



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**Brazil's Lula to pay 4 day visit to China**

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**Chelsea urged to emulate 2012 CL win**

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## Briefs

### Justice Isa clarifies NA presence

**AGENCIES**  
ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday issued a clarification regarding invitation to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (the Constitution). Justice Isa, in the clarification, stated that all the SC judges were invited to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution. He said prior to accepting the invitation, inquiries were made as to whether there would be political speeches, and assurances were extended that only the Constitution and its making would be spoken about, and the programme sent to him also confirmed that.

### Palestine is most important issue: envoy

**DNA**  
PALESTINE: Palestine is the first and the most important issue of the Islamic world, said Ambassador of I.R. Iran to Islamabad Seyed Mohammad Ali Hossaini on Tuesday. The ambassador, in his message, said that the Al-Quds has special significance to Palestine and the Palestinian cause, but beyond that, it is the axis of unity and integration of the Islamic world. It is the day of unity of Muslim countries in fighting against oppression, massacre and occupation and is an opportunity for the world to remember more than 70 years of oppression of the displaced Palestinian nation and to renew the commitments regarding the formation of an independent Palestinian state based on the principle of self-determination.

**Sehr, Iftar Timing**

**Ramazan 21, 1444**

Sehr: 04:14 am  
Iftar: 06:40 pm  
Fique-Jafria  
Sehr: 04:04 am  
Iftar: 06:50 pm

## Security concerns Sweden shuts down embassy in Islamabad

The embassy refused to tell when the mission will resume its working

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Sweden has shut down its embassy in Islamabad for an indefinite period over security risks. According to Swedish Embassy, it will remain shut for visitors and would not be able to send any documents to its consulates, Gerry centers and on home addresses of its applicants. The embassy has extended its apology over the inconvenience but has stated that it gives priority to provide security to its visa applicants and staff. The embassy refused to tell when the mission will resume its working in Islamabad. Diplomatic sources said that Pakistani students who want to get admission in the Swedish educational institutions will be affected most as the new academic session in Swedish universities is starting from August and the visa process approximately takes 4-6 months. Likewise, the Pakistani Diaspora living in Sweden could not apply visit visas for their families back home. The overseas Pakistani community is trying to reach out to the Pakistan Embassy in Sweden and the Foreign Office to apprise them of their difficulties.

The Foreign Office have also raised the matter with the Swedish Embassy. In January 2023, protests were erupted against Sweden all across the Muslim world especially in Pakistan over the burning of Holy Quran near Turkey's embassy in Stockholm by a far-right politician and anti-Islam provocateur, Rasmus Paludan, a dual Danish-Swedish national, with a reputation for carrying out similar acts.

It may also be mentioned here that another Scandinavian country Finland had also closed down its mission in Pakistan almost ten years ago over security reasons. However the Finnish authorities later made it clear that the Islamabad mission was shut down because of some budgetary constraints. Finland, nevertheless, has recently re-opened its embassy in Islamabad.

Croatia happens to be another country, which used to have an embassy in Islamabad but then shut it down in early 90s. The Croatian authorities had cited multiple reasons for the closure of the mission however the key reason was lack of any bilateral engagement both in the political and economic arena. Diplomatic sources believed that Denmark may also follow the suit after Sweden and may wind up from Pakistan albeit for the time being. Denmark, like Sweden, is also faced with similar security threats in the wake of continuous incidents of desecration of holy Quran.

## Three terrorists killed in Bannu IBO: ISPR

The militants were actively involved in terrorist activities

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Three terrorists were killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Nurur area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, the army's media affairs wing said on Tuesday. A press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that security forces conducted an IBO last night on the "reported presence of terrorists". "During conduct of the operation, fierce fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists. Resultantly, all three terrorists were sent to hell," the statement said. The ISPR said the militants were "actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens", adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered from their possession. "Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate menace of terrorism from the area," the ISPR said. On Sunday, two alleged terrorists were killed and another was arrested by security forces during an IBO in Mach area of Bolan district. On April 8, security forces killed two terrorists in separate gun battles during operations in Waziristan.

## TTP still using Afghan soil: Asif

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that Pakistan shared good relations with the interim government in Afghanistan, but at the same time expressed concern that the "TTP [Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan] is using Afghan soil even today for attacks in our country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa". He passed these remarks in an interview. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in TTP violence since peace talks between the militant group and the government began to falter in the latter half of last year. The TTP formally ended the ceasefire on November 28 and since then executed more than 100 attacks. Many of these attacks were planned and directed by the TTP leadership based in Afghanistan.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki exchanging views. - DNA

### FM, Saudi envoy discuss Pak-KSA ties

Bilawal expresses gratitude for always supporting Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki on Tuesday exchanged views on the bilateral ties between the two countries. During a meeting, the foreign minister observed that the restoration of bilateral ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran was significant for regional peace, a press release said. He reiterated that Pakistan accorded high priority to its bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto also expressed his good wishes for the Saudi leadership and expressed gratitude for always supporting Pakistan in a difficult situation.

### ECP submits elections funds report in SC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In line with the deadline issued by the Supreme Court (SC), the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday submitted a report to the top court on whether the government had provided it with the funding to conduct elections in Punjab. The report was submitted with the SC's Registrar's Office in a sealed envelope. The April 11 date for the report - as ordered by the court last week - followed the April 10 deadline that was set for the government to disburse funds to the commission for the polls.

Continued on Page 06

## 'Irresponsible move' Pakistan condemns India's plans to hold G-20 meet in IIOJK

Such events cannot hide the reality of Jammu and Kashmir

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed its strong indignation over India's decision to hold the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar on 22-24 May 2023. "Scheduling of two other meetings of a consultative forum on youth affairs (Y-20) in Leh and Srinagar in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is equally disconcerting," the foreign ministry spokesperson said Tuesday. The spokesperson said India's irresponsible move is the latest in a series of self-serving measures to perpetuate its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir in sheer disregard of the UN Security Council resolutions and in violation of the principles of the UN Charter and international law. Pakistan vehemently condemns these moves. "Such events cannot hide the reality of Jammu and Kashmir being an internationally recognized

Continued on Page 06

## India angers China with villages programme

NEWS DESK

NEW DEHLI: India's powerful home minister on Monday visited a Himalayan frontier state that China claims as part of its territory to launch a 48 billion rupee (\$585 million) development scheme he said would add to the security of the unmarked border. Home Minister Amit Shah said the programme, which will cover nearly 3,000 villages in four states and one federally administered territory on the Chinese frontier, was aimed at helping reverse migration out of border areas.

Continued on Page 06

## AJK High Court disqualifies Prime Minister Tanveer Ilyas

Imran Khan convenes meeting to discuss AJK politics

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) High Court on Tuesday disqualified Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan from holding any public office after he was found guilty of contempt of court. The high court full bench in a contempt of court hearing refuted apology tendered by Sardar Tanveer Ilyas to the court. The court had summoned AJK PM Tanveer Ilyas in a contempt notice tak-

en on his speech at a public meeting criticizing the stay orders and said the practice was affecting performance of the government. The bench also sentenced the regional prime minister till rising the court. "Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir has committed contempt of the court," the bench said in its verdict. Tanvir Ilyas, has reached the Azad Kashmir Supreme Court, against his disqualification decision by the high court.

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## Govt successfully overcoming challenges: PM

Prime Minister visits various points set up for the distribution of free flour

DNA

FAISALABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the completion of the one year of coalition government marked a successful tenure that resulted in Pakistan's restored credibility, and overcoming of the country's financial and energy challenges. "I can inform people that over the last one year, we have largely succeeded in establishing Pakistan's credibility as a partner and friend," he wrote in a Twitter thread. PM Sharif said, "Today marks the completion of one year since I took oath as PM of a coalition government. This has been a time of massive challenges and difficulties. "It was a long journey, but sustained efforts made it possible," he said. Sharif recalled that the passage of No-Confidence Vote against former prime minister Imran Khan Niazi's government was unprecedented. "[It was unprecedented] not because the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) came into power, but because almost all of Pakistan's political forces came together to use the forum of parliament to vote out an unpopular govt through constitutional means," he said. The prime minister said the coming together of



political parties with different manifestos for a common national cause represented a "major step forward in the country's political evolution". "Reconciliation and cooperation, instead of confrontation and vendetta marked the new politics post-April '22," he said. He said despite the economic landmines laid by Imran Khan and the disruptions in global fuel and food supply lines, Pakistan's economy continued to stay afloat. "All predictions of default turned out to be false alarms. Sincere efforts are underway to revive the economy," he said. Sharif said the coalition government has been at pains to repair, rebuild and deepen Pakistan's diplomatic relations that were dealt a severe blow by the 'Niazi regime'. He said Pakistan faced unprecedented floods last year. The decisiveness with which the government undertook rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts, provided social protection to millions of people and mobilized international community has been acknowledged by the world as outstanding, he added. He mentioned that the government employed climate diplomacy to present Pakistan's case on the international stage.

Continued on Page 06



# Efforts in full swing to ensure transparency for general elections

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Khurram Dastgir on Tuesday said that all out efforts were being made to ensure that the 2023 general elections were free, fair, and transparent without unconstitutional interference. Addressing a press conference here, the minister said that this year the general elections "should not be like 2018 which were manipulated", adding that the current elections should represent the public opinion. He said the Parliament's joint sitting had passed the resolution, the other day, stating that elections of Provincial and National assemblies should be held simultaneously across the country. The minister stated that the Senate's resolution reflected the reservations held by "smaller provinces" not condoning the plan to hold elections in piecemeal. "Elections for Punjab assembly having 55 percent of the total population [of the country] would influence the general elections result, he added. He said that elections in only two provinces would "create anarchy and commotion in the country". "There is no ambiguity in the Constitution about holding of general elections

as it clearly stated that elections should be held after a fresh census and delimitation of constituencies by taking all provinces along," he added. He said there were many decisions of courts in this regard. Taking exception to the Supreme Court's verdict in the suo motu notice ordering the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within 90 days and could take minimum drift to the constitutional schedule by the "barest margin, the minister said that the four other judges in their dissenting notes had declared the arbitrary "use of suo motu notice wrong". He stressed the need for simultaneous conduct of elections in all provinces of the country under the caretaker setups, adding that it was important for transparency as well as to take the country towards stability. In the last general elections, the PDM had secured 68 per cent votes which constituted two third of total registered voters, he added. Khurram appealed to the Supreme Court to bring "transparency in its affairs and constitute a full court to address the constitutional crisis through collective wisdom". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had himself

stated that the decision of the full court would be acceptable and implemented, he added. Replying to a question, he said the power supply situation would be far better during the summer as compared to the last year due to the better management. Around 2,000 MW of electricity had been added to the system in last 11 months from local coal, he appraised. The minister said the use of local coal for power generation would also bring down the prices of electricity. Bidding for the first mega solar project would be opened on May 7, he added. To another question, he said the "2018 elections were manipulated" and the entire nation was facing its consequences in the form of an economic crisis including a shortage of wheat, sugar and fertilizers. To a query, the minister said record loans were borrowed during the tenure of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the total country's debt stood at over Rs 51,000 billion. 90 percent increase was witnessed in the debt and liabilities of the country during the PTI's tenure, he added. He said despite the financial crisis, the incumbent government repaid \$10 billion loan in one year.

## CCTV cameras installation in progress at Peshawar Prison

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Prisons Hidayatullah Afridi on Tuesday said that the installation of video cameras in the Central Jail Peshawar is in progress, which will monitor the supply of mobile phones and drugs to the prisoners while the contact of the prisoners with outside facilitators will also cease. Expressing his anger over the recent quarrel in the jail, the minister said the prisoners involved in the incident should be closely monitored so that such incidents do not take place in future and bring disrepute to the administration and the government, while the administration should inform the government and the public about their activities inside the prison through the social media.

## Pakistan asks China to speed up work on KCR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has asked China to expedite work on \$2bn Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and \$10 billion Mainline-1 (ML-1) – the 1,872km railway track as agreed between the leadership of the two nations in November. According to a statement released by the Ministry of Planning and Development, Pakistan "requested strong support of National Development and Reforms Commission (NDRC) and other relevant Chinese government institutions to advance implementation of important projects like ML-1, KCR and key energy projects in line with the leadership consensus." During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing last year, the Chinese political leadership agreed to fast-track processing for ML-1 by immediately triggering their respective teams.—DNA

## PAJCCI hails allowing of cross stuffing of Afghan, Uzbek cargo

This decision will not only reduce the burden on Karachi port, but would help in making Aza Khel dry port operational, besides creating employment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by providing livelihood to more than 2

PESHAWAR: Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has welcomed permission from the customs department for cross stuffing of Afghan and Uzbek cargo at Karachi Port. In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said it was a welcome step that the demand of businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade had been met.

