

FC personnel martyred, 5 injured in landmine blast in Harnai

HARNAI: A Frontier Corps personnel was martyred while five were injured after the patrolling vehicle came into contact with a landmine in the Khost mining area in Balochistan's Harnai district on Sunday. Harnai Deputy Commissioner Azeem Jan Damar confirmed the incident and said that the FC soldiers were on a routine patrol when their vehicle hit the landmine. The vehicle was also damaged in the blast. The injured personnel were rushed to a nearby hospital as Levies and FC forces arrived at the scene to investigate the incident. —Online

Fazl announces second round of anti-govt protests from 23rd

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazl ur Rehman on Sunday announced that he will launch a campaign against the PTI-led government by holding public gatherings in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad in the coming days.

The veteran politician made the announcement after holding a consultative meeting with allied parties in Lahore.

Fazl further said the JUI-F and its allied parties will hold a public gathering on February 23 in Karachi, in Islamabad on March 1 and March 19 in Lahore. The announcement was in line with what JUI-F's secretary general had stated last month.

In a press conference on January 30, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidri had announced that his party would resume its campaign against the PTI-led federal government. The campaign would resume after a failed Azadi March carried out by the JUI-F and other opposition parties last year. In today's press conference, Fazl while hitting out at the incumbent government said that the government has "gone home", adding that there was no "writ of the government" at this point.

Fazl shared that in today's meeting the parties deliberated on the formation of a constitutional and elected govt. "We stand by the stand we took on the first day," stated the JUI-F leader, while sharing the details of the anti-government protests that they plan to launch. —Online

Govt to expedite crackdown against hoarders, says Hamad

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Hamad Azhar on Sunday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), govt would expedite crack-down against hoarders for reducing the prices of essential commodities in next few days.

The government would encircle the mafias hiding behind the sugar, wheat, textile and other sectors, he stated while talking to a private news channel programme. The action would be launched with the help of provincial governments to catch the perpetrators creating artificial shortage of essential food items in the country, he added. Commenting on currency devalue and inflation issues, he said the PTI government had to take unpopular decisions to balance the system.

Criticizing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz regime, Hamad Azhar said infact, the weak policies introduced by the last govt had played major role in currency devaluation. He added that price hike issue in some food items including vegetables would be resolved in couple of days. In reply to a question, he said the directors of International Monetary Fund (IMF), visiting Pakistan tomorrow, to meet the officials in Pakistan. —Online

PM to open two-day int'l Afghan refugees moot on 17th

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan will inaugurate two-day international conference on Afghan refugees here on February 17 which would be attended by ministers and senior officials from different countries.

The government of Pakistan, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is convening the international conference to mark "40 years of Afghan refugees presence in Pakistan: A new partnership for solidarity", on February 17-18.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, ministers and senior officials from around 20 countries, who had been supporting the Afghan refugees across the globe and in Pakistan, would be participating, the foreign office in a press release on Sunday said. It said, in addition, senior level participation is also expected from the United Nations, multi-lateral developments banks, civil society

Indo-Pak war on Kashmir can not be ruled out, says AJK PM

The Business Report

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan said on Sunday that Kashmir was a nuclear flash-point in South Asia and the possibility of war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir could not be ruled out.

He was talking to the delegation of newly elected office bearers of District Bar Association Rawalpindi and High Court Bar Association that called on him at Jammu and Kashmir House in federal capital on Sunday, an AJK government official statement released to the media Sunday night said.

The AJK prime minister stressed the need for immediate increase of military power to foil the expansionist and nefarious designs

of India. "No diplomacy can survive without power and the Pakistan is only country capable to stop India from its expansionist motives in the region", he added.

He said RSS ideology was working behind the satanic brain of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "We are fully aware of the challenges being faced by our beloved country but it is imperative to enhance the military power of the country", the premier asserted. Raja Farooq Haider Khan said India despite all its efforts miserably failed to buy the loyalties of the Kashmiris. "It is high time for us to do whatever we can for our brethren who are the victims of worst state terrorism in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK)", he added.

