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Country's future links with well educated youth: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): with a facility to get edu-Prime Minister cation at the country's Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the country's future hinged upon well educated and skilled youth of the country and for the provision of quality education, the federal government would facilitate the high achievers with scholarship schemes to get education in the well reputed global educational institutes.

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

Under the prime minister's direction, the student from 2022 flood affected area of Qila Saifullah was provided

prominent educational institute.

The prime minister recalled that he met the desperate student in the Khasnoob camp in Qila Saifullah when floods had caused destruction in 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.

The student thanked the prime minister for giving him an opportunity to meet him. Congratulating the prime minister, he said that he prayed for Shehbaz Sharif for his kind gesture.



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 tated to continue education

peace and stability in the country.

Ali area of North Waziristan district.

issue with Afghanistan government

sacrificed their lives to safeguard the motherland.

said there is a need for unity in the war against terrorism.

economic crisis and put it on the path of progress and development.

Afghanistan's soil being used for

terrorism in Pakistan: Asif

SIALKOT (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif says entire nation is

united against terrorists and security forces are rendering unprecedented sacrifices for

Talking to media in Sialkot on Sunday, he said martyrs are our real heroes who

The Defence Minister strongly condemned cowardly attack by terrorists in Mir

He also condemned social media campaign by some elements against martyrs and

Answering the question, he said Pakistan is passing through an economic crisis and

The Minister said that the government is determined to steer the country out of

To a question, he regretted that Afghanistan's soil is being used for terrorism in

Pakistan. He said that some facilitators have been traced, and Pakistan has raised the

one political party has written a letter to the International Monetary Fund, which is

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,

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

SLAMABAD (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 activities 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 terrorists 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

Barkhan wildfire

extinguished

UETTA (APP): Local

idministration, Provincial

Disaster Management Au-

thority (PDMA) and local

Hundreds of trees and

recious shrubs have burnt

n forest fire at Koh-e-

andaran on the confluence

of Kohlu and Barkhan in

Balochistan. A huge forest

fire that erupted in the

mountainous region on Sat-

urday spread over large area

and engulfed the entire ar-

eas putting hazards to the

hundreds of trees and pre-

ious and rare shrubs.

other day.

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, İnterior 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



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

Preliminary list of candidates issued by ECP:

38 candidates in competition run for 11 seats of Senate from Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: In all 38 candi-

residents extinguished the vildfire that engulfed the Koh-e-Jandaran in Barkhan dates are in competition run listrict of Balochistan the for 11 seats of Senate from Balochistan province as the preliminary list of candidate was issued by the Election Commission of Paki-

stan (ECP) here on Sunday. According to the preliminary 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.

Similarly, eight nomination papers were filed by the women for two seats of women in Senate from the

province. The process of scrutiny of the papers of candidates would start on Monday (today), and would remain continued till March 19. 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-



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jet demonstrating different skills during rehearsal ahead of the Pakistan Day parade on 23rd March in the Federal Capital.

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 extension 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.

Nation stands united with Pak Army in war against terror: Mohsin Naqvi

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 act.

In a press statement, Interior Minister said all the martyred Jawans including Lt 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 Naqvi said entire nation was united and stood with Pak Army in war against terror. He assured the nation that Pakistan Army will give due response to ter-

Elements behind campaign against martyrs to face stern action: Tarar

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah 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

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

being taken to reduce the burden on poor people and to bring elites in the tax net,"

He said that interna-

LAHORE (APP): Federal tional economic journals like Bloomberg had termed the appointment of the Fi-Tarar said on Sunday the nance Minister a good step, adding that international journals had acknowledged that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharifhad 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 condemned the terrorist attack in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, in which seven soldiers, including two officers, were martyred.

He said that Captain Muhammad Ahmed Badar was also martyred, who was the only brother of five

He said how painful and tragic it was for his family. "Law enforcement agencies, the people All these measures are of Pakistan, politicians and almost every segment of society have rendered a lot of sacrifices in the war against terrorism," he



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

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

KARACHI: A month after the caretakers burdened the masses with gas price hike on the International Mon-etary 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

Monitoring Desk

gas prices under structural benchmark criteria till February 15, 2024. In its fresh plea filed with the Ogra, the SSGC requested the fuel regulator to

enue 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, dur-

(mmbtu). Citing an esti-

mated Rs79.63 billion rev-

ing which the regulatory authority will determine the gas prices. The Ogra will also hear the petition in Quetta on March 20. It is pertinent to mention here that the IMF wants the government to

implement the gas review implementation biannually to reduce the circular debt. Amid the ongoing eco-

nomic crisis, the newly elected government would make a formal request to the IMF for a longer and larger size of fresh increase in the gas price by Rs274.40 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit bailout package under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) next month.