A notification regarding allowing of cross stuffing was issued by the Directorate General of Transit Trade a couple of days earlier. Zia Sarhadi said due to the restriction placed on cross stuffing, the businessmen were facing extra charges due to delays in

the return of containers to the shipping company. The containers carrying goods took several days in reaching to Afghanistan and returning back to Karachi port, inflicting huge fines on importers under the head of detention charges. With allowing of cross stuffing, the containers will be offloaded at Karachi and goods be transferred to trucks for onward transportation to Afghanistan.

Director PAJCCI also urged that GD (Goods Documentation) filing at Aza Khel dry Port in Nowshera district. This decision will not only reduce the burden on Karachi port, but would help in making Aza Khel dry port operational, besides

creating employment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by providing livelihood to more than 270 custom clearing agents. Zia said Aza Khel dry port was constructed at a cost of Rs. 50 million by Pakistan Railways a few years earlier but has never been operational due to lack of activities in regard with Afghan transit goods. He said the cross-stuffing facility should also be allowed at Aza Khel Dry Port in Nowshera and cargoes in bulk quantities like sugar, wheat, and urea be transported in railway wagons which would help in reducing transportation costs for businessmen, besides generating revenue for Railways.—APP



ISLAMABAD-April11: A large number of the Shiite Muslims are attending mourning procession of Youm-e-Ali at Sector G-6 in Federal Capital.— Online

## NEECA devises financial mechanism for energy efficiency

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has mandated the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) to promote the use of electrical appliances, particularly lighting products, in order to reduce the burden on the national electricity grid. With lighting alone consuming approximately 15% of the electricity generated, NEECA has identified this area as a key target for improvement. In recent years, the development of new LED technology has offered the same level of light intensity while consuming only one fifth of the electricity used by previous lighting sources.

By replacing old lighting with new LED lighting, people and organizations can significantly reduce their electricity bills. To highlight the potential for savings, a case study was conducted at the Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqui Memorial Library in Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. The old fluorescent lights on the ground floor were replaced with new LED light panels, resulting in a reduction in electricity consumption from 49,177 kWh per annum to 12,661 kWh per annum - a saving of 33,516 kWh. The lighting was donated for the case study, and the payback period on the investment in the new lighting fixtures was calculated as six months.—DNA

## APHC urges G20 not to dent its credibility

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) while stressing that Indian government led by Narendra Modi is continuously peddling false propaganda to push the so-called normally narrative has reiterated its call for boycott of G20 summit in Srinagar.

The representatives of all APHC constituents at an extraordinary meeting in Srinagar drew the attention of the G20 countries towards cordon and search operations, killings and arrests by Indian troops in the territory on daily basis and said that these brutal activities are enough to say

no to the event in Srinagar.

They said that by holding the G20 event in IIOJK, India, in fact, wants to give legitimacy to its illegal actions of 5 August 2019 in the disputed territory. The APHC said that G20 nations should not forget that India is committing serious crimes against humanity in Kashmir, and its summit will not only undermine the UN credibility, but will also raise questions over the Group's adherence to democratic credentials.

Modi regime, the APHC meeting observed, is trying to distort truth and twist facts to hoodwink the world into believing as if everything is normal in the occupied territory.

The meeting constituted a sub committee to further strengthen coordination among the APHC constituents to expedite struggle for securing the right to self determination.

Besides G20 countries, the APHC leaders called upon the UN Secretary General to take a step forward and appoint a special representative to explore a viable solution to the festering Kashmir dispute.

Meanwhile, APHC leaders Syed Bashir Andrabi and Khawaja Firdous in a joint statement in Srinagar said that peace in South Asia will remain a distant dream unless the Kashmir dispute is resolved as per UN resolutions.—DNA

## NEECA devises financial mechanism for energy efficiency

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has mandated the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) to promote the use of electrical appliances, particularly lighting products, in order to reduce the burden on the national electricity grid. With lighting alone consuming approximately 15% of the electricity generated, NEECA has identified this area as a key target for improvement. In recent years, the development of new LED technology has offered the same level of light intensity while consuming only one fifth of the electricity used by previous lighting sources. By replacing old lighting with new LED lighting, people and

organizations can significantly reduce their electricity bills.

To highlight the potential for savings, a case study was conducted at the Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqui Memorial Library in Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. The old fluorescent lights on the ground floor were replaced with new LED light panels, resulting in a reduction in electricity consumption from 49,177 kWh per annum to 12,661 kWh per annum - a saving of 33,516 kWh. The lighting was donated for the case study, and the payback period on the investment in the new lighting fixtures was calculated as six months.

Encouraged by the results of the case study, NEE-

CA has devised a plan to promote the transition to energy-efficient lighting by setting up a Revolving Loan Fund facility through HBL, a leading bank in the country. The fund will offer loans at lower mark-up rates to small and medium-sized projects initially, with provisions for relatively bigger projects as the fund size grows. Prospective projects will be evaluated by NEECA for technical feasibility, and financial due diligence will be carried out by HBL. The loans will be repaid out of the savings in the monthly electricity bill. The fund will be lucrative for participating organizations as it envisages a 4% earning per annum.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE, Hamad Alzaabi visits Pakistan Sweet Home. Ambassador along with MD Zumrud Khan and orphans celebrated Zayed Day for Humanitarian Work in Ramadan and recalled virtues and human attitudes of the founding father of UAE.— DNA

## Elections of all assemblies to be held simultaneously

He said that the Speaker of the National Assembly would be written for recovery from former Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry who used official flats, vehicles, and other resources for months after the ouster of his government, he maintained

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said that general elections of the National Assembly and the provincial assemblies should be held simultaneously as per the spirit of the constitution to strengthen the federation. Addressing a press conference here, he said that a joint session of parliament has adopted a resolution for simultaneous general elections of all assemblies. He said that a separate resolution has been passed in the National Assembly which asked the Prime Minister and cabinet not to follow unconstitutional and unlawful decisions regarding cases about the delay in Punjab elections.

About the statement of the PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry regarding fake signatures on this resolution, he said those all signatures are genuine as coalition partners do not believe in dishonesty. He said that PTI had remained involved in fraudster activities and Azhar Siddique, a lawyer of Imran Khan, submitted documents in Lahore High Court with fake signatures of Imran Khan. He said that the Speaker of the National Assembly would be written for recovery from former Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry who used official flats, vehicles, and other resources for months after the ouster of his government, he maintained. He said that general elections to the National

Assembly or a Provincial Assembly should be held simultaneously after setting up caretaker governments as per the real spirit of Article 224 of the Constitution of Pakistan. Attaullah Tarar said that a joint sitting of parliament has passed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 which aims at giving the power of taking suo motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior judges including the Chief Justice. He said that it would ensure transparent proceedings in the apex court and includes the right to appeal. He said that the bill states that every cause, matter, or appeal before the apex court would be heard and disposed of by a bench con-

stituted by a committee comprising the CJP and the two senior-most judges. It added that the decisions of the committee would be taken by a majority. Regarding exercising the apex court's original jurisdiction, the bill said that any matter invoking the use of Article 184(3) would first be placed before the above mentioned committee. Attaullah Tarar interpreted the order of Justice Athar Minalah in election-related case which stated that the case was dismissed by 4 to 3. In this order, he said that it has been told that suo-motu notices were actually aimed at down-trodden segments and to protect their fundamental rights because such segments lack resources with them. He quoted Article 191

of the Constitution which says that the Supreme Court may make rules regulating the practice and procedure of the Court subject to the Constitution and law. After the passage of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023, he said the president shall give his assent within ten days failing which such assent shall be deemed to have been given. He said that a money bill – Charge Sum for General Election Provincial Assemblies of Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Bill 2023 – has been introduced in the National Assembly to fund the general elections in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and parliament would decide about it.—Agencies

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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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### Emergency

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Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
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Motorway Police.9270601-20  
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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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



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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

# Rennes School of Business France visiting Pakistan

“Rennes School of Business is a unique multicultural business school that welcomes and educates over 90 nationalities daily in English since its foundation in 1990: Thomas Froehlicher

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rennes School of Business, a leading triple accredited French Business school, has visited Pakistan to sign several co-operation agreements. Earlier in the year, a delegation of Rennes School of Business, composed of Thomas Froehlicher, Director General of the university, and Pauline Cojean, International Development Manager for Pakistan, visited Lahore and Islamabad. This visit is the follow-up of their first visit in November, during the Choose France Education Fair, organized for the very first time in Pakistan by the French Embassy in Pakistan and Campus France. “Bringing to Pakistan a delegation of top French universities in various academic fields for the very first time during the Choose France Education Fair was a challenge, but the fact that the Director General of one of our best Business Schools in France is coming back 6 months later is a very good sign that the objective



to have long term cooperation between France and Pakistan is heading in the right direction”, said Sabine Vermillard, Higher Education and Scientific attaché at the French Embassy in Paki-

stan. Mr Froehlicher and Mrs Cojean visited several universities they already went to in November, to carry on the cooperation. Several agreements for mobility and re-

search cooperation were signed during their visit or since, with NUST, LUMS, Kinnaird College for Women, Superior University. Another concrete project is already emerging with the organi-

zation of a summer program with Kinnaird College for Women, in which Pakistani students and professors will go to Rennes campus in June, both to study and discover Breton and French culture.

According to DG Thomas Froehlicher, “Rennes School of Business is a unique multicultural business school that welcomes and educates over 90 nationalities daily in English since its foundation in 1990. Its permanent and international faculty is fortunate to have 5 professors with degrees from the best institutions in Pakistan. Pakistan is a great country where we wish to offer a certain image of France for motivated students and to engage in research activities in our favorite subjects such as agri-finance or green and data-driven supply chain management”. Mr Froehlicher and Mrs Cojean already plan to come back to Pakistan in October 2023 for the second edition of the Choose France Education Fair, which will take place in Lahore and Karachi

# Alvi directs USC to employ deceased employee's son

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan (the Agency) to appoint the son of a deceased employee under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package. The President gave these directions while accepting a representation filed by Mr Rizwan Ullah (the complainant) whose late father (Bakhtawar Shah) was employed in the Agency and died during service in 2009. The complainant had applied for appointment against the deceased

employees' children quota under Prime Minister's Assistance Package but to no avail. Feeling aggrieved, he approached Wafaqi Mohtasib who rejected his complaint stating that since his father died on 28-12-2009 before the adoption of the package w.e.f. 01-07-2012, therefore, the policy was not applicable to the complainant. Mr Rizwan Ullah then filed a representation with the President, which was accepted. The President in his decision observed that the Agency had already provided a job to another deceased employee's son under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package where-

as his father died on 08-02-2012 before the adoption of the policy by the Agency, adding that the Corporation could not deny similar treatment to the complainant. He further noted that PM's Assistance Package was issued vide Establishment Division's OM in 2006 and amendments thereafter were made from time to time. He stated that the Agency adopted the Package w.e.f from 01-07-2012 but it was not clear whether it adopted the package of 2006 or any other thereafter. He also referred to the Establishment Division's O.M. dated 17-04-2018 wherein it had been ex-

plained that the widow/widower or a child of a civil servant who died during service may be entitled to apply for contract appointment as per the maximum age limit prescribed for initial Appointment to Civil Posts. The President concluded that the Mohtasib had overlooked these important aspects of the matter, therefore, its orders were being set aside and Utility Stores Corporation was directed to process the case of the complainant for appointment under the PM's Assistance Package at the earliest.

# Delay in crackdown will double the price of sugar

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Hanif Mughal, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Tuesday said the influential sugar mafia has started an artificial sugar crisis across the country to profit during the holy month of Ramadan. The price of sugar has been increased by Rs30 to Rs40 rupees per kg in different parts of the country which is unjustified, he said. Large quantity of sugar is being smuggled to Afghanistan where the smugglers get paid in US Dollars, he added. Hanif Mughal said that inflation has broken the back of the people, the prices of electricity, gas and petrol are also continuously increasing, and the rupee continues to weaken. A flour crisis was already taking a toll on the masses and now the sugar crisis after the flour crisis is an atrocity in which the most influential people of the country are involved, he informed. He said that there is no shortage of sugar in the country but the prices are increasing on a daily basis which is a cause of concern. So far, one hundred and fifty billion rupees have been taken out of the pocket of the poor to fill the coffers of the mafia and the process continues unabated. He warned that if the crackdown is delayed, the price of sugar will soon double and the price of bakery items, sweets and beverages which have already become twice as expensive as compared to last year will become further dearer. The government should determine the prices of sugar in the market and not give free hand to the greedy private sector, otherwise the masses will continue to suffer while the government will lose billions in taxes, he demanded. The government should take practical steps instead of issuing warnings to save people from this new problem.