The AJK prime minister said Kashmiris

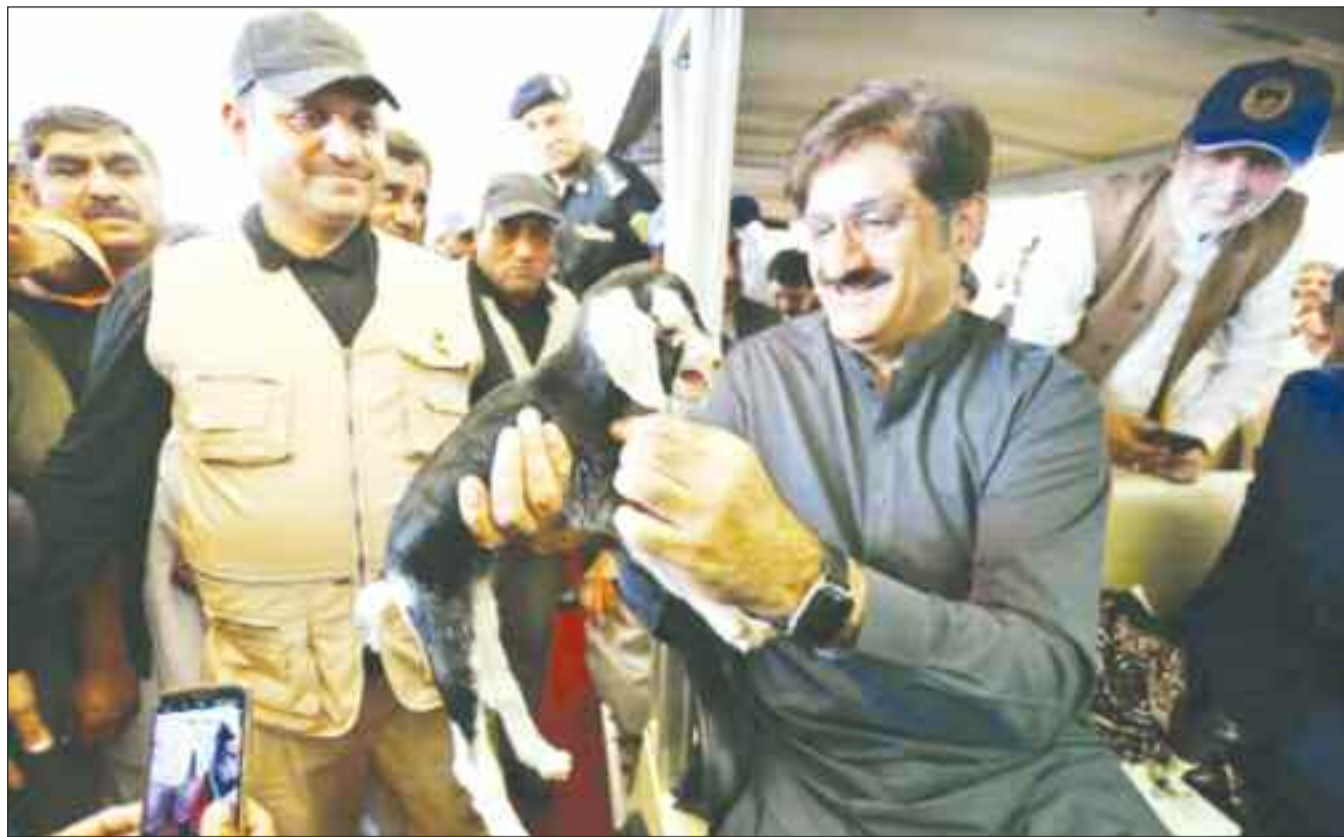
were rendering matchless sacrifices for the freedom of their motherland.

He urged lawyers to play their effective role highlighting the right to self determination movement of the people of IOJK. "Lawyers fraternity must feel proud to be in the same profession which was the profession of the founders of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal", he added. Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider expressed the hope that time was not so far when the people of IOJK would see the dawn of freedom of their motherland.

On this occasion, the newly elected office bearers of the District and High Court Bars Associations invited Prime Minister to address their respective bars. Raja Farooq Haider Khan accepted their invitation.

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HYDERABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visits animals stall during closing ceremony of Sindh Livestock Expo 2020 organised by Livestock & Fisheries Department at the Bypass.

PM-Housing-Initiatives

Low-cost housing units for the poor families kick-start

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Provision of low-cost housing units for the poor segments of society, homeless and low-earning class as announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan, finally entered into the next phase as construction on these units has kick-started in the Federal Capital under the government's mega social security flagship Ehsaas programme.

