



## PML N leader slams PTI leadership

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: Central Leader Pakistan Muslim League (N) former Federal Minister Sheikh Aftab Ahmed in his special talks with the media on Sunday has strongly criticized the financial mismanagement of PTI Imran Khan leaving the country into serious crisis arisen after signing foreign loan agreements of billions dollars with IMF first ever in the history of 70 years besides dissolving provincial assemblies only for his ego satisfaction and stubbornness. While expressing his views on the prevailing economic juncture, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed said the responsibilities of these circumstances rest upon Imran Khan when the nation compares with the tenure of Muslim League supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif. Sheikh Aftab Ahmed said that the country was facing worst kind of load shedding of power, gas, of 18 hours when Mian Nawaz Sharif took over as Prime Minister in 2013. He said that more than 14000 mega volts electricity was produced as a result of the agonized load shedding was minimized while people was prosperous who were able to earn their livelihood as the industry was at fast track leading to increase in growth rate as par with other developing countries of the region.

## Man martyred, two injured in Bannu IED blast

PESHAWAR: Man martyred and two others were injured in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast near Bakakhel Mandi in Bannu on Sunday. Police control Bannu said that IED, planted in a motorcycle, detonated causing the martyrdom of a citizen identified as Khan Muhammad son of Saifullah, while Arif Khan son of Shayer Khan and Zahid son of Zair Muhammad got critical injuries. The police cordoned off the area soon after the incident and started a search operation to arrest the persons involved in the incident. The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital where their situation was stated to be stable. **APP**

### Change of Name

I have changed my name from Nasreen Akhtar to Nasreen Hassan Niazi. Name may please be changed in all official documents. Nasreen Hassan Niazi W/O Amir Hassan Khan. CNIC No. 54400-6889784-8

### Change of Name

I Muhammad Maaz s/o Jehad Ali resident of Ghauri Town Phase 7 4c-2 Islamabad registered with FBISE at SSC level under Registration No. 2114501072 passed SSC Annual Examination 2021 under Roll No. 1011591 do announce that I have decided to substantially change my name from Maghaz to Muhammad Maaz which is written as Muhammad Maaz in Board's documents/record. Hence the same may be changed. That the statement give above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing has been concealed or withheld.



ISLAMABAD: A girl slides along one of the world's most extended zip line during Islamabad Test Festival at F-9 Park.— Online

# Punjab govt won't hinder Aurat March in province

LAHORE: Punjab Interim Information Minister Amir Mir has promised that the caretaker government will not place any obstacles for Aurat March protesters in the province, adding that all the reservations of the event's organisers had been addressed. The Aurat March organising committee had last month requested a no objection certificate (NOC) from the district administration to hold a rally on March 8 at Nasser Bagh, Lahore, followed by a

march around the perimeter of the park. However, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider had rejected the plea citing "the current security scenario, threat alerts, and law and order situation, and in light of activities like controversial cards and banners for awareness of women's rights and the strong reservation of the general public and religious organizations, especially JJ's (Jamaat-i-Islami) women's and student wings, who had also announced a pro-

gramme against the Aurat March." Subsequently, Aurat March organisers petitioned the Lahore High Court on Saturday night, saying that the DC's order was "arbitrary, discriminatory and ultra vires" of various constitutional articles. The petition has been fixed for March 6 (Monday) and will be heard by Justice Muzamil Akhtar Shabbir. In a statement released today, Mir said that the government has decided to provide security to Aurat

March protesters. "Complete police security will be given to the participants." He said that the caretaker government won't become a hindrance for the demonstrators, adding that "our caretaker government believes in the freedom of all individuals". The minister further said that all the reservations put forward by the protesters will have been removed. "We hope the Aurat March will be held in a peaceful manner," he added.

Earlier, civil society, political parties, and rights organisations condemned the deputy commissioner for rejecting the plea to organise Aurat March on International Women's Day on March 8. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan also strongly condemned the Lahore district administration for rejecting Aurat March organisers permission to hold a public rally marking International Women's Day on March 8. "It is regrettable that their

right to peaceful assembly is routinely challenged by the district administration because 'controversial' placards and 'strong reservations' from the public and religious organisations ostensibly create law-and-order risks. This is a poor defence." The HRCP demanded that the caretaker Punjab government uphold the Aurat March's right to freedom of peaceful assembly and provide the marchers with full security.—**Online**

## Sehbaz Khan promoted as conservator reforestation



### MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shahbaz Khan has been promoted as Conservator Reforestation Muzaffarabad Circle performance of Muzaffarabad Reforestation Circle will be much better now.. Muhammad Shahbaz Khan has started work after taking charge. Officers of AJK Forest Department expressed their happiness on his promotion and expressed the hope that Shahbaz Khan will now do

better with hard work. Shahbaz Khan is one of the few officers in AJK's Forest Department who has always increased the positive reputation of the department. Conservator Muhammad Shahbaz Khan has played an important role from design & documentation of TBTP to successful plantation. Shahbaz Khan, without taking any kind of pressure, has boldly released the encroached land of the Forest Department from powerful encroachments. Shehbaz Khan is known not only in AJK but in entire of Paki-

stan as a competent, hardworking, expert in documentation, respected by senior officers and kind by junior officers. Shahbaz Khan is always ready for the technical assistance of the forest officers not only in AJK but also all over Pakistan for the improvement of forests. The promotion of Shahbaz Khan will definitely prove better for the Forest Department. Shahbaz Khan's performance as Divisional Forest Officer was exemplary and he was appreciated at all levels.

## Supremacy of law, welfare of force top priority: IGP

D.I.KHAN: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan on Sunday said that the supremacy of law and justice and the welfare of the police force were the top priorities of the department. He stated this during his visit to Ejaz Shaheed Police Lines, Dera Ismail Khan where he was welcomed

by Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Abdul Ghafoor Afridi, DPO Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaiserani, DPO Tank Waqar Ahmed, DPO South Waziristan Shabir Hussain and other senior police officers. On this occasion, a smartly turned contingent of police presented salute to the IGP. The IGP also visited 'Yadgar-e-Shuhada' at po-

lice lines and laid wreaths on the memorials of police martyrs. The KP Police chief also planted a sapling in the premises of Police Lines in connection with the ongoing spring plantation drive. While addressing a gathering of officers and officials of police, the IGP said the police job was a sacred profession which puts a heavy

responsibility on the shoulders of the force to move forward as a team for establishing peace in the entire province and the country. He mentioned that the officers, from constable to the rank of IG, have rendered sacrifices for the bright future of the country and nation. He said that the provincial police always fulfilled its responsibility with bravery in all difficult situations even by putting their lives at risk. The entire nation acknowledge the sacrifices of the police, he added.—**APP**

## SACM Haroon Shah to perform duties sans perks, privileges

### DNA

PESHAWAR: The Special Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mr. Pir Haroon Shah made a big decision by not getting a salary and other benefits despite his entitlement. He said that he personally took this decision, keeping in view the current financial situation. He said that he has joined provincial caretaker cabinet in the spirit of public service and can't become a burden on the government treasury by taking salary and benefits in the current economic crisis. Pir Haroon Shah said that his purely attention would be to deliver his services to the people of the province to the Caretaker Chief Minister whose trust on



him by making his cabinet member. He said that on serving humanity, needs to sacrifice oneself and current fiscal situation of the whole country, especially the province, requires that tough decisions be applied from one's self, so they have decided to be members of the caretaker provincial government without getting salary and other privileges.

## Politics of blame games, character assassination detrimental to harmony, democracy

PESHAWAR: Political parties are the pre-requisite of every democratic system to run government affairs through its elected representatives and solve people's problems.

"In democratic countries, the success of political parties in general election largely depend on the political behaviour and psychological-economic factors, past service record and manifestos of political parties rather launching of personal attacks, blame games, characters assassination of political leadership and dragging state institutions into politics," Professor Dr A.H Hilali, former Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP on Sunday. He said issues-based political debates help in broadening of voters' understanding and resolution of socioeconomic and political issues besides promoting political harmony.