# APHC boycotts G20 summit in Srinagar

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has reiterated its call for a boycott of the G20 summit in Srinagar on Tuesday. According to Kashmir media service (KMS), all APHC leaders in a meeting drew the attention of the G20 countries towards atrocities by Indian troops on innocent people of India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) on daily basis and said, “These brutal activities are enough to say no to the event in Srinagar.” They said, “By holding the G20 event in IOJK, India, in fact, wants to give legitimacy.” “G20 nations shall not forget that India is committing serious crimes against humanity in IOJK, and its summit will not only undermine the UN's credibility.—APP

# Faisal Qayyum takes charge as GM Serena Hotels Gilgit-Baltistan

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Faisal Qayyum Khan has joined as the General Manager of North Serena Hotels Gilgit-Baltistan. He is amongst the very few senior managers who was moved to various positions during the last 10 years with the intent to sharpen his operational skills, in addition to his forte of sales and marketing. Mr. Faisal joined Serena



Hotels in the year 2001 and later got further promoted to senior roles within the organization. In September 2013 he was transferred to Faisalabad

Serena Hotel as Executive Assistant Manager and then General Manager Gilgit Serena Hotel & Hunza Serena Inn in September 2015. Mr. Faisal joined the Corporate Office in April 2017 as GM Sales and Marketing and later was promoted to Corporate Director Sales & Marketing in March 2020. He has now been assigned the responsibility of General Manager North and his responsibility is to look after the operations of Serena Hotels in Gilgit-Baltistan.

# PIDE-RASTA-BOI Workshop today

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the Board of Investment (BOI) and Research for Social Transformation & Advancement (RASTA), is organizing a workshop on “Regulatory Framework of Pakistan,” on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 (Today) at Islamabad. The Workshop will discuss Pakistan's Regulatory landscape and its challenges and deliberate on the way forward for an enabling business environment. This platform will also share recent developments under BOI's Regulatory Modernization Initiative and PIDE's research work on the Sludge Audit series. In addition, the Workshop will include a discussion on regulatory challenges between Private Sector and Regulators and moderated Penal discussion on the way forward.

# Chinese universities to award certificates

ISLAMABAD: The University of Gwadar's Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) has entered into a collaboration with TANG International Education Group, China, enabling students and employees from the university to enroll in different online short courses at reputed universities and colleges in China. Gwadar Pro quoting an official notification, reported that students who meet the criteria would be enrolled in different Chinese institutions, including Hunan Polytechnic of Environment and Biology, Yangzhou Vocational Technical College, Loudi Vocational and Technical College, Shanghai Urban Construction Vocational College, and Beijing Business School. The areas of study include biological medicine, agriculture science, mechanical engineering, and CIT/ST. The courses include fundamentals of psychology, pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical technology, pharmaceutical analysis, production technology of poultry, and hybrid rice technology. Under CIT/ST, the students will learn an overview of the python language, python's basic elements, and get to know the turtle and turtle brush setting. Upon the completion of each course, a participant will receive a certificate from the respective Chinese university, while a participant with good grades on each course will be awarded gifts like a laptop, a mobile phone, and other electronic gadgets, according to the official statement. There is no maximum or minimum course limit for the participants. For online registration, students can visit the university's website and fill out an online form to register for the course of their choice.—DNA

# پاکستان ریلویز

ڈویژنل سپرنٹنڈنٹ آف سروسز اور پمپنگ

شوکاروٹ

ریلوے آفیسر کو صرف ریلوے کے کاموں سے متعلقہ پوزیشنوں پر

ڈیپارٹمنٹ میں آفس اور کورڈینیشن اور ایجنسیوں

پاکستان ریلویز کے درج ذیل ملازمین کے لیے اطلاع کے بغیر قانونی طور پر اپنی ڈیوٹی سے غیر حاضر ہیں ان کے گھروں کے پتے پر شوکاروٹس بھیجا گیا لیکن یہی انہوں نے اس کے بدلے کی اطلاع دی اور یہی ڈیوٹی پر حاضر ہوئے ہیں لہذا انہیں آخری بار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اشتہار ہذا کی اشاعت کے (10) دنوں کے اندر اندر دفتر میں حاضر ہوں اور غیر حاضری کی اشاعت کریں۔ تہی بخش جواب دینے کی صورت میں ان کے خلاف ای اینڈ ڈی رولز 2020 کو اپنی تحت کی طرف سے روایتی کرتے ہوئے نہیں نوٹری سے درخواست کر دیا جائے گا۔

نمبر شمار	نام / ولدیت	مقام	کیمس نمبر	تاریخ غیر حاضری	پتہ
1	محمد زین ولدہ آکرستین	مقام	402-E/97/M.Z/IV/P-7	23.12.2022	House No. ZA/1183 Sector 3 Mohallah Khabyan sirsayed Rawalpindi.
2	عیلیٰ الرحمن ولدہ مہرمان	شیخ پور	402-E/41/K.R/IV/P-7	11.01.2023	Bangla No. 19 Railway Colony Jhelum
3	علی ولدہ سترطلی	اسٹنڈنٹ ڈرائیور	402-E/38/A.A/III/P-7	16.01.2023	Street No. 2 Mohallah Lalazar Colony Gujrat.
4	راوی محمد اعجاز ولدہ محمد متقی	سگنل ماسٹرن	402-E/157/ME/Absent/IV/P-7	02.02.2023	House No. 463/E Diesel Colony Rawalpindi.

برائے ڈویژنل سپرنٹنڈنٹ پاکستان ریلویز اور پمپنگ

PID NO.6239



## Briefs

## Sherry refuses shifting IWMB to Interior Ministry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday refused to put the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Interior. The Board at present is a subsidiary department of the Climate Change Ministry.

She was expressing her views during the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change meeting chaired by Senator Seemee Ezdi.

Senator Rehman said the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board was not going under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior. Under the Islamabad Wildlife Management Ordinance of 1979, the Board was mandated to manage and protect the Margalla Hills National Park.

"As long as I am the Minister, I will not allow the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board to be placed under the supervision of another Ministry," Sherry Rehman said.

She added that the Margalla Hills National Park was declared a protected area some 42 years ago and was considered a preserved zone.

She said Margalla Hills National Park needed to be demarcated to protect its habitat, wildlife and environment, adding, "We have to demarcate the national park to prevent illegal encroachment."

The Minister informed the Committee that on her request the nomenclature of the Ministry of Climate Change has been changed as the ministry played a liaison and coordination role in environmental projects and agreements with international countries and forums.

She added that now the Ministry of Environmental Change has been renamed as Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.—APP

## Rana inaugurates Country Directory Online System

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday inaugurated the PhD Country Directory Online System at the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan Secretariat Islamabad. Through the launch of the online system that can be accessed through <https://eservices.hec.gov.pk/#/pcd>, the HEC's conventional Ph.D. Country Directory (PCD) setup has been automated to improve efficiency in the PCD registration process of Ph.D. scholars in Pakistan.

A ceremony, held in this connection, at HEC Secretariat was attended by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail, Vice Chancellors of different universities, and a large number of Ph.D. scholars.

The PCD Online System, developed by the HEC Higher Education Data Repository with the help of Information Technology (IT) and other Divisions, will enable the inclusion of Pakistani Ph.Ds in the HEC data, through university focal persons, within a few days without submission of documents or applications in the hard form. Earlier, the PCD processes involving five stages took a Ph.D. scholar several months to be part of the registered Ph.D. community of Pakistan. Addressing the ceremony, Rana Tanveer Hussain termed the launch of the PCD Online System commendable and hoped that the development will benefit the Ph.D. scholars in a hassle-free manner. He highlighted the importance of employing technology in institutional operations to make processes easier for the public. He emphasised the need for investment in human capital and underlined the role of HEC in developing human resources for the country. The Minister stated that the development of higher education and marketable, need-based research is the key to progress and prosperity of a nation. He advised the universities to establish special on-campus setups for promotion of skill-based education.—APP

## Business community urged to invest in Balochistan

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Mian Akram Farid former President ICCI also spoke at the occasion and stressed for exploiting natural resources of Balochistan to improve Pakistan's economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Governor Balochistan said that his province is endowed with great natural resources including Reko Diq and Saindak projects and invited the business community of Islamabad to capitalize on these natural resources by investing in Balochistan to generate more business and investment activities. He said that the development of Reko Diq will make Balochistan a hub of direct foreign investment and create a lot of economic benefits to Pakistan. Similarly, Saindak copper and gold project has the potential to make Balochistan prosperous and strengthen Pakistan's economy. He said that due to these untapped natural resources, people of Balochistan are facing great economic problems and emphasized that the business community should exploit them to bring progress and prosperity



to the province. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest at an Iftar Dinner hosted by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his honor. Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and invited the ICCI delegation to visit Balochistan where he would connect them with their counterparts to explore joint ventures and business partnerships.

He said that he would try to visit Iran and Afghanistan to highlight the investment potential of Balochistan to the investors of these neighboring countries.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan is facing a dollar crisis and development of Reko Diq and Saindak can bring billions of dollars to Pakistan and enable it to get rid of foreign debt. He

stressed that the government should take all possible measures to establish peace in the province that would enable the investors to tap these natural resources. He said that development of Gwadar Port and Gwadar Industrial Estate should be expedited to make Balochistan a hub of business activities. He said that Balochistan should be connected through road and railways links with Iran and Afghanistan to increase regional

trade. He said that the development of the blue economy in Balochistan can bring great benefits to the country.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Balochistan offers great investment opportunities and establishing a better law & order situation and improving security would enable the business community to take benefit of untapped natural resources of Balochistan.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that instead of looking towards foreign lenders for financial help, the government should focus on Balochistan to improve its economy and achieve self-sufficiency.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Mian Akram Farid former President ICCI also spoke at the occasion and stressed for exploiting natural resources of Balochistan to improve Pakistan's economy.

## RDA inflows rise to \$5.966 bn in March

ISLAMABAD: The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) rose to US \$5.966 billion by the end of March 2023 as compared to US \$5.811 billion by February end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The data showed that the inflows of remittances during the month of March were recorded at US\$ 155 million as compared to US\$ 125 million in February and US\$ 110 million in January 2023. RDA was launched by the SBP, in collaboration with commercial banks operating in the country.

These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan. The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 12,769 to 549,445 in February 2023 from 536,676 accounts in February 2023.

The scheme that started in September 2020 received a lukewarm response from overseas Pakistanis who deposited only US\$ 7 million in the opening month, however with the passage of time the interest kept on increasing as the inflow reached US\$ 40 million in October 2020 and US\$ 110 million in the subsequent month.—APP

## IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 7 am to 11 am, Islamabad Circle, Chahra, Kirpa, Alipur Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Madina Colony, Masryal Road, Multabad Feeders, Cantt Circle Rawalpindi, Chauhan, Chontra, Rajar, Chakri, SPD, SPF Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Daultala Feeder, Attock Circle, Mainawala, Khanabad, Lalazar, Lalrukh, Small Industrial, Pormiana, Garhi Afghana, Shakurdra, Bolnewal, Shadi Khan, Shamsabad Feeders and suburbs.

## Unlocking the potential of Energy Efficiency

AHMED HASSNAIN

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has mandated the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) to promote the use of electrical appliances, particularly lighting products, in order to reduce the burden on the national electricity grid. With lighting alone consuming approximately 15% of the electricity generated, NEECA has identified this area as a key target for improvement. In recent years, the development of new LED technology has offered the same level of light intensity while consuming only one fifth of the

electricity used by previous lighting sources. By replacing old lighting with new LED lighting, people and organizations can significantly reduce their electricity bills.