Senate elections:

Scrutiny of nomination papers to be carried out on Tuesday ISLAMABAD (INP): The one general seat and one scrutiny of nomination paseat for technocrats includ-

scrutiny of nomination papers for elections on forty-eight vacant seats of the Senate will be carried out on Tuesday. Revised list of the can-

26th of this month whilst the candidates can withdraw their nomination papers by 27th of this month. In

the federal capital, members of the National Assembly will elect members of the Senate against of next month.

ing Ulema. Members of the four provincial assemblies will

elect senators for seven general seats, two women seats, didates will be issued on the and two seats for technocrats including Ulema from each province, as well as one seat for non-Muslims from both Punjab and Sindh provinces. According to the schedule, polling will be held on the second

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pa- the PTI, people became not 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 the previous government of he added.

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,

portfolio of Power ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

has assigned the portfolio of Power to Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari in place of the portfolio of Railways. According to the notification of the Cabinet Division, the PM relieved Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Masood Malik of the additional portfolio of

SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif is addressing to the media at his residence. **CJCSC**, Services Chiefs

pay tribute to MM Alam **Independent Report** down five Indian fighter RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs pay tribute to the 1965 war hero Air Commodore Mohammad Mahmood Alam (Late) on his 11th death anniversary. Air Commodore Alam achieved the remarkable feat of downing 5 Indian Air force jets in less than a minute durin the 1965 war. ing the 1965 war - A
The war hero
record that remains unbreathed his last on 18th ing the 1965 war - A beaten till date. The leg-

jets piloting his F-86 Sabre jet plane, becoming an "Ace in a Day" on 7th September 1965. In total he had 09 kills and 02 enemy aircraft damages to his credit during a period of 11 days. The war hero was honored with the prestigious 'Sitara-e-Jurat' with BAR for his outstanding performance

March 2013, in Karachi endary PAF pilot shot after a prolonged illness.

Awais Leghari assigned

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. Ğuangxi'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.

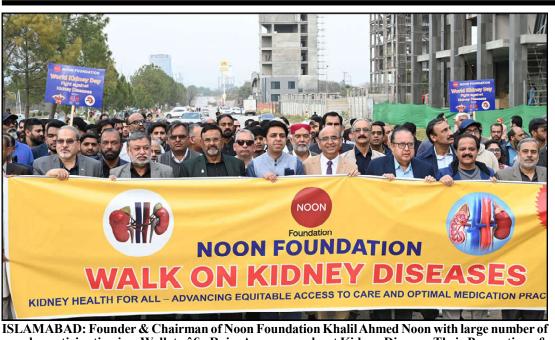
they be able to." to vote for Maduro, far be-

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.



people participating in a Walk to "Raise Awareness about Kidney Diseases Their Precautions & Treatment in Pakistan" at Mehran Gate F-9 Park.

Islamophobia, calls for steps to address anti-Muslim sentiments ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa- Islamophobia, labeling it as incitement of non-Muslims a toxic barrier hindering inagainst Islam, attributing it

PUC vows global action against

kistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the Council is set to escalate its efforts on a global scale to foster interfaith dialogue and harmony

Addressing international media in connection with the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia' the other day, he emphasized that Islamophobia poses a grave threat to Muslims worldwide.

Ashrafi urged world powers to accelerate initiatives to eradicate

terfaith harmony.

He called upon the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other international bodies to champion initiatives aimed at eradicating all forms of discrimination while nurturing a culture of love, tolerance, and coexistence. He stressed that Islam embodies peace, love, and tolerance, emphasizing the teachings of Allah Almighty and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Independent Report

Minister Maryam Nawaz

on Sunday announced

three-month remission in

prisoners and release of

province. Addressing the

iftar dinner ceremony

organised in the Kot

Lakhpat Jail here, the CM

stated that 155 prisoners

are being released after

paying a diyat amount of rupees 150 million with the

philanthropists. A video

call facility will be provided in all the jails of Punjab

very soon, she announced.

she herself remembered the

time spent during her

period of imprisonment

while coming to the Central

Gul condoles

martyrdom of

Army soldiers

in N. Waziristan

ISLAMABAD (APP)

Chairman Tehreek-e-Jawaan Pakistan (TJP)

Mohammad Abdullah Gul

on Sunday expressed his

deep sorrow over the mar-

tyrdom of the officers and

soldiers of Pakistan Army

prayed for the exaltation of

the ranks of the martyrs in

the hereafter and blessings

of peace and patience onto

the bereaved families, said

was not easy to offer the

funeral of martyrs while

expressing his deep grief

and pain over the martyr-

dom of the brave sons of

ernment and opposition leaders should abstain from

politics on such occasion as

it was not the time for scor-

ing points but rather for cre-

ating motivation and en-

couragement among all the

ranks and files of the na-

tion. He regretted that it

was big tragedy but no

news channels turned their

screen margins and logos

dark to express solidarity or held any talk show.

