



# Islamabad Post

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### Finnish PM faces challenge from country's far right

Detailed News On Page-07

### Amna appointed ambassador to EU and Belgium

Detailed News On Page-08

### Verstappen wins Australian Grand Prix

Detailed News On Page-06

## Briefs

### 'Govt mulls action against SC judges'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan has hinted at filing a reference against three Supreme Court judges hearing the Punjab and KP election delay case. The move from the government comes after the three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, refused to form a full court bench despite appeals by the ruling alliance and continued to hear the case after the recusals. The case involves a petition from PTI seeking a judicial order for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PTI, following the directives of party chief Imran Khan, had dissolved its provincial assemblies in two provinces in January this year, looking for early elections.

### Talks with old allies restarted

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Parvez Elahi claimed on Sunday that his party had restarted talks with its old allies, including the Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P). In his statement, the former Punjab chief minister went on to claim the MQM-P was of the view there was no benefit to continuing to extend support to the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). "The Balochistan government and the GDA are also having reservations over the government's anti-state policies," Mr Elahi claimed. In connection with the alliance, PTI chairman Imran Khan will reveal the next strategy after summoning the meeting of all the parties, he added.

### Sehr, Iftar Timing

**Ramazan 12, 1444**

Sehr: 04:27 am  
Iftar: 06:34 pm  
Fiqua-e-Jafria  
Sehr: 04:17 am  
Iftar: 06:44 pm

## Info Minister says

# Time over for Khan's lies, fraud

### Says news attributed to PM about election not true

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Imran Khan is responsible for the economic, political and constitutional crisis in the country. Federal Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Imran Khan has defrauded the youth and the people. Break "HE IS DYING NOW", Imran Khan will be disqualified for Foreign Funding and watch stealing. "We will save the country from Imran Khan, who is bent upon creating chaos and anarchy by misleading the youth," the minister said in a news statement while reacting to Imran Khan's remarks in an interaction with journalists. She said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief had not only deceived the masses but also lied to them, but time had come for their emancipation from "evil like Imran Khan". Marriyum said Imran Khan had promised to end corruption in 90 days and vowed to rectify the governance and economic situation within first 100 days of his government tenure. 10 million jobs and five million houses were also part of his promises to the nation before coming into power,



### 'Imran's plan to sabotage CPEC foiled'

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz slammed on Sunday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, saying the latter's plan to sabotage the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had been foiled. In connection with the reopening of Khunjerab Pass after three years for trade between China and Pakistan, Ms Nawaz said, "It is the matter of immense delight that Khunjerab Pass has been opened in 2023 after three years. I would like to felicitate the leaderships and the masses of both China and Pakistan." In terms of Pakistan-China friendship, Ms Nawaz said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping were playing vital role in a bid to further strengthen the ties between the two countries.

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# No trade ties with Israel; declares Pak

### Both Commerce Ministry, FO deny diplomatic, trade relations

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly rejected reports of trade relations with Israel by terming such information "sheer propaganda." "Pakistan has no diplomatic and trade relations with Israel," said Foreign Office in a press statement Sunday. The Foreign Office spokesperson reacting to the reports of the sell of Pakistani commodities in the Israeli markets said there is no change in Pakistan's policy about the Jewish state. The FO spokesperson further directed to contact the Ministry of Trade and Commerce for further reaction to the news. Separately, in a press release issued in Islamabad Sunday, the Ministry of Commerce stated that the rumours about beginning of Pakistan-Israel trade is sheer propaganda after a news release of American Jewish Congress which was misrepresented. "Even in their press release they nowhere mentioned about official trade between Pakistan and Israel," a spokesman at the ministry said, adding "However, nei-

ther we have any trade relations with Israel nor we intend to develop any." A Jewish Pakistani Fishel Benkhald had sent food samples to three businessmen in Jerusalem and Haifa through UAE in personal capacity who he met in foreign countries during food exhibitions. Nevertheless, it was not supported by Pakistan Government and no banking or official channel was involved either. The spokesman further stated that in our talks with UAE, the issue of origin will be strictly implemented. UAE has curtailed tariffs on 96 percent goods traded with Israel which has benefited traders from UAE to Israel. Pakistan has very clear policy of trade with countries. According to Import Policy Order, 2022 Pakistan has explained the prohibition of trade with various economies. According to the Import Policy Order: "Import of the followings are banned, namely: (a) goods of Indian or Israeli origin or imported from India or Israel: Provided that the provisions of this clause to the

Continued on Page 06

## KSA invites 'Nawaz Sharif, PM for Umrah'

### Nawaz shall be the Royal guest; will spend 10 days

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a gesture of goodwill, Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has invited Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif - who is considered closer to the royal family - and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the kingdom to perform Umrah, well-placed sources revealed.

According to the sources privy to the development, the three-time prime minister - who is in a self-imposed exile in London on medical grounds since November 2019 - along with his daughter Maryam Nawaz and other family members will depart for Saudi Arabia via a special plane on April 11.

Nawaz Sharif will be the royal guest in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He would spend the last 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan in Medina and Makkah, the sources added. However, the final schedule of Sharif's visit to the kingdom has not been announced yet. It is pertinent to mention here that various ministers and parliamentarians have devised plans to perform Umrah during the period.

## Russian strike on Ukraine city kills six

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Ukraine says heavy Russian shelling has killed at least six civilians in Kostyantynivka, an industrial city near embattled Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine. Missiles and rockets damaged 16 apartment blocks and other buildings including a nursery school, head of the presidential staff Andriy Yermak said on social media. The city is just 27km (17 miles) west of Bakhmut, where many have died on both sides in months of heavy fighting. Mr Yermak said the Russians hit Kostyantynivka with S-300 surface-to-air missiles and Uranus rockets, and at least eight people were injured. The city is near Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, two key cities which Russia is striving to capture in order to complete its occupation of Donetsk region.

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## Talks only on elections

# Will not negotiate with thieves and corrupt, says Imran

### LHC takes up dismissal of 121 cases against him today



STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has said that he would not negotiate with the government, and if talks were held his party delegation would take part. Talking to a foreign TV channel, Imran said that he would not sit with those whom he called thieves and corrupt. The biggest problem of the country today is holding general elections in 90 days, he said and added that if the elections were not being held within the stipulated time, the chances of elections in October were dim. The PTI chairman said that if the talks were held, they would be held only on the issue of elections. "If they don't agree to the elections, then there is no point in negotiations. I have no contact with anyone, but I am ready to talk about holding the elections," he continued. He criticised ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif and said that dividing the Supreme Court for his personal interests was an old strategy of him. By refusing to accept the decision of the Supreme Court, you give an impression that there was no Constitution and law in the country. But the entire nation would stand by the Supreme Court, he added. Imran claimed that in 2018 elections, PTI's seats were reduced through a plan to manipulate the assembly. He also claimed that he knew who managed

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## 'Zardari destroys Bhutto's constitution'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Sunday that PPP was proud of the 18th Amendment but "Bhutto's grandson has decided to attack Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Constitution. In a news conference on reaching the city, the former foreign minister has asked PPP to clear its stance whether they were standing with the Constitution or abrogating it. "Either the PPP stands with the Constitution or it should announce that it is abrogating it," he said, adding that the silence that PPP has adopted was not enough.

Taking aim at the former president and PPP co-chairman, Qureshi said: Asif Ali Zardari has destroyed what Bhutto created". "The National Assembly speaker is an obstacle in our return to the house. Bhutto's Constitution has been occupied by the Zardaris," Qureshi added. He further said that under the current political circumstances, the 1973 Constitution that the PPP was proud of, was being tainted. Shah Mehmood Qureshi also lashed out at the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for "attacking" the Constitution and "pressurising the Supreme Court". He went on to say that the coalition government was using every tactic to delay general elections and for that, the new bill limiting the CJP's powers was also passed in the parliament. The PTI vice-chairman said that President Dr Arif Alvi has already begun consultations with lawyers.

Continued on Page 06

# 1st Russian crude oil shipment in a month

### Malik says that the incumbent government had finalised talks with Russia

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik said that the country will receive its first consignment of crude oil from Russia next month. The state minister made these remarks while talking to a private news channel. Malik said that the incumbent government had finalised talks with Russia, adding that the first shipment will reach Pakistan next month through a cargo. He assured that the government would sell cheap oil after receiving this shipment. Unmute "People will get relief from the [petrol] price hike after the arrival of oil from

Moscow," Musadik Malik added. In reply to a question about rationalizing power and gas tariff, the minister said that the government will introduce a different tariff for the poor and elite class. The government has finalised a strategy in this regard and would issue separate billing for poor and rich classes, he said. Russia had conceptually agreed in January to supply crude oil and oil products to cash-strapped Pakistan at cheaper rates and signed several memoranda of understanding with Pakistan's energy ministry. Following the signing of the deals, Pakistan said it wanted to import about 30 to 35 percent of its total crude oil requirement from Russia.

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## Inside...

