



# Islamabad POST

Monday, March 20, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

### Ex-President Donald Trump expects to be arrested on Tuesday

Detailed News On Page-08

### Former Taiwan president Ma to visit China

Detailed News On Page-08



### Iran proposes location for Saudi meeting

Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Khan wants riots in country

DNA

FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has alleged that PTI chief Imran Khan wants riots and anarchy in the country after the elections, media reported on Sunday. While talking to the media, Rana Sanaullah alleged that the general elections in Punjab and KP will spread riots and anarchy in the country. He claimed that the upcoming elections are against the constitution and their results will not be accepted by anyone. "Imran Khan wants to see riots in the country after the elections. He is making such moves in the enmity of the country."

### Imran's role significant in future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab former chief minister Parvez Elahi said on Friday that the PTI Chairman Imran Khan's role in the future of the country's politics would be important. He had a meeting with Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani in which various issues of the country were discussed. Mr Elahi said he had always played constructive role for country's stability and he would continue to perform his duties and PTI chief would lift image of the country at international level. Both leaders expressed resolve to be united on various problems confronting the country.

### PML-Z chief Ijaz-ul-Haq joins PTI

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Zia (PML-Z) chief Ijaz-ul-Haq formally joined Imran Khan-led PTI on Sunday, media reported. The son of former military dictator Zia-ul-Haq and PML-Z chief Ijaz-ul-Haq met Imran Khan today. After the meeting, Haq announced to formally join Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Earlier in February, former Punjab chief minister (CM) Chaudhry Perwaiz Elahi and ten other ex-PML-Q MPs had joined PTI.

## Party seeks permission PTI to hold power show on Wednesday

### Imran threatens legal action against officers involved in 'attack' on his residence; PTI says Maryam behind Zaman Park 'attack'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Sunday yet again announced a power show at Minar-e-Pakistan on Wednesday (March 22) after Saturday's "high drama" as chaos erupted at his Zaman Park home and at the judicial complex in Islamabad where he appeared before a trial court in the Toshakhana case. Recalling the incidents that took place since his announcement of kick-starting the election campaign from March 8, he said: "I decided to hold a rally on March 8 after taking permission from the police on March 7, however, on the day of the gathering they started installing containers and imposed Section 144." He questioned how can authorities impose Section 144 - banning pillion-riding and gathering of five or more people - after the announcement of the election date. He claimed that despite all the drama he decided to call off his rally because he was afraid of chaos, "but they [coalition government] want to throw me in Balochistan jail so I am unable to hold campaign for the upcoming elections." "They plan to arrest me so that I am unable to issue ticket to my party leaders," he said, accusing the Pakistan PML-N of conspiring a plan against him. Khan, without naming PML-N Senior Vice President

Continued on Page 06

### Imran, other PTI leaders booked on terror charges

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police have lodged a FIR - including terrorism charges - against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and more than a dozen PTI leaders for allegedly attacking police officers and causing chaos outside the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC), it emerged on Sunday. Hours-long clashes were reported between PTI workers and the capital police on Saturday after the former prime minister arrived at the FJC to attend a hearing in the Toshakhana case. In the violent confrontation, a contingent of law enforcers and PTI supporters used anti-riot gear against each other with teargas used from both sides to push the opposing side back. The PTI used rocks against the police alongside petrol bombs to set their vehicles on fire. The mob also set a police chowki on fire and during the confrontation over 25 officials were injured.

Continued on Page 06

## Sharifs mull political strategy ahead of polls

### Nawaz directs Prime Minister Shehbaz to ensure 'enforcement of law'

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) top leadership, Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz, held a two-hour-long meeting to discuss the country's current political situation, media reported on Sunday. Sources said that Maryam Nawaz arrived at PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif's residence at Jati Umarh. Party supremo Nawaz Sharif participated in the meeting via video link. Sources claimed that matters related to country's political and economic situation were discussed during the meeting. The PML-N leadership also expressed "serious concern" over "assault" on law enforcement agencies (LEAs) by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). During the meeting, Nawaz Sharif directed PM Shehbaz to ensure "enforcement of law" at any cost. "We have always respected institutions and the judiciary. We had always appeared before court whenever summoned," the PML-N supremo said. Meanwhile, sources claimed that Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif took Nawaz and Maryam into confidence over the meeting of allied parties - summoned today (Monday) at 02:00 pm. Sources further said that Nawaz Sharif directed the prime minister to make decisions in consultation with the allied parties.

Continued on Page 06

### 'Imran launches attack on State'

DNA

LAHORE: Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb Sunday lashed out at PTI Chairman Imran Khan for intimidating judiciary by his 'terrorism' thus making fun of the judicial system. The information minister was holding a presser in Lahore today. She fired a broadside at former premier saying that he has gone mad with the hunger of power. She wondered at the logic of Imran as he was claiming that he got killed if he went to court. Marriyum said that the former premier had ruined the economy. She dubbed him a 'lying political terrorist, a rat and a foreign agent who has launched an attack on the state'. She said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is not a political party, rater 'a terrorist' has been imposed on our society. She said the court is summoning him and he is refusing to appear before it. The minister stated that weapons and petrol bombs were found from

Continued on Page 06



CHAMAN: A view of huge cache of arms and ammunition including Improvised Explosive Devices recovered during an Intelligence Based Operation carried out in general area Rehman Kahul, Chaman. - DNA

### PM unfurls petrol relief package

#### Subsidy for those who own motorcycles, rickshaws, 800cc cars

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Sunday that low-income individuals will receive a petroleum subsidy of Rs50 per litre as part of a relief package. The subsidy will be available to those who own motorcycles, rickshaws, 800cc cars, and other small vehicles. During a review meeting on the relief package, the premier emphasised that the programme will be implemented soon, and a comprehensive strategy will be formed in collaboration with relevant departments for effective implementation. He noted that motorcycles, rickshaws, and small cars are primarily used by low-income individuals, and the subsidy would provide relief to those in need. Despite economic difficulties, the government is committed to providing assistance to the poor, said the prime minister. The review meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Advisor to PM Ahad Cheema, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Finance, Secretary Petroleum, and other high-ranking officials. Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik briefed attendees on the strategy for providing the subsidy.

## Forces recover huge cache of arms, ammunition

### Intelligence Based Operation carried out in Rehman Kahul, Chaman

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces on Sunday recovered huge cache of arms and ammunition in an IBO in Chaman. According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press statement, an Intelligence Based Operation was carried out in general area RehmanKahul, Chaman to clear a suspected hideout of Terrorists on 19 Mar 23, linked with recent terrorist incidents including planting of improvised explosive devices in Chaman and surrounding areas. As a result of continuous technical Surveillance and Reconnaissance of the area, a location of the Terrorists was identified and Security Forces were employed to check it,

Continued on Page 06

### K-P police check-post attacked by 'terrorists'

DNA

PESHAWAR: A police post in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (K-P) Meri Khel was attacked on Sunday but so far, no casualties have been reported, according to media. According to the police, grenades were used in what is being termed a "terrorist attack". A motorcycle parked at the checkpoint caught

Continued on Page 06



Experience Hospitality, Culture and Luxury in the heart of Peshawar

For reservations, please call +92 (91) 588 9000 or email at reservation.psh@serena.com.pk

PESHAWAR SERENA HOTEL

## Inside...

Pak-US need to focus joint working on Green Climate Fund - Page 02

Pak-Kyrgyzstan can play role in economic integration - Page 03

Police and ICCI to further improve security in Capital - Page 04

The Current Political Situation in Pakistan - Page 05

Australia empowering Pakistani girls thro Cricket - Page 06

ICCI demands cut in SBP interest rate - Page 07

Indonesian ambassador bids farewell to cyclists - Page 08

## Putin makes surprise trip to Russian-occupied Mariupol

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: A day after being accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court, President Vladimir Putin made a surprise visit to the Russian-occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol, scene of some of the worst devastation of his year-old invasion. State television showed extended footage of Putin being shown around the city on Saturday night, meeting rehoused residents and being briefed on reconstruction efforts by Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin. The port city of Mariupol became known around the world as a byword for death and destruction as much of it was reduced to ruins in the first months of the war, eventually falling to Russian forces in May. Hundreds were killed in the bombing of a theatre where families with children were sheltering. The Organization for Security and Cooperation and Europe (OSCE) said Russia's early bombing of a maternity hospital there was a war crime. Moscow denied that and has said since it invaded on Feb. 24 last year that it does not target civilians. Putin's visit had the air of a gesture of defiance after the International Criminal Court issued

a warrant for his arrest on Friday, accusing him of the war crime of deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. He has not publicly commented on the move, but his spokesman said it was legally "null and void" and that Russia found the very questions raised by the ICC to be "outrageous and unacceptable". The visit to Mariupol was the first that Putin has made to the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine's Donbas region since the war started, and the closest he has come to the front lines. While Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made a number of trips to the battlefield to boost the morale of his troops and talk strategy, Putin has largely remained inside the Kremlin while running what Russia calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine. Kyiv and its allies say the invasion is an imperialistic land grab that has killed thousands and displaced millions of people in Ukraine. Putin's trip to Mariupol took place in darkness. State TV showed him at the wheel of a car, driving through the city in the company of his deputy prime minister, Khusnullin, and being briefed in detail on the rebuilding of housing, bridges, hospitals, transport routes and a concert hall. State media said he visited a new residential neighbourhood that had been built by Russian military with the first people moving in last September.





# Pak-US need to focus joint working on Green Climate Fund

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Monica P. Medina has said that the governments of the United States (U.S.) and Pakistan have great room for working together on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to solve climate challenges due to worst impacts of global warming and environmental degradation. The U.S. Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs in a discussion after the bilateral working group on climate and environment informed media men on the outcomes of the ministerial dialogue on important issues faced by Pakistan due to climate change. Ms. Medina said, "One thing that we really need to work on together is with respect to the Green Climate Fund which is one of the largest fund donors of the projects to deal with climate change in the world, and that both Pakistan and US governments are going to co-chair the board of directors at the key moment when the countries are looking to get more funding from the Fund into the communities that are being hit hardest by climate change."

She underlined that it was a tremendous opportunity for the US and Pakistan in particular to work together to help solve climate challenges now even as the entire conference of the parties (COP) process continued to deal with the loss and damage fund. The U.S. Assistant Secretary said Pakistan is a very important partner and friend of the U.S., adding, "We have a very meaningful and a deep relation-

ships with lots of people to people ties, strong bilateral exchanges and were working together on a huge range of global climate and environmental topics and challenges as these challenges we know hit close to home." The U.S. official said the world countries had faced horrible climate impacts but the devastating floods in Pakistan last year caught everyone's attention. "We worked closely with the Pakistani government in the wake of the floodings. Since these terrible events, the U.S. have announced more than \$200 million in flood relief, food security, disaster preparedness and other recovery efforts. We are very pleased to be able to do that as well as lending a lot of expertise too in trying to figure out ways to prevent and adapt to these sorts of climate stressors. She added that the U.S. administration had realised that both the countries would have to move forward to mitigate climate crisis by working together. The U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry would have been here but his busy schedule did not permit him, she added. Commenting on the Working Group proceedings, Ms. Medina said, "We not only had a climate dialogue but an environmental dialogue which allowed us covering a full range of topics including water resources, agriculture, nature and biodiversity, ocean conservation, and several others. It was very pleased to leave this working group together with the Minister for Climate Change Senator, Sherry Rehman here in Pakistan and our two governments had a long discussion about how we are going to strengthen our cooperation on climate and environmental issues." The U.S. Assistant Secretary had met with the Minister for Water Resources. She

had also visited the biodiversity rich Margalla Hills National Park and saw the work of Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB). She termed the IWMB as a model for other wildlife services. She appreciated the bear rehabilitation center and the Leopard Preserve Zone managed well by the IWMB. She also appreciated the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) young scientists and commended the students for asking good questions. She also met the young and called her interaction important with women at NUST who were very engaged and active to be part of the learning process. She also met the programme alumni at the Embassy that had a huge one. "They are very active in civil society, business and academia," she acknowledged the U.S. Embassy program alumni. She also met the representatives of the business community and civil society and was amazed to meet them. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Embassy work on looking the issue of climate change at the local level, she said. Ms. Medina noted that plastic pollution issue was another important area where the U.S. government was engaged with its Pakistani counterpart. "Pakistan had one marine protected area (MAP) and we are also working in this area to enhance Pakistan's capacity to further boost its MAPs." She added that further areas of cooperation included illegal fishing, air quality, mangroves, impacts of floods and recovery issues and Climate Smart Agriculture to address impacts of environmental degradation, and management of 2023 monsoon floods.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of women in a queue to collect government free flour in connection with Ramzan ul Mubarak at Khana pull in the Federal Capital. —APP

## DC imposes section-144 in distt

PESHAWAR: To maintain law and order throughout the district, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahad imposed Section 144 Cr-Pc which prohibits the gathering of 5 or more persons. Issuing a press note, Section-144 would be effective from March 18 to 22 and in case of violation, legal action will be initiated under Section 188 PPC.

## Imran 'ruined' economy

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Sunday said that Imran Khan took the government under a conspiracy to "roll back CPEC and ruined the economy of the country". He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Rs597 million Sui gas project in the suburban village of Baganwala Abbottabad. Former MPA Sardar Aurangzeb Nalotha and a large number of people from different walks of life were also present. The minister further said that Imran Khan left the treasury empty and now he was fleeing from the courts.