FBR official

responsible

for Justice Isa

case appointed

Commissioner

Chairman FBR,

He said that the gov

Abdullah Gul said it

The TJP Chairman

in North Waziristan.

a press release.

the soil

The CM stated that

collaboration

155 prisoners across the

punishment of

to misinformation and hatred propagated against Islamic teachings. Recognizing Islamophobia as a crime, Ashrafi highlighted the designation of March 15 as the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia' by the United Nations, a milestone achieved through collaborative efforts involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other entities. Ashrafi emphasized the urgency of addressing global anti-Muslim senti-Ashrafi lamented the ment, branding discrimina- holy month of Ramazan.

Maryam announces 3-month

remission in jail terms of

prisoners, release 155 prisoners

tion as a significant threat to world peace. He underscored the need to clarify the distinction between Jihad and terrorism through dialogue, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which fueled widespread misconceptions about Islam and Muslims in the Western world. The PUC, Ashrafi said, pledged to intensify its global en-deavors for interfaith dialogue and harmony, culminating in an upcoming international conference, themed 'Paigham-e-Pakistan' in Islamabad after the

Revolutionizing University Land Use: PIDE's bold vision for commercial partnerships to enhance revenue

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), a Premier National Think Tank, has made public its investigative report titled "GORs Everywhere: University Land for Public Housing. "Authored by Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), M.Jehangir Khan, and Iram Nadeem, this study embarks on a critical analysis of the conventional utilization of university lands, predominantly allocated for housing within educational institutions' premises.

It advances a transformative outlook proposing prompted by the scarcity It advances a transforthe allocation of these tracts of tax dollars and diminish-

for commercial endeavours ing societal support. through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), aiming at amplifying universities' revenue streams whilst augmenting local economies and societal well-being, said a press release issued here on Sunday. According to the press release, the report states that Universities globally have evolved from their traditional roles to become contemporary, busi-

joying greater autonomy This shift comes as higher education faces the dual challenges of growth

ness-oriented centres of

education and research, en-

In response, institutions are increasingly adopting entrepreneurial approaches, including selfpromotion, forging partnerships, and embracing technological innovations, to thrive in the knowledge economy and align themselves as competitive entities in both domestic and international arenas.

In Pakistan, universities confront similar financial challenges and debates over resource allocation and financial independence. particularly concerning the construction of housing colonies on campus lands. Such practices are criticized for squandering valuable assets that could be more strategically utilized.

Iranian evnoy

sympathizes

with families

who lost their

loved ones in

terrorist attack

ISLAMABAD (APP)

The Ambassador of Iran to

Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam, extended his

condolences to the people of Pakistan and the fami-

Police determined to address public' issues on priority: **DPO Industrial Area Zone**

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DPO Industrial Area zone held an open kutchery at Masjid Siddique Akbar, sector I-16 Noon police station area. The open kutchery was attended by citizens and senior police officials, a public relations officer said.

He said that, 'Open Kutchery' are being held across the city to ensure the early redressal of public complaints following the

orders of ICCPO.

DPO Industrial Area issued orders on the spot to address the issues of the participants and assured them that their suggestions will be taken into account.

Addressing the gathering, the DPO Industrial Area said the police were determined to resolve the issues faced by the residents. He said the open kutchery was helpful in maintaining direct relationships with the public.

He said that, better strategy on part of the police led to reduction in crime in the city.

