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Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 272, Ramzan 07, 1445 AH Monday March 18, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs. 15

President warns of befitting response against terrorists

Attends funeral prayers of Lt Col Kashif, Capt Bader; Underscores unity against scourge of terrorism, Says I promise that the blood of our sons will not go in vain

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari, attended Namaz e Janaza of Shaheed Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Bader who had been martyred in Mir Ali, North Waziristan during a terrorist attack on Saturday.

On the occasion, the president paid tribute to shuhada and reiterated the resolve to respond to terrorist activi-ties with full force, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release, on Sunday.

He said that the people of Pakistan and its armed forces were united and would face terrorism in unison. He also expressed the resolve to make the terrorists accountable for blood of each martyred jawan, adding their brave brothers, sons and friends had been protecting

the borders. President Zardari promised that the blood of the sons of the soil would not go in vain.
In the early hours of 16 March, a group of six terror-

ists attacked a security forces' post in the general area of Mir Ali of North Waziristan District.

According to the details, the troops foiled the initial attempt of the attack, the terrorists rammed an explo-

sive-laden vehicle into the post, followed by multiple suicide bombing attacks, which led to the collapse of a portion of a building, resulting in the Shahadat of five soldiers.

APP add: The funeral prayers of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed, age 39 years and resident of Karachi and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar Shaheed, age 23 years and resident of District Talagang who embraced martyrdom while defending their motherland against the scourge of terrorism in Mir Ali, North Waziristan District, were offered at Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi.

President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, Foreign Minister, Interior Minister, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff, senior serving military and civil officers, relatives of Shuhada and locals of the area attended the funeral, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said on Sunday. "Pakistan Army has consistently upheld the ideals of Faith, Unity and Discipline. Guided by these enduring principles, Pakistan Army has always endeavoured to set higher benchmarks of professionalism and loyalty in its unrelenting fight against terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir senior serving military and civil officers, relatives of Shuhada and locals of the area attending funeral prayers of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar Shaheed who embraced martyrdom while defending their motherland against the scourge of terrorism in Mir Ali, North Waziristan District,



ISLAMABAD: Mr Ikramullah, hailing from Qila Saifullah Balochistan, who is currently 9th class student at Lawrence College, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Mr Ikramullah's house and school were damaged in 2022 floods. On instructions of the Prime Minister, he was facilitated

Governor calls for preparing comprehensive strategy to prevent mishaps & disasters

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to prepare comprehensive strategy for prevention of the mishaps and disasters well in time in the present developed era of science and technology.

The Governor said that forests and wildlife are our national assets, therefore, it is necessary to create sense of their protection besides their importance.

In this regard, the employees of all concerned departments and volunteers deserve appreciation for overcoming the fire broke out in the forests located in mountains of Barkhan dis-

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar said that the long term planning is direly needed to extinguish the fire

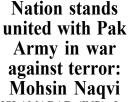
as well as to cope with the natural disasters including earthquakes, floods or epi-

The Governor said that one can not neglect the incident of fire eruption in the forests merely by terming the same as natural calamity or mere fire eruption.

Rather, advance infor mation of such mishaps and disasters can be given in the developed era of science and technology, and then it is possible to prevent the otherwise likely financial and human losses, he

Moreover, the sustainable arrangements can also be made for protection from incidents like fire in forests and etc, he said.

In addition to this, assistance of the media can also be sought for running awareness campaign among general public.



ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi said entire nation was strongly condemning terror attack on Mir Ali check post. He assured the nation that terrorists will be given befitting response for this cowardly

In a press statement, that Pakistan Army will

Awais Leghari assigned portfolio of Power

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assigned the portfolio of Power to Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan eghari in place of the port-

folio of Railways. According to the notification of the Cabinet Dirision, the PM relieved ederal Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Masood Malik of the additional portfolio of Power.

Interior Minister said all the martyred Jawans including t col Syed Kashif Ali were heroes of the nation. Entire nation paid tributes and salutes to the heroes who laid their lives for the security of the country. Mohsin Nagyi said entire nation was united and stood with Pak Army in war against terror. He assured the nation

give due response to terror-

Federal Capital.

upon well educated and ity to get education at the country's prominent edu-cational institute. skilled youth of the country and for the provision of quality education, the fed-The prime minister recalled that he met the deseral government would facilitate the high achievers perate student in the with scholarship schemes Khasnoob camp in Qila Saifullah when floods had to get education in the well reputed global educational caused destruction in

Under the prime minister's direction, the stu-dent from 2022 flood af-fected area of Qila Saifullah

was provided with a facil-

Balochistan province during 2022. He said that he had assured the student of the provision of quality education, adding that it pleased him a lot that the student was now studying in

Lawrence College



Country's future links with

well educated youth: PM

Minister Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Sharif on Sunday said that

the country's future hinged

The prime minister

expressed these views

during a meeting with

Ikramullah, a student from

Balochistan province, who

is now studying in the 9th

class at Lawrence College

Muhammad

nstitutes

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar addressing a press conference at 180 h Model Town.

Elements behind campaign against martyrs to face stern action: Attaullah Tarar

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday the government was fully aware of the challenges facing the country and steps were required to tackle economic problems

Addressing a press conference here at the PML-N Secretariat, he said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had shared his agenda aimed at stabilizing the country's economy.

He said the Premier had taken up all matters seriously, including reducing government

expenses, privatisation of certain state-owned entities. "Restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue and tax reforms are major initiatives the government is undertaking to increase the tax net. All these measures are being taken to reduce the burden on poor

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jet demonstrating different skills

during rehearsal ahead of the Pakistan Day parade on 23rd March in the

people and to bring elites in the tax net," he maintained. He said that international economic jour-nals like Bloomberg had termed the appointment of the Finance Minister a good step, adding that international journals had acknowledged that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had a potential to overcome economic challenges through reforms.

He said: "Political stability leads to economic stability and sincere efforts are being made in this regard."

He strongly con-demned the terrorist attack in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, in which seven soldiers, including two officers, were martvred

He said that Captain

Muhammad Ahmed Badar was also martyred, who was the only brother of five sisters

Afghanistan's soil being used for terrorism in Pakistan: Asif

Lauds counter-terrorism sacrifices of security forces; Accuses PTI of working against national interests

SIALKOT (INP): Defence ardly attack by terrorists in regrettable. Khawaja Minister Muhammad Asif says entire nation is united against terrorists and security forces are rendering unprecedented sacrifices for peace and stability in the coun-

Talking to media in Sialkot on Sunday, he said martyrs are our real heroes who sacrificed their lives to safeguard the motherland.

The Defence Minister strongly condemned cow-

Mir Ali area of North Waziristan district.

cial media campaign by some elements against martyrs and said there is a need for unity in the war against terrorism.

Answering the question, he said Pakistan is passing through an economic crisis and one political party has written a let-

The Minister said that the government is deter-

He also condemned so- mined to steer the country out of economic crisis and put it on the path of progress and development. To a question, he regret-

ted that Afghanistan's soil is being used for terrorism in Pakistan. He said that some fa-

cilitators have been traced, and Pakistan has raised the ter to the International issue with Afghanistan Monetary Fund, which is government

CM appreciates PDMA, FC, Forests, Barkhan wildfire extinguished

administration, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and local residents extinguished the wildfire that engulfed the Koh-e-Jandaran in Barkhan district of Balochistan the other day.

