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Google chief warns of potential AI dangers

Detailed News On Page-07

Iran's Raisi invites Saudi King to visit Tehran

DNA

Detailed News On Page-08

A sister publication of **CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency**



Barca's Laporta denies any wrongdoings





Briefs

Nawaz wants polls at one time

DNA

MUNAWARA: MADINA (PML-N)

and former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has said that Pakistan's progress and prosperity was stopped after massive rigging in 2018 elections and imposing a selected and incompetent prime minister who not only ruined the country's economic stability but the whole system. "When we came into power after the 2013 general elections, the country was facing a lot of difficulties, the PML-N the then government brought the country out of severe crises," he said. He as addressing the iftar dinner in honour of former federal minister for religious affairs and chairman Hazara Tehreek Sardar Yousaf and central coordinator Prof Hafiz Sajjad Qamar by him.

PDM not serious about talks

Abid Raza



Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Pakistan League-Nawaz Muslim (PML-N) government of being insincere about negotiations. Speaking to media on Monday, Mr Qureshi claimed that the PDM's President, Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, stated that dialogue was unnecessary. He also mentioned Rana Suanaullah's media talk and claimed that PML-N was divided on the dialogue. Mr Qureshi emphasised that the power source of the

country was its people.

Sehr, Iftar Timing **Ramazan 27. 1444**

Sehr: 04:05 am Iftar: 06:45 pm Fiqa-e-Jafria Sehr: 03:55 am Iftar: 06:55 pm

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Fighting rages in Sudan as death toll climbs to 97 - Page 08

Rs 21bn for Polls

NA halts release of funds

NA committee, in a summary sent to the cabinet, recommended that funds not be released

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Despite the Supreme Court's orders, the National Assembly approved a summary sent by the Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue regarding non-provision of funds to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Earlier in the day, the NA committee, in a summary sent to the federal cabinet, recommended that funds amounting to Rs21 billion for holding the elections not be released. The cabinet, in turn, referred the matter to the National Assembly. During the NA session, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar presented the committee's report, which was then approved by the lower house of parliament. Addressing the media earlier today, Tarar said the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had "no role" in releasing the funds, adding that it was the prerogative of the National Assembly and the Ministry of Finance and Revenue. Speaking on the floor of the house, Tarar reiterated his earlier statement. He said the apex court's decision to hold the election in Punjab on May 14 had been to held within the boundaries pro-

Continued on Page 06

Fawad wants SC proceedings against SBP

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior vice president Fawad Chaudhry on Monday demanded Supreme Court to initiate proceedings against the State Bank of Pakistan as the latter had failed to meet the court's deadline to release Rs21 billion in funds for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Talking to the media, he said the PTI was focused on holding negotiations on elections adding that the government was not serious about holding talks. "Negotiations could only be d by the constitution and

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Eid holidays Imran fears another arrest 'operation'

Salman Safdar told the court that state machinery was being used against his client

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan informed the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday that he fears the government may launch a fresh "operation" during the Eid ul Fitr holidays at his Zaman Park residence in a bid to arrest him. The PTI chief informed the court about his concerns during a hearing on his petition seeking details of cases registered against him across the country. During the hearing, Khan's counsel

Barrister Salman Safdar told the court that state machinery was being used against his client. He urged the court to stop the registration of cases against the PTI chief. "Everything has a limit in all

cases the police are the complainant," said Safdar, citin the Wazirabad incident and Zile Shah case where the police were the complainant. "If your stance has been recorded then it shouldn't remain an issue," Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh remarked. However, Safdar told the bench that in all ases terrorism charges were included,

> lent over the misuse of authority. "We have to fight on all fronts. Coming to take bail every day is not the solution," said Safdar. He added that in the cases registered, so far, there is no need to arrest the PTI chief. "Now, Eid is coming and the court will not be working. During these days the police may open another front at Zaman Park,"

dding that the court cannot remain si-

Continued on Page 06

Safdar said, adding that

Iranian Envoy pays farewell call on CNS

Ambassador Hosseini is leaving Pakistan in a couple of weeks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad Ali Hosseini paid a farewell visit to Naval Headquarters in Islamabad on Monday. The Ambassador also called on the Naval PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest and regional securi ty situation were discussed. They reiterated the commitment to further promote maritime relations between the two countries. Last week, Ambassador of Iran

Continued on Page 06

Hina briefs PM on Uzbekistan visit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar, met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif on Monday to discuss the affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, Minister Khar provided a detailed briefing to PM Sharif on the current state of affairs at the ministry of Foreign Affairs. She discussed recent developments, ongoing initiatives, and challenges being faced by the ministry. Furthermore, Minister Khar also

Continued on Page 06

PM urges world to notice India's dangerous moves

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hosted Iftaar dinner for envoys of the Muslim countries

The Prime Minister also talked about Palestine and what the Israeli occupation was doing in Al-Aqsa

Mosque. PM Shehbaz also briefed the envoys of latest developments in Pakistan. - DNA

Says India exploited Pulwama situation for political gains

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister Shehbaz Sharif says revelations by ex-Governor of IIOJK about reality of Pulwama incident and how Indian

government exploited the situation for political gains vindicates Pakistan's position. In a tweet, he said world should take note of India's dangerous brinkmanship that could have led to disastrous consequences for the region. A day earlier, Pakistan said recent statements made by Satya Pal Malik, former governor of Indian-administered Kashmir, "vindicate its stance" on the 2019 Pulwama attack. In February that year, 40 Indian paramilitary soldiers were killed in a suicide attack in the Pulwama district of the disputed Himalayan region also claimed by Pakistan since 1947. New Delhi had accused Islamabad of orchestrating the attack which brought the two nuclear powers to

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to present the draft for the necessary legislation to prevent smuggling. Chairing a high-level review meeting in Islamabad on Monday to prevent smuggling of sugar, wheat, flour and urea in the country, the Prime Minister also directed to make anti-smuggling courts active and effective immediately. The meeting was informed that a nationwide operation is underway to prevent the smuggling of urea fertilizer and sugar. Yesterday, 49 trucks were

PM for making

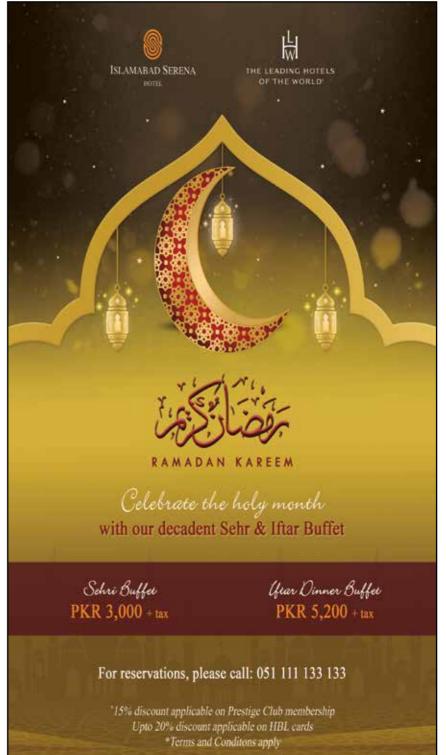
anti-smuggling

courts active

Mahnoor Ansar

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Thousands of Palestinians illegally detained by Israel

Over the past five decades, Israel, the occupying power, has detained over 800,000 Palestinians

CENTRELINE REPORT

RAMALLAH: On the Palestinian Prisoner's Day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates salutes the thousands of Palestinian detainees who have been and are still held arbitrarily and illegally in the Israeli detention dungeons; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates the centrality of the Palestinian detainees' cause and reaffirms that their freedom is a fundamental part of the freedom of the Palestinian people; Over the past five decades, Israel, the occupying power, has detained over 800,000 Palestinians, including children and women. Currently, Israel illegally detains 4,800, including 29 females and 170 children; Moreover, 967 Palestinians are currently detained under the Israeli illegal policy of administrative detention. The highest number of administrative detainees in the past 11 years; Suc- RIYADH: Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas arcessive Israeli occupation governments have implemented discriminatory policies against Palestinian detainees. The current racist Israeli occupation government intensified these abhorrent policies; Approving a draft law authorizing the execution of Palestinian detainees, approving a discrimtheir land, and introducing a draft law depriving detainees of

Palestinian president arrives in Saudi Arabia

The President is expected to meet with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman

rived in Jeddah on Monday ahead of the 27th night of Ramadan. The President is expected to meet with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman tomorrow in order to discuss the latest developments of the Palestinian cause and the situation in the region, and inatory legislation deporting Palestinian detainees from to strengthen the Palestinian-Saudi relations. He was greeted on arrival at King Abdulaziz International Airport by the deputy governor of the Makkah region Prince Badr bin Sultan and other officials. – DNA

Continued on Page 06

US-Pak health partnership

brings new laboratory

The United States will continue to build a strong health and science partnership

PESHAWAR: The Excise Intelligence Bureau (EIB) on Monday foiled a drug smuggling attempt in Mardan and recovered 42 kg of hashish during its special campaign initiated on instructions of Secretary Excise Department Ehsanullah and Director General Excise Zafarul Islam Khattak.

According to the details. Provincial In-charge Excise Intelligence Bureau Majid Khan received information from his confidential sources that there will be an attempt to smuggle a large number of drugs to Punjab in a white Toyota Corolla vehicle at any time. Upon this Majid Khan promptly chalked out the action plan with Excise and Taxation Officer Narcotics Control Zahid Iqbal Khan and SHO Police Station Excise Mardan Region Muhammad Riaz. The team henceforth stopped vehicle number LZG 129 while operating on Charsadda-Mardan Road near Sheikh Maltoon Town and during the search of the vehicle, 42,000 grams (42 kg) of hashish was recovered from its secret parts. A case has been registered in Excise Mardan Region under the complaint of SHO Muhammad Riaz for further investigation and legal action.—APP

CS chairs meting to prevent smuggling

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry chaired an important meeting to discuss measures for preventing the smuggling of essential commodities, such as wheat, sugar, and fertilizer. The meeting was attended by the Secretaries of Food, Interior, Agriculture, Industries, as well as various Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners, who participated through video link. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for strict action against hoarding and for the district administration to monitor the stock of dealers. The transportation of essential commodities in border districts will be monitored by a joint checkpoint comprising representatives of various departments. Steps will also be taken to control the supply of essential commodities in the border districts and action will be taken against excessive stocking. –APP

Man impersonating as police officer arrested

PESHAWAR: A man impersonating as a police officer and trying to loot people was arrested by the Jamrud police of Khyber district in Shahkass area on Monday. According to police, the accused dressed in police uniform and boarded a car having official number plates was arrested by postin-charge Ittehad Khan. A fake service card and a pistol with multiple rounds were also recovered from him. The Police said the arrested accused was identified as Attaullah s/o Ata ur Rehman belongs to Mastalkhel area of Shahkass. The accused were shifted to the lockup of Jamrud police station for further interrogation.-APP

EIB recovers 42 kg hashish

DNA ISLAMABAD: U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer; Federal Secretary at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan; and Pakistani National Institute of Health Chief Executive Officer Ghazal Parveen inaugurated a U.S.-funded entomology laboratory today that will strengthen Pakistan's ability to track and respond to vector-borne disease outbreaks."The devastating 2022 floods across Pakistan reminded us all of the health risks posed by waterborne diseases," Schofer said. "The United States stands with Pakistan as it continues to recover from the floods. The laboratory, funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and



Prevention, is the latest milestone in the longstanding U.S.-Pakistan health partnership. For decades, the United States and Pakistan

have collaborated closely to support the health of the Pakistani people. After both the 2010 floods and the 2022 floods, U.S. Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention experts traveled to Pakistan to consult with Pakistani and UN partners about how to effective-

stemming from the flooding. In recent years, the United States and Pakistan also have partnered to combat the COV-ID-19 pandemic, with the United States supplying over 80 million doses of safe and effective COVID vaccines to Pakistan thus far.

The U.S. Agency for International Development also has built clinics and hospitals across Pakistan, expanding access to quality health care. For example, the Jacobabad Institute of Medical Sciences, built by USAID, remained open during the 2022 floods, providing necessary medical care to flood-affected individuals.

The United States will continue to build a strong health and science partnership with Pakistan, including through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance framework.

Shami to head APNS

govt-press relations

committee

They have also requested Mr.

Muhammad Aslam Kazi to be

DNA

head the Government Press Relations Committee of

the APNS as Chairman. They have also requested

Mr. Muhammad Aslam Kazi to be Chairman of the

Arbitration / Dispute Resolution Committee. The

members nominated on the committees are as un-

der: Government Press Relations Committee: Mr.

Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami Chairman Daily Paki-stan, Mr. Sarmad Ali Vice Chairman Secre-

tary General, APNS, Mrs. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani

Member

Arbitration / Dispute Resolution Committee, Mr.

Member

President, APNS, Mr. Imtinan Shahid

Sr. Vice President, Mr. Muhammad

Vice Chairman

Vice President, Mr.