The Islamabad Capi-

tal Police were taking steps to control crime further. He



Shariah Board Pak sets

minimum Sadaqah Fitr,

Fidya at Rs 300 for Ramazan

proceedings, the partici- asked the gathering to copants shared their griev- operate with the police in ances and also gave suggestions to resolve them. The

ISLAMABAD (APP)

Chairman of the Shariah Board Pakistan, Sheikh Al-

Hadith Professor Dr. Mufti Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

Jalali has announced that the minimum Sadaqah Fitr

and Fidya for fasting this

year was set at Rs 300 per

person, roughly equivalent

to two kilograms of wheat

flour. He, in a statement,

emphasized the importance

of philanthropists and af-

fluent individuals contrib-

uting Sadaqah Fitr and

Fidya in accordance with

controlling the crime in the

Similarly, he outlined

Rs 18,000 for oats, Rs

Dr. Jalali clarified that

Travelers and those

the Fidya rates for fasting

the entire month of

Ramazan, which are Rs

72,000 for dates, and Rs

Fidya for fasting was in-

tended for individuals who

were chronically ill or un-

able to fast with no pros-

temporarily unable to fast

were obligated to make up

for missed fasts, as Fidya

could not be a substitute for

9,000 for wheat flour,

132,000 for raisins.

pect of recovery.

Aseefa Bhutto submits nomination for NA-207 by-polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move marking her debut in the political arena, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, the youngest daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari, has submitted her nomination papers for the National Assembly seat NA-207 in Shaheed Benazirabad. The seat became vacant following her father's elevation to the presidency.

Accompanied by provincial health minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho and a team of legal advisors, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari presented her nomination form to the returning officer, Sher Ali Jamali, private news channels reported This marks her first foray into contesting for a public office, reflecting the continuation of the Bhutto-Zardari

legacy in Pakistani politics. As the political landscape evolves with this new entrant, all eyes are on Aseefa Bhutto Zardari as she embarks on this journey to represent her constituency in



NAWAB SHAH: Daughter of Former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari submitted her nomination form to R.O for for By-election.

India's extremist policies have shattered socio-political fabric of Kashmir: Altaf

tentions and curbs on free-

doms of expression and

movement had become a

visit of India's Prime Min-

ister to the valley of Kash-

mir as an attempt to show

a fake-normalcy. He said

that besides forcing public

servants to participate in

Modi's political rally, people

were gathered from different

locations and herded to the

main venue to ensure a crowd

Narendra Modi's visit to

Kashmir took place at the

time when his right wing

extremist party had not

only failed in restoring po-

ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Jinnah Avenue, a busy road on normal days,

was empty on Sunday during the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarik in the

litical process.

Altaf Wani said that

for the prime minister.

He termed the recent

new-normal in Kashmir.

ISLAMABAD (INP): human rights, arbitrary de-Kashmiri representative Altaf Hussain Wani has said that the extremist policies of India's apartheid regime have shattered the sociopolitical fabric of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Altaf Hussain Wani stated this while taking part in a general debate held under agenda item 3 on the sidelines of 55th session of UNHRC in Geneva, today.

Speaking on behalf of the World Muslim Congress, he drew the attention of the Council towards the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in Indian held Jammu and

He told the world audience that abuse of basic

lies who lost their loved ones in the terrorist attack on the security forces post in North Waziristan District's Mir Ali area.

In a message, he expressed his deep sorrow and said, "I am deeply dejected to see seven young Pakistani brothers in the security forces of Pakistan embraced Shahadat in a terrorist attack while protecting their motherland in the Holy month of Ramadan."

The Ambassador said. We always believe that Pakistani martyrs are also Iran's martyrs.

He further added. My condolences to the people and government of Pakistan and the families who lost loved ones"

ITP issues traffic plan for Pakistan Day Parade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has issued a traffic plan for the parade and full rehearsal day on March 23.

According to the spokesperson of the Traffic Police, heavy traffic entry will be closed from 12 midnight to 2:00 p.m. on March 17, 19, 21, and 23. Traffic coming from Lahore can use GT Road from Rawalpindi Saddar Road to Peshawar GT Road and Motorway.

Similarly, traffic coming from Koral Chowk and Rawalpindi will enter Islamabad via Khanna Pul Lehtrar Road, and Park Road. Light traffic can also divert from Kashmir Chowk to Bahara Kahu and Murree. Similarly, during the parade, Faizabad will be closed for all kinds of traf-

their financial capacity, with values set at Rs 600 for oats, Rs 2,400 for dates, abstaining from fasting, he and Rs 4,400 for raisins. Faisal Masjid seeks applications for Aitekaf in last Ashra of Ramazan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faisal Masjid is set to host 300 individuals for Aitekaf, a revered Islamic tradition of seclusion and devotion, in a bid to deepen their spiritual connection during the

holy month of Ramazan. The administration of Faisal Masjid has opened its doors to those seeking this profound spiritual experience in the last Ashra (10 days) of the holy that applications for Aitekaf will be accepted until the 10th of Ramazan, allowing eager devotees to secure their spots in advance.

