



Prince Harry, Meghan involved in car chase while being followed by photographers

NEW YORK (Agencies): Prince Harry and his wife Meghan were pursued by photographers in cars after a charity event in New York, the couple's office said Wednesday. The pair, together with Meghan's mother, were followed for more than two hours by a half-dozen vehicles with blacked out windows after leaving the event, their office said. Their office said in a statement that the chase "resulted in multiple near collisions involving other drivers on the road, pedestrians and two NYPD officers." It called the incident "near catastrophic." Harry's mother, Princess Diana, died in a car crash in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi in Paris. The NYPD did not provide immediate comment to describe or corroborate the royals' statement about the incident. "While being a public figure comes with a level of interest from the public, it should never come at the cost of anyone's safety," the statement from the couple said. Security for Harry and Meghan has been an issue since the British government stripped them of protection when they moved to California in 2020 and it figures in three of his



legal cases against the government and tabloid press. The chase occurred the same day a lawyer for Harry argued in a London court that he should be able to challenge a government decision denying him the right to pay police for his own security in the UK. Harry has argued his safety was "compromised due to the absence of police protection" during a short visit to the UK in July 2021, when his car was chased by photographers as he left a charity event. The couple have said they funded their own security after former President Donald Trump said the US government wouldn't pay to protect them. Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, had been in New York to accept the Ms. Foundation Women of Vision Award with Black Voters Matter co-founder La-

Tosha Brown. The gala kicked off the foundation's largest fundraising campaign ever — \$100 million over the next 12 months — that will be used to further the organization's equity-centered initiatives and its mission of advancing women's collective power. With her mother, Doria Ragland, in the audience, Meghan recounted how Ms. Magazine was always in their house and how it affected her world view. "I am a woman who remains inspired and driven by this organization," she said, looking over at Ms. Foundation co-founder Gloria Steinem. "It allowed me to recognize that part of my greater value and purpose in life was to advocate for those who felt unheard, to stand up to injustice, and to not be afraid of saying what is true and what is just and what is right." The event was her first public appearance since she skipped the coronation of her father-in-law King Charles III earlier this month in order to stay at home in California for her son Prince Archie's fourth birthday. Her husband Prince Harry attended the coronation in London and then rushed back to California.

Iraq bans US dollar transactions to boost local currency

BAGHDAD (Agencies): The Iraqi Ministry of Interior imposed a ban on the use of US dollars in personal and commercial transactions in Iraq. According to local reports, the ban, which came into force last Sunday, aims to promote the use of the local currency, the Iraqi dinar, and limit the use of the US dollar in Iraq. The measure is expected to reduce the difference between the official exchange rate offered by the government and the exchange rate in the black market, a difference that has driven up prices. The Iraqi Ministry of Interior mentioned in a statement that the Iraqi dinar is the national currency in Iraq, and the commitment to dealing with local currency



enhances the sovereignty and economy of the country. The Interior Ministry also indicated that dealing in currencies other than the Iraqi dinar is punishable by law and that it is committed to holding those trying to undermine the Iraqi currency. To impose this ban, the Interior Ministry's Anti-Organized Crime Directorate requested merchants to sign undertakings, affirming that they would conduct their businesses only using the Iraqi dinar.

Quad summit in Australia canceled after Joe Biden shortens Asia trip

SYDNEY (Agencies): A planned summit of Quad leaders from the United States, India, Australia, and Japan in Sydney next week has been canceled after US President Joe Biden pulled out of his visit, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Wednesday, adding that talks could still proceed as leaders visit Japan. Biden was slated to gather with Albanese, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio on May 24 for a meeting of the informal security dialogue, which is widely seen as a counter to China's aggressive posture in the region. The late hour cancellation — which also saw Biden pull out of a visit to Papua New Guinea — comes as the US seeks to energize its security ties in the Pacific amid rising competition with Beijing. But Washington's



fractious domestic politics has curtailed what would have been a significant visit to Asia by a US president. Biden had been planning to travel to Sydney for the summit as part of a weeklong Asia tour that was set to begin in Hiroshima, Japan, for a Group of Seven (G7) leader summit, and include a stopover in Papua New Guinea for a meeting with Pacific Island leaders. Biden will still travel to Japan starting Wednesday, but he canceled the additional legs of the trip, due to the ongoing debt ceiling negotiations in Washington, the White House confirmed Tuesday.

