

# Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. EC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No. 208, Ramzan 07, 1445 AH Monday March 18, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15



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

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 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 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 unremitting fight against terrorism."

## 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 Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif says entire nation is united against terrorists and security forces are rendering unprecedented sacrifices for peace and stability in the country.

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 cowardly attack by terrorists in Mir Ali area of North Waziristan district.

He also condemned social 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 letter to the International Monetary Fund, which is regrettable.

The Minister said that the government is determined to steer the country out of economic crisis and put it on the path of progress and development.

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

Continued on page 2

## Country's future links with well educated youth: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister 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 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 Murree.

Under the prime minister's direction, the student from 2022 flood affected area of Qila Saifullah was provided with a facility to get education at the country's 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.



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 to continue education.

## CM appreciates PDMA, FC, Forests, District administration and levies for overcoming Barkhan mountains fire

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister 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 Chief Minister said that all the concerned overcame 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 in 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.

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

**Independent Report**  
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 terrorists.

## Awais Leghari assigned 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 Power.

## 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 extension after his approval.



Zaheer Babar is a four-star 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 Babar held a meeting with newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif few days ago and discussed matters of national importance.

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan 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 the PTI, people became not billionaires but trillionaires [via corruption]."

Responding to a question, 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," he added.

## 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 February 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 Quetta on March 20.

## 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 candidates are in competition run for 11 seats of Senate from Balochistan province as the preliminary list of candidates was issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (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.

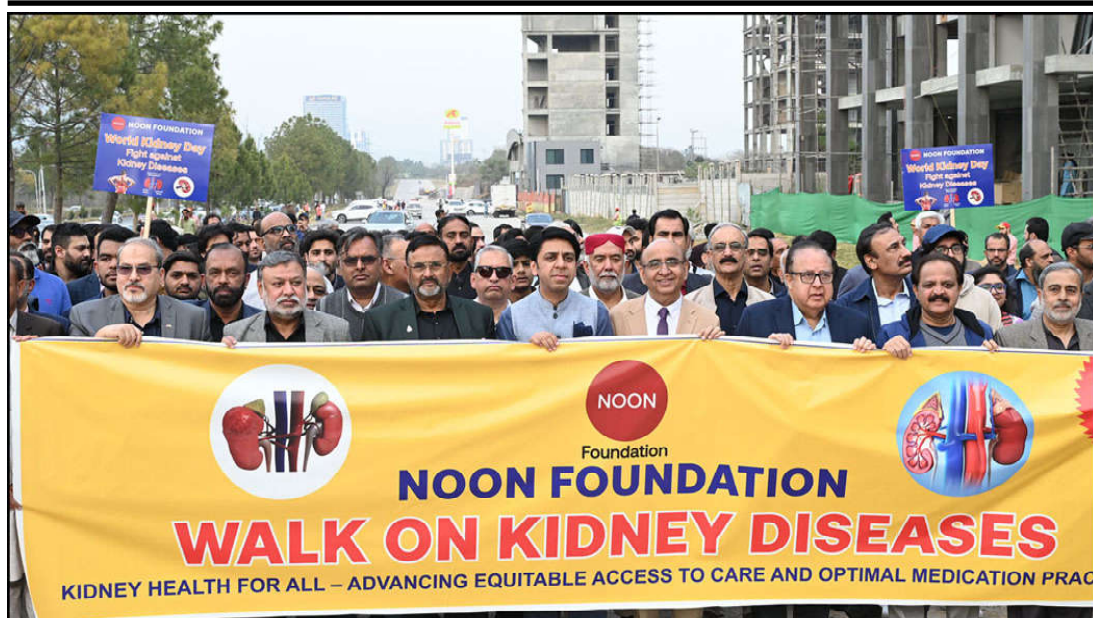
It may be mentioned here that in all 11 seats of Senate including seven general and two each of technocrats and women had fallen vacant on March 12 after retirement of the senators.

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



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





ISLAMABAD: Founder & Chairman of Noon Foundation Khalil Ahmed Noon with large number of people participating in a Walk to raise awareness about Kidney Diseases Their Precautions & Treatment in Pakistan at Mehran Gate F-9 Park.

## 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 the allocation of these tracts

for commercial endeavours 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, business-oriented centres of education and research, enjoying greater autonomy and financial independence.

This shift comes as higher education faces the dual challenges of growth and sustainability, prompted by the scarcity of tax dollars and diminishing societal support.

In response, institutions are increasingly adopting entrepreneurial approaches, including self-promotion, 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, particularly concerning the construction of housing colonies on campus lands. Such practices are criticized for squandering valuable assets that could be more strategically utilized.

## Noon foundation hosts awareness walk about kidney diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Noon Foundation successfully hosted an awareness walk on Sunday evening near Mehran Gate, F-9 Park with aimed to enhance understanding of kidney diseases, their prevention and treatment options.

A renowned nephrologist, Dr. Zahid Nabi engaged with participants in an interaction talk, focusing on raising awareness about kidney diseases and advocating for lifestyle changes to avert severe kidney-related complications, said a press release.

Administrator of a dialysis center supported by Noon Foundation, Dr. Zubair Hassan underscored the alarming prevalence of Diabetes Mellitus in Pakistan which is nearly 30 percent. This rate suggested that one in every three Pakistanis is diabetic, the highest incidence worldwide.

He highlighted that approximately 12.5 percent of the population is at the end stage of kidney disease, necessitating dialysis.