The trend of disrespecting the decisions of the judiciary reflects an agenda that was predicted by Hakim Saeed and Dr. Israr Ahmed, he added. Nawaz Sharif and PML-N got 13 years of power in this country, and 70% of Pakistan's development projects were attributed to the PML(N) and Nawaz Sharif, the minister said. Murtaza Javed Abbasi while criticizing Imran Khan said the latter had a long list of corruption cases starting from Toshakhana to others, and today, he was granted bail in nine cases within a minute, on the other side Nawaz Sharif faced 120 charges in 6 months.

The minister said that Nawaz Sharif was a hero of the nation who made Pakistan atomic power and brought the country on the path of progress and prosperity. The approval of the Hazara Electricity Supply Company (HESCO), the number has reached 7,800.

He said that projects worth Rs. 24 billion had been completed in Haripur, Manshera and Abbottabad, and after the accountability of PTI new general elections would also be held. —APP

## First ever Islamabad Literary Festival ends

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Literary Festival 2023 organized by CDA has been. Renowned writers from all over the country, prominent personalities from literature, culture, arts and various walks of life participated in the literary festival. The literary festival continued for three days which was organized for the first time in Islamabad. Chairman CDA Captain Noor Ul Amin Mengal has said that being the city manager of the country's capital, it is our responsibility to promote the culture, arts, traditions, civilization and culture of the entire country in Islamabad. According to the details, different colorful programs were also presented on the third day of the festival. The third day started with program Youth Role models which was participated by people belonging to different walks of life who earned good

name for Pakistan both at national and international level in their respective fields. The program was hosted by Absa Kanwal. Badminton player Ayesha Akram, football and basketball player Sana Mehmood, boxing player Mohammad Shoaib, renowned artist Bano Rehmat, art director Kamran Khan and Table tennis player Raheela. While Chairman CDA Noor Ul Amin Mengal also participated in this panel discussion. Speaking in the program, Ayesha Akram said that CDA has a big hand in her success because whenever she needed to prepare for any international or domestic competition, CDA management provided her Iqbal Hall Badminton Court. She said that hard work is the main ingredient to get success in any field of life, followed by parents' trust in their children. That is why

parents should encourage their children especially girls. Sana Mehmood, who represented Pakistan at the world level in football and basketball, said that these two sports were considered male sports, but with hard work, I proved that if girls are given facilities, they can serve equally for the country. She urged the parents to encourage their children in sports fields and other areas of life. She said that the place where she has been playing is also a ground built by CDA. She requested the Chairman CDA to add more such facilities in the city. Mohammad Shoaib, from Quetta, who made Pakistan famous in boxing, said in the Pakistan there are about 36 sports being played, but boxing is the only sport in which blood flows along with sweat. —DNA

## Commissioner visits free flour points

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Mr. Liaquat Ali Chatta on Sunday while inspecting the distribution system of free of cost flour to the deserving people in Attock has directed the Deputy Commissioner Attock to ensure maximum relief to the consumers particularly during the holy month of Ramazan. This was told by the Deputy Director Public Relations Attock Mr. Shahzad Niaz here on Sunday. During his surprise visit the the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Mr. Liaquat Ali Chatta also reviewed the over all arrangements for supply of free flour points of Attock dis-

trict. He was also accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza, Addl Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Director Public Relations Mr. Shahzad Niaz and all other officials of the relevant departments. On this occasion, the commissioner was informed that 56 utility stores and 19 trucking points have been designated for the distribution of free flour while six points have been fixed for Punjab Social Protection Authority. The commissioner also interacted with the people present at these points and inquired about the distribution of free flour. He said that all-out efforts were being made to provide relief to the people and they would get full relief, particularly during Ramazan with this initiative taken by the Punjab government.



## PBF says diplomacy with US economic think-tanks under way

LAHORE: The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), with the support of overseas Pakistanis, has started trade diplomacy with American economic think-tanks and chambers of commerce to strengthen economic ties between the two countries. PBF Vice President Attiq Akram Chaudhry told APP on Sunday that in this regard, the forum had also appointed a focal person for the US markets as Pakistan needed more strong trade relations with the US. "We believe that a robust trade relationship between the United States and Pakistan is more important than ever to bolster Pakistan's economic stability as it recovers from the devastating floods, besides guiding the American business community towards trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan," he added. Attiq Akram Chaudhry said the US had long been Pakistan's largest export market with potential for further growth. —APP

## AFD pledges \$55 mln to support Pakistan's Polio Program

ISLAMABAD: French Development Agency (AFD) has pledged \$55 million to help support Pakistan's Polio Programme operations, in efforts to interrupt poliovirus transmission. With this the French Development Agency (AFD) has become part of global polio eradication partners with its commitment to filling the funding gap of the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to end polio. A delegation of the AFD and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation met the Special Health Secretary and visited the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication. The meetings were part of the delegation's week-long visit to Pakistan to help support the country in the areas of health and social protection. During a briefing at the NEOC, the AFD committed to supporting the Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) in immunization activities, disease surveillance, polio campaign monitoring and other technical areas, and filling the funding gap of

\$55 million (under the PC-1 for polio eradication, 2022-2026) that the programme needed. NEOC Coordinator Dr Shahzad Baig emphasized the significance of the polio infrastructure to Pakistan's healthcare. "We are very grateful to the French Government for this support." "The Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme is a vital part of our healthcare system and investing in polio is an investment in the country's overall health system," he said. He added, "The polio infrastructure has proven how it can offer the most reliable support for the most challenging of health emergencies, like we saw with the COVID-19 response, which capitalized on the experiences of polio surveillance teams." The French Development Agency delegation was headed by Agn's Soucat, Director of Health and Social Protection, while the Gates Foundation delegation was led by Jay Wegner, Global Head for Polio Eradication. The delegation held a meeting with the Country Representatives of WHO and UNICEF

and discussed how the polio infrastructure was on the forefront in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent flood response. After the NEOC meeting, Special Health Secretary Mirza Nasir ul Din Mashhood Ahmad held a debrief at the Ministry of Health and spoke about the impact on Pakistan's health infrastructure after the 2022 floods, which left 2,000 health facilities damaged. "Despite the challenges of last year, the Government of Pakistan did not waver in its resolve to eradicate polio. We remain committed to the cause and the multiple vaccination campaigns we have held since the floods are a testament to that commitment," the Health Secretary said. Ms. Agnes emphasized on strengthening the primary health care system, integrated disease surveillance and response systems and prioritizing preparedness for emerging and re-emerging diseases, including building the capacity of frontline workers for primary health care and other needs. —APP

## Minister agrees to redress SMEs liquidity crisis

DNA

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar has agreed with the demands presented to him by the apparel exporters, especially to resolve the issue of liquidity crunch faced by the SMEs due to blockage of sales tax refunds, creating the crucial cash flow problem for the garment exporters to cater the new orders. The Commerce Minister attended an interactive session along with Defence Minister Khawaja Aasif and TDAP Director General Shahzad Ahmed Khan, in his maiden visit to Sialkot on request of PRGMEA, also largely attended by the exporters from all industrial ex-



port-oriented sectors. He was quite impressed with the activity of Sialkot-based garment exporters and overall PRGMEA participation in economic growth from Lahore and Karachi members. Syed Naveed Qamar said

that he would convene a meeting with the officials of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to resolve this issue on urgent basis. The Minister of Commerce said that the government was committed to providing a level-playing field and

reducing the cost of doing business for export-oriented sectors including textile whole chain. This shall help boost exports and reduce the current account deficit. He stated that it is time to promote value-added products and that the

government will provide incentives for this purpose as soon as the economic conditions get better.

Naveed Qamar stated that the Ministry of Commerce had formulated the Textiles and Apparel Policy 2020-2025, which will address matters including value addition, product diversification, skill development, productivity and ease of doing business. We need to attract investment in the textile and apparel sector to enhance our manufacturing capacities, saying that the SMEs across the world are engines of growth for any country, he said and added that in the global textile industry Pakistan has less than 2% share which needs to be enhanced with practical steps.

**MURREE BREWERY**

### Open House for Diplomatic Missions

Murree Brewery Company Limited located in Rawalpindi is an icon reflecting the past and the present history of the subcontinent.

Murree Brewery Company is pleased to invite friends from diplomatic missions to visit us and share the experience of our efforts towards keeping it afloat for over 160 years of operation.

We cordially invite diplomatic missions to visit us on any Saturday from 10 am to 1:30 pm to enjoy our hospitality and our products tasting. However, since, we are located in the Red Zone / Prohibited area and it will be mandatory to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs well in advance of the intended visit date. We look forward to welcoming you all soon.

For further information please contact the following.

**Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman**  
Mobile: 0300 8553342



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### MARCH

March 01 / Bosnia National Day  
 March 03 / Bulgaria National Day  
 March 06 / Ghana Independence Day  
 March 12 / Mauritius National Day  
 March 17 / Ireland St. Patricks Day  
 March 20 / Tunisia Independence Day  
 March 21 / Namibia National Day  
 March 25 / Greece National Day  
 March 26 / Bangladesh National Day  
 March 27 / Myanmar Armed Forces Day



### Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133  
 Marriott.....051- 2826121  
 Monal.....0334-5421812



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
 Bomb Disposal.....15  
 Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
 Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122  
 Motorway Police.....9266044  
 Motorway Police.9270601-20  
 Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9225596  
 Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
 PIA Flight Info.....114  
 PIA Cargo.....9280979  
 Railway Inquiry.....117  
 Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
 WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489  
 CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
 MH.....561116  
 Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
 DHQ.....5556311-4  
 RGH.....9290301-7  
 Holy Family.....9290322-7  
 PIMS.....9261170-79  
 Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
 Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

CDA.....9221334-43  
 CDA.....9208301-04  
 Met Office.....9250360-6  
 RDA.....5555864  
 TMA.....5770886  
 Cantonment Board 9270151-3



### Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224  
 Potohar Town.....9209224  
 Rawal Town.....5773343



### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying at Kachnar Park, in Federal Capital. —Online

## Pak-Kyrgyzstan can play role in economic integration

He said KTH would help in achieving results-oriented goals of promoting strong economic cooperation among the traders

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House and Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Sunday said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan could play a key role in regional economic integration. Speaking to a delegation of industrialists and traders today led by Faran Shahid Arain at Kyrgyzstan Trade House (KTH), he highlighted profound fraternal relations and deep-rooted linkage between both countries. He said Kyrgyzstan is keen on enhancing bilateral trade and further strengthening and promoting the existing economic ties through investment. He

said, on the other hand, Pakistan also attached great significance to Kyrgyzstan for better cooperation in multiple sectors including trade, energy, education, science and technology and cultural exchanges between the two Muslim brotherly countries. He said the geographical location of Pakistani is special for CARs and Kyrgyzstan as these landlocked countries can access many global markets through Pak ports. He said close interaction between the traders and people-to-people contact besides B2B ties will pay dividends to either country. He said KTH would help in achieving results-oriented goals of promoting strong economic cooperation among the traders. He said

Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Kyrgyzstan are estimated to be over 90\$ billion market with potential for business and investment, however, Pakistan's trade with these countries is not upto the mark. Meher Kashif Younis said Pakistan can export many products to these countries including textile, leather, pharmaceuticals, agriculture products, electrical appliances communication, machinery equipment and in building sector. He pointed out that these countries including Kyrgyzstan import a large variety of machinery and equipment from other sources and Pakistan can become a major exporter of high value products and similar-ly Pakistan can import energy

and other products from Kyrgyzstan and other countries. He said Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev is making hectic endeavours to promote bilateral trade between two countries and facilitating the importers and exporters to explore investment avenues and joint ventures. He said KTH is symbol of trade cooperation between private sectors of both countries. He said Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have centuries-long cultural, religious and economic relations well before their creation. Meanwhile Police have arrested four illegal arms holders and recovered arms, and ammunition from their possession during a crackdown here

on Sunday, informed police spokesman. Rata Amral police held Asif and recovered a pistol of 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Mandra police arrested Shahbaz Ali and recovered a pistol of 30 bore from his custody. While, R.A Bazaar police recovered a pistol of 30 bore from Fawad Hafeez and a pistol of 30 bore from Mubarak Aziz was also recovered during an operation. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police teams adding that the crackdown against illegal arms holders will also be accelerated.