He said a permanent political divide with no channel of communication and political intolerance retards the political and economic development, besides widening the economic gap between influential and the underprivileged. He said if the existing trend of political intolerance, accusations and blame games among politicians continued in Pakistan, then it would be extremely difficult to bring political and economic stability to the country despite holding of general election.

In democratic process, he said the doors to political dialogue among religious and political entities were always open to take decisions in national interest and for people's well being. He said unfortunately our politicians did not learn lessons from our history and again started wrangling by closing the doors of political dialogue ahead of election despite the country's difficult economic situation. He said the absence of political dialogue, elections' rigging and corruption allegations and confrontation politics had led to the dismissal of several political governments in the past. The government of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was dismissed after the nine religious and political parties under the platform of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) had launched an agitation movement claiming electoral fraud despite strong rejection by the PPP and subsequently democracy was packed up for the third time on July 5, 1977.—**APP**

## IGP for activation of protection centers

Qazi Shoab Khan

ATTOCK: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar on Sunday while addressing through video link has directed all the Regional Police Officers and District Police Officers of the Punjab to activate "Protection" centers in all regional police offices of the province by Sunday March 5 and by March 12 in all district police offices. The director public relations of Punjab Police Mr. Nayyab Haider told media that IG Punjab has directed RPOs and DPOs to activate these "Protection Centers" as per

the issued instructions and leave no stone unturned in serving and protecting the vulnerable sections who deserve help and attention apart from transgender and helpless children. IG Punjab said that these "Protection Centers" will play a significant role in helping and protecting transgender, destitute children and homeless children suffering from mental problems. IG Punjab ordered the RPOs, DPOs to ensure best measures under personal supervision for the security of foreign nationals, especially Chinese residents. Dr. Usman Anwar said that

the security of Chinese citizens is the first priority, so security inspections of all working sites including Chinese citizens' residences, offices should be done regularly. IG Punjab directed all the RPOs and DPOs to initiate strict crackdown across Punjab to protect the precious human lives from kite flying and said that the law breakers involved in manufacturing, buying, selling and using metallic strings and kites should be brought under the grip of the law and should be severely punished. He said that the concerned circle officers and DPOs will

be held accountable in future where the incident of metallic kite string comes to light. IG Punjab gave Shabash to the district police officers for registering more cases on calls of 15 and reprimanded other officers for less registration of cases. He said that the indicators which were considered negative in the past for police performance are now being considered as a sign of positive performance. IG Punjab while giving orders to make the ongoing crackdown more effective for the arrests of proclaimed offenders stressed to accelerate com-

munication with Interpol and more effective follow-up to arrest proclaimed offenders involved in serious cases. He said that if there is a need to enlist absconders as proclaimed offenders, they should be enlisted proclaimed offenders without any delay because until we know the exact targets; our line of action will not be correct. He said that the CPOs and DPOs of the districts who enlist more proclaimed offenders in the police files are worthy of praise and their performance is worthy of emulation for other officers.



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For further information please contact the following.

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## Briefs

4349  
emergency  
calls received  
in Feb: Rescue  
1122

RAWALPINDI: The District Emergency Officer, Engineer Kamran Rasheed reviewed the performance of all the stations during the last month of February with the aim of improving the delivery service. He said that delivery of emergency services of the same quality would be continued without any discrimination. Media Coordinator Rescue Rawalpindi released the data and said that Rescue 1122 received 4349 emergency calls in the last month and 3942 emergency victims were responded timely. Some 1214 of these emergency calls were related to road traffic accidents. Similarly, 115 minor fire incidents and 482 special rescue operations were conducted whereas 05 incident of gas explosions and 02 building collapse incidents were reported, 2378 medical emergencies and 153 crime incidents were included in the report. He further said that most of the traffic accidents due to rash driving and one wheeling on motorcycles were reported.—APP

59 kite sellers  
arrested  
during  
crackdown

RAWALPINDI: Police on Sunday arrested 59 kite sellers and kite flyers during a crackdown here, informed a police spokesman. Rawal Town police arrested 12 kite flyers and recovered 108 kites and strings from them. Similarly, Potohar Town police held 45 kite sellers and recovered 725 kites and strings from their possession. While, Suddar Division Police arrested 02 kite flyers and recovered kites and strings from them. Police have registered separate cases against all the accused. City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani said the ongoing crackdown against kite flyers and kite sellers will be intensified. He made it clear that strict action will be taken against those involved in illegal activity.—APP

IRSA releases  
97,200  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 97,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 54,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1449.30 feet and was 51.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 16,800 cusecs while outflow as 55,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1106.30 feet, which was 56.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 20,000 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

Heavy  
bike show  
organised  
for special  
children

ISLAMABAD: The Heavy Bike Riders Group and a private restaurant on Sunday jointly organised a bikes show in order to promote healthy activities for differently abled special children. After the opening ceremony of the new restaurant in the federal capital, the heavy bike show was organized for the special children. The event titled "Healthy Activity for Special Children" was participated by social and business personalities including Head of Care for Special Persons Foundation Hina Hasnain, businessmen Abdul Hafeez Chaudhry, Mian Zohaib, Mian Shoaib, Sajjad Chaudhry, social activist Dr. Eshal, well-known heavy bike riders of Rawalpindi Omar Ashraf, Zeeshan Aftab, Abdul Rehman, Major Arsalan and Anjam Minhas participated on this occasion. Talking to the journalists, the participants said that it was the responsibility of all of us to pay attention to the care, education.—APP

Chairman PEMRA assures  
for Radio, TV license to ICCI

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that many TV channels normally highlight negative aspects of Pakistan while the ICCI radio and TV channels would highlight the positive aspects of Pakistan to promote a soft image of the country

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation met with Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig in his office and discussed with him the plan of starting an ICCI radio and TV channel. Wakil Khan, Director General Licensing, PEMRA was also present on the occasion. Addressing the delegation, Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig appreciated the plan of ICCI to start its own radio and TV channel and assured that he would issue their license on priority basis after fulfilling the documentary requirements. He further assured that he will fully cooperate with ICCI for the completion of this important project as it will benefit the business community and the economy. He said that ICCI should coordinate with foreign universities for providing quality business education to students to



meet the needs of businesses and industries. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) briefed the Chairman PEMRA about the aims and objectives of starting radio and TV channels. He said that these

channels would educate the young generation about the importance of exports promotion, which the country desperately needs at this time. He said these channels would promote business role models for youth to motivate them to launch business start ups and create jobs for others. He said

that Pakistan's business and economic potential will be highlighted to attract local and foreign investment to Pakistan. He said that prominent business leaders and economists will be invited on radio and TV channels to discuss the key issues of economy and find their optimum solutions.

He said that these channels will create better awareness in the business community about various business & economic issues to facilitate them in business development. He said that the channels will focus on expanding the tax base and identifying new exports markets for Pakistan. He

hoped that with the support of PEMRA, ICCI would soon be able to start its own radio and TV channel. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that many TV channels normally highlight negative aspects of Pakistan while the ICCI radio and TV channels would highlight the positive aspects of Pakistan to promote a soft image of the country. He said self-made business persons would be promoted by highlighting their achievements. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI, said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country, but is not given the due respect in the society, so the ICCI channels will promote the respect and dignity of the business community. He said that PEMRA should take action against those TV channels which are promoting polarization in the society as Pakistan desperately needs national unity and consensus to get out of the current political.