Hundreds of trees and precious shrubs have burnt in forest fire at Koh-e-Jandaran on the confluence of Kohlu and Barkhan in Balochistan. A huge forest fire that erupted in the mountainous region on Saturday spread over large area and engulfed the entire areas putting hazards to the hundreds of trees and precious and rare shrubs.

PM grants extension to Air **Chief Marshal** Zaheer Babar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday granted a one-year extension to Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu.

The prime minister has sent the advisory of the the Air Chief Marshal's exten sion to President Asif Ali Zardari and granted him ex tension after his approval.



Zaheer Babar is a fourstar air force officer and 16th Chief of Air Staff. He took over command of the air force on March 19, 2021, from his predecessor ACM Mujahid Anwar Khan. It may be noted that Air Chief Zaheer Babr held a meeting with newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif few days ago and discussed matters of national importance. X Spaces, he alleged: "In the previous government of the added."

District administration and levies for overcoming Barkhan mountains fire **Independent Report** Chief Minister said that all

QUETTA: The Chief Minster Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has appreciated the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Frontier Corps (FC), district administration and Levies force for extinguishing the fire erupted in the forests at mountains located in Barkhan district. In an official statement

issued here on Sunday, the

the concerned overcome the fire through joint efforts, which is appreciable.

He said that we appreciate all employees and jawans who took part in the process of extinguishing fire n Barkhan mountains. However, he directed the concerned authorities to standby the concerned operational teams in the district headquarter in view of the winds and dry wild grass.



RAWALPINDI: President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir pays condolence to martyrs family after Funeral prayers of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed and Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar

Corruption was rampant in former PTI govt in KP, admits Marwat

kistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader and lawmaker Sher Afzal Marwat, who is known for his outspoken demeanour and controversial statements, on Sunday admitted that corruption was rampant in his party's previous government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). During a live session on

X Spaces, he alleged: "In

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pa- the PTI, people became not billionaires but trillionaires [via corruption].' Responding to a ques-

tion, the PTI leader said that the narrative of keeping former prime minister Imran Khan at Adiala Jail instead of his residence in Bani Gala was not floated by him. "Former KP chief minister Mahmood Khan earns Rs2.5 million daily from one of his mines now,

Consumers to bear the brunt as SSGC seeks further hike in gas price

Monitoring Desk KARACHI: A month after the caretakers burdened the

masses with gas price hike on the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand, the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) has requested the fuel regulator the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) — to further increase gas prices from July 2024. The caretaker government had approved a

67% increase in the natural gas tariff with effect from February 1. The tariff was hiked to meet the deadline of the IMF for hiking the gas prices under structural benchmark criteria till Feb-

ruary 15, 2024. In its fresh plea filed with the Ogra, the SSGC requested the fuel regulator to increase in the gas price by Rs274.40 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit

(mmbtu). Citing an estimated Rs79.63 billion revenue shortfall, the SSGC urged Ogra to set average price of one mmbtu gas at Rs1740.80.

A public hearing on the petition is scheduled on March 18 in Karachi, during which the regulatory authority will determine the gas prices. The Ogra will also hear the petition in Ouetta on March 20.

Preliminary list of candidates issued by ECP: 38 candidates in competition run for 11 seats of Senate from Balochistan **Independent Report** the women for two seats of QUETTA: In all 38 candiprovince. dates are in competition run for 11 seats of Senate from

SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad

Asif is addressing to the media at his residence.

tion Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here on Sunday. According to the pre-liminary list, in all 17 candidates filed nomination papers for 7 general seats of Senate from the province while 13 candidates filed nominations for two seats allocated for Technocrats from the province.

Balochistan province as the

preliminary list of candi-

date was issued by the Elec-

Similarly, eight nomination papers were filed by women in Senate from the

The process of scrutiny of the papers of candidates would start on Monday (today), and would remain continued till March

It may be mentioned here that in all 11 seats of Senate including seven general and two each of technocrats and women had fallen vacant on March 12 after retirement of the sena-

The polling on these 11 seats is scheduled to be held on April 2, 2024 in the provincial assembly here.

Daily soice of Masse Independent

Provincial share

The PPP has aptly advised the central government to worry about improving its tax collection rather than eying the provinces' share of tax revenues.

Reacting to recent reports that the IMF wants Pakistan to restart discussions on the 2009 NFC award to correct the 'imbalance' in the centre-provinces distribution of tax resources, PPP Senator Sherry Rehman rejected suggestions that the global lender was interfering in the constitutional framework of resource allocation. "Why would the IMF want to put itself in the middle of changing the NFC formula of Pakistan?" she asked. Her reading of the situation is accurate. Even if the lender wants the provinces to reduce their expenditure to produce a fiscal surplus and share more financial responsibilities with the federation to narrow the nation's burgeoning consolidated fiscal deficit, it would not want to be seen getting caught up in constitutional issues. She also correctly blamed the consistently lower than 9pc federal tax collection—as a ratio of GDP—for the country's fiscal dilemma and the accumulation of a mountain of debt to the tune of \$271bn. The fact of the matter is that some forces favouring a strong centre and weaker federating units have been actively campaigning against, and are demanding an immediate rollback of the landmark 18th Amendment to the Constitution and the current NFC award, which have accorded the provinces unprecedented administrative, political, and fiscal powers.

The campaign appeared to pick up momentum over the past several years as the country's fiscal predicament worsened. Nevertheless, robust resistance from the smaller provinces and certain political parties, particularly the PPP, and constitutional protection for the existing resource-sharing formula have kept such forces from undoing the changes. The argument that increased provincial autonomy and an enhanced provincial share from the federal tax pool is dangerous for federalism must not be entertained, as the issue touches upon matters related to the future of the country. Any attempt to roll back provincial autonomy and financial powers would lead to greater friction between the centre and provinces, as well as among the federating units, which would harm the state's federal complexion.

Pakistan was envisaged as a federation by its founding fathers, who had promised an autonomous and sovereign status to the constituent units in the Lahore Resolution. However, the dominance of the bureaucracy and successive military rulers favouring a highly centralised state structure prevented the country from becoming a proper federation until the 2008 parliament rectified the situation. It is true that the federal government and provinces still have many unresolved constitutional, administrative and fiscal issues, but the rollback of the existing political and fiscal powers enjoyed by the latter should not be among them. Pakistan's future lies in more democracy and more federalism and not in a centralised state structure.