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Azerbaijan wants to further improve ties with Pakistan - Page 04

Imran's free spirited decision making - Page 05

Verstappen beats Hamilton to win chaotic Australian Grand Prix - Page 06

Finns vote as far right aims to unseat PM Marin - Page 07

West Bank: Israeli soldier kills Palestinian citizen - Page 08

# Never a dull moment in Pakistani politics!!

## ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

It was a cool and misty morning in November 1997 when an unruly mob pounced upon the Supreme Court of Pakistan forcing the judges including the then Chief Justice Syed Sajjad Ali Shah to flee from the scene in order to avoid fatalities. Syed Sajjad Ali Shah's bench was hearing a contempt of court plea against the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The PM viewed the contempt proceedings and judges as 'biased' towards him. He feared that if found guilty he had to lose the coveted office of the prime minister. A split among the judges was managed. So much so, some of the judges formed their own bench and dismissed the then sitting chief justice from his office. The PML N leadership never admitted to having been instrumental in the SC attack, however this is also a fact that no security personnel had tried to stop the mob when it was coming to pound the apex court. The



mob was rather facilitated by the police in order to make sure that it duly achieves its objective. The then Chief Justice, when left with no option, wrote a letter, under Article 190 of the Constitution, to the then military leadership to come in aid of the superior court. Article 190 says that all executive and judicial authorities throughout Pakistan shall act in aid of the Supreme Court. The then military leadership, in response to the CJ letter, had advised the Chief Justice to please contact the Defence Ministry for this purpose. Nobody came to the rescue of the then CJ and consequently he had to leave his office rather in an unceremonious manner. The situation which we are witnessing these days within and without the Supreme Court, appears to be similar to that of 1997. However there is one big difference. Those were kind of dark ages. There used to be only one state-owned TV channel and some newspapers. Social media too was not born yet at that time. The only source of information used to be official TV and a bunch of newspapers - most of them under acute censorship even at that time. That is why whatever happened to the Supreme Court and its judges went unheard and un-reported.

But now it is altogether a different ball game. Today, it is simply impossible to hide facts for a longer period of time. The social media ostensibly has acquired a center stage when it comes to dissemination of information at the grass-root level. With over 100 TV channels and dozens of newspapers it is no longer possible for the government to unduly maneuver public opinion in its favour. The PML N stalwarts may have a similar mindset in terms of their approach towards the Supreme Court even now however attacking the apex court may no longer be an option. Divisions among the judges nevertheless are quite visible and to some extent the gimmick, (divide and rule) appears to have worked for the ruling alliance albeit it is not sure whether this division would help it achieve the desired results i.e. delaying of the Punjab and KPK election till October this year. As regards the provincial and federal elections, the sitting government and the Establishment as well want these elections to be delayed even beyond October. The reasons for delaying the Punjab and KP polls, according to the government, happen to be the financial and security related. On the other hand

the Supreme Court is not ready to allow naked breach of the Constitution, which clearly states that elections should be held within 90 days after dissolution of the assemblies. As reports suggest the Chief Justice and two other judges are still holding the fort and seem determined to implement Constitutional provisions in letter and spirit. The judges may be small in numbers yet people of Pakistan are quite confident that ultimately the judges would rule the roost since they are perched on the highest pedestal of morality and law. And then they have people's backing as well so why should they fail? As I had pointed out in my earlier pieces, the government was in no mood to hold general elections even in October. The idea was to wait for President Alvi to complete his term in September and then pave the way for the imposition of economic emergency through the Acting President Sadiq Sanjani. That plan may still be on the table however dissolution of Punjab and KP assemblies seems to have made things difficult for the government. And the way things are transpiring as a result of apex court proceedings or PTI's hostile posture towards the PDM government, it looks as

if the PDM may not be able to translate its plan of extending the term of the National Assembly, into reality. Of course, it is the Supreme Court that will decide as to when the elections in Punjab and KP should take place, however there is a general perception that the Court may also support the idea of holding the provincial and federal elections at the same time and for this purpose the Court has sought assurances from various political parties. But the court will take this course only when all stakeholders evolve a consensus on an election date. If not then the Court shall go by the book. There is a proposal to hold all elections somewhere in August for which the assemblies had to be dissolved in June. The government can present its budget in early June and then quit. The PMLN is scared of possible defeat in elections that is why it is reluctant to call it a day at this point. Most of the analysts believe the PML N ought to take this risk and should not be worried at all even if the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf comes to power. It would take only a year or maximum two for PTI to itself torpedo its ship because it has no game plan either. Then the field shall be wide open for PMLN and other political players.

Uniform taxation policy to be launched

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: Executive Officer Cantonment Board Kamra Mr. Faem Ali while talking to the media has said that a uniform taxation policy is being launched in coordination with all stake holders. Responding different questions of the media persons, Executive Officer Kamra Mr. Faem Ali said that 18 out of 27 shops of the Mini Plaza were get cleared where business activities are being run by the business community without any interruption. Mr. Faem Ali said that the pace of construction work of causeway near GT road Jatial, Taja Baja along with Mini Plaza has also been accelerated to avert any flooded hit situation if arises in future. He said the national highways authority has also extended their due share for construction of this project. He said that the civic affairs of the cantonment board Kamra under clean kamra mission were also kicked off to make the cantonment a land mark of pollution free and hygienic environment particularly in cooperation with all elected representatives and general public at large.

6-year-old arrested on rape charge in Sarai Alamgir

JHELUM: Showing an 'extraordinary performance', Sarai Alamgir police arrested a 6-year-old boy on the charge of rape. A man registered a complaint about the rape of his daughter at Sarai Alamgir police station. Taking prompt action on his complaint, police arrested a 6-year-old boy Saturday night on the charge of rape. The family members protested against the detention of the child in the police station. However, the police said that no action would be taken against the child till the arrival of his DNA report. They said that were taking action on the complaint of the father of victim girl. The child's family said how a 6-year-old could do such an act. The opponents want to disturb us by lodging a false case against us, they protested. —DNA

Land sliding blocks Nathiagali Bakot road

NATHIAGALI: The debris of an under-construction five-star hotel in the nullah Garang on Nathi Gali Road Sunday triggered land sliding which blocked the road where thousands of travelers were trapped in their vehicles. Instead of removing the obstruction, the Galyat Development Authority (GDA) and the Communication and Works Department started blaming each other, causing inconvenience to the people during the holy month of Ramadan. GDA officials informed the media that this is not their jurisdiction and responsibility and that people of the area should contact the Communication and Works Department," he suggested. GDA collects clean drinking water in tanks from the same place and sells it in Galyat. —APP

PR expresses intention of launching 'Peshawar Cargo Express Train'

Peshawar Cargo train will run on a load of 10 ZBCs, a kind of bogies used to transport multiple items, from Peshawar, five ZBCs from Rawalpindi and ZBCs from Lahore to Karachi and vice versa, reads the advertisement issued by Deputy Chief Marketing Manager Freight, Zeeshan Shahzad.

DNA

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Railways while expressing its intention of introducing 'Peshawar Cargo Express Train' has sought proposals from private parties for outsourcing commercial management of the project. According to an advertisement appeared in press, the proposed Peshawar Cargo Express Train will operate between Peshawar city station and Karachi city station via main line. Peshawar Cargo train will run on a load of 10 ZBCs, a kind of bogies used to transport multiple items, from Peshawar, five ZBCs from Rawalpindi and ZBCs from Lahore to Karachi and vice versa, reads the advertisement issued by Deputy Chief Marketing Manager Freight, Zeeshan Shahzad. The train, having a potential carrying capacity of 1500 tonnes, will operate daily both from Peshawar to Karachi and from Karachi to Peshawar with en-route stopping stations of Lahore and Rawalpindi for attaching and detaching of ZBCs. The interested parties are asked to submit proposals for launching of the project till April 19, 2023 while a pre-bid with all the interested parties will be held on April 13, the advertisement added. Meanwhile the plan of Pakistan Railways for launching of Peshawar Cargo Express Train has been highly hailed by business community dealing in im-

Mohra Shera Dam construction Rules violation, design change issues surface

Without feasibility study & consultant and design has been changed. Shocking revelations in the monitoring report' PM should take legal action against those responsible by ordering investigation

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

To meet the shortage of water, small, madam and large dams are being constructed across the country by the federal government. Monitoring of development projects at the federal and provincial levels is ongoing to ensure that the construction of dams is being done according to the standards or not. Monitoring and evaluation Departments issue reports after monitoring. Through observations said that the construction of the development projects is being done according to the prescribed standards or the rules and regulations are being violated. MOHRA SHERA DAM Near Mohra SHERA village at about 20 Km South West of Mandra town Tehsil Gujar Khan District Rawalpindi.



Construction is in progress of the dam started on 17th Jan, 2015 and is expected to be completed on 31st Dec, 2023.

2023. Original PC-I Cost was 688.705 Million then it was revised and Revised PC-I Cost is 1128.542 Million. Financial utilization is 71 per cent and the consultant of this project is NESPAK. On 19th January 2023, the team of DG M&E Punjab visited for monitoring and the observations given by the monitoring team after the visit were shocking. Those observations are observation no 6. The provision of consultancy was provided. However, the representative of the consultant was not available at the site at the time of visit. 7. Feasibility study of the project was not conducted/provided by the department till the time of the report issuance. 8. It was observed that workers were partially equipped with Personal Protecting Equipment (PPEs) due to that any unforeseen incident

impact more dangerously due to non-availability of (PPEs) further no first AID box was available at site. 9. It was observed that the design capacity of the dam is 5820 AFT however as per Google earth the actual capacity of the dam was measured less due to that some adverse actions could be seen which mention are in 9.1 onwards, as shown in Figures. Further. Project profile could be viewed through below mentioned link or attached QR code can also be used for scanning purpose in order to visualize on ground details of dam according to Google earth. After reading the observations, it appears that there was excessive negligence during the construction of the dam. No one knew about this negligence or it was deliberately covered up to receive a share in the corruption.

Three well-diggers crushed to death by mudslide in Mailsi

DNA

MAILSI: Three young labourers including a 10-year-old child were crushed to death by a mudslide while digging a well in Mailsi. The rescuers on Sunday pulled out the bodies of the labourers from the well with the help of local people after a hectic 19-hour long rescue operation. The bodies have been handed over to the heirs. Poverty drove the ill-fated young labourers to come out of their home and eke out their living. But the death did not let them go back. Rescue sources said that the victims belonged to the same family. The dead were identified as 20-year-old Sajjad Ahmed, 17-year-old Zameer Ahmed and 10-year-old Muhammad Shaban. Seeing the dead bodies of three young persons, the atmosphere in the area turned melancholic.