To highlight the potential for savings, a case study was conducted at the Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqui Memorial Library in Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. The old fluorescent lights on the ground floor were replaced with new LED light panels, resulting in a reduction in electricity consumption from 49,177 kWh per annum to 12,661 kWh per annum - a saving of 33,516 kWh. The lighting was donated for the case study, and the payback period on

the investment in the new lighting fixtures was calculated as six months. Encouraged by the results of the case study, NEECA has devised a plan to promote the transition to energy-efficient lighting by setting up a Revolving Loan Fund facility through HBL, a leading bank in the country. The fund will offer loans at lower mark-up rates to small and medium-sized projects initially, with provisions for relatively bigger projects as the fund size grows. Prospective projects will be evaluated by NEECA for technical feasibility, and financial due diligence will be carried out by HBL. The loans will be repaid

out of the savings in the monthly electricity bill. The fund will be lucrative for participating organizations as it envisages a 4% earning per annum. This initiative by NEECA to encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting will benefit customers through a perennial reduction in their electricity bills. The government will also benefit by reducing its spending on importing oil for electricity generation and by reducing carbon emissions, thereby contributing to global climate change mitigation efforts also. For any queries, NEECA may be contacted at [npm@neeca.gov.pk](mailto:npm@neeca.gov.pk)

## ANF recovers 356 kg drugs in 13 operations; arrests 14

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in 13 operations conducted across the country managed to recover 356 kg of drugs and arrested 14 accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in an operation, ANF recovered 55 grams of heroin from a parcel being sent to Birmingham through Rawalpindi GPO.

In the second operation in Islamabad, Chungi no 26 areas, ANF recovered three kg charras from the possession of an accused resident of Charsada. He said that in the second operation at Chungi no 26, over 700 grams of heroin were recovered from the possession of a female drug pusher, a resident of Islamabad. In two operations on Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, four kg charras was recovered from the possession of three accused including a woman and 3.6 kg charras from the possession of an accused resident of Charsada. The spokesman said that in a raid near Sahianwala Toll Plaza, Faisalabad, 30 kg charras and 3.6 kg opium were recovered from secret cavities of a car. An accused resident of Peshawar was also arrested during the operation.

Eight kg heroin was recovered from a loader vehicle at Lahore International Airport while after preliminary investigation, four accused were rounded up, he said adding, ANF also foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to Punjab and recovered 10 kg heroin from a pickup vehicle, intercepted near Peshawar Ring Road. Two accused, residents of Khyber were held during the operation. ANF in a raid in Tank, Dera Road, Dera Ismail Khan, managed to recover 30 kg charras from the possession of an accused resident of Tank. In another operation, a bid to smuggle narcotics from Khyber to Peshawar was foiled. ANF and FC in a joint operation at Zayra Check post seized 10 kg charras and held two drug smugglers, residents of Orakzai.

## Day of Human Space Flight on April 12

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Human Space Flight will be celebrated on April 12 (Wednesday) to mark the first human space flight on April 12, 1961.

The International Day of Human Space Flight celebrates the start of the space era for humankind, reaffirming the important contribution of space science and technology in today's world. The day also aims to promote aspirations to explore and maintain outer space for peaceful purposes. Activities to promote the day include photo exhibitions, conferences showcasing technology used for outer space, and the release of commemorative stamps. In 2011, the UN declared April 12 as the "International Day of Human Space Flight" to remember the first human space flight and to promote the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind.—APP

## Learning, teaching Qur'an best practice: VC AIOU

Dr Sanaullah Hussain said, "We have tried our best to teach the Holy Qur'an through modern and simple lessons in the easiest manner"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has stressed that learning and teaching the Holy Qur'an was the best practice.

He was addressing the closing ceremony of Tajweed UI Quran classes here the other day.

Dr Nasir said, "We will create more opportunities for understanding the Qur'an and increase the duration of Tajweed UI Quran classes", adding teaching Quran during the blessed month of Ramadan was the best practice.

Earlier, the participants of Tajweed UI Quran classes had requested VC to

increase the timings and groups of the classes. The Vice Chancellor AIOU instructed the Department of Quran and Tafsir to consider their request.

It is worth mentioning here that the Department of Quran and Tafsir, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, AIOU organised 'Tajweed UI Quran classes' keeping in mind the importance of reciting the Quran during Ramadan. The classes started on the 2nd of Ramadan and continued till the 20th of Ramadan. The closing ceremony of these classes was presided over by the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. Chairman of Department of Seerat Studies, Prof. Dr. Moinuddin Hashmi

was the chief guest while Chairman of Department of Quran and Tafsir, Dr Sanaullah Hussain hosted the ceremony.

Dr Moinuddin Hashmi said that the Holy Qur'an was the source of guidance, and it had been urged to read the Qur'an slowly and clearly.

Dr Sanaullah Hussain said, "We have tried our best to teach the Holy Qur'an through modern and simple lessons in the easiest manner." Participants of the course said that they benefited a lot from the classes, and now would be able to recite the Holy Qur'an correctly.

Later, the Vice Chancellor distributed certificates to all the participants.

## Air quality in Capital reported healthy

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital's air quality on Tuesday was reported healthy despite dry weather and development projects on two major roads of the metropolis. Air pollution in the metropolis remained low since the onset of the Spring season as prolonged rainy weather helped in containing air pollutants ration in the atmosphere. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) daily air quality report indicated a reduced ratio of air pollutants, recorded below permissible limits, and the air quality was healthy. The Agency is responsible to ensure the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997. The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 14.46 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which was higher than the NEQS of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy. PM2.5 is generated through the combustion of an engine, industrial emissions, burning garbage or inflammable material and dust blown up by fast-moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads. The EPA officials claimed that the vehicular emissions due to increased automobiles were one of the leading cause of bad air quality. Industrial emissions were already subsided due to carbon-absorbing advanced technology installed at various steel manufacturing units. Senior Pulmonologist at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Dr Zia Ul Haq told APP that the dry and cold air at different phases due to increased exposure of an individual in the outdoors caused breaches in the lining of the respiratory tract which used to lead to an infection and also damage the normal secretions taking place inside the breathing organs causing respiratory ailments. He said the pulmonologists usually advise the elderly above 50 years of age or patients of chronic heart, kidney, and lung diseases to get the flu vaccine during the peak winter season to avoid respiratory diseases. The senior pulmonologists said the people were also advised to avoid unnecessary prolonged outdoor visits during the morning.—APP

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## Dialogue, not war, only way to resolve disputes

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Beijing, April 6, 2023. [Photo/Xinhua] With Riyadh and Teheran announcing in Beijing on Thursday the official re-establishment of their diplomatic relations, there are hopes that a permanent cease-fire can be agreed to put an end to the Yemen conflict, a de facto proxy war between the two Middle East giants that has been fought for nine years. It is good to hear that Saudi and Omani delegations arrived in Yemen's capital Sana'a over the weekend to negotiate a permanent cease-fire deal with Houthi officials, which aims to end hostilities and rebuild efforts and a timeline for foreign forces to exit the country. If the talks go well, reportedly, an agreement is expected to be announced before the Eid al-Fitr holiday, which begins on April 20. This means that thanks to China's pro-peace efforts and mediation, with the reconciliation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the positive role Oman has been playing in the process as well as the United Nations' support, the stage has been set to end the conflict in Yemen. As a matter of fact, ending the war in Yemen has always been in China's consideration in its mediation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. As Geng Shuang, deputy permanent representative of the Chinese mission to the United Nations, pointed out on March 15, dialogue and negotiation are the only realistic way out of the Yemen issue, and China hopes that the resumption of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran will create favorable conditions for the improvement of the situation in Yemen. Before the arrival of the delegations, the two sides have already shown their respective goodwill to each other. The Saudi coalition lifted eight years of restrictions on imports through Houthi-controlled ports, and almost at the same time, the Houthi forces announced that they would unilaterally halt missile and drone strikes against Saudi Arabia and all offensive operations on the battlefield, pledging that if Saudi Arabia promised to lift its blockade of Yemen and halt its air campaign, it will permanently cease fire. All these have happened after the United States' "strategic withdrawal" from the region where for too long it had thought it could waywardly play countries off against one another and speculate on the mess. And it was during its "stay" that the regional conflicts and issues worsened and were made seemingly insoluble, except by war. The series of positive changes the region has experienced and has enough reason to expect in the foreseeable future show to the world that the right way to solve disputes should always be dialogue, not war.



## US involvement in Ukraine crisis

A small number of Pentagon documents on the Russia-Ukraine military conflict, including some marked "top secret", were posted on Twitter and Telegram on Wednesday. Since then, journalists, researchers and social media sleuths have uncovered additional classified documents posted as early as March 1 on additional sites. But it is not the leak that is the most surprising aspect about the classified documents but how deeply the United States is involved in the conflict and how much it is doing to help Ukraine. Despite its denial of direct involvement, the US is already a de facto participant in the conflict, considering both the military and intelligence aid it has offered to Ukraine. The documents that have appeared on social media only serve to tell the world that the US is part of the hostilities, and what it has been doing is meant to make the conflict continue. Behind the rhetoric of "supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression" is the US' geopolitical thinking of dividing the world into two camps as it did during the Cold War. With another camp which is supposed to pose a threat both militarily and ideologically to the camp headed by the US, Washington can continue to make the case that the European Union countries must unite under the banner of North Atlantic Treaty Organization to seek the protection of the US. If anything, the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine has provided Washington with a glimmer of hope that it may be possible to make the military conflict a protracted war and thus divide the world into two camps: the one that supports Ukraine and the other that supports Russia. That explains why Washington has made no efforts at all to mediate between the two parties and has excluded any possibility of a political settlement of the conflict. The global industry and supply chains will be disrupted or even shattered. The EU's economy will be seriously affected. The development of the global economy which has already suffered considerably because of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict will see no hope of recovery. Neither will those in need of help for survival in developing countries see any hope of shaking off poverty. It is both selfish and callous of Washington to do whatever it can to make the hostilities continue and do nothing to seek a political settlement of the conflict. Global efforts are needed to bring Ukraine and Russia to the negotiation table for a political solution as early as possible. That is the way to maintain world peace and development, and that is what China is doing.

## Israel is creating an explosive situation in Al-Aqsa

Adnan Abu Amer

Ben-Gvir and the other extremists in government are Netanyahu's only chance to stay in power and avoid going to jail for corruption. They know that, and are taking advantage of the situation to support with all means possible the violence Jewish settlers have unleashed onto Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and to continue eroding the status quo at the holy sites with the aim to establish new facts on the ground – ie, full Israeli control. Netanyahu does not necessarily mind. For him, the violence is a useful distraction from the anti-government protests which have plagued his sixth term in office. It is quite apparent that war is not in Israel's interest. It is currently preoccupied with the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank. It is worried about Iran's military presence and diplomatic successes

On April 5, shocking footage emerged from occupied East Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque of Israeli security forces mercilessly beating Palestinian worshippers. The brutal violence left at least 12 Palestinians injured at Islam's third holiest site and fuelled public anger. Rockets were fired from Gaza and Lebanon as a warning against further escalation, but Israel did not listen. The following day it repeated the violent attack on al-Haram al-Sharif, where Al-Aqsa Mosque is located, and carried out air raids on Gaza and Lebanon. By now it is quite clear that American efforts to prevent another escalation in Palestine are failing. And once again, it is not the Palestinian side that is responsible. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's desperate bid to cling to power is not conducive to any de-escalation Washington may desire and is bound to accelerate processes that could ultimately trigger violence and instability well beyond occupied East Jerusalem. For more than a year now, tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories have been high. Armed Palestinian resistance has been active, especially in Jenin and Nablus, while the Israeli security forces have carried out incessant violent raids of Palestinian towns and villages. The United Nations called 2022 the deadliest year for the occupied West Bank in the past 16 years, as the Israeli army killed at least 170 Palestinians, including 30 children, and injured at least 9,000. The first two months of this year have been the most violent since 2000, with 65 Palestinians killed, including 13 children. This year, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan coincides with the Jewish holiday of Passover. So it was apparent that this time of year would be another potential flashpoint for violence. Hoping to preclude a major escalation, which would distract attention from the war in Ukraine, two regional meetings were held under United States tutelage to negotiate measures to calm the situation. On February 26, Palestinian, Israeli, Jordanian, Egyptian and American officials met in the Jordanian port city of Aqaba. The joint communique issued after the summit emphasised a commitment to "de-escalation on the ground ... to prevent further violence" and an Israeli pledge to stop authorising new illegal settlements in Palestinian territories for six months. On March 19, another meeting was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, where the Palestinian and Israeli officials committed to uphold the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem "both

in words and in practice" and emphasised the "necessity of both Israelis and Palestinians to actively prevent any actions that would disrupt the sanctity of these sites, inter alia during the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan". But Netanyahu's government has been upholding the status quo neither in words nor in practice. The Israeli prime minister is allied with far-right and ultra-religious forces which have openly stated that the Israeli recognition of the Jordanian guardianship of the holy sites was an historic mistake which they are bound on rectifying. In fact, 2023 started with far-right Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir entering al-Haram al-Sharif, provoking public anger across Palestine. Under his watch, the raids by Israeli settlers on the Muslim holy site under the protection of the Israeli security forces have only intensified. Ben-Gvir and the other extremists in government are Netanyahu's only chance to stay in power and avoid going to jail for corruption. They know that, and are taking advantage of the situation to support with all means possible the violence Jewish settlers have unleashed onto Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and to continue eroding the status quo at the holy sites with the aim to establish new facts on the ground – ie, full Israeli control. Netanyahu does not necessarily mind. For him, the violence is a useful distraction from the anti-government protests which have plagued his sixth term in office. It is quite apparent that war is not in Israel's interest. It is currently preoccupied with the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank. It is worried about Iran's military presence and diplomatic successes in the region. It has been striking Syria regularly, seeking to curb Iranian influence and is concerned about Hezbollah's role in a recent roadside bomb explosion near the border with Lebanon. Whether Netanyahu would listen to the Israeli security establishment is another question. On the other side, Hamas in Gaza has tried to take a measured response. It has warned Israel against further raids on Al-Aqsa. It is reluctant to escalate as this could take attention away from the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank, which Hamas sees as the main arena of conflict with Israel. Armed attacks in the occupied territories cause much more anxiety to the Israeli authorities than a confrontation with Gaza.