The plot sickens

Muna Khan

Reality TV shows are my on/ off guilty pleasure. I should be more embarrassed to admit this, but here we are. It began with a curiosity for The there's Kardashians and then it went downhill — shows about rich housewives, home makeovers, hoarders, marrying someone you've never seen. Some are truly terrible, but then you have Traitors (the original British version) which is addictive and very good. As a (ahem) con-

noisseur of such shows, I've realised the boundaries between politics and reality shows have blurred. I'm not saying anything new. Donald Trump has shown how it's no longer ludicrous to think a reality TV star can become president. Kanye West also attempted a run. People want Oprah Winfrey to run. Taylor Swift influences elections. Ukraine and Guatemala have elected comedians as presidents. Politicians in the UK have participated in reality shows, including George Galloway on Big Brother in 2006, when he was an MP, and 'Brexit king' Nigel Farage revolutionary. received a whopping £1.5 million for I'm a Celebrity last year.

quit movie careers in Bollywood, for example, to join politics. And, of course, we have Imran Khan. He has turned his celebrity status into political success. His politics relies heavily on charisma, drama and spin components of reality TV. Everyone else is copying his style but are poor imitations. Bad behaviour is rewarded in both fields; there is no accountability either. worse your behaviour, the more you are lauded. And the media you perform on, profits. But reality TV isn't real. The audience sees

Celebrities have

rative that suits the per-this example. One informers. Like our politivolves PTI MNA formers. Like our politi-

Writing in Political Studies Review in 2019. John Street explained how, over the years, been mediatisation personalisation of politics, resulting in politicians being treated as celebrities and not politicians. Celebrity politicians, as the brilliant media scholar Neil Postman wrote, are held to different standards. Well before the term 'fake news', social media and the internet, celebrity politicians were not held accountable for their falsehoods. US president Ronald Reagen praised apartheid in South Africa for ending segregation,

into their emotions. Politicians have learned that being a celebrity is lucrative and they benefit financially, like Khan's inner circle did. Of course, all political parties benefit by working for corporate, military and business interests, but they've never sold themselves as

when it hadn't. But vot-

ers didn't care for accu-

racy, they saw him as

someone who tapped

While the issues facing Pakistan are serious — we have been at a nazuk mor since before vou and I existed — politics is debased and unserious. It is parties throwing accusations at each other and trying to outwit the other in whataboutery. Policy matters are linked to slogans. Everyone's in on it: subsidised atta has Nawaz's face on the bags, as if we forget who's in power there.

This plays out every night on our airwaves and social media, where everyone's vying for virality. To remain reltics from the celebrity playbook help. Two re- how this will end an edited version, a nar- cent incidents illustrate Courtesy Dawn

Shandana Gulzar, who implicated Maryam Nawaz in an audio leak wherein she claims the now chief minister told someone to "run over [PTI worker] Zilley Shah" The FIA has summoned her and she will likely be asked to produce evidence. In the same week, Sher Afzal Marwat accused Maryam Nawaz of plotting to kill him and paid Indian business ty-coon Jindal \$100,000 for this hit. This is the level of politics — and it sells. It is, as Street wrote, "the art of performance, the art of being celebrity". I don't believe politicians say outlandish things because they believe them but be--cause they want to emulate their leaders and remain close to him/ her. They are expected to behave this way. And, they are not held accountable for their claims by the media; some journalists ask tough questions, but audiences don't care about veracity. Could action by FIA, for example, against

The day the UN released its Human Development Index Report showing Pakistan's decline in its position to 164 out of 193 countries, our was media busy analysing the meeting between KP chief minister and the men he spent a long time denigrating. I understand it was an important event, but it is an example of priorities. Of our politicians, policymakers and the media. This is the only reality I have known: No one cares about maternal health, child development, sanitation, access to water, gas, bijli, even X. Our political leaders and their handlers have lost the plot. The media is allowevant, one has to up the ing lies to air as enterante, which is where tac-tainment. And no one wins a prize for guessing

Gulzar serve as a deter-

Focus on actions

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

A 10-point priority agenda evolved during various conversations convened by the Sanober Institute was laid out in my article, 'Setting priorities', last week. However, setting priorities can only be effective if accompanied by an implementable action plan. To that end, there are essentially five sets of actions that the government should consider in order to implement these priori-

First, to achieve sustainable uninterruptable political stability, the prime minister should invite the opposition for a national dialogue involving all political parties in parliament as well as major institutions, including the judiciary, ECP, the military, intelligence agencies, the civil bureaucracy, and those representing trade and industry. The dialogue should

focus on a five-point agenda: (i) strengthening local governments, which are not receiving their due share from the resources devolved to the provinces; (ii) strengthening the ECP, which must ensure intra-party elections and transparently acquired funding for poll campaigns; (iii) reforming NAB, which has been politicised, thus depleting the confidence of bureaucracy and business; (iv) reconsidering the NFC award, which has left the centre too resource-deficient to handle debt payments and defence costs; and (v) a solemn commitment by all stakeholders to ensure, within their respective domains, merit, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

The outcome of the dialogue should be a national consensus to norms and conduct, ensure the rule of law and meritocracy; and enable the continuity of economic policies - a kind operationalised to handle forms. -- Courtesy Dawn

of charter of democracy, more commercial traffic, good governance, and economy

Second, restoring

economic stability needs multipronged actions. The prime minister has already constituted a committee to suggest ways to reduce wasteful expenditure in the central government. The real test would be to implement the recommendations. A similar effort is required in the provinces. Federal ministries dealing with subjects already devolved to the provinces under the 18th Amendment should be pu--blic awareness immediately dissolved. It is a welcome development that the process of privatisation of loss-making SOEs like PIA and the Steel Mills has gained momentum. And the new finance minister has prioritised negotiations with the IMF for a Pakistan-owned, Pakistan-led programme, debt restructuring, broadening the tax base, exports-led growth,

economy. pressure of price hikes affecting ordinary people, regional trade opportunities, however limited in scope, should be explored, particularly for the provision of vegetables, fruit and other essential commodities. The government should not spend scarce resources on populist measures like dole-outs and charity programmes. Instead, efforts should be focused on creating jobs via an enabling environment for IT and microfinance.

digitising

civil service reforms should be implemented. No new task force or commission is required as considerable work has already been done, including by the Ishrat Husain-led committee, which had made doable strengthen democratic and cost-effective recommendations

Third, the nearly completed port in Gwadar should be immediately

with a mandatory share of jobs for Gwadar and other Balochistan residents. Border markets with Iran should be expanded at the three main crossing points to create jobs for Balochistan's people. The new government has about setting up Special Economic Zones. Likewise, opening SIFC to private sector investments could stimulate act-ion in key sectors of the economy. The SIFC should create more abo-ut its achievements so far to counter the misgivings some people have about it.

Fourth, the office of national security adviser should be energised to effectively coordinate our response to security challenges. For internal security, a task force should be set up under the NSA to propose reforms in the police and criminal justice system. Apropos external secu-For relief from the rity threats, the NSA's office should work with intelligence agencies and other stakeholders to suggest options for decisions by the National Security Committee.

Finally, our foreign

policy should be reviewed comprehensively so that it can address the challenges of evolving global and regional geopolitics, particularly major power competition, relations neighbours, and the geoeconomics pivot. To that end, a high-level task The much-needed force comprising all relevant stakeholders and invitees from academia and think tanks could be constituted within the foreign ministry to propose, within three months, doable and pragmatic foreign policy op-

> The above is not an exhaustive list of actions. If implementation is initiated, a stage could be set to undertake broader re-

Commerce News

Pak-Iran bilateral trade can be increased up to \$5b: Iranian envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr . Reza Amiri Moghadam has said that due to strong economic and trade integration between Pakistan and Iran, bilateral trade can be increased up to \$ 5 billion a year in the

coming few years. There is a strong possibility of doubling the bilateral trade between the two countries through air, rail and maritime integration, which will prove to be a catalyst in regional and global trade as community in Islamabad.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan and Iran were geo-strategically very

integration of both countries is of great importance in the world of Geo- economy, said a press

release issued, he said. The Iranian envoy between Pakistan and Iran, 12 border trade markets had been opened, in which 6 border markets had been completed and others are well, he said while in progress, which would mega projects were addressing the business usher in a new era of extremely important for both countries.

located at the junction of trade ties, so both Middle East, South Asia countries should declare and Central Asia. both ports as coastal sister Therefore, the land and sea ports so that mutual economic development can be achieved jointly. Dr Reza Amiri Moghadam said that both countries were members of major forums like Shanghai Cooperation said that in order to further Organization (SCO), ECO improve transit trade and D-8 in which it was very easy to work on

common economic goals. He said that both China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and BRI economic integration in Pakistan and Iran, which can stabilize the economic relations between the two

countries.