## Govt flexing muscles to manage power supply

ISLAMABAD: The government is mulling multi-pronged strategy to cope with upcoming power shortage issue during summer despite economic turmoil and rising fuel prices following International Monetary Fund demands. Since uninterrupted power supply is considered as crucial for development of industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors, its smooth supply to domestic consumers is equally important. Therefore, the present government is vigorously pursuing the arrangements to overcome load-shedding in coming summer and provide respite to industry and common consumers in scorching heat. Rising fuel prices and new energy situation after Ukraine war also necessitated Pakistan to utilize its indigenous resources like hydel, solar, wind and Thar coal as it has already announced not to build any new power projects

depending on imported coal and ensure 60 percent of its power through local sources by 2030. "We are taking pragmatic steps to overpower load-shedding by focusing on generation, transmission and energy conservation to provide maximum relief to people," stated Minister for Power Division Khurram Dasgir. "The present government has already added 1,980 MW cheap electricity to the system from Thar coal reserves in just 10 months besides 720 MW and 1100 MW from Karot Hydropower and K-3 Nuclear Power Plants," he added. Khurram Dasgir said the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) government led by the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had successfully added over 10,000 MW electricity to national grid through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects during 2013 to 2018. "Efforts of the then PML-N

government, had not only controlled load-shedding but also surplus power was available in the system," he remarked. "But, criminal negligence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had delayed number of projects draggin the country to darkness once again." He informed that total power generation from Thar coal stood at 2640 MW with formal commissioning of 1320 MW Shanghai Electric Thar Coal Project under the CPEC. "Another 330 MW Thal Nova Thar coal project has already been synchronized in February that would help reduce load-shedding in summer and cut the power tariff." Khurram said there were 175 billion tons coal reserves at Thar that were sufficient to generate 100,000 MW electricity. Moreover, Bolan-Gawadar Transmission Line has also been completed to import 100 MW electricity from Iran.—APP

## Member of bike lifter gang held

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police Bhara Kahu police team apprehended a wanted member of a bike lifter gang involved in bike lifting incident and recovered a stolen motorbike from his possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police had started a crackdown against criminal elements involved in car and bike lifting incidents in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directives, the police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a bike lifter gang involved in numerous bike lifting incidents. Police team also recovered a stolen motorbike from his possession.

## 'Guru culture' a lethal form of neo-slavery

ISLAMABAD: The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Dr Qibla Ayaz on Sunday said there was a united stance on the 'guru culture' as it was a lethal form of exploitation and neo-slavery. It was against human rights and it should not be part of any act or rules to be framed for transgender persons, he said in an exclusive talk with APP. Besides urging the parents of non-binary gender children to take their ownership, Dr Qibla Ayaz proposed the government to establish rehabilitation centers to bring them in the mainstream of social spectrum. He said according to the health experts, transgender persons could be operated on at every stage of life including childhood, or after attaining the age of adult or youth in the light of modern medical sciences and could be transformed as normal and productive citizens of the society except in a few cases. Shedding light on the 'Self-perceived identity' in the perspective of Islam, he said it was contrary to the teachings of Shariah and it could be a source of many unexpected issues in the future. However, the provision of self-perceived identity must be abrogated from any act or rules, he added. He further pointed out that the word transgender was wrongly defined in the Transgender Persons (Rights of Protection) Rules, as it included those persons who did not fall in their category and recommended that the word intersex must be used instead of transgender because it was the umbrella term for the following segment of the society. By birth non-binary gender persons could analyze their physical status or it could be ascertained by their parents or medical board.—APP

## Consumers urge to manage traffic

ISLAMABAD: Mismanged car queues are causing traffic congestion at Srinagar Highway due to car parking alongside the road of the popular weekly bazaar at H-9 Sector. The mega shopping bazaar and most visited place of the metropolis lacks proper management and coordination to make visitors park their vehicles properly. The entrance and exit to the parking remain overfilled, bungled, and aching especially on Sunday which causes an unmanageable traffic load for officials and market staffers. Visitors prefer to park vehicles along with Srinagar Highway, service road, and 9th avenue to seek easy entrance and exit after their shopping. Kashif Raza a visitor to the market said that the parking area remains occupied and the customers have to reach their cars on foot while carrying heavy packs of groceries. He said that to avoid inconvenience citizens prefer to park their cars on the main road. Another visitor Saima Khurshid commented that citizens prefer shopping from the weekly markets as prices of essential commodities are reasonable. She said that customers save some money but waste their time due to unmanageable traffic. When contacted Islamabad Traffic Police, the relevant official said that traffic management of weekly markets remains at the top of the priorities list of the police. He said that wardens are always available on the Srinagar Highway and around the weekly markets to maintain the traffic flow. He informed that every customer is in hurry and tries to park the car close to the doors.—APP

## 5720 fine tickets issued

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police issued 5720 fine tickets to vehicles and bikes during the ongoing year for non-registration and having fancy or non-pattern number plates. Following the special direction of Inspector-General Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police intensified action against the vehicles non-registered and having fancy and non-pattern number plates in the capital city. The action was also ordered against those vendors preparing such number plates, a police public relations officer said. He said that, the Islamabad Capital police expedited the campaign against such vehicles having fancy and non-pattern number plates and issued 5720 fine tickets to vehicles and bikes for violating traffic rules. The purpose of this campaign is to ensure high alert security, maintaining law and order situation in order to ensure the protection of the lives as well as property of citizens and avert any untoward incident. Islamabad Capital Police urged the motorists to display the number plates issued by Excise and Taxation Office and also keep with them.

## Agricultural country lags behind in advanced technology

### MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



There is a vast area of fertile land in Pakistan and it is our bad luck that agricultural commodities cannot be produced in Pakistan as per requirement. Even today, many items including meat, wheat, sugar, tomatoes, onions have to be imported to meet the shortage of food. This question arises in the mind of every person of Pakistan, whether our livestock and agriculture departments do not have the capability or resources, due to which they could not show better performance in terms of food production. According to the federal and provincial governments that resources are being provided to the Livestock and Agriculture Departments as per requirement, anyone who doubts can read the Federal PSDP and the ADPs of the four provinces.

It can be seen in PSDP and ADPs that funds of billions of rupees are being provided to NARC, seed certification, livestock and agriculture departments. Many projects have been completed at the federal and provincial levels and several projects are ongoing. Whether there is proper monitoring of the completed and ongoing projects and objectives for which the projects were completed have been fulfilled or not. The people of Pakistan should know about PSDP and ADPs projects whether the projects are succeeding or failing. The projects about which information has to be conveyed to the public are the Federal PSDP projects Cage Culture Cluster Development Project, Calf feedlot fattening in Pakistan, Establishment of consumer sourcing seed authenticity system and Strengthening of Labs of FSC&RD, National Oilseed, Enhancement Program, National Peste Des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Eradication Programme: Phase 1 - Risk Based PPR Control In Sheep and Goats of

Pakistan, National Program for Enhancing the Command Area in Barani Areas of Pakistan, National Program for Improvement of Watercourses in Pakistan - Phase II, Prime Minister's initiative for Backyard Poultry, Prime Minister's initiative for Save the Calf, Productivity Enhancement of Rice, Productivity Enhancement of Sugarcane, Productivity Enhancement of Wheat, Promotion of Olive cultivation on commercial scale in Pakistan -Phase II, Promotion of Trout Farming in Northern Areas of Pakistan, Strengthening / Up-gradation of Agriculture and Livestock Research System of Arid Zone Research Institute, Umerkot-Sindh, Water Conservation in Barani Areas of KP, Projects of Punjab ADP Extension Service 2.0 Farmer Facilitation through Modernized Extension, Promotion of fruits production in Punjab through provision of certified plants, Rehabilitation of Old Bulldozers for Sustainable Land Development Work to Ensure Food Security, Upgradation of AARI Infrastructure, Faisalabad,

Research & Development on Fruit Crops in South Punjab through Establishment of Fruit Research Institute at Bahawalpur, Establishment of Center of Excellence for Olive Research and Training (CEFORT) at Barani Agriculture Research Institute Chakwal, Promotion of Mechanized Agriculture for Increasing Crop Productivity, Privatization of Agriculture Extension Services to Enhance the Service Delivery, Establishment of Centers of Excellence for Wheat, Rice, Sugarcane, Maize & Millets, Provision of Missing Infrastructure in 10 Agriculture Produce Markets, Promotion of High Value Agriculture through Solarization of Drip & Sprinkler Irrigation Systems, Projects of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial ADP Gomal Zam Dam Command Area Development and On Farm Water Management for High Value and High Efficiency Agriculture Project, - Introduction of Certification Facilities for Quality Assurance and Creation of Market Link-

ages for Agriculture Interventions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, - Provision of Interest Free Loan to the Farmers of Command Area under Gomal Zam Dam - Command Area Project, Establishment of Trout Villages in Malakand and Hazara Division, Development of Cold Water Fisheries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Provincial Share-PM's Agriculture Emergency Program), Development of Reservoirs for Fisheries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sindh ADP projects Establishment of Agro-Export Processing Zone for Export of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers & Allied Processing Products from Local Farms / Processing Units to Overseas Markets, Provision of Agricultural Land Development Machinery & Equipments (On Subsidized Rate), Sindh Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Program Phase-I Project (World Bank Assisted), Additional Lining of Watercourses in Sindh. Whatever the success rate of the projects is, it is important to bring it to the public as there is

a widespread perception among the public that the completed and ongoing projects under the National Food Security and Agriculture Departments have been complete failures. The main reason for the failure of these projects is high level corruption. If there was no corruption, the benefits of these projects would have been available at cheaper prices of food items. Misperception is widespread among the public because there is no media projection of the progress of agricultural projects. Unnecessary and excessive pesticide spraying on crops has fatal effects that ultimately cause various diseases in people, this is a question mark on the efficiency of plant protection and pest warning. How much role are playing in availability of food items the completed and ongoing projects under the Ministry of National Food Security & Research and agriculture departments? I will write an investigative article on the completed and ongoing projects very soon.



## Briefs

Admin to  
distribute  
1447,775 free  
flour bags

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration would distribute 1447,775 free flour bags among poor and deserving people. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta, the administration had finalized all the arrangements and set up free flour distribution points. He informed that 100,000 flour bags would be distributed on daily basis. In this regard, 232 trucking points had been established across the district. Free flour bags would be distributed among the deserving people as per the instructions of the Punjab Government, he said. Display of the price lists would be ensured at all shops and the representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajran would also be taken on-board, he said. He further informed that the Commissioner had directed the authorities concerned to resolve all revenue matters including 'Gardavari', Jamabandi and 'Khwat' on a priority basis. Strict action would be taken against the 'Naib Tehsildars', found negligent particularly in any revenue matter including Gardawari, Jamabandi and Khwat, he added.—APP

FGEHA  
allocates 1,188  
category-I plots

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has allocated around 1,188 category-I plots in Park Road Housing Scheme, Islamabad for allotment to federal government employees as per the approved layout plan. "As per the decision of the 142nd meeting of the executive committee of the authority, a 3.5 per cent quota was further segregated into constitutional serving (2.5 per cent), constitutional retired (0.5 per cent) and constitutional widows (0.5 per cent) categories with the criteria "age-wise seniority" and "length of service" respectively," said a document available with APP.

It said a number of plots to be allotted as per the above-approved quota reserved in the Park Road Housing Scheme for the registered members of constitutional bodies/quota. The bodies included in the said quota were the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad High Court, Federal Shariat Court, Election Commission of Pakistan, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly Secretariat, Islamic Ideological Council, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat and Federal Tax Ombudsman Office, the document said.—APP

PTDC  
launches two-  
week training  
program

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) launched a two-week national tour guides training program to train 1000 trainees across the country. "The PTDC in collaboration of Sustainable Tourism Foundation Pakistan (STFP), College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATO), Department of Tourist Services (DTS), and PUM will conduct a series of training workshops," said a press release issued by PTDC. The two-week standard level extensive training program would provide massive opportunities and expertise to the trainees to get knowledge and guidance as how to compete in the field of tourism in the country. The first training workshop started at Islamabad on Saturday in which 25 participants from different parts of the country participated. International and national trainers and experts of tourism are conducting the training workshops. The PTDC is developing the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, taking full advantage of regional and international trends so that it can significantly contribute to the improved quality of life in Pakistan whilst promoting the country's cultural.—APP

Police and ICCI to further  
improve security in Capital

Ch. Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Shabbir, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Sai fur Rehman, Malik Mohsin Khalid and others also highlighted various issues that needed the close attention of SP Rural for redress

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that a secure and peaceful environment is the key requirement to promote business and investment activities and stressed that Islamabad Police should take ICCI on board to further improve the security situation in the Capital in order to boost business activities. He said this while talking to Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural Islamabad during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the rural areas in Islamabad need further improvement in the security situation and stressed that the police should work in close liaison with the trade associations of rural areas to provide a more secure environment to the traders community. He said that police should register data of all security



guards deployed in the markets of rural areas and verify their credentials to make sure that clean record holders are employed as security guards in rural areas. He said that the police should hold

open kuchehries so that the citizens could highlight their issues for redress. He further said that police should devise a strategy to deal with the issues being faced by the citizens due to anti-social

elements. Speaking at the occasion, Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country and

providing them a secure environment is the high priority of police. He assured that he would work with ICCI and concerned market associations to further improve security arrangements in the rural areas. He said that police would collect data of security guards posted in housing societies of rural areas to verify their credentials. He said that police would also start the process of registering Afghan nationals in Islamabad and monitor their movements in order to ensure that they aren't involved in any criminal activities. He said that open kuchehries would also be started soon as they were suspended due to the security situation.

Ch. Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Shabbir, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Sai fur Rehman, Malik Mohsin Khalid and others also highlighted various issues that needed the close attention of SP Rural for redress.