Hamas's strategy now is to encourage a popular Palestinian mobilisation in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Israel in order to serve as a barrier to further encroachment on Al-Aqsa Mosque. That said, Hamas may also find itself under pressure to act decisively, especially if Israel's brutal violence against worshippers continues. The Palestinian people have already reacted angrily at the weak condemnations issued by the Palestinian Authority and its inaction. The Hamas leadership would not want to be perceived as passive and may feel compelled to abide by popular demand to take a tougher stance and intensify rocket fire towards Israel. Thus a repeat of the 2021 war on Gaza, which was also triggered by Israel's raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque, may take place. But an escalation beyond that is also on the horizon. There have been repeated warnings that Israel's actions in the holy sites could trigger a "religious war". In January, Jordanian Ambassador Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud told the UN Security Council that Israeli attacks on al-Haram al-Sharif are provoking "the feelings of nearly two billion Muslims" and could spark a "religious conflict". There is growing concern that with its aggressive actions in Al-Aqsa, Netanyahu's government is seeking to impose restrictions on Palestinians' access to the holy site, the way it was done with the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron. The latter was divided by the Israeli authorities into sections that Muslims and Jews can visit to supposedly prevent further violence after a Jewish settler opened fire on Muslim worshippers, killing 29 in 1994. Imposing these measures in the Al-Aqsa compound would be a clear violation of the status quo, under which non-Muslims are allowed to visit only at certain hours and are not allowed to pray inside. So far there have been only condemnations issued by Arab states, the European Union and the US. What Arab and Western capitals do not understand is that unless there is a harsh response to Israeli actions now, Netanyahu's far-right allies will only be emboldened to go even further in their efforts to take over Muslim (and Christian) holy sites and settle. Their aggression in al-Haram al-Sharif is turning it into a detonator that sooner or later will blow up the whole region.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

## Israel will be incinerated by these fires Netanyahu ignites

Baria Alamuddin

Because Israel has got away with killing and oppressing Palestinians in the past, it believes that its ongoing repression won't carry a cost. This is a dangerous mistake, as the situation has been transformed in ways that Netanyahu apparently fails to comprehend – not least the likelihood of triggering a new intifada. Furthermore, Israel's increasingly radicalized and anti-democratic trajectory will ultimately lose it the international

As three of the world's great faiths celebrate the festivals of Ramadan, Easter and Passover in the cradle of those religions, various parties have been deliberately provoking tension toward all-out conflict. Exchanges of rockets across the Lebanon-Israel-Syria borders are evidence of an inflammatory situation that nobody has control of. Attacks by Israeli security forces on Ramadan worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, in which about 40 Palestinians were injured and 350 arrested, are symptomatic of these escalatory tendencies. Why was the mosque raided when there was no credible security threat? Simply because Israeli officials currently calling the shots are wedded to an approach of maximum harassment and kneejerk overreaction. About 1,000 radical settlers then stormed Al-Aqsa on April 9, and Jordan warned Israel of the "catastrophic consequences" of deliberately inflaming the situation around Jerusalem's holy sites. We see the same gratuitously provocative approach applied to settlement expansion, demolition of homes, and security crackdowns in Palestinian areas. Newly appointed extremist Israeli ministers enjoying their first taste of power are spoiling for a fight, even castigating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for not going far enough. Tensions have been further exacerbated by the killing of two British Israelis in the Jordan Valley and a car ramming in Tel Aviv. In the lead-up to Easter there was a surge in hate crimes against Christians and Christian holy places by Jewish fanatics who increasingly feel that they can act with impunity – including desecrating graves and carrying out violent attacks against Palestinian Christians. In his Easter message, the Pope made a general reference to Jerusalem tension, but global Christian institutions should be taking up this cause more vigorously. Who fired 34 rockets into Israel from Lebanon? Israel appears happy to buy into the fiction that it was Hamas, but these strikes certainly emanated from locations where nothing happens without Hezbollah's blessing. And who believes that Hamas would have embarked on such adventures

without Hezbollah approval, even if the latter would prefer a fig leaf of deniability for the time being? Iran and Hezbollah have been losing personnel to daily airstrikes in Syria, but they play make-believe that these humiliations have little to do with them. Based on strategic calculations alone, Netanyahu should be 100 percent focused on the encroaching nuclear and paramilitary threat from Iran; instead he has been allowing his pyromaniac political stablemates to ignite one bushfire after another, fueling a situation of anarchy and volatility in Israel that has little precedent. Hundreds of thousands of protesters rightly believe that Netanyahu's latest efforts to eviscerate the judiciary and turn his extremist allies into omnipotent paramilitary warlords pose an existential threat to Israel's future. Hassan Nasrallah likewise has become a prisoner of his own evermore bellicose rhetoric, threatening to unleash war with Israel at the slightest provocation – a war that Hezbollah and Lebanon are in no position to wage. Hezbollah may possess far greater missile capabilities than in 2006, but we should be under no illusions that Israel's military would make short work of Lebanon. The civilian loss of life would be horrific – and no country is set to rush to Lebanon's aid. These developments demonstrate the fundamental long-term weakness of Israel's position. As long as it refuses to make peace with an ever-multiplying Palestinian population, it can only futilely run around in circles igniting fires and putting them out. Israel could easily win a war against Hezbollah, but in doing so it would create a new generation of implacable enemies. Israel says it wants peace with Arab states, but shows no readiness to do what it would take to stimulate genuine peace and put a halt to the endless cycle of conflict. Israeli officials are unnerved by the recent Saudi-Iran deal, and partial Arab rapprochement with Bashar Assad in Syria. Meanwhile Iran-backed paramilitary forces encircle Israel from numerous states, and Tehran gets ever closer to the nuclear and ballistic capacity which it gloats could wipe Israel off the map. Last week the

US deployed a guided missile submarine to the Gulf region after specific Iranian threats to Israeli and regional shipping. Because Israel has got away with killing and oppressing Palestinians in the past, it believes that its ongoing repression won't carry a cost. This is a dangerous mistake, as the situation has been transformed in ways that Netanyahu apparently fails to comprehend – not least the likelihood of triggering a new intifada. Furthermore, Israel's increasingly radicalized and anti-democratic trajectory will ultimately lose it the international friends it has always relied upon for financial and military support. Through America and Europe condoning and facilitating its actions, Israel became the over-demanding spoilt child of the West. If the West really is still a friend, it is morally obliged to draw Israel back from the brink of self-destruction. Israel can deny the historic reality of Palestine all it wants, but this only blinds it to the demographic fact that Palestinians are trending toward being the majority. If Israel refuses to make peace now from a position of relative strength, a time will come when it is compelled to beg for peace while it still possesses some remnants of a state to negotiate with. There is likewise a growing awakening throughout Lebanon, and specifically among Hezbollah's supporters, that this Tehran-backed entity is less an agent of protection and "resistance," and more a catalyst for Lebanon's destruction. Many media commentators look at these recent escalations and complacently tell us that war is unlikely because the parties don't desire it. Instead they should be warning that these parties are not rational actors, are not fully in control of events, and have done much to fan the flames through their incompetence and self-interested agendas. Following the chaos of recent days, war is an increasingly likely prospect. We should collectively be doing everything in our power to halt these maniacs before they take us all to hell.

Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## Government successfully overcoming...

FROM PAGE 01  
"As Chair of G77 plus China, we were instrumental in the establishment of loss and damage fund. Pledges of US\$ 9 billion at Geneva moot are evidence of our successful diplomacy," he said. He said in the last one year, the coalition government made efforts to diversify the energy mix with an aim to provide relief to the citizens. "The renewed focus on solar, hydel, and coal power projects is aimed at replacing the costlier sources of power generation with cheaper ones," he said. The prime minister pointed out that inflation hit people hard globally, adding that geo-strategic rivalries, increase in prices of the fuel and food commodities and historic floods are some of the key factors responsible for inflation. "Mindful of its impact, the government has expanded social safety net and provided targeted subsidies," he said. He said under the watch of the PDM government, Pakistan managed to exit the Financial Action Task Force's grey list, thanks to the excellent inter-ministerial coordination as well as support extended by the military leadership.

## TTP still using Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01  
During the interview on Tuesday, Asif recalled that the issue of increased attacks by the TTP was brought to the notice [of the Afghan Taliban rulers] during his recent visit to Kabul. Earlier this year, a Pakistani delegation comprising Asif, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum, Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed Khan, Chargé d'Affaires (CdA) to Afghanistan Ubaidur Rehman Nizamani and Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan Mohammad Sadiq - visited the Afghan capital for talks on security-related matters, including counter-terrorism measures. The minister said: "[In the meeting] The [Afghan] Taliban had expressed their determination to deal with this problem and said that they won't allow their land to be used for terrorism as per the Doha Agreement."

## Pakistan condemns India's...

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dispute that has remained on the agenda of United Nations Security Council for over seven decades. Nor could such activities divert international community's attention from India's brutal suppression of the people of IIOJK including illegal attempts to change the demographic composition of the occupied territory," she said. She further said that with its decision to host G-20 events in IIOJK, India is again exploiting its membership of an important international grouping for advancing its self-serving agenda. "For a country that has a grandiose vision about itself and its place in the world, India has once more demonstrated that it is unable to act as a responsible member of the international community," the spokesperson concluded.

## India angers China with villages...

FROM PAGE 01  
Shah added during Monday's visit to Arunachal Pradesh that Indian troops, who have long been deployed in the region, were making sure no one eyed its borders or encroached on its land. His comments came hours after Beijing said it firmly opposed his planned visit to the eastern state and viewed his activities in the area as violating China's territorial sovereignty. "Zangnan is China's territory," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said earlier on Monday in response to a question on Shah's visit. "The Indian official's visit to Zangnan violates China's territorial sovereignty, and is not conducive to the peace and tranquility of border situation."

## Wahab thanks Pakistani nation during Ramadan Sports Series

Lahore beat Faisalabad to win Punjab Hockey Championship

DNA

LAHORE: Wahab Riaz, sports youth affairs adviser to caretaker CM Sindh Mohsin Naqvi, thanked Pakistani nation for their support and appreciation during Ramadan ul Mubarak Sports Series. Soon after taking charge as a government official for the very first time, Wahab was seen as too active in sports circles. Wahab and his department launched first-ever Ramadan ul Mubarak Sports Series featuring events of badminton, hockey, cricket (tape ball), football, kabaddi, and table tennis. After the completion of hockey event, Wahab took to Twitter to thank Pakistani nation. "Congratulations Lahore Division on becoming Punjab Hockey Championship 2023 title holders. Hard luck Faisalabad Gladiators. I'm happy that our dream of hockey revival in Pakistan



is supported and appreciated by the entire nation," he wrote. Lahore Division beat Faisalabad Gladiators in the final to lift the trophy. The win-

ning team received PKR2.5 million. The runners-up received PKR1.5 million. Wahab Riaz visited cricket grounds in Lahore soon after taking

charge as sports adviser to CM Punjab. Wahab is upbeat to work for the betterment of sports in the province. The cricketer expressed anger

over the state of local cricket grounds in Lahore. He immediately directed upgradation of the grounds. "We will take every possible step to revamp sports grounds in Punjab," he said. "I will visit different sports facilities in the province to make sure that sports prevail here," he had added. Wahab recently represented Peshawar Zalmi in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 8. Wahab was named in Punjab's caretaker government as sports minister. He requested the provincial government to let him play the recently concluded PSL 8 before taking oath. After getting free from PSL 8, the cricketer has now taken charge as advisor sports minister. Wahab represented Peshawar Zalmi under the captaincy of Babar Azam in PSL 8. Wahab took 10 wickets in 11 matches this year. Overall, he is the highest wicket-taker in PSL with 113 wickets.