Pak-US counter terrorism  
dialogue to start next week

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) and Pakistan are set to hold a two-day Counterterrorism Dialogue starting from March 6 in Islamabad. The American delegation, led by Christopher Landberg, is expected to arrive in Pakistan for the talks. According to the spokesperson of the US Department of State, the inter-agency delegation will discuss a joint strategy to combat terrorism with their Pakistani counterparts. "They will discuss the 'shared terrorist threats facing the two countries' and develop 'policy-oriented strategies' regarding cooperation in critical areas such as border security and

countering the financing of terrorism," the State Department said. The development comes against the backdrop of increasing terror incidents in Pakistan and Washington's assurance to help the country deal with the worsening law and order situation. Both countries share the view that Afghan soil is being used for terrorism against Pakistan. The deteriorating relationship between Islamabad and Kabul is a result of the Taliban government's failure to crack down on terrorists operating from Afghanistan. The talks come amid tensions between the two countries following an arrest warrant issued against Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan by a court in Pakistan. However, the spokesperson

of the US Department of State clarified that it was a problem for the Pakistani people to deal with and not the concern of the US. The United Nations had recently revealed in a report that the Taliban have failed to fight terrorists in Afghanistan. The talks between the US and Pakistan are expected to form a plan of action to deal with the threats of terrorism and to improve cooperation between both nations. During February, US Department of State Counselor Derek Chollet visited Pakistan and held a series of meetings with the civil and military leadership as a manifestation of a positive trajectory of relations with the US. "Chollet and a delegation of senior US government officials, including Coun-

selor of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Clinton White and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Pakistan Elizabeth Horst, visited Islamabad February 16-17 to highlight the importance of our bilateral partnership and reaffirm our countries' shared goals," said the US Embassy in a statement. Chollet met with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to discuss strengthening the US-Pakistan bilateral partnership, including increased economic cooperation and Pakistan's needs as it continues to recover and rebuild following the floods. In a meeting with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, Counselor Chollet discussed security cooperation and counter-terrorism.

Third power tariff  
hike in two months  
unacceptable

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said the cost of electricity has been increased three times in two months due to the pressure of the IMF which is unacceptable. The burden on the masses has been increased by almost Rs450 billion while the burden on the wealthy and the elite is not being increased, it said. Instead of increasing the burden on the public, the theft of electricity should be stopped and bills should be collected from the users of free electricity to give some relief to the masses, said Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of PEW. In a statement issued here today, he said that the Federal Cabinet has approved the imposition of an additional burden of 335 billion rupees on the consumers by fulfilling the third condition of the IMF. A surcharge of three rupees 23 paise per unit is being imposed on the bills. The increase will be applicable to domestic, agricultural, commercial, and Kelectricity consumers. The government has already imposed a burden of Rs76 billion on electricity bills from March to June due to which the poor and the salaried class have become more vulnerable. However, he said, there is no intention on the part of authorities to collect bills from those consuming thousands of units of free electricity. There is no serious to reduce the theft of billions of rupees in the power sector, he said, adding that stealing power is not limited to influential people. Consuming electricity without payment is illegal.—DNA

Dar acknowledges  
China's response  
to western media

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar applauded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China's response to the western media who raised a question regarding China's loans awarded to Pakistan. Pakistan is experiencing economic testing times and China has extended its financial support. Bloomberg asked Mao Ning, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, at the Regular Press Conference on March 2, "Both Moody's and Fitch say Pakistan has \$7 billion of debt due by June, including those from China. So will the loans be rolled over?" The diplomat responded, "To give our principled position, China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic and cooperative partners and iron brothers. The two sides have always shared weal and woe together and supported each other. China has been in close economic and financial cooperation with Pakistan and supported its efforts to maintain economic stability, improve lives and achieve self-generated development." She noted, "I need to point out that the radical financial and monetary policies of a certain developed country and their serious spillover effects are the primary cause of the financial difficulties experienced by Pakistan and many other developing countries. The Western-dominated commercial creditors and multilateral financial institutions account for the lion's share of developing countries' debt.

Record hike in markup  
to shut local industry

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday said that the country's economy has nosedived partly due to external factors but majorly due to non-serious and poor domestic policy decisions and mismanagement of the economic managers, as the rupee saw yet another dramatic fall in just over a month, plummeting 6.66% while the key interest rate have been escalated by the central bank by 300 basis points to the record historic level of 20%, which will destroy the economy completely. Asking the authorities to include serious and progressive fiscal reforms in the IMF program FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that it is very clear that IMF programs focus on stabiliza-

tion and crisis management rather than growth-oriented policies that require structural reforms. He stressed need for a revisit of government policies including the coordination exercise between the Ministry of Finance and SBP, as no independent economist could support the economic policies that are currently in place. He said that rupee has plummeted 6.66% against the US dollar during the trading session on Thursday, as it settled at 285.09 against the greenback, a decline of Rs18.98 in the inter-bank market. Earlier during the day, the rupee had depreciated to 284.88 against the US dollar in the inter-bank market before posting a minor recovery that proved short-lived. The rupee had plummeted against the US dollar on Wednesday as well but the fall was less severe as the currency settled at 266.11 after a depreciation of 1.73% or Rs4.61 in the inter-bank market. The local



ISLAMABAD: Artisans busy in their work stall during a "Her Hunar" exhibition at Pak China Friendship Center.—DNA

'Vaccination could reduce  
risk of long COVID'

ISLAMABAD: After studying thousands of people's symptoms post-COVID-19, researchers have found that getting vaccinated could potentially reduce the risk of long COVID. The new study — which looked at patients 3 months after their COVID-19 infections across pre-Delta, Delta, and Omicron variants — at first saw that long COVID symptoms were more common in the pre-Delta period than in the Delta and Omicron periods. But these differences across variants became less important when researchers adjusted for vaccination status, suggesting that the vaccine could play a key role in lessening the risk of long COVID and making its symptoms less severe. Another important finding of the study, from researchers at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center and the University of California San Francisco and published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, was the sheer number of people post-COVID-19 who reported severe fatigue. "Mild fatigue is much different than severe, life-impacting fatigue," lead author Michael Gottlieb, MD, said at a media briefing Wednesday. "One in eight affected with COVID had severe, prolonged fatigue at 3 months. ... That speaks to the impact we're seeing as a society." The study included 2,402 COVID-positive and 821 COVID-negative people, with 463 falling into the pre-Delta category, 1,198 during Delta, and 741 during Omicron. The authors did not weigh how severe the patients' initial COVID infections were versus their prolonged symptoms, but Gottlieb told reporters that the group is currently working on supplemental survey research to see if there are any parallels between the two. Gottlieb said the research team is continuing to follow patients beyond the 3-month mark, to see what the paths of their symptoms look like. Some early data, he said, shows patients' symptoms going in both directions: Some people who have minimal symptoms at 3 months might convert to severe symptoms at 6 months, and others with severe symptoms at 3 months might be better at 6 months. All of these lingering questions, including how reinfection plays into long COVID, will be the focus of future research for Gottlieb's team. "We need to understand long COVID better, and we need to define it better," Gottlieb said. "Long COVID isn't a singular concept, there are different phenotypes and versions of it. As researchers, public health leaders, and as a society, we need to better understand what people are going through."—Online

Book  
launching on  
March 08

ISLAMABAD: A book titled 'International Peacekeeping, perspectives from Pakistan' by Dr Tughral Yamin will be launched on March 8 which includes research work on international peacekeeping. The book will be launched under the banner of the Institute of Policy Studies in collaboration with the National University of Science and Technology. According to Institute of Policy Studies, Prof. Dr. Tughral Yamin was a professional soldier before he opted for a second career in academia. He served in the elite 7 Frontier Force Regiment and retired as a brigadier after 36 years of active service. He was awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) for his meritorious service. The book is the first brief academic account on international peacekeeping focusing on Pakistan's perspective, a press release said. Its various chapters provide a detailed account of different aspects of the UN peacekeeping missions around the world. The book includes 14 chapters each covering several subjects by different authors related to the peacekeeping. The book also gave an insight into various areas of UN peacekeeping operations, including its historical background. "UN peacekeeping forms an important tenet of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan began participating in UN peacekeeping operations in 1960. Since then the country has earned the distinction of being one of the most consistent and professional peacekeepers. Along the way, it has acquired the reputation of being one of the largest troops contributing countries among the UN member states," Institute of Policy Studies said on its website. Prof. Yamin has been involved in peacekeeping training and has authored several articles on the subject of peacekeeping. He had also written a book about UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia (1992-1995) in which his unit participated with distinction.—APP