PHC sealed 539 quackery businesses

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) carried out a big crackdown in 22 districts and closed down 539 outlets of quacks during the ongoing anti-quackery campaign. According to the PHC spokesperson on Sunday, the enforcement teams conducted raids on 2,689 treatment centres during March. They found that 98 qualified physicians had started treating patients at the previously marked quacks' centres. Also, the teams started surveillance of 1,469 centres. Out of the 22 districts, the maximum number of 407 raids were conducted in Faisalabad, and 66 centres were sealed. Among the rest, 35 backstreet clinics were sealed in Sheikhpura, 29 in Kasur, 28 in Sargodha, 23 in Khanewal, 22 in Sialkot, 19 in Attock, 18 in Rawalpindi and 17 in Lahore. The spokesperson added that the PHC teams had so far visited over 154,000 centres, and closed down around 43,300 illegal outlets, while more than 35,300 quacks were found to have quit their illegal businesses.

WAF ready to convene all parties conference to end political chaos

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Amidst the current tumultuous political landscape and constitutional stalemate, WAF Peshawar is steadfast in its commitment to upholding and fortifying the democratic process. In light of the recent political impasse, WAF Lahore members united in their efforts to rally political party leaders to

convene an All Parties Conference (APC), recognizing that the current crisis poses a grave threat to the democratic values of our political system. As civil society organizations in Lahore implored the participation of JAC and WAF Lahore, Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, with the approval of the WAF Working Committee, joined the delegation to address the pressing matter at hand swiftly.

While time constraints precluded consultation with all provincial Coordinators, members from regional chapters acknowledged the significance of the initiative. They agreed that each chapter should call their meeting to discuss and express their consent. In this regard, WAF Peshawar convened an online meeting on March 25th, 2023, and unanimously agreed to endorse the initiative.

Recognizing the deleterious consequences of the ongoing political crisis across the political spectrum, WAF Peshawar is resolute in its commitment to facilitate meetings with political party leaders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to urge them to convene an All Parties Conference to resolve the current crisis and safeguard the democratic process and values we hold dear.

AJK govt determines to deliver quality medicare : PM

MIRPUR: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas has said that his government was determined to ensure the delivery of quality medical facilities to the masses close to their doorstep across the AJK. He was talking to a delegation of Mirpur Healthcare Community led by Dental Surgeon Dr. Adnan Marghoub Khan and Dr. Ijaz Raja who called on him here late Saturday. They briefed the premier about

the issues relating to the hospital and medical college. They also presented a charter of demands on behalf of the community. The AJK Prime minister agreed upon all the demands and assured the visiting delegates that all their legitimate demands would be fulfilled and whatever problems faced by the community would be addressed on a priority basis. He also assured the delegation that during his next visit to the city, he would pay a detailed

visit to Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College. The delegation included Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad Raja, Dr. Tahir Mehmood, Dr. Gohar Latif, Dr. Ahmed Naeem Kayani, Dr. Shoaib Khan, Dr. Majid Altaf, Sajid Ahmad Chaudhry and others, whereas Medical Superintendent Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur Dr. Amir Aziz and Principal Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College Professor Dr. Faisal Bashir was also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, Central Chairman Zakat Council Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique also called on Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan. Speaking on the occasion, the PM directed the concerned authorities

to ensure fair distribution of Zakat among the poor and needy in Azad Kashmir. The PM said that as per his announcement, an amount of 6000 and 12000 rupees should be paid as zakat and dowry funds to the needy. The Chairman of Central Zakat Council, Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique, briefed the Prime Minister about the issues related to the Zakat Council. The Prime Minister assured him that all the problems faced by the Council would be addressed on a priority basis. On this occasion, the government ministers including Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni, Chaudhry Maqbool Gujjar were also present. —DNA

Four-day rain, thunderstorm predicted in KP

PESHAWAR: The Met Office on Sunday forecast widespread rain, winds and thunderstorms with snow fall over the high mountain for most parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 2 to April 5. It said that isolated heavy falls and a few hail storm is expected in Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Batta gram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber,

Kurram, Orakzai, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Mawat, Tank, DI Khan, North and South Waziristan districts during the period. It warned that strong winds and hailstorms could cause damage to loose infrastructure and standing crops in the province. Landslides could also occur in some vulnerable parts in hilly areas during the forecast period and day temperatures would fall significantly during the spell. Meanwhile,

PDMA issued an alert to all district governments to take precautionary measures to avoid loss of life and damage to infrastructure, crops and animals. The authority also asked the concerned departments to ensure the availability of emergency services, staff, machinery and other resources, remain vigilant in restoring road links in case of landslides and keep monitoring of local Nullahs besides activating emergency helpline No 1700 to respond to any emergency timely. —APP

Police recover 27kg hashish, arrest smugglers

PESHAWAR: Capital city police on Sunday foiled the smuggling of drugs recovered 27 kilograms of hashish and arrested two smugglers. They were smuggling hashish from district Khyber to Punjab and the police checked their vehicle at the Bara Qadeem check post. The smugglers were identified as Faisal Rehman and Asadullah residents of Sahiwal. The police registered the case and started an investigation. —APP

Advertisement for 'The Digital Census' featuring a man in a uniform, statistics, and contact information for the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

## 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 Papacy 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



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

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



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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

### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Belgium considers Pakistan an important country: Envoy

The Ambassador further said that both countries have strong trade and economic relations in the areas of Textile, Pharmaceutical products, machinery, medical equipment, iron, steel and chemicals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belgium enjoy friendly and cooperative relations based upon common interests and shared values of democracy, pluralism and trust. The bilateral diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Belgium were established soon after Pakistan's independence in 1948. Belgium considers Pakistan an important country in the region and values its efforts for the peace and stability. These remarks were made by Charles Joseph M Delogne, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Pakistan during a seminar titled "Pak-Belgium Relations: Past, Present and Future" which was organized by Policy Institute for Peace and Development (PIPD) and Bahria University, Islamabad.

He further said that both countries have strong trade and economic relations in the areas of Textile, Pharmaceutical products, machinery, medical equipment, iron, steel and chemicals. Addressing the students, he



highlighted the two types of academic scholarships; ARES and VLIR-IOUS that can be acquired by HEC and Ministry of Education directly with the counterparts in Brussels. Ms. Wadana Khattak, President

Policy Institute of Peace & Development stressed upon the crucial role of cultural diplomacy and people to people contact in bringing the nations closer. She said that through sharing culture, art, music and sports,

two countries can build a stronger and lasting relationship with each other. She expressed the dire need for cross-pakistani collaboration between Pakistan and Belgium both at government and public level to further enhance

the ties and foster the already strong diplomatic relations. Dr. Adam Saud Dean Department of Social Sciences presented a scholarly expose at the historical and current perspective of relations between Belgium and Pakistan while exploring the new domains of cooperation and strengthening of bilateral ties. He said that there exist a number of areas in which Belgium and Pakistan can jointly work to benefit mutually from such as information technology, science, medical and industrial research and agricultural innovation.

In the end, Mr. Arsalan Khat-tak, ABC offered the token of thanks to H.E. Charles Joseph M Delogne Ambassador of Belgium, Ms. Wadana Khattak President PIPD, Dr. Adam Saud Dean Department of Social Sciences, Bahria University, faculty members and the participants on behalf of Embassy of Belgium and Policy Institute of Peace and Development for their worthy presence at the conference

## RDA accelerates operation against illegal housing schemes

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa has accelerated its ongoing operation against illegal housing schemes. According to a RDA spokesman, the Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA had issued notices to the owners of five illegal private housing schemes namely Green Lake City at Dhoke Bhaia Rawat, Chak Beli Khan Road, Safanza New Era at Ralla Gujrain Chak Beli Khan Road, Royal Ghar (Apna Ghar) at Mouza Paryal Chak Beli Khan Road, New Iqra City at Mouza Dheri Jorian, Rawat Rawalpindi and Hoon Farm House at Mouza Adyala Road Rawalpindi. He said the DG had directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against illegal housing schemes and advised the citizens not to invest in unauthorized projects. The DG had also instructed the Director MP&TE to take action against illegal advertisements and marketing of illegal projects and lodge FIRs against the rules violators. He informed that the RDA authorities would also lodge FIRs against above-mentioned illegal housing schemes. The spokesman said that the owners and sponsors of illegal housing schemes were misleading the public through illegal advertisements. In this regard, the Planning Wing of RDA had also requested the Cyber Crime Wing of FIA to take legal action, he added. He informed that RDA would continue its ongoing operation against illegal housing schemes without any discrimination. The DG had also advised the citizens to check status of the housing schemes at RDA's official website www.rda.gov.pk before investment, he added. —APP

## Minimum Sadqa-e-Fitr fixed at Rs 320 per head

ISLAMABAD: Former Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Mufti Muneeb ur Rehman has declared the minimum amount for Sadqa-e-Fitr at Rs 320 per person, which is an obligatory charitable donation that Muslims are required to pay during the holy month of Ramadan. The rate is based on the prices of staple food such as flour, dates, raisins, cheese or barley, as per the Islamic Shariah.

The importance of Sadqa-e-Fitr lies in helping the poor and needy people in society, especially during the festive occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. This act helps the poor and needy during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr and is a way for Muslims to give back to their community and earn blessings from Allah Almighty.