Finance Secretary,

Chairman Vice Presi-

Joint Secretary,

Man roughed up in torture cell at Islamabad police station

ISLAMABAD: A video clip has surfaced on internet in which two policemen in civilian clothes can be seen torturing a citizen in Khanna police station of Islamabad, exposing the crooked colonial remnants of "Thana Culture". According to a private television channel footage of torture cell, the citizen was being roughed up by police officials. The video shows police personnel torturing the citizen inside the police station and it also clearly captures the screams of the accused who was tortured. But, the concerned SHO and other officers turned deaf ears.

The people of the area claimed that despite the installation of billions of rupees worth of Safe City Project cameras, the officials remained ignorant of the internal conditions of police stations in the federal capital. They said that that torturing prisoners in the torture cell is extremely usual at this police station. Several footages have previously surfaced in the capital city but nobody took notice

Minister stresses for reviving sick industry

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Muhammad Adnan Jalil on Monday directed the relevant authorities for taking effective measures to revive the sick industries and also resolve the problems being faced by industrialists in the industrial estates established in the province. He said to revive the sick industry it was necessary to resolve the problems of industrialists of the Economic Zones Development Company and Small Industries Development Board

as well. He issued these instructions during a detailed briefing given by all the attached entities of the and Technical Education Department here at Civil Secretariat Peshawar.

The minister was given a detailed briefing by the Pakhtunkhwa Khyber Board of Investment and Trade, Directorate of Industries, Small Industries Development Board, and other relevant departments while the implementation of the decisions taken in the previous meeting was also reviewed

Two killed, six injured in firing incident

The accused persons were also produced in the courts of the concerned duty magistrates for seeking their physical remands to complete the other prerequisite formalities of police challans, accordingly

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: In Attock two persons were killed while sustained multiple bullets injuries over minor disputes within the jurisdictions of police stations Jand and New Airport Fatehjang. Police said 25 years old Mohammad Qadeer son of Mohammad Bashir of village Chachri, tehsil Jand went to purchase chicken from the local market where the butcher got infuriated due of over charging of chicken who also exchanged hot words with the victim. Meanwhile, the butcher along with his younger brother attacked upon him with their sharp dagger and fled away leaving the young man flutter in a pool blood on the spot. On getting information, police squad reached and shifted the injured to the tehsil

headquarter hospital Jand where he was pronounced as dead. Later on, case was registered and dead body was handed over to its real heirs completing all legal conditions.

In another incident, Salamat Hussain son of Saghir Hussain resident of village Lundi Syedan reported to police station new airport Fatehang that he accompanied by Naeem Abbas Shah, Tatahir Shah including others were on their way towards Rawalpindi when they were forced to stop at 1900 hours on the road blocked with stones. He further said that eight persons identified as Zaki Abbas, Naeem Abbas, Naqi Abbas, Taqi Abbas, Imran Abbas with their four unknown accomplices armed with lethal weapons suddenly appeared and showered bullets which resulted death of Naeem Shah before taking any medical aid while Kamran Shah, Mazhar Shah, Fazal Kareem, Mohammad Ibrahim, Tatahir Abbas and the plaintiff got multiple bullet injuries. On information, police rushed to collect necessary evidence from the crime scene besides shifting the injured persons to the tehsil headquarters hospital Fatehjang. The dead body of Neem Abbas was handed over to its real heirs after fulfilling all legal requirements. The ill-motive behind this scene was stated to avenge of an earlier murder occurred in the same locality. However, cases were registered by the respective police stations and investigation were launched as per

law. The accused persons were also produced in the courts of the concerned duty magistrates for seeking their physical remands to complete the other pre-requisite formalities of police challans, accordingly.

Sindh govt launches Benazir **Bhutto HRs**

KARACHI: Sindh Human Rights Department on Monday announced the launch of the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Human Rights Awards each year in December for human rights activists and others recognizing their contribution and unresolved achievements made in the area of promotion and protection of human rights of citizens including marginalized and underprivileged groups and segments in the province of Sindh. The award is named after Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the first woman elected Prime Minister in the Muslim world who served two terms as a PM of Pakistan and who was honoured with the UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights in 2008.

Special Assistant to Chief

Awards

Chairman of the Arbitration / Dispute Resolution Committee KARACHI: Veteran journalist and analyst Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami will be heading the Govt-Press Relations Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS). While another veteran journalist Aslam Kazi shall head the Arbitration/dispute resolution committee. Earlier, "The President, Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani and the Secretary General, Sarmad Ali of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have requested Mr. Mujib-ur-Rahman Shami to

Minister Sindh on Human Rights, Surendar Valasai said that the award is a tribute to Shaheed Bibi for her valiant struggle who remained a passionate supporter of human rights throughout her life and left behind a legacy of continuously inspiring actions for the protection.-APP

Member

Aslam Kazi

S.M. Munir Jilani

Mr. Shahab Zuberi Member

Muhammad Aslam Kazi

dent, Mr. Asif Zuberi



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov visited Sundas Thalassemia Center in Islamabad, met with the Center's medical staff, patients, and their family members and presented Ramazan packages prepared by the embassy. - DNA

In the memory of General Ayub Khan

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

The nation of Pakistan could never forget April 19, 2023 the death anniversary of Field Martial Muhammad Ayub Khan a five-star general officer who was serving as the second President of Pakistan from 1958 until his forced resignation in 1969.

Ayub Khan's eldest son Gohar Ayub Khan was Pakistan's Foreign Minister in the Nawaz Sharif government and his grandson Omar Ayub Khan was briefly Pakistan's Minister of State for Finance. His daughter Begum Nasim Aurangzeb was married to Miangul Aurangzeb, the Wali of Swat. Now a days his grand son Omar Ayub Khan has very staunch position in Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf who was remained cabinet member of former Prime Minister Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan. Ayub Khan was born on 14 May

1907 in the village of Rehana in the Haripur District Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa,. Ayub Khan was enrolled in a school in Sarai Saleh for his basis education. He enrolled at Aligarh Muslim University in 1922, but did not complete his studies there, as he was accepted into the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Ayub Khan embraced private-sector industrialization and free-market principles, making the country one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. He built several infrastructure projects, including canals, dams and power stations, began Pakistan's space programme, Ayub's reign also saw increasing political tensions in East Pakistan. In 1960, he held an indirect referendum of his term in power. Functioning as a kind of electoral college, close to 80,000 recently elected village councilmen were allowed to vote ves or no to the question by winning 95.6% of the vote to formalise new

system. Ayub Khan moved to have a constitution created, and this was completed in 1961. Ayub Khan introduced the Muslim Family Laws through an Ordinance on 2 March 1961 under which unmitigated polygamy was abolished, consent of the current wife was made mandatory for a second marriage, brakes were also placed on the practice of instant divorce.

The Arbitration Councils set up under the law in the urban and rural areas were to deal with cases of family matters. His economical policies were based on the model of capitalism and followed the Free-market economics principles, industrialization that took place in his term is often regarded as "Great Decade" in the history of the country (both economical and political history). The "Great Decade" was celebrated, which highlighted the development plans executed during the years of Ayub's rule, the private consortium

companies, industries and

credited with creating an environment where the private sector was encouraged to establish medium and smallscale industries in Pakistan. This opened up avenues for new job opportunities and thus the economic graph of the country started rising. He also introduced a new curricula and books for schools. Many schools and colleges were constructed during his time. He also introduced agricultural reforms according to which no one could occupy land less than 12.5 acres (500 irrigated land and 1000 unirrigated.) An oil refinery in Karachi was set up, and these reforms led to 15% GNP of the country that was three times greater than that of India.

Despite the increase in the GNP the profit and revenue was gained by the 22 families that controlled 66% of the industries and land of the country and 80% of the banking and insurance of Pakistan. The education reforms were steadily improved, and

scientific efforts were at the rising level during his years, leading the world-acclaim of Pakistan where his image was regarded more positive. This policy could not followed for a long time after 1965, the economy was collapse and the economical declines which he was unable to control.

He subsidized fertilizers and modernized agriculture through irrigation development, spurred industrial growth with liberal tax benefits. In the decade of his rule, gross national product rose by 45% and manufactured goods began to overtake such traditional exports as jute and cotton. He shunned prestige projects and stressed birth control in a country that has the seventh largest population in the world: 115 million. He dismissed criticism with the comment that if there was no family planning, the time would surely come when "Pakistanis

eat Pakistanis.

Business Recorder, Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani Member President, APNS, Mr. Sarmad Ali at the meeting. -APP Secretary General, APNS The Smooth Moving Connection









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- Storage





National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

APRIL

April 04/Senegal **National Day** April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day April 12/Somalia **Armed Forces Day** April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun April 16/Denmark **National Day** April 17/Iran **Army Day** April 17/Syria **Independence Day** April 18/Zimbabwe **Independence Day**

Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day April 26/Tanzania

April 24/Holy See

National Day April 27/Sierra Leone **Independence Day** April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel....111 133 133 Marriott......051-2826121



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......9222596 Rawalpindi......9270601-20

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CAA	.9281092



Hospitats		
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 Internation	onal 4603666	



Departments		
CDA	9221334-43	
CDA	9208301-04	
Met Office	9250360-6	
RDA	5555864	
TMA	5770886	
Cantonment B	oard 9270151-3	

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation	9209224
PotoharTown	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in carpeting of Park Road, on Monday.—Online

Shehbaz govt leads the way for accessible healthcare

The prime minister, who during his tenure as Punjab chief minister set up and upgraded various hospitals in the province

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has taken a lead in transforming country's healthcare and support through its trailblazing initiatives from focusing on affordability and accessibility to establishing specialized medical and counseling facilities to cope with the increasing demand.

The measures taken by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government including the establishment of an autism center in the federal capital, launch of mental health helpline and life-saving CPR training programme, and allowing the prisoners to get medical education speak to a larger commitment to creating a more equitable and modern healthcare system.

In a bid to encourage the philanthropists' contribution to the health sector, the prime minister recently inaugurated a 600-

bed Indus hospital in Lahore and urged the philanthropists to come forward and donate generously for alleviation of the sufferings of the poor and deserving people in the field of health and education.

He also inaugurated six-storey and 350-bed Saleem Memorial Trust Hospital in Lahore and expressed the hope that facility would serve the ailing humanity with world class treatment facilities. The prime minister, who during his tenure as Punjab chief minister set up and upgraded various hospitals in the province, referred to Recep Tayyip the-art hospital in Muzaffargarh, which was set up during 2010 floods by the Turkish government. Prime Minister Shehbaz, addressing the hospital's inauguration ceremony said while being Punjab CM, he had activated Punjab Endowment Fund with deposit of 20 billion rupees and supported a large number of orphan children with its fund which was unfortunately closed by the previous government. However, he assured that his government would restore all such pro-people schemes including endowment fund and CM self-employment scheme. The PML-N government had also set up PKLI hospital costing Rs20 billion which was politicised by the previous government causing an immense damage. Hepatitis filter centers across Punjab province were set up under its patronage and patients from all over the country came for treatment. To ensure the affordability and accessibility of the medicines for the inflation-stricken people, the government reduced the prices of 20 medicines up to 30 percent in order to give relief to the masses. The ratio of price reduction of most medicines remained at 30% and the

price of 54 other medicines was also fixed. The prime minister recently launched the "HUMRAAZ "mental health application and integrated helpline 1166 for citizens' mental health and well-being. The citizens can consult with psychologists and doctors by calling free on 1166 if they are suffering from depression, tension, or mental stress.

The incumbent government launched a PM's National CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation) programme for the general public to enable the general public to enable geons to run the facility. The them to become a life-saver. federal health ministry, in co-The government recently established National Autism and Mental Health Centre for children in the federal capital as a first such high quality facility in the country. In the first phase, the centre will offer diagnostic and treatment facilities at the out-patients department (OPD). In order to promote an equitable

health education system, the federal government directed the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to make arrangements for the inclusion of young prisons in the next admission test of medical and dental colleges.

The government is in the process of establishing a Kidney Transplant Centre at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in the federal capital and would also engage the reputed renal and liver transplant surordination with the provinces, has developed a National Tobacco Control Policy to sustain the tobacco control efforts in Pakistan It also banned all forms of tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorship besides enforcing graphic health warning with 60% space of cigarettes packs

and outers.

NEECA plans competition

ISLAMABAD: National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) is conducting a national level National Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EE & C) awareness competition to inculcate a culture of conservation and efficient use of energy in Pakistan. The competition would be held in four categories including writing, video, art and mobile application development, sources told APP here Monday.

The deadline for the first three categories is fixed as May 26 while the submission date for 4th category- mobile application development will be June 15. However, for the 4th category, the interested contestants have to submit proposals by May 4, they said. The winners of the competition would be awarded cash prizes, letters of appreciation and shields. The first position holders in each category would get Rs 100,000, 2nd Rs 50,000 and 3rd Rs 25,000.