Media  
awareness  
about census  
stressed

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Muhammad Sarwar Gondal on Sunday stressed for media awareness for the society about the first-ever digital population census 2023 in the country which would continue for one month to help make future development plans, creation of jobs, assembly seats and for keeping development funds for urban and rural areas. Around 121000 field enumerators have been deployed for the purpose, he said while talking to PTV news channel. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal further said during this phase, the enumerators are visiting door-to-door with the latest tablet technology to collect household family data, adding that the aim of the census was to collect and collate details about property usage, types of businesses and the demographics of individuals, nationals and residents alike. "The government aims to conduct this census to plan better policies for the growth and development of the society", he added. To a question, Gondal replied, "There are already many reservations over the sixth population census conducted in 2017, and now after a long gap of five years, we are again conducting a digital population census with the coordination of all provincial stakeholders." He urged the citizens to actively participate in the census and their personal information would remain confidential. "All the nationals and residents, families and private sector companies should co-operate with the census teams, as it benefits everyone and contributes to advancing the development of the country's services." "Every piece of information provided to the census teams contributes to serving the community, whose members are an integral part of the country's comprehensive developmental policy plans," he mentioned. He said, "The census teams, instead of recording complete details, will only collect UTN numbers, which will be provided to those citizens who will save their data digitally.—APP



## Briefs

## Imran evades arrest, wants 'public trial'

FROM PAGE 01  
"Dirty Harry" were still in power and that another plan to assassinate him had been hatched. "I went to Lahore and Islamabad high court and there was no security," he claimed while adding that his legal team was to pen a letter to the chief justice of Pakistan to take notice of the matter. "It seems as though the ones who should be responsible to provide safety are the real danger," he said as he amped up his rhetoric against Shehbaz, Sanaulah and "Dirty Harry" in particular. Terming the cases against him as "comical" Imran also called for a public trial of his Toshakhana case. "Your and your children's future is very bleak," he said taking note of the state of the country's economy as well as the condition of rule of law. Imran also thanked all 'Jail Bharo' movement participants for having made him proud.

## PEMRA bans coverage of Imran Khan

FROM PAGE 01  
allegations, hateful, slanderous and unwarranted statement" against state institutions and officers were in sheer violation of Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan and a judgment of Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) passed in Suo Moto Case. The authority further said that after analysing the content of Imran's speech, it has been observed that the content was aired live by the licensees without effective time delay mechanism which is the violation provisions of Pemra laws and in disobedience of judgements passed by the honourable courts. "The competent authority i.e. Chairman PEMRA in view of the above mentioned background and reasons, in exercise of delegated powers of the Authority vested in Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2007, hereby prohibits broadcast of live speech of Imran Khan on all satellite TV channels with immediate effect," it added.

## Bilawal threatens to leave...

FROM PAGE 01  
quarters that the time allotted for the exercise was too short. Addressing a function in Karachi, FM Bilawal said that judging from the feedback received so far, the PPP and many citizens from other provinces had reservations about the exercise. "I got to know that a digital census is under way when it was extended. If this is a census where you have to enter your information yourself on the internet and if a federal minister did not know, then it means the people must not know [about it] either."

## ECP to issue schedule...

FROM PAGE 01  
Interior and Ministry of Finance for security and funds for the general elections in the province. The development comes a day after President Alvi announced April 30 as the date for elections in Punjab. "President Dr Arif Alvi has announced to hold general elections of Punjab Assembly on April 30, Sunday," tweeted the President's office. "The decision was made by the president after considering the dates proposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan," it added.

## Poor nations'...

FROM PAGE 01  
poverty and battle climate change. Central African Republic's president told the UN Least Developed Countries meeting in Doha that his resource-rich but impoverished nation was being "looted" by "Western powers". But the opening day of general debate at the once-in-a-decade summit saw no major announcement of desperately needed cash - apart from \$60 million that host Qatar said it would give to United Nations programmes.

## Army lifts Combaxx-Roshan Khan Team Squash Title

Jahangir Khan lauded the zeal shown by players during the entire event and advised them to focus on their game and sheer talent so that they can shine as world-class players to regain lost glories in squash for country once again



AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: In a superb display of talent, Army players, were in command all through the event, and won both Men

and Women's finals of the Combaxx-Roshan Khan National Team Squash Championship organized by Pakistan Navy in collaboration with Combaxx Sports at Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex Karachi.

Wapda players also shone on the court and emerged as ultimate runners-up. The following are the results of the finals, both men's and women's and other position matches played on the fifth and final day of the tournament.

**In Men's Final, Army beat Wapda 2-1.** Farhan Mehboob Lost to Hamza Khan 9-11, 4-11, 6-11 (23 mins) while Wapda's Nasir Iqbal Beat Sadam Ul Haq 11-1, 11-8, 11-5 (21 mins), and Noor Zaman Lost to Army's Ashab Irfan 3-11, 2-11, 7-11 (20 mins).

**In the Women's Final, Army thumped WAPDA 2-0.** Sammar Anjum Lost to Amna Malik 11-4, 10-12, 9-11, 6-11 (34 mins) while Noor Ul Ain Lost to Mariam Malik 6-11, 13-11, 5-11, 8-11 (34 mins).

**Women's Final Standing:** Squash Legend and former World No. 1 Jahangir Khan was the Chief Guest at the medals ceremony and gave trophies and other individual prizes while Omar Saeed, CEO Combaxx Sports, Adnan Asad, President SSA, Lt Cdr Ramatullah, Media Advisor Pakistan Olympic Association Asif Azeem, General Manager Combaxx Sports Zubair Macha, Tournament referee Naveed Alam, and Tournament director Tahir Jameel Khanzada were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Jahangir Khan lauded the zeal shown by players during the entire event and advised them to focus on their game and sheer talent so that they can shine as world-class players to regain lost glories in squash for the country once again.

## Super Kharala Cricket Club win Jhelum Cricket League

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: The final match of Jhelum Cricket League (JCL) organized by Jhelum Forum was played at Zam-eer Jafri Cricket Stadium

Jhelum, which was played between the Super Awan Cricket Club and Super Kharala Cricket Club. While chasing the 205 runs made by Super Kharala Cricket Club Super Awan Cricket Club made

only 165 runs. The Super Kharala Cricket Club won the tournament defeated by defeating the final match. Ehtisham Khata from Super Kharala Cricket Club played spectacular innings of 60 runs. On this

occasion, Ilyas Gondal, Dr. Asmat Javed, Chaudhry Anwar Yaqoob, Jamil Bhatti, Ghulam Rasool, Khube Butt congratulated the players and the organisers and distributed prizes among the players.



## Fiorentina deny Milan second spot

MILAN: AC Milan missed the chance to go second in Serie A on Saturday after falling to a 2-1 defeat at Fiorentina, ending a recent upturn in form for the reigning champions. Nicolas Gonzalez's penalty three minutes after the break and a late Luka Jovic header earned Fiorentina the three points and ended Milan's four-match winning streak ahead of their Champions League showdown at Tottenham on Wednesday. Theo Hernandez netted in stoppage time for Milan who are fourth, level on 47 points with local rivals Inter. Stefano Pioli's side, without suspended star attacker Rafael Leao, are one behind Lazio after their stunning win at runaway leaders Napoli on Friday moved the capital club second. "Fiorentina were better than us today, but not because our minds were on Tottenham," said Pioli to Sky. "That will be a different match, it's a knockout game and tonight's performance won't affect us, just as Tottenham won't be affected by their two consecutive defeats." Fiorentina meanwhile stay 12th, level on 31 points with Torino, after a win which came on the fifth anniversary of former Viola captain Davide Astori's death. Astori died in his sleep in a hotel room on this day in 2018, aged just 31, when Pioli was in charge at Fiorentina. - Agencies