He said that Gwadar and Chabahar were very



PESHAWAR: Assistant commissioner inspecting the selling of food items and checking the price control list in the Holy Month of Ramadan during crackdown drive against profiteers, at different areas of Peshawar.

Dubai's Al-Matiyah forum empowers global SMEs cooperation.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Al-Matiyah Investment and Business Forum in Dubai, supported by influential patrons, brought together investors and entrepreneurs from nearly 50 countries to strengthen national SMEs through diverse cultural

exchange and collaboration.
The forum's primary objective was to build bridges economic connecting the Middle East with the world, presenting Dubai as a hub entrepreneurial

strategic importance but also showcased the UAE as a hub for culture and commerce, poised to foster the development of the next generation of Emirati

Under the auspices of

business leaders.

notable personalities like Sheikh Faisal bin Obaid bin Suhail Al Maktoum, Ali bin Abdullah Al Mualla, Ammar bin Salem Al Qasimi, Sheikh Humaid bin Khalid Al Qasimi, His Excellency Awad Excellency Awad Mohammed bin Sheikh Mejren, and His Excellency Dr. Juma Madani, the This event not only event signalled a new era phasized Dubai's in global economic

Dr. Juma Madani, Al-Matiyah leading Investment, expressed the forum's essence: "It transcends a mere conference; it's a gathering of sheikhs, ambassadors, and business leaders worldwide, converging to

cultivate a dynamic

environment of enterprise

and innovation. In a significant development, Al-Matiyah Investment forged a strategic partnership with Petrus Bio Energy Do, a pioneering Brazilian company in sustainable

agriculture and energy. Guangxi's foreign trade hits record

(Xinhua/ APP):South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region touched a new high in foreign trade in the first two months of 2024, local authorities said

Sunday. **Guangxi's total imports** and exports in January and February hit 109.1 billion yuan (about 15.4 billion U.S. dollars), up 18.9 percent year on year. Exports rose 37.2 percent year on year to 60.59 billion yuan, and imports increased 1.9 percent to 48.51 billion.

inflation: Mughal

Reducing interest rates

to devalue rupee, raise

Economy Watch (PEW), Murtaza Mughal has said that demand of the business community to reduce the interest rate was unjustified, as it will weaken the rupee and trigger inflation.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said an interest rate cut would allow the government to unnecessary expenditures that are not

required at this point. Murtaza Mughal said that electricity and gas prices have troubled the entire country. People are going bankrupt while factories are closing down.

Many factories were capacity; the provinces.

gas tariff was justified, but getting approval from the IMF will be impossible, he added.

The business leader said that increasing the tax net, bringing the non-taxpaying sectors into the tax net, and amending the NFC award have become necessary to save the country.

Restructuring of local and foreign debt has also become necessary. Still, caution is needed in this regard so that it does not hurt the market, he cautioned. Mughal said the federal government is considering handing over the electricity running at half their distribution companies to



MULTAN: A farmer is busy spraying pesticide on the crop at his farm field.

'Modern designs, trends crucial for furniture industry'

LAHORE (APP): Modern modern designing and new designing and new trends in the furniture industry are essential for gaining a competitive edge, driving sales and profitability, enhancing brand image, embracing sustainability, leveraging technology, and expanding into international markets. Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq stated this while talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs and furniture manufacturers led by Ms Nida Ejaz here on Sunday. He added that

trends play a crucial role in the furniture industry. By embracing these

trends, he said, the furniture

manufacturers can thrive in a dynamic and evolving industry. "Modern furniture designs often incorporate technological advancements provide enhanced functionality convenience. Integration of features like smart furniture, wireless charging, and IT connectivity can make furniture more appealing to tech-savvy buyers," he observed

gas cylinder from vendor at Fort road. Govt should work on fast track plan to address expansive energy issue: Anjum Nisar

HYDERABAD: A person selecting and purchasing

ISLAMABAD (INP): cost of doing business, Chairman Businessmen which the government Panel (BMP) of the needed to bring down to Federation of Pakistan bring the local as well as Chambers of Commerce the export industry at and Industry (FPCCI), par Mian Anjum Nisar has competitors. asked the government to work on a fast track plan urged for increasing ease to address expansive of doing business, energy issue and priority lowering should be given to the value-added industry in refunds to solve liquidity

issued here on Sunday, he said that Pakistan's material, and equalizing the energy tariff across the issued here on Sunday, core issue is the high country

with global

Mian Anjum Nisar cost crunch, relaxing import In a statement policy for industrial raw

Technical varsities VCs meet Punjab industries minister LAHORE

Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce, Chaudhry Shafay Hussain has said that government would transform technical universities into real centers of promotion of technical education.

He was talking to Vice Chancellors (VCs) of Technical universities, who called on him here at TEVTA Secretariat (Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority). The minister discussed with VCs the matters relating to teaching process. development issues and future plans of the universities. The VCs informed about the problems

technical universities. While assuring them of resolving the problems of technical universities, Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said, "I will visit the universities soon to review the teaching process and problems." He said the usefulness and importance of technical education cannot be denied in the present era.

Various markets, industrial bodies support **PIAF in LCCI elections**

LAHORE (INP): To express solidarity with the PIAF in the upcoming that it is a seed elections of Lahore Chambers of Commerce

Industry (LCCI), various traders and industrial associations, especially the paper market and Shah Alam Market, Young Traders Association, Beden Road and other markets, delegation visited the PIAF office on Sunday.

The delegation from

Butt while the delegation from Young Traders Association of Shah Alam SAARC Chamber Mian

Anjum Nisar.

Market was led by Shehzad Aslam and the delegation from Baden Road was led by Tahir Hafeez. On this occasion, the PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, Pattern-in-chief PIAF and Vice President of

high in Jan-Feb

Comprehensive plan formed for restoration of KP's law & order situation: CM

Pakhtunkhwa Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Sunday said that a comprehensive plan has been prepared for restoration of law and order in the province as it was top priority of his

talking to media during his ensured at public hospitals. and youth would be first ever visit to Dera Ismail Khan after being elected as Chief Minister. said

implementation over that plan would be started soon as better law and order situation was imperative for progress of any area. He said the steps

would also be taken for the safety of police and other

PESHAWAR: PESCO workers are busy repairing

Competition in KP

tough for Senate poll

competition in Khyber Commission disclosed that

for two reserved seats Fazal Hanan, Asif Iqbal,

The official of the Saeed,

the transformer in the Tehsil area.