Global warming set to break key 1.5C limit for first time

LONDON (Agencies): Our overheating world is likely to break a key temperature limit for the first time over the next few years, scientists predict. Researchers say there's now a 66% chance we will pass the 1.5C global warming threshold between now and 2027. The chances are rising due to emissions from human activities plus the El Niño weather event expected this summer. If the world passes the limit, scientists stress the breach, while worrying, will likely be temporary. Hitting the threshold would mean the world is 1.5C warmer than it was during the second half of the 19th Century, before fossil fuel emissions from industrialisation really began to ramp up. The 1.5C figure has become a symbol of global climate change negotiations. Countries agreed to "pursue efforts" to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C under the 2015 Paris agreement. Going over 1.5C every year for a decade or two would see far greater impacts of warming, such as longer heatwaves, more intense storms and wildfires. But passing the level in one of the next few years would not mean that the Paris limit had been broken. Scientists say there is still time to restrict global warming by cutting emissions sharply.

3M chief business officer fired for inappropriate conduct

NEW YORK (Agencies): Manufacturer 3M fired longtime executive Michael Vale on Friday, citing "inappropriate conduct and violation of company policy." Vale was promoted to a new role as 3M's group president and chief business and country officer just last month. In that position, Vale oversaw 3M's safety, industrial, consumer, transportation and electronics businesses, reporting directly to CEO Mike Roman. Before the new role, Vale served as 3M's group president for the company's safety and industrial business. Vale was paid more than \$1.6 million in total cash compensation a year by the company, as of April 1,

2022, according to a recent company shareholder report. Vale had been an employee at the company, which produces tape, surgical masks, and other industrial products, for more than 30 years. The company said he was terminated for cause, in an announcement on Monday. 3M said that it took immediate action after verifying Vale's violation of company policy and that the inappropriate conduct was "unrelated to the company's operations and financial performance." The company's stock opened in the red on Monday, but rebounded by early afternoon. When reached for comment by CNN, 3M referred to its statement.

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy ordered to wear electronic tag after losing corruption appeal

PARIS (Agencies): Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has lost his appeal against a 2021 conviction for corruption and influence-peddling at the Paris court of appeals. The court on Wednesday upheld his initial sentence of three years of prison, with Sarkozy being required to wear an electronic bracelet under house arrest for one year, and two years suspended. "Nicolas Sarkozy is innocent," his lawyer Jacqueline Laffont told CNN affiliate BFMTV on her way out of court. "The decision is astounding and unfair," she added. Laffont said Sarkozy "will go to the end of this judicial process," and will file an appeal at the French

supreme court, the last legal step before his sentence is executed. Sarkozy was first sentenced in March 2021 for trying to illegally obtain information from a senior magistrate in 2014 about an ongoing investigation into his campaign finances. The Paris prosecutor had then requested a three-year prison sentence, with two years suspended, for the former president and his co-defendants: his lawyer Thierry Herzog and former magistrate Gilbert Azibert. The case dates back to 2013 when investigators looking into Sarkozy's campaign finances bugged phones belonging to the former president and his lawyer Herzog.

Britain to train Ukrainian pilots, supply more missiles and drones



LONDON (Agencies): Britain is to start elementary flight training for Ukrainian pilots as part of a new military support package announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during a face-to-face meeting in the U.K. with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday. Sunak linked the training program to efforts by the U.K. and others to equip the Ukrainian Air Force with Lockheed Martin-made F-16 aircraft, which

he called "Ukraine's fighter jets of choice." During the meeting, which took place at the prime minister's Chequers country retreat just outside of London, the British government announced it would step up the supply of air defense missiles and 200-kilometer-range (124-mile-range) attack drones as part of a steadily growing arms package supplied by the U.K. to Ukraine. Last week, Britain became the first Western nation to supply long-range cruise missiles to Ukrainian forces when the Defence Ministry announced it was already delivering MBDA-built Storm Shadow weapons to equip Kyiv's Soviet-era combat jets with a potent strike capability.

Amid Reports of Rift, Taliban Appoints Maulvi Kabir as Prime Minister

KABUL (Agencies): The Taliban* stormed back to power in Kabul in August 2021 but failed to form an inclusive government, a fact which has become a bone of contention between its various factions. The Taliban have named Maulvi Abdul Kabir as Afghanistan's acting Prime Minister. He replaced Mullah Muhammad Hassan Akhund on this post, since the latter reportedly fell ill, Kabul-based Khaama Press and Amu TV said on Wednesday. The move was confirmed by the headline Islamic group's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who said that Hassan Akhund has not been seen in Kabul since he went to Kandahar to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr in April. Though the Taliban have cited Hassan Akhund's ill health as the reason behind his replacement, the development



comes only days after Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani had criticized the group's "exclusivity of power." "The system should not be that small and exclusive that only members of religious schools (madrassas) would see them represented," Haqqani said last week. "We should not make the system small and exclusive, but this government belongs to all people." Coming back to Abdul Kabir, he's among the senior-most Taliban members and was part of the group that negotiated the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in Qatar.