In writing, video and art competitions, there is two sub-categories- essay and story, short videos and short film and painting or drawing and digital poster

designing respectively. Similarly, mobile application development ideas should be tailored to meet the practical needs of energy efficiency in any sector including building, agriculture, transportation, industry, power and petroleum.—DNA

World famous Qawwal Aziz Mian remembered

ISLAMABAD: World-renowned Qawwal Aziz Mian was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary here on Monday. Aziz Mian was born in Delhi on April 17, 1942, and migrated to Pakistan after the partition of the subcontinent.

He obtained his master's degrees in Arabic, Persian language, Persian literature, Urdu literature, and history from the University of Punjab. Aziz Mian was one of the non-traditional Pakistani Qawwals. His voice was raspy and powerful. He was also famous for singing Ghazals in Qawwali style.-DNA

President calls for plan to address education issues



DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for

devising a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges being faced by the country in the health and education sectors. Expressing

of out of school children, he said that over 23 million children were out of school and urged the need for thinking out of box solutions to enrol them. He stated that the educating these children was really a major challenge that could not be addressed only with present bricks and mortar system but it required the use of digital and online learning methods. The President expressed these views during a presentation by UNICEF on its initiatives in Pakistan. The country Representative of UNICEF, Mr. Abdullah Abdulaziz Fadil, briefed the meeting about the role and

achievements made by UNICEF in the health and education sectors of Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Mr. Hamish Young, Chief polio UNICEF, Ms. Ellen Van Kalmthout, Chief Education, Mr. Haile Gashaw, Chief WASH and others at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The UNICEF country representative apprised the meeting about the impacts of floods on children and the support extended by UNICEF to the children of flood-affected areas. He said that 134,779 children with severe malnutrition had been enrolled for treatment, besides immunising 1,194,940 children against measles. It was apprised that UNICEF established 1232 temporary learning centres and helped 180,889 children to continue their learning in a safe and protected environment through various modalities. He highlighted that 1,195,088 people had been provided access to safe drinking water.

HEC advise students to beware of TNE policy violation

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Monday advised the students to beware of Transnational Education (TNE) Policy Violations by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). According to the HEC Officials, "It has been observed with grave concern that several Pakistani institutions offering qualifications in collaboration with foreign universities under Transnational Education (TNE) Policy are violating HEC policies while granting admission to students." "As a result, students are facing problems getting reco gnition/equivalence of their degrees from the Higher Education Commission (HEC)," said the officials. Therefore, all the recognized institutions imparting foreign qualification in Pakistan (list) available at: https://www. hec.gov.pk/english/universities/Pages/Foreign-Collaboration-Institutions.aspx) are hereby advised to ensure that all the legal/codal formalities are met, as devised by this Commission, at the time of granting admission, while fulfilling all other requirements of the host university/institution as described under TNE Policy. -DNA

SSC exams to start on April 27

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The matriculation examination organized by the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education(FBISE) will start on April 27. For this purpose, as many as 997 examinations and 928 practical centers have been established countrywide. All the preparations have been completed in the examination centers including the placement of staff. Meanwhile, examination centers have also been es tablished abroad under the Federal Board. A total of 38 overseas centers have been established

and the examinations will start in these centers. According to the sources of the Federal Board, "A total of two lahks 55 thousand 405 male and female students will participate in the examinations.' "The roll number slips of these students have been uploaded to the website of the Federal Board from where their printouts can be obtained.'

It is worth mentioning here that IT is being fully utilized in the examinations by the Federal Board. A special app has been developed for the attendance of students and staff in the examination centers. Thus attendance will be completely digital and exams will be SLO based. The matriculation exams will end on May 20, the Federal Board sources informed. Chairman Federal Education Board Qaiser Alam Khan has said, "The examination system of the FBISE is an example for the entire country."

"We have started using IT to make the entire process more transparent, from conducting examinations to marking and preparation of results, which has made it easier for students" he added.

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Briefs

'Policy of containing inflation failed'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday said the policy of increasing interest rate to reduce inflation has failed, so the interest rate should not be increased further. Rather, other methods should be used to contain inflation and provide some relief to the masses.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that an increase in the interest rates was followed by the failure of banks in the US and EU which damaged their economy, therefore instead of repeating the experiences of these countries, lessons should be learned from them.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that frequent increase in interest rate in Pakistan is not serving any purpose but to disturb the business community and the public, and it is leading to bank defaults.

The causes of inflation in Pakistan are the continuous increase in the value of the dollar more than the demand for commodities, continuous decrease in the value of the rupee, and holding containers loaded with goods worth more than five billion dollars at the ports, which leads to the lack of essential commodities and raw materials in the country. Lack of control over prices and hoarding mafia exploits are also reasons behind the unprecedented inflation.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in developed countries, the business community and the people take the most loans from banks, so the increase in the interest rate reduces the demand and inflation. But he observed that the main customer of banks in Pakistan is the government itself, and no government cares what the interest rate is. He questioned how inflation will be controlled by increasing the interest rate when the government has to borrow indiscriminately anyway. The business leader further said that approximately 50 million people in Pakistan receive about 12 trillion rupees annually through remittances and hundi, which increases the demand for goods and services, which is not affected by the interest rate.

The government continuously strives to increase exports and remittances and introduce cheap credit schemes to increase productivity, increasing demand. He noted that in Pakistan, 60% of the economy is undocumented, due to

which people have an extra four trillion rupees available every year, and even these people are not affected by the increase in interest rates because they do business in cash.

CTP launch crackdown against overcharging before Eid

RAWALPINDI: As residents of the twin cities head to their hometowns and villages to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, inter-city transporters have started hiking their fares. To stop this profiteering, the City Traffic Police (CTP) has launched a grand operation against these transporters for overcharging passengers. According to City Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan on Monday, transporters were already warned to stop overcharging or else they would face strict action in accordance with the law.

He said that CTP had created special squads to monitor those buses and wagons. If they find a public service vehicle (PSVs) fleecing passengers, they would be issued a ticket and slapped with a heavy fine, he added.

To make sure that transport ers don't dodge the fines, the CTO also directed traffic police, sector in-charges and wardens to keep a strict check on overcharging in public transport.—APP

ICCI for revival of Pakistan Railways to revive economy

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan Railways should extend its rail network to Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia that would help Pakistan to improve trade and exports with these countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan Railways can play a key role in the development of the economy and stressed that the government should focus on revival of railways to revive the economy. He said that the Pakistan Railways, once a much cheaper and effective source of transportation of goods, has lost its competitiveness to road transport, and now handles only about six per cent of the freight traffic. He urged that Pakistan Railways should improve the quality of its cargo service and work with the private sector to increase its share of freight traffic in the short term to at least 20 percent that would help its better growth. He said this while talking to Saqib Igbal Butt, Senior Superintendent Goods, Pakistan Railways,



Islamabad Dry Port during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that railways should establish bonded and non-bonded warehouses, stocking, storage & loading/unloading facilities in Islamabad in consultation with ICCI to facilitate the business community in import and export of goods. He said that Pakistan can reduce USD 5 billion in oil import bill by developing Pakistan

Railways. He further said that Pakistan can also pay all debt of the country by selling lands of Pakistan Railways.

Speaking on the occasion, Saqib Iqbal Butt, Senior Superintendent Goods, Pakistan Railways, IslamRailways is ready to provide cargo service to the business community as per their needs. He said that new cargo coaches will reach Pakistan soon from China that would provide better freight service to the private sector. He said that Pakistan Railways need the support of the private sector to improve its share of cargo service and said that the business community should work with Pakistan Railways for transportation of goods that would help its revival. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the business community is ready to construct stocking sheds on BOT basis in Islamabad to stock imported goods and railways should facilitate them in this regard.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan Railways should extend its rail network to Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia that would help Pakistan to improve trade and exports with these countries.

99,800 **cusecs water** ISLAMABAD: Indus River

IRSA

releases

System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 99,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 86,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1434.62 feet and was 36.62 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 26.500 cusecs while outflow as 30,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1106.95 feet, which was 56.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1.050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 28,300 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. –APP

2,956,487 free flour bags distributed in Rawalpindi division

RAWALPINDI: The administration has distributed 2,956,487 free flour bags among poor and deserving families in Rawalpindi division. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi continued free flour distribution here late Sunday night and achieved the target successfully.

He informed that 11 mega centers were set up in Rawalpindi district to provide free flour to the citi-

All-out efforts were made to ensure smooth distribution of free flour bags among the poor and deserving citizens and no untoward incident was reported in Rawalpindi, he added.

The distribution of free flour continued till 25th Ramadan, he said and informed that the administration was also taking strict action in accordance with the law against profiteers and hoarders. The administration had imposed fines amounting to over Rs 4 million on 1325 profiteers while 318 shopkeepers were sent behind the bars for profiteering and not displaying the rate lists. The DC said, 23 FIRs were also lodged against profiteers and hoarders.-APP

China' 3-day iftar reception gets underway in Gwadar Chinese Embassy wished the special Iftar receptions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the sacred month of Ramazan, a threeday Iftar reception is being organized for hundreds of local common people of Gwadar by the Chinese embassy in collaboration with China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) and local NGO "Helping Hand Foundation Gwadar". Iftar reception started on Sunday. It will continue on

Monday and Tuesday. The

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As a sec-

ond major achievement in

less than two months, the

Indus River was success-

fully diverted through the

second diversion tunnel at

the Dasu Hydropower Pro-

ject (DHPP). "The second

diversion tunnel was made

functional on Sunday by

diverting the Indus Riv-

er through it," according

to Deputy Commissioner Kohistan Upper's office,

Gwadar Pro reported on

Monday. "Each and every

one of you contributed

highly to the success of

this project. Thank you

so much for all the hard

the local people of Gwadar a very blissful fasting days in the month of Ramadan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. More than 200 people of

Gwadar belonging to the lower strata of society are being served at Iftar time daily for three days. Elaborate Iftar will include fresh water, drinks, traditional delights (sweet and

salty), meals, and local dish-

es. A COPHC official said

that under the CSR frame-

work, COPHC is arranging

Indus River

successfully diverted

work. Congratulations on

the incredible success,"

said Deputy Commission-

er Irfan Ullah Mehsud

on this occasion who was

accompanied by project

director DHPP, District

Police Officer Muhammad

Khalid Khan, and mem-

bers of China Gezhouba

Group Company (CGGC)

"This is a great honor for

me to inaugurate the sec-

ond diversion tunnel of

the project," Mr. Mehsud

The first diversion tunnel,

with a length of the diver-

sion tunnel, is 1.3 kilome-

ters with 20-meter width

and 23-meter height, was

inaugurated in February

added.

present on the occasion.

for Muslim residents of Gwadar, considering them brothers.

China's 3-Day Iftar Program has commenced with enthusiasm leaving a lasting imprint of philanthropism, humanity and a people-to-people bond between China and the indigenous community of impoverished people in Gwadar. Helping Hand Foundation official said "the sort of assistance we received from the esteemed Embassy is unprecedented".

2023. CGGC is the con-

tractor of the main works

and is leading the con-

struction of the project.

Upon completion, Dasu

will become the project

with the highest annual

energy generation in Pa-

kistan i.e., 21 billion units

WAPDA is spending Rs.

17.34 billion on schemes

relating to resettlement,

environmental manage-

ment, and social develop-

ment in the project area.

About 3722 jobs, includ-

ing 1945 for locals, have

so far been created,

which will increase to

the 8000 mark during the

peak construction period

of the project.

on average.

"This kind gesture serves affability. Apart from helping the poor have enough to eat, it boosts the morale of local youth that the Chinese brothers stand by us through thick and thin". he added. Another official of Helping Hand Foundation, praised the auspicious efforts by COPHC and Chinese authorities, saying such generous contributions by the Chinese brothers for a specifically religious event reflect their vision of inclusivity and coexistence.

ANF recovers over 72 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Nar cotics Force (ANF) in seven operations managed to recover over 72 kg drugs, 176 heroin-filled and 124 Ice-filled capsules, 8200 intoxicated tablets, 120 liters liquid Ice drug and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He said in an operation at International Islamabad Airport, 73 heroin-filled cansules were recovered from the possession of a Jeddah-bound passenger, residents of Bahawalpur. In two operations at International Mail Office, 8200 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel being sent to America and 190 grams Ice drug from a parcel being sent to London. In two operations at Lahore International Airport, 103 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Bahrain-bound

passenger and 124 Ice filled capsules from the possession of another Bahrain-bound female passenger, resident of Nowshera. In sixth operation conducted in Gwadar, 120 liters liquid and five kg Ice drug was recovered. The Ice drug was buried underground to smuggle abroad.

In another operation near Chaman Friendship Gate, 44 kg heroin was recovered from a suspicious parcel.—APP

PTCL Group runs Ramazan campaign

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) conducted a week-long SMS broadcast campaign to support donations for some of the leading charity organizations in Pakistan, besides helping raise awareness regarding charitable causes and donating to credible organizations. The campaign aims to facilitate charity, compassion, and philanthropy - some of the key attributes defining the spirit of the Holy month of Ramazan - to supplement support for the most vulnerable and underprivileged segments of society.

