutions are fully prepared to curb terrorist activities in the coun-

try, adding that the incidents like Lahore blast cannot shatter our determination and morale. He went on to say that said investigation of the incident is underway and perpetrators of the incident will be held accountable to law. "Deadlock over negotiations with TTP came due to their unacceptable conditions," he said and added two terrorists of TTP were killed in Islamabad on 18th of this month and same action would be taken against anyone who will try to spoil the peace of the motherland.

The minister: "Our nation paid heavy price for peace restoration in the country and no one will be allowed at any cost to spoil it, adding that we have sacrificed more than 80,000 lives and suffered an economic loss of around 150 billion dollars for this purpose."



MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi talks to media.

C/A deficit witnesses marginal increase in December

Pak among top three economist normalcy index, says Tarin

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin on Saturday said that for the third consecutive time, Pakistan stood in the top three in Economist normalcy index.

No other country has achieved this in the world; the Finance Minister said this on his official twitter account.

He said the same is reflected in the revised Gross Domestic Products (GDP) growth of 5.37 percent in FY21, the second best in the last 14 years.

Moving on with the structural changes, inclusive growth and policy actions, Bloomberg have also recognised that Pakistan has entered the decade of sustained growth, he said.

The Minister said that the next ten years will help reduce income disparity, increase employment and improve human development.

Another report adds: The current account deficit (CAD) was broadly unchanged at \$1.93 billion in Dec 21 from \$1.89 billion in Nov 21, State Bank of Pakistan said on Saturday.

Cumulatively, led by significant terms of trade shock amid ongoing

economic recovery, CAD reached \$9.09 billion in July-Dec FY22.

The data released by the Central Bank said exports of goods and services in the first half of the financial year 2021-22 were higher compared to the same period of last year as they rose to \$15.24 billion and \$3.4 billion respectively in Jul-Dec (FY22) from \$11.84 billion and \$2.8 billion in the same period of last year.

However, on account of higher imports, the balance of trade in goods expanded to \$21.2 billion in the period under review while that of services also expanded to \$1.8 billion.

A current account deficit is normal for a country like Pakistan where saving is low and which is undergoing a growth recovery. Two things are important that it is not too large, and that the country is able to finance it without losing foreign exchange reserves.

Pakistan's market-based exchange rate system introduced in June 2019 will help ensure the current account does not become unsustainable like in the past.

This mechanism did not exist in the

past. Instead, the exchange rate was kept at an artificial level, such that the current account deficit kept growing and precious foreign exchange reserves were depleted to pay for imports and the country was forced to go to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

At over \$18 billion, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves rose to a five-year high in December. They rose by over \$5 billion during the calendar year 2021. Conversely, during FY17 and FY18, they fell by \$2 billion and \$6.4 billion, respectively.

The data showed that the CAD without official transfers expanded to \$9.26 billion compared to the surplus of \$1.11 billion in the same period of last year.

Similarly, the workers' remittances rose to \$15.8 billion in July-December this year compared to \$14.2 billion in July-December FY21.

As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), the current account balance witnessed a deficit of 5.7 percent in July-December FY22 as opposed to a surplus of 0.9 percent in the same period of last year. —APP

PM asks world to give humanitarian relief to Afghans

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief to millions of Afghans on the brink of starvation.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a tweet today [Saturday], said there is an urgency and obligation for the international community under the unanimously adopted UN principle of Responsibility To Protect.

It merits mention that United Nations says that currently, more than half the population of Afghanistan depends on life-saving assistance.

The United Nations' Secretary-General, António Guterres has warned that the world is "in a race against time to help the Afghan people."

The UN chief said the scale of the appeal "reflects the scale of the despair."

"Babies being sold to feed their siblings. Freezing health facilities overflowing with malnourished children. People burning their possessions to keep themselves warm. Livelihoods across the country have been lost."

New spell of rain, snowfall hits parts of country

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: New spell of rain on Saturday has lashed different parts of the country including Lahore and Islamabad.

According to details, Bhakkar, Sangla Hill, Darya Khan, Pakpattan and other areas also received showers. Meanwhile, Rain emergency has been declared in Rawalpindi.

On the other hand, snowfall has also witnessed in Swat, Galyat, Murree, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and other hilly areas.

Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) stated that the current spell of rain and snowfall will continue for another two days.

Top BLA Commander killed in Afghanistan

KARACHI: A commander of outlawed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) has been killed over a financial dispute in Afghanistan.

The terrorist commander was identified as Razak aka engineer who was a resident of Ahmed Wal area of Nushki and was living in Afghanistan for quite some time.

"He was involved in fundraising for the outlawed BLA besides also smuggling weapons from Afghanistan into Pakistan through Nushki route," they said.

The sources further shared that Razak has also claimed responsibility for a suicide attack in Quetta in 2011 besides his involvement in other major terrorist acts in the Balochistan. —DNA

EU retains ban on PIA flights

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has retained ban on Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight to the union.