Defense ministers from Japan, China inaugurate hotline

TOKYO (Agencies): The Japanese and Chinese defense ministers inaugurated their long-awaited hotline on Tuesday as a step to build trust and improve communication at a time when Japan and other neighbors are concerned about Beijing's increasingly assertive military activities. Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada and his Chinese counterpart, Li Shangfu, talked for about 20 minutes through the hotline for the first time since it was established on March 31, the Japanese Defense Ministry said. The two ministers welcomed the start of the operational use of the hotline and affirmed the importance of "the maritime and aerial communication mechanism," which includes the hotline, in building trust between the two sides while avoiding



contingencies. Tokyo and Beijing are embroiled in a dispute over tiny Japanese-controlled islands in the East China Sea, known as the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China. China routinely sends Coast Guard vessels and planes into waters and airspace surrounding the islands to harass Japanese vessels, with Japan's military scrambling jets in response. China's naval fleet also regularly circles around Japanese coasts, sometimes in joint military exercises with Russia, irking Tokyo.

About Khyber Mail The Khyber mail was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932. A newspaper in English by the eminent journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989 it has survived as leading English newspaper in the region by the sons of Sana Ullah i.e. Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah and Sheikh Saleem Ullah. The publication was shut down in 1989 due to various reasons. The current owner Rizwan Inayat son of Sheikh Inayat Ullah and grandson of Sheikh Sana Ullah, has restarted the family heritage but meeting with the requirement of the century, by giving the readers current happenings around the world with one touch anywhere any time and updating the reader to pace up with the world.

92 miscreants identified in violent protest on May 9 in Dir

PESHAWAR (APP): The Special Branch of district police Lower Dir has identified as many as 92 miscreants who were involved in vandalism in disguise of protests on May 9 in the district. According to the report available with this agency, these miscreants were directly involved in damaging the public and private properties on the day. The report recommended strong legal action against them. Meanwhile, another report of the police in the provincial capital disclosed that the miscreant elements in the guise of protests on May 9 and 10, looted public and private properties besides causing damage worth millions of rupees to

government offices and army check posts in the city. An official report regarding the losses in the provincial capital revealed that the miscreants vandalized public and private properties in Bacha Khan Chowk and Firdous areas and set fire to offices of Radio Peshawar and Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) located in a four-storey building of PBC. Moreover, five motorbikes, two vehicles and a cattle market wherein 20 cattle were also burnt alive. Similarly, the saboteurs also destroyed the installations of Sui-gas and PTCL, private vehicles on the way and looted ATMs of different banks and arms' shops thus causing loss of millions of rupees, it

said, adding that they also vandalized the offices of Election Commission and Khyber Bank besides attacking the check posts of Army near Gora Qabristan and on Shami road. The main gate of the provincial assembly was also broken by the violent mob while a group of criminals ransacked the Hayatabad check-post and stole two motorbikes and official furniture and electronic appliances, including computers, fans, water coolers and others. The report further mentioned that public and private properties were also damaged in Bannu, Khyber, Charsadda, Lower Dir, Kohat, Mardan and Swabi and added a list of losses was being prepared.

Three operatives of banned outfit held

PESHAWAR (APP): A special operation team of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) during an intelligence based operation arrested three operatives of a banned outfit and recovered huge cache of arms from their custody. According to police spokesman, the three accused were wanted to police in various crimes of serious nature including extortion and terrorism. The CTD team acting on a tip-off blocked the roads entering Peshawar city from district Khyber and arrested the ac-

cused after an encounter. The terrorists were identified as Mohammad Ijaz, Wasal Khan and Mohsin Khan, residents of Koki Khel, Jamrud. The CTD teams recovered six hand-grenade, one SMG with 22 cartridges of 7.62 bore, spare magazine, one pistol of 9-mm with two cartridges, one pistol of 30-bore with four cartridges and three mobile phones. The accused were shifted to CTD police station where investigation was started for the arrest of other criminals.