RCB to start  
cleanliness  
work of  
Nullahs soon

RAWALPINDI: The cleanliness work of Cantt Nullahs would be launched soon and all Nullahs would be cleared, said Additional Cantonment Executive Officer (ACEO), Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Umair Mehboob. He informed that the authorities concerned had been directed to launch a grand operation to remove encroachments. A special committee would also be formed to resolve the complaints of the traders as soon as possible. The ACEO said that the board would start the cleanliness work of the Nullahs soon and it would be completed before start of monsoon rains. He said that the board was facing water shortage but all available resources were being utilized to supply water to the residents. Efforts would also be made to resolve water shortage issue on priority, he added. The board would also launch an operation against illegal hand-cart bazaars, he said.—APP

Daraz facilitates donation for  
flood relief efforts in Pakistan

It's the accumulation of acts of kindness, as in this case the Alibaba Group and Daraz Pakistan, that our close bond continues to enhance and grow stronger over time. Chin-Pak dosti zindabad!

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In response to the devastating floods that hit Pakistan last year, Daraz has announced that it will facilitate a donation of around US \$320,000 from its China-based parent company Alibaba Group to support efforts to rehabilitate communities affected by the disaster. The donation will be made to The Citizens Foundation, a globally recognized and respected non-profit organization working since 1995 to provide quality education to the underserved population of the country. The funds will be utilized to build a school in the Badin District of Sindh for 180 children to resume their education at the earliest possible, and its upkeep for the next five years. Daraz Pakistan will be managing the overall partnership with The Citizens Foundation

to govern the construction of the school and monitor the project's progress on a monthly basis. Ehsan Saya, Managing Director, Daraz Pakistan, stated, "The country has been through the worst natural disasters in its history, affecting a significant number of our population and infrastructure. Recovering from the losses caused will not be linear. As organizations and individuals, we must all step up to help in whatever capacity we can. At Daraz, generosity of spirit is one of our core values which we try to live by every day, especially at difficult times that affect our nation. We are proud to be a part of Alibaba Group, which is contributing to helping communities rebuild their lives. The gift of education is the best way to give back to society in the most meaningful manner, and we are confident that we will be able to transform many lives through this

partnership with The Citizens Foundation." Syed Asaad Ayub Ahmad, President & CEO, of The Citizens Foundation, expressing his views on the occasion said, "For 27 years, TCF has been committed to providing quality education for the less privileged children of Pakistan. To fulfill this mission, we look towards collaborating with organizations that share our vision of a better and literate Pakistan. The E-commerce sector is transforming the future of shopping from conventional brick-and-mortar stores and has entered the digital era with modern solutions, allowing ease of purchasing in the most efficient manner. We are excited to collaborate with Daraz Pakistan and expand our reach and impact." Ms. Pang Chunxue, Chargé d'affaires of China Embassy, Islamabad, appreciated this effort and shared "I am very pleased to learn that Chinese

Alibaba Group has committed to donate USD \$320,000 to support rehabilitating communities affected by the floods, and feel more excited to know that the funds will be used to build a school in the Badin district of Sindh to accommodate 180 children to resume their studies. My special thanks also go to The Citizens Foundation for their facilitation and implementation. China and Pakistan have a tradition of helping each other and sharing weal and woe. In addressing the historical floods last year, China offered immediate support and assistance to Pakistan. Up to now, China has provided nearly US \$260 million in flood relief assistance to Pakistan. It's the accumulation of acts of kindness, as in this case the Alibaba Group and Daraz Pakistan, that our close bond continues to enhance and grow stronger over time. Chin-Pak dosti zindabad!

Experts urge transfer of  
China's renewable energy  
expertise to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: "Cooperation between China and Pakistan can help Pakistan benefit from China's expertise in renewable energy, including solar and wind energy. Sino-Pak cooperation opportunities lie in renewable energy assessment, project investment and development, technology training, etc," said Qin Haiyan, secretary-general of the China Wind Energy Association. In a webinar titled "Pakistan's Green Energy Pathways - Inspirations from China" hosted by energy and environment thinktank Renewable First (RF), Qin attributed China's wind power market growth to factors such as the Renewable Energy Law and a stable domestic market. He added that China has significantly reduced the leveled cost of electricity (LCOE) for onshore and offshore wind projects over the past decade, with a 60% reduction in offshore projects. As the world's largest market for wind power for 14 years running, China is sharing wind power technologies such as wind turbines with Pakistan, contributing to cost reductions in electricity generation in the country. By the end of 2022, China's cumulative installed wind power capacity had exceeded 396 GW, the secretary-general said. China has built more than 20 power plants in cooperation with Pakistan and trained thousands of local wind energy professionals, claimed Leo Deng, a Pakistan-based consultant on the power project, in an interview with Gwadar Pro. According to Gwadar Pro, he further said, wind and solar power are the cheapest new forms of electricity generation and possibly could dramatically reduce Pakistan's dependence on expensive imported fuels. The Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP) 2047, issued by NEPRA, forecasts Pakistan's total power generation to increase from 33,000 megawatts in 2020 to approximately 168,200 megawatts in 2047, with wind and solar power accounting for 23% of the energy mix by 2030, up from around 3% in 2020. Leo believes that the Pakistani government's push towards renewable energy is a great opportunity for China.—DNA

24  
absconders  
involved  
in criminal  
activities  
arrested

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police have arrested 24 absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crime during the last week, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes. During the crackdown, the Islamabad capital police Aabpara, Gola, Industrial Area, Shahzad Town, Bara Kahu, Kohsar, Margalla, Noon and Karachi company police stations teams arrested 24 absconders and proclaimed offenders from different areas of the city during the last week. The Islamabad Capital Police is taking all possible steps to eradicate crime from the city and those involved in heinous crimes and illegal activities will be dealt with iron hands.—DNA

Chinese firm looks to establish  
industrial park in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar assured all-out support to a Chinese company looking to invest in Pakistan. According to the Ministry of Commerce, a Chinese business delegation led by Mr. Hou Jianxin, Chairman Shandong Xinxu Group Corp., China, met the Minister at his office, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. Mr. Hou Jianxin told the Minister that in line with the decision of the government of Shan-



dong province to shift Chinese industry to Pakistan, he came up with the vision to build an industrial park in Pakistan. The Industrial Park will serve as a focal point for all the industrial require-

ments of Pakistan from China and vice versa, he said. The Chairman said that projects like solar panels assembly plant, metal refining plants, fertilizer production plant, food processing plants

(dry milk production, seafood processing, meat processing) etc. are being considered for future investment. Syed Naveed Qamar appreciated decision of the Shandong government to shift its industry to Pakistan, which, he said, will not only save our foreign reserves but will also create job opportunities. The Minister sought comprehensive proposals from the Chinese firms interested in shifting their businesses to Pakistan, which will be forwarded to the Board of Investment (BOI) for expediting the investment process.

Prof van Ypersele vows  
to transform IPCC

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and award-winning science commentator, Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele who is a candidate for the upcoming IPCC chair election has vowed to transform the global climate science forum into the world's strongest and rigorous global voice of climate change. Prof. van Ypersele has been contesting for the chairmanship of the IPCC for the second time and had earlier lost the polls to the Republic of Korea's Hoesung Lee and had managed to receive the second highest votes. Prof. van Ypersele has the official support of the Belgian government for his candidacy. He has a vast experience of four decades in climate science and diplomacy, remained IPCC Vice-chair from 2008-2015 and has been active at the forum since 1995. In an exclusive interview with APP, Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele said he had set a clearcut agenda of taking the IPCC to new heights of excellence and glory as the global environmental body already enjoys great repute and prestige internationally. He said it is a useful and relevant body for all kinds of decision makers including businesses, policy makers, media, teachers and common people etc. Prof. van Ypersele said the decisions taken by the relevant stakeholders had serious repercussions and impacts that needed to be guided through proper and accurate science based data. He also expressed his intentions to turn the institution into an all inclusive institution. Dr. van Ypersele said the IPCC is an Intergovernmental organisation involving a variety of scientists who know the reality of their regions and that it was important to involve as many developing country scientists as possible, so that the IPCC would really have a 360 degree angle view of both the climate challenge and its solutions. He mentioned that he had the experience of working in an inclusive manner whereas inclusivity according to him meant in particular gender equality and better developing country scientists participation.—DNA

Pakistan Monument  
major attraction  
for tourists

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Monument is a major source of attraction for foreign dignitaries and domestic tourists at large due to its architectural beauty located at west viewpoint of the Shakarparian hills. Talking to APP, Haroon Waheed, a resident of G-6, said he along with his family visited a Pakistan Monument and enjoyed a lot by visiting Pakistan Monument's museum that reflecting and representing magnificent and rich cultural heritage and history of the country. He said Pakistan Monument had designed and constructed in a very unique style, adding that the architectural marvel commemorates the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country and symbolizes the patriotism of the Pakistani people. "The Monument's cleanliness and location besides Shakarparian hills is a source of inspiration for visitors and they love to visit the historical site to refresh their memories regarding Pakistan history and historical perspective," he said. Anna Ali, a resident of Lahore, said the lovely winter season and peaceful atmosphere is also a key factor for our trip to enjoy the day. She apprised that security arrangement was laudable and commendable. She said there is a dire need to further improve and modernize the cleanliness system and availability of other facilities as well. "People belonging to every segment of society are visiting the Pakistan Monument." Anna further said that its unique design and the scenic location has made it one of the most famous monuments of the country and making it one of the top places to visit in Islamabad and Rawalpindi twin cities. It is pertinent to mention here, the idea to create a national monument in Islamabad was first proposed by former President Pervez Musharraf. The government laid the foundation stone in 2004. In 2005, the Council of Architects and Town Planners organized an architecture competition to select a design for the landmark.—APP

MARCH 2023

Pakistan's Premier News &  
Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk

www.dnanews.com.pl

www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

IslamabadPOST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



## Limited space no excuse for water dump

Some equipment that Japan will use to discharge the nuclear contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant was put into operation for the first time on Friday shortly after passing an inspection by the Japanese Nuclear Regulation Authority.

Yet its operation involves stirring the radioactive wastewater and homogenizing the concentration of radioactive substances, after which the equipment will measure whether the substances other than tritium are below the safety standards, as if stirring the water is all it takes to qualify it as part of the ocean.

Without effective third-party supervision, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, all inspections, measurement and final approval will be carried out and made unilaterally by Japan itself in an opaque way, leaving the rest of the world in the dark. That Japan claimed that its discharge plan has been endorsed by the IAEA is not true.

The IAEA Task Force has not yet finished its review and assessment. It has offered no final conclusion yet. And it found that the plan was inconsistent with the IAEA safety standards in many areas. To know the effects of the "treatment" designed by Japan on the water, China presented a list of technical questions to Japan in November, but Japan has responded by distorting concepts, evading the crucial part or even refusing to talk about the matter. Tokyo is well aware that the disposal of the water is not a private matter of Japan, and answers to these crucial questions are also deep concerns of the world. It is obliged to keep the processing transparent for the supervision of the other parties, including the IAEA.

Initial assessment shows that the nuclear contaminated water contains more than 60 radionuclides, including tritium, carbon-14, cobalt-60, strontium-90, iodine-129. The half-life of tritium is about 13 years, and that of carbon-14 is more than 5,000 years. There is not yet effective technology to treat many of those radionuclides. Some long-lived radionuclides may spread with the ocean currents and form a bio-concentration effect, which will multiply the total amount of radionuclides in the environment, causing unpredictable harm to the marine environment and human health. There should be no discharge of the water until all stakeholders and international organizations confirm that it is safe. It is incumbent on Japan to respond to the concerns of the world and dispose of the water in a responsible manner consistent with international legal obligations and safety standards.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 194

Email: [dailyisbpost@gmail.com](mailto:dailyisbpost@gmail.com)

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## Iraq, 20 years on

It did not take long for anyone to realise that the Iraq war was the disaster that many had predicted; not much longer than it took to confirm that it was launched on a lie and that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Whatever relief or joy was felt by Iraqis at the fall of Saddam Hussein's violent and oppressive regime, it was soon subsumed by the horror of what followed. The body count and wider damage have not stopped rising since. When the 10th anniversary arrived, Islamic State (IS), birthed by the war's fallout, had yet to make its frightening rise to establishing a "caliphate". Two decades on from the beginning of the war, with the "shock and awe" assault of 19 March 2003, we are still fathoming the impact of the US-led and UK-backed invasion. The toll has been felt most of all, of course, within Iraq itself. Hundreds of thousands of civilians died in the violence that followed. The Costs of War project estimates that several times as many may have died from knock-on effects. More than 9 million Iraqis were displaced. Thousands of coalition personnel, mostly American, were killed. Trillions of dollars that could have been spent on improving lives were instead squandered destroying them.

The catastrophe was compounded by the failure to plan for what came next. Iraqis watched as power stations and national treasures were looted, while American troops guarded the oil ministry and Donald Rumsfeld, the defence secretary, glibly dismissed the turmoil: "Freedom's untidy". The security vacuum and de-Ba'athification strategy fomented sectarianism not only in Iraq itself, but far beyond its borders – and fuelled terrorism that has proved not only most deadly in the region, but has taken lives in the west, too. Later decisions such as support for Nouri al-Maliki made matters worse. The invasion curtailed hopes of stabilising Afghanistan, by drawing away attention, resources and troops. It strengthened and emboldened Iran. It reinforced North Korea's conviction that it was essential to acquire and defend WMDs. It hastened the end of the brief unipolar moment and undercut visions of a rules-based global order.