Through the SMS campaign, PTCL and Ufone 4G reached a vast audience and encouraged them to contribute to the right causes in the Holy month of Ramazan. The Group's customers across the country, especially in major metropolises received donation appeals from Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, JDC Foundation, Al Shifa Eye Trust, Pink Ribbon, and Indus Hospital. These organizations have an exemplary track record of generating welfare for vulnerable and underprivileged people in Pakistan by providing free of cost healthcare and economic support. The beneficiaries of these charities are in millions, while an active donor base helps sustain their operations. The SMS broadcast campaign provided drive and direction for effective charity making, which witnesses a sharp spike during the Holy month of Ramazan. Hopefully, It will not only direct funds to where they are most needed but also enhance the impact of the welfare initiatives.

A large number of donors in Pakistan use UPaisa to make secure and convenient contributions to leading charity and welfare organizations. UPaisa users can make contributions to organizations of their choice from a comprehensive list of charitable organizations available on UPaisa app, or by dialing USSD *786*5*5# from their handset. PTCL Group mirrors the compassionate spirit of the Pakistani nation which is considered to be one of the most charitable nations in the world. PTCL and Ufone 4G have conceived and executed impactful corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives to stimulate shared value for society. Through its latest campaign, PTCL Group has resourced and strengthened Pakistani welfare organizations to enhance their reach and impact, so the cycle of goodness continues uninterrupted.

Railways instruct to tighten security in trains

structions to all Superintendent of Police (SP) Railways to tighten security in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr days. The Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had directed all SPs Railways to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strict watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, an official in the Ministry told APP. Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force would be deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff would also be kept on alert for the search of luggage and passengers at railway stations.-APP

Bank Alfalah partners with SendSpend

DNA ISLAMABAD: Bank Alfalah,

one of the largest commercial banks in Pakistan, has collaborated with Send-Spend, headquartered in London, United Kingdom (UK), to launch a stateof-the-art, international remittance service. The cloud-based service allows immediate and effortless money transfers from the UK to Pakistan through mobile phones, allowing individuals and businesses to send and receive money internationally more conveniently than ever.

SendSpend is an international remittance service that uses ground-breaking cloud-based technology to make money transfers seamless and convenient with just a few taps. Through its partnership with SendSpend, Bank Alfalah is equipping the users of 17 different mobile wallets in Pakistan to not just receive funds internationally but also the possibility to use Bank's over 900 ATMs nationwide to cash out. Users will also be able to have the funds transferred directly into the bank account of their choice in any bank. Atif Bajwa, President and

CEO of Bank Alfalah, commented on the partnership, 'We are pleased to partner with SendSpend to offer customised solutions for non-resident Pakistanis in the UK to send hassle-free remittances to their loved ones in Pakistan. This innovative service empowers customers by placing financial control directly in their hands. The partnership marks a significant step towards building an ecosystem of progressive banking, with Bank Alfalah leading the way in providing tailored solutions for its customers' unique

Dr Jamal visits RIU to inspect facilities

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Health Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Monday visited the Rawalpindi Institute of Urology (RIU) to inspect facilities. Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha and Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema also accompanied him during the visit. Dr Jamal visited the laboratory, dialysis centre and OPD and issued instructions for early completion of the remaining work at the hospital while inspecting the. Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Health Minister Dr Jamal Nasir said that not only the citizens of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, but also the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, and Azad Kashmir are benefiting from modern health facilities available at the Rawalpindi Institute of Urology. He said that RIU is a state-of-the-art treatment facility equipped with all modern facilities, which provides world-class medical facilities to patients suffering from kidney and bladder diseases. The minister added that RIU's pathology lab has modern equipment. The OPD is fully functional and provides modern facilities to dozens of patients daily with highly qualified doctors and paramedical staff. He said the dialysis centre is also fully functional, providing dialysis facilities to patients in two shifts.-APP

Preparations for Eid gain momentum

A huge rush of people can be witnessed thronging to the main markets of the capital including G-9, G-10, F,-6, F-7, F-10, Aabpara Market, etc to buy Eid stuff.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With only a

kets have displayed the latest Eid editions of dresses, shoes and other essential accessories to attract buyers and gain maximum profits while some are offering discounts. Although several buyers altered their mode of shopping from physical to digital one, however, majority of the buyers still prefer visiting the shopping

malls themselves to shop

for different items for their

ultimate satisfaction. "I have completed Eid shopping for myself and my family so that we can move to our native town a few days earlier. Since the tailors have stopped taking orders for stitching dresses so I bought ready-to-wear dresses for all my family members", Sherish Batool, a housewife said. "Shopping during the month of Ramzan and prevailing

heat wave conditions is itself a difficult task so I am trying to complete it so that I can focus on prayers to seek blessings of Allah during the last Ashra of the holy month," she added

Muhammad Taj, a father of three kids said, "I have completed shopping for my family from the famous brands offering Ramzan sale

is not affordable for salaried class during the prevailing inflation. Dr Faryal Kausar said

as buying things at full price

"Chand Raat is the most exciting time when we all family members visit the nearest market to buy bangles and henna. I have completed all the shopping except bangles and henna as buying such items on Chand Raat doubles the joy of festivity". A huge rush of people can be witnessed thronging to the main markets of the capital including G-9, G-10, F,-6, F-7, F-10, Aabpara Market, etc to

buy Eid stuff.

few days left in the Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations, the masses are finalizing their preparations to mark the grand festival with great enthusiasm by visiting the main markets and shopping malls in bulk. So many buyers are thronging to the main markets of the federal capital to complete their shopping as authorities expect more rush during the last days of Ramazan before the festival. Different famous brands as well as local mar-

Macron's words of truth

N his flight from China and after returning to Paris, French President Emmanuel Macron gave a series of interviews with the media and elaborated on the idea of European strategic autonomy in many aspects. He said that Europe must reduce its dependence on the US and avoid being caught up in the confrontation between China and the US over the Taiwan question. He urged Europe to become more committed to achieving strategic autonomy so as not to become a "vassal" of a major power amid the global crisis. He also stressed that Europe doesn't want to "get into a bloc versus bloc logic." This is obviously a result of Macron's long-term observation and reflection. In addition, this is a view representative of Europe's insightful people in the face of the continent's current complex and severe internal and external situation, pointing out a relatively objective and rational path and direction in line with Europe's own interests. In the eyes of normal people, a European leader's emphasis on protecting European interests should not have become "news." But in the US and the West, many people act as if this has stepped on their tails and show a strong sense of discomfort and even fury. Such an abnormal reaction confirms Macron's statement that strategic autonomy is "Europe's struggle."

The strongest criticism against Macron comes from the US as well as Central and Eastern Europe. This is not difficult to understand, but deserves vigilance from the Europe. Central and Eastern European countries are at the forefront of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and have particularly severe security concerns, which has led to more radical foreign policies. But the dissatisfaction of the Americans with Macron reveals the true face of the US.

The US' geopolitical role assigned to Europe is structurally contradictory to Europe's pursuit of strategic autonomy. Macron's visit to China this time and his remarks on European strategic autonomy have reminded people of former French president Charles de Gaulle. After World War II, the Cold War quickly began, and de Gaulle strongly advocated for strategic autonomy, withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure and established diplomatic relations with China. T

Europe will not lose friends because of sticking to strategic autonomy, but will only gain more respect and have the ability to better maintain its interests and strategic balance in the international arena. If even controlling one's own fate is a mistake, then Europe will have no hope. Once again, Europe is standing at a historical juncture. Whether to revisit and carry forward Gaullism or choose confrontation, we believe the continent will make the right choice.

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G7 continues provocative behavior

retending to be blind to the ugly roles their countries are playing in aggravating tensions on the Taiwan question and the Korean Peninsula issue as well as prolonging the Ukraine conflict, the top diplomats of the G7 countries at their meeting in Karuizawa, Japan, pointed their fingers at those being contained, threatened and bullied by the United States, accusing them of trying to change the status quo by force. It is ridiculous that the top diplomats of the US and Japan in the meeting cited the People's Liberation Army's recent military drills around the island as a sign that Beijing is becoming increasingly aggressive and thus making it a potential security threat to the world.

The Taiwan question is completely China's internal affair. That there is only one China in the world with Taiwan being an inalienable part of Chinese territory is recognized by not only the governments of all the G7 countries, as the political foundation for their diplomatic relations with China, but also the United Nations. As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said in a regular news conference on Monday, although the national reunification of China has not yet been realized, China's sovereignty and territorial integrity have never been separated, and that is the real status quo of the Taiwan Strait. Whatever form it takes, as long as the Taiwan question appears in the joint statement the three-day meeting is scheduled to release on Tuesday upon its conclusion, it will constitute a grave violation of China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and harm the issuers' credibility. Beijing is the last party in the world that would like to see the Taiwan question resolved by force. Instead, it is the US and Japan, which are always ready to scratch each other's back in the process, that have been acting recklessly over the Taiwan question, taking advantage of it to advance their own agendas. By siding with the US, the attendees at the meeting will ignore Washington's consistent provocations on the Taiwan question, with its top lawmaker's meeting with the island's diehard secessionist leader Tsai Ing-wen early this month being the latest. And that Tokyo is hyping up the Taiwan question to justify its attempt to rid Japan of its institutional restrictions on militarism.

If the US and Japan are really "defenders of peace" as they claim, they should first stop distorting the Taiwan question and acknowledge that they themselves are part of the root cause of the tensions. Paying only lip service to adhering to the one-China policy and turning a blind eye to "Taiwan independence" secessionists' activities, the top diplomats of the "wealthiest democracies" are showing the world how they act as Washington's puppets, and how hypocrisy defines their membership of the US club.

PTI chooses young candidates

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



One of the significant challenges facing youth engagement in politics and democracy in Pakistan is the lack of political awareness and education. Many young people do not understand their rights as citizens and do not have the knowledge to engage effectively in the political process. Therefore, there is a need for civic education programs that educate young people on democratic values, human rights, and the importance of civic participation. Another significant barrier is the lack of political opportunities for young people in Pakistan.

akistan is a country with a significant youth population, where young people make up about 64 percent of the total population. Youth engagement in politics and democracy is crucial for the development and stability of the country. Unfortunately, many young people in Pakistan face several barriers to participate in democratic processes, such as poverty, lack of education, and limited access to information.

One of the significant challenges facing youth engagement in politics and democracy in Pakistan is the lack of political awareness and education. Many young people do not understand their rights as citizens and do not have the knowledge to engage effectively in the political process. Therefore, there is a need for civic education programs that educate young people on democratic values, human rights, and the importance of civic participation.

Another significant barrier is the lack of political opportunities for young people in Pakistan. The political system in Pakistan is dominated by older politicians, and many political parties are not receptive to youth participation. Therefore, it is crucial to create more opportunities for young people to participate in the political process, such as creating youth wings within political parties, establishing youth councils, and providing training and mentorship programs. Furthermore, many young people in Pakistan face economic challenges that limit their ability to participate in politics. Poverty and unemployment among young people are widespread, and this can discourage them from engaging in the democratic process. Therefore, it is crucial to create economic opportunities for young people, such as job creation programs, entrepreneurship training, and microfinance initiatives.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is a political party in Pakistan that has attracted significant support from young people, particularly during the 2018 general elections. The PTI has positioned itself as a party that is com-

mitted to youth empowerment and has made Majid Hussain Dogar also has conducted several promises to address the issues faced by young people in Pakistan.

Majid Hussain Dogar is a young candidate from PP195 from the PTI who is going to contest the 2023 general elections in Punjab. He is about 30 years old at this time, and his campaign is focused on youth empowerment, education, and job creation. Majid Hussain Dogar was born in Arifwala District Pakpattan, Pakistan, and completed his education Arifwala and then from Lahore. He remained brilliant student through his academic career. He always respected his teachers and elders. After completing his studies and became involved in youth activism, working to promote education and employment opportunities for young people.

Since the last decade, Majid Hussain Dogar highlighted the issues faced by young people in his constituency, including the lack of job opportunities and poor education standards. As a young PTI candidate, Majid Hussain Dogar is running an active and energetic election campaign that focused on engaging with young voters in his constituency. Majid Hussain Dogar is using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to reach out to young voters in his constituency. He is also posting regular updates about his campaign, his policies, and his vision for the future, and used social media to communicate directly with voters and answer their questions.

Majid Hussain Dogar holding public meetings and rallies in his constituency, where he speaks to voters about his policies and listened to their concerns. He uses these meetings to build a personal connection with voters and to demonstrate his commitment to serving the community.

Majid Hussain Dogar also goes door-todoor to meet with voters, hear their concerns, and ask for their support. This personal approach is helping him to build trust and connect with voters on a deeper level. He gives his focus on youth empowerment, outreach activities aimed specifically at young voters. He has been holding events at local ceremonies, to engage with young people on social media, and spoke at youth-focused events to highlight his policies and vision for the future.