Al-Khidmat foundation inaugurates Aghosh Home for orphans in Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan initiated the construction of Aghosh Home in Mardan, with the foundation stone laid during a ceremony led by President Prof. Dr. Hafeezur Rahman. The event was attended by renowned cricketer Fakhr-ul-Zaman and Mardan City mayor Hamayatullah Mayar. The project aims to support 200 orphans and is projected to be completed within two years, with a budget of 160 million rupees. The inauguration took place in Azhan Colony, Mayar Road, Mardan, with the presence of notable figures including former member of the National Assembly Maulana Dr. Ataur Rehman, National Chairman of Aghosh Homes Air Marshal Retd Farooq Habib, and Provincial Minister of food Shiraz Akram, among others. Prof. Dr. Hafeezur Rahman emphasized Al-Khidmat

Foundation's dedication to humanitarian service, particularly during times of natural disasters and global epidemics. The organization's widespread recognition and support were acknowledged, while Mardan's City Mayor designated 20 kanals of land for the Aghosh Home project. Fakhr-ul-Zaman expressed his wholehearted support for the initiative, underscoring the shared responsibility of sponsoring orphans as a national and religious duty. He pledged his assistance to the people of Mardan in this noble endeavor. Various speakers, including Al-Khidmat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Khalid Waqas, Provincial General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Abdul Wasi, and Provincial Minister for Food Shiraz Akram Bacha, commended the establishment of Aghosh Home in Mardan.

CM KP allocates a day each week for merged district people

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has announced to allocate a day in each week for the people of merged districts to resolve their problems on priority basis. In a bid to address public problems at the district level, the Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan, has decided to dedicate one day every week for merged district matters, said spokesman of Chief Minister House on Wednesday. As part of this initiative, the general public of merged districts will have the opportunity to

meet with the Chief Minister every Thursday at CM House Peshawar from 3pm to 5pm. District residents are encouraged to avail this opportunity and visit the CM House during the designated time to inform the Chief Minister about their concerns and problems. In order to effectively address the public issues in merged districts, the Chief Minister will issue necessary directives to the relevant authorities. The decision by the Chief Minister demonstrates his commitment to ensure that the concerns of the public in various districts are heard and addressed promptly. By allocating a specific day each week, he aims to streamline the process

of resolving public issues and provide a platform for direct communication between the people and the government, said the spokesman of CM House. The initiative has been widely welcomed by the residents of merged districts, who view it as a positive step towards improving governance and addressing the needs of people. It is worth mentioning here that, it is the second session of these meetings is scheduled to take place on Thursday, May 18. Last week maximum tribal elders visited CM's House and the Chief Minister had issued directives to concerned authorities to resolve their problems on priority basis.

Murad Ali of KP reaches semis in 34th National Games Men Badminton Singles

PESHAWAR (APP): Eight times National Champion international Murad Ali of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took berth into the semi-finals of the Men Singles Badminton event part of the ongoing 34th National Games being played at Indoor Hall of the Ayub Stadium, Quetta on Wednesday. Murad Ali continued his winning spree, by recording a thumping victory against his strong rival Tayyub Shafiq of Higher education Commission (HEC) in the marathon three sets battle. Setting up a semi-final clash against another promising player Shoaib Riaz, also hailing from Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but playing for Pakistan Army, Mu-

rad Ali dominated the first and third sets before losing the second set to his strong rival Tayyub Shafiq. Murad Ali has the honor of winning the National Badminton Championship, National Ranking Men Championship for record eight times, was also the gold medal winner of the 33rd National Games held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2019. Murad Ali, a South Asian Games bronze medalist and also represented Pakistan in Commonwealth Games in Australia and Asian Games in Indonesia, said: "I am trying my hard to win back the title again and hopefully it will be a good semi-final against the most talented Shoaib Riaz of Pakistan Army.

Ten arrested during grand anti-encroachment operation in Tehkal

PESHAWAR (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi on Wednesday carried out a grand anti-encroachment operation in Tehkal Payan area during which ten violators were arrested while two truckloads of encroached items were confiscated. According to the district administration, over 30 ramps, and encroached sheds were removed by the heavy machinery while an illegal fruit market was also

removed during the operation. The AC Zainab Naqvi while taking action on instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shah Fahad along with Director West Enforcement Capital Metropolitan Arbab Ameen Haidar and demolishing staff conducted the operation against encroachers in Tehkal Payan. On the occasion, she warned the shopkeepers to refrain from encroachment and keep the footpaths open for pedestrians.

FIA arrests Hawala accused, recovers Rs 22.9m

PESHAWAR (APP): The Commercial Banking Wing of FIA and Excise Department during a joint action arrested an accused involved in illegal payments of remittances (Hawala Hundi) and money exchange here on Wednesday. Following instructions issued by the Director FIA KP Zone, Nisar Ahmad Khan, Director Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar, Afzal Khan Niazi and a team of Excise

arrested the accused named Fareed Hussain and initiated an investigation against him under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. The FIR and Excise teams also recovered Rs 22.9 million and six chequebooks of different banks from the possession of the accused. The FIA also recovered data from the mobile and lists regarding Hundi and Hawala. Further interrogation from the accused was underway.