Under the project, the government, is said to have managed the financing for the applicants by involving some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who would extend loans to the people, an official source told APP on Sunday. A non-governmental organization had already started the loaning process as in the first tranche, Rs 7.35 million had been disbursed so far among 31 applicants to help them bear the cost of the unit, the official source added.

The federal government in cooperation with the State Bank of Pakistan was also in the process of making legislation to enable the banks extend housing loans to the poor people

who were so far deprived of the facility. According to official website of Division of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, under such housing initiatives, Ehsaas also envisaged construction of homes for 10,000 orphans, setting up of Panah-gahs in several major cities and a housing scheme for the poor (including landless farmers) through interest free loans.

The "Ehsaas" programme, with the objective to reduce inequality, invest in people and lift backward districts, hinged over creation of a 'welfare state' as announced by the prime minister. The Ehsaas' poverty reduction strategy were based upon four pillars and it currently embodied more than hundred policy actions including provision of low costing houses to the poor and setting up shelter houses. The programme was launched for the extreme poor, orphans, widows, homeless, disabled, jobless, poor farmers, labourers, sick and undernourished, students from low-income backgrounds and the elderly citizens.

Currently, the house financing facility in Pakistan is just 0.2 per cent while it is 10 per cent in India, 30 per cent in Malaysia and 80

per cent in the United Kingdom and the United States. Besides, under the Naya Pakistan housing scheme, in the first phase, 135,000 housing units were planned across the country. In the initial phase of the scheme, 110,000 housing units would be constructed in Balochistan for the fishermen and the government employees whereas 25,000 units would be built in Islamabad and Rawalpindi at four sites for the government employees.

There was a shortfall of over 10m houses in the country, and every year, additional demands for residences added to this backlog.

The incumbent government intended to promote access to housing and jump start the housing sector as it had set target to provide 5 million houses to the homeless people of the country.

PM Imran had already launched a low-cost finance scheme to kick-start the affordable housing project for the poor. It was expected that the unprecedented mega projects would generate economic activities through jobs creation and promotion of 40 allied industries

Unprecedented escalation in production cost

Country's poultry industry facing massive losses

By Our Staff Correspondent

LAHORE: The outgoing year 2019 has proved to be the worst year for poultry industry, breaking record of last 30 years' losses mainly due to unprecedented escalation in cost of production.

The cost of poultry feed has flown upward, reaching the highest level of last 10 years owing to huge depreciation of Rupee against dollar, record high markup rate and continued hike in power and gas tariffs, leading to jump in feed rate up to Rs3000 per 50kg bag from earlier price of about Rs2200.

These views were expressed by the Pakistan Poultry Association former chairman Abdul Basit, who is also ex-president of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). He revealed that average sale price of the whole year of poultry products should remain higher than the cost of production by at least Rs1-2 which is essential for the survival of business. However, the calendar year 2019

proved to be unfortunate for the poultry sector in the last 30 years, inflicting loss of billions.

Abdul Basit said that poultry sector is unable to pass on ever soaring cost of production to the consumers. Rather the industry survives by enhancing its efficiency through technology advancement.

Pakistan Poultry Association former chairman said that poultry products are sold below price of their original cost during eight months of the year. When chicken prices start to go upward during the rest of four months, then industry is able to compensate its losses incurred throughout the year.

He said that government, instead of controlling fuel price or seizing power tariff hike, makes wrong propaganda against poultry farmers, who have contributed a lot to control ever-soaring inflation in the country.

Replying to a question regarding present trend of poultry rates, he said that poultry rates have not been increased as other kitchen

items registered hike in prices during the last 30 years. Poultry products have been resisting inflationary trend, as they never go up as other products register hike in their rates due to high inflation. He said that farmers community, including poultry farmers, are the most oppressed and vulnerable group, as they cannot fix the rate of their produce according to their cost of production.