According to Mufti Muneeb, the market price of 2.25 kilograms of flour, the amount for Fitrana is calculated as Rs 320 per head. The faithful who want to pay Fitrana equal to the price of barley, and dates should pay minimum Rs 480 and

Rs 2,800 per head respectively. Similarly, the faithful wanted to pay Fitrana at the rate of raisin should pay Rs 6,400 per head for first class dates and Rs 4,800 per person for second class raisin. A Muslim, who possesses food in excess of his needs, must pay Sadqa-e-Fitr before the Eid prayers. If the person is a breadwinner, he should also pay Sadqa-e-Fitr for his dependents, such as wife, children, dependent relatives or servants. Mufti Muneeb also advised the people to pay the amount to the poor before Eid-ul-Fitr so that they could also celebrate the festival. The most deserving people for Sadqa-e-Fitr are close relatives followed by neighbours and the poor. Mufti Munibur Rehman said real spirit of Fitr and Fidyah is two-time meal of a destitute person, so it is better to pay the meal cost of a hotel. However, those who are wealthier, they should try to pay more to extend assistance to the poor in this time of skyrocketing inflation. If any one had been unable to keep fast for the whole month of Ramadan, he or she should pay the whole month Friday as compensation worth Rs 9,600 in proportionate to flour price, Rs 14,400 for barley, Rs 84,000 for date, Rs 192,000 for raisin first class and Rs 144,000 for second class raisin. Similarly, Kufara (compensation) for leaving 30 fasts in wheat would be Rs 19,200, for wheat Rs 28,800, for barley, Rs 168,000 dates, Rs 384,000 raisin first class and Rs 2,88,000 for second class raisin. Kufara in wheat would be Rs 3,200, barley Rs 4,800, dates Rs 28,000, raisin Rs 64,000 first class and Rs 48,000 for second class raisin.—APP

## Lush green Daman-e-Koh major source of attraction

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful recreational spot Daman-e-Koh in the Federal Capital Islamabad a major source of attraction for the visitors including international tourists. Talking to APP on Sunday, Sarfraz Ahmed, a resident of G-10, visited along with family and said that eye keeping view of Islamabad from Daman-e-Koh make our visit wonderful and enjoyable during the holy month of Ramzan. He further said the natural and peaceful atmosphere at Daman-e-Koh, Margalla Hills make the weekend a pleasant and entertained. "It is a wonderful place

to hang out with families where cool breeze is blowing across all the time and natural environment with fresh air fills my lungs."

Huma Ali Malik, a resident of Lahore, apprised that people are observing the nature and natural beauty at lush green and mountain with fresh air. During the holy month of Ramzan, she said that a large number of people are visiting this place to make their weekend full with enthusiasm. She urged the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to make the arrangements to ensure cleanliness and security arrangements to facilitate the tourists. Car

parking facility is provided close to the Northern Spot where a cafe and some small tuck shops cater the needs of guests, she added. Huma Ali further said the CDA should establish a mosque for offering prayers five time at Daman-e-Koh. It is pertinent to mention here, the lush green hills of Margalla around 3000 feet above the sea level and 1000 feet from the federal capital, a salubrious spot called Daman-e-Koh (in the lap of the mountain) is surely a place where natural and man-made beauty intrigues the heart and mind of every visiting individual.—APP

## VC PMAS-AAUR for establishing agri centers

RAWALPINDI: Vice Chancellor, Pir Mehr Ali Shah, Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman has proposed to establish agricultural machinery testing facility, standardization and certification centers in different zones to promote agricultural mechanization in Pakistan.

According to a PMAS-AAUR spokesman, the experts from Asian & Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery (ANTAM), UN Center for Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization (UN-CSAM), Engineers & Senior Management officers from Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) and Punjab Agriculture Department Field Wing

visited, PMAS-AAUR to collaborate for the establishment of agricultural machinery testing and standardization center at the university here the other day. The VC proposing to establish agricultural machinery testing facility said that the agricultural machinery testing and standardization center would not only come up with a machinery performance rating system, but would guide the prospective users in the selection of agricultural machinery according to tested performance.

While highlighting the importance of this center, he said that providing better and standardized agricultural machinery to the farmers, it would also enable them to increase

their per acre agricultural production.

"Pakistan is currently facing a serious wheat crisis, to deal with and we have to take every step that will help us to deal with it," he said.

After visiting laboratories, center for precision agriculture, engineering workshops and detail discussions, the delegation expressed keen interest for mutually collaboration in development of machinery testing and calibration procedures, formulation of standardization procedures and codes, skill development, capacity building of machinery operators, licensing, certification and introducing latest and emerging technologies with PMAS-AAUR, the spokesman informed.—APP

## WASA directed to disconnect connections of defaulters

RAWALPINDI: Managing Director (MD) Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi Muhammad Tanveer has directed the authorities concerned to disconnect connections of the defaulters. According to a WASA spokesman, the MD had directed the authorities to ensure 100 percent recovery of the outstanding dues from the defaulters. The MD had also appreciated efforts of the officers who showed good performance in revenue recovery campaign and reprimanded those whose performance was not satisfactory. The MD had directed the authorities to accelerate the crackdown against the defaulters. He informed that the officials concerned had been directed to ensure supply of clean drinking water particularly during 'Sehri and Iftar' hours. The supply of clean drinking water to the citizens was being ensured from the filtration plants during 'sehri and iftar'. Steps were also being taken for immediate repair in case of malfunction of tube-wells, he said. He said like other parts of the country, the citizens here were also facing water shortage, which was mainly due to the decrease in the level of underground water and lack of timely construction of new water reservoirs. In this situation where WASA was making every possible effort to provide clean drinking water to the citizens, it was also responsibility of the citizen to use water carefully and try to save this priceless blessing of Allah Almighty, he added. —APP



Government of Pakistan

PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA REGULATORY AUTHORITY ISLAMABAD

## APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR AWARD OF CABLE TV LICENCES

Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) invites applications under Section 19 of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 (as amended by PEMRA Amendment Act 2007) for the award of Cable TV licences in different Cities of Pakistan. The Application Form along with Details of the Cities, Guidelines to establish/operate Cable TV Networks and Bidding Procedure can be obtained from the concerned PEMRA Regional Office and PEMRA website i.e., [www.pemra.gov.pk](http://www.pemra.gov.pk).

Interested firm/companies shall apply through the prescribed Application Form, along with requisite documents and application processing fee (non-refundable fee) of Rs.5,000/- in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft in favor of PEMRA, Islamabad for each area applied for. The duly filled Application Form must be submitted in the concerned Regional Office only.

Only shortlisted firms/companies fulfilling the requisite criteria shall be invited to participate in an open and transparent bidding process and Cable TV licences shall be issued to the successful applicants after completion of all legal requirements under PEMRA laws and payment of requisite fees. Moreover a person who has already been issued a Cable TV licence for the proposed cities shall not be eligible to apply for the same area(s) for which he has been issued a licence.

Applications submitted after due date or incomplete applications shall be rejected. Last date of submission of application is 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. For further information, you may visit concerned Regional Office of PEMRA. The bidding process shall be held in the respective Regional Office of PEMRA.

The submission of applications/shortlisting shall not establish any right or claim of any applicant company whatsoever for the grant of a licence. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all or any application by recording reason in writing in the light of PEMRA laws.

PID (I) No.6026/22

Director General (Licensing Distribution)  
PEMRA Headquarters  
Sector G-8/1, Mauve Area, Islamabad  
Tel: 92 (51) 9107115, 92(51) 9107178

[www.pemra.gov.pk](http://www.pemra.gov.pk)



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## Trump vs the law. Who will win?

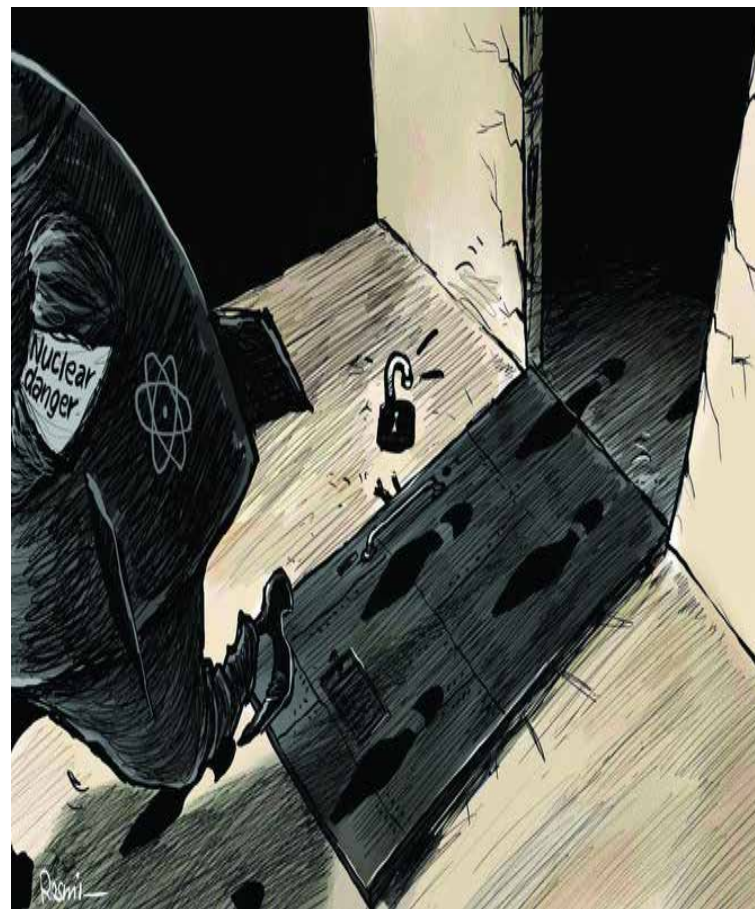
Donald Trump has built his career on brazenness. A man without shame, he has hurtled on apparently unstoppable, through serial scandals, two impeachments, electoral rejection and an armed insurrection by his supporters. Now he is setting another grim precedent, as the first former US president in history to be charged with a criminal offence. Half a century after the first investigation into his business dealings, a New York grand jury has voted to indict him. But even if he cannot bluster or bully his way out, he will keep fighting the law, and the law may not win. That the case relates to paying hush money to the adult film actor Stormy Daniels is at once apt and disconcerting. Apt, in that its tawdriness and banality encapsulate the man. Disconcerting, in that it appears almost inconsequential beside the damage he has wrought upon the nation. He still faces multiple other civil and criminal cases: on the latter score alone, he is being investigated in relation to potential mishandling of classified documents; attempts to overturn his loss in Georgia in the 2020 election; and obstructing the transfer of power, as part of the justice department's probe of the January 6 insurrection.