## La Liga leaders Barcelona held by Girona at Camp Nou

BARCELONA: Barcelona extended their lead at the top of LaLiga to 13 points despite being held to a goalless draw by mid-table Girona in their Catalan derby at the Camp Nou on Monday. Barca came closest to scoring but Ronald Araujo's shot in the first half did not completely cross the goal line before Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga clawed it clear in what was a largely uninspiring performance from the home side. They moved up to 72 points from 28 games, 13 ahead of second-placed Real Madrid with 10 rounds remaining, while Girona are eight points clear of the relegation zone in 11th place.

Barcelona coach Xavi was hoping for a reaction from his side following their 4-0 loss to Real Madrid in the Copa del Rey semi-final last week, but they struggled to break down a resolute Girona defence that had only kept one other LaLiga clean sheet all season. "It was a very tough game, Girona played really well. We did well in the high press, but again we could not score," Xavi told reporters. "It is a pity because we wanted to move 15 points clear of Real Madrid, but this is football. I think you have to value a lot the position we are in (at the top of LaLiga). The responsibility to score is on all the team.

We played a good game, we were just missing the goal. We tried everything but it was not possible today." Gazzaniga also had to clear the ball off his goal line after team mate Santiago Bueno played a stray back pass that would have nestled in the bottom corner, while Barca winger Raphinha fired wide when well placed at the back post. Home defender Eric Garcia headed over from a free kick when he should have scored, but the best chance of the second half fell to the visitors. Striker Taty Castellanos was played through one-on-one with Barca goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, but curled

his shot wide when a simple square pass to team mate Viktor Tsygankov would have resulted in a tap-in for the latter. "This is a difficult place to come, against a team that finds it easy to score goals," Girona defender David Lopez said. "We had to play a very complete game not to concede. We resisted and take home a deserved point. The only negative is that we could not score. In these types of games you get one chance and if you don't take it, you will not get another one." Barca travel to Getafe in their next fixture on Sunday, while Girona host Elche on the same day. - Agencies

## Rawalpindi Royals beat Kashmir Kings

ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi Royals (RR) stunned Kashmir Kings (KK) by 9 wickets in the 5th match of the ongoing 2nd T20 Markhor Ramadan Cup 2023, courtesy to Khalid Usman's superb bowling performance and Tahir Baig's unbeaten 70 runs here at Ayub Park National Stadium on Monday night. Rawalpindi Royals chose to field first after winning the toss. Kashmir Kings managed to score 164 for the loss of eight wickets in 20 overs. Iqbal Akram scored unbeaten 34 runs, while Nasir Nawaz made 30 off 23 balls. Mohammad Akhlaq (20 runs off 17 balls), and Raiz Khan (18 runs off 15 balls) were the other main contributors. Royals' Khalid Usman shone with the ball and removed Kings' four top batters, conceding just 18 runs in his four overs. Ahsan Bhatti took two wickets for 17 runs, while Sajid Khan and skipper Yasir Shah claimed one wicket each for 12 and 33 runs respectively. Royals' Tahir Baig and Sohaib Maqsood shone with the bat to power their side to win in the 17th over. Tahir scored brisk unbeaten 70 runs off 40 balls, while Sohaib made 48 runs off just 25 balls. Umair Mumtaz scored 34 runs off 28 balls and remained not out. Kings' Bilal Sarwar was the only successful bowler as he took the lone wicket of Royals. Khalid Usman was declared player-of-the-match for his four wickets. - APP

## 'T20I series against Pakistan tough'

KARACHI: New Zealand's all-rounder Daryl Mitchell is excited about T20I and ODI series against Pakistan, starting on April 14. After landing in Pakistan early today, Mitchell spoke about coming back to Pakistan. "Excited to be back here and it is always a pleasure to play in Pakistan," said Mitchell. "We have some new faces in the squad. The tour is long and it won't be easy to play Pakistan in their home condition," said Mitchell. Last January, New Zealand beat Pakistan 2-1 in three-match ODI series. Mitchell said Pakistan are a world-class side. "Pakistan are a really tough side with the likes of some prominent cricketers. We are prepared and looking forward to taking this challenge," he concluded. Tom Latham-led New Zealand squad reached Lahore today. After resting for two days in, New Zealand squad will take part in a training session on April 13 at the Gaddafi Stadium.

## NEW ZEALAND SQUADS:

T20I: Tom Latham (c), Mark Chapman, Matt Henry, Cole McClench, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi, Will Young, Chad Bowes, Dane Cleaver, Ben Lister, Adam Milne, James Neesham, Henry Shipley, Blair Tuckner  
ODI: Tom Latham (c), Henry Nicholls, Tom Blundell, Cole McClench, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi, Will Young, Chad Bowes, Ben Lister, Adam Milne, James Neesham, Henry Shipley, Blair Tuckner

## PAKISTAN SQUADS:

T20I: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Ihsanullah, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood and Zaman Khan  
ODI: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood and Usama Mir. Reserves: Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed and Tayyab Tahir

## Series schedule (T20Is to start at 9pm; ODIs to begin at 3.30pm)

14 Apr - 1st T20I, Lahore	27 Apr - 1st ODI, Rawalpindi
15 Apr - 2nd T20I, Lahore	29 Apr - 2nd ODI, Rawalpindi
17 Apr - 3rd T20I, Lahore	3 May - 3rd ODI, Karachi
20 Apr - 4th T20I, Rawalpindi	5 May - 4th ODI, Karachi
24 Apr - 5th T20I, Rawalpindi	7 May - 5th ODI, Karachi



MALE: Pakistan High Commissioner V/Adm (R) Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani, pays courtesy call on Faisal Naseem, Vice President of the Maldives. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including expanding trade & tourism by strengthening connectivity. - DNA

## Villarreal's Alex Baena reports attack to police

MADRID: Villarreal's Alex Baena will file a police complaint after being "attacked" following his team's win over Real Madrid, the club confirmed Sunday, with various Spanish media outlets reporting Los Blancos midfielder Fede Valverde punched him. Baena was allegedly struck in the face by Uruguay international Valverde after the champions' 3-2 defeat in La Liga, with the Madrid player waiting for him by the Villarreal team bus. "Alex Baena suffered an attack while

he was going to the team bus after the game against Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu," wrote Villarreal in a statement, without mentioning Valverde. "In light of this situation, the player has decided to file the corresponding complaint against the attacker to the national police. "Once more, Villarreal shows its rejection of any act of violence and believes firmly in the player's version of events, and will support him through this process." Real Madrid and Villarreal did

not respond to requests for comment from AFP. "I'm very sad for the attack that I suffered after the game and surprised about what they are saying about me, it's totally false that I said that," wrote Baena on Twitter earlier Sunday after claims he angered Valverde by taunting him about his unborn child. Villarreal beat Real Madrid in a thrilling clash at the Santiago Bernabeu and after the game, Spanish reports state that Valverde waited to confront Baena. "Fede Valverde, tuggish and cowardly," Villarreal team delegate Xisco Nadal wrote on Twitter on Sunday, before later deleting his post. Referee Javier Alberola Rojas did not include any reference to the incident in his report from the game. - APP

## ECP submits elections funds...

FROM PAGE 01  
The government has so far not issued the funds for polls and instead referred the matter of election funds to Parliament. The bill was referred to a standing committee and lawmakers are set to reconvene on Thursday. Last week, the apex court had fixed May 14 as the date for the polls in Punjab and directed the federal government to release election funds worth Rs21 billion to the ECP by April 10 for elections in Punjab and KP. It had also instructed the election commission to file a report in the chambers of the three-judge bench - comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar - by April 11 (today) stating whether the said funds had been provided and received.

"If the funds have not been provided or there is a shortfall, as the case may be, the court may make such orders and give such directions as are deemed appropriate to such person or authority as necessary in this regard," the top court had said in its order. Meanwhile, the ECP has raised alarm over judicial overbearing diluting its writ and proposed legislation to do away with the president's role in determining the date for general polls.

## Lampard urges Chelsea to emulate 2012 shock CL win

"This game won't faze him. I can't remember how many times I've told young wingers; 'watch Raheem Sterling and see why he scores 20 goals a season'. I just think he's a top player."

DNA

LONDON: Frank Lampard has urged Chelsea to ignore the turmoil enveloping his struggling side as he invoked the memory of the Blues' incredible run to Champions League glory in 2012. Lampard is back in charge of Chelsea until the end of the season after replacing the sacked Graham Potter last week. After watching Chelsea crash to a lacklustre 1-0 defeat at Wolves in his first game in charge on Saturday, Lampard takes them to Real Madrid for a daunting Champions League quarter-final first leg on Wednesday. Chelsea are languishing in 11th place in the Premier League after a dismal campaign that included Thomas

Tuchel being sacked in September and Potter lasting only seven months before his dismissal. The west Londoners have managed to progress to the last eight in Europe despite their wretched domestic form. Knocking out holders Real would be a major upset, but Lampard knows all about defying the odds in the Champions League. Lampard captained Chelsea in their unexpected run to Champions League triumph 11 years ago. The Blues finished sixth during an underwhelming top-flight season, with Roberto Di Matteo replacing the axed Andre Villas-Boas in March. But in the Champions League they overturned a 3-1 first leg deficit to beat Napoli in the last 16, then recovered from 2-1 down

on aggregate in the semi-final second leg to eliminate Lionel Messi's Barcelona despite a red card for John Terry on a memorable night in the Camp Nou. In the final against Bayern

Munich, they needed a last-gasp equaliser from Didier Drogba to set up a penalty shoot-out victory over the Germans in their own Allianz Arena stadium. Repeating that fairytale success

seems beyond Chelsea as they board their flight to Madrid, but Lampard insists anything can happen if his players show enough desire. "There's a lot to it. Part of that was we parked the bus at the Nou Camp and managed to hang on for our dear lives! There are so many things, fate in different moments," he said. "But we did have a huge desire and a big character and a level of talent in the group that have been striving for years to win a Champions League, so that one you remember. "A team and a group will always go through tough moments to get to great ones." Chelsea are without a win in their last four games and once again lacked a cutting edge in the Wolves defeat. If Lampard's men are stunned in the Bernabeu, the

Blues boss could do with a rare influential display from Raheem Sterling. The England forward has struggled badly since his move from Manchester City last year. Lampard recalled Sterling to face Wolves but there was little sign of the pace and trickery that made him such a force during his time at City. Sterling, who has scored just seven times this term, did grab a crucial goal in the Champions League last 16 second leg win against Borussia Dortmund and Lampard believes he can still have a positive impact on Chelsea's fortunes. "Raheem has been there and done it and there's history of producing," Lampard said. "He's been one of the best wingers in the world for a long time, at times, maybe in some people's opinion, the best.





## Briefs

## Lula to pay 4-day visit to China

BEIJING: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will pay a four-day state visit to China this week, after overcoming pneumonia that forced him to postpone the trip. "As agreed by both sides, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of the Federative Republic of Brazil will pay a state visit to China from April 12 to 15," Hua Chunying, spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry, said in a statement on Tuesday. "The visit shows the high importance both sides attach to China-Brazil relations."

She added: "We warmly welcome President Lula and look forward to working with Brazil to upgrade our mutually beneficial co-operation and bring more positive energy to solidarity, cooperation & common development among developing countries."

Lula also confirmed the visit on his Twitter account, saying it is meant to "strengthen relations with our biggest trading partner." This would be Lula's third foreign visit, after trips to meet Argentine President Alberto Fernandez in Buenos Aires, and his US counterpart Joe Biden in Washington since being inaugurated earlier this year.