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial

submitted

Pakhtunkhwa is also tough

in the Senate elections with

a total of 42 candidates

nomination papers for

eleven seats of the Senate,

an official of the Provincial

Election Commission said

here Sunday. He said that

there will be a contest

between 10 candidates for

two posts of Technocrat,

25 candidates for 7 general

seats submitted their

nomination papers, and 7

candidates have submitted

their nomination papers

The chief minister has been reopened by Khyber said the government has ensuring all facilities for Chief restored 'health-card' needy people.

facility.
"We have to improve the treatment facilities at public hospitals," he said business opportunities to and hoped that soon the people would not have them charity or stipend. need to visit private hospitals as provision of would be provided He stated this while all facilities would be employment at their homes

> Commenting on the current wave of inflation, he said the provincial government will give Rs 10,000 each to 850,000 deserving families of the countries province under Ramazan package. It will be handed over to them at their skills training. After the doorstep respectfully, he training, the skilled people mentioned.

Moreover, he said the sent facility of 'Shelter homes'

Azam Khan Swati, Qazi

Advocate, Waqar Ahmed

Dr.

Khalid Masood, Fazal

Hanan, Dilawar Khan,

Qaiser Khan, Noorul Haque

Qadri and Syed Irshad

Hussain are candidates for the

Technocrat seat. Irfan Saleem,

Mehmood, Dilawar Khan,

Faisal Javed, Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Azhar

Qazi Mashwani, Niaz

Ahmed, Waqas Orkazai,

Azam Khan Swati, Murad

Hamad Cheema,

Muhammad

Mahmood

Muhammad

Qazi,



Monday March 18, 2024

people rather only giving

provided with skill

trainings.

He informed that the

underway with other

provision of employment

to people by giving them

of the province would be

De-siltation of

171 canals of

DG Khan zone

to start today

DG KHAN (APP): The de-siltation of 171 small

and big canals of Dera Ghazi Khan zone will start

on Monday, March 18. The task has been

given to remove silt from 1625 kilometers long canals

Superintending Engineer Irrigation Department Khan Shaukat

Hayat said that provincial, divisional, and district-

level committees have been

formed to monitor the

proper de-siltation of

He said that the monitoring land information management

system has also been made

functional by the provincial

wastage of water by the de-

silting and the canal water

will reach the tail-end

has any objection or

suggestion related to the

de-siltation, it could be

submitted in writing to his

office and the Canal

farmers in abundance.

There will be no

He said that if anyone

by April 20.

government.

abroad

consultation

employment.

He said the women

LAHORE: Member National Assembly Sardar Shamsher Mazari and Member of the Punjab Assembly Khizer Mazari call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Food minister's inspections lead to disposal of 2,500kg of spoiled meat

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin led a comprehensive inspection drive with Punjab Food Authority (PFA) teams in markets in the provincial capital here on Sunday.

The vigorous scrutiny resulted in the disposal of a staggering 2,500 kilograms of spoiled, substandard, and expired meat, bringing a sense of relief to Lahore's residents.

Under the vigilant eye of the provincial minister, the PFA teams descended Moghulpura Market. meticulously inspecting meat shops in the vicinity. In addition to swiftly disposing of unfit meat, strict warnings were

issued to violators of food safety regulations. Talking to media,

Food Minister Bilal Yasin revealed that immediate action was taken to seize substandard and expired meat from the shelves of meat shops. He lamented the discovery of foulsmelling meat in unhygienic freezers, underscoring the urgency of situation.

During inspections, Bilal Yasin noted deficiencies in cleanliness and the presence of pests, urging for swift rectification.

different hospitals, while

589 victims with minor

injuries were treated at the

incident site by rescue

medical teams thus

The food minister directed the PFA teams to ensure the comprehensive traceability of meat supplied across Punjab,

14 dead, 1122 injured in 1063 road accidents

Independent Report At least fourteen persons were killed and 1122 injured in 1063 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab

reducing the burden of during the last 24 hours.
Out of these, 533
Out of these, 533
Out of these, 533 people with serious drivers, 44 underage injuries were shifted to drivers, 133 pedestrians.

in Punjab

Governor attends funeral prayer of Nisar Shakir

PESHAWAR (APP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Peshawar Mayor Haji Zubair Ali Sunday attended the funeral prayers of late senior journalist Nisar Ahmad Šhakir at Asia Gate Peshawar.

He condoled the death of Asif Nisar's father and prayed for patience for the family. The governor said that the services of late Nisar Ahmad Shakir will be remembered.

FIA arrests two outlaws for work visa fraud

MULTAN (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) claimed to have arrested two alleged outlaws in a fraud case related to work visas.

According to official sources, the arrested outlaws are identified as Tariq Hussain and Anwar ul Hassan residents of Burewala.

The alleged outlaws took money from a citizen on the promise of sending him to Bahrain on a work visa. However, the outlaws neither returned the money nor sent him a work visa The aggrieved citizen approached the FIA Multan.

Punjab police sign MoU with private hospital

Independent Report AHORE: On the direction of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, measures are being taken to provide best medical facilities to Punjab Constabulary personnel, in continuation of which an MoU has been signed between the Punjab Police and a private hospital group (Farooq Group).

Commander Battalion-V, PC, Abbas Lines, SSP Mian Afnan Ameen visited Farooq Group of Hospitals. Commander Battalion-V, PC, Abbas Lines, SSP Mian Afnan Ameen and CEO Dr Sabir Ayaz Malik signed the MOÚ

Under the MOU, Farooq Hospital PC Lahore will organize

medical camps along with medical experts on awareness and treatment of medical problems in PC offices. Commander Battalion-V, PC, Abbas Lines SSP Mian Afnan Ameen said that Punjab Constabulary officials will be provided special discount on laboratory tests and bed expenses at Farooq Hospital. A 100% free treatment facility wil be available at Akhtar Saeed Teaching Hospital for the families of police martyrs. Free treatmen facilities will be provided to PC Lahore personnel as per hospital policy. This MoU will be applicable to DHA, Iqbal Town, Westwood Colony and Rawalpindi branches of Farooq Hospital.



LAHORE: A large number of women in a queue to get flour bag on subsidies rate.

All tourist sites to open for world soon to enhance country's GDP, says Zahid

PESHAWAR (APP): Zahid Chanzeb, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture, Museums and Archeology, Sunday revealed that the tourism industry generates 30 billion dollars in revenue to the national economy, which is 6% of the country's GDP.

"Nature generously blessed our province with the world's best hill stations and tourist destinations and only focusing on this sector can revolutionize the headquarters in Peshawar economy of the province cantt wherein he went

quality of life of the poor over here and the present PTI-led KP govt is quite serious to exploit all such vital sectors on crash grounds", he added.

Trillion of rupees in income can be obtained from the tourism sector to spend on ameliorating a lot of the poor and contributing in restoration of the economy and infrastructure of the province, he maintained. He expressed this during his visit to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and that can ameliorate the around various sections.

International News

Russia election to tighten Putin's grip, opponents stage noon protest

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin is poised to tighten his grip on power on Sunday in a Russian election that is certain to deliver him a landslide victory, though some opponents staged a symbolic noon protest at polling stations against his rule.

Putin, who rose to power in 1999, is poised to win a new six-year term that, if he completes it, would enable him to overtake Josef Stalin and become Russia's longest-serving leader for more than 200

The election comes just over two years since Putin triggered the deadliest European conflict since World War Two by ordering the invasion of Úkraine. He casts it as a "special

War has hung over the three day election: Ukraine has repeatedly attacked oil refineries in Russia, shelled Russian regions and sought to pierce Russian borders with proxy forces - a move Putin said would not be left unpunished.