He said, "In the span of just over a year, we have performed 7,600 high-quality dialysis procedures at no cost, including the provision of necessary medicines and laboratory tests."



ISLAMABAD: A large number of Suzuki cabs waiting for passengers at khana pull.

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Kashmiri representative Altaf Hussain Wani has said that the extremist policies of India's apartheid regime have shattered the socio-political 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 55<sup>th</sup> session of UNHRC in Geneva, today.

Speaking on behalf of the Council towards the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir.

He told the world audience that abuse of basic human rights, arbitrary detentions and curbs on freedoms of expression and movement had become a new-normal in Kashmir.

He termed the recent visit of India's Prime Minister to the valley of Kashmir 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 for the prime minister.

Altaf Wani said that Narendra Modi's visit to Kashmir took place at the time when his right wing extremist party had not only failed in restoring political process.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Ginnah Avenue, a busy road on normal days, was empty on Sunday during the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak in the Federal Capital.

## Iranian envoy 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 families 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 Korah Chowk and Rawalpindi will enter Islamabad via Khanna Pul, Lehar 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 traffic.

## 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 (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DPO Industrial Area zone held an open kutchery at Masjid Siddique Akbar, sector 1-16 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.

At the outset of the



proceedings, the participants shared their grievances and also gave suggestions to resolve them. The

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 Capital Police were taking steps to control crime further. He

## Shariah Board Pak sets minimum Sadaqah Fitr, Fidyah at Rs 300 for Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Shariah Board Pakistan, Sheikh Al-Hadith Professor Dr. Mufti Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Jilali has announced that the minimum Sadaqah Fitr and Fidyah 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 affluent individuals contributing Sadaqah Fitr and Fidyah in accordance with their financial capacity, with values set at Rs 600 for oats, Rs 2,400 for dates, and Rs 4,400 for raisins.

Similarly, he outlined the Fidyah rates for fasting the entire month of Ramadan, which are Rs 9,000, for wheat flour, Rs 18,000 for oats, Rs 72,000 for dates, and Rs 132,000 for raisins.

Dr. Jilali clarified that Fidyah for fasting was intended for individuals who were chronically ill or unable to fast with no prospect of recovery.

Travelers and those temporarily unable to fast were obligated to make up for missed fasts, as Fidyah could not be a substitute for abstaining from fasting, he maintained.

## Faisal Masjid seeks applications for Aitekaf in last Ashra of Ramadan

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 Ramadan.

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 month. It has announced

that applications for Aitekaf will be accepted until the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, allowing eager devotees to secure their spots in advance.

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

## PMNH finally on way to expansion

ISLAMABAD (APP): But after years, the previous coalition government led by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif finally allocated funds for this project and ensured that same are also released on time.

"The construction work of the museum has been started after receiving initial funds out of total Rs. 500 million allocated for this year. This money would be spent on construction of these blocks," stated Dr. Khalid Mahmood, who is heading this project in PMNH.

He informed that the contractors have been hired by the Public Works Department during October last year and work has been started.

"Construction of six blocks would be completed during three years time and it would help address the

issue of space shortage for displaying more specimen," Dr Khalid said.

Although the science and technology sector in Pakistan witnessed a boom during last few years with its departments diligently focusing on research and innovation, but the Pakistan Museum for Natural History (PMNH) could not get due share of funds to complete construction of its lingering six blocks.

The museum comprising only two blocks and delay in their completion since its establishment in 1976 had compelled the PMNH administration to display maximum specimens of natural resources in small rooms and corridors.

Besides providing research facilities to faculties and students, PMNH regularly organizes trainings,

## PUC vows global action against Islamophobia, calls for steps to address anti-Muslim sentiments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan 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.

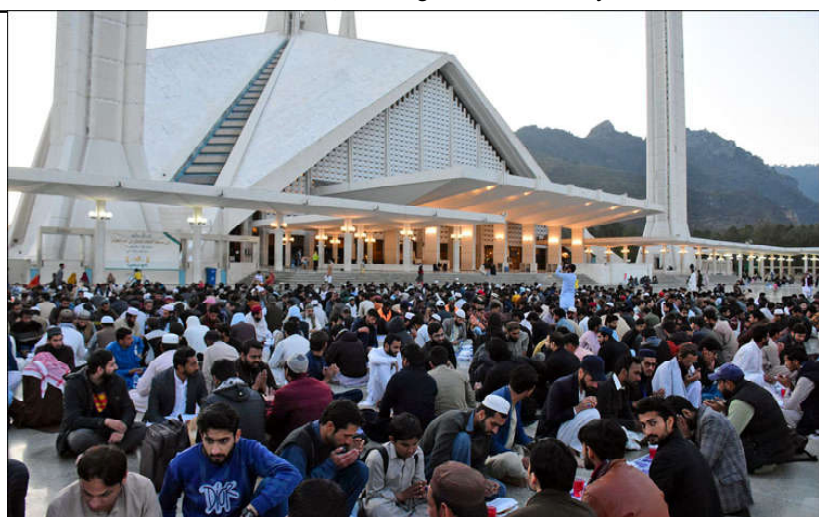
Ashrafi urged world powers to accelerate initiatives to eradicate

Islamophobia, labeling it as a toxic barrier hindering interfaith 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).