They are totally dependent on market forces, as against the manufacturers and dealers, who have full authority to set the price of their goods based on cost of production and other duties, he added. Abdul Basit, who is also chairman of Big bird, said that due to record hike in cost of production along with unmanageable ventilation system at controlled sheds even in winter, which may perish even the whole poultry stock, almost 25 per cent of farmers have shut their businesses temporarily, as they cannot take the risk of colossal loss. This also causes a sharp reduction in poultry stocks, lifting

EF seeks FM's permission to repatriate students from Wuhan

KARACHI: The Edhi Foundation has written a letter to Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday, seeking permission to "evacuate students from Wuhan city of China". The letter states that the organisation's representatives are in touch with the students, who are "mentally disturbed and in stress". The letter also states that the students are "facing food shortage" and that most of them are not infected and "we can save them". Wuhan, the epicentre of the new coronavirus that has claimed over 800 lives and affected more than 37,000 people so far. —APP

Fehmida for revisiting FPCCI nomination for SAARC CCI

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Fehmida Kausar Jamali Sunday underlined the need to revisit the chamber's nomination for the executive committee of the SAARC Countries Chamber of Commerce (CCI).

In a statement, she said the FPCCI's nomination for the executive committee in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) CCI seemed to be politically motivated, which might set aside the country's image and regional trade. Fehmida Jamali, who is currently holding the office of Insaaf Women Federation Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Vice President, said Pakistan stood as a novel example where politics had stifled the traders. "This is the reason that our exports are continuously falling while regional competitors in the SAARC region like Bangladesh and India, are enjoying positive growth," she added.

Ms. Jamali said she had requested Prime Minister Imran Khan and Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi to intervene in this matter immediately and give necessary directions to the FPCCI Secretariat on revisiting the list of names as it's a matter of the country's reputation.

The vice president said she, in a letter written to the SAARC Chamber headquarters last month, pointed out that the FPCCI's nominees' were not competent to hold such position due to their less expertise in the trade diplomacy.

'Role of local communities in CPEC projects vital'

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: Former chief minister Dr. Mohammad Malik Baloch has emphasised the need for prioritising the inclusion of Balochistan's local communities in all the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

Speaking at a stakeholders' round-table at Gwadar, Dr. Baloch called for further increasing the share of jobs for locals, particularly in Gwadar and across the province in general. Political activists, provincial government officials, fishermen and business representatives participated in the round-table, organised jointly by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) and the Association for Integrated Development (AID). They stressed that inclusive development was the spirit of China's Belt and Road Initiative, and called for direct involvement of local communities in planning and execution of critical development projects in Balochistan.

They also urged federal and provincial governments to address issues such as provision of health and education facilities, supply of potable water and livelihoods of fishermen.

Most of the delegates who deal in fisheries called for subsidies or cheaper loans to further develop their business, as almost 75 per cent of Gwadar's population lives off the sea i.e. fishing. Most of the participants repeatedly underscored the need for urgently setting up technical education and training centres in Gwadar so the city could produce young skilled workers for the upcoming industrial zone.

Officials speaking in their personal capacity did point out that several demands by the local communities were being gradually addressed, albeit at a slow pace.

'PM Poultry project in full swing in KP'

PESHAWAR: Secretary Livestock and Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Israr Khan Sunday said distribution of chicken under domestic poultry project of the Prime Minister Imran Khan is in full swing receiving overwhelming responses people across the province.

He said, distribution of chicken in the domestic poultry project of Prime Minister Imran Khan's National Agriculture Emergency Program through Livestock Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa got significant responses from the people of Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Kohat, and Karak.

He said this week, distribution of poultry in Mardan and Swabi has been completed while in next week it will be started in Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Tank and Lakki Marwat.

The distribution process, including the integrated districts, has initiated phase wise, he said adding, "it will be launched from the first week of March and in the view of the usefulness of the program, the government has been requested to further expand the program so that the public can get the maximum benefit from this useful program." He said through this program poor and middle class people could not only improve their economic condition but also meet their daily needs as well. According to statistics, people from all over the province have been given the program through which they could improve their economic condition.

He also lauded the vision of the Prime Minister Imran Khan to empower people and making them economically sound at their door steps. He said the program is going successful and receiving good results, that is why the demand of the distribution under domestic poultry project is increasing with every passing day. He also appreciated Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan, Jahangir Khan Tareen, Focal Person of the National Agriculture Emergency Program, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Livestock. —Online



KARACHI: Activists of Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen present during a ceremony titled Martyr Qasem Soleimani Conference at the Nishtar Park.