## Azerbaijan struggles to revive life in war-hit cities

ISLAMABAD: The government of Azerbaijan is currently carrying out the gigantic task of bringing life back to the war-hit areas of Nagorno-Karabakh by rebuilding civic facilities, worship and recreational places as well as water reservoirs. The representatives of foreign media visiting Azerbaijan to attend a summit of Non-Aligned Movement's Contact Group held in Baku on March 2, were escorted to different war-ravaged areas which had been reclaimed by Azerbaijan from Armenia following a three-decade war. The Azeri government is carrying out rehabilitation work in Shush city, once a hill resort and cultural centre which now gave a deserted

look owing to the massive destruction during the war period. During a visit to the site, the Azeri authorities told the media that rehabilitation work was going to restore a 150-year-old Gazanchi Church and two historical mosques. The media men were also given a guided tour of the newly constructed Fuzuli International Airport which was built within eight months considering the urgent need for relief supplies as well as the influx of foreign delegates. Two more airports were also in the pipeline in the Karabakh region. The heavy machinery was engaged in the restoration of a huge water reservoir in Fuzuli which used to be a main source of irriga-

tion to the area, famous for its agricultural products. A massive tree plantation was also underway in the region to revive its green look as well as economic activity. On one side, there were the remains of the erstwhile city centre of Fuzuli, while across the road, the ongoing construction of around 1,000 residential apartments was emerging as a ray of hope for the displaced population which was eagerly awaiting return to their native areas. Amidst all massive reconstruction activities, the major challenge of clearing the region of around 1 million landmines still existed as the government was diverting a major chunk of its funding for the purpose. - APP

## Bayern's season 'judged against PSG': Nagelsmann

Bayern are currently on a streak of 10 consecutive Bundesliga titles but their success means results in Europe hold major significance in the Bavarian capital. Speaking with German broadcaster Sky, Nagelsmann explained what he told the team when he locked the dressing room doors after victory

DNA

BERLIN: Julian Nagelsmann believes Bayern Munich's season will be judged on their performance at home against Paris Saint-Germain in Wednesday's last 16 Champions League clash. Speaking after his side returned to the Bundesliga summit with a 2-1 win at Stuttgart, Nagelsmann said he hoped the "manner and style" of the game would matter more than the result. "For me, it's the manner and the style which matters. The result might depend on a few things - and we have the better chances (due to the 1-0 lead from the first leg) - but the style of our game is how the season will be seen," said the Bayern coach. Bayern are currently on a streak of 10 consecutive Bundesliga titles but their success means results in Europe hold major significance in the Bavarian capital. Speaking with German broadcaster Sky, Nagelsmann explained what he told the team when he locked the dressing room doors after the victory.



"I told them that on Wednesday we have a very important game and that we need to bring our intensity. They're a very difficult team to beat - they're among the best teams in Europe." Veteran Bayern forward Thomas Mueller told Sky that the tight match against relegation-threatened Stuttgart was the perfect preparation for Wednesday's decisive encounter with the French champions. "That a Bundesliga game can be so tight is no surprise. On Wednesday, it'll be like that from the beginning." Bayern have won seven from seven in the Champions League this season. Earlier on Saturday, a flat Union Berlin missed a chance to keep in touch with Bayern and Dortmund, playing out a scoreless draw at home against Cologne. Union Fischer singled out goalkeeper Frederik Rønnow for particular praise, telling Sky: "Cologne were a bit more dangerous... we can thank our goalkeeper for keeping us in the game." The result, Union's third 0-0 draw in their past five matches, sees Berliners fall five points behind Bayern, sitting in third place.

## PSL 8th Edition



MONDAY 07:00 PM  
MARCH 06, 2023  
Pindi Club Ground,  
Rawalpindi



## Fazal wants elections delayed

FROM PAGE 01

"Law and order situation in the country is not suitable for elections." The general elections in Punjab are scheduled for April 30, while the date for the polls in KP is yet to be announced as Governor Ghulam Ali has not made a decision yet. In light of the Supreme Court's split ruling earlier this week, President Arif Alvi announced the date for Punjab polls after consulting the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). But the KP governor is yet to "open" the letter that the ECP has sent to his office. Maulana Fazal also held Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led government responsible for the prevailing economic crisis and ruining the country's economy.

## PM Shehbaz appreciates Qatar's...

FROM PAGE 01

"highly appreciated" the contribution by Pakistani workers in the development of Qatar and "particularly praised the role played by the Pakistani security personnel towards successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Doha". During the meeting, PM Shehbaz appreciated Qatar's continued support for Pakistan's development initiatives and highlighted the enormous potential for enhanced cooperation between the two countries. "He also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties with Qatar and discussed ways and means to enhance collaboration in the areas of bilateral investment, trade, and export of skilled and highly skilled manpower from Pakistan," the PMO said.

## PM to address...

FROM PAGE 01

countries, and helping them to progress on the road to prosperity. PM Shehbaz, who is participating in the moot on the invitation of Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, said that the LDCs had been badly affected by climate change, post-pandemic and geo-strategic disruption in food and energy supply chains. "These global events have left them vulnerable. LDCs will be better served by putting welfare of people at the center of public policy," the premier wrote on Twitter. PM Shehbaz Sharif will address the summit today (Monday). He will hold bilateral meetings with participating leaders and heads of delegation on the sidelines of the conference.

## PML-N slams...

FROM PAGE 01

While talking to the media in Faisalabad, the federal minister maintained that the PTI chief is getting arrested on the court's order and the government is not taking the initiative. Sana also said that "conducting elections is the job of the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] but the current situation is in front of everyone". He furthered that "such elections should be held after which the country moves towards improvement." Sana claimed that "Imran's story of an assassination attack on him is based on lies, he does not have anything else to say." The comments by the PDM leaders come as Islamabad police travelled to Lahore earlier in the day to arrest the PTI chief in relation to arrants issued in the Toshakhana (gift repository) case against him.

## Briefs

## Indonesia's inflation to stay above 5% in first half of 2023

JAKARTA: Indonesia's inflation will remain above 5% in the first half of 2023 and below 4% in the second half, mainly due to high food prices, central bank governor Perry Warjiyo said on Sunday, warning that the fight to control inflation must continue.

"The game is not over, let us together anticipate inflation mainly food inflation," Perry said at an event on Makassar, in South Sulawesi, where he urged local authorities to work with the central government to reduce inflationary pressures. "We must control inflation because it relates to people's prosperity and welfare," he said. "Let's strengthen synergy amongst stakeholders to control inflation." ECB facing high core inflation in the near term, Lagarde says Indonesia's Consumer Price Index rose 5.47% on a yearly basis in February, largely due to rising prices for fuel, rice, cigarettes and air travel, though core inflation unexpectedly slowed to 3.09%. —DNA

## Need urged for promoting AI to achieve growth

ISLAMABAD: The Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis Sunday underlining the vital importance said artificial intelligence is now need of the hour which has the potential to add up to 16% or about \$13 trillion to the global economy by the year 2030 and additionally it could boost the global gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 26%.

Speaking at a seminar on "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Economy" held under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said. Artificial intelligence (AI) plays an increasingly important role in our lives and economy and is already having an impact on our world in many different ways.

He said worldwide competition to reap its benefits is fierce, and global leaders like the US and Asia have emerged on the scene. He said AI is seen by many as an engine of productivity and economic growth. It can increase the efficiency with which things are done and vastly improve the decision-making process by analysing large amounts of data. He said it can also spawn the creation of new products and services, markets and industries, thereby boosting consumer demand and generating new revenue streams. —APP

## Historic agreement reached after decade of talks

NEW YORK: Nations have reached a historic agreement to protect the world's oceans following 10 years of negotiations. The High Seas Treaty aims to place 30% of the seas into protected areas by 2030, to safeguard and recuperate marine nature. The agreement was reached on Saturday evening, after 38 hours of talks, at UN headquarters in New York. The negotiations had been held up for years over disagreements on funding and fishing rights. The last international agreement on ocean protection was signed 40 years ago in 1982 - the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. That agreement established an area called the high seas - international waters where all countries have a right to fish, ship and do research - but only 1.2% of these waters are protected. Marine life living outside of these protected areas has been at risk from climate change, overfishing and shipping traffic.