Ashrafi lamented the

incitement of non-Muslims against Islam, attributing it 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 sentiment, branding discrimination 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 endeavors for interfaith dialogue and harmony, culminating in an upcoming international conference, themed 'Paigham-e-Pakistan' in Islamabad after the holy month of Ramadan.



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

## FBR official responsible for Justice Isa case appointed Commissioner

ISLAMABAD (Online): Instead of initiating criminal proceedings against Sajida Kausar and other accomplices involved in misusing their position to frame an asset declaration case against Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

Chairman FBR, Malik Zubair Tiwana has appointed involved officer to the coveted post of Commissioner IR LTO.

The three officers Zulfiqar Ahmad, Sajida Kausar and Khurshid Alam, were removed from their positions and placed in the admin pool of the FBR after the case against Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

## 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 martyrdom of the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army in North Waziristan.

The TJP Chairman prayed for the exaltation of the ranks of the martyrs in the hereafter and blessings of peace and patience onto the bereaved families, said a press release.

Abdullah Gul said it was not easy to offer the funeral of martyrs while expressing his deep grief and pain over the martyrdom of the brave sons of the soil.

He said that the government and opposition leaders should abstain from politics on such occasion as it was not the time for scoring points but rather for creating motivation and encouragement among all the ranks and files of the nation. 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.

## Women's voices should not be silenced

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

The Afghanistan Journalists 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 in the media sector."

The Women's Media 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 International 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 and begin a conversation with and within unions, press clubs, and media organisations.

The WMFP feels more restrictions on women in the Afghan media could affect the work being done and may lead to the silencing of women's voices from inside the country.

regard SP Judicial Protection Unit (JPU) briefed the security officers and officials, those performing security and squad duties at

## Security personnel briefed for effective duty

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr.

regard SP Judicial Protection Unit (JPU) briefed the security officers and officials, those performing security and squad duties at



Akbar Nasir Khan, a special briefing was held for the officers and officials deployed on important security duties regarding their duties, a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this

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 about being alert.



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

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief 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 government. He stated this while talking to media during his first ever visit to Dera Ismail Khan after being elected as Chief Minister. He said the implementation of the 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 forces.

The chief minister said the government has restored 'health-card' facility. "We have to improve the treatment facilities at public hospitals," he said and hoped that soon the people would not have need to visit private hospitals as provision of all facilities would be ensured at public hospitals. 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 province under Ramadan package. It will be handed over to them at their doorstep respectfully, he mentioned. Moreover, he said the facility of 'Shelter homes'

has been reopened by ensuring all facilities for needy people. However, he said, the government would also take steps for providing business opportunities to people rather than giving them charity or stipend. He said the women would be provided employment at their homes and youth would be provided with skill trainings. He informed that the consultation was underway with other countries regarding provision of employment to people by giving them skills training. After the training, the skilled people of the province would be sent abroad for employment.



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

# Maryam announces 3-month remission in jail terms of prisoners, release 155 prisoners

**Independent Report** LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Sunday announced three-month remission in the punishment of prisoners and release of 155 prisoners across the 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 collaboration of philanthropists. A video call facility will be provided in all the jails of Punjab very soon, she announced. The CM stated that she herself remembered the time spent during her period of imprisonment

while coming to the Central Jail today. "I was 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 is feeling unwell and is being taken to the hospital. It was a 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 used to sit on the praying mat. "I used to wait for the 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 think and ponder in the jail" she recalled.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the GBDWP meeting at CM Secretariat.

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

PESHAWAR (APP): Zahid Chanzab, 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 has generously blessed our province with the world's best hill stations and tourist destinations and only focusing on this sector can revolutionize the economy of the province that can ameliorate the 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 Tourism Authority (KPCTA) headquarters in Peshawar cant wherein he went around various sections and got acquainted of its working. An introductory meeting was also held on this occasion. Zahid Chanzab while chairing the meeting said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has made it clear in his first policy statement that all due rights and financial resources of the province.



PESHAWAR: PESCO workers are busy repairing the transformer in the Tehsil area.

# 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 Shakir 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.

# 2087 square feet of streets to be paved in UC 10 Korangi: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that 2087 square feet of streets will be paved in UC 10 Korangi at a cost of Rs 80 million and, development work will be done in all seven districts. He expressed these views while inaugurating the community support program's pavement and renovation works in Korangi Town, said a statement. He said that dental surgery, orthopedic and diabetes treatment will be done in Sarfaraz Rafiqi Hospital during the next one week. Karachi Institute of Heart Disease is starting a nursing school in which 130 male and female students of Karachi

will be able to take a certified course, he said. On this occasion, Member Provincial Assembly Farooq Awan, Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, UC10 Chairman Habib, Korangi District President Javed, City Councilor Afshin Shah and other local leaders were also present. The Mayor Karachi while addressing the ceremony held after starting the development works said that the federal, provincial and local governments are now on the same page so it should be expected that there will be no hindrance in the development works.

# 14 dead, 1122 injured in 1063 road accidents in Punjab

**Independent Report** LAHORE: At least fourteen persons were killed and 1122 injured in 1063 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 533 people with serious injuries were shifted to

different hospitals, while 589 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 626 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 133 pedestrians.

# Punjab police sign MoU with private hospital

**Independent Report** LAHORE: 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 MOU. 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 will be available at Akhtar Saeed Teaching Hospital for the families of police martyrs. Free treatment 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. Under Sahet Saholat program Treatment facility will be provided at Westwood Colony whereas Hemodialysis facility will be available in all branches under the health facility programme. The IG Punjab appreciated the MOU with Farooq Group and said it will prove an important step in the health welfare of the force.