The indictment is still sealed, but reportedly includes more than two dozen counts. While Mr Trump has admitted authorising a \$130,000 payment on the eve of the 2016 election, he still denies an affair with Ms Daniels, claiming to be a victim of extortion. Though his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, pleaded guilty to campaign finance charges relating to the money, the case looks far from straightforward legally.

Any charges would play to the martyr myth of Mr Trump's supporters: he is already exploiting the case in fundraising and it is expected to boost him in the Republican primaries. His rival, Ron DeSantis, was quick to denounce the indictment; Fox News, which had distanced itself from Mr Trump in recent months, fell back into line. But the tackiness of this matter makes it perhaps less potent than an election-related case – and it's unlikely to help him in the general election with former supporters who stayed at home or peeled off to Joe Biden in 2020.

The former president, barefaced as ever, has decried the charges as "election interference", accused the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg, who is Black, of being racist, and drawn on antisemitic tropes. His incendiary rhetoric is not only vicious but dangerous.

To shy away from bringing charges because they will increase divisions and might unleash violence would be wrong. As both businessman and politician, Mr Trump has spent a lifetime seeking to avoid legal consequences for his conduct. To allow him to sidestep them for fear of his reaction and that of his supporters would be to bolster his message that truth and the law are for little people, and that lies and might will triumph. That would surely be a far greater blow to American democracy.



## Sino-Japanese trust key to Asia-Pacific stability

A direct hotline between the Chinese and Japanese defense ministries has been set up and is due to be put into operation this spring. Announcing the news on Friday, the Chinese Defense Ministry said it would "strengthen the capabilities of the two sides to manage and control maritime and air crises".

Plans for the hotline have been in the works since 2007, but they stalled due to Japan's "purchase" of the Diaoyu Islands in 2012. It was not until President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed at their meeting in Bangkok in November to accelerate the talks on the mechanism that it was finally realized.

Although this is a welcome sign that the two neighbors want to foster trust and maintain regional peace and stability, China is justifiably concerned about a possible regression in Japan's policy toward it, as Wang Yi, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said in his meeting with former Japanese prime minister Yasuo Fukuda in the Chinese capital on Friday. These concerns have been fueled by recent moves by Tokyo that call into question whether Japan will continue to adhere to the direction of peaceful development.

Wang said that China hopes Japan will uphold the commitments made in the four political documents between the two countries and create conditions conducive to the healthy development of China-Japan relations. This will have been a message reiterated to Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, who paid a two-day visit to Beijing on the weekend, before heading to Brussels to attend the meeting of NATO foreign ministers. The possibility of Tokyo providing a doorway for NATO to expand its reach into the Asia-Pacific is one of the concerns that Wang was referring to. Although it is too early to say the relationship between China and Japan has warmed up, the meeting may have helped the two sides orient their relations in the right direction if Tokyo engaged in the exchanges with goodwill and sincerity. If they can thaw their relations again, China and Japan would hopefully see a rebound in their bilateral trade volume, which dropped in 2022, thus laying a firmer foundation for mutual trust.

But to get bilateral ties back on the right track, Japan needs to recognize that having good relations with its neighbor is of more benefit to it than hanging on to the coattails of an ally 10,000 kilometers away that is only interested in looking after No 1. It is absurd to please the latter at the cost of friendly relations with the former.

## Imran's free spirited decision making

Qamar Bashir



They are discredited due to mismanagement of the economy, skyrocketing inflation, rising rates of unemployment, historic depreciation of the currency, rising wave of terrorism, rockbottom industrial and agricultural growth. This has led to their total annihilation of public support and impending election defeat, prompting the government to launch an all out offensive to eliminate Imran once for all and win back the country from his clutches and dole it out to their upcoming generation.

But what if their goal of eliminating Imran

One million dollar question remained so far unanswered, why did Imran Khan dissolved the Punjab and KP assemblies? Did he made an error of judgment, did he fell willingly in the trap laid down by the government, when first they lured him by pledging to go for general elections if the provincial assemblies were dissolved, but conveniently set aside their pledge soon after they were dissolved, and later delayed the elections even at the cost of violating the constitution which necessitate holding of election with 90 days. Or, was this his most calculated and daring move, albeit full of risks, but he perhaps knows very well that the bigger the risk, the bigger the reward.

During our discussions in the Presidency, most of our colleagues described Imran Khan's decision to dissolve the assemblies as hasty, lacking political wisdom, premature, and illogical. They believed that by doing so, he had rendered himself completely vulnerable and defenseless against brute state power which allegedly had the full blessing and support of the deep state. Other colleagues, however, were of the opinion that, while Imran Khan will pay dearly for his bold and unexpected decision, this is what great leaders do.

If they make decisions based on common logic and common wisdom, they should become followers rather than leaders. Imran Khan's decision to put himself in danger was an excellent political maneuver, but how?

The ultimate goal of all leaders and political parties is to gain power to put their manifesto into action which is possible only when they enjoy widespread public support. This was what exactly Imran Khan gained after he sacrificed his assemblies. Now he is enjoying widespread public support and sympathy from people all over the country and the world. In one of his interviews, when Hassan Nisar, a veteran journalist was asked, which

one is the most popular political party, he replied in his usual candid style that PTI is currently holding first, second and third place, PPPP is holding fourth place and PM-L(N) fifth place, most of the other political analysts and thinkers share the same opinion. On the other hand, by his free spirited decision pattern and his ability to build narrative and sold it successfully to the public he has put PDM on the defensive. They are discredited due to mismanagement of the economy, skyrocketing inflation, rising rates of unemployment, historic depreciation of the currency, rising wave of terrorism, rock-bottom industrial and agricultural growth. This has led to their total annihilation of public support and impending election defeat, prompting the government to launch an all out offensive to eliminate Imran once for all and win back the country from his clutches and dole it out to their upcoming generation. But what if their goal of eliminating Imran proved elusive. Imran Khan's unconventional and risky moves have perplexed his opponents, who are accustomed to taking conventional and traditional moves devoid of creativity and foresight and expect the same from their political opponents. His ability to manage seemingly illogical decisions and convert them into success and ultimately winning the game is exceptionally well and proven, leaving his opponents totally disarmed.

The government has realised that it is impossible to defeat Imran politically, and going to elections at this point of time when he is drenched with popularity would be suicidal therefore it has chose to apply conventional solutions of registering over 134 FIRs, leaking audios and videos, registering fake and frivolous cases, intimidating the courts to refuse him bails, blame him for law and order situation, increasing cases of terrorism and in its guise delay the elections, buy time, bait Imran Khan with additional temptations, incentivize him to make mistakes and then use the state

power to arrest and eliminate him from political chessboard.

Unlike other politicians who use politics to protect their vested interests and pass on the power to their future generations, Imran has no legacy to which he can pass on his political career.

This is both a hot and cold fact. Hot because if he is removed, there will be no one to carry on his vision, and his party, which he has spent over thirty years building, will likely to cavedown in no time. If he lives long enough, he will be able to serve only another term in office before succumbing to aging. This leaves him with only five productive years to turn his vision into reality, and if the bus passes without him in the next general election, he would eventually leave the field exclusively for old timers and their political heirs and heiresses. Perhaps PDM is aware of this reality, so it is a matter of life and death for them to disqualify him from running for public office in the upcoming general elections by any means at their disposal.

Frustrated, the Interior Minister went so far as to say in his most recent interview that either Imran will die or they will die. Maryam Nawaz has vowed that elections will take place only after all cases against Nawaz Sharif are dropped as if they never happened, allowing him to lead the party in the next general election. While admitting that the Establishment no longer supports Imran, she and her party have launched a dangerous assault on the judiciary in order to arm twist it to exonerate Nawaz Sharif and arrest, imprison, and bar Imran Khan from running for any public office. The game of settling personal vendettas seemed to have no end while people sick and tired of it are waiting for a miracle to happen to save them and the country.

—The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President of Pakistan and Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France

## The first day of April

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April

Some historians speculate that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, as called for by the Council of Trent in 1563. In the Julian calendar, as in the Hindu calendar, the New Year began with the spring equinox around April 1.

People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person. Historians have also linked April Fools' Day to festivals such as Hilaria (Latin for joyful), which was celebrated in ancient Rome at the end of March by followers of the cult of Cybele. It involved people dressing up in disguises and mocking fellow citizens and even magistrates and was said to be inspired by the Egyptian legend of Isis,

Osiris and Seth.

There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather. April Fools' Day spread throughout Britain during the 18th century. In Scotland, the tradition became a two-day event, starting with "hunting the gowk," in which people were sent on phony errands (gowk is a word for cuckoo bird, a symbol for fool) and followed by Tailie Day, which involved pranks played on people's derrieres, such as pinning fake tails or "kick me" signs on them. In modern times, people have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims that have fooled their audiences.