In the latest assessment of global marine species, nearly 10% were found to be at risk of extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These new protected areas, established in the treaty, will put limits on how much fishing can take place. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors' takes a keen interest in calligraphy art during a "Her Hunar" exhibition at Pak China Friendship Center.—DNA

## Time now to do justice for least developed countries

"You risk being left behind in the digital revolution without the support or technology you need for social and economic development or job-creation," he said, calling for an end to the conditions that have left vulnerable countries facing a "perfect storm"

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged the international community - particularly wealthy nations - to step up and help the more than 1.1 billion people in the least developed countries break out of "vicious cycles" and lift themselves out of poverty. "Countries with the least need support the most. And you need it now. You represent one in eight people on earth. But your countries are trapped in vicious cycles that make development difficult, if not impossible," Guterres told the Summit of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in Doha, Qatar, according to a UN Press release issued at UN Headquarters in New York.

Today's Summit of Heads

of State and Government from some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries is taking place just ahead of the opening of the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, known as LDC5, which will run in the Qatari capital from 5 to 9 March. The LDC Summit is normally held every 10 years but has twice been postponed since 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Over the next five days in Doha, government leaders and other stakeholders are set to assess the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, adopted at a precursor UN conference held in Türkiye in 2011, and mobilize additional international support and action for the world's 46 least developed countries.

In his welcoming remarks to the LDC Summit, the UN chief stressed that the cost of living was becoming increasingly difficult due to the war in Ukraine, resulting in higher energy and food prices. This, combined with the effects of conflict, drought, hunger and extreme poverty, creates an environment that fuels poverty and injustice. "For your countries, progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - starting with the eradication of extreme poverty and ending hunger - is about more than lines on a chart leading to 2030," the Secretary-General said. "It's a matter of life and death and it is unacceptable if you are held back by processes and decisions that are made far beyond your borders."

Indeed, fossil fuel giants are raking in huge profits, while millions in your countries cannot put food on the table. "You risk being left behind in the digital revolution without the support or technology you need for social and economic development or job-creation," he said, calling for an end to the conditions that have left vulnerable countries facing a "perfect storm." "Ending this (perfect) storm for perpetuating poverty and injustice...requires massive, sustained investment," he explained, and stressed that the global financial system had been designed by wealthy countries, "largely to their benefit". In the absence of effective debt relief, LDCs are forced to devote an increasing share of government

revenues to debt servicing. And countries that graduate to middle-income status will lose LDC-specific benefits, which "will become a punishment, not a reward," Mr. Guterres warned. Mr. Guterres went on to say: "We cannot allow countries to fall back down the development ladder after working so hard to climb it. Amid these injustices, the United Nations is working with you to develop smooth transition strategies, based on tailored support for the graduation process." [A country can graduate from the LDC category by meeting two of three criteria (income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability), or by having a per capita income of more than twice the income graduation threshold,

at two consecutive triennial meetings of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP). Find out more here.] To achieve this, the Doha Programme of Action (DPOA) - the landmark roadmap adopted in March 2022 aimed at, among others, creating new commitments and broad partnerships towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the LDCs - includes an online university, a food stockholding system, and an international investment support centre. In addition, the so-called SDG Stimulus package, launched in February, also proposes to increase financing for sustainable development, address the high cost of debt, and scale up emergency financing. —APP

## Estonia votes in election test for pro-Kyiv govt

TALLINN: Estonians headed to the polls on Sunday in an election pitting one of Europe's most staunchly pro-Kyiv governments against a far-right party seeking to capitalise on anger at rising living costs and which would stop admitting new Ukrainian refugees. If, as opinion polls predict, Prime Minister Kaja Kallas' liberal Reform party wins the national election and successfully crafts a coalition it would cement the Baltic nation's pro-European direction. Estonia would also stay on course to adopt more green energy and continue to accept refugees from Ukraine. The polls close at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT), with most electoral districts expected to report their tallies by midnight. Reform won an election in 2019 but was then kept from power as three smaller parties formed a government. It collapsed in 2021, allowing Kallas to create a coalition and take charge. The far-right EKRE party may end up in second place, according to opinion polls, as their promises to slash energy bills by opposing the transition to green energy are proving popular in some parts of the country, as is the pledge to not accept new Ukrainian refugees. Kallas and EKRE leader Martin Helme both told Reuters this week they hope to lead the next coalition government. —Agencies

## PIAF for clear roadmap for economic revival

DNA

KARACHI: While demanding a clear roadmap for the revival of economy, the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Sunday termed the present financial crisis as a nerve-shattering for trade and industry. There was a consensus among the participants of a meeting presided over by the PIAF chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol and attended by other office-bearers that there was a lack of coherence in the government policies and things on economic front went shaky instead of moving

for the last several months. Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that volatile exchange rate, unprecedented hike in markup rate, repeated increases in electricity rates, gas shortage, price spiral, mismanagement and bad governance have now become the hallmarks of the government. He said that massive fall of rupee value continued to damage the economy, as the rupee witnessed a huge depreciation; one of the highest devaluations of local currency in Pakistan's history. PIAF Chairman observed that besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of

cash dollars are seen in the market. He argued that this devaluation of the currency was dictated by the IMF through prior actions and it has nothing to do with macroeconomic fundamentals. He said that there was a complete breakdown of economic policymaking, as the country's fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies.

He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The empirical evidence showed that the one percent monetary tightening hiked the inflationary pres-

sure by 1.3 percent in the case of Pakistan, he added. He said that the US dollar continued to rise against the rupee, reaching a record high. The government needs to devise a strategy on war-footing to increase foreign investment in Pakistan so as to stop the upward trajectory of the dollar, he added. Exports went down quantitatively while the situation of new investment remained very bleak during the year, they observed adding that the Monetary Policy Committee of the State Bank of Pakistan has raised the key interest rate by 300 basis points, taking it to 20% - the highest level since October 1996.

## Pak animated film showreel fascinates Chinese audience

DNA

BEIJING: The showreel of Pakistan's upcoming hand-drawn animated film The Glassworker has cast a spell on Chinese audience as it has garnered more than 558,000 views, with over 5,000 comments and reviews on Bilibili, a popular YouTube-like video sharing platform in China with over 70 million active daily users. "I can't believe this is the real art. Really looking forward to the entire film," reads one comment on Bilibili. "Amazingly high-quality film! If this proves a success, it will revolutionise Pakistan's cultural industry," another user posted. In an exclusive interview with China Economic Net (CEN), Usman Riaz, director of the animated film and founder of the Karachi-based Mano

Animation Studios, said that he was "tremendously grateful for the response it [the showreel] has gotten. It would be amazing to share the film with the incredible audience and ani-

mation supporters in China." Inspired by his trip to Italy when he was 16 years old, where he had the opportunity to see the glass blowing being done in Venice, the Pakistani director

decided to make an animated film out of it once the opportunity arose. However, it wasn't until 2015 that Usman started working on the film, and the film-making process has been arduous.



## Protests break out in Iran over schoolgirl illnesses

WEB DESK

DUBAI: Worried parents protested in Iran's capital Tehran and other cities on Saturday over a wave of suspected poison attacks that have affected schoolgirls in dozens of schools, according to Iranian news agencies and social media videos. The so-far unexplained illnesses have affected hundreds of schoolgirls in recent months. Iranian officials believe the girls may have been poisoned and have blamed Tehran's enemies. The country's health minister has said the girls have suffered "mild poison" attacks and some politicians have suggested the girls could have been targeted by hardline Islamist groups opposed to girls' education. Iran's interior minister said on Saturday investigators had found "suspicious samples" that were being studied. "In field studies, suspicious samples have been found, which are being investigated... to identify the causes of the students' illness, and the results will be published as soon as possible," the minister, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazi, said in a statement carried by the official news agency IRNA. Sickness affected more than 30 schools in at least 10 of Iran's 31 provinces on Saturday. Videos posted on social media showed parents gathered at schools to take their children home and some students being taken to hospitals by ambulance or buses. A gathering of parents outside an Education Ministry building in western Tehran on Saturday to protest over the illnesses turned into an anti-government demonstration, according to a video verified by Reuters.