Majid Hussain Dogar also engages in community service activities like cleaning up local areas, planting trees, and providing food to those in need. This helped him to build goodwill in the community and demonstrate his commitment to serving the people.

His campaign is characterized by a strong focus on engaging with voters directly, building personal connections, and demonstrating his commitment to serving the community. This strategy may helpe him to build a broad base of support and win the election in his constituency.

Majid Hussain Dogar's campaign is going successfully, and he will elect a member of the Punjab Assembly from his constituency PP195 Inshallah. Majid Hussain Dogar's campaign was characterized by a strong focus on engaging with voters directly, building personal connections, and demonstrating his commitment to serving the community. These strategies helped him to build a broad base of support and win the election in his constituency.

He will be a younger member of parliament at this time, and his victory will be seen as a sign of the growing importance of young people in Pakistani politics. Majid Hussain Dogar's success as a young candidate from the PTI has inspired many other young people in Pakistan to become involved in politics and work towards creating a better future for themselves and their country. His focus on youth empowerment, education, and job creation has resonated with many young people in Pakistan, and his election has demonstrated the potential for young people to make a significant contribution to Pakistani politics and society.

Finland joining NATO; implications for Russia Ukraine war

Nazia Shaikh



Finland was worried about Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year, which shares 1,340 kilometers (832 miles). In World War II, Finland was defeated by the Soviet Union afterwards it remained neutral. But recently, it applied to join NATO in May 2022 for security propose because Moscow's invasion of Ukraine gave

Europe's security backdrop and provoked Finland and its neighbor Sweden 7 n 2022, invasion of Ukraine turn over to drop years of neutrality. The move of Finland to join the NATO military alliance is a major political and strategic setback to Russian President Vladimir Putin with a historic shift of Europe's post-cold War security background generated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Putin has long grumbled about NATO's expansion toward Russia and somewhat used that as the explanation for the incursion of Ukraine.

Finland was worried about Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year, which shares 1,340 kilometers (832 miles). In World War II, Finland was defeated by the Soviet Union afterwards it remained neutral. But recently, it applied to join NATO in May 2022 for security propose because Moscow's invasion of Ukraine gave message to Finland that there is not very much room for non-aligned in between.

A new era begins, and the period of neutrality ends; President Sauli Niinistö said before his country's blue-and-white flag was elevated outside NATO head office. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said this is maybe the one thing that we can thank Mr. Putin for because he once again triggered something that initiated many countries to believe that they have to do more to look out for their defense and to make sure that they can deter possible Russian aggression going forward. Russia said

that it would be forced to take "reciprocal Russian concerns is not taken into account, actions" to address what it called security threats created by Finland's membership. It had also warned it would strengthen militaries near Finland if NATO sends any further region. Finland's membership indicates the troops or equipment to Finland. While NATO says it poses no danger to Russia. Finland joining NATO is a major change in the situation of Northern Europe, which was previously one of the most stable regions in the world. President Sauli Niinistö said that Russia tried to create a circle all over the place of them for security purposes and we are not a circle. Finns themselves feel more protected, that we are living in a more stable world. Finland is protected by NATO according to Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg's "iron-clad security guarantee," under which all member countries guarantee to come to the defense of any ally that comes under attack he also mentions that no troops will be sent to Russia unless they want help from NATO. NATO has repeatedly stressed that it is solely a defensive alliance and does not threaten Russia. Moscow says the funneling of heavy weaponry to Ukraine by NATO countries since the war began proves the West is bent on destroying Russia. The further expansion of NATO will not be helpful in resolving in Russia- Ukraine War. Conflict resolution is only possible when Russia's concerns is also addressed. West should adopt accommodating approach towards Russia national interest.

will have an impact on the war in Ukraine but more influence on the growing conflict over security and resources in the Arctic alliance against Russia and what weapons NATO places there and Russia will respond according to that will create more instability in the region. For Russia, this development as Finland joining NATO is a major strategic and foreign policy defeat as its neighborhood cannot feel any trust towards Moscow. Russian reaction to Finland's accession to NATO is likely, and further militarization of the Finland-Russia border which create security threats for Moscow. Finland joining NATO will prolong the conflict in Russia Ukraine war. Nuclear proliferation will increase in Europe and also tensions between the west and Russia. It will also challenge the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties that are signed between states. It will create an environment in which disarmament will be difficult and nuclear proliferation chances will be more as states develop more weapons for security and defense purposes.

-The writer is a Research Officer at Centre for International Strategic Studies, AJK. Her research areas are Strategic Stability in South Asia, Strategic Dynamics of South Asia & Conflict Resolution between Pakistan & India.

Fawad wants SC...

From Page 01

Supreme Court (SC)." Mr Chaudhry went on to say that if elections were not

held in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), it would

be tantamount to sabotag-

ing the constitution. "The

court should fulfill their wish of getting disquali-

Meanwhile, Law Minister

Law Minister Azam Nazeer

Tarar on Monday announced

that the Supreme Court

(Practice and Procedure) Bill,

2023 - which aims to curtail

the chief justice's powers to

take suo motu notice in an

individual capacity - will be-

Speaking to a media chan-

nel, the law minister said

that matter relating to im-

plementation on the law

Referring to the top court's

order to the State Bank of

Pakistan (SBP) for release

of Rs21 billion from the

funds held with it to the

Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) for holding

elections to the Punjab and

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as-

semblies, the minister said

that the procedure for ap-

come law on April 20.

will be seen later.

fied," he added.

NA halts release of funds

From Page 01 former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. He noted that the parliament had passed a resolution to hold election all over the country on the same day. The Supreme Court on April 14 directed the central bank to release funds worth Rs21 billion for elections in Punjab and send an "appropriate communication" to this effect to the finance ministry by Monday (April 17).

A three-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar, conducted an in-chamber hearing last week regarding the non-implementation of its April 4 order to the federal government and directed the central bank to release funds. The directives came after the electoral body submitted a re-

port informing the apex court that the Ministry of Finance has failed to release funds as ordered by the three-member bench on April 4. PM urges

world to...

From Page 01 the brink of another war. But the Pakistani government denied its involvement in the attack. Malik, who was the governor of Indian-administered Kashmir at the time of the attack, told India's The Wire news website in an interview that he "realised that all the onus of the attack will be put on Pakistan" to reap electoral benefits. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi had repeatedly cited the Pulwama attack to mobilise voters in the 2019 general elections, in which he returned to power with a larger majority in parliament. In his interview, Malik, the former governor, blamed Pakistan for the attack but added that it happened due to the "incompetence" and "carelessness" of Modi's government. Malik claimed that Modi told him to "stay quiet" about the security lapses he allegedly

raised with the government. PM for making...

From Page 01 seized by FBR and law enforcement agencies, while also foiled attempts smuggle thousands of tons of urea and sugar and seized the items. Joint patrolling teams are being established to stop cross-border smuggling while four joint patrolling check posts have been established in Balochistan The Prime Minister issued instructions to the institutions concerned to increase the number of these check posts. The Prime Minister also directed SUPARCO to provide real-time satellite imagery of the country's borders and traffic data to prevent smuggling.

Iranian Envoy...

From Page 01 to Pakistan Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini paid a farewell call on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The foreign minister appreciated Sevved Ali Hosseini's services for promoting Pakistan-Iran relations during his posting in Pakistan. He said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iran in all fields and restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia was very important for

Hina briefs PM on...

peace in the region.

From Page 01 briefed Prime Minister Sharif on her recent visit to Uzbekistan and the status of Pakistan's relations with its neighboring countries. She highlighted the importance of maintaining positive relationships with neighboring countries, in particular, given the current political and economic climate.

The PM reiterated his government's commitment to working closely with the ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote Pakistan's interests on the global stage.

Briefs Pakistani climbers make history on 10th highest Annapurna

Naila has become the first woman from Pakistan to climb Annapurna and the first to summit four peaks above 8,000 meters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: ShehrozeKashif and Naila-Kiani, two climbers from Pakistan, Monday along with the Seven Summit Treks team, successfully ascended Annapurna 1, the world's 10th-highest mountain located in Gandaki province of Nepal. According to KarrarHaidri, the secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, Kashif has now become the youngest mountaineer in the world to summit 11 peaks above 8,000 meters, while Naila has become the first woman from Pakistan to climb Annapurna and the first to summit four peaks above 8,000 meters. Sajid Ali Sadpara, another mountaineer,

also successfully ascended Annapurna without oxygen on Saturday, making it his fourth 8,000'er summit, all of which he climbed without oxygen. The achievements of these climbers are

setting new records in mountaineering. Kashif, who was born in 2002 made history in 2021 by becoming the youngest climber in the world to summit K2 on July 27. He has continued to break records in the climbing community. At the young age of 17, he summited Broad Peak, earning him the nickname "The Broad Boy." Since then, he has climbed numerous mountains, including Kangchenjunga, the world's

third-highest peak, and Mount Lhotse, the

fourth-highest peak in the world.



In 2022, he was recognised by Guinness World Records for being the youngest person to climb K2 and Broad Peak. However, he faced a close call in July of that year when he and Fazal Ali went missing after summiting Nanga Parbat. They were found shortly after.

Kiani made headlines when images of her wedding shoot at K2 basecamp in



2018 went viral on social media. She has since summited Gasherbrum-II and K2, the world's second-highest mountain, in July 2022, following in the footsteps of SaminaBaig, the first Pakistani woman to do so.

Sadpara, the son of late mountaineer Ali Sadpara, aims to climb all of the world's 14 eight-thousanders without supplemen-



tal oxygen. He has already summited K2, Gasherbrum-I, and Gasherbrum-II in Pakistan and Manaslu in Nepal without supplemental oxygen, setting records along the way. These mountaineers have made a name for themselves in the Alpine community, showcasing their incredible abilities to climb some of world's most challenging peaks.

proving the funds has been clarified in Article 81, 82, 84 of the Constitution.

Thousands of **Palestinians**

From Page 01

medical treatment are only samples of such discriminatory policies; The Israeli occupation detention system is a main part of its collection of colonial tools to intimidate and persecute the Palestinian people to serve different objectives including enabling forcible transfer, mass displacement, land confiscation and annexation: The Israeli judicial system is part of the colonial regime that legitimizes discrimination, torture and persecution of the Palestinian people; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the international community, including HCPS to the GCIV, to uphold their legal responsibilities towards Palestinian detainees by ending arbitrary detention without fair trial or any legal basis for the deprivation of liberty.

US win women's ice hockey world c'ship



NEW YORK: Hilary Knight scored third-period power play goals 27 seconds apart as the United States stunned archrivals Canada 6-3 in Ontario to win the gold medal final of the women's world ice hockey championships. Canada had led 3-2 heading into the third period in the final on Sunday evening and were on course for a third successive world title but threw it away with sloppy play, taking two late penalties to gift the US a two-player advantage with 3:52 left.

Knight made them pay dearly for their mistakes, securing her nation's 10th women's world hockey championships gold medal and first in four years. Af-

Federal Cup Basketball

Tournament QF

line-up completes

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Raptors Red, Bulls A, Generals, Hawks

Blues are entered into the quarterfinal round in the Fed-

eral Cup 3x3 Basketball Tournament organised by Federal

Basketball Association (FBBA) here at F-6Multipurpose

court, Islamabad. In the pre-quarter final round of the

on-going 3x3basketball tournament, Bulls A defeated DHA

Lakers by 14-9 points while Raptors Red defeated TW C by

12-9 points to reach into the quarter final round. Thunders

defeated Islamabad Hawks by 11-6 points, Generals de-

feated Spurs by 10-5 points, Hawks Blues defeated Hawks

Reds by 13-08 points, TW A defeated DHA Rockets by 18-

10 points, Bulls B defeated Net Reapers. 16-12points while

TW B defeated City Reapers by 17-13 points and reached

the quarterfinal round. According to Federal Basketball

Association Secretary Ouj E Zahoor, 37 basketball teams

in men's category are participating in the four-day tourna-

ment while six teams in women's category will also com-

pete in the federal cup 3x3 basketball tournament.