Lula had to cancel his state visit to China last month because of mild pneumonia. He is expected to arrive in Shanghai late Tuesday and later travel to Beijing where he will meet his counterpart Xi Jinping on Friday.—DNA

## Imam stabbed in New Jersey

NEW YORK: An imam in the US state of New Jersey was stabbed during morning prayer. Sayed El-Nakib, imam of the Omar Mosque in Paterson, was stabbed by an attacker who hid in the congregation while leading the morning prayer on Sunday, April 9. The attacker, Serif Zorba, 32, was caught on the mosque's security camera jumping over the congregation and stabbing the 65-year-old imam with a knife. Zorba was caught by the worshippers and handed over to the police. He was also seen threatening people who tried to stop him. El-Nakib was taken to the Saint Joseph Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. "Zorba is charged with Attempted Murder, First Degree; Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, Third Degree; and Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, Fourth Degree," said a statement from Passaic County Prosecutor's Office. Zorba said he is from Istanbul and came to the US a while ago and communicated with the court through a Turkish translator. The mosque administration detailed the attack but did not mention Zorba's motives in a statement, adding the investigation is ongoing.—APP

## England: Junior doctors begin strike

LONDON: Tens of thousands of junior doctors on Tuesday began a four-day strike in England over an ongoing pay dispute. The 96-hour industrial action is the "second round" of strike action by the British Medical Association (BMA), as they also went on strike for 72 hours on March 11-13. An estimated 350,000 appointments, including operations, will be canceled as a result of the strike, according to local media reports. In a statement issued in late March, the union said that the decision to hold a fresh strike action in April was taken after "the highest-ever number of junior doctors" voted for a walkout. "The Government continues to refuse to grant full pay restoration. Junior doctors have no option but to take action," it added. While workload and waiting lists are at record highs, junior doctors' pay has been cut by more than a quarter since 2008, according to the BMA. Speaking to Sky News on Monday, Matthew Taylor, the chief executive of the NHS Confederation, said that the strike is having a "catastrophic impact" on NHS waiting lists.—Agencies

## Classified document leak will 'lead to death', warns Pentagon

"The release of classified and sensitive information can not only have enormous consequences for our national security but also lead to death," warned Meagher

## NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The leak of highly classified US documents is a "very serious" security risk, the Pentagon's top spokesman said on Monday. Washington is taking steps to mitigate the damage from the disclosure, which revealed sensitive information about the conflict in Ukraine, such as the situation on the front and Kyiv's crucial anti-aircraft defences. "We don't know who is responsible," said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby. "We don't know if they have more [documents] to post. Is this a concern for us? Absolutely." The damaging leak has raised eyebrows among the US allies. Intelligence involving other nations was revealed, with

some documents mentioning that Israel's secret service Mossad would defend demonstrations inside the country against controversial judicial reform. Many are marked "secret" or "top secret", though Euronews cannot confirm their authenticity. US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has reportedly spoken to allies, held daily meetings to assess the damage and set up a group to figure out what was lost and who had access to the information. That such documents are circulating online is "a very serious risk to national security and has the potential to fuel disinformation", US Department of Defence spokesman Chris Meagher told reporters on Monday. Part of the intelligence brief revealed that Russian spies were caught boasting



about convincing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to "work together against US and UK intelligence agencies". The Emirati government has dismissed these allegations as "categorically

false", though concerns have grown in Washington that the UAE has helped Russia circumvent sanctions over the Ukraine invasion. A criminal investigation has been opened

by the US Justice Department, with President Joe Biden said to be following the situation closely. Images of classified documents have circulated on Twitter, Telegram, Discord and other platforms in recent days, although some may have done the rounds for weeks before attracting media attention. Many of them are no longer available on sites where they originally appeared, with US officials scrambling to have them purged. US officials are reaching out to concerned governments "to reassure them of our commitment to protecting intelligence and our ability to secure our partnerships," said US diplomacy spokesman Vedant Patel. Defence Ministry spokesman Meagher said a team was working to determine whether the documents

were genuine. "Photos appear to show documents in a format similar to that used to provide daily updates to our senior Ukraine and Russia-related operations, as well as other intelligence updates," he said. But added: "Some seem to have been edited." At least one of the documents appears to have been altered to suggest that Ukraine suffered greater losses than Russia, when the original said the opposite was the case. The consequences of these leaks could be significant, even deadly for US intelligence sources. "The release of classified and sensitive information can not only have enormous consequences for our national security but also lead to death," warned Meagher.



ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon to Pakistan calls on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.—DNA

## Malik dissolves UBG partially

LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's United Business Group Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik on Tuesday partially dissolved the group with immediate effect for revamping it with the induction of fresh blood. Sharing the details with media here, he said a resolution was unanimously adopted at last core committee meeting held under his chairmanship a couple of days ago in the city calling for dissolution of the group except the patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer, Chairman and Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari while all other office bearers of the UBG across the country cease to hold office with immediate effect paving the way to invigorate and overhauling the group to make it vibrant. Shahzad Ali Malik said dedicated and loyal traders leaders enjoying good repute in business community would be considered on merit for giving them new responsibilities in the group to achieve desired results. He said, serve the industrialists and traders was the top priority of the group and hoped that under the dynamic leadership of newly elected group patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer Minister Industries and Energy Punjab, new group would strive hard to help resolve the problems confronting the traders besides acting a bridge between government and business community to put the country on the track of development, progress and prosperity.—Agencies

## 8,000 cyberattacks thwarted in Iran last year

TEHRAN: Iran said Tuesday it had thwarted more than 8,000 cyberattacks in the previous Iranian calendar year that ended on March 20. Amir Muhammadzadeh-Lajevardi, CEO of Iran's Telecommunication Infrastructure Company (TIC), said as many as 8,321 cyberattacks targeting the country's critical infrastructure network were successfully warded off in the past year. He referred to recent cyberattacks on the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and domestic messaging applications Rubika and Bale, which were both reportedly foiled. "These days, the largest volume of foreign attacks is directed at banks and financial institutions, internet providers and communications infrastructure, which have been repelled," Lajevardi said in a statement cited by state news agency IRNA. Most of these have been distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks - which means an attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network with a wave of internet traffic. Anonymous local and foreign hacker groups have in recent years targeted public and private enterprises in Iran at an alarming rate, most of them thwarted successfully. The hacker groups upped the ante during recent anti-government protests that were triggered by the death of a 22-year-old woman while in police custody last September. In January, Iranian authorities said they had foiled a wave of DDoS attacks targeting the country's top public banking institution as well as two domestic messaging applications. In December 2022, a major DDoS attack was reported at the Imam Khomeini International Airport in the Iranian capital Tehran, which delayed flights by about 15 minutes. In April last year, Iranian authorities said they had thwarted attacks that targeted the infrastructure of more than 100 public sector organizations, without naming them. While most cyberattacks have in recent years been repelled, an attack on Iran's gas distribution network in October 2021 caused widespread disruption and chaos at gas stations across.—DNA

## Yemen prisoner swap to start Thursday as peace hopes rise

DUBAI: A prisoner exchange involving hundreds of detainees from Yemen's brutal civil war will start on Thursday, a Yemeni government official said, against a backdrop of rising hopes for peace. Nearly 900 prisoners, most of whom were fighting with Huthi rebels, will be flown between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, which leads the military coalition fighting on behalf of the ousted government, the official said on Tuesday. The Arabian Peninsula's poorest country has been at war since the Saudi-led intervention began in March 2015, months after the Iran-backed Huthis seized the capital Sanaa. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, through direct and indirect causes, and Yemen is suffering one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, according to the United Nations. The prisoner exchange, the biggest since October 2020, will last three days and involve multiple cities in Yemen and

Saudi Arabia, said Majid Fadael, the official spokesman for the government delegation negotiating the exchange. The Huthis will release 181 prisoners, including Saudis and Sudanese, in exchange for 706 detainees held by government forces, according to an agreement reached last month in Switzerland. "All arrangements have been completed... to implement the agreed-upon exchange process," Fadael tweeted. "The first day of the exchange process will be through reciprocal flights of the Red Cross between Aden-Sanaa and Sanaa-Aden," he added. The exchange agreement was struck days after the landmark announcement that heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Iran, long at odds in the turbulent Gulf region, would seek to restore diplomatic ties after a hiatus of seven years. Yemen's six-month, UN-brokered truce that officially lapsed in October is still largely holding, providing

respite for a population of 30 million that is mostly dependent on aid. This week, a Saudi delegation has held discussions with the Huthi leadership in Sanaa, hoping to "stabilise" the truce and seeking inter-Yemeni dialogue towards a "comprehensive political solution", according to the Saudi ambassador. Analysts say oil-rich Saudi Arabia wants to exit the war in neighbouring Yemen to focus on domestic projects aimed at diversifying its crude-dependent economy. After Thursday's flights between rebel-held Sanaa and Aden, on Friday and Saturday prisoners will be flown in and out of Riyadh and Abha in Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Sanaa, Mocha and Marib, Fadael said. "This exchange process will be followed by other exchanges in the near future until all detainees and abductees are released on the basis of all for all, and all detention centres and prisons are cleared," he tweeted. According to the Huthis,

13 prisoners arrived at Sanaa international airport on Saturday, in exchange for a Saudi prisoner who was released earlier. "More than 1,050" prisoners were released in the last major exchange in October 2020, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Huthis' political council, told AFP that the talks with the Saudi delegation "now revolve around lifting the (transport) blockade completely, withdrawing all foreign forces in Yemen, and releasing all prisoners." "What we care about now is the issue of achieving comprehensive peace," he said in an interview. But in a tweet, he also warned of "the return of war... in a more fierce manner" if negotiations fail. "Saudi aircraft will bomb Yemen again, and the Yemeni air and missile forces will resume bombing Saudi Arabia," Bukhaiti tweeted.—Agencies

## AK Party launches Turkish election campaign

ANKARA: With almost one month left to Türkiye's critical presidential and parliamentary elections, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) revealed its election manifesto, hoping to build upon more than two decades of work in power. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan introduced the party's campaign for the May 14 elections at a sports hall in the capital Ankara on Tuesday at the event attended by a large crowd of party supporters. Erdoğan was joined by his party's candidates for parliamentary elections, who were introduced en masse to the public for the first time two days after the party unveiled its candidate list. "I see (this crowd) here as a harbinger of the Century of Türkiye. By Allah's will, we are here to say once again 'enough, the word now belongs to the people,'" Erdoğan told the emotional crowd, referring to the campaign slogan of the Democrat Party, winner of Türkiye's first multi-party elections in 1950. The president listed past slogans of the AK Party and said they would now take the "right steps without stopping." "We are here to open the door of the Cen-

ture of Türkiye. It is not tomorrow but now," he said. The AK Party also revealed its election paraphernalia and slogans at the event. Each candidate will be required to use the motto of "Century of Türkiye" with the slogan's logo next to the party's traditional lightbulb logo. "Century of Türkiye" represents the party's vision for the following dec-

ades of the Republic of Türkiye, which marks its year's centenary. Erdoğan has previously described this new era as the "rising" period of Türkiye after going through periods of "apprenticeship, mastery and struggle," summing up three stages of the AK Party's political history as the No.1 party in power since 2002. Indeed, Erdoğan is credited with raising Türkiye's

profile in the international community as an influential country. At the same time, his successive governments and lawmakers have been architects of landmark reforms for rights and enormous infrastructure projects. The party also slightly changed its traditional slogan, "Keep Walking without Stopping," which refers to improving public services,

investments, and other signs of improvement in Türkiye's overall welfare without interruption. It is now "Keep Walking with Right Steps." Another slogan accompanying posters of Erdoğan reads "Right Time, Right Man for Century of Türkiye." The party's election manifesto focused on two decades of services the AK Party government catered to the public. It showcased the government's steps to improve Türkiye overall in industry and high technology, education, foreign policy, defense industry, energy, agriculture, social and cultural life, health, youth and sports, etc. It also concentrated on the aftermath of the Feb. 6 earthquakes and how an AK Party government can take Türkiye to a future with resistance to disaster risks. Erdoğan said the elections were closely watched by the world, giving the example of the Islamic world, which observes the holy month of Ramadan like Türkiye. He recalled how a Muslim country sent 200 tons of date fruits to people affected by the February earthquakes on Ramadan and recounted aid from Muslim countries helping earthquake victims.—Agencies



## Aesthetics Lab personalizing experiences through AI

## DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan - Aesthetics Lab, a new medical aesthetics provider, is changing the way patients experience aesthetics through the power of AI technology. With a mission to provide transparency, personalization, and empathetic patient handling, Aesthetics Lab is helping patients make wise decisions and achieve world-class aesthetic experiences. Founded by two doctors and a serial entrepreneur, Aesthetics Lab leverages deep tech and Korean medical expertise to empower patients. With two clinics already functional in Lahore, Pakistan, the co-founders are optimistic about aesthetics potential and have set their sights on global expansion. "One, we want to make sure people have the information they need to make the best treatment decisions. Two, we want to be the best at what we do, and this means mapping patient needs and preferences into a highly responsive and intelligent AI technology that we believe will launch us into a new era of aesthetic medicine," says Dr Hamza Tauqeer, Co-Founder and CEO. Aesthetics Lab's approach is different from other aesthetics providers that recommend every treatment under the sun at exorbitant prices without properly analyzing patient history and skin needs. Co-Founder and Chief Medical Officer, Dr Sarah Alam states that understanding patient fears and problem areas is crucial to their approach: "Ours is more than just a less is more approach. That applies too, but our focus is on owning the patient rather than the treatment."