PDMA prepares comprehensive heat wave action plan in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) under the guidance of Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Wednesday unveiled a comprehensive heat wave action plan 2023 to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat in the province. The plan designed considering the adverse effects of climate change and rising temperatures, assigns clear roles and responsibilities to all stakeholders to ensure citizens' health, safety, infrastructure, and forest protection. The Heat Wave Action Plan was developed with the consultations of relevant stakeholders and an analysis of past experiences of heat waves in the province. The plan emphasizes the importance of awareness

campaigns to educate citizens about preventive measures against heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) seasonal outlook, temperatures were expected to be slightly above normal in the upcoming two months. With the anticipated rise in temperatures, the general public is advised to take necessary precautions to avoid heat stroke. To protect oneself from heat stroke and other heat-related ailments during the heatwave period, PDMA advises the masses to drink plenty of water, wear loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing to allow better air circulation and reflect sunlight, limit direct exposure to the sun during peak hours, typically between 10 am to 4 pm.

PESCO notifies power suspension in Peshawar, Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Wednesday announced the power suspension schedule due to maintenance work. PESCO said that the power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Rehman Baba Grid Station on May 18, 22, 25 and 29 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Resultantly, consumers of 11KV Kachori, Shalozai, Safdar Abad, Khanmust, New Hazar Khwani, Surizai, Phandu Baba, Urmar 2, Hazar Khwani, Yakatoot, New Chairman Daftar, Jameel Colony, Ring Road, Beri Bagh, Rashid Ghari, Surizai, Akhon Abad, Ring Road 2, SIDB feeders will face inconvenience. It said that power supply would also remain suspended from 132 KV Kohat Road Grid Station on May 18, 22, 25 and 29 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. due to which consumers of 11KVPAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Bagh, Sonehri Masjid, Bana Mari, Civil Quarter, Nothia, Murshad Abad, Abasin, Old Deh Bahadar, Deh Bahadar, Wazir Abad, Ameen Colony, J Bara, Nodhya Payan, Murshid Ababad, Dora Road, Nodiya Bahadar, Lundi Arbab 1,2,3, Sheikh Muhammad, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gulbarg, Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience. The power

supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar City Grid Station on May 18, 22, 25 and 29 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. As a result, consumers of 11KV Sikhandar Abad, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home, Bana Mari, Urmar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molvi G, Nishtarabad, NHA feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will also remain suspended from 220 KV Mardan Grid Station on May 18, 20, 27 and 31 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., inconveniencing consumers of 11 KV Muhabat Abad, Sheikh Maltoon, Express, Industrial, SIDP, Jan Abad, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, Bacha Khan MED College, Benazir Children Hospital, Bank Road, Nissata Road, Sheikh Maltoon, Ahmad Abad, Misri Khan, Rural 1, PRC, Bagh Iram, New Turo, Nawa Kale, Eid Ghah, Gujar Garhi feeders. Moreover, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Mardan Grid Station on May 18, 20, 27 and 31 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Resultantly, consumers of 11 KV SIDB, Bashakhan, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, Charsadda Road, New Manga, Saleem Khan, Gujar Garhi, Town, Muslim Abad, New Saleem Khan feeders will face inconvenience.

Qamar Zaman calls on newly posted DG Sports KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Vice President Pakistan Squash Federation legendary Qamar Zaman on Wednesday called on newly posted Director General sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Captain (R) Khalid Mahmood in his office and the two discussed in detail ways and means for the game development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Captain (Retd) Khalid Mahmood assured Qamar Zaman, who is also Chairman KP Squash Association, that all possible resources will be used for the development of squash. Chairman Qamar Zaman along with squash player and former champion Maqsood Ahmed met DG Sports Cap-

tain (retd) Khalid Mahmood and congratulated him on assuming the post and discussed squash with him. Qamar Zaman said KP Squash Association is focusing on age-group squash events so that squash should be promoted at the grassroots level. He said the association is keen to have more tournaments at the school level and bring up the players from there, but for this, we need government support. Captain (retd) Khalid Mahmood while appreciating the efforts of Qamar Zaman said that in squash we have produced great champions but now steps should be taken to have players in the international ranking.

Students asked to play role in educating community regarding importance of vote

PESHAWAR (APP): Director Elections Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Asif Ali Yasin on Wednesday asked the students to play their role in educating their community regarding the importance and process of the vote. Director Elections expressed these views while addressing to an awareness session in Shaheed Banazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar. Spokesperson to the Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Ahmad also attended

the voter's awareness session which was arranged by CDPI Pakistan in collaboration with FNFP Pakistan. The students and faculty members were briefed about the electoral process, the importance of the vote, the composition of ECP, the constitutional and legal framework and steps being taken for inclusive and credible elections. A demo regarding the conduct of the poll was also presented in order to educate students about the process of polling.