ter Caroline Harvey had pulled the US level at 3-3 early in the third, captain Knight scored twice to complete her hat-trick having also netted in the second period. Cayla Barnes scored into an empty net to close out the scoring while Abbey Murphy also had a goal. Brianne Jenner had a hand in all three Canada goals, scoring twice in the second period and setting up Marie-Philip Poulin for another, but it was her tripping penalty, along with Claire Thompson's delay of game, that provided the US with their golden opportunity. "It takes a whole village for one player to be successful on the ice," said Knight,

the US all-time leading scorer at the

"It's a huge honour to lead this team but the day-to-day business hasn't changed. "It's hard to beat Canada. It's harder to beat Canada in Canada." It was another dramatic end to one of the greatest rivalries in sport and, as usual, was played at a frenetic pace from the opening face-off to the final buzzer. No country other than the US or Canada have won a world championship

or Olympic gold. Only once have the Canadians and Americans not played each other for the world title, when hosts Finland crashed the party in 2019 to take silver. In the seven Olympic women's finals, Canada have won gold five times with the other two titles going to the Americans. Earlier on Sunday, Canada's Minister

of Sport Pascale St-Onge said the government will restore funding to Hockey Canada after the body met three conditions to make the sport saier. Hockey Canada had its funding frozen last year when the national governing body came under scrutiny over its handling of sexual assault allegations. The organisation, which has lost many corporate sponsors amid the scandal, has been under fire since news broke in last May of an alleged group sexual assault involving members of Canada's 2018 world junior team and a subsequent out-of-court settlement paid for out of player registration fees. - DNA

Barca investigation a 'ferocious attack': **Joan Laporta**

BARCELONA: An investigation into claims that Barcelona paid referees for preferential treatment is part of a smear campaign, says club president Joan Laporta. Prosecutors allege Barcelona paid Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira, former vice-president of Spain's referees' committee, 8.4m euros (£7.4m). Barcelona say the money was for consultancy work. "This is one of the most ferocious attacks in our history," Laporta said. "I am convinced that FC Barcelona has not committed any crime of sports-related corruption. I hope that sooner rather than later it is fully exonerated. "I ask FC Barcelona supporters to be as united as ever in defence of our crest, our essence, and our ownership model, which is that of a club owned by all of its members." Last month a court heard that Barca had been indicted on charges of "corruption", "breach of trust" and "false business records". European football's governing body Uefa has said it is also investigating the matter. Laporta said Barcelona have a paper trail of the payments made between 2001 and 2018. - Agencies

Nigerian airport workers go on strike

ABUIA: Thousands of travelers were stranded in Nigeria Monday as airport union workers began a two-day strike demanding better conditions. The strike canceled flights as employees from across seven unions in Nigeria's aviation industry blocked access to the country's largest airports, in Lagos and the capital, Abuja. Strikes are common in Nigeria's aviation sector. Workers say they have poor conditions and airlines are struggling with rising costs and fuel shortages. It is the second union-organized strike this year and comes after failed attempts by regulators and policymakers to appease workers. - APP

Italy pushes crackdown on migrants

ROME: Italy's right-wing government pressed ahead with plans to crack down on migrants as they arrived by the hundreds on Monday at a Sicilian port after a Coast Guard rescue. Dozens more were taken on board a charity boat from an unseaworthy vessel operated by smugglers, while others came ashore unaided. This week, the Senate is due to take up proposed legislation put forward by the government of far-right Premier GiorgiaMeloni that aims to make it harder for migrants to gain temporary permission to stay in Italy. Coalition ally Matteo Salvini, who leads the anti-migrant League party, wants the country to eliminate a status known as "special protection" for many of the tens of thousands of migrants who have come ashore in Italy for years now aboard smugglers' boats launched from Libya, Tunisia, Turkey and other places. That status allows migrants who are unlikely to win refugee status to stay in Italy for two years, pending renewal.

During this time, they can work legally and rent housing. Salvini claims the possibility of "special protection" acts as a "pull factor, in encouraging migrants to leave their homelands in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Many of the migrants are fleeing poverty or a lack of decent jobs in sub-Saharan Africa, northern Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Egypt. While Meloni has said she'd like to see that status eliminated, lawmakers from another coalition party, Silvio Berlusconi's conservative Forza Italia, have indicated they could push for the time to be slashed from two years to six months. "It's not so much a question of numbers, but of (sending) a signal of severity that we want to give, Maurizio Gasparri, a prominent Forza Italia senator was quoted as saying in Corrieredella Sera on Monday. The number of migrants arriving this spring has risen relentlessly.

A Coast Guard boat with about 200 migrants aboard pulled into the harbor of Catania, Sicily early Monday. They were among some 600 migrants rescued by the Coast Guard during the weekend in Malta's search-andrescue sector of the Mediterranean. For years, humanitarian groups have lamented that Maltese authorities often ignore distress calls from foundering migrant vessels. The others arrived in Catania late Sunday night aboard a vessel operated by Frontex, the European Union's border protection agency. Also on Sunday, an Italian naval vessel brought some 300 rescued migrants to another Sicilian port, Augusta, Italian media said. - Agencies

Imran fears another...

From Page 01 the police should not be allowed to register a case within these days. "Is there any such precedence?" Justice Sheikh asked. Upon this, the PTI chief came to the rostrum and told the bench that the court had ordered the police not to launch an operation in Zaman Park yet it happened. "Now during holidays, they will launch an operation. I have credible reports that they will launch an operation. The court must stop them,' Khan urged, adding that the "law of the jungle" prevails here first people are arrested then they are informed about

the accusations.

"I am just informing you about the threats beforehand," Khan said and returned to his seat. Anwar Mansoor, Khan's other lawyer, said that such actions are being used to stop the elections. "A political leader is being threatened with arrest so he does not go to the people," said the lawyer. Following this, the Punjab government's lawyer told the court that seeking the court's permission for investigating someone is not legal. "Courts have been rejecting such petitions," the Punjab government lawyer said. On this, Justice Sheikh asked the lawyer when there was no need to arrest in old cases and then why does the government want to take action after the registration of new cases. However, the government's lawyer maintained that the petition was unmaintainable.

N Ireland's Good Friday Agreement explained

The situation deteriorated into a conflict involving Irish republican militants, loyalist paramilitaries and U.K. troops. Bombings and shootings killed some 3,600 people, mostly in Northern Ireland, though republicans also set off bombs in mainland Britain BELFAST: It has been 25

years since the striking of the Good Friday Agreement, the landmark peace accord that ended three decades of violence in Northern Ireland, a period known as "the Troubles." The anniversary is being marked with celebration that peace has endured, but concern about entrenched divisions and political instability. And the specter of violence has not wholly disappeared – last month U.K. intelligence services raised the terrorism threat level for Northern Ireland from "substantial" to "severe." Here's a look at the accord and how it came about:

WHAT WERE THE TROUBLES?

When Ireland, long dominated by its bigger neighbor Britain, became a self-gov-

erning Roman Catholic-majority country a century ago, a six-county region in the north with a Protestant majority remained part of the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland was split between two main communities: nationalists - most of them Catholic - who desired union with the rest of Ireland, and largely Protestant unionists, who wanted to stay British. The Catholic minority experienced discrimination in jobs, housing and other areas in the Protestant-dominated state. In the 1960s, a Catholic civil rights movement demanded change, but faced a harsh response from the government and police.

The situation deteriorated into a conflict involving Irish republican militants, lovalist paramilitaries and

U.K. troops. Bombings and shootings killed some 3,600 people, mostly in Northern Ireland, though republicans also set off bombs in mainland Britain. WHAT LED TO THE

PEACE DEAL? By the early 1990s, the armed conflict had reached "a hurting stalemate," said Katy Hayward, professor of political sociology at Queens University Belfast. "There was a recognition on the part of the British government and army, and on the

Irish republican side as well, that there was never going to be an outright victory." The Irish Republican Army called a cease-fire in 1994, allowing its allied party, Sinn Fein, to join other nationalist and unionist parties in peace talks co-sponsored by the British and Irish governments. The United States played a key role – former Sen. George Mitchell chaired the talks, spending 22 months in Belfast overseeing the delicate multi-party negotiations.

The talks came close to collapse several times. But after a marathon weeklong negotiating session that stretched long past deadline, agreement was reached on April 10, 1998 - Good Friday. British Prime Minister Tony Blair hailed the agreement. saying: "Today I hope that the burden of history can at long last start to be lifted from our shoulders." The following month, the agreement was ratified by voters in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

WHAT'S IN THE AGREEMENT? The agreement gave formal

recognition to Northern Ireland's multiple identities, allowing residents to identify as British, Irish or both. It ended direct U.K. rule and set up a Northern Ireland legislature and government with power shared between unionist and nationalist parties. The agreement affirmed Northern Ireland as part of the U.K. but set out that it could in future unite with Ireland if a majority in both the north and the republic supported the move. After some hiccups, militant groups agreed to disarm, and paramilitary prisoners jailed for taking part of the violence were freed

sore point with victims and bereaved families. The British military withdrew and dismantled its bases and border check-

something that remains a

points. People and goods could flow freely across the all-but-invisible border between Northern Ireland and the republic. WHAT IS THE SITUA-TION NOW?

Four months after the agreement, IRA dissidents planted a car bomb that killed 29 people in the town of Omagh, the deadliest single attack in Northern Ireland. But despite sporadic attacks since then by small splinter groups, peace has held. Niall Ó Dochartaigh, professor of political science at the University of Galway, said that despite the Good Friday Agreement's failings, "it has been hugely successful in bringing to an end the large-scale organized violence that took place for more than a quarter of a century." - Agencies

Public Notice I, Nasreen Begum (CNIC

61101-1803213-8) Wilayat Hussain (late) resident of House No. 16, Street No. 5 Muhalla Raja Iqbal Town is hereby announcing that Muhammad Usman s/o Wilayat Hussain is my real son, whereas I am disinheriting my real son Muhammad Usman s/o Wilayat Hussain from all my inheritance and wealth including bank account. From now on neither me nor my sons Muhammad Naeem, Muhammad Bilal and Ahmad Hassan will be responsible for any of his dealings and actions.



Briefs

Google chief warns of potential Al dangers

WASHINGTON: Artificial Intelligence (AI) will soon impact "every product of every company," Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai said on Sunday, warning of the dangers that the technology poses for employment sectors and the distribution of misinformation. "We need to adapt as a society for it," Pichai told American television network CBS. He added that job growth and sustainability will be disrupted for industries that rely on what he referred to as "knowledge workers," such as writers, accountants - and even the engineers who designed the software.

Google launched its AI 'chatbot', Bard, last month. This followed the debut of OpenAI's ChatGPT online in 2022, which received significant publicity for its ability to compose academic papers and write intricate and detailed passages of prose with human-like language, among other utilities.-APP

Sanctions may backfire on dollar

WASHINGTON: The role of the US dollar as the world reserve currency may actually diminish due to the US using its leverage on the global financial system to pursue its geopolitical goals through sanctions, Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen has admitted. However, no other currency is ready to replace it, she reckoned. Yellen was asked during an interview on Sunday by CNN's Fareed Zakaria about the efficiency of the anti-Russia sanctions and about Washington's history of what he described as the "weaponization of the dollar.

Zakaria cited recent statements by Brazil's President Lula da Silva and other politicians about the risk of dependency on the US currency. He asked whether the present time would ment when "the dollar's hegemony and its status as a reserve currency began to falter." Yellen acknowledged that use of financial sanctions "could undermine the hegemony of the dollar" in the long run, but promised that Washington was using this "important tool" judiciously and with the backing of its allies.

Regardless, she added, the role of the American greenback is explained by factors such as the volume of the US treasuries market, its wide use in international trade, and a "rule of law" in the US that other nations cannot offer. "We haven't seen any other country that has this basic infrastructure and institutional infrastructure that would enable its currency to serve the world like this," she explained.

Opponents of US domination in global finances are not necessarily advocating replacing the dollar with another currency serving the same role. Russia's leadership has prioritized a transition away from the dollar and into regional currencies.-Agencies

HEC announces undergraduate scholarships

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced undergraduate ships for the students of the Coastal Region of Balochistan. "HEC, in that regard, has invited applications from outstanding students of Gwadar, Lasbela/ Hub, Kech (Turbat) and Awaran, districts of Balochistan who intend to pursue undergraduate studies in HEC recognised public/ private sector universities/ degree awarding institutions (DAIs) of Pakistan," said official sources from the Commission on Monday. The scholarships are being offered in all areas of study/disciplines under the project titled, "Coastal Region Higher Education Scholarship Programme for Balochistan". sources said that applicant must possess a domicile/ local certificate of Gwadar. Lasbela/Hub, Kech (Turbat) or Awaran District of Balochistan. - Agencies

Bans on Ukrainian grain imports

'Not acceptable': EU decries Poland and Hungary's decision

News Desk

BRUSSELS: The rift over tariff-free imports of Ukrainian grain has acquired a new dimension after the European Commission decried as unacceptable the bans imposed by Poland and Hungary over the weekend.

The two countries have repeatedly complained about the influx of low-cost Ukrainian grain, arguing the massive arrival of produce is distorting the market and depressing prices for local producers.

"We are aware of Poland and Hungary's announcements regarding the ban on imports of grain and other agricultural products from Ukraine. We are requesting further information from the relevant authorities to be able to assess the measures," said a spokesperson of the European Commission. "In this context, it is important to underline that trade policy is of EU competence exclusive and, therefore, unilateral actions are not acceptable. In such challenging times, it is crucial to co-

ordinate and align all deci-

sions within the EU." Ukraine is a global leader in the export of maize, wheat,

sunflower, barley and other foodstuffs, which provide a lifeline to many developing countries across the world. But these flows have been severely imperilled by Russia's invasion, forcing the United Nations and Turkey to act as mediators and broker the so-called Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The initiative provides the guarantee that Russia will not attack ships that carry exports of commercial food and fertilisers from three Ukrainian ports: Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhny/ Pivdennyi.