A military adventure conceived by many of its players as a brash reassertion of US supremacy in the wake of the September 11 attacks only weakened and undermined the country – all the more so after the horrors of Abu Ghraib and wider brutality against civilians. More than half of Iraqis are too young to remember life under Saddam Hussein. Some now aspire to a society and government that looks beyond sectarianism and towards a brighter future, as the 2019 Tishreen movement, and the re-emergence of participants in 2021's elections, showed. Yet the low turnout underscored that others have given up on democracy, thanks to those who boasted that they were bringing it to justify their war. It may be many more years before we fully reckon the effects of the catastrophe unleashed two decades ago.

## The Current Political Situation in Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



On 25 July 2018, parliamentary elections took place, which were won by Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI, Pakistan Movement for Justice). Even though significant restrictions were imposed during the election campaigning, the elections can be described as democratic, leading to the second peaceful change of government in succession. The new government had promised a number of socio-economic reforms and efforts against corruption. Therefore its record has been mixed, and its fiscal space is limited.

Pakistan is facing many problems of rising inflation, food shortages, the threat of sovereign debt, and escalating violence, its political system entered 2023 with high stakes among the political elite, causing government paralysis and confidence. The democratic institutions are drastically going to be declined. Harsh politics are not new in a polarized Pakistan, but their combination with economic, humanitarian and security crises have made the country's current problems all the more pressing. The challenges facing this populous, strategically located and nuclear-armed Islamic nation are also spilling over into Pakistan's relations with countries and neighbors in the region.

On 25 July 2018, parliamentary elections took place, which were won by Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI, Pakistan Movement for Justice). Even though significant restrictions were imposed during the election campaigning, the elections can be described as democratic, leading to the second peaceful change of government in succession. The new government had promised a number of socio-economic reforms and efforts against corruption. Therefore its record has been mixed, and its fiscal space is limited. The socio-economic situation remained difficult.

The latest round of political turmoil began in April 2022 with the overthrow of Imran Khan's government in a parliamentary vote of no confidence that exposed the collapse of the ruling military-civilian condominium and the clever dealings of the various 12 political parties. But rather than leave Khan alone, he has joined a spirited populist campaign that now looks likely to see him returned to office in the next national election. The current political deadlock is particularly over setting the date for those elections, constitutionally mandated for October 12, 2023. Building on the momentum of his move,

Imran Khan and his Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters are trying to hold early elections, while a coalition led by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) party arrives as late as possible. To stay in power, the government relied on its patronage networks and resorted to politicizing key state institutions such as the judiciary, the accountability office, and the country's electoral commission. In mobilizing his supporters, Khan used inflammatory rhetoric and maneuvered politically in ways that many believe exceeded the limits of democratic competition. Pakistan's powerful military, temporarily on the sidelines but mindful of its institutional interests, arbitrates the bitter rivalry.

Pakistan's internal security is threatened by terrorism, extremism and separatist movements. The security situation in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in the former tribal areas and in the Province of Balochistan is constantly tense. Even though the security situation in significant parts of the country has improved, the government has so far not been able to enforce its monopoly on force throughout the country. Since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, terrorism has begun to increase again, especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Many international actors are also closely following the political developments in Pakistan.

Many countries are concerned about the ability of a troubled and politically paralyzed Pakistan to deal with the growing challenge of militant extremism. Although Khan has toned down some of his anti-American rhetoric, he continues to refer to the current government as "imported" and his often sympathetic views of the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban have worried American and European powers.

Many Gulf States, which for years have relied on Pakistan's military to provide security for the government and value Islamabad's

regional diplomatic role, need the security of a politically predictable and stable Pakistan. The same is true of the international financial community which, along with the Saudis, Chinese and others, has invested heavily in Pakistan.

The year 2023 probably has many open questions. Among them, can Pakistan's warm political system succeed in curbing election violence? Will the army keep its promise not to interfere in the electoral process? Could the resounding triumph of Khan's conspiratorial populism reshape politics in a way that sets Pakistan on a more authoritarian path? How could a collapsing economy affect the political process, possibly postponing elections? The minor question is that Pakistan has a long way to go to establish a stable and functional political system, let alone build a democratic political culture.

Now all eyes are on how military-civilian relations that are being shaped up under Asim Munir. Under Bajwa, the military consolidated its control over all sorts of behind-the-scenes politics. Bajwa presided over a close "same page" relationship with Khan.

When this conflict occurred, the Muslim League (N) was eager to replace Khan as an ally of the military and head of the civilian government. Bajwa resigned saying that the army would no longer be involved in political affairs. Very few people in Pakistan believe him. With politics dominating the agenda this year and elections approaching, army chief Asim Munir has a chance to show the country whether he will follow in his predecessor's footsteps or chart a new course for Pakistan's civil-military relations.

The political parties must also agree that in future the opposition parties will fulfill their duties but will not attempt to overthrow any existing government before the end of their term. All political parties must also express their commitment to maintain continuity in the economic policies of each government.

## Ukraine crisis and fear of Biological weapons

Gul.i.AyeshaBhatti



A recent similar incident came onto the surface when Russian diplomatic outlined concerns towards the US and Ukraine on their adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention on June 13, 2022. The U.S.'s role in "activities of biological laboratories in the territory of Ukraine," in particular, was questioned by Russia. The original diplomatic document, which is not available in the public domain

In March 2022, in the initial phase of Ukraine Crisis, Russia claimed to have discovered proof that the US and Ukraine had produced biological weapons in violation of international law. In a statement, Russia claimed to have discovered "proof of an emergency clean-up" done by the Kiev administration that was aimed at eliminating traces of the military-biological program, in Ukraine, financed by the U.S. Department of Defense. In support of Russia's assertion, a representative for the Chinese Foreign Ministry said that the U.S. Department of Defense employed "26 bio-labs and other associated facilities in Ukraine to undertake bio-military preparations" and had "total control" over them. The Russian claims were referred to as "preposterous" by a White House spokesperson and were called "complete nonsense" by the U.S. State Department, which also said that Ukraine does not have any biological weapons research facilities. At the UN Security Council, Russia has frequently expressed worries about American biological labs secretly being operated in Ukraine during the conflict. In response, the Security Council was informed by U.N. Under Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament that "there was no proof of any biological weapons programs in Ukraine." It's not the first time that a state is showing concerns regarding the use of biological weapon by another state however, the whole process of investigation is vague and needs a lot of reforms. Although, the Biological Weapons Convention functions as an arms control and disarmament convention by outlawing the creation, manufacture, acquisition, transfer, and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons however, it requires modification in terms of investigation methods and avoiding being influenced by one party only. The 1972 Biological Weapon Convention took effect on March 26, 1975. The Convention now has

183 States Parties, including the US, Ukraine, and Russia, and four signatures. In 1925, the League of Nations enacted the Protocol on the Prohibition of Wartime Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous, or Other Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Gas Protocol). It prohibits "bacteriological techniques of warfare" and has 146 States Parties, including the US, Ukraine, and Russia.

After the Second World War, the League of Nations and the UN urged nations to eliminate all "mass destruction-adaptable" weapons, including biological ones. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, states considered disarmament issues and biological warfare threats. These efforts led to the 1971 Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, manufacturing, and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons and their destruction. Nonetheless, during the cold war, Russia and the US accused each other of breaking the biological weapon convention. Nothing can be proven without an inquiry mechanism. A recent similar incident came onto the surface when Russian diplomatic outlined concerns towards the US and Ukraine on their adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention on June 13, 2022. The U.S.'s role in "activities of biological laboratories in the territory of Ukraine," in particular, was questioned by Russia. The original diplomatic document, which is not available in the public domain, was later described by Russia as requesting a "bilateral consultation procedure" with the US and Ukraine over the implementation of Articles I and IV of the Biological Weapons Convention. Article 1 forbids the creation, production, stockpiling, acquisition, or retention of biological agents or toxins, as well as of weapons, tools, and delivery systems intended to employ such agents or toxins. In addition, Article IV mandates that States "take necessary steps" to guarantee that their territory is not utilized to create, acquire, or hold onto biological agents, poisons, or other materials that fall under the purview of the Convention.

Later on, Russia requested a formal consultation conference under Article V of the Biological Weapons Convention. The purpose of the conference would be to "resolve the concerns with the US and Ukraine over their compliance" with the Convention. In accordance with Article V of the Convention, States are required "to consult one another and to cooperate in settling any difficulties which may arise in respect to it".

Over 80 countries, including Russia, the US, and Ukraine, joined the official consultative session in Geneva in September 2022. The closed-door meeting included only Biological Weapons Convention States Parties and signatories. Despite cataloguing States' documentary submissions, Geneva debate information is not released. 35 delegations either endorsed or rejected Russia's claims while the US and Ukraine conducted scientific research. Belarus, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela may have contributed to Russia's allegations. China was "extremely disturbed" and demanded an impartial international investigation of American biological research. Technically, the convention's dispute resolution seems inadequate. If Russia's charges are true, the meeting had no conclusions of fact, legal conclusion, or sanction for the US and Ukraine. The summit did not censure or change American policy beyond the few States that back Russia. The Convention appears to favor a few powerful States over compliance and accountability. So, the Convention's function in international law is vital, especially in cases like Russia's charges of American biological weapons in Ukraine. In this regard, international lawmakers should evaluate thoroughly and critically how states continue to violate international law, particularly the Biological Weapons Convention, without being held accountable.

—The writer is PhD Scholar International Relations Islamabad [guleayeshabhatti@gmail.com](mailto:guleayeshabhatti@gmail.com)



## Briefs

## PTI to hold power show on Wednesday

FROM PAGE 01  
Maryam Nawaz, said: "The 'queen of lies' wants to have a level-playing field before the general elections are held but this is all a part of the London Plan as they want to throw me out of their way as they very well know that the PTI will clean sweep against them."  
The cricketer-turned-politician recalled that he had requested the sessions court to shift his case due to security concerns, however, instead of adhering to his plea the court issued arrest warrants. "When the court directed me to mark in-person attendance the people went crazy and asked me not to leave Zaman Park as they were afraid about my well-being," he said, adding that when he left, he knew either he would be killed or thrown in the jail in Balochistan.  
He complained that it took him more than five hours to reach the Islamabad Judicial Complex as the caretaker government of Punjab had closed all motorways for one person. "It felt like the authorities have deployed all police and FC personnel on the way of the judicial complex who were trying to provoke party supporters and workers to react by using tear gas in order to create a chaotic situation which would have delayed my appearance," he said.  
Khan revealed that when he reached the Islamabad Judicial Complex he saw Rangers, police and other "unknown people" as they made all-out efforts to create chaos outside the court so that "when I come out of my car they can easily kill me."  
Meanwhile, regarding the search operation at his Lahore home — where he has been recuperating since he was injured in an assassination attempt in Wazirabad on November 3 2022 — the PTI chairman said that the police trespassed his home at a time when Bushra Bibi-Khan's wife — was alone at home.  
"Under which law did they loot things, break things in my house?" he questioned, adding that these "disgraced people" weren't ashamed that a woman was alone in the house.

## Imran, other PTI leaders booked on terror charges

FROM PAGE 01  
The same day, Ramna Police Station House Officer (SHO) Malik Rashid Ahmed registered an FIR at the Islamabad Counter Terrorism Department against Imran and other PTI leaders.  
The complaint invoked sections 148 (rioting, armed with a deadly weapon), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 380 (theft in dwelling house, etc), 395 (punishment for dacoity), 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees), 435 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to cause damage to amount of one hundred rupees), 440 (mischief committed after preparation made for causing death or hurt) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Pakistan Penal Code.  
It also included Section 7 (punishment for acts of terrorism) of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997.  
In the FIR, SHO Ahmed said that the PTI chief along with 17 other PTI leaders violated Section 144 — imposed in Islamabad — and blocked the road for traffic.

## Turkish Airlines Golf Tournament



ISLAMABAD: Participants of the Turkish Airlines Amateur World Golf Cup series posing for a picture with former Chief of the Naval Staff Pakistan Navy Admiral Asif Sandila @ at the Margallah Green Golf club. General Manager Turkish Airlines Islamabad Ali Battal and his team hosted the event. DNA

## Australia empowering Pakistani girls thro Cricket

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: A wonderful cricket day was held for teenage girls to show their skills in the 7th edition of AHC-PCB Girls Cricket Cup here at diamond cricket ground Islamabad on Sunday.  
The Australian High Commission (AHC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) with the support of Serena Hotels organised the 7th AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup which played by four girls schools including Mashal Model School Bari Imam, SOS Children's Village H-11, Islamabad Model School for Girls - F-6/1 and Islamabad Model School for Girls I-9/1 Islamabad.  
Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins congratulated the girls and the schools on their participation and welcomed the continued support of the PCB and Serena Hotels for the annual AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup.  
"The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since May 2016 to promote gender equality through sport. We began with a single an-



nual tournament in Islamabad but have since expanded to Lahore and Karachi," Mr Hawkins said. "Our countries share a passion for cricket. It's more than just a game - it's a powerful tool for people-to-people connect, for social change. By supporting events like the Girls' Cricket Cup, we're pro-

moting equality, opportunity and hope. Every time these girls hit a boundary or make a catch, they are taking a step towards greater empowerment," Hawkins added. The girls attended an eight-day coaching clinic in the lead-up to the competition conducted by PCB first class cricket coaches,

led by head coach Wasim Yousofi, Manager Game Development Aisha Jalil and Head of Pakistan Women's Cricket Tania Mallick. The High Commissioner highlighted that the Australian High Commission is pleased to support the initiative during the Pakistan Super League, in which Austral-

ian players, including Australian female cricketer star Tess Flintoff, is participating. "It's an exciting time for cricket fans in both Australia and Pakistan. A shared love of cricket is one of the many bonds that bring our countries together," he added.  
Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels, said, "This is the seventh year for Serena Hotels to be a part of this tournament. Cricket is a passion in Pakistan for men as well as women. Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins congratulated the girls and the schools on their participation and welcomed the continued support of the PCB and Serena Hotels for the annual AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup. The Serena Hotels have been actively supporting and sponsoring all sports, including women's sports and truly believe in gender empowerment, which can only be realised if opportunities are provided for women to explore their true potential."  
Meanwhile Mashal Model School Bari Imam defends the title by beating Islamabad Model School for Girls F-6/1 Islamabad in the final.