While Putin's re-election is not in doubt given his control over Russia and the absence of any real challengers, the former KGB spy wants to show that he has the overwhelming support of Russians. Voting ends at 1800 GMT on Sun-

The Kremlin has sought a high turnout, and as polls opened for a third day in western Russia, officials said the turnout in the first two days had already reached 63% nationwide.

lished shortly after voting

Supporters of Alexei Navalny, who died in an Arctic prison last month, had called on Russians to come out at a "Noon against Putin" protest to show their dissent against a leader they cast as a corrupt autocrat.

out corruption and war, said in a message to a rally in Budapest on March 15. "Putin is not Russia.

Russia is not Putin.'

ends at 1800 GMT.

"Alexei was fighting for very simple things: for freedom of speech, for fair elections, for democracy and our right to live with-Navalny's widow, Yulia,

There was no inde-

pendent tally of how many of Russia's 114 million voters turned out at noon to show opposition to Putin.

Climate protesters under fire in Europe, says UN Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: Environ-mental activists are increasingly facing hostility across Europe, a UN expert said. warning that the very right to protest was "at risk" in countries usually considered beacons of democracy.

Michel Forst, the UN special rapporteur on environmental defenders, said that he was deeply troubled by the hardening tone against climate activists in countries including France, Austria, Germany and Brit-

Government ministers have been throwing about terms like "eco ter-rorists" and "Green Talibans" to describe nonviolent activists, he claimed, also blaming some media reporting for contributing to an increasingly hostile public attitude. "It creates a sort of chilling effect," warned Forst, an independent expert appointed under the UN's Aarhus Convention — a legally-binding text that provides for justice in en-



GAZA CITY: Palestinians inspect the rubble of a building after it was destroyed in an Israeli strike the night before in the Rimal neighbourhood. The head of Israeli intelligence is expected to lead ceasefire talks in Qatar in response to a new proposal from Hamas.

Mossad chief may lead Doha talks on Gaza

Monitoring Desk DOHA: The head of Israeli

intelligence is expected to lead ceasefire talks with mediators which resume in Qatar today (Sunday) in direct response to a new proposal from Hamas, a source close to the talks said on Saturday. The talks between Mossad head David Barnea, Qatar's prime minister and Egyptian officials will focus on remaining gaps between Israel and Hamas including over prisoner releases and humanitar-

ian aid, the source said. Israel had said on Friday it would be sending a delegation to Doha, but did not spell out when it would part. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to convene the security cabinet before the talks. Israeli officials were not immediately available to comment on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.

Barnea was involved previous significant pushes for a deal. A shortlived truce in November was agreed and came into effect after his participation in talks in Doha. His last meeting with Qatar's prime minister in January led to a proposal for a temporary ceasefire that Hamas ulti-

Trump predicts the end of US democracy if he loses 2024 election

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Donald

Trump said on Saturday if does not November's presidential election it will mean the likely end of American democracy. The Republican presidential candidate, speaking to supporters in Ohio, made the claim after repeating his baseless assertion that his 2020 election defeat to Democratic President Joe Biden was the result of election fraud.

During an outdoor

speech that was whipped by strong winds and punctuated by some profane language, Trump predicted that if he does not win the Nov. 5 general election, American democracy will come to an end. "If we don't win this election, I don't think you're going to have another election in this country," Trump said. Trump, who is under criminal indictment in Georgia for trying to overturn the result of the 2020 election

Sixteen Nigerian soldiers killed in community clashes in Delta state

Monitoring Desk ABUJA: Sixteen Nigerian Army soldiers were surrounded by youths and killed earlier this week after they attempted to quell community clashes in the oil-producing southern Delta state, an army spokesperson said on Sat-

urday.

The troops from 181 Amphibious Battalion had responded to the conflict in the Okuoma community when they were killed on Thursday, Brigadier General Tukur Gusau said in a statement.

Bolsonaro says he does not fear being put on trial

Monitoring Desk RIO DE JĂNEIRO: Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro said he does not fear being put on trial one day after a police investigation revealed the farright politician tried to coop the country's military chiefs in a coup plan to overturn his 2022 election defeat. Bolsonaro did not refer directly to the allegations made by two armed forces commanders that he had summoned them to discuss a possible coup d'etat to prevent leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from returning to power.

babies' in Gaza, says UN **Monitoring Desk**

No more 'normal-sized

humanitarian situation in Gaza is a "nightmare" for mothers and babies, with doctors reporting small and sickly newborns, stillbirths and women forced to undergo C-sections without adequate anesthesia, a UN official said.

"I'm personally leaving Gaza this week terrified for the one million women and girls of Gaza... and most especially for the 180 women who are giving birth every single day," Dominic Allen, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) representative for the state of Palestine, said in a video news conference from Jerusalem. 'Doctors are report-

ing that they no longer see normal-sized babies, "Allen said after visiting hospitals still providing maternity services in the north of Gaza, where need is espe-

though, tragically, is more stillborn births... and more neonatal deaths, caused in part by malnutrition, dehydration and complications. The numbers of complicated deliveries are roughly twice what they were before the crisis with Israel began - with mothers stressed, fearful, underfed and exhausted — and caregivers often lacking nec-

essary supplies.
"We have had reports of insufficient anesthetic being available" for Caesar-ean sections, "which again is unthinkable." "Those mothers should be wrapping their arms around their children," he said. "Those children should not be wrapped in a body bag.

Israel has defended its policies as it pursues its stated goal of destroying Hamas, saying the UN should send more aid to the

EU to bolster Egypt ties with billions in funding

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: European leaders

are expected to announce a multi-billion euro funding package and an upgraded relationship with Egypt in Cairo on Sunday, part of a push to stem migrant flows across the Mediterranean that has been criticised by rights groups.

The agreement is de-

signed to enhance cooperation in areas including renewable energy, trade, and security while delivering grants, loans and other funding over the next three years to support faltering Egypt's economy

European governments have long been worried about the risk of instability in Egypt, a country of 106 million people that has been struggling to raise foreign currency and where economic adversity has pushed increasing numbers to migrate in recent years.

Inflation has been running close to record highs and many Egyp-

tians say they struggle to get by. Over the past month, however, the financial pressure on the government has eased as Egypt has struck a record deal for Emirati investment, expanded its loan programme with the IMF, and sharply devalued its currency. Diplomats

Egypt's strategic importance has been underscored by the conflict in neighbouring Sudan, which has created the world's biggest displacement crisis, and the war in Gaza, which borders Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Egypt has been the

main conduit for international humanitarian aid sent to Gaza, and along dent Ursula von der Leyen will lead a delegation on Sunday that also includes

with Qatar and the United States has been trying to mediate a truce between Israel and Hamas. European Commission Presithe Italian and Greek prime ministers and the

Cypriot president.

Venezuela's Maduro announces candidacy for July re-election **Monitoring Desk** address supporters.

Voters cast their ballots at a polling station on the final

day of the presidential election in Moscow, Russia.

CARACAS: Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro will run for a second re-election to secure another sixyear term in voting planned for July 28, the ruling Socialist party said.

Maduro, a 61-yearold former union leader, was proclaimed as the Socialist party's candidate by Vice President Diosdado Cabello, and took the stage at a large sports arena to 54.5%.