Applicants are advised that the process operates on a first-come, firstserved basis, emphasizing the importance of prompt submission. Prospective participants are required to obtain an application form from the Faisal Masjid Islamic Centre office.

Women's voices should not be silenced

Independent Report ordered by the Taliban. Media reports Taliban have warned of a ban on 'female media appearance without

nalists Centre (AFJC) issued a statement in which it said the Taliban have warned if the rules are not followed it may lead to a ban on women working in the media.

The Afghan women's story needs to be told, which is why the women in the media need to keep working despite the severe pressure.

Local media reports that "The Afghanistan Journalist Support Organization disclosed that out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, there are no female journalists in 19. The organization has estimated the current number of female media employees or journalists active

Forum, Pakistan (WMFP) stands in solidarity with its colleagues in Afghanistan. WMFP is a network of women in media across Pakistan. It was developed two years ago under the Înternational Federation of Journalists (IFJ) gender work in Pakistan. This network helps to amplify the voices and issues of women in media and acts as a bridge between the unions and press clubs to highlight women in media

Jail today. imprisoned in the Death Cell Chakhi and faced a difficult time. My father was also imprisoned in the same Jail but was denied permission for meeting him. I used to meet my father once a week only. Once I received a hand written letter of my father which stated that he after being arrested is being taken to the NAB. Someone in the jail told me that your father

time of great difficulty."
The CM stated that she used to query as what wrongful act she has committed for which she is kept in the jail and then think and ponder in the used to sit on the praying jail" she recalled.

is feeling unwell and is being

taken to the hospital. It was a

appeal when I came to know that the Judge went on three weeks leave. I couldn't talk with my cancer patient mother in the Adiala Jail. I used to talk with my children for 20 minutes only. I was greatly worried about my 15 years old daughter as she also underwent a difficult time. Someone in the court told my father about the state of illness of my mother and despite his repeated saying, no one allowed his conversation with his wife. I spent the difficult jail time with patience and perseverance. A person gets 24 hours to

mat. "I used to wait for the

Security personnel briefed for effective duty

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of the special direction directions of the special direction directions of the special direction dire Islamabad Capital City Po-lice Officer (ICCPO) Dr. cials, those performing se-curity and squad duties at



Akbar Nasir Khan, a special briefing was held for the officers and officials deployed on important security duties regarding the better performance of their duties, a public relations

officer said. He said that, in this about being alert.

Supreme Court, to maintain the law and order situation and prevent any untoward incident. Officers were briefed regarding high-alert duty in view of the current situation, the officers and officials on squad duty were informed

China's UN envoy pays farewell call on Munir Akram

NEW YORK (APP): Ambassador Zhang Jun, the permanent representative of China and a top Chinese diplomat, paid a farewell call on Ambassador Munir Akram at the Pakistan Mission in New York.

Ambassador Zhang has been a key player at the UN for the past five years, especially in the deliberations at the Security Council.

A press release of the Pakistani Mission said both ambassadors discussed bilateral relations between the two countries, and expressed their satisfaction on the current evel of engagement at the UN. They vowed to keep playing their role in further

strengthening the bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Akram appreciated Ambassador Zhang for his leadership and splendid services in strengthening the relationship between Pakistan and China.

He said he worked very closely with his Chinese counterpart on a range of bilateral and multilateral issues during his term in office. Ambassador Akram expressed his best wishes and

prayers for the future of the outgoing Chinese Ambassador. On his part, the Chinese envoy thanked Ambassador Akram and the Pakistan Mission.



ISLAMABAD: Residents of Islamabad breaking their fast at Faisal Mosque in the Federal Capital.

month. It has announced

ISLAMABAD: Women in media have to struggle with more issues than others. They have to tackle pressures from family and in the workplace, but they have to break through societal boundaries to make their place. Women in media working in Afghanistan are facing an additional layer of pressure in the form of guidelines

dress code compliance'. The Afghanistan Jour-

in the media sector."

and begin a conversation with

ISLAMABAD (Online): Instead of initiating criminal proceedings against Sajida Kausar and other accom-plices involved in misusing their posi-tion to frame an asset The Women's Media declaration against Justice Qazi

Faez Isa.

Malik Zubair Tiwana has appointed involved officer to the coveted post of Commissioner IR LTO. The three officers Zulifqar Ahmad, Sajida Kausar and Khurshid Alam, were removed from their positions and placed in the admin pool of the FBR after and within unions, press clubs, the case against Justice Qazi Faez Isa. and media organisations.