## Sharifs mull political strategy ahead of polls

FROM PAGE 01

He also issued directives to give preference to party workers who made sacrifices in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) elections. Earlier in March, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) constituted a parliamentary board for provincial assembly elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). PML-N supremo will head the parliamentary board while party's president Shehbaz Sharif will be part of the board.

## 'Imran launches attack on State'

FROM PAGE 01

Imran's residence during police search operation. "PTI is a terrorist organization," she asserted, requesting the Supreme Court to take suo motu notice against this "terrorist party". She rued that the Ladla (blue eyed) has been provided protection and he has been facilitated. "Today, stones are being thrown at courts and the whole world is laughing at us as one man is making fun of courts," the minister added. She said that Imran abused courts only because he wanted that the court would not indict him. No other person has been facilitated in the way this man has been facilitated in the entire legal, constitutional and judicial history of the country. She blamed Imran for the imposition of jungle rule in the country. Ms Aurangzeb wondered that the PTI chief was granted eight bail in eight minutes.

## Forces recover huge cache of arms, ammunition

FROM PAGE 01

The statement said. Extensive search and sanitization was carried out in the area, and resultantly, a huge cache of arms and ammunition including Improvised Explosive Devices has been recovered. Pakistan Army in step with Nation, remains determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

## K-P police check-post attacked by 'terrorists'

FROM PAGE 01

fire due to the explosives used during the attack and was completely burned. The militants managed to escape as police took retaliatory action. Earlier this week, two policemen deployed on census duty in KP's Tank and Lakki-Marwat districts were killed while five others received injuries in terrorist attacks.

## Assad in UAE as second post-quake Gulf visit

DUBAI: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad met Sunday with Emirati leaders in Abu Dhabi, his second Gulf visit since last month's earthquake prompted renewed efforts to bring Damascus back into the Arab fold. The trip — Assad's second to the oil-rich United Arab Emirates in as many years — comes after a visit to Oman last month, his only official engagements in Arab countries since the start of Syria's war in 2011. The UAE's president, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, greeted Assad and his wife Asma in the capital, official news agency WAM said, before high-level meetings at the presidential palace.

"We held constructive talks aimed at developing relations between our two countries," the Emirati president said in a statement. "Our discussions also explored ways of enhancing cooperation to accelerate stability and progress in Syria and the region," Sheikh Mohamed added. Abu Dhabi, which normalised relations with Assad's internationally isolated government in 2018, has led aid efforts in the aftermath of the February 6 earthquake that struck southeastern Turkey and northern Syria, killing tens of thousands. Analysts say a diplomatic momentum generated in the quake's aftermath could bolster Damascus's relations with Middle Eastern countries that have so far resisted normalisation after more than a decade of war. "The UAE's approach and

efforts towards Syria are part of a deeper vision and a broader approach aimed at strengthening Arab and regional stability," said senior Emirati presidential adviser Anwar Gargash. "The UAE's position is clear regarding the need for Syria to return to" its place in the Arab world and regain legitimacy in the region, Gargash said on Twitter. "This was confirmed by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed during his meeting today" with Assad, the adviser added. The UAE had pledged more than \$100 million in assistance to quake-hit Syria, by far the largest sum by any single nation. It had also dispatched a search and rescue team, provided thousands of

tonnes in emergency relief items and provided medical treatment for Syrian quake victims in Emirati hospitals. And the UAE's foreign minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, last month became the first senior Arab official to visit Syria since the quake. Emirati analyst Abdulkhaleq Abdulla said Abu Dhabi "is convinced, along with many Arab states, that the time has come to reconcile with Assad... and see Syria return to the Arab League and the Arab fold". Assad has been politically isolated in the region since the start of Syria's war, triggered by the government's suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations, and was expelled from the Cairo-based Arab League.—APP

led by head coach Wasim Yousofi, Manager Game Development Aisha Jalil and Head of Pakistan Women's Cricket Tania Mallick. The High Commissioner highlighted that the Australian High Commission is pleased to support the initiative during the Pakistan Super League, in which Austral-

## Starc bags 5 as Australia beat India

VISAKHAPATNAM: Mitchell Starc's 5-53 and a blazing 66 by Mitchell Marsh helped Australia demolish India by 10 wickets in the second one-day international to level the series at 1-1 on Sunday. Starc, a left-arm quick, rattled the Indian batting with his pace and swing to bundle out the opposition for 117 in 26 overs in Visakhapatnam. Openers Travis Head (51) and Marsh, who smashed six sixes in his 36-ball blitz, then took apart the Indian bowling to romp home in 11 overs and level the three-match series with one game left. Australia finished the chase with 39 overs to spare and bounce back from their opening loss. Starc led the team's lethal attack with the wicket of Shubman Gill for a duck after the tourists decided to bowl first after overnight rain. Two successive strikes from Starc to get returning skipper Rohit Sharma for 13 and then Suryakumar Yadav, out for a second straight first-ball duck, pushed India onto the back foot. KL Rahul played out the hat-trick ball but lasted for just 11 more deliveries before falling leg before wicket to Starc, who returned figures of 4-31 in his first spell of six overs. Skipper Steve Smith took a stunning one-handed catch at first slip to dismiss Hardik Pandya for one off the bowling of Sean Abbott, who took three wickets. Smith went full stretch to his right and was airborne when he took the catch off an edge from Pandya, setting social media abuzz with praise for his "superman" effort. Virat Kohli attempted to hit back for India with a score of 31 that included four boundaries before he was trapped in front by Nathan Ellis.—Agencies

## BN Polo clinch Century Ventures National Open Polo trophy

The best Pakistani mare of the tournament was awarded to Raja Temur Nadeem's mare 11-481. The Syed Wajid Ali Shah trophy was awarded to Kamila, a foreign mare owned by Babar Naseem

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: BN Polo clinched the Century Ventures National Open Polo Championship Trophy by defeating Master Paints/Newage Cables by 12-6 in the final played at the crowded Lahore Polo Club on Sunday.  
Hamza Mawaz Khan emerged as hero of the main final as he fired in five fabulous goals while he was ably supported by foreign players Tito Ruiz Guinazu and Elena Venot, who contributed with two and three goals respectively while Babar Naseem converted one goal.  
BN Polo were off to flying start in the grand finale as they thrashed in three goals — two by Hamza and one by Tito Ruiz — to take a 3-0 lead while Master Paints/



Newage's Simon Prado converted one before the end of the first chukker to make it 1-3. Prado added one more in his team's tally in the beginning of the second chukker to further reduce

the margin to 2-3. But BN bounced back well by banging in a brace — one each by Hamza and Tito Ruiz — to stretch their lead to 5-2. The third chukker began with a field goal by Raja Te-

mur that helped MP/Newage make it 3-5 but BN Polo converted two back-to-back goals through Hamza and Babar to enhance their lead to 7-3. The highly-charged fourth chukker saw BN

Polo cracked a quartet — two by Elena and one each by Tito and Hamza — to gain a healthy 11-3 lead while MP/Newage scored three goals — two by Greguol and one by Prado — to reduce the deficit to 6-11. In the fifth and decisive chukker, BN Polo struck the only goal through Elena Venot to win the historic event by 12-6.

The chief guest of the final was Chairman Pakistan Polo Association Lt Gen Khalid Zia while Club President Umar Sadiq, Directors of Century Ventures Pvt. Ltd. Ayaz Lakhani, Kamran Afzal, Wasim Mazhar, Nazia Wasim, Secretary of PPA Lt Col Ayaz Mahmood, LPC executive committee members, players, their families and a large number of spectators were also present on the occasion.



## Briefs

## Montenegro votes in presidential polls

PODGORICA: Montenegro cast ballots Sunday in a presidential contest pitting the Adriatic nation's longest serving leader Milo Djukanovic against a range of rivals hoping to shake up the country's political scene. The election follows months of deadlock after the government was hit with a no-confidence vote in August but continued to rule, kicking off a wave of protests and calls for snap polls for the parliament. The latter were called for June 11 by Djukanovic on Friday a day after he had dissolved parliament as a three-month deadline expired for the prime minister-designate to form a new government. Montenegro's president has a largely ceremonial role, with most political power resting with the prime minister. Nonetheless, Djukanovic remains one of the most instrumental figures in the country, famed for wielding power and influence across Montenegro for years, since he broke with Serbia and helped oversee its independence in 2006.

A loss at the polls for Djukanovic and his DPS party would signal the beginning of a new political era for the country as it pursues European Union membership—a long-sought goal that has been held up by lagging reforms and endemic corruption. If none of the seven candidates in the race secures more than 50 percent of the vote—a likely outcome—a runoff will be held on April 2.—APP

## 71 detained in Paris protests

PARIS: Police on Saturday detained at least 71 people in Paris during protests against the government's pension reform.

Thousands of people took the streets of the capital, protesting the overhaul pushed by President Emmanuel Macron without a parliamentary vote. The new legislation would raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 by 2030. Activists headed to the streets in the south due to a ban on demonstrations in the Place de la Concorde square close to the parliament, and around the famous Champs Elysees avenue. The demonstrators set fire to garbage containers, bicycles and scooters, and chanted anti-police slogans. Security forces tried to disperse the protesters by using tear gas and water cannons, while some people were also injured.

There have been mobilizations with thousands of attendees in cities across France since Thursday when the government invoked a controversial executive power, the so-called "Article 49.3," and forced through the reform.

## Iran's security chief in Iraq for talks

BAGHDAD: The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has traveled to Baghdad to hold talks with Iraqi officials and sign a joint security cooperation document, following his landmark trips to China and the United Arab Emirates. Heading a delegation, Ali Shamkhani was welcomed by his Iraqi counterpart, Qasim al-Araji, at Baghdad airport on Sunday. He also paid a visit to the site where Iran's legendary anti-terror commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated by the US three years ago. Shamkhani is expected to meet with top Iraqi political and economic officials and sign a joint security cooperation document that has been discussed for several months. The signing of the document, which reinforces mutual responsibility and commitment with the aim of protecting good neighborliness and securing common borders, plays a key role in ending the illegal presence of armed counter-revolutionary elements.—APP

## ICCI demands cut in SBP interest rate

Zafar Bakhawari, former President ICCI said that Pakistan is facing a serious issue of foreign exchange reserves due to which imports are banned and said that the best option for Pakistan to improve forex reserves is to boost exports on an urgent basis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has that the 20 percent benchmark interest rate in Pakistan is highest in the Asia, which is a major hurdle in promoting trade and industrial activities in the country and urged that the SBP should make significant cut in interest rate to revive the businesses and economy. He said that the interest rate in China is 3.65%, Bangladesh 6%, India 6.5% but in Pakistan it is 20%, which is highest in the whole Asian region. He wondered how the Pakistani businesses could compete with regional competitors for exports with the highest interest rate. He said this



while addressing a dinner reception hosted in honor of Sardar Tahir Mahmood, President, Islamabad Estate Agents Association. Ahsan Bakhawari said that the historic hike in interest rate has made the credit cost unaffordable for the private sector due to which business and investment activities are badly suffering. He stressed that the government should address

the concerns of the business community on high interest rate and high taxes on the construction sector to ease their problems. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Tahir, President, Islamabad Estate Agents Association said that the construction industry is the backbone of the economy as its growth boosts the business activities of over 70 allied industries.

However, the construction industry is in big trouble these days due to high interest rate, higher taxes and devaluation of the rupee. He stressed that the Finance Minister Ishaq Dar should hold a meeting with the business community of the construction industry to listen to their genuine issues and take urgent remedial measures to revive the economy. Zafar Bakhawari, former President

ICCI said that Pakistan is facing a serious issue of foreign exchange reserves due to which imports are banned and said that the best option for Pakistan to improve forex reserves is to boost exports on an urgent basis. He said that for this purpose, it is essential that the government should promote ease of doing business by reducing the cost of

doing business. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former President ICCI said that the government's policy of increasing interest rate to control inflation has failed miserably. He said that instead of controlling inflation, high interest rate would lead to rapid de-industrialization causing more slowdown in GDP growth. He urged that the SBP should reconsider its monetary policy and reduce interest rate to make it affordable for businesses.

Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Zahid Rafiq Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association, Ch.Masood, Ch. Nadeem ud Din, Tahir Abbasi, Abid Khan, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Sai fur Rehman Khan, Baber Chaudhry and others also spoke at the occasion.