GOLD PRICE IN PAK

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
Per Tola Gold	Rs 233,300	Rs 213,857	Rs 204,137	Rs 174,975
Per 10 Gram	Rs 200,017	Rs 183,348	Rs 175,015	Rs 150,013
Per Gram Gold	Rs 20,002	Rs 18,335	Rs 17,502	Rs 15,001
Per Ounce	Rs 567,041	Rs 519,785	Rs 496,161	Rs 425,280

FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	292	296
China Yuan	42.07	42.47
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.3
Saudi Riyal	78.5	79.3
U.A.E Dirham	80.5	81.4
UK Pound	366	369
Euro	318	321
Australian Dollar	192.5	194.5
Canadian Dollar	214	216.2

Emergency Numbers

Organization	Phone No
Rescue 1122 HQrs	091-2264224-25
Rescue 1122 Mardan	0937-9230770
Fire Brigade Cantt:	091-9212534
Fire Brigade City	091-2566666
Police Emergency	091-9212222
Edhi Ambulance	091-2214575
Red Crescent Ambulance	091-2210836
Emergency Ambulance	091-2590846
Civil Defence, Peshawar	091-9212176
Lady Reading Hospital	091-9211430
HMC Peshawar	091-9217140-46
KTH Peshawar	091-9216340-8
Irniam Hospital	091-9216115
Mission Hospital	091-2212371
Al-Khidmat Hospital	091-2215945
Fauji Foundation Hospital	091-9212771-4
Frontier Foundation Blood Services	091-5703463
Hamza Foundation, Peshawar	091-5841632
Sui Gas, Peshawar	091-9213016
Wapda Complaint Peshawar	091-9212041
PIA, Peshawar	091-9213351
Airport Inquiry	114
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Sex Offender List

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) should be commended for the recent launch of the National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). The move aims to establish an official list of those convicted of sexual crimes against women and children across the country. This is standard practice across the world—a sexual offenders list is often kept on a national or state level to ensure that convicted offenders do not have the chance to commit repeat offences by simply moving to another place. The database must be maintained diligently and efficiently, which is why it is positive to see the national registration authority take this initiative. NADRA has the capacity and resources necessary to track offenders across the country, which could mean that this registry will be effective if implemented properly. It is equally important to communicate this list's existence and means of access to citizens. The sex offender list is only useful if it is accessible by a large number of people. The strategy to use the SMS service to obtain data then, will perhaps be the most efficient way to allow for the data to be accessible. There is a dire need for the state to take steps against the rising incidence of sexual crimes against women and children. We have repeat instances of very high-profile cases that get media attention, but the number of cases of this nature tells us that more is needed on the part of the state and the public. A sex offender list is a step in the right direction, but a lot more needs to be done to make Pakistan a safer place for both women and children. Improvement of policing and investigative capacity is another crucial reform that we need. It is hoped that the state recognizes the need to take more policy action in this sphere and that authorities work towards change.

Leveraging COP28

— By Aisha Khan

AS we gear up for the 28th Conference of Parties (COP) in December 2023, it is important to remember that laggard momentum is no longer an option. It is time to take stock not just of emission reduction commitments but of the whole range of actions needed to ward off a gathering climate crisis. The COP presidency plays an important role in navigating this complex and often contentious process. This is a time for responding with urgency and tabling concrete, ambitious propositions for transformative adjustments. The UAE can build on the momentum generated at the Petersburg Dialogue to articulate a forward-looking focus on key areas and building alliances, including appointing ministerial pairs to lead on consultations. The UAE can steer the process to harvest key outcomes from partners and strengthen its own climate offer. The G7 Leaders Summit (May 19-21) and the Financing Pact Summit (June 23) are opportunities to leverage ministerial signals for setting expectations from specific actors (Canada, the UK with the support of France) especially on the phase-out of all fossil fuels and coal by 2030. Similarly, efforts need to be made to ensure that leaders from G7, at the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact, show willingness to lead coalitions driving international financial reform, and draw up a joint roadmap for reform implementation and overarching objectives, including private finance. This is an opportunity to ramp up pressure on new international climate commitments to contribute to a Loss and Damage (L&D) fund, by mobilising commitments for making a path-breaking pledge for the Green Climate Fund's replenishment. The COP28 president-designate, Dr Sultan Al-Jaber has already expressed his concern on the delay in the delivery of \$100 billion pledged in 2009 and its diminished value after 14 years. The estimated new adaptation cost of \$1 trillion annually will not be an easy commitment to secure. The list of 'essential actions' is long. Leading by example, the UAE could pioneer innovative sources to secure reliable financial flows for adaptation and loss and damage by making the first pledge to the future L&D fund. This will help initiate a responsive move by other multilateral actors. As host, the UAE can also convene discussions on defining indicators to set trigger points for disbursing L&D finance, particularly in the form of drought and water