In 1957, the BBC reported that Swiss farmers were experiencing a record spaghetti crop and showed footage of people harvesting noodles from trees. In 1985, Sports Illustrat-

ed writer George Plimpton tricked many readers when he ran a made-up article about a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch who could throw a fastball over 168 miles per hour. In 1992, National Public Radio ran a spot with former President Richard Nixon saying he was running for president again... only it was an actor, not Nixon, and the segment was all an April Fools' Day prank that caught the country by surprise. In 1996, Taco Bell, the fast-food restaurant chain, duped people when it announced it had agreed to purchase Philadelphia's Liberty Bell and intended to rename it the Taco Liberty Bell. In 1998, after Burger King advertised a "Left-Handed Whopper," scores of clueless customers requested the fake sandwich. Google notoriously hosts an annual April Fools' Day prank that has included everything from "telepathic search" to the ability to play Pac Man on Google Maps. There is always the classic April Fools' Day prank of covering the toilet with plastic wrap or swapping the contents of sugar and salt containers

## Briefs

## 'Imran's plan to sabotage CPEC foiled'

FROM PAGE 01

She went on to say the opening of the Khunjerab Pass will pave way for addressing the difficulties faced by both the nations. Heaping praise on PML-N supremo over the CPEC, Ms Nawaz lamented the masses would not face severe economic hardships if the trade between the two countries continued with the "speed of the PML-N." Berating the PTI-led government, Ms Nawaz accused the PTI of destroying the CPEC. She slammed Mr Khan for making "baseless allegations" about the prevailing of corruption in the projects - under the CPEC. On Thursday, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz slammed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan, saying the institutions could not run at the latter's will.

## No trade ties with...

FROM PAGE 01

extent of India shall not apply to therapeutic products regulated by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). (b) import of live animals, i.e. cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats and meat & bone meal (MBM) and feed ingredients of animal origin are banned from countries classified by the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) in the latest edition of Terrestrial Animal Health Code as Controlled Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Risk and Undetermined BSE Risk.

## Russian strike on...

FROM PAGE 01

Kostyantynivka's population before Russia's February 2022 invasion was about 70,000. Explosions also rocked Russian-occupied Melitopol on Sunday, the southern city's Ukrainian mayor Ivan Fedorov said. He said the blasts targeted the rail depot there. Melitopol has been hit repeatedly by Ukrainian missiles because it is a transport hub for the Russian military, lying just north of Russian-occupied Crimea.

## Will not negotiate...

FROM PAGE 01

the PTI members. He strongly criticised the PDM for refusing to accept the decision of the three-member bench of the Supreme Court and said that the PTI would fully support the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, Ex-prime minister Imran Khan's petition seeking the dismissal of 121 cases registered against him has been fixed before the Lahore High Court (LHC) for tomorrow (Monday). A two-member bench headed by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi will take up the petition. The plea, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, named both Imran and the PTI as petitioners. It said that the government was "misusing" the criminal justice system to stop the PTI chief from participating in the upcoming elections.

## 'Zardari destroys...

FROM PAGE 01

He also urged the legal community "to play a role in the country's history". The constitutional crisis in Pakistan deepened as the ruling coalition in the Centre, led by PML-N, hinted that it would not accept the decision of the three-member SC bench hearing the polls delay case. Shah Mahmood Qureshi claimed the PML-N leadership has decided to attack the Constitution, while Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has hinted at directly attacking judges. The PML-N has accelerated its efforts to pressurize the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the PTI leader alleged, adding the PML-N is harassing judges in order to pressurize them.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of the Christens devotees are attending procession to mark their religious event 'Palm Sunday' at Fatimah Church in Sector F-8 as it is a Christian moveable feast that falls on Sunday before Easter. - Online

## Verstappen beats Hamilton to win chaotic Australian Grand Prix

By the halfway mark, he was seven seconds ahead with the battle seemingly all about who came second between Hamilton and Alonso. But there was more drama when Kevin Magnussen lost the rear tyre of his Haas and red flag came out again at death

## SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Max Verstappen held off a revived Lewis Hamilton to steer his Red Bull to a chaotic win at the Australian Grand Prix on Sunday and tighten his grip on the world championship. The world champion began from pole and despite being passed by Mercedes pair George Russell and Hamilton at the start, he kept his cool to win a race red flagged three times, with multiple crashes. Hamilton came home second ahead of Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, who made it three podiums from three this year. "We had a very poor start, lap one I was careful as I had a lot to lose," said Dutchman Verstappen, who won the season-opening race in Bahrain and came second in Jeddah a fortnight ago. "After that, the pace of the car was quick. With these red flags, I don't know, I don't really understand. It was a bit of a mess but we had good pace and we won, so that's important. It was a disastrous day for Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, last year's winner, who spun out on the first lap, while Russell's car caught fire on lap 19 and his race too was over. Victory was Verstappen's maiden win in



Melbourne and Red Bull's first in Australia since Sebastian Vettel's 2011 triumph. His teammate and winner in Saudi Arabia Sergio Perez sliced through the field to come fifth after qualifying last due to brake issues, behind Lance Stroll in the other Aston Martin. The Red Bull triumph came despite unbelievable late drama that saw a red flag come out when Verstappen had a comfortable lead from Hamilton and Alonso with two laps left, meaning they had a bunched restart for an all-out attack to the finish. But it descended into chaos when

and working as hard as I can but still, considering we've been down on performance and in straight pace, for us to be up there fighting with Aston is amazing."

On a fine day, Lando Norris in a McLaren was sixth, Niko Hulkenberg in the Haas seventh and rookie Oscar Piastri, in the other McLaren, an encouraging eighth on his home circuit. Alpha Romeo's Zhou Guanyu came ninth and AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda 10th. "We had a rollercoaster of emotions today, many things going on at the beginning, and the last half an hour," said Spanish veteran Alonso. "Mercedes were very fast and Lewis did an incredible job - I could not match the pace, but we'll take P3." With Red Bull's undeniable speed advantage, it was crucial for Russell and Hamilton to get a strong start. And they did just that with both scoring past a tentative Verstappen on the first corner before Leclerc spun at Turn 3 and the safety car came out. They resumed with Hamilton pressing Russell before the safety car was deployed again on lap seven when Williams' Alexander Albon lost control, leaving gravel on the track, with a red flag eventually needed. They got underway again from a standing start with Hamilton initially keeping Verstappen at bay.

On the other hand, Federal Minister Ehsanur Rehman Mazari has called a meeting of the PSB Governing Board on April 7, in which important decisions are expected

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

## AFP expelled from PSB Governing Board

On the other hand, Federal Minister Ehsanur Rehman Mazari has called a meeting of the PSB Governing Board on April 7, in which important decisions are expected

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) expelled Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) from PSB Governing Board with immediate effect after the approval of Federal Minister of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC). According to the details, the President/Secretary General of Athletics Federation of Pakistan was recently again included in the reconstituted PSB Governing Board. The decision to withdraw the nomination of AFP from the PSB Board was taken under the constitutional powers conferred under sub-rule 1 (f) and sub rule 3 of the rule 5 of the constitution of the PSB 2022. After the approval of Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsanur Rehman Mazari, the nomination of Athletics Federation from the Governing Board of Pakistan Sports Board was withdrawn through notification. On the other hand, Federal Minister Ehsanur Rehman Mazari has called a meeting of the PSB Governing Board on April 7, in which important decisions are expected. The another sports federation will be replace Athletics Federation but it is not yet clear as to which federation will now replace AFP on the PSB Board.

## Manchester City thrash Liverpool 4-1

MANCHESTER: Manchester City thrashed Liverpool 4-1 but remain eight points adrift of Arsenal at the top of the Premier League after Gabriel Jesus scored twice in the Gunners 4-1 win over Leeds. In the clash between the two sides that have dominated English football over the past five years, City were a class apart despite the absence of Erling Haaland due to injury. Liverpool went in front through Mohamed Salah's 23rd goal of the season but were blown away in the second half after Julian Alvarez brought City level before the break. Pep Guardiola's men needed less than a minute in the second period to go in front as Kevin De Bruyne tapped home Riyad Mahrez's cross. Ilyay Gundogan slammed home the third before Jack

Greish rounded off his best performance in a City shirt with a fine finish for the fourth. "Now it's the Jack we thought (we were buying). Aston Villa fans know this Jack," said Guardiola of Greish, who joined for a Premier League record £100 million (\$124 million) in 2021 from the Birmingham club. City still have a game in hand on Arsenal and the two meet in a potential title decider at the Etihad later this month. A sobering defeat is another blow to Liverpool's hopes of a top-four finish as the Reds slip to eighth in the table. Arsenal did not feel the pressure of City briefly cutting the gap before kick-off at the Emirates as Jesus marked his first league start since November with a double. Bukayo Saka was handed a rare rest by Mikel

Arteta and Jesus took responsibility for the penalty spot in his absence to open the scoring 10 minutes before half-time. Jesus was sidelined for three months after picking up a knee injury at the World Cup but the former City forward's return for the run-in could deny his old club a fifth title in six years. The Brazilian fired home his second goal of the game after Ben White doubled Arsenal's lead early in the second half. "He's been working so hard the last four or five months with a lot of support obviously from the team and the staff," said Arteta on Jesus' impact. "Today he deserved the chance to start and he grabbed the opportunity with a lot of conviction and scoring two very important goals." - Agencies