## Kosovo, Serbia agree to on EU normalisation plan

BELGRADE: Kosovo and Serbia have tentatively agreed on how to implement a European Union-sponsored plan to normalise their ties, according to the bloc's top diplomat, though leaders of the two nations said disagreements remained. The deal on Saturday came after 12-hour talks between Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and EU officials on implementing the normalisation plan, which both sides had agreed to in Brussels last month.

The two leaders held separate meetings with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell before a three-way

session in the North Macedonian town of Ohrid. "We have a deal," Borrell tweeted after the meeting. "Kosovo and Serbia have agreed on the Implementation Annex of the Agreement on the path to normalisation of relations," he said. This means "practical steps on what has to be done, when, by who and how," he added at a news conference. Kosovo and Serbia have been in EU-backed talks for nearly 10 years since Kosovo declared independence in 2008, almost a decade after war ended Serbian rule. But Serbia still regards Kosovo as a breakaway province and flare-ups between the Balkan neighbours have

stoked fears of a return to conflict. Both countries hope to join the EU one day, and they have been told they must first mend their relations. Solving the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo has become more important as war rages in Ukraine and fears mount in the West that Russia could try to stir instability in the volatile Balkans, where it holds historic influence. The EU plan calls for the two countries to maintain good neighbourly relations and recognise each other's official documents and national symbols. But the plan, drafted by France and Germany and supported by the United States, does not explicitly call for

mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia. If implemented, it would prevent Belgrade from blocking Kosovo's attempts to seek membership in the United Nations and other international organisations. Although tentatively agreeing on the EU plan reached last month, Serbia's populist President Vucic seemed to backtrack on some of its points after pressure from far-right groups, which consider Kosovo the cradle of the Serbian state and Orthodox religion. Vucic said on Thursday that he "won't sign anything" at the Ohrid meeting and earlier pledged never to recognise Kosovo or allow its UN membership.—Agencies

## Gandhara art exhibition to promote Pak-China shared heritage

BEIJING: The Pakistan-China joint exhibition on Gandhara art and culture being held here in Palace Museum will help promote the shared heritage and enhance people-to-people contact between the two countries, Federal Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division, Ms. Fareen Mazhar said. More than 173 Gandhara artefacts collected from different museums of Pakistan were showcased at the three-month-long exhibition jointly organized by the Palace Museum and Department of Archaeology and Museums of Pakistan, and supported by Pakistan Embassy Beijing, she told APP. Underlining the centrality of this exhibition as a landmark event in the cultural cooperation between the two countries, she expressed the hope that the event would be beneficial not only to the general public but also to Chinese scholars and professionals to understand the cultural heritage of Pakistan. "This is the first exhibition in China that we have done, so we're very proud of that and we hope to do more in the future," Fareen Mazhar said and adding that on the basis of this exhibition, extensive cooperation in cultural relic protection and personnel exchanges between China and Pakistan will be carried out, which will contribute more to the friendship between the two countries. To a question about the exchange of scholars from both countries, she informed that Chinese scholars can visit sites in Pakistan and scholars from Pakistan can come and visit China.

## North Korea fires short-range ballistic missile

PYONGYANG: North Korea on Sunday fired a short-range ballistic missile towards the East Sea, local media reported amid ongoing military drills between the US and South Korea. South Korea's military said they detected the launch from the Tongchangri area on the country's west coast at 11.05 a.m. local time (0205GMT). Yonhap News Agency reported. "While strengthening its monitoring and vigilance in preparation against the possibility of additional launches, our military is maintaining a full readiness posture in close cooperation with the United States," the country's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were as quoted as saying in a statement. The latest missile launch was the fourth such show of force by North Korea in a week. On Friday, North Korean state media confirmed that a missile test-fired the previous day was the newest Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Thursday's missile launch took place just hours before South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol left for Tokyo, the first head of state to visit Japan since 2011. The US Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement on Sunday said the latest launch "does not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel or territory, or to our allies," but highlights the destabilizing impact of North Korea's "unlawful WMD (weapons of mass destruction) and ballistic missile programs." "The US commitments to the defense of the Republic of Korea and Japan remain irrevocable," the statement said.—APP

## Kazakhstan kicks off snap parliamentary polls

ASTANA: Kazakhstan holds snap parliamentary elections Sunday as the leader of the Central Asian country pushes political reforms. Polling stations opened at 7:00 am (0100 GMT), according to AFP reporters in the capital Astana and Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city. Around 12 million voters have until 8:00 pm to cast their ballots. The huge, oil-rich nation is wedged between its former Soviet master Russia and China, which is gaining status in Central Asia as an economic powerhouse. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced the early vote as part of a "modernisation" drive introduced months after protests against fuel prices erupted in January last year. They

were brutally crushed and 238 people died, according to the official toll. Tokayev, a former diplomat, was hand-picked in 2019 by his predecessor and mentor Nursultan Nazarbayev to take the helm after a nearly three-decade rule. But Tokayev purged vestiges of that era after the demonstrations. He promised to reform government institutions and in January dissolved parliament, saying early polls would "give new impetus to the modernisation". The ex-Soviet country's elections now feature a wider array of candidates but there was scepticism in Almaty over the changes. "Will I take part in the elections? No, to be honest... because I hardly believe in fair elections in Kazakhstan

in general," Aset Smagulov, a 21-year-old IT specialist, told AFP before the poll. Independent candidates are allowed to run for parliament for the first time in nearly 20 years, whereas the previous lower house was made up of three pro-government parties. The threshold to enter the 98-seat legislature has been lowered to five percent and a 30 percent quota was introduced for women, young people and people with disabilities. Political scientist Dimash Alzhanov said the ruling elites remain in control of the votes, despite the changes. "The electoral system has changed and gives the impression of choice. But in reality, the president and his admin-

istration are keeping the vote count in their hands," Alzhanov told AFP. "Here, elections are held in order to keep power. That's what elections are in an authoritarian country," he said. After the riots that grew out of peaceful demonstrations against a fuel price spike, Tokayev was re-elected in a snap presidential vote in November, securing a landslide win in an election criticised for lacking competition. Inequality and corruption persist and soaring inflation is hurting the purchasing power of the population of nearly 20 million people. In economic hub Almaty, the campaign was in full swing with candidate posters on restaurant windows, scaffolding and street lamps.—APP

## Kuwait court nullifies 2022 parliamentary vote

KUWAIT: Kuwait's constitutional court on Sunday nullified last year's legislative elections and ruled in favour of reinstating the previous parliament, state media said, as a political crisis roils the oil-rich Gulf state. The September polls — the most inclusive in a decade — had seen opposition members clinch 28 out of 50 seats, giving them a parliamentary majority. The vote marked a victory for opposition figures, many of whom had stayed out of elections in the past decade over what they saw as alleged meddling by the executive authorities over parliament. "The Kuwaiti Constitutional Court issued a verdict on Sunday annulling the results of the 2022 National Assembly elections," due to discrepancies in the decree dissolving the previous parliament, the official KUNA news agency said. It also ruled to reinstate the parliament that was elected in 2020 but dissolved following orders by the crown prince in June, KUNA said. Lawyer Nawaf Al-Yassin said the ruling followed several electoral appeals. "The appeals relate to the invalidity of the electoral process, the decrees calling for elections, and the decree dissolving the previous National Assembly," he told AFP. Kuwait is the only Gulf Arab state with a fully elected parliament. One of the world's biggest oil exporters, it adopted a parliamentary system in 1962. But repeated political crises have led to state paralysis and regular disputes with cabinet. In January, Kuwait's government resigned only three months after it was sworn in due to disputes with lawmakers, the sixth government in just three years.—APP

## NATO jets intercept Russian aircraft near Estonian airspace

BERLIN: For the second time in a week, British and German fighter jets intercepted a Russian aircraft close to Estonian airspace on Friday as NATO carries out joint air policing efforts in the region. The two Typhoon jets intercepted "a Russian military Tu-134 passenger jet, known by the NATO name Crusty, that was being escorted by two Sukhoi Su-27 Flanker fighter jets, and an AN-12 Cub military transport aircraft," the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) said in a statement on Saturday. The RAF said the operation was a "reassurance that the UK and Germany together with other NATO allies stand with their Estonian ally at this time of tension." "We quickly identified the Russian aircraft and then monitored it as it flew close to NATO airspace," said Richard Leask, an RAF commander. "The NATO Air Policing mission is carried out to ensure any aircraft of interest are intercepted to ensure we know who they are and maintain flight safety for all airspace users," he added. The RAF is deployed in Estonia on Operation Azotize, and will take over leadership from the German detachment in April.—Agencies

## Putin makes surprise visit to Mariupol

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin made a surprise visit late on Saturday to the city of Mariupol in Ukraine's Donetsk region, which has been under Russian control since last May. "The head of state inspected several objects of the city, and also talked with local residents," said a statement by the Kremlin on Sunday. Putin flew to Mariupol by helicopter, it noted, adding that he later drive a car in the city accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin, who reported "on the progress of construction and restoration work in the city and its surroundings." "In particular, they discussed the construction of new residential microdistricts, social and educational facilities, housing and communal services infrastructure, and medical institutions," the statement said.—APP

## State of Out-of-School Children in Gilgit-Baltistan

NADIA ZARTAJ



Education is a fundamental aspect of a country's development, and Pakistan is no exception. The country has made significant progress in expanding access to education over a few years in the past, with the enrollment rate in primary schools increasing from 63% in 2000 to 86% in 2015. However, the quality of education in government schools has been a persistent challenge, as the standard of education in educational institutions varies widely across the country. One of the main reasons for the disparity in the quality of education is the lack of resources available to government schools. Many of these institutions are located in rural areas that lack adequate facilities, such as classrooms, books, and other teaching materials. This results in overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of resources that has an adverse impact on the quality of education. According to Faqirullah, Director Education Planning Gilgit Baltistan, Theman and core issues include shortage of classrooms (policy Issue as there is set/approved criteria for i.e.

02-3 rooms for primary school, trs policy Issue as there is set/approved criteria for i.e. 02 teachers for primary school, furniture department is providing furniture on regular basis through GB ADP and lack of trainings for teachers established Teachers and Staff Training Center and made functional (2023) and their monitoring due to ban on purchase of vehicles by Federal Government, monitoring of schools is not being carried out on regular basis) etc. Another major challenge is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers in many areas across Gilgit-Baltistan. Many teachers in government schools do not possess adequate trainings and skills, as a result there is a lack of experienced teachers in the classrooms. This leads to poor teaching methods and an inability to effectively engage students in the process of learning. There are a number of reasons behind the low quality education in government educational institutions. According to the Principal Government Boys High School Chatorkand Ghizer, Mr. Naeem, some of the core factors are the curriculum, being the first, is quite outdated and has not been revised over several decades till the recent Single National Curriculum was implemented. Education Department Gilgit-Baltistan is implementing SNC since its

implementation. Secondly the people, especially the parents do not value free education as anything free is considered to be of low standard due to which there is no driven attention for the kids in government institutions than those in the private institutions. Despite these hindrances, the government of Gilgit Baltistan has been trying to improve the education standards in the government institutions. In the recent years there have been major breakthroughs, such as training sessions are being provided to teachers, different ICT labs are being installed in different Government institutions and efforts are being put to develop the infrastructure of the government institutions as well. Similarly, insufficient government funding is another major factor that contributes to the lower standard of education in government schools. The government may not allocate enough resources to the education sector, which limits the resources available to schools and hinders their ability to provide quality education. In the year 2021-22, the education department received a budget of 116 million rupees, which was allocated to various schemes including ongoing and new ones. Presently, the education department is working on 204 ongoing schemes and 49 new schemes, with a budget

of 2.4 billion rupees for this year. These schemes include different projects, and completion depends on factors such as funding and the pace of work. However, according to Director General Education Majeed Khan, "We are working hard to complete our ongoing projects and this year the ongoing projects will be completed without any interruption. In the past two years, the education sector has introduced new initiatives such as the development of learning management systems, installation of IT and technology systems in schools, funds being released by the permission of the chief secretary". In addition to these structural issues, corruption and political interference in the education system may also impact the quality of education. Corruption can divert funds away from where they are needed, reducing the resources available to schools. Political interference can result in a lack of accountability and ineffective decision-making, further hindering the quality of education said Faqirullah, Director Education Planning Gilgit Baltistan. It is the vision of education department to provide every child the excess of education and ensure the quality of education in government institutions. Education department has taken certain initiatives in this regard as surveys were conducted.

According to The survey done by DoE and EMCS EMIS 2019 a sum total level of pre-primary 36% primary 17% and secondary 19% of out of schools children. 27597 children in pre primary 1340 girls 14187 boys , 24366 in primary 9987 boys and 14379 girls and 25634 in secondary Level 10089 boys and 15545 girls are out of schools . The average of teachers in government schools 7613, 4739 male teacher and 2883 female teachers. The recent SSC exam passing result of Gb GOVERNMENT institutions is 77% and 22.5% fail for the school dropout children especially in the far-flung districts of Gilgit-Baltistan like Diamer where there are cultural barriers. In such areas, the education department has taken the initiative of home based schools where girls are given the necessary education at their doorsteps. This initiative bore fruits when there was an increase of 20% in the elementary examination. Another such prolific step taken by the government is the distribution of free textbooks to the students of grade 1 to 10. Similarly, the implementation of the Single National Curriculum for grade 1 to 6 has also been very useful. Besides these measures, construction of new schools and up gradation of existing schools are also part of government's ongoing initiatives.