'There's just one outcome, the people's victory on July 28," Maduro said, wearing a bright red zippered jacket.

they be able to." to vote for Maduro, far be-

hind opposition candidate

Maria Corina Machado's

They haven't been able to stop us, nor will Recent polls show 13.9% of Venezuelans plan

vironmental matters.

President rejects workplace harassment case against FCE Prof.

ISLAMABAD (APP): were raised by the Ombuds-The President of Pakistan has rejected the appeal filed by Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MOFE&PT), challenging the order issued by the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harass-

This decision comes in the wake of a contentious case involving allegations of harassment against Dr. Samia Dogar, a former director at the Federal College of Education (FCE).

Earlier on December 8, 2023, the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment issued a final order directing the Ministry of Education and Professional Training to reinstate Dr. Samia Dogar to her previous position as a Professor (BS-20).

This decision followed an appeal filed by Dr. Samia against Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary under the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010. Key concerns

man regarding the initial inings, highlighting serious violations of Dr. Samia Dogar's due process rights.

These included the absence of cross-examination of witnesses and the failure to examine crucial evidence such as a video recording of a Zoom call.Consequently, the Ombudsman set aside the initial inquiry committee's report and directed the Ministry of Education to reinstate Dr. Samia and conduct a fresh inquiry into the harassment complaint.

The Education Ministry was given a strict deadline to provide its findings within 30 days.

Meanwhile, Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, contested the orders of the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment and filed a representation with the president of Paki-

However, after due consideration, the President upheld the decision, refusing Waseem Ajmal's appeal



RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir pays condolence to martyrs family after Funeral prayers of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed at Chaklala Garrison.

Solar lamps distributed among more than 100 houses in Railway Colony

Independent Report

taker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Ameer Muhammad Khan Jogezai distributed solar camps among more than 100 houses in a backward area of Railway Colony Harnai

The Wing Commander Frontier Corps, Colonel Javed was also ac-

Speaking on the occasion, the former caretaker Provincial Minister said that at the moment, there is electricity crisis all over the There are several areas

where there is no electricity at all, he pointed out.

He said that electricity is supplied in the area merely for two to three hours in this particular area of Harnai.

While on the other hand, people were also upset about the excessive bills of electricity, he added. The former Minister

mentioned that around 15,000 solar lights have been distributed in backward areas of different districts of the province.

In addition to this, ration is also being arranged for 800-1000 families by the Health Balochistan.

The distribution of ration would be started among the deserving families soon, he announced

Promoting sports in Balochistan among top priorities, says secretary

QUETTA (APP): Secre- top priorities for which tary Sports and Youth Balochistan Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani on Sunday said that it is the responsibility of the government to provide sports op-

portunities to the athletes. The Department of Sports and Youth Affairs of Balochistan for which in-Balochistan has created the structions have been given best strategy to ensure the to all district sports officbest opportunities to the ers. youth.

In a statement issued Balochistan is among our

practical steps are being

He said that like every year, this year also 23 March will be celebrated in a grand manner and sports competitions will be organized in all the districts of

Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani further said that here, the secretary said that best facilities will be propromotion of sports in vided to the athletes in the



QUETTA: Member of Provincial Assembly Bakht Kakar planting trees during the tree plantation campaign on the bypass.

FIA arrests seven human traffickers, hawala hundi operators

ISLAMABAD (INP): The of a substantial amount of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Sunday claimed to have arrested a total of seven individuals, including four wanted culprits, allegedly involved in also seized from the sushuman trafficking and operating illegal money exchange business.

As per FIA spokesperson, revealed that the individuals were arrested from different cities across the country including Multan, DG Khan, and

The FIA spokesperson reported that the apprehended individuals were in the immigration departfound to be in possession ment.

local currency, exceeding a significant sum of foreign currency, amounting to 4562 Saudi Riyals, was

The FIA has vowed to continue its efforts to root out such unlawful practices and bring the perpetrators

Earlier in the day, responding to the report of the Libya and Greece boat accident, the FIA blacklisted 87 officers across the country from being posted



calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Ayaz, Dr. Amiri discuss bolstering parliamentary, economic relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Ambassador of Iran, Dr. Amiri Moghaddam Sunday discussed bolstering parliamentary and economic relations between Iran and Pakistan.

During the meeting, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed Pakistan's deeprooted fraternal bond with Iran, steeped in shared history, culture, and religion, said a news release.

He emphasized the need to strengthen these ties further by expanding cooperation across all mutual areas of interest, particularly in energy and trade, to uplift the economies of both nations, especially those living on both sides of the common border.

Amnesty Int'l urges govt to restore X in **Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD (INP): Amnesty International has demanded the immediate restoration of the social media platform 'X' from the government of Pakistan.

Amnesty, along with thirty-one civil society organizations, has signed a joint statement urging Pakistani authorities to restore access to X platform. The statement stated that such actions not only violate fundamental rights such as freedom of expression.

lighted the strategic geographical positioning of both countries, presenting significant opportunities for regional and global connectivity and trade promotion. While acknowledging the positive trajectory in bilateral trade, he noted that there is untapped potential that both nations should

He stressed the importance of cordially addressing pending issues related to banking, trade, transportation, and energy. Additionally, he expressed optimism about resolving issues related to the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline.

Ayaz Sadiq underscored the pivotal role of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral relations. He expressed in-

The Speaker high-ted the strategic geo-ted the strategic geo-ted the strategic geolarly to support governmental efforts in achieving the common goal of expanded economic coopera-

> Moghaddam congratulated Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on his re-election and extended warm Ramazan greetings.

He praised the Speaker's vision for collective growth and assured full commitment and cooperation from Iran across all ar-

The Ambassador also informed the speaker about the upcoming visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan, highlighting its significance in advancing bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in various sec-

Roof collapse leaves 6 dead and 4 injured in South Waziristan

PESHAWAR (INP): A dev- ers swiftly arrived at the astating incident struck the Ragzai area of Barmal Tehsil in South Waziristan on Monday when the roof of a house tragically collapsed, claiming the lives of six people and injuring four

Among the deceased were three men, two children, and a woman, according to rescue officials who swiftly responded to the

Emergency respond-

scene and worked tirelessly to extricate the victims. The deceased were transported to the DHQ Wana morgue, while the injured received immediate medical attention at the DHK

The cause of the roof collapse remains under investigation as authorities work to ensure the safety of the community in the aftermath of the devastating incident.



QUETTA: Vehicles passing through sewerage water accumulated on the Jinnah road need the attention of concern authorities.

PML-N's Asif Kirmani denies of applying for Senate ticket

AHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, Dr Asif Kirmani has said that he hasn't replied for Senate

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that it was not true that PML-N has not awarded Senate ticket to him.

Dr Asif Kirmani said, I am in Muslim League-N and still consider Nawaz Sharif as my leader."

He further stated that he hasn't applied for Senate ticket, neither interested nor contacted anyone in this connection.

The political leader said that he was affiliated with PML-N by birth and don't need certificate of loyalty from anyone.

Katcha dacoits shoot two captives dead; throw their bodies into river

KASHMORE (INP): The dacoits of katcha area who had kidnapped two persons after luring them to Rojhan a few days ago, have thrown their bodies into the River Indus after murdering them brutally on Sunday.