Although fragile, the deal has been renewed several times and has so far resulted in exports of over 23 million tonnes of grain and other foodstuffs, according to EU estimates.

Almost half of the cargo was maize, which needed to be moved out of Ukraine in order to make space for the summer harvest.

In parallel, the EU decided to suspend duties and quotas on a long list of Ukrainian exports destined for the bloc, including many agricultural goods, in a bid to help the war-torn country cope with the economic fallout from Russia's war and facilitate trade for Ukrainian farmers.

The suspension is meant to last until June this year but the Commission has proposed a one-year extension until June 2024.

Both programmes - the Black Sea deal and the EU's solidarity lanes – have worked to lower international commodity prices: World Bank figures show maize at \$394.8 per metric tonne in February, compared to its May 2022 peak of \$522.29.

This trend, however, has been met with fierce criticism in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia Romania and Bulgaria. They complain that "unprecedented levels" of tariff-free grain are being stockpiled inside their countries and putting local producers at a disadvantage, "If market distortions causing damage to farmers in our countries cannot be eliminated by other means, we ask the Commission to put in place appropriate procedures to reintroduce tariffs and quotas on imports from Ukraine," the

leaders of the five member

states said in a joint letter addressed to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The Polish government, one of Ukraine's staunchest supporters, has led calls against the surplus of cheap grain, urging Brussels to take action, step up assistance through EU funds and ensure Ukrainian imports are evenly distributed across the entire bloc.

In the face of growing anger from farmers, who fear financial and job losses, Polish Agriculture Minister Henryk Kowalczyk resigned from his post earlier this month, a decision that coincided with a state visit from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Speaking of a "moment of crisis," the leader of Poland's governing party, Jarosław Kaczyński, announced on Saturday a decision to temporarily prohibit the import of grain and other foodstuffs, such as sugar, eggs, honey, milk, various types of meat and wine, that come from Ukraine.

The ban appears to be total as it also applies to the transit of goods through Poland. Kaczyński added the government was prepared to

discuss the issue with the Kyiv authorities, who deplored the move as "drastic" and contrary to previous arrangements.

Hungary followed suit and joined the ban later on Saturday without specifying the blacklisted products, while Bulgaria has suggested it might take similar steps. Warsaw and Budapest said their bans would remain in force until 30 June, when the EU's suspension of tariffs is due to expire. Besides its initial condemnation, the European Commission said on Monday it lacked "full clarity" on the legal basis behind the Polish and Hungarian decisions and it was "too early" to comment on possible steps to make both countries comply with EU law.

The Commission underlined the benefits of the solidarity lanes and acknowledged the impact of "oversupply" on the European market. In its legislative proposal to

extend the tariff-free programme for Ukrainian imports, the executive added an "expedited safeguard" to allow for the reintroduction of duties on products that "adversely affect" the European market, although it is still unclear if this would be triggered under the present conditons.

"It's not our objective, nor anybody's objective, to wreck difficulties on populations within the European Union whilst we are supporting Ukraine," said a Commission spokesperson.

The executive unveiled in March an assistance package worth 56.3 million to compensate affected farmers in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania for the economic loss caused by the rise in agricultural imports and the pressure on supply chains. A second aid package of

EU funds is under works, the Commission confirmed, without providing any specific details.

Asked about why Ukrainian goods were not being shipped out to Africa and the Middle East, the spokesperson said the solidarity lanes were only an emergency plan to get grain out of the country, not a commercial deal to determine its "final customers.'

"This is left to the economic operators because it is clear they're the best placed in order to ensure that (...) things can be sent to where they are needed," the spokesperson said.

3.100 prisoners freed by Myanmar junta

YANGON: At least 98 foreigners were among around 3,113 prisoners released by the military junta in Myanmar on Monday.

The latest amnesty of prisoners came on the traditional New Year's Day in the Southeast Asian nation.

Junta called the release a step intended "to bring peace of mind" and said it was carried out "in consideration of humanitarian concerns," Myanmar Now news website reported, citing a statement by Myanmar military council secretary Lt. Gen. Aung Lin Dwe. Junta, however, did not reveal whether or not political prisoners and dissidents are part of the fresh amnesty. Citing data from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. the report added: "At least 17,460 people remain in the junta's prisons and at least 3,240 have been killed by the regime's forces during the post-coup period."

The Myanmar military, locally known as Tatmadaw, launched a coup in February 2021 to uproot the National League for Democracy (NLD) government and install a junta regime.—Agencies

Italy seizes 2 tons of cocaine

ROME: Italian authorities seized two tons of cocaine in packages left in the Mediterranean Sea on Monday. "Approximately 2 tons of narcotic substance of the cocaine type, found in the sea off the eastern coast of Sicily," the country's Finance Guard said in a statement, adding that the operation was part of regular patrols in coastal waters by naval air units.

It said the forces identified 70 packages floating together with a luminous signaling device and held together by nets. The peculiar packaging method and presence of a luminous device led to suspicions that the packages could contain drugs left in the sea by a cargo ship to be retrieved and transporting to the statement.—APP

Slovakia delivers 13 MiG-29 to Ukraine

BELGRADE: Slovakia on Monday said it delivered all of its 13 Soviet-era MiG-29 iets it promised to Ukraine. "All 13 Slovak MiG-29 have been safely handed over to Ukrainian Air Force. Proud to be on the right side, doing the right thing to help protect lives. We Stand with Ukraine," Slovak Defense Minister Jaro Nad said on Twitter. "With the first batch of four MiG-29s flown to Ukraine by Ukrainian Air Force pilots in March 2023. the remaining nine have by now been successfully transferred to the Ukrainian forces," the country's Defense Ministry said in a separate statement. Nad said the delivery shows Slovakia's "huge support for Ukraine" in its defense against Russia's "military aggression" and in its protection of human lives. "Unlike for our neighbour,

for us, the aircraft were made unusable. It was the right thing to do," he added. He said the transfer was conducted by road due to security concerns in a "challenging logistics operation."-Agencies

Murza sentenced to 25 years in prison

MOSCOW: A court in Moscow on Monday convicted a top Kremlin foe on charges of treason and denigrating the Russian military and sentenced him to 25 years in prison. Vladimir Kara-Murza, Jr., a

prominent opposition activist who twice survived poisonings he blamed on the Kremlin, has been behind bars since his arrest a year ago. He has rejected the charges against him as political and likened the judicial proceedings against him to the show trials during the rule of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.The charges against Kara-Murza stem from his March 15 speech to the Arizona House of Representatives .-APP

'Willing to work together to preserve global security'

DNA

BEIJING: Beijing is willing to work with Moscow to "safeguard" global and regional security and stability, China's defense chief Russian President told Vladimir Putin.

At a meeting on Sunday in Moscow, Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu assured Putin that Chinese President Xi Jinping's administration intended to fully implement an understanding the two leaders reached last month.

Beijing is also willing to "further strengthen the strategic communication between the two militaries and bolster multilateral coordination and cooperation

so as to make new contributions to safeguarding global and regional security and stability," said Li, who is in Russia for an official fourday visit, his first overseas trip since being appointed as China's defense chief last month.

This comes after Xi paid a state visit to Russia last month. According to a statement by

China's Defense Ministry, Putin noted Xi's "recent fruitful Russia visit, during which they charted the course for the development of Russia-China relations in the new era, and agreed to further strengthen the strategic coordination between the two countries and deepen practical cooperation in such fields as economy, culture and education, among

"Military cooperation plays an important role in Russia-China relations," Putin said, expressing hope that "the two militaries will strengthen cooperation in joint training, professional exchanges and other fields, and that the strategic mutual trust between the two

be deepened. Li said that the two heads of state "steer the development of China-Russia relations and the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era has been continuously deepened."

countries will continue to

"The military mutual trust between the two countries has been increasingly consolidated with substantial progress in cooperation,'

According to a separate statement by the Kremlin, Putin told Li that Russia-China ties had experienced a "very good" development, particularly in the economic, social, cultural, and educational

It said Putin also underlined the presence of active work between the militaries of the two countries, saying that regular exchanges were taking place in terms of information, military-technical cooperation. and conducting joint military exercises.

"I think that this is, of course, another important area that strengthens the exclusively trusting, strategic nature of our relations,' Putin further said.

Belgian lobbyist sues Ursula for corruption

BRUSSELS: A Belgian activist started legal action against EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen for causing financial damage to the Belgian state by negotiating the joint procurement of COVID-19 vaccines by text messages, local media reported

Frederic Baldan, a lobbyist officially accredited to EU institutions, sued von der Leyen for causing financial damage to the Belgian state when she secured a 35 billion (\$38.4 billion) deal with pharma company Pfizer to buy 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines for EU countries, Belgian weekly Le Vif reported. The purchased number of jabs turned out to be way more than the EU countries needed and had to be destroyed or donated. According to the investigation of the US-based daily New York Times, von der Leyen negotiated the mega-deal by text messages with Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla but claimed later to have erased the conversation. According to Baldan's claim, von der Leyen is responsible for "abusing office and title", "destruction of public documents," and "illegal usage of interests and corruption." The European Ombudsman and the European Public Prosecutor's Office have also started investigating the allegations, while The New York Times sued the European Commission at the EU Court in February. Baldan's lawsuit is the first against its president who could have committed a crime under Belgian criminal law.-DNA

UK, US urge sides in Sudan to end fighting

BIRMINGHAM: The US and the UK urged a return to negotiations in Sudan, after violent clashes between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) which have claimed nearly 100 lives.

UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and his American counterpart Antony Blinken spoke at a joint press briefing during their G-7 trip in Japan on Monday, calling on Sudanese generals to put an immediate stop to the ongoing fight. According to the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate, at least 97 civilians have been killed and hundreds of other were wounded since the fighting began on Saturday. There was no immediate confirmation of military casualties by the rights group. British top diplomat said the two ministers spoke about the situation in Sudan, adding: "We call upon an immediate cessation of violence, a return to the talks, talks which seem to be heading in the direction of civilian government, and of course, that is the ultimate desired outcome. And we will continue working both with our close friend, the United States of America, and our friends in Africa and the wider Arab world to bring about that move towards peace and a civilian democracy." Cleverly called upon the sides to get back to negotiations. "That's what the people of Sudan want, that's what the people of Sudan deserve, and we will continue to seek ways to support that road back to peace." The US foreign secretary agreed that there is a shared deep concern about the fighting and its potential of spilling to the region.-DNA



WASHINGTON: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to USA Furqat Sidikov attend a special in New York that brought together 250+ compatriots, including Uzbek Diaspora living in the US. -DNA

Iran: Unipolar world is dead

"Iran lays great emphasis on the principle of good neighborliness, and gives special focus on friendly relations on the basis of mutual respect and common interests," he said

News Desk

TEHRAN: The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry says the unipolar world order has ceased to exist as new powers are emerging, stressing that the US government is faced with a shrinking sphere of influence and depleting power.

"A unipolar world does not exist anymore, and the United States is not known as a superpower any longer. Of course, it can be viewed as a power; but actually not as a superpower," Nasser Kan'ani told reporters during a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday. "In light of the Islamic Re-

public's capabilities, as well as the shift in the balance of power both at regional and international levels, the [Iranian] administration has tried to unlock all such potentials in order to secure the interests of the Iranian nation, foster regional convergence as a fairly comprehensive approach towards common interests, and help de-escalate regional conflicts," he said.

He added Iran has time and again reiterated that it will not limit its foreign policy to one specific geographical region or certain politi-

"We will continue to forge and cement friendly relations with all the countries that are willing to adopt the same approach on the basis of mutual respect, reciprocity and common interests.' Elsewhere in his remarks, Kan'ani stated that Iran hopes for the technical cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) to continue, and for the outstanding issues in the country's nuclear program to be resolved. The top Iranian diplomat highlighted that IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi paid a visit to Tehran in March, as a result of which technical delegations were exchanged, representatives of the world nuclear body traveled to Iran and technical talks were held within the framework of the agreement reached between the two sides and declared officially. "The talks are ongo-

ing as per the agreement.

This is a technical path. Should the technical path not get overshadowed by political issues and stances, we hope for the process of cooperation between Iran and the IAEA to maintain, and for positive steps toward resolution of the outstanding technical issues to be taken." Touching on diplomatic relations between Iran and neighboring Azerbaijan, Kan'ani stated that the Israeli regime is an implacable enemy to relations between the two Muslim neighboring countries and is seeking to foment

discord in order to reap its own benefits. "Since the Zionist regime's so-called national security and survival strategies are anchored in creating and stoking instability and in-

security across the [West Asial region and in the Muslim world, its mischief will not be exclusively directed at Tehran-Baku ties."

