

Pak Taliban call off ceasefire

Accuse govt of breaching terms

REUTERS, Islamabad

Taliban militants in Pakistan declared an end to a month-long ceasefire arranged with the aid of the Afghan Taliban, accusing the government of breaching terms including a prisoner release agreement and the formation of negotiating committees.

The Pakistani Taliban, or Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), are a separate movement from the Afghan Taliban and have fought for years to overthrow the government in Islamabad and rule with their own brand of Islamic Sharia law.

Last month's ceasefire, which was always set to run until Thursday with the possibility of extending if both parties agreed, was the latest in a series of attempts to broker a settlement to end a conflict that has killed thousands.

The Afghan Taliban's shock overthrow of the Western-backed government in August gave the talks fresh impetus but the TTP accused Islamabad of failing to respect the ceasefire agreement.

It said the government had not released more than 100 prisoners as promised and had not appointed negotiating teams to conduct talks. It also said security forces had carried out raids while the ceasefire was in force.

"Now let the Pakistani people decide whether it is the TTP or the Pakistani army and establishment that is not abiding by the agreements?" the group said in a statement.

"In these circumstances, it is not possible to advance the ceasefire," it said.

Best known in the West for attacking Malala Yousafzai, the schoolgirl who went on to win the Nobel Prize for her work promoting girls' education, the TTP has killed thousands of military personnel and civilians over the years in bombings and suicide attacks.



Protesters carry placards and an effigy of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte during a protest in observance of International Human Rights Day at a university grounds in Manila yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

LONDON COURT RULING

Assange one step closer to extradition to US

REUTERS, London

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange yesterday moved a step closer to facing criminal charges in the United States for one of the biggest ever leaks of classified information after Washington won an appeal over his extradition in an English court.

US authorities accuse Australian-born Assange, 50, of 18 counts relating to WikiLeaks' release of vast troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables which they said had put lives in danger.

Assange's supporters cast him as an anti-establishment hero who has been persecuted by the United States for exposing US wrongdoing and double-dealing across the



world from Afghanistan and Iraq to Washington.

At the Royal Courts of Justice in London, the United States won an appeal against a ruling by a London District Judge that Assange should not be extradited because he was likely to commit suicide in a US prison.

Judge Timothy Holroyde said he was satisfied with a package of assurances given by the United States about the conditions of Assange's detention, including a pledge not to hold him in a so-called "ADX" maximum security prison in Colorado and that he could be transferred to Australia to serve his sentence if convicted.

MORE NEWS

Indian defence chief cremated in military funeral

The flag-wrapped coffin of India's defence chief was towed through the streets of New Delhi on a gun carriage draped with flower garlands before he was cremated yesterday. General Bipin Rawat, 63, was killed along with his wife and 11 military personnel when their helicopter crashed on Wednesday. He and his wife were cremated together on the same pyre, with a 17-gun salute fired as their daughters set it alight. India accorded him full military honours for his funeral, with the gun carriage bearing his remains towed by an armoured vehicle and escorted by lines of security personnel.

Myanmar activists protest against junta with 'silent strike'

Protesters in Myanmar closed businesses and stayed off the streets yesterday in a "silent strike" against rule by the military and its ousting of the Southeast Asian country's democratically elected government in a February coup. Photos published by Myanmar media showed deserted streets and markets in towns across the country, while protesters in the northern city of Shwebo wore black clothes and marched in silence. "We need to send a message to the world about Myanmar's terrible human rights violations," protest leader Khin Sandar told media. "Silence is the loudest shout. We want our rights back. We want revolution. We express sadness for our fallen heroes," she said.



Australia fights bushfires in west, floods in east

Australia battled twin natural disasters yesterday, with bushfires cutting through a picturesque west coast region, while serious flooding and heavy rains lashed the country's east. After weeks of high temperatures, fires flanked the western tourist hotspot of Margaret River -- famed for its fine wine and big surf. No homes have been damaged or injuries reported, but flames have been seen over a wide area, sending smoke billowing high into the sky. Emergency warnings are in effect, and some residents have been told to flee to safety or shelter in place. "Act immediately to survive," the state's Department of Fire and Emergency Services said.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Poor soil, water putting food security at risk: FAO

AGENCIES

Pressure on land and water resources has increased and poses a risk to not only feeding the next generation but the environment and security as well, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization warned Thursday.

Its latest report on the state of the world's limited land and water resources for food production found that many are already stressed, yet face even more intense use to feed a world population that is expected to grow by over a quarter in the coming three decades.

The agency estimates that on current trends the agrifood sector would need 35 percent more water to produce the additional food needed over the coming decades.

"That could create environmental disasters, increase competition for resources, and fuel

- Agrifood sector would need 35pc more water to produce additional food
- Rapid scaling-up of technology will be needed to boost the efficiency of agrifood sector

new social challenges and conflicts," said the FAO.

The agency's director-general, Qu Dongyu, said current agrifood production is not proving to be sustainable and was putting pressure on land and water use, reports AFP.

"Yet, agrifood systems can play a major role in alleviating these pressures and contributing positively to climate and development goals," he said at the launch of the report, according to a FAO statement.