## OIC expresses solidarity with Indonesia

JEDDAH: The General Secretariat of the OIC expressed its solidarity with Indonesia in its position rejecting the participation of the team of Israel, the occupying power, in the FIFA Youth World Cup matches that were to be organized in Indonesia this year. It considered this principled position as an embodiment of Indonesia's unfailing commitment to support the Palestinian cause and its absolute rejection of the aggressive Israeli occupation policies towards the Palestinian people. The OIC also expressed, at the same time, its dissatisfaction with the decision of the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) to strip Indonesia of the right to host these sporting events. - DNA

## Kvitova shocks Rybakina to win Miami Open

But this year, the courts have been unusually fast, infusing Kvitova's vicious lefty serve and nuclear groundstrokes with even more pace

MIAMI: For almost the entirety of Petra Kvitova's storied 17-year career, the hard courts of the Miami Open have played slowly in humid Floridian weather, conditions entirely unsuited to the best fast-court player of her generation. In her 12 previous Miami Open appearances, she had never passed the quarter-finals. But this year, the courts have been unusually fast, infusing Kvitova's vicious lefty serve and nuclear groundstrokes with even more pace. She has ruthlessly taken advantage of the more favourable conditions and on Saturday afternoon the 15th seed closed off nine days of vintage ball-striking by outmuscling Elena Rybakina, the 10th seed, 7-6 (14), 6-2. By winning the title for the first time, she ended Rybakina's 13-match winning streak and her pursuit of the "sunshine double". Indian Wells and Miami, at the final stage. After ample struggles in this autumn of her career, including falling out of the top 30 last season, as many questioned

whether she would keep playing for much longer, Miami marks the 33-year-old's first WTA 1000 title since 2018 and ninth overall. Most notably, this is a milestone 30th career title for Kvitova, the highest tally among her generation. Among active women players, only Venus Williams has won more titles. The first three months of the season has underlined a shift in the tour. After years of defence-based players populating the top ranks of the women's tour, first-strike tennis now rules. Kvitova has long exemplified the ethos of uncompromising big hitting and her comfort in the match-up against Rybaki-

na, another of the biggest shotmakers in the world, was immediately clear. Eight games into the final, the average rally length stood at just three shots as both players served well and attacked as early as possible. They converged in a marathon 20-minute tiebreak, the momentum constantly swinging as Kvitova saved five set points before converting her fifth. With the first set secured, Kvitova relaxed, striking the ball freely and serving spotlessly until the end. "Elena didn't lose a tiebreak

[this year]," she told Amazon Prime. "I had it in my mind and I said: 'She has to lose at some point!'" "So I kept going. The balls afterwards were so fluffy and didn't fly at all. I'm lucky. I had to be a little bit more aggressive, which I had been in the end, but during the tiebreak I struggled." Having won her first of two Wimbledon titles 12 years ago, Kvitova has steadily built a hall of fame career, even recovering from a serious knee attack in 2016 to re-establish herself as one of the best tennis players in the world. It has not been without its struggles, her high-risk ball-striking also leading to many early losses. But even as her peers have retired, Kvitova's reputation as one of the most dangerous and unpredictable players in the world endures. "I think nobody really expected this," she said. "Not me, not my team, I would say. I really enjoyed this sunshine double - already in Indian Wells I got in good form. I'm happy I'm injury free and, oh my God, I made it." - Agencies

## Time over for Khan's lies, fraud

FROM PAGE 01

she recalled, adding all proved to be word of his mouth, nothing substantial. He also claimed that he would not only bring 200 economic experts into the country from abroad, but also take initiatives to attract \$200 billion investment in Pakistan, but all of those promises were nothing but lies. "Time for Imran Khan's deception and fraud is over now," the minister said while lashing out at the PTI chief's "facilitators who has been abetting him in his crimes." "Whoever assisting Imran Khan in spreading chaos and anarchy is a criminal," Marriyum said, adding all those "terrorists" who threw petrol bombs on personnel of the Law Enforcement Agencies would be taken to the task. She said Imran Khan "violated the Constitution on the whims of his facilitators who did not exist anymore". "Incompetent" Imran Khan dissolved his own governments in the provinces. His politics is crumbling and he had now become a past, she added. The minister said Imran Khan would be disqualified for "his involvement in receiving foreign funding, stealing expensive wrist watch from Toshakhana and the parental issue of Tyrian White". She said Imran Khan accused a foreign country for his ouster from power and then he had put all the blame on interim CM of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, who was now being blamed for unleashing violence, adding that Imran was doing this to deceive the masses. Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday rebutted the news attributed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which claimed that the latter was not in the favour of holding elections. "This is a lie," she said while terming the news, related to an important meeting chaired by the prime minister in Lahore the other day, "fabricated one". The minister also urged the media to publish only those news which was either issued by the prime minister's office or by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. "Fabricated, baseless and malicious rumours should not be reported as news," she stressed.

## Potter takes 'responsibility' for Villa defeat

LONDON: Under-pressure Chelsea manager Graham Potter said he took responsibility for a 2-0 loss at home to Aston Villa on Saturday sent the Blues into the bottom half of the Premier League tables. Ollie Watkins gave Villa an early lead before a superb strike by John McGinn, fresh from starring in Scotland's shock Euro 2024 win over Spain, made it 2-0 in the 56th minute with Chelsea booted off the field by their own fans come full-time at Stamford Bridge. Defeat saw Villa leapfrog the hosts into ninth place, with the result leaving Chelsea, for so long used to being title-contenders, in 11th - below local rivals Fulham - and five points off any European spot. "I don't like to blame anybody, I have to take responsibility," said Potter. As for the jeers of the fans, the former Brighton boss added: "We can feel the pain of the supporters... I understand when you lose at home, the emotion of the game is such that people are going to be disappointed and frustrated and angry." - APP

## Man Utd must be in UCL: Ten Hag

LONDON: Erik ten Hag has insisted Manchester United must be playing Champions League football next season, saying there can be "no misunderstanding" about their need to return to Europe's premier club football competition. The former Ajax manager has overseen an impressive return to form after taking charge at Old Trafford last season with the English giants in the doldrums. Under the Dutch boss, United ended a six-year trophy drought with victory over Newcastle in last month's League Cup final. "One thing let's make clear, we have to play Champions League football," Ten Hag said. - Agencies



**Briefs**

**Amna Baloch appointed ambassador to EU and Belgium**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior diplomat Amna Baloch has been appointed as Pakistan's ambassador to the European Union and Belgium. According to diplomatic sources, Amna Baloch will assume her duties as ambassador next month. The post of Ambassador to the European Union and Belgium was vacant after Dr. Asad Ma'jeed Khan became Foreign Secretary. Amna Baloch is currently the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Malaysia and was recently promoted to BFS-22. She assumed charge as the High Commissioner of Pakistan in Malaysia on 19 August 2019. She was born in 1966, received a master's degree in history and joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1991. Amna Baloch served as a Section Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1992 to 1994 and from January 1998 to June 2002. Moreover, she worked as Deputy Director from March to August 2004 and as Director from March 2005 to August 2010. Between July 2002 to December 2003, she worked as Second Secretary in Copenhagen. She also served as a Counsellor/Minister in Colombo, Sri Lanka from April 2011 to June 2014. Amna Baloch served as Consul General at the Consulate General in Chengdu, China from July 2014 to July 2017.

**Japan urges China to release detained national**

BEIJING: Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi met his Chinese counterpart on Sunday and urged Beijing to promptly release a detained Japanese national. Hayashi's meeting with Qin Gang was the first visit to Beijing for a Japanese foreign minister in over three years, as the two rival Asian powers seek common ground amid rising regional tension. An employee of Astellas Pharma Inc (4503.T) was detained in China for unknown reasons, a company spokesperson said a week ago. Five Japanese nationals are currently detained in China, two of whom have already been tried and found guilty, according to Japan's foreign ministry. "I made a protest against the recent detention of a Japanese person in Beijing, and made a strong point of our position on the matter, including the early release of this national," Hayashi told reporters. Qin responded that China "will handle (the case) according to the law", according to a readout from the Chinese foreign ministry. Hayashi said Japan is seeking transparency over the legal process regarding detentions and has asked for China to secure a fair and safe business environment. He did not elaborate on China's reaction. - APP

**KP-Balochistan highway blocked by landsliding**

QUETTA: The N-50 highway connecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan was blocked on Sunday at Dhana Sar and Manikhawa locations in Balochistan's Sherani district after torrential rains caused landslides in the area, leaving vehicles stranded. Balochistan Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Director General (DG) Naseer Khan Nasir told Dawn.com that National Highway connecting KP's Dera Ismail Khan and Balochistan's Zhoab was "completely closed off due to landslides" at the above-mentioned locations. He added that the recent torrential rains in KP's bordering mountains and Koh-i-Sulaiman range had led to floods in Balochistan and bordering areas of KP. - APP

**West Bank: Israeli soldier kills Palestinian citizen**

The Jerusalem incident at the edge of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex, the third holiest site in Islam, came at a high point of Muslim attendance for the holy month of Ramadan. The compound, revered by Jews as the Temple Mount, is also the most sacred site in Judaism

NEWS DESK

**OCCUPIED WEST BANK:** An Israeli soldier has shot dead a Palestinian man in the occupied West Bank, hours after a policeman killed a medical student at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa compound. The Palestinian Authority identified the man killed in the West Bank on Saturday as Mohammad Ra'ed Baradiyah, 24. Witnesses told the Palestinian Wafa news agency that Baradiyah was shot in his car near the town of Beit Ummar and that medics were denied access to the wounded man. "Baradiyah was left bleeding helplessly until he died of his wounds," the agency reported. The Israeli military said Baradiyah was shot dead after he rammed his car into a group of soldiers. Israeli medics said three people were wounded, two of them seriously. Earlier on Saturday, Israeli police said they shot dead another Palestinian man at the Chain Gate, an access point to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem. Palestinian worshippers at the entrance to the site said the police shot 26-year-old Mohammad Khaled al-Osaibi at least 10 times after he tried to prevent them from harassing a woman who was on her way to the holy compound.