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

# 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 rigorous 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 upon 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 foul-smelling meat in unhygienic freezers,

underscoring the urgency of the situation. During the inspections, Bilal Yasin noted deficiencies in cleanliness and the presence of pests, urging for swift rectification. The food minister directed the PFA teams to ensure the comprehensive traceability of meat supplied across Punjab, including Lahore. He reiterated his commitment to providing safe and hygienic food to the people, particularly during Ramadan. In line with directives from the Punjab Chief Minister, a concerted crackdown against counterfeit mafia is underway, with PFA inspection teams fully mobilized throughout the province. Encouraging citizen participation, Bilal Yasin called upon the people to collaborate with the Punjab Food Authority in eradicating adulteration and counterfeiting in food. In case of any grievances, he urged citizens to promptly reach out to the authorities at 1223.



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

# Cash, gold worth million looted in Hassanabdal

ATTOCK (APP): Armed bandits looted two gold traders at gunpoint depriving them from gold and cash in Hassanabdal on Sunday and fled away successfully. As per details, Muhammad Akbar reported to Hassanabdal Police that he, along with Muhammad Waseem, had collected gold from various jewelers in Attock city. They had reached Hassanabdal Chowk to hire a vehicle bound for Abbottabad when five armed bandits, wielding weapons and sticks, arrived in a passenger van. The bandits forcibly bundled them into the vehicle at gunpoint. Subsequently, the armed bandits assaulted them inside the vehicle, snatching cash amounting to Rs. 0.6 million.

# Competition in KP tough for Senate poll

PESHAWAR (APP): The competition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also tough in the Senate elections with a total of 42 candidates having submitted 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 for two reserved seats for women. The official of the Provincial Election Commission disclosed that Azam Khan Swati, Qazi Muhammad Anwar Advocate, Waqar Ahmed Qazi, Dr. Hamad Mahmood Cheema, Khalid

Masood, Fazal Hanan, Dilawar Khan, Qaiser Khan, Noorul Haque Qadri and Syed Irshad Hussain are candidates for the Technocrat seat. Irfan Saleem, Muhammad Talha Mehmoood, Dilawar Khan, Faisal Javed, Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Azhar Qazi Mashwani, Niaz Ahmed, Waqas Orkzai, Fazal Hanan, Asif Iqbal, Azam Khan Swati, Murad Saeed, Faizur Rehman, Khurram Zeeshan, Attal Haq, Masoodur Rehman, Shafiq Ayaz, Asif Rafiq, Mahmood Khan, Noorul Haq Qadri, Muhammad Naseem, Sajjad Hussain, Taj Muhammad Afridi, Ahmed Mustafa, and Fida Muhammad are also candidates for the 7 general seats, said the official of the Provincial Election Commission.

# Ramazan: The month of patience, compassion for all

PESHAWAR (APP): PESHAWAR (APP): Ramazan, the 9th holy month of Islamic calendar teaches Muslims to practice self-discipline, sacrifice and empathy by helping the underprivileged besides encouraging actions of generosity and compulsory charity for socio economic empowerment of poor people. Famous for countless blessings, Ramazan is the holy month in which Muslims from across the world show exceptional endurance, patience and empathy besides seeking forgiveness and mercy keeping them modest and disciplined in life. From dawn to dusk, Ramazan's 30-day fasts

abstain Muslims from all kinds of sinful actions, negative behaviors, and smoking. It teaches immense virtues and tolerance besides helping the needy, vulnerable and oppressed segments of society. "In Islam, patience means to endure or persevere in the face of any difficulty or hardship for Allah only. It requires us to tolerate any trial realizing that whatever we are going through is according to Allah's divine will, and He is the One to take us out from all difficult circumstances and challenging situations," said Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi, Chief Khateeb of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while talking to APP.

He said Allah Almighty has repeated the word, 'Sabr' (patience) almost 75 times in the Holy Quran which indicates its significance for humanity. The Holy Qur'an says, "O you who believe! seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Saabiireen (the patient ones). "As devoted servants of Allah Almighty, we have an obligation to be grateful when we earn Allah's bounties. Similarly, we should deal with all calamities and difficult situations with forbearance, self-control and humbleness," he added. "The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had

also laid great emphasis on mercy, kindness and sympathies with the needy and poor people besides persons with different abilities during Ramazan and declared that the rewards of enduring patience in hard times are manifold in this world and in the hereafter. KP Chief Khateeb said, "Never a believer is stricken with a discomfort, illness, grief or mental worry but Allah Almighty will expiate his sins on the account of immense patience and compassion during Ramazan." He said a believer, who socializes with people and tolerates their mistakes with sympathy and gentleness would have

greater rewards than the other believers, who do not do so. In another Hadith on the reward of fasting, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whosoever fasts during Ramazan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven." The first Ashra of Ramazan is seeking mercy of Allah, the middle one for forgiveness and the last one to get liberation from the hellfire. "In Ramazan, there was a night of Laylatal Qadar (the Night of Power) and according to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), every Muslim who prays on Laylatal Qadar with faith and sincerity, all his/her past sins would be forgiven."



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali being aware about online diagnoses and treatment of diseases after inauguration of Shifa Digital Clinic

## 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 well, he said while addressing the business community in Islamabad.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan and Iran were geo-strategically very important countries located at the junction of Middle East, South Asia and Central Asia. Therefore, the land and sea integration of both countries is of great importance in the world of Geo-economy, said a press release issued, he said.