## Briefs

### Iran proposes locations to Saudi Arabia for FM meeting

DNA

DUBAI: The Iranian government has proposed to Saudi Arabia three locations for a meeting at foreign minister level, Iran's foreign minister said on Sunday, citing the latest messages with Riyadh since the countries agreed to re-establish ties. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabbollahian told a news conference in Tehran his country had agreed to such a meeting, although he did not list the three locations or say when such a meeting might take place. Iran and Saudi Arabia, the region's Shi'ite Muslim and Sunni powers, agreed on March 10 to re-establish relations and re-open embassies within two months after years of hostility. The deal, brokered by China, was announced after four days of previously undisclosed talks in Beijing between top security officials from the two rival Middle Eastern powers. Amirabbollahian also said Tehran was ready for the mutual reopening of embassies. Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran in 2016 after its embassy in Tehran was stormed during a dispute between the two countries over Riyadh's execution of a Shi'ite Muslim cleric.

### NATO jets intercept Russian aircraft

DNA

MUNICH: British and German fighter jets intercepted a Russian aircraft flying close to Estonian airspace Friday, according to a statement from the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF). It was the second such encounter this week, as NATO carries out joint air policing efforts in the region. The two Typhoon jets intercepted "a Russian military Tu-134 passenger jet, known by the NATO name Crusty, that was being escorted by two Sukhoi Su-27 Flanker fighter jets, and an AN-12 Cub military transport aircraft," the RAF said. The news comes amid renewed public appeals by Ukrainian leaders for western fighter jets. They say the jets are needed urgently to defend against Russian missiles and drone attacks. But NATO allies are unlikely to send more advanced jets to Ukraine, defense experts have told CNN. An interception of this kind is not atypical for NATO aircraft, but the joint air policing mission is a first for two NATO allies, the statement said. The RAF described the operation as reassuring that the UK, Germany and other NATO countries "stand with their Estonian ally at this time of tension."

### 'Dar should clarify his nukes statement'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday questioned Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's statement on nuclear weapons in the Senate, demanding that the senator clarify whether IMF asked for Pakistan to give up its missile system. Addressing a press conference, Qureshi said that the finance minister was the in-law of the ruling party and his statement on the Senate floor was important. "This statement has created a new crisis in the country," the former foreign minister said, adding that the Foreign Office spokesperson had to clarify during her weekly press briefing. "The spokeswoman says that talks about nuclear power are not on the agenda of talks with any country or financial institution [then] why did Ishaq Dar give this statement on the Senate floor," Qureshi questioned. "Tell us if IMF asked you for a missile system, Ishaq Dar. Why did you make such a big statement on the floor of the house?" asked Qureshi.

# Indonesian ambassador bids farewell to cyclists

## Cyclist also all praise for Indonesia embassy and the people of Pakistan for their gracious welcome and then send-off

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio has said his embassy and colleagues were trying their best to ensure better facilitation of those who intend to visit Indonesia. He expressed these views on the occasion of inauguration of the new-look visa section and saying goodbye to Cyclists duo to its next destination. Ambassador Tugio further said cyclists Asid Kusuma Atmaja and Yunus who are on their way to Makkah (Saudi Arabia) on bicycles to perform Hajj are leaving for their next destination. He said these cyclists shall reach Saudi Arabia en route Omna, Iran and UAE. He termed their passion to face all the hardships of the roads and ordeal of a long journey to reach Saudi Arabia for Hajj highly valuable. He added, it gave him immense pleasure to announce that the visa issues of the two Indonesian cyclists have been resolved and they can now resume their road.



three days. He also thanked the Pakistani media as well as the tourism industry people for their cooperation to highlight Indonesia's rich tourism potential, cuisine and culture. The cyclist duo has been on the road since August 2022 and reached Pakistan earlier this month. Both of them while talking Islamabad POST said they were anxious to reach their final destination. The further said that they were touched by the hospitality extended to them by the Indonesian ambassador and the entire embassy staff. They were also all praise for the people of Pakistan for their gracious welcome and then send-off.

### Serbia wants to normalise ties with Kosovo

WEB DESK

BELGRADE: Serbia wants normal relations with Kosovo but still won't sign any agreement with it, President Aleksandar Vucic said on Sunday, a day after he verbally agreed to implement a Western-backed plan for the normalisation of ties. Serbia wants to join the European Union, and a condition of membership is that it normalise relations with ethnic Albanian-majority Kosovo, which declared independence in 2008 but which Belgrade still considers a Serbian province. Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti agreed to implement normalisation steps at a meeting with EU officials in a North Macedonian lake resort on Saturday, although no document was signed and the EU said it had wanted to go further. "Serbia wants to have normal relations with Kosovo. We want to travel, we want to do business, you cannot live isolated behind 100 metres walls," Vucic told reporters on Sunday.

### Record increase in flour prices in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: All records of flour prices have been broken as a 20 kg bag of wheat flour has reached Rs3,100 for the first time in the history of Pakistan. According to a report, the citizens of Karachi are forced to buy the most expensive flour in the country. Atta is being sold for up to Rs155 per kilogram in Karachi as a 20 kg bag of flour has become more expensive by Rs 200 in a recent week in Karachi and it is available at Rs 3100. As per the report of the Bureau of Statistics, a bag of flour has become expensive up to Rs 200 in Multan, Rs 100 in Peshawar, Rs 80 in Hyderabad, and Rs 30 in Quetta in a week.

## Magnitude 6.8 earthquake shakes Ecuador

QUITO: At least 14 people were killed in a strong earthquake that shook a coastal region of Ecuador and northern Peru on Saturday, causing structural damage to multiple homes, schools and medical centers. The quake, which the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) measured at magnitude 6.8, struck at a depth of 66.4 km (41.3 miles) about 10 km (6.2 miles) from the city of Balao in the province of Guayas. The earthquake did not appear likely to generate a tsunami, authorities said. "We remain in the territory verifying the damage caused by the earthquake this morning. I want to confirm that I am with you and express my solidarity and commitment to the victims," Ecuadorian President Guillermo Lasso said in a tweet. The presidency's communication agency said the quake left 14 people dead, and more than 380 people were injured, largely in the El Oro province. - Agencies

## Indian police launch manhunt to arrest prominent Sikh leader

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: Mobile and internet services were suspended in several areas of India's Punjab on Sunday as the police launched what it called a "manhunt" for prominent Sikh leader Amritpal Singh, Indian media reported. India media describes him as a "Khalistani leader". According to a Scroll.in report, statewide "cordon-and-search operations" were launched against Singh's organisation Waris Punjab De on Saturday. "As part of the operations, 78 persons have been arrested and several more have been detained," it quoted the police as saying. On Sunday, India Today reported that security has been beefed up across Indian Punjab as the search for Singh continued for the second day. "[The] father of Amritpal Singh, who was declared a fugitive by the Jalandhar Commissioner on Saturday (March

18), said the Punjab Police conducted searches at his residence in Amritsar but did not find anything illegal," it said. "We don't have any information about his whereabouts. They carried out a search at our residence for 3-4 hours but did not find anything illegal. Police should have arrested him before he left home," the report quoted Singh's father as saying. Meanwhile, The Wire said Section 144 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, which prohibits the assembly of five or more persons, has been imposed in many districts of Punjab - including Sri Muktsar Sahib and Fazilka, two of the six border districts of Punjab. "Heavy police deployment was made in all district headquarters, including Singh's hometown near Amritsar. The paramilitary forces have sealed off the Jalpur khera, which is Amritpal Singh's native village," it stated. The report also said that mobile internet and SMS services in several districts of Punjab have been suspended till today afternoon.

## Pak, China discuss co-op during third BPC talks

### According to FO, Pakistan and China will also enhance high-level engagements and dialogue mechanisms and make the channels of communication even more robust

BEIJING: Pakistan and China discussed bilateral relations, agreeing to expand and reinforce political and security cooperation, bilateral trade, economic and financial cooperation, cultural exchanges, tourism, and people-to-people ties, Foreign Office said Sunday. The two sides shared their views during the third round of Pakistan-China Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) - which is a regular institutional mechanism between both countries - held in Beijing on March 18. Foreign Secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan led the Pakistan delegation while the Chinese side was headed by Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. According to FO, Pakistan and China will also enhance high-level engagements and dialogue mechanisms and make the channels of communication even more robust.

Noting the completion of a decade of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to CPEC which remains a major pillar of bilateral cooperation and a symbol of ever-deepening friendship between both countries. They also agreed to remain engaged in the expansion of CPEC including on participation of third parties to enhance regional connectivity and cooperation. Dr Majeed thanked the Chinese side for its consistent and generous support for the economic stability of Pakistan and the humanitarian assistance during the devastating floods in 2022. Meanwhile, Sun reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic security. - DNA

## Former Taiwan president Ma to visit China

TAIPEI: Former Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou will visit China this month, his office said on Sunday, the first time a former or current Taiwanese leader has visited since the defeated Republic of China government fled to the island in 1949. The trip will be at a time of heightened tensions between Beijing and Taipei as China keeps up its military

and political pressure to try and get democratically-elected Taiwan to accept Chinese sovereignty. Ma, who remains a senior member of Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) opposition party, held a landmark meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Singapore in late 2015, shortly before current Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen was elected. Ma's office said that he would visit China from March 27 to April 7 and go to the cities of Nanjing, Wuhan, Changsha, Chongqing and Shanghai. He will meet students and visit sites connected to World War Two and China's conflict with Japan as well as those related to the 1911 revolution which overthrew the last Chinese emperor and ushered in the Republic of China, his office said. The Republic of China remains Taiwan's official name. It did not say if he would meet any Chinese officials or leaders, including whether he would meet Xi. - APP

## Ex-US President Trump expects to be arrested on Tuesday

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Donald Trump says he expects to be arrested on Tuesday and has urged his supporters to launch mass protests. However his lawyer said there had been no communication from law enforcement and the former president's post was based on media reports. Prosecutors have been looking at a possible indictment of Mr Trump. Reports say it could come next week. If he is indicted, it would be the first criminal case ever brought against a former US president. This case focuses on alleged hush money paid on Mr Trump's behalf by his lawyer to porn star Stormy Daniels prior to the 2016 presidential election. It is one of several cases in

which the 76-year-old is currently being investigated, although he has not yet been charged in any and denies wrongdoing in each. Mr Trump has pledged to continue his campaign to become the Republican nominee in the 2024 presidential election, even if he is indicted. Past efforts to investigate him, including two impeachment trials, the Russia investigation and the Mar-a-Lago raid, have tended to make him more popular with his base, so an indictment could have a similar effect. It is not yet known if he is going to be criminally charged this week or even, beyond broad strokes, what those charges might be. But with the former president predicting an arrest, and calling for mass protests, this is a journey into unknown territory. Mr Trump has a loyal base of follow-

ers, and the 6 January 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters following his repeated calls to protest has proven that a fraught situation can quickly escalate into violence. On Saturday Mr Trump wrote on his social networking site Truth Social that "illegal leaks" from the Manhattan district attorney's office "indicate" he would be arrested on Tuesday. The district attorney's office has not yet commented. Mr Trump's lawyer, Susan Necheles, said her team had not heard anything from law enforcement officials. "Since this is a political prosecution, the district attorney's office has engaged in a practice of leaking everything to the press, rather than communicating with President Trump's attorneys as would be done in a normal case," she said.

## Bus crash in Bangladesh kills at least 19

DHAKA: A speeding bus veered off a major expressway in central Bangladesh and plunged into a ditch, killing at least 19 people and injuring dozens, police said. The death toll could rise further as some of the injured passengers are in critical condition, said Anwar Hossain,

a police official of Shibchar, where the crash occurred. The city is 80 km away from the capital Dhaka. The bus, carrying more than 40 passengers, fell about 9 metres (30 feet) into a roadside ditch after breaking through the railing of the newly-built Padma river bridge expressway, Hossain said. The driver, who was killed, appeared to have lost control of the vehicle after the tyre of the bus burst, he said, adding that the cause of the accident was under investigation. Road accidents are common in Bangladesh, often blamed on reckless driving, old vehicles and poor safety rules, and killing thousands each year. - Agencies

**MURREE SPARKLETT'S**  
Bottled Drinking Water  
ISO/IEC 17025 | ISO 9001, 22000, 14001  
45001 Certified Company

**We Only Offer**

- Excellence in Quality & Innovation
- A Reasonable Price
- Efficient Services
- A Genuine Pakistani Brand

**A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE BY MURREE SPARKLETT'S**  
**LET THE CUSTOMER DECIDE!**

Others call it "Marketing Support", "Trade Promotion", "Exclusivity Rights", "Shelf placement"- we call it **UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES**. Millions of rupees are exchanging hands above and below the table in the garb of product promotion. Trade institutions i.e Restaurants, Marts & other outlets are being bribed & forced to keep/sell only specific products. We at Murree Sparkletts (a division of Murree Brewery Company) believe all such practices are unethical. We say **LET THE CUSTOMER DECIDE** which product to consume. By dishing out millions of rupees, beverage companies are depriving the public at large their right of choice.

**SAY NO TO INVISIBLE CORRUPTION.**