**Israel attacks Syria's Homs**

**DAMASCUS:** Israel has launched air raids on outposts in Syria's Homs province, wounding at least five soldiers, according to the Syrian Ministry of Defence. The raids early on Sunday were the third in recent days, including an attack on Friday that killed two military advisers with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to Iran's semi-official Mehr News Agency. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanani, said in a statement on Sunday that the two IRGC members died fighting "terrorism" supported by Israel and that Israel had violated Syrian sovereignty and international law. "It is obvious that the blood of these eminent martyrs will not be wasted and in addition to politically and legally pursuing these violating and criminal actions, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to respond at an appropriate time and place to the terrorism of the fake Israeli regime," he said. Israel launched "an aerial aggression from the direction of northwest Beirut, targeting some outposts in Homs city and its countryside at 00:35 am" (21:35 GMT on Saturday) and Syrian air defences had intercepted some of the missiles, the ministry said in a statement carried by state media. A Syrian military source told state media that the attacks caused some material damage and injured five military personnel. The Israeli military declined to comment on the report, according to the Reuters news agency. Without referring to any specific attacks or sites, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet that Israel is "exacting a heavy price from terrorist-supporting regimes" outside its borders. Two Western intelligence sources who requested anonymity told Reuters that the rocket strikes targeted the T4 air base west of the ancient city of Palmyra and al-Dabaa airport near the city of al-Qusayr close to the Lebanese border, an area where Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah group is deployed. Iranian military personnel and Hezbollah fighters are stationed at both airports and there is a strong presence of pro-Iranian militias in that area of Homs province, the sources said. Syria denies Western and Israeli allegations that Iran, whose top military officials frequently visit Syria, has an extensive military presence in the country. - DNA

The police, however, alleged al-Osaibi tried to take a gun from an officer and fired it in a scuffle. Al-Osaibi's family has disputed the police account of his death and demanded to see security camera footage. "He is a polite, kind man from a family of doctors who was going to Al-Aqsa for spiritual reasons," his cousin Fahad al-Osaibi said. "If you want us to believe that he tried to attack police, then show us the security footage." Al-Osaibi's family said he was a physician who had recently passed his exams and earned his medical degree in Romania. He returned to his hometown a month ago, his cousin said, and was caring for his sick father as he worked to get certified in Israel. Raam, a political party that represents Israel's Palestinian minority, also rejected the police account of events and called for an investigation. Meanwhile, the umbrella organisation representing Israel's Palestinian citizens announced a "general strike and day of mourning" on Sunday following the "execution" of al-Osaibi. The Jerusalem incident at the edge of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex, the third holiest site in Islam, came at a high point of Muslim attendance for the holy month of Ramadan. The compound, revered by Jews as Temple Mount, is also the most sacred site in Judaism.

**Three UK citizens held in Taliban custody**

WEB DESK

LONDON: Three British men, including a charity worker, are being held in Taliban custody in Afghanistan, a UK non-profit organisation says, and the UK foreign ministry says it is working to secure contact with them. In a statement released on Saturday, the foreign office said it was providing support to their families. The Presidium Network said it is assisting two of the detainees, charity medic Kevin Cornwell, 53, and an unnamed man. It also confirmed that the third man is Miles Routledge, 23, a British holidaymaker who received widespread attention and criticism on social media in August 2021 for having travelled to Afghanistan despite the Taliban's return to power after US-led foreign forces withdrew from the country. "We believe they are in good health and being well treated," Scott Richards of the Presidium Network told UK-based Sky News. "We have no reason to believe they've been subject to any negative treatment such as torture, and we're told that they are as good as can be expected in such circumstances."

**APNS welcomes Sohail as Secy Info**  
*Sarmad Ali hopes new Secretary would resolve pending issues*



ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on Saturday welcomed and congratulated Sohail Ali Khan on his appointment as Secretary (In-charge) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. In a statement Secretary General APNS Sarmad Ali expressed the hope that the problem of print media would not only be resolved soon but also strengthen the government's relations with media under the Secretaryship of Sohail Ali Khan. "I would like to take this opportunity to bring in your (Sohail) notice the issues pertaining to the print media which are still lying unattended and these included our pending request for a 50 per cent increase in government advertising rates which have not been increased since 2017, enhancement in the quantum of government advertising and payments of long outstanding dues," he said. Sarmad Ali assured APNS full support and cooperation to the newly appointed Secretary Information & Broadcasting in the larger interest of the media and country. - DNA

**All set to reopen Khunjerab Pass Monday after three years**  
- PM Shehbaz lauds reopening of Khunjerab Pass

GILGIT: The Khunjerab Pass, a major trade route between Pakistan and China, is likely to be re-opened April 03 after a closure of almost three years in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. All arrangements in this regard have been completed. It is pertinent to mention here that Khunjerab Pass connects Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan with China's Xinjiang, the Uyghur autonomous region, which had been closed in the year 2020 after the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. The closure of Khunjerab Border caused immense financial hardships to the local business community and a large number of workers were left jobless. According to pro-



daily bus service from Sost Valley of Gilgit-Baltistan to Xinjiang province of China. The port authorities on the Chinese side of Khunjerab Pass have been instructed to take all necessary measures regarding Covid-19 before the start of arrival of goods from Pakistan. - DNA

**PPP minister criticizes PML-N policies**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MNA Qadir Mandokhail has assailed the performance of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) ministers, saying that the party should hand over the finance and interior ministries to other coalition partners if it was unable to handle issues. The lawmaker said, while speaking to a private TV channel, that the PML-N ministers had mishandled the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's arrest. "The Punjab IGP

should also be punished for his failure to arrest Imran Khan," he added. He said that PML-N's Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz had said it was not her government even though her uncle was the prime minister of the country. "People cannot be fooled by such talk," he added. He also criticised Finance Minister Ishaq Dar over his statement about "not compromising on the country's nuclear programme" in the Senate. Demanding a probe against him, Mandokhail said that the PPP would not compromise on the country's nuclear and missile programmes. The PPP MNA also lashed out at Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Punjab IG for mishandling Imran Khan's arrest issue. "I told Rana Sanaullah to handle the situation wisely, but he failed to control one person and the situation worsened." - DNA

**Dozens arrested in India over communal violence**

DNA

NEW DELHI: More than a dozen people were arrested in India's Bihar on Sunday as raids continued in the state following two days of communal riots, according to local media. Communal clashes were reported in West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat on Thursday and Friday during the Hindu festival of Ram Navmi which commemorates the birth of the Hindu deity Ram. Local media said vehicles, houses as well as shops were set on fire and several people were injured. On Saturday, media reported that fresh violence erupted in two to three places in Bihar in which one person was killed. It quoted Superintendent of Police Ashok Mishra as saying that the person died during violence in Bihar and his body had been sent for a postmortem examination. Subsequently, several arrests were made. Mishra said that eight first information reports had been filed and more than 50 people had been arrested in raids that were conducted at night. Separately, Indian publication Scroll.in reported that authorities have banned gath-

erings of four or more persons in Sasaram and Biharsharif under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. It said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was scheduled to take part in a function in Bihar's Sasaram, also canceled his visit because of the clashes. Meanwhile, Bihar Bharatiya Janata Party chief Samrat Choudhary blamed Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for deteriorating law and order in the state, the Scroll.in report stated. "Even Bihar Sharif, which falls in the chief minister's home district of Nalanda, is in turmoil. So are many other parts of the state," Choudhary was quoted as saying. For his part, Kumar said that communal tensions during Ram Navmi festivities were disturbing and asked the police to punish those responsible for the chaos. "Such incidents happened for the first time in the area. It's not natural... We know that some people are indulging in mischief and are trying to disrupt communal harmony in the state. We will not allow this to happen," the report quoted the chief minister as saying. In West Bengal, deaths were reported during the clashes.

CALIFORNIA: At least 26 people have been killed after a series of tornadoes tore through towns and cities in the South and Midwest of the United States. Homes were destroyed and thousands left without power after huge storms caused devastation across several states. There have been more than 80 reported tornadoes since 31 March, according to the National Weather Service. States including Arkansas, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Alabama and Mississippi have all had fatalities. One storm shredded through the Arkansas town of Wynne - a community some 100 miles (170km) east of the state capital, Little Rock. Ashley Macmillan said she, her husband and their children huddled with their dogs in the bathroom as a tornado passed overhead, "praying and saying goodbye to each other, because we thought we were dead". A falling tree seriously damaged their

**Death toll grows as extreme storms ravage US states**

home, but they were unhurt. "We could feel the house shaking, we could hear loud noises, dishes rattling. And then it just got calm," Ms Macmillan told news agency. Wynne High School was badly damaged, with some buildings torn to pieces. One of its teachers, Lisa Worden, said a decision to send pupils home early was critical. "We got out at 1:30, which was such a God blessing from our superintendent, because otherwise kids would have been on busses and teachers would have still been here. And so that would have been even more devastating," she told a news agency. Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency in the state of

Arkansas on Friday, with the national guard activated to help with recovery efforts. She said she had spoken to President Joe Biden about the situation, who promised federal aid. Friday's storms also led to the collapse of a theatre roof at a packed heavy metal gig in Belvidere, Illinois state, leading to one death and 28 injuries. As storms continue to work their way east, hundreds of thousands of people are without power across several states. Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania are the worst affected, according to the US PowerOutage website. In a bulletin, the Storm Prediction Center warned some of the projected tornadoes could track across the ground for long distances. - APP

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