The agency said a rapid scaling-up of technology will be needed to boost the efficiency of the agrifood sector and put its use of resources on a sustainable footing.

A report of FAO on Tuesday said the land we use to grow our food is contaminated with larger quantities of plastic pollutants.

RUSSIAN TROOP BUILDUP NEAR BORDER

Biden gives Ukraine 'strong' support

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden gave "strong" backing Thursday to Ukraine in its struggle with Russia and urged a diplomatic solution to the conflict in eastern Europe, while promising US help if Moscow attacks.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky issued a statement thanking Biden for his "strong support" in a phone call lasting about an hour and a half.

And the White House said Biden "reaffirmed the United States' unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Biden also placed a separate call to the leaders of Nato members Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, which are all in eastern Europe and deeply concerned by Russian military threats to Ukraine.

They "discussed Russia's destabilizing military buildup along Ukraine's border and the need for a united, ready, and resolute Nato stance for the collective defense of allies," the White House said.

Biden had already spent two hours talking to President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, warning him that if Russian troops now massed next to Ukraine launch a major attack, Moscow would then face US economic sanctions "like none he's ever seen."

But the White House stressed that Biden, in his calls on Thursday, was also pushing for reinvigorated diplomacy, including the stalled peace talks between Ukraine and Russia.

"Within the next couple days, we're obviously going to continue talking with our European partners, we're going to continue talking with our Russian partners and finding a way forward," a senior administration official told reporters.



DECEMBER 11

1946 - The United Nations General Assembly created the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) to provide relief to children in war-torn countries.

1994 - Russia sent tanks and troops into Chechnya to end the rebel territory's three-year drive for independence.

1997 - The world's first treaty to reduce greenhouse gases was agreed after marathon talks in Kyoto, Japan.

SOURCE: REUTERS

'Uyghur tribunal' is a lie: China

UN says genocide report 'disturbing'

AGENCIES

The Chinese embassy in London said an unofficial tribunal of lawyers which accused Beijing of genocide against the Uyghurs was nothing more than a political tool of China's enemies which were spreading lies.

The unofficial tribunal of lawyers and campaigners said on Thursday that Chinese President Xi Jinping bore primary responsibility for what it said was genocide, crimes against humanity and torture of Uyghurs and Kazakhs in Xinjiang. An embassy spokesman said it was "nothing but a political tool used by a few anti-China and separatist elements to deceive and mislead the public."

"Anyone with conscience and reason will not be deceived or fooled," the spokesman said.

The tribunal, headed by British lawyer Geoffrey Nice, has no powers of sanction or enforcement, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, the UN yesterday labelled as "deeply disturbing" the report by the London panel of lawyers and rights experts. UN rights office spokesman Rupert Colville said the agency had not verified the findings and did not comment on the conclusion that China had committed genocide through population control measures.

India's Omicron cases mild

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has detected 25 cases of the emergent Omicron variant of the coronavirus and all have shown mild symptoms, the health ministry said yesterday, adding that there was no immediate plan to authorise vaccine boosters.

Vaccine supplies have surged in India in recent months thanks to the Serum Institute of India (SII), which now plans to halve the monthly output of its version of the AstraZeneca vaccine as demand has crashed.

The SII and other Indian drugmakers such as Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, which distributes Russia's Sputnik vaccine, have lobbied the government to approve booster shots in a bid to lift sales.

Senior health official Vinod Kumar Paul told a news briefing that government experts were studying data on boosters but "our emphatic view...is to (first) cover every adult with (just) the primary two doses."

The government has said this target can be achieved by January.

India has not considered authorising booster doses yet as many in the country have been naturally infected and the government believes two vaccine doses offer sufficient protection for now, three informed sources told Reuters late last month.

Around 87% of India's adults, estimated at 939 million people, have received at least one dose of a vaccine and 54% of them have received the full two. Inoculations for those under the age of 18 years have not started.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Hadia Ahmadi, 43, was a teacher in various schools under the previous Afghan government, but she lost her job due to education restrictions for children and job restrictions for women, now she waxes shoes for people along the street in Kabul, Afghanistan. The photo was taken on November 22, 2021 and released yesterday.

MIGRANT TRUCK CRASH

53 killed in Mexico

AFP, Tuxtla Gutierrez

At least 53 migrants crammed into a truck traveling at high speed were killed Thursday in Mexico after the vehicle overturned in the southern state of Chiapas, a major transit point for those trying to reach the United States.

Thousands of people attempt the long and hugely dangerous journey, often seeking a life free of violence and poverty in their home nations in South America.

It is unclear how many people were traveling in the truck but at least 58 were injured, three seriously, according to a preliminary report from the prosecutor's office in Chiapas, bordering Guatemala.

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Re-tender Notice No: 08/2021

E-tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works details in table.

Memo No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Tender document last selling date and time
36.02.014.00.00.056.2021	Construction of pump driver quarter & pump house	626133	20-12-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.059.2021	Installation of Deep Tube-Well	626134	20-12-2021, 4.30pm
36.02.014.00.00.058.2021	Installation of water supply line	626136	20-12-2021, 4.30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to as per above table. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Ahmed Jamal Naser Chowdhury
Project Director
BSCIC Industrial Estate, Rawjan (1st Revised)

GD-2289