The EASA, in its response to letter of PIA, said that it was pleased to hear that International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) was able to remove the Significant Safety Concern (SSC) that was raised against Pakistan Personnel Licensing (PEL) following the on-site Universal Safety Oversight Audit Program (USOAP) activities performed in Pakistan from 29 November to 10 December 2021.

"The closure of this SSC was an important step towards a potential lifting of the suspension of PIA Third Country Operators (TCO) Authorization (TCOA)." However, the agency said that the removal of SSC by ICAO does not affect European ban on the flights as EASA still needs to evaluate performance of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The decision about lifting the ban will be taken after the evaluation report of the agency.

NCOC protocols in mosques, worship places

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Saturday has conducted a meeting to review coronavirus situation across the country and decided to implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) in mosques and other worship places.

According to details, only fully vaccinated people will be allowed to offer prayers in mosques while wearing facemasks has also been made mandatory.

The management has also been directed to remove carpets from the floor and ensure six-foot distance among the individuals to avoid the spread of the

virus. The people should perform ablution at home and then visit mosques.

Arrangements should be made to carry out prayers in open places while windows and doors of the worship places should also be left open.

Moreover, NCOC has also directed to keep Friday sermon brief.

On the other hand, Pakistan has reported 12 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 1,360,019. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 29,077. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) 6,540 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours.

Pak exports to China surged by 69pc in 2021

BEIJING: Pakistan export to China was increased by 68.9 percent in 2021 and crossed the historical figure of \$3.58 billion while the total import and export between the two countries stood at \$27.82 billion, according to the official data from the General Administration of Customs (GACC) of China.

Pakistan's export to China crossed \$365.35 million in December 2021, up 17 percent, while in the same period of the previous year, it was \$312.33 million, which is the second-highest figure of the year, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Pakistan's exports made the highest gain in November 2021 when its export volume to China was \$379.17 million. Last year,

the highest value was in December 2020 when its export volume was \$312.33 million.

Overall, from January to December 2021, China's imports from Pakistan totaled \$3.58 billion irrespective of COVID-19, while in the same period of last year it was \$2.12 billion.

This year China's export to Pakistan was increased by 57.8 percent to \$24.23 billion, while last year it was \$15.36 billion and in 2019 it was \$16.17 billion.

Shan Saeed, Chief Economist at Juwai IQI, said trade between the two countries has made significant progress as both export and import volumes are on the rise. This is a testament of China's commitment to BRI projects with CPEC under the limelight. —DNA

Govt striving hard to bring economic stability, says Qureshi

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that government is striving hard to bring economic stability in the country.

Talking to newsmen in Multan Saturday, the Foreign Minister said this year is the year of revival of economy and next year will be year of prosperity.

The foreign minister said that Pakistani economy is growing by 5.3 percent as per the World Bank report which is encouraging. He said that Pakistan has successfully overcome the four waves of corona pandemic.

"Coronavirus affected global economy but the country still managed

well despite the pandemic," he added.

To a question, he said Pakistan's armed forces and entire nation have sacrificed their lives in war against terrorism. He said nefarious designs of enemies against Pakistan will never be succeeded.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government will complete its term and will also give surprise in next general elections.

The Foreign Minister said that government is fully aware of inflation in the country but PTI has taken steps for stability in the economy.

Talking about creation of South

Punjab province, Qureshi said that he has penned a letter to Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto on the matter as government wants to fulfill its promise but establishment of new province requires constitutional amendment which requires support from opposition.

He further said that government is even willing to give opposition the credit for the constitutional amendment if it wants. While criticizing Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the minister said that all political parties of Sindh have rejected the provincial local government act. He added that PTI is in favor of local bodies elections. —DNA



MURREE: Security personnel push a vehicle during fresh snowfall at the hill station.

PM changes Pakistan's economic course: Fawad Ch

DUBAI: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had changed the course of Pakistan's economy towards the right path.

"Earlier, ours was a service-based economy with focus on imports, but now Pakistan's economy is standing on its feet with a significant rise in exports, especially textiles," the minister said in an exclusive interview with the Gulf News, daily during his visit to its office in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

Responding to a query, the minister said Pakistan was playing a greater role in the world affairs now

due to the incumbent government's solid foreign policy. "Pakistan has regained 'respect' at the international level due to our prime minister's stance on international policies," he added.

Fawad Hussain, who had been in Dubai to inaugurate screening of Pakistani films and music at Dubai Expo 2020, said the global aid agencies, including the United Nations, predicted that the humanitarian crisis was getting worse in Afghanistan.

He stressed that countries around the world needed to work together to resolve this issue.

"We had a special session of the Organisation of Islamic Countries

(OIC) foreign ministers recently and have been successful in garnering support from all. After the session, the UN also launched \$5 billion (Dh18.39 billion) appeal to help Afghanistan cope with its worst ever humanitarian crisis," the minister was quoted by the daily as saying.

To a question regarding facilities extended to the overseas Pakistanis, he said Pakistan would soon launch dedicated property projects for them, providing them investment opportunities with peace of mind. The prime minister would soon unveil new dedicated investment schemes for

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