



# Islamabad POST

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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**

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**Barca's Laporta denies any wrongdoings**

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## Briefs

**Nawaz wants polls at one time**

DNA

MADINA MUNAWARA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Supreme

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 then government brought the country out of severe crises," he said. He is 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

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi accused the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government of being insincere about negotiations. Speaking to media on Monday, Mr Qureshi claimed that the PDM's President, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, stated that dialogue was unnecessary. He also mentioned Rana Sanaullah's media talk and said 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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## 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 "please one man", apparently referring to

**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 held within the boundaries prescribed by the constitution and the

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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, citing 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 cases terrorism charges were included, adding that the court cannot remain silent 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," Safdar said, adding that

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hosted Iftar 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

**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 Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest and regional security 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

Says India exploited Pulwama situation for political gains

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime 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

**PM for making anti-smuggling courts active**

MAHNOOR ANSAR

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

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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; Successive 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 discriminatory legislation deporting Palestinian detainees from their 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

RIYADH: Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas arrived 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 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

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**EIB recovers 42 kg hashish**

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 meeting 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 post-in-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

**US-Pak health partnership brings new laboratory**

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

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 effectively respond to the health crises stemming from the flooding. In recent years, the United States and Pakistan also have partnered to combat the COVID-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.

**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 SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: In Attock two persons were killed while six 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 to 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, Salam Hussain son of Saghir Hussain resident of village Lundi Syedan reported to police station new airport Fatehjang that he accompanied by Naem 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, Naem 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 Naem 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 Naem 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 prerequisite formalities of police challans, accordingly.



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

**In the memory of General Ayub Khan**

QAZI SHOAB 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 Insaf 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 of 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 yes 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 small-scale 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."

**Sindh govt launches Benazir Bhutto HRs Awards**

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 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

**Shami to head APNS govt-press relations committee**

They have also requested Mr. Muhammad Aslam Kazi to be Chairman of the Arbitration / Dispute Resolution Committee

DNA

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 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 under : Government Press Relations Committee: Mr. Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami Chairman Daily Pakistan, Mr. Sarmad Ali Vice Chairman Secretary General, APNS, Mrs. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani Member President, APNS, Mr. Imtihan Shahid Member Sr. Vice President, Mr. Muhammad Aslam Kazi Member Vice President, Mr. S.M. Munir Jilani Member Joint Secretary, Mr. Shahab Zuberi Member Finance Secretary, Arbitration / Dispute Resolution Committee, Mr. Muhammad Aslam Kazi Chairman Vice President, Mr. Asif Zuberi Vice Chairman Daily Business Recorder, Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani Member President, APNS, Mr. Sarmad Ali Member Secretary General, APNS



**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 Khana 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 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 of them.

**Minister stresses for reviving sick industry**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Muhammad Adnan Jailil 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 Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department here at Civil Secretariat Peshawar. The minister was given a detailed briefing by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 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 at the meeting.—APP

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## 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
- April 24/Holy See  
Anniversary of His Pa-  
pacy of his Pontificate
- April 25/DPR Korea  
Armed Forces Day
- April 26/Tanzania  
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



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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police...9266044  
Motorway Police.9270601-20  
Women Police Stations  
Islamabad.....9222596  
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

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

### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: 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 Erdogan, a 250-bed state-of-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 them to become a life-saver. 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 surgeons to run the facility. The federal health ministry, in coordination 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 others.

## 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 sub-continent.

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

concern over the alarming number 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 recognition/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 established 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 lakhs 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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## Macron's words of truth

ON 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.



## G7 continues provocative behavior

Pretending 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.

Pakistan 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 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-to-door 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,

Majid Hussain Dogar also has conducted 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 help 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

In 2022, invasion of Ukraine turn over Europe's security backdrop and provoked Finland and its neighbor Sweden 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 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 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.

Russian concerns is not taken into account, will have an impact on the war in Ukraine but more influence on the growing conflict over security and resources in the Arctic region. Finland's membership indicates the 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.





## 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 complaint invokes 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 Mars and beyond. 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 offloading propellant, re-trying 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 230-foot 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. "Initial 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

## Thaw in Saudi-Iran ties may pave way for Pakistan gasoline 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 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 Riyadh will make heavy investment in Iran soon, the sources said, adding Saudi companies can extend physical and technical cooperation for

completion of IP gas pipeline project. 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 pursuing the gas pipeline project. As 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

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

## 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

other heat-related ailments after attending 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, especially during April, which is considered to be one of the hottest months in India. Photos of the event show thousands sitting 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 for food 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 Julian 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 Republic 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.

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