The Iranian envoy said that in order to further improve transit trade between Pakistan and Iran, 12 border trade markets had been opened, in which 6 border markets had been completed and others are in progress, which would usher in a new era of economic integration in both countries.

He said that Gwadar and Chabahar were very important in maritime trade ties, so both countries should declare both ports as coastal sister 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 Organization (SCO), ECO

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 mega projects were extremely important for Pakistan and Iran, which can stabilize the economic relations between the two countries.

The Iranian envoy said that the two mega projects were not only in the interest of both countries and bilateral cooperation is of utmost importance, which can bring prosperity to the region.

He said that in the same way North, South and Corridor and East, West were also very important in regional and global trade, which increases the possibility of connecting the global supply chain of both countries.



**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-Matiah forum empowers global SMEs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Al-Matiah 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 economic bridges connecting the Middle East with the world, presenting Dubai as a hub for entrepreneurial activity. This event not only emphasized Dubai's 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 business leaders.

Under the auspices of 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 Mohammed bin Sheikh Mejren, and His Excellency Dr. Juma Madani, leading Al-Matiah 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-Matiah Investment forged a strategic partnership with Petrus Bio Energy Do, a pioneering Brazilian company in sustainable agriculture and energy. This alliance underscores the forum's dedication to global expansion and environmental stewardship.

The UAE's investment climate once again positions it as a diverse hub, attracting a wide array of business talent. With its economic strength, Dubai remains at the forefront of the global entrepreneurial scene. The successful debut of the Al-Matiah Forum sets the stage for SMEs to thrive on a global scale.

The guest list boasted prominent figures from around the world, representing countries such as the United States, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, China, India, Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan.

## Reducing interest rates to devalue rupee, raise inflation: Mughal

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of Pakistan 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 start 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 running at half their production capacity; therefore, the demand to reduce the electricity and 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-tax-paying 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.

Murtaza Mughal said the federal government is considering handing over the electricity distribution companies to the provinces. How will the provinces run these companies when the federal government cannot run them?

It would be better to sell these companies because the private sector would run them efficiently. He noted that bill-paying consumers have to bear the burden of loss-making discos, which is tantamount to encouraging corruption and power theft.



**MULTAN:** Laborers are busy unloading sacks of potatoes from delivery trucks at the Vegetable market.

## Dollars' demand in market must remain balanced: Shahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that the demand for dollars in the market should remain balanced.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that a balanced exchange rate increases confidence in the market, which is very important.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that maintaining the dollar's value was necessary to maintain the current balance between imports and exports.

A change in the value of the dollar affects the import and export sector, which disturbs the business environment, he added.

The business leader noted that the exporters get worried when the dollar becomes expensive. When the dollar becomes cheap, the imports start to

increase, which causes the deficits to rise. Both these situations affect the business environment.

He said that the dollar's depreciation will increase the trade and current account deficit, which has been controlled with incredible difficulty.

The seven-month current account deficit has been reduced to one billion dollars, and the federal government has to pay 24 billion dollars in debt servicing in the current fiscal year, so no risk can be taken.

Shahid Rasheed said that exporters were currently facing problems. They have to use the most expensive electricity in the region. Gas has become more costly by 300%, the interest rate for them was up to 25%, and fuel was also expensive. The government had proposed to make electricity cheaper for the export sector, which the IMF rejected.

## Technical varsities VCs meet Punjab industries minister

LAHORE (APP): 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 of 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.

## China's installed capacity of power batteries grows in Jan-Feb

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's installed capacity of power batteries went up in the first two months of the year, according to data from the China Automotive Battery Innovation Alliance.

During the period, the installed capacity of the batteries stood at 50.3 gigawatt-hours (GWh), up 32 percent year on year. In February alone, the output fell 18.1 percent year on year to 18 GWh.

The exports of the power batteries came in at 16.3 GWh during the January-February period.

## NTDC acquires land for installing 600 MW solar project in Kot Addu

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) acquired 2553 acres of land for establishing 600 Mega Watt solar power project in the Kot Addu district.

According to NTDC spokesperson, the 600 MW solar power project will be installed in Tehsil Chowk Sarwar Shaheed of Kot Addu.

NTDC spokesperson stated that the project will help reduce dependence on expensive electricity and added that the land was also being acquired in Layyah and Jhang for two more similar projects.

A solar project of 1200 MW will be installed in Layyah and 600 MW in Jhang and these three projects will generate 2400 MW of solar energy.

## Sec Agri for increasing women counters at Fair Price Shops

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Agriculture Punjab Ifekhar Ali Sahu directed the officers concerned to increase women counters at Agriculture Fair Price Shop to facilitate maximum people in the holy month.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the Secretary Agriculture said that fair price shops have been set up across the province.

## 'Modern designs, trends crucial for furniture industry'

LAHORE (APP): Modern 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 modern designing and new 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 to provide enhanced functionality and convenience. Integration of features like smart furniture, wireless charging, and IT connectivity can make furniture more appealing to tech-savvy buyers," he observed.

The PFC chief was of the view that keeping up with new design trends allows manufacturers to leverage technological innovations and offer products that align with the digital age. He said latest design trends often emphasize sustainable and eco-friendly materials and manufacturing processes.