stress, to enable effective measurement and response in terms of new funding. Climate summits put greater responsibility on the host country to ratchet up its climate offer to set the stage for negotiations. The UAE's Nationally Determined Contributions set a target equivalent to emissions of 13 per cent above its 2015 levels in 2030. However, the level of ambition required for a 1.5 degrees Celsius compatible emissions pathway is a 36-39pc reduction. There is a clear opportunity here for the UAE to leverage its diplomatic influence through credible actions and urge all countries to comply with the UNFCCC executive secretary's call, to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets, aligning them with the Paris Agreement temperature goal. Building on the COP theme of "a zero carbon and resilient world" and "partnerships to promote progress," the UAE could leverage its influence over the oil and gas sector to accelerate the global energy transition towards renewable energy. It is also a diplomatic opportunity for capitalising on the political energy around reform of the financial system to broker MDBs' support for mobilising guarantees and regional platforms to support the energy transition. COP28 needs to broker a policy and finance package on food and land use. Governments need to reconfirm commitments to deliver nature-based finance under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and agree to work towards scaling-up private sector contributions by expanding payments for ecosystem services. The time is right for triggering debate on the MDBs' financial models and aligning them with public good, advancing debt relief of bilateral, multilateral and privately held debt to free significant fiscal space for investments in the transformation, and making better use of their toolbox, especially guarantees and expansion of lending capacity. The list of 'essential actions' is long; the outcome will once again fall short of expectation. But given the magnitude of the threat, the UAE must push parties to develop, deploy and disseminate technologies and adopt policies to achieve deep decarbonisation in the energy sector. This should be accompanied by a strong demand for increased public and private investments to mobilise quantity and quality of finance for climate action, including tripling MDB/DFI finance from \$60bn to \$180bn in the next five years. Courtesy: DAWN

UK's economic slowdown, scandals and workplace bullying

— By Dr Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

In the months leading up to King Charles' coronation on May 6, while the UK was mourning the passing of its popular queen of 70 years, politics rudely and repeatedly intruded. First, it was the brief but tumultuous 49-day premiership of Liz Truss, whom Queen Elizabeth asked to form a new government just two days before the monarch passed away on Sept. 8. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak formed his new government on Oct. 25, after Truss was pressured to resign following a number of policy missteps. The youngest, richest and one of the most business-savvy prime ministers in modern British history raised hopes that the UK was finally on a clear path toward recovery from Brexit and COVID-19. But Sunak's steady hand has yet to restore confidence in the British economy or lift the country's spirits, as I noticed during a recent lengthy visit. The coronation's pomp and circumstance were needed shots in the arm for the country's morale, but the economic doldrums persist and political scandals at the highest levels of government dampen that spirit. Less than seven months into PM Sunak's term, the economy has not recovered. According to government reports published last week, Britain's economy grew sluggishly in early 2023. Gross domestic product edged up a mere one-tenth of 1 percent in the first three months of the year, the same tepid pace as in the last three months of 2022. A sharp GDP drop in March alarmed the markets. Widespread labor strikes may have contributed to the poor performance, but experts also point to inflation and rising interest rates. Britain's inflation rate exceeded 10 percent in March, double the US level and much higher than the eurozone's. Last Thursday, the Bank of England raised the interest rate to 4.5 percent, its highest level since 2008. The central bank still forecasts the economy to grow 0.25 percent in 2023, which, although weak, is better than its earlier forecast of a contraction during this year. Following Brexit, the UK has been counting on leveraging its deregulated economic environment to attract new investment and trade with its partners, according to the 100-page report on the "Benefits of Brexit," which came out last year. Gulf Coop-