"Iran lays great emphasis on the principle of good neighborliness, and gives special focus on friendly relations on the basis of mutual respect and common interests," he said.



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Briefs

Chinese accused of blasphemy shifted to **Abbottabad**

DNA

ABBOTABAD: A Chinese national, arrested on charges of blasphemy, was shifted from Upper Kohistan to Abbottabad in a Pakistan Army helicopter on Monday afternoon over safety fears, Komila Station House Officer Naseeruddin said.

The accused, who works at the Dasu Hydropower Project, was taken into custody by the Komila police on Sunday night after labourers at the site accused him of blasphemy.

SHO Naseeruddin, while confirming the arrest, said that a first information report (FIR) had been registered against the Chinese national at the Komila police station. The complaintinvokes Section 295-C [use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him)] of the Pakistan Penal Code. It was registered on the complaint of Gulistan and Yasir - both of whom are heavy vehicle drivers.

The complaint said that on Sunday night police official Jehanzeb was informed about a mob trying to break into a Chinese camp near Barseen. It stated that locals had staged a protest and damaged the camp's site number 6.

SpaceX postpones test flight of biggest rocket

WEB DESK

CALIFORNIA: SpaceX on Monday postponed the first test flight of Starship, the most powerful rocket ever built, designed to send astronauts to the Moon and

Liftoff of the gigantic rocket was called off just minutes ahead of the scheduled launch time because of a pressurisation issue in the booster stage, SpaceX said.

SpaceX founder Elon Musk said a pressure valve appeared to be frozen, forcing a postponement of the launch which had been planned for 8:20am Central Time (1320 GMT) from Starbase, the SpaceX spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas. "Learned a lot today, now off-loading propellant, retrying in a few days," Musk tweeted. SpaceX said the launch will be delayed for at

least 48 hours.

The US space agency Nasa has picked the Starship spacecraft to ferry astronauts to the Moon in late 2025 - a mission known as Artemis III - for the first time since the Apollo programme ended in 1972. Starship consists of a 164-foot tall spacecraft designed to carry crew and cargo that sits atop a 230foot tall first-stage Super Heavy booster rocket.

Indian police arrest soldier over killings at base

NEW DELHI: Police in India's northern border state of Punjab have arrested a soldier in connection with last week's killing of four others at a military base, they said on Monday.

The four were shot dead in their sleep in barracks at the Bathinda military base early on Wednesday. The killings were suspected

to have been motivated by "personal enmity", district police chief Gulneet Singh Khurana told reporters. If found guilty, the soldier faces the penalty of expulsion from the army, a court-martial and criminal prosecution in the civilian

courts, the last of which could bring a life term or even a capital sentence. In a statement, the Indian Army said that on interrogation, the soldier had "confessed to his involvement'

in stealing an assault rifle and killing four colleagues. investigations indicate that this was apparently due to personal reasons or animosity," it

added. - Agencies

Fighting rages in Sudan as death toll climbs to 100

Sudan's army chief has branded the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) a rebellious group and ordered it be dissolved

News Desk

KHARTOUM: Explosions rocked the Sudanese capital Khartoum Monday as fighting between the regular army and paramilitaries raged for a third day with the death toll rising to nearly 100. The violence erupted Saturday after weeks of power struggles between Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

Sudan's army chief has branded the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) a rebellious group and ordered it be dissolved, as the paramilitary group continued battling the army in the capital and across the country for a third day. The raging battles triggered a wide international outcry with appeals for an immediate cease-fire and dialogue.

"The death toll among civilians in clashes since it began on Saturday ... has reached 97," the doctors' union said in a statement early Monday, noting the figure does not include all casualties as many could not reach hospitals due to difficulties in movement. It said hundreds of civilians were wounded in the clashes. Loud gunfire and deafening explosions echoed across the streets of Khartoum Monday morning as clashes continued, according to AFP journalists. A stench of gunpowder lingered as plumes of thick black smoke emanated from damaged buildings, according to witnesses.

The fighting broke out after bitter disagreements between Burhan and Daglo over the planned integration of the RSF into the regular army - a key condition for a final deal aimed at ending a crisis since the 2021 military coup they orchestrated together.

The coup has already derailed a transition

to civilian rule following the 2019 ouster of president Omar Al-Bashir and piled on a spiraling economic crisis in Sudan. The clashes forced Sudanese to hunker down in their homes with fears of a prolonged conflict that could plunge the country into deeper chaos, dashing hopes for return to civilian rule. Since Saturday, the two sides have traded blame over who started the fighting. Each has claimed the upper hand by declaring control of key sites, including the airport and the presidential palace but none of their claims could be independently verified.

Fighting also raged in other parts of Sudan including the western Darfur region and in the eastern border state of Kassala. The Saturday killing of three staff from the World Food Programme in North Darfur clashes prompted the agency to suspend all operations in the impoverished country.

Medics have pleaded for safe corridors

for ambulances and a cease-fire to treat the victims because the streets are too dangerous for transporting casualties to hospital. The RSF was created under Bashir in 2013, emerging from the Janjaweed militia that his government unleashed against non-Arab ethnic minorities in Darfur a decade earlier, drawing accusations of war crimes.

The latest violence sparked by the two generals has reflected the deep-seated divisions between the regular army and the RSF. Despite the wide calls for a cease-fire, the two generals appeared in no mood for talks. Burhan, who rose through the ranks under the three-decade rule of now-jailed Bashir, has said the coup was "necessary" to include more factions in politics. Daglo later called the coup a "mistake" that failed to bring about change and reinvigorated remnants of Bashir's regime ousted by the army in 2019 following mass protests.

Four dead in Alabama party shooting

DNA

ALABAMA: At least four people were killed and 28 wounded in a shooting that erupted during a late-night "Sweet 16" birthday celebration at a dance studio in the small town of Dadeville, Alabama, state police and local news media said.

Some of the injured were critically wounded during the shooting in east-central Alabama, about 60 miles (100 km) northeast of the state capital of Montgomery, authorities said. There was no official word on what led to the gun violence.

Authorities said the shooting started shortly after 10:30pm CT on Saturday but they declined to answer questions or provide further details during two Sunday news conferences. Officials said there was no longer any threat to the community but did not say whether a suspect has been killed or arrested.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini calls on Naval Chief Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi. - DNA

AJK Assembly fails to elect new Prime Minister

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: A session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Assembly to elect a new prime minister was adjourned on Monday without the poll being held. The election was announced after Sardar Tanveer Ilyas' disqualification by the AJK High Court in a contempt case.

The session, which was due to start at 11am, finally began at 3:30pm under the chairmanship of Speaker Riaz Ahmed. However, the session was adjourned till 11am tomorrow without a new prime minister being elected. The PTI enjoys a majority in the AJK Legislative Assembly, but their path to secure a candidate loyal to Imran Khan as the premier may get difficult. AJK President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has rebelled against his own party and created a forward bloc in the assembly. According to sources, Chaudhry's forward bloc has the support of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

However, PML-N AJK President Shah Ghulam Qadir told Daily Jang that as per a "power-sharing formula" their

alliance was with the PPP. "If the candidate for PM was from PPP then we would have been bound to vote for him," explained Qadir. He added that the PPP did not contact the party when it was negotiating with

the forward bloc and neither did the

then PML-N, with its seven votes, will make its own decision," said the PML-N leader. However, sources shared that after seeing Qadir's reaction AJK President Chaudhry reached out to the PML-N to seek support for

latter contact them. "If the situation remains like this the forward bloc candidate.

ties may pave way for Pakistan gasline project completion of IP gas pipeline project. ISLAMABAD: The ice is melting fast as the restoration of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran may also leave a positive spin on Tehran's relations with Pakistan. According to the diplomatic

Thaw in Saudi-Iran

sources, Islamabad has accelerated its efforts for completion of Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project. The sources were of the view that Iran would welcome if Saudi Arabia desires to invest in the IP gas pipeline or other energy projects in Pakistan. The Saudi finance minister had announced that Riyad will make heavy investment in Iran soon, the sources said, adding Saudi companies can extend physical and technical cooperation for

Iran has reactivated its embassy in Saudi Arabia last week and Riyadh is expected to reciprocate after Eidul Fitr. Pakistan, in the meanwhile, is actively pursuing to win waivers from sanctions on the IP gas pipeline project, for which Saudi Arabia can play an important role. The diplomatic sources said Pakistan can be fined up to \$18 billion for not pursing the gas pipeline project. Aas per the agreement the IP pipeline should be completed by 2024 and in case of failure Pakistan may face arbitration in a French court and it might face \$18 billion in fine if it terminated the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline agreement. - DNA

Twelve die of heatstroke at Indian award event

Monitoring Desk

MUMBAI: Twelve people have died from heatstroke while many others have been admitted to hospital after attending an awards ceremony in India's Maharashtra state. The government-sponsored event took place in an open ground under a blazing sun and lasted for several hours. Thousands of people attended Sunday's event, which was held to felicitate a prominent social activist. Many people complained of dehydration and the function. Navi Mumbai - a city close to financial hub Mumbai - where the event was held, recorded a maximum temperature of 38C (100F) on Sunday. Health experts have advised people to stay out of the sun during the peak heat hours of 11am to 4pm, espe cially during April, which is considered to be one of the hottest months in India. Photos of the event show thousands sitting

other heat-related ailments after attending

directly under the sun, with no roof or covering providing any kind of shelter.

Officials told the media that refreshments had been provided at the venue through the day and that booths had been set up to provide medical aid to people, but opposition parties alleged that the event was mismanaged and that it should not have been held at this time of the year. The event was organised at the Kharghar International Corporate Park grounds to confer an award on social worker Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari, popularly known as Appasaheb Dharmadhikari.

US warship sails through Taiwan Strait

WEB DESK

SEOUL: A United States warship has sailed through the Taiwan Strait in what the country's navy described as a routine transit, just days after China ended its latest war games around the island. In a statement on Monday, the US Navy's 7th Fleet said the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Milius sailed through the Taiwan Strait. The warship conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" through waters "where high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law", it said. The ship's transit demonstrates Washington's commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, it added. China said on Monday that it had tracked a US warship through the Taiwan Strait, adding that Washington had "hyped up" the transit. Colonel Shi Yi, a Chinese military spokesman, said troops in area "remain on a high level of alert at all times and will resolutely defend national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability".

UN pledges \$5.5m forfood security in flood-affected areas

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations on Monday announced that \$5.5 million would be dedicated towards emergency nutrition and food security interventions in the "most vulnerable communities of Balochistan and Sindh" impacted by last year's catastrophic floods. The disastrous floods of 2022 were the tenth most expensive climate disaster to have buffeted a nation over the last decade, according to risk modelling firm RMS. The floods inflicted an estimated loss of \$3 billion on the country, caused over 1,700 deaths and displaced eight million people. A press release issued by the UN today warned that the number of children suffering from wasting in flood-affected areas had greatly increased compared to the pre-flood situation, which was already reaching emergency levels it pointed out. It added that a rapid survey conducted in 15 flood-affected districts suggested that "nearly one-third of children aged six to 23 months suffer from moderate acute malnutrition and 14 per cent from severe acute malnutrition", further saying that the number of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition with medical complications who were admitted for hospital treatment had also gradually increased since the floods as global food prices soared. As a result, the press release said UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Julien Harneis announced that he would dedicate \$5.5m out of the \$6.5m allocation received from the Central Emergency Response Fund towards emergency nutrition and food security interventions. – DNA

Iran's Raisi invites Saudi **King to visit Tehran**

DNA

TEHRAN: Signalling a thaw in years of hostility with Saudi Arabia, Iran has sent an official invite to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said Monday. "Iranian President (Ebrahim Raisi) has sent an invitation to the Saudi king in return for an invitation by Riyadh for him," Nasser Kanaani said during a televised news conference, according to Arab News. The development comes soon after Saudi officials visited Iran earlier this month to discuss the reopening of Riyadh's embassy in Tehran and consulate in Mashhad, following a deal

- brokered by China - that aims to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries in March. Iran's semi-official Tasnim News

Agency reported that delegations from both countries are preparing to officially reopen their missions, which would restart their activities by May 9. The deal in March to end the conflict was brokered by Chinese President Xi Jinping and surprised all sides, effectively sidelining the United States.

The move aimed to ease tensions in the Middle East. Sour relations between Tehran and Riyadh have fuelled several conflicts - both direct and indirect - across the Middle East. The diplomatic rift between the two countries goes back seven years.

The two states have been on bad terms since 2016, when Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iran after its embassy in Tehran was stormed during a dispute between the two countries following Riyadh's execution of a Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Iran and Saudi Arabia support rival sides in several conflict zones across the Middle East, including in Yemen where the Houthi rebels are backed by Tehran, and Riyadh leads a military coalition supporting the government. "Following talks, the Islamic Re-

public of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have agreed to resume diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions within two months," Iran's state news agency IRNA said, citing the joint statement.