The dacoits shot Ahsan and Shehzad, both masons by profession, dead when they saw them

condemns suicide attack at security forces in NW **Independent Report**

Muhammad Ali Achakzai

QUETTA: The social and political leader of Chaman, Muhammad Ali Achakzai has strongly condemned the cowardly suicide attack at the check post of security forces in North

Waziristan. In a condemnation statement issued here on Sunday, Muhammad Ali Achakzai said that the security forces humiliated the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan by attacking the forces.

He said that the mo-

through such cowardly

He said that every Pakistani is grieved over the martyrdom of Army Officers and jawans and share grief with their families. He also paid rich trib-

utes to the brave officers and jawans who embraced martyrdom in the incident of

He also stressed the need to take strict measures against terrorism in the country He said that the

people of Balochistan are rale of security forces and nation would not be down forces.

PTI fires back at PML-N: **Qaiser accuses ministers** of exploiting 'martyrs' for political gains

Asad Qaiser, the former National Assembly speaker and prominent PTI leader, on Sunday hit back at federal ministers Khawaja Asif and Attaullah Tarar, who charged his party with running a smear campaign against the martyrs of Pakistan military and law enforcement agencies.

The PTI has always recognised and honoured the sacrifices made by soldiers defending the country's borders," Qaiser asserted while speaking to a group of reporters.
"[Defence Minister]

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Khawaja Asif and [Information Minister] Ataullah Tarar's misleading propaganda about the martyrs is regrettable," he remarked.

In a post on social media platform X, Qaiser emphasised that "those using the soldiers' martyrdom for their political gains are not the well-wishers of the nation."

"The nation is proud

of each and every soldier protecting the country, averred the PTI leader

PTI leader Barriste Saif also came down hard on the PML-N, accusing them of exploiting the martyrs for political gains.

CDWP approves Rs. 4.54bn **Energy Sector Project for Gwadar District**

address the electricity demands of Gwadar, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved a crucial "revised" energy

This project focuses on enhancing the transmission line infrastructure for the coastal city, marking a significant step forward in meeting Gwadar's energy The CDWP meeting,

led by Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, sanctioned the energy project for Gwadar along with another initiative the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province fol-

The approved energy sector project, titled "Construction of 220kV Trans-

ISLAMABAD (INP): To mission Line (28km) along with 2nd Circuit Stringing of 132kV Transmission Line from Jiwani to Gwadar (94km) Revised," is valued at Rs. 4540.010 million. Gwadar Pro re-

This initiative, worth Rs. 4.54001 billion, aims to be financed through the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP). Its primary objective

is to provide an uninterrupted power supply to consumers across all categories and enhance the overall commercial viability of the power sector. The project entails the construction of grid sta-

tions and includes the eslowing detailed discussions. tablishment of a 132kV (AIS) grid station in Jiwani, featuring a 132 KV Line Bay facing the Jiwani –

Gwadar Circuit. It also involves setting up a 132kV (AIS) grid station in old Gwadar, including a 132 KV Line Bay facing the Gwadar (old) -

Jiwani Circuit. Furthermore, the project encompasses the construction of a 220/ 132kV Transmission Line from Gabd to Jiwani (Zero Point) and the second Circuit Stringing of the exist-ing 132 kV SDT Jiwani– Gwadar (old) 99 KM Transmission

(QESCO portion). This project is set to significantly improve the power infrastructure in Gwadar, representing a crucial development in addressing the energy needs of this burgeoning economic hub, Gwadar Pro reported



QUETTA: Sardar Rab Nawaz Kurd, Agha Ali, Ali Raza Ahmedzai and other meeting with MPA Mir Liaquat Ali Lehri.

Resolution of masses' problems govt's top

priority: Tarar LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said that resolution of the problems of masses was topmost priority of the present

elected government. Addressing a ceremony here he said, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz had always served the people of Pakistan with utmost dedication and under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan will make strides towards progress and pros-

Govt collects Rs 142 tax & levy per liter on petrol, diesel

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani government has revealed details on the taxes and levies collected on petrol and diesel. Sources report that the government collects Rs 82 per liter as tax on both petrol and diesel, with an additional Rs 60 per liter levy. This translates to a total collection of Rs 475 billion from consumers in the first six months, with a target of Rs 920 to 970 billion projected for the entire year. According to media reports, in a separate announcement, the government has decided to maintain petrol prices.

AJK President urges unified action against India's Kashmir agenda

MIRPUR (APP): Azad underscored the responsi-Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry emphasized the need for unified efforts to counter India's disruptive agenda in the region.

Speaking at an Iftar dinner on Sunday, he highlighted the launch of a public awareness campaign from Mirpur aimed at exposing the human rights violations by Indian forces in Occupied Kashmir and advocating for Kashmiri self-determination on the global stage. Chaudhry criticized Indian Prime Minister Modi's use of Kashmir as a political tool, tonomy.

alleging it to be a ploy to secure electoral gains. action to address the wors- emphasizing the resilience ening situation in Indian Il- of Kashmiris against Indian

Jammu Kashmir President bility of all Kashmiris in advancing the freedom movement

Regarding local issues, Chaudhry pledged to address concerns in Mirpur, including the Rathoa Haryam Bridge issue, and announced efforts to improve road infrastructure in the area. In addressing unemployment, he promised opportunities based on merit for educated youth.

Chaudhry's remarks highlighted a commitment to both local development and the broader Kashmiri struggle for rights and au-

He urged overseas Kashmiris to advocate for He called for collective the cause internationally, legally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and ing violence in the region.

Aleem Khan vows to swiftly resolving public interest matters

AHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Abdul Aleem Khan, has pledged to address longstanding public interest issues in NA-117 with top priority. During an iftar gathering with former chairman, vice chairman, and councilors in his constituency NA-117, he, also the President of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), emphasized the importance of ency development.

coordinated development efforts. Joined by MPs of PP-145 and 146, Samiullah Khan and Ghazali Salim, the event saw discussions on strategic plans for con-

stituency development. The IPP president outlined plans to establish a central office in NA-117, facilitating collaborative efforts between MPs for comprehensive constitu-

Feasibility study for construction of Gwadar Expressway Phase II underway

practical step towards the expansion of Gwadar Expressway Phase II of Gwadar Port, the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Ministry of Maritime Affairs has floated a tender to hire the services of consultancy firms (National & International) for survey and feasibility study for the execution of the project.

The Gwadar Expressway Phase II, with a length of 10.5 kilometers, aims to connect the Gwadar Port with New Gwadar International Airport.

Mubarak, in Quetta.

the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), with relevant experience, and providing an affidavit confirming non-involvement in any arbitration or litigation with any government agency or department can apply for the project.

The consulting firms shall be engaged via quality and cost-based selection as per Public Procurement Regulatory Rules while single stage two envelope bidding procedures as per PPRA rule 36(b) will be adopted

Companies can submit all required documents

tered as a consultant with by April 17, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

Gwadar Eastbay Expressway is the main artery of Gwadar Port through which the entire traffic of the port will flow. The objective of

Eastbay Expressway is to provide primary connectivity of the Port & its Free Zone with the network of National Highways for smooth logistic transportation of import, export, and transit goods. The 19-kilometer

Gwadar Expressway Phase I was completed and inaugurated on June 3,



QUETTA: People are busy in buying food items before Iftar times as demands of food items increased in city during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-