## IMF lowers global growth forecast

NEW YORK: The outlook for the world economy this year has dimmed in the face of chronically high inflation, rising interest rates and uncertainties resulting from the collapse of two big American banks. That's the view of the International Monetary Fund, which on Tuesday downgraded its outlook for global economic growth. The IMF now envisions growth this year of 2.8%, down from 3.4% in 2022 and from the 2.9% estimate for 2023 it made in its previous forecast in January. The fund said the possibility of a "hard landing," in which rising interest rates weaken growth so much as to cause a recession, has "risen sharply," especially in the world's wealthiest countries. "Inflation is much stickier than anticipated even a few months ago," Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, the IMF's chief economist, wrote in the fund's latest World Economic Outlook. The IMF, a 190-country lending organization, is forecasting 7% global inflation this year, down from 8.7% in 2022 but up from its January forecast of 6.6% for 2023. Persistently high inflation will likely force the Federal Reserve and other central banks to keep raising rates and to keep them at or near a peak longer to combat surging prices. Those ever-higher borrowing costs are expected to weaken economic growth and potentially destabilize banks that had come to rely on historically low rates.—Agencies

## Volcano erupts in Russia's Far East

MOSCOW: The Shiveluch volcano erupted in Russia's Far East region of Kamchatka on Tuesday, throwing ash columns up to a height of 20 kilometers (12 miles). "The eruption of the Shiveluch volcano continues. According to satellite data, it threw another ash column, the height of which was about 12 thousand meters (39,370 feet) above sea level," the Far Eastern branch of the Unified Geophysical Service of the Russian Academy of Sciences said in a statement. According to the service, four maximum eruption phases have been recorded so far, the maximum height of the ash column over the Shiveluch volcano reached 20 km (12 mi) above sea level.—APP



## Briefs

**IMF revises Pakistan's GDP forecast to 0.5% for FY23**

DNA

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has lowered Pakistan's current year growth forecast from 2 percent to 0.5 percent for the current fiscal year (FY23). The IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook report Pakistan's GDP is projected to be 3.5 percent in FY24 which stood at 6 percent in FY22. Moreover, the Fund has revised upward the inflation rate projection to 27.1 percent for the current fiscal year against its earlier projection of 19.9 percent. According to the report, consumer prices were 12.1 percent in FY22 and are projected to be 21.9 percent in FY24. Meanwhile, unemployment in the country is projected to increase to seven percent in 2023 against 6.2 percent in 2022. The Fund trimmed its 2023 global growth outlook slightly as higher interest rates cool activity but warned that a severe flare-up of financial system turmoil could slash output to near recessionary levels, a private television channel reported Tuesday. The IMF said in its report that banking system contagion risks were contained by strong policy actions after the failures of two US regional banks and the forced merger of Credit Suisse. But the turmoil added another layer of uncertainty on top of stubbornly high inflation and spillovers from Russia's war in Ukraine.

**Key US lawmakers win access to mishandled docs**

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration has begun sharing with a bipartisan group of lawmakers known as the Gang of Eight classified documents found in the possession of former President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden and former Vice President Mike Pence, according to five people familiar with the matter. Top lawmakers, including Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, had for months been asking the Justice Department to provide access to the documents — or at least an assessment of what was in them — so that Congress could gauge the potential national security harm. That process recently got underway, said the people, who insisted on anonymity to discuss private interactions between the Justice Department and Congress. Committee leaders have been granted access to them on a rolling basis, said one of the people. A Justice Department special counsel, Jack Smith, is investigating whether Trump mishandled roughly 300 documents with classified markings found at Mar-a-Lago, the former president's Florida estate, and whether he or his representatives sought to obstruct that probe. — Agencies

**Arms looted by militants from Wana recovered**

WAZIRISTAN: South Waziristan police conducted an operation in the district's Azam Warsak village on Monday and recovered the weapons and ammunition looted by militants from a police station in Wana in December, according to DPO Shabbir Hussain Marwat. Around 50 militant stormed a police station in Wana on December 20 last year and escaped after looting arms and ammunition. In a statement, DPO Marwat said an operation was carried out last night on his directives on the basis of a tip-off, and the looted weapons and ammunition were recovered from the house of a person identified as Bin Yameen. According to the statement, the recovered items included one sub-machine gun, two magazines, one bulletproof jacket, two wireless sets, two mobile phones, three belts, three RPG warheads including boosters. — APP

# Russian forces in Crimea brace for possible assault

The Kremlin wants Kyiv to acknowledge Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and also recognize September's annexation of the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia

KYIV: The Moscow-appointed leader of Crimea said Tuesday the region is on guard for what may be an impending Ukrainian counteroffensive. Sergei Aksyonov told reporters that Russian forces in Crimea had built "modern, in-depth defenses" and had "more than enough" troops and equipment to repel a possible Ukrainian assault after 13 months of war following Russia's full-scale invasion. "We cannot underestimate the enemy, but we can definitely say that we are ready (for an attack) and that there will be no catastrophe," he said. His comments came days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reaffirmed Kyiv's intention to take back the Black Sea peninsula that Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Aksyonov

first announced the beginning of fortification works in Crimea in November, without giving details. In February, at a security meeting chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin, he said that the works were set to finish by April. Satellite images published last week showed a complex web of trenches and other fortifications dug near Medvedivka, a small town near a crossing between Crimea and mainland Ukraine, suggesting Russian concerns about a possible Ukrainian attack there. Military analysts expect Kyiv to take advantage of improving weather to seize the battlefield initiative with new batches of Western weapons, including scores of tanks, and fresh troops trained in the West. Ukrainian forces could seek to break through the land corridor between Russia

and Crimea, heading from Zaporizhzhia toward Melitopol and the Azov Sea. That might split the Russian forces in two. Kyiv's forces face a formidable challenge to dislodge Russian forces, however. Their armor likely will encounter minefields, anti-tank ditches and other obstacles, while extensive trench systems provide cover for Moscow's troops. The Kremlin wants Kyiv to acknowledge Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and also recognize September's annexation of the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. Ukraine has vowed to drive the Russians out of all occupied territories and has ruled out any talks with Moscow until it fully reclaims control of its land. The Ukraine-held parts of the four prov-

inces have felt the brunt of Russian bombardments in recent months, and seven civilians were wounded by Russian shelling in Donetsk and Kherson on Monday and overnight, the presidential office reported Tuesday. Russia on Tuesday also used Su-35 aircraft to launch strikes on two towns in the Zaporizhzhia region, the head of the Ukrainian presidential office said. Andriy Yermak said in a Telegram post that local authorities were assessing the damage in the towns of Orikhiv and Huliaipole, each of which had a pre-war population of just under 14,000. Russian artillery also hit a church in Kherson, blowing out its windows and damaging its roof and walls, the Ukrainian regional military administration reported on Telegram. It said there had been no casualties. — Agencies

## Court scraps ECP plea for early hearing of Toshakhana case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in the federal capital on Tuesday disposed of a petition filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for early hearing of the Toshakhana case against PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day after hearing arguments from the ECP and Imran Khan's lawyers. At the outset of the hearing, PTI chief's lawyer Khawaja Harris raised objections to the ECP plea, stating: "Why is it showing more interest in Imran Khan's case?" He said the PTI was facing a plethora of cases and lawyers required time to get themselves prepared for them. Another PTI lawyer, Faisal Chaudhry, argued that the court had fixed April 29 for next hearing after the election commission expressed its consent. "It came to the ECP's mind after two days that the case should be fixed for early hearing," he said. At one point, Mr Harris cited the proceedings of a case filed by the ECP against PPP leader Ali Haider Gilani, saying the private complaint was lodged against him last year but he was yet to be indicted. He said a court had also postponed Mr Gilani's case for one and a half months. While rejecting the impression that the case was being dragged, he said the suspect also had some rights. The PTI lawyer also accused the ECP of discrimination in the case against his client. "Attempts to fix the case for early hearing are tantamount to intervention," he argued.

## Bill curtailing CJP's powers challenged in SC

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 was challenged before the apex court on Tuesday. Advocate Muhammad Shafay Munir challenged the bill and claimed that it should be declared illegal and unconstitutional as only the top court had the authority to make its own rules. The petition made the Federation of Pakistan through its secretary and the minister for law and justice as respondents among others. The petition comes after the joint sitting of parliament passed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023, with amendments days after President Dr Arif Alvi returned the bill seeking to curtail the chief justice of Pakistan's (CJP) powers to initiate suo motu and constitute benches amid protest by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf senators. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran Seyed Mohammad Hosseini calls on FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. — DNA

# US, Philippines begin largest-ever drills

WEB DESK

MANILA: The US and the Philippines are holding their largest-ever joint military drills a day after China concluded large-scale exercises around Taiwan. Over three days, China's military rehearsed blockades of Taiwan in response to the island's leader meeting the US House Speaker last week. Washington criticised China's display of firepower as disproportionate, while Taiwan President Tsai said it was "irresponsible" and she had the right to make visits to the US.

The US drills had been earlier planned. Filipino and US officials say the drills show their commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region that is open and free. Washington announced last month that their annual Balikatan exercise with the Philippines would be their largest ever - involving more than 17,000 troops, including 12,000 from the US. The two-week Balikatan operation will also see the militaries execute a drill to blow up a mock target warship in the South China Sea - a move that could incur China's wrath. The exercises, however, should not be

viewed as a response to developments in Taiwan, US and Filipino military officials said. In February, Washington secured a new defence deal with Manila where four new naval bases will be established on Philippine islands close to contested waters. Three of these bases are to the north of Luzon Island, the nearest bit of land to Taiwan besides China. The waterways around the Philippines and in the South China Sea contain some of the world's most valuable trade routes, and have been the subject of disputed territorial claims by China in recent years.

# Afghan forces rescue man, arrest 3 kidnappers

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Afghan security forces rescued a businessman from kidnapper in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. The forces also arrested three kidnappers, the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) said in a statement on Tuesday. The businessman was kidnapped in Police District 12 of Kabul city and the kidnappers demanded 2 million U.S. dollars as ransom from the victim's family for his release, the statement said. The GDI personnel, after identifying the location of the kidnappers, launched special operations and rescued the businessman, the statement

said, adding the GDI personnel have also arrested three kidnappers. Similarly, security forces rescued a businessman from kidnappers' clutch and arrested two people who demanded 300,000 dollars as ransom for releasing their prey in the northern Mazar-I-Sharif city some 10 days ago. In war-torn and economically impoverished Afghanistan, criminal gangs, including kidnappers, often attempt to target wealthy families by kidnapping their members and demanding huge amounts of cash for their release. The Afghan caretaker government has vowed to crack down on outlaws and criminal elements as part of efforts to ensure law and order in the poor country. — Agencies

## Govt to ensure transparency for elections: Dastgir

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Khurram Dastgir on Tuesday said that all out efforts were being made to ensure that the 2023 general elections were free, fair, and transparent without unconstitutional interference. Addressing a press conference here, the minister said that this year the general elections "should not be like 2018 which were manipulated", adding that the current

elections should represent the public opinion. He said the Parliament's joint sitting had passed the resolution, the other day, stating that elections of Provincial and National assemblies should be held simultaneously across the country. The minister stated that the Senate's resolution reflected the reservations held by "smaller provinces" not condoning the plan to hold elections in piecemeal. "Elections for Punjab assembly having 55 percent of the total population [of the country] would influence the general elections result, he added. He said that elections in only two provinces would "create anarchy and commotion in the country". "There is no ambiguity in the Constitution about holding of general elections as it clearly stated that elections should be held after a fresh census and delimitation of constituencies by taking all provinces along," he added. — DNA

## COAS visits Heavy Industries Taxila



DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, COAS, visited Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) on 11 April 2023. He was briefed about technical capabilities of HIT, progress of on-going projects, indigenization efforts and recently undertaken modernisation measures. COAS visited various factories of HIT and witnessed manufacturing, rebuild and upgradation of tanks, APCs, enhanced protection solutions, remote weapon systems and indigenous

155 mm Artillery gun barrels for Pak Army. COAS remarked that HIT is a hub of knowledge economy and R&D which is key to achieve self-reliance in defence production and contributes towards national exports and economy. COAS expressed his full confidence in capabilities of its personnel and appreciated the commitment of officers and workforce to transform HIT into a modern defence production establishment for meeting requirements of Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) at par with international standards. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Chairman HIT.

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