## Big industry grows by 1.48% in January

ISLAMABAD (APP): The output of the Large Scale Manufacturing (LSMI) sector witnessed an increase of 1.48 per cent during the month of January 2024 compared to the same month of last year, according to PBS data.

The main contributors towards the overall growth of 0.52% included, food (0.38%), beverages (0.12%), tobacco (-0.82%), textile (-1.90%), garments (0.86%), paper & board (-0.10%), petroleum products (0.44%), chemicals (0.46%), pharmaceuticals (1.32%), iron & steel products (-0.05%), electrical equipment.

Overall the LSMI showed a decline of 0.52



**HYDERABAD:** A person selecting and purchasing gas cylinder from vendor at Fort road.



**QUETTA:** People are buying children's clothes from roadside vendors at Joint Road.

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

LAHORE (INP): To express solidarity with the PIAF in the upcoming 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 Paper Market Ganpat Road was led by APMA former chairman Khamis Saeed Butt while the delegation from Young Traders Association of Shah Alam 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 SAARC Chamber Mian Anjum Nisar, Senior Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian, Mian Abuzar Shad.

## Guangxi's foreign trade hits record high in Jan-Feb

NANNING (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.

## Modernizing hosiery industry to boost exports

FAISALABAD (APP): As Pakistan's industrial sector witnessed an overall decline in recent years, reorganizing and modernizing this sector would be an uphill task for the new government.

With two seasoned politicians in the driving seats as President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the business community hopes revolutionary steps to make local industry compatible to international standards for capturing more markets.

Due to volatile situation in the country during past half decade and rising input expenditures, many small industrialists were reluctant to invest more in textile sector especially the hosiery industry.

The businessmen are continuing with old and obsolete machinery although it cost them much than the latest technology making their products incompatible to goods being sold in international market.

"Most of our machinery is old and tromped, causing heavy energy wastage besides other inefficiencies in our overall production process," remarked Mian Abdur Rasheed, a veteran industrialist. "As they use old motors, their energy cost jumps up due to wastage of energy. Even then they prefer to pay high cost in energy bills."

When asked about reasons behind this tendency, he said as these industrialists witnessed uncertain situation in recent years and were reluctant to invest more to replace their old motors.

"Therefore, we expect from the new government to direct its departments to focus on these issues and provide owners free consultation to improve their efficiency and controlling energy wastage," he stated.

Although individually these are small units, yet collectively they are contributing a sizable share in local economy employing thousands of workers," he added.

"Therefore, they should be facilitated and guided to benefit from modern technologies to enhance their profitability."

As the hosiery sector can be segregated into local and export units, Jinnah Colony Faisalabad, Islam Nagar, Gulistan Colony, Haji Abad, Guru Nanak Pura have emerged as a hub of small hosiery units for local consumption while the major export units are housed in Millat Town, Jaranwala-Khurrianwala Industrial Belt, Value-Added City, Allama Iqbal Industrial Estate and Small Industrial Estate near Nalka Kohala.

When contacted different local hosiery owners, their problems felt like identical as also faced by overall industrial sector like high cost of doing business, non-availability of cheaper raw material like fine counts of yarn consumed by hosiery units.

"We think the uncertainty prevailed in the country in recent past and high energy tariff were the major causes to hamper the growth of hosiery industry to a desired level."



**QUETTA:** Labourers are making bundles of mint and spinach for selling at Mizan Chowk.

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
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 years.

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

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 Sunday.

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.



Voters cast their ballots at a polling station on the final day of the presidential election in Moscow, Russia.

# Biden roasts Trump at Washington press dinner

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden joked about Donald Trump and his own age at an annual media dinner on Saturday — before unloading deadly serious criticisms of his rival in November's election.

"One candidate's too old and mentally unfit to be president," the 81-year-old Democrat quipped at the Gridiron Club in Washington. "The other guy's me."

Democrat Biden was making his first speech as president at the annual white-tie gala for the US media and political elite, an event that Republican former president Trump addressed in 2018.

Biden is trailing in a number of polls and faces voters concerns about his age, which he has tried to address by highlighting 77-year-old Trump's recent verbal slip-ups. In his remarks, Biden took a swipe at Republicans in Congress who have launched an impeachment inquiry into his son's business dealings, saying they would "rather fail at impeachment than succeed at anything else."

He added that Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, sitting at the head table with Biden on the eve of St. Patrick's Day "took one look at Congress and he asked for another Guinness."

Varadkar and Biden both pushed during a meeting at the White House on Friday for Republicans in Congress to stop blocking military aid for Ukraine to fight Russia's invasion.

But Biden then returned to Trump, saying that the Democrats' election campaign would show how they rebuilt the US economy after the Covid-19 pandemic "without encouraging the American people to inject bleach".

# Modi says he's confident of win in India elections

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India will elect a new parliament in seven phases between April 19 and early June, the country's election authority said on Saturday, in what amounts to the world's largest election with nearly one billion eligible to vote.

The election pits two-term strongman Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his regional allies against a bickering alliance of two dozen opposition parties, with surveys suggesting a comfortable win for Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party (BJP).

A victory would make Modi, 73, only the second prime minister after Jawaharlal Nehru, India's independence hero and its first prime minister, to win a third straight term.

"We address you at a precious moment, when we as a nation are set to reiterate our pledge to electoral democracy, when Indians will together express their will once again," Rajiv Kumar, the head of the independent Election Commission of India, told reporters.

The last of the seven phases of voting will be held on June 1 and votes counted on June 4, he said.