## Netanyahu tries to calm outcry over minister's remarks

WEB DESK

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought on Sunday to soften international outcry over a call by a far-right member of his cabinet for a flashpoint Palestinian village to be "erased", saying those remarks had been "inappropriate". But Netanyahu also pushed back against censure of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, accusing foreign powers of playing down Palestinian violence like the Feb. 26 killing of two Israeli brothers in Huwara village that sparked a settler rampage there.

Smotrich said last week that while he opposed vigilantism, he believed "that Huwara needs to be erased" by Israel. The U.S. State Department called the comments "irresponsible," "repugnant" and "disgusting" and said Netanyahu should reject and disavow them.

The U.N. human rights chief said Smotrich had made "an unfathomable statement of incitement to violence". With Israeli media speculating that Smotrich, who is due to visit Washington next week, would be snubbed by the U.S. administration and complicate its ties to the Netanyahu government, he offered a retraction on Saturday but no apology. "Being upset, I misspoke," Smotrich told Channel 12 TV. The Palestinians have urged the U.S. administration not to receive Smotrich. Netanyahu has said that he - and not coalition partners like Smotrich - calls the shots on Israeli diplomacy. "It is important for all of us to work to tone down the rhetoric, lower the temperature," Netanyahu tweeted on Sunday, thanking Smotrich "for making clear that his choice of words ... was inappropriate". "I am still waiting to hear a condemnation from the Palestinian Authority for the murder of the Yaniv brothers," Netanyahu added. "And Israel is waiting for the international community to insist that the PA condemn that attack. Not only has it not done so, it continues to turn a blind eye to the PA's rampant incitement."

On Thursday, State Department spokesperson Ned Price tweeted: "Just as we condemn Palestinian incitement to violence, we condemn Finance Minister Smotrich's provocative remarks that also amount to incitement of violence. It is imperative that Palestinians and Israelis work together to restore calm."

## Britain to stop those arriving illegally from staying

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Anyone arriving illegally in Britain will be prevented from staying, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in an interview published on Sunday, ahead of new legislation which is expected to be set out next week. Under pressure from his own lawmakers to find a solution to the flow of migrants arriving in Britain across the channel from Europe, Sunak has made stopping small boats one of his five key priorities. "Make no mistake, if you come here illegally, you will not be able to stay," Sunak told the Mail on Sunday newspaper.

Under current practice, asylum seekers who reach Britain are often able to remain in the country to have their case heard. A new law to tackle the issue is due to be set out on Tuesday, the newspaper reported, after more than 45,000 people made the perilous crossing last year. Asylum applications to the United Kingdom are below the European Union average, official data shows.

Last year, former Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed a deal to send tens of thousands of migrants, many having made the journey from Afghanistan, Syria or other countries suffering war, more than 4,000 miles away (6,400 kms) to Rwanda. The policy has faced a legal battle after the first planned deportation flight was blocked by a last-minute injunction granted by the European Court of Human Rights.

Briefs

K-P governor commits to respecting SC poll order

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Governor Haji Ghulam Ali has said that he has not seen the letter sent by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), but will definitely give a date for the provincial assembly's polls. Speaking to a local news outlet, the governor said that he always respected the courts, but the letter had been sent to his principal secretary, which would be opened on Monday. The governor, while referring to the Supreme Court order, said the orders would be followed. "We will definitely announce a date for the elections as we have always respected courts and will do so in the future as well." Speaking to another news outlet, the governor expressed his disapproval to the president's announcement of holding polls in Punjab on April 30. He said that he was hoping for a unanimous date for the elections in both the provinces - Punjab and K-P.

Joe Biden to tighten rules on US investment in China

DNA

WILMINGTON: The Biden administration is close to tightening rules on some overseas investments by U.S. companies in an effort to limit China's ability to acquire technologies that could improve its military prowess, according to a U.S. official familiar with the deliberations. The soon-to-be-issued executive order from President Joe Biden will limit American investment in advanced technologies that have national security applications - such as next-generation military capabilities that could help China improve the speed and accuracy of military decision making, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The expected action is the latest effort by the White House to target China's military and technology sectors at a time of increasingly fraught relations between the world's two biggest economies. In October, the Biden administration imposed export controls to limit China's ability to access advanced chips, which it says can be used to make weapons, commit human rights abuses and improve the speed and accuracy of its military logistics.

Fire destroys refugee camp in Bangladesh

WEB DESK

DHAKA: A big fire at a camp for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh destroyed homes and sent thick black clouds of smoke through the area on Sunday before being brought under control. The blaze erupted at Camp 11 in Cox's Bazar, a southeastern border district where more than a million Rohingya refugees live. Most of the refugees fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017, and the fire left some of them homeless again. "We currently don't have an estimate for damages but there are no reports of casualties," Rafiqul Islam, additional police superintendent at Cox's Bazar told Reuters. He added that the blaze was under control and senior officials from the fire, police and refugee relief departments were at the site. Faruque Ahmed, a local police official, said the cause of the fire was not clear. Neither police official gave an estimate for the number of homes destroyed. "I couldn't save anything. Everything burnt to ashes. Many are without homes. I don't know what will happen to us," said 40-year-old refugee Selim Ullah, a father of six children.

China looks at reforms to deepen Xi Jinping control

China will pursue a reduced economic growth target of about 5% this year, while defence spending is to rise by more than 7%

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Xi Jinping is set to deepen his control of China's government and economy, as lawmakers meet in Beijing to pass far-reaching reforms. The National People's Congress (NPC), a rubber-stamp parliament, will confirm Mr Xi's third term as president, and the appointments of his top team. They will also name a new premier, the second-in-command after Mr Xi, as the incumbent Li Keqiang departs. The Two Sessions, as the meetings are known, are an annual affair. But this year's sessions are particularly significant as delegates are expected to reshape several key Communist Party and state institutions. They will also tighten control over bodies overseeing the finance sector and scientific and technology work, while "strengthening

party-building work" in private businesses, according to state media. The moves will likely further blur the lines between the Chinese Communist Party and the government, and consolidate the party's control of the private sector. This comes amid an ongoing corruption crackdown which has seen a string of high-profile businessmen disappear in recent years. The latest person to go missing was one of China's top dealmakers in the tech sector. This week's NPC meeting will also formalise Mr Xi's leadership of the country, as he will be elected president of China and head of the armed forces. He secured his position in the echelons of Chinese power in October last year, when the Communist Party re-elected him as their leader for a third term. It was a break from decades-long tradition, as no other party leader besides Commu-

nist China's first leader, Mao Zedong, will have served for this long. In the 2018 NPC meeting, lawmakers had approved the removal of term limits on the presidency, effectively allowing Mr Xi to remain leader for life. Mr Xi's appointment comes as he faces domestic pressure to turn around an economy battered by his zero-Covid strategy and crackdowns in various business sectors. At the start of the meeting, it was announced that China will pursue a reduced economic growth target of about 5% this year, while defence spending is to rise by more than 7%. Abroad, Mr Xi is navigating worsening ties with the US over the Ukraine war and the recent spy balloon saga, even as he warms his embrace of Russian leader Vladimir Putin. The NPC will also unveil the new Premier, China's equivalent of a prime minister who traditionally oversees the economy

and administrative aspects of governance. Li Qiang, one of Mr Xi's most trusted colleagues, is expected to assume the role. As the Shanghai party secretary, he oversaw a prolonged and painful Covid lockdown that angered locals and made international headlines. Outgoing premier Li Keqiang, who was ousted in the leadership reshuffle at October's party congress, will deliver his last work report speech. The political appointments for the rest of the Politburo Standing Committee, the equivalent of Mr Xi's cabinet, will also be announced. Many will be watching to see who fills several key positions, such as the commerce minister, head of the national development and reform commission, propaganda chief, and head of state security. Observers say the team was picked more for their loyalty to Mr Xi and the party, rather than for their expertise.