Modi said the "biggest festival of democracy" had started and his party would campaign on its track record of "good governance and public service".

"I have full confidence that we will get the full affection and blessings" of more than 960 million voters for the third consecutive time, he said in a series of posts on X.

Modi and his party have been in campaign mode for months. The prime minister has been flying around the country almost daily, inaugurating new projects, taking part in religious events and addressing public and private meetings.



BERLIN: Police remove an activist during a "disobedient assembly" called by an environmental group.



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 humanitarian 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 do so or who would take 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 in previous significant pushes for a deal. A short-lived 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 ultimately rejected.

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said on Saturday if he does not win 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 there, this week won enough delegates to mathematically clinch the Republican nomination.

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.



TORONTO (Canada): People being handed out food to break their fast as supporters of a ceasefire in Gaza gather to protest outside the venue of a Liberal Party fundraising rally.

# US agency engages SpaceX to build spy satellites

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: SpaceX is building a network of hundreds of spy satellites under a classified contract with a US intelligence agency, five sources familiar with the programme said, demonstrating deepening ties between billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's space company and national security agencies. The network is being built by SpaceX's Starshield business unit under a \$1.8 billion contract signed in 2021 with the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), an intelligence agency that manages spy satellites, the sources said. The plans show the extent of SpaceX's involvement in US intelligence and military projects and illustrate a deeper Pentagon investment into vast, low-Earth orbiting satellite systems aimed at supporting ground forces. If successful, the sources said the programme would significantly advance the ability of the US government and military to quickly spot potential targets almost anywhere on the globe.

The contract signals growing trust by the intelligence establishment of a company whose owner has clashed with the Biden administration and sparked controversy over the use of Starlink satellite connectivity in the Ukraine war.

# Crisis-hit Sri Lankan economy rebounds as tourists return

**Monitoring Desk**  
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's economy rebounded strongly in the fourth quarter of 2023 from the island nation's unprecedented financial crisis as tourism arrivals rose, the government said on Saturday. Agriculture, industries and services boosted the expansion to 4.5 per cent in the December quarter compared to a 12.4pc contraction a year earlier, the census and statistics department said.

It added however that the economy shrank by 2.4pc overall during 2023 compared to a contraction of 7.8pc in 2022, when the country defaulted on its \$46 billion foreign debt.

"Sri Lanka's economy experienced some kind of duality in 2023," the department said in a statement, noting that the first half of the year recorded negative growth while the economy bounced back in the second.

"The long-awaited boom in tourism came towards the end of the year," the department said, adding that worker remittances too had improved.

# No more 'normal-sized babies' in Gaza, says UN

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: The 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 anaesthesia, 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 reporting 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 especially great.

"What they do see 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 necessary supplies.

"We have had reports of insufficient anaesthetic being available" for Caesarean 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 territory.

# 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 designed 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 Egypt's faltering 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 Egyptians 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 say 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 with Qatar and the United States has been trying to mediate a truce between Israel and Hamas.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will lead a delegation on Sunday that also includes the Italian and Greek prime ministers and the Cypriot president.

# Venezuela's Maduro announces candidacy for July re-election

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

Maduro, a 61-year-old 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 address supporters.

"There's just one outcome, the people's victory on July 28," Maduro said, wearing a bright red zippered jacket. "They haven't been able to stop us, nor will they be able to."

Recent polls show 13.9% of Venezuelans plan to vote for Maduro, far behind opposition candidate Maria Corina Machado's 54.5%.

But though Machado won an opposition primary in October, it was unclear whether she will appear on the ballot after the country's top court upheld a ban barring her from holding public office.

Candidates have until March 25 to register and it remained unclear whether the opposition will name a replacement for Machado, who is under increasing pressure to pick a substitute.

The US partially rolled back sanctions on Venezuela's government in late 2023 because of an elections deal with the opposition, but the nascent rapprochement came to an end with arrests of opposition figures and the court decision about Machado. The US has pledged a reinstatement of oil sanctions from mid-April.

Ruling party sources have told Reuters the reversal in policy by Maduro may be due to waning popularity with his base.

Venezuela has suffered hyperinflation and an unprecedented economic collapse since Maduro took power in 2013, after the death of his mentor, President Hugo Chavez.

# Iceland volcano erupts again, spewing fountains of lava

**Monitoring Desk**  
COPENHAGEN: A volcano in Iceland erupted on Saturday for the fourth time since December, the country's meteorological office said, spewing smoke and bright orange lava into the air in sharp contrast against the dark night sky.

In a video shot from a Coast Guard helicopter and shown on public broadcaster RUV, fountains of molten rock soared from a long fissure in the ground, and lava spread rapidly to each side.

The eruption began at 2023 GMT and the fissure was estimated to be about 2.9 kilometres long, roughly the same size as the last eruption in February, the Icelandic Meteorological Office said in a statement.

Authorities had warned for weeks that an eruption was imminent on the Reykjanes peninsula just south of Iceland's capital Reykjavik.

The site of the eruption was between Hagafell and Stora-Skogfjell, the same area as the previous outbreak on Feb. 8, the Met Office said.

"This was definitely expected," said Rikke Pedersen, head of the Nordic Volcanological Centre.

"Of course the exact time of the eruption is impossible to predict. The first cues of this moving towards the surface actually only happened about 15 minutes in advance," she said.

Reykjavik's Keflavik Airport's website showed it remained open both for departures and arrivals.