South Korea, Japan near landmark deal

DNA

SEOUL: South Korea and Japan may be near resolving a dispute over colonial-era forced labour that has overshadowed political and trade relations between the two neighbours, with media reports saying Seoul could announce plans on Monday. The South Korean government plans to announce on Monday morning its solution to the historical and legal dispute over compensating people forced to work under Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea, Japan's Kyodo news reported, citing unnamed diplomatic sources. The labour dispute and one over women forced into Japanese military brothels have bedevilled ties between the two pivotal U.S. allies for years. South Korea's foreign ministry, asked about the reported agreement, said negotiations were ongoing. "The government is continuing to consult in various ways between diplomatic authorities at all levels in order to come up with a reasonable solution that meets the common interests of Korea and Japan as soon as possible," it said in a statement. Japan's Cabinet Office and Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to phone and email requests for comment.

Iran makes sweeping pledge of coop to IAEA

VIENNA: Iran has given sweeping assurances to the U.N. nuclear watchdog that it will finally assist a long-stalled investigation into uranium particles found at undeclared sites and even re-install removed monitoring equipment, the watchdog said on Saturday. The International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran issued a joint statement on IAEA chief Rafael Grossi's return from a trip to Tehran just two days before a quarterly meeting of the agency's 35-nation Board of Governors. The statement went into little detail but the possibility of a marked improvement in relations between the two is likely to stave off a Western push for another resolution ordering Iran to cooperate, diplomats said. Iran has, however, made similar promises before that have yielded little or nothing. "Iran expressed its readiness to ... provide further information and access to address the outstanding safeguards issues," the joint statement said. A confidential IAEA report to member states seen by Reuters said Grossi "looks forward to ... prompt and full implementation of the Joint Statement". Iran is supposed to provide access to information, locations and people, Grossi told a news conference at Vienna airport soon after landing, suggesting a vast improvement after years of Iranian stonewalling. Iran would also allow the re-installation of extra monitoring equipment that had been put in place under the 2015 nuclear deal, but then removed last year as the deal unravelled in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from the deal in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump. - Agencies

Qatar's emir slams delay in aid to Syria

DOHA: Qatar's emir said on Sunday he was puzzled by the delay in delivering aid to victims of last month's earthquake in Syria, adding that it was wrong to abuse humanitarian aid for political purposes, in an apparent swipe at the Syrian government. Qatar was among several regional states that backed rebels in Syria's civil war and has previously spoken out against efforts by some countries to normalise ties with Damascus. Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, speaking at the opening of the U.N. Least Developed Countries conference in Doha, stressed the need to help Syrians "without hesitation" and support Turkey's efforts to recover from the devastating earthquake. The death toll in Turkey has risen to above 45,000, bringing the total toll including Syria to about 51,000. In Syria, the northwest region controlled by rebels at war with President Bashar al-Assad was the worst hit. - Agencies

Maiden Russian crude oil shipment due next month

ISLAMABAD: The first oil cargo from Russia is expected to arrive in Pakistan by the end of April after the latter agreed to the former's demand to import a single cargo first as a test case to bridge "trust deficit". Moscow has already offered to export 100,000 barrels of crude oil per day to Islamabad. Following Saudi Arabia that also exports around 100,000 barrels of oil per day, Russia will emerge as the second largest crude oil supplier to Pakistan if the both the countries sign a deal. Sources told The Express Tribune that Russia had raised doubt "over the seriousness of Pakistan to mature the oil deal". Therefore, in a recent meeting held between the two countries, Moscow had asked Islamabad to import "one oil cargo" as a test case. The sources said that Russia had heavy crude oil but Pakistan lacked the technology to refine such oil, therefore, it agreed to export blended oil to the country. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iraq Hamed Abbas Laftah takes keen interest in calligraphy art during an exhibition titled "Her Hunar" at Pak China Friendship Center. - DNA

Foreign Minister to preside over conference on 'Women in Islam'

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will preside over a conference on 'Women in Islam' in New York on Wednesday next. The conference is being hosted by Pakistan in its capacity as the chair of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. The objective of the conference is to bridge the gap between perception and reality on the rights of women in Islam and celebrate the experiences and successes of iconic Muslim women. It is also aimed at establishing an annual policy dialogue to address challenges and explore opportunities to advance the role of women in OIC countries. The opening address of the Foreign Minister will be followed by the

speeches of UN General Assembly President, Csaba Korosi; OIC Secretary General, Houssein Ibrahim Tahar; Executive Director of UN-Women, Sima Bahous and other dignitaries and representatives of OIC Member States. The Foreign Minister is also expected to participate in a high-level UN Security Council debate on 'Women, Peace and Security', sponsored by Mozambique in its capacity as the Council's President for this month. Later, in pursuit of the General Assembly landmark resolution designating 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, the General Assembly president and the foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be co-convening a special high-level event to commemorate the day on Friday. - DNA

Greek train crash: PM Mitsotakis seeks forgiveness

WEB DESK

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has asked for forgiveness from the families of the 57 victims of this week's train crash. In a Facebook message, Mr Mitsotakis said that "in the Greece of 2023... two trains heading in different directions cannot run on the same line and no-one notices". Protests have continued for days. Clashes with police were reported on Sunday as thousands joined a demonstration in the capital Athens. Police estimated 12,000 people attended the protest. Some demonstrators set fire to rubbish bins and threw petrol bombs. Police responded firing tear gas and stun grenades, clearing the central Syntagma Square of the protesters within a few minutes. The protesters also reportedly released hundreds of black balloons into the sky in memory of the dead, with some holding signs reading "Down with killer governments".

Syria mission worth the risk, top US general says

DAMASCUS: The nearly eight-year-old U.S. deployment to Syria to combat Islamic State is still worth the risk, the top U.S. military officer said on Saturday, after a rare, unannounced visit to a dusty base in the country's northeast to meet U.S. troops. Army General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flew to Syria to assess efforts to prevent a resurgence of the militant group and review safeguards for American forces against attacks, including from drones flown by Iran-backed militia. While Islamic State is a shadow of the group that ruled over a third of Syria and Iraq in a Caliphate declared in 2014, hundreds of fighters are still camped in desolate areas where neither the U.S.-led coalition nor the Syrian army, with support from Russia and Iranian-backed militias, exert full control. Thousands of other Islamic State fighters are in detention facilities guarded by Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, America's key ally in the country. American officials say that Islamic State could still regenerate into a major threat. - DNA

Donald Trump pitches a sequel, but shies away from attacking rivals

"We are going to finish what we started," he said. "We're going to complete the mission. We're going to see this battle through to ultimate victory"

OXON HILL: Former President Donald Trump cast himself as the only Republican candidate who can build on his White House legacy but shied away from directly critiquing his potential rivals, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Trump, giving the headlining address at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, told a cheering crowd that he was engaged in his "final battle" as he tries to return to the White House. "We are going to finish what we started," he said. "We're going to complete the mission. We're going to see this battle through to ultimate victory." Though DeSantis, seen as Trump's biggest potential rival, is frequently a subject of name-calling and other attacks in Trump's social media posts and in interviews, he wasn't mentioned directly in Trump's address before conservative activists, who earlier in the day applauded when an old video clip of the Florida governor was shown in a montage. While CPAC was once a must-stop for candidates mulling

Republican presidential runs, DeSantis and other major likely contenders skipped this year's gathering amid scandal and as the group has increasingly become aligned with Trump. The former president's enduring popularity with this segment of voters was on display throughout the conference this week. Some attendees wore Trump-themed outfits, with "MAGA" hats and sequined jackets. Members of his family and his presidential administration were swarmed like celebrities in the hallways and dominated the list of speakers. The handful of other potential and declared candidates not named Trump who spoke received only tepid applause. And the annual CPAC straw poll, an unscientific survey of attendees, found Trump the top choice to be the party's nominee, with 62% support, trailed by DeSantis at 20% and businessman Perry Johnson, who announced his long shot bid at the conference, with 5%. Nearly all - 95% of respondents - said they approved of Trump's performance as president. - Agencies



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