Lava appeared to be flowing rapidly south towards the nearby Grindavik fishing town, where a few of the nearly 4,000 residents had returned following earlier outbreaks, the Met Office said.

The town was again being evacuated, public broadcaster RUV reported. An outbreak in January burned to the ground several of its homes.

# Two injured in BBQ eatery blast in eastern China

**Monitoring Desk**  
SHANGHAI: Two people were injured on Saturday after a powerful blast at a barbecue shop in the eastern Chinese city of Huaian, local authorities said, the latest incident to spur calls for better restaurant safety checks across the country.

Videos online posted by state media showed that the blast that occurred at 4:20 p.m. local time (0820 GMT) ripped off the facade of the eatery's building, sending big black plumes of smoke into the air and spraying glass shards across the street.

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): To address the electricity demands of Gwadar, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved a crucial "revised" energy project.

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

The CDWP meeting, led by Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, sanctioned the energy project for Gwadar along with another initiative in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province following detailed discussions.

The approved energy sector project, titled "Construction of 220kV Transmission 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 reported.

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 stations and includes the establishment of a 132kV (AIS) grid station in Jiwani, featuring a 132 KV Line Bay facing the Jiwani -



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

## AJK President urges unified action against India's Kashmir agenda

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir President 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, alleging it to be a ploy to secure electoral gains.

He called for collective action to address the worsening situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and

## 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 prosperity.

## 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.

Accordingly to media reports, in a separate announcement, the government has decided to maintain petrol prices.

## Aleem Khan vows to swiftly resolving public interest matters

LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Abdul Aleem Khan, has pledged to address long-standing 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 Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), emphasized the importance of

## Feasibility study for construction of Gwadar Expressway Phase II underway

GWADAR (INP): As a 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.

Any company registered as a consultant with 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 PPR rule 36(b) will be adopted.

Companies can submit all required documents

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, 2022.



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-Mubarak, in Quetta.



LAHORE: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khawaja Saad Rafique 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 deep-rooted 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.

The Speaker highlighted 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 explore.

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-

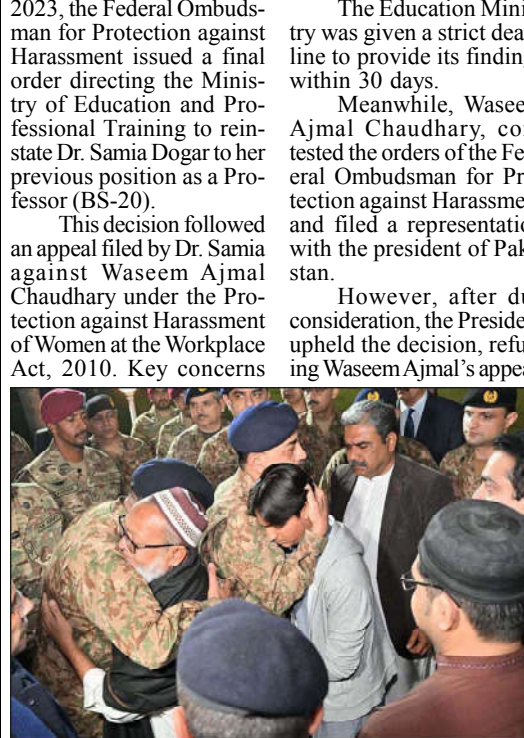
## President rejects workplace harassment case against FCE Prof.

ISLAMABAD (APP): 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 Harassment.

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



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 HARNAL: The former caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Ameer Muhammad Khan Jogezi distributed solar lamps among more than 100 houses in a backward area of Railway Colony Harnal on Sunday.

The Wing Commander Frontier Corps, Colonel Javed was also accompanied by him.

Speaking on the occasion, the former caretaker Provincial Minister said that at the moment, there is electricity crisis all over the province.

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 Harnal.

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.

## Roof collapse leaves 6 dead and 4 injured in South Waziristan

PESHAWAR (INP): A devastating 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 others.

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

Emergency responders swiftly arrived at the 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 hospital.

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.

## Muhammad Ali Achakzai condemns suicide attack at security forces in NW

Independent Report 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 morale of security forces and nation would not be down through such cowardly acts.

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 tributes to the brave officers and jawans who embraced martyrdom in the incident of terrorism.

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

He said that the people of Balochistan are standing by their security forces.

## 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.

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

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

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.

## Promoting sports in Balochistan among top priorities, says secretary

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Sports and Youth Balochistan Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani on Sunday said that it is the responsibility of the government to provide sports opportunities to the athletes.

The Department of Sports and Youth Affairs of Balochistan has created the best strategy to ensure the best opportunities to the youth.

In a statement issued here, the secretary said that promotion of sports in Balochistan is among our

top priorities for which practical steps are being taken.

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 Balochistan for which instructions have been given to all district sports officers.

Dr. Javed Anwar Shahwani further said that best facilities will be provided to the athletes in the festival.



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 Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Sunday claimed to have arrested a total of seven individuals, including four wanted culprits, allegedly involved in human 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 Bahawalpur.

The FIA spokesperson reported that the apprehended individuals were found to be in possession of a substantial amount of local currency, exceeding Rs 1 million in cash, while a significant sum of foreign currency, amounting to 4562 Saudi Riyals, was also seized from the suspects.

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

Earlier in the day, responding to the report of the Libya and Greece boat accident, the FIA black-listed 87 officers across the country from being posted in the immigration department.