eration Council countries were clearly among those partners, but COVID-19, the Ukraine war, industrial action and the resultant economic stagnation have not made it easy. Nor has the drip, drip of political scandals. Sunak's pledge in October that his government would have "integrity, professionalism and accountability" set a new high bar, given the circumstances and timing of his mandate. However, within six months, several senior officials were forced to resign amid controversies about their conduct. In November, Sir Gavin Williamson, a senior minister and close ally of Sunak's, was forced to resign on charges of bullying his fellow colleagues. In January, the powerful Conservative Party Chairman Nadhim Zahawi left the Cabinet when he was found to be in "serious breach" of the ministerial code related to his taxes. Then, in April, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab quit the Cabinet following the conclusion of an inquiry into bullying allegations against him by two dozen former subordinates. In addition to these public resignations, British tabloids have continued sniping at the prime minister and his Cabinet, with innuendo and leaks intimating further misconduct. This rate of attrition, with three high-ranking officials quitting the Cabinet in six months, worries investors, especially given the amplification of these stories and others by the British media. It may have added to the sluggishness of the economic recovery. However, there may be a positive unintended consequence of Raab's resignation. While discussions continue in Britain over whether existing laws bar the kind of conduct he is accused of, the story has unleashed a larger conversation over the degree of pressure and admonition that may or may not be tolerated in high-pressure business situations, especially those involving senior government officials. According to the UK government's definition, bullying and harassment are behaviors that make someone feel "intimidated or offended." While harassment is unlawful under Britain's Equality Act of 2010, bullying may not be illegal except in certain circumstances. There is a fine legal line between harassment and bullying, hence the ambiguity. Examples of bullying or harassing behav-

ior include unfair treatment, picking on or regularly undermining someone, denying someone training or promotion opportunities, or "spreading malicious rumors," according to the government. Bullying and harassment can happen face-to-face or by letter, email or by phone. While bullying itself is not against the law, it can be regarded as harassment, and thus be unlawful, when the unwanted behavior is related to gender, religion, race, age or disability, among other conditions stipulated in the law. To prove that workplace bullying amounts to unlawful harassment is thus not straightforward, hence it took the UK authorities several months of painstaking investigation to complete their report on Raab. While Raab's exit from the Cabinet promises to limit the damage to the government's reputation, the case has shed light on the serious problem of workplace bullying, not only in Britain but around the world. It should lead to a healthy discussion and raise awareness about this common phenomenon — where senior officials feel, as Raab has maintained, that exacting pressure and candid criticisms are needed to get tasks done properly and in a timely manner. Labor laws around the world, including in GCC countries, are catching up by banning some harmful conduct in the workplace. Harassment, including sexual harassment, was until recently tolerated in the workplace, but no longer, thanks largely to the many victims who have risked their careers and reputations to call it out. Much progress has been made on the legislative side of things, but more work needs to be done to eradicate harassment in the workplace. However, bullying still occupies a legal gray area and some hope that the Raab case will serve to clarify. While his alleged bullying has damaged many of its victims, as well the reputation of the UK government and of course Raab's career and social standing, there may be a silver lining. The very public affair could be the spark that ignites the movement to banish bullying from the workplace. Until legislation and legal enforcement catch up, social awareness and public pressure could help reduce its prevalence. Courtesy: ARAB NEWS

Why The Revival Of Nuclear Energy Is Good News For Russia?

— By Haley Zaremba

It seems increasingly likely that we are witnessing the dawn of a new nuclear era. After decades of decline in the West, a potent mix of climate goals and politically motivated energy wars have changed public and private opinion regarding the controversial energy source. Nuclear has notorious drawbacks, but it's also a proven form of carbon-free energy production, with plenty of existing infrastructure. It also doesn't entail any of the issues with variability that are associated with wind and solar power. Many advocates of nuclear power argue that we can no longer afford to ignore it as a key source of clean energy in the fight against climate change. And increasingly, the public and private sectors are listening. In the United States, the Biden administration has kept momentum building for a nuclear renaissance with its Inflation Reduction Act, which includes tax breaks and other incentives all along the nuclear energy supply chain. Meanwhile, in the European Union, nuclear advocates are trying to push through policy supporting nuclear power as Europe reconfigures its energy landscape in the context of its energy war with Russia. As the bloc scrambles to replace the historically huge role of Russian natural gas in its energy mix, many see nuclear

as a clear solution. Currently, pro-nuclear France is leading a campaign to convince the European Commission to take nuclear power's role in the clean energy transition seriously. Public opinion, too, is shifting. A brand new Gallup poll shows that support for nuclear energy in the United States is at a 10-year high. But there are some considerable drawbacks to the nuclear revolution. For one thing, the West doesn't have nearly enough nuclear fuel to power the kind of comeback that many are expecting. After decades of neglect, nuclear infrastructure and supply chains in the West have atrophied. But some countries never stopped developing their nuclear power industries. China, South Korea, and Russia, for example, have robust nuclear energy sectors and the supply chains to back them up. This puts the West in the ironic position of potentially having to rely on Russian nuclear fuel to build up a homegrown nuclear sector robust enough to replace Russian fossil fuels. That'll show 'em. In fact, as the European Union and the United States have condemned Russia's illegal war in Ukraine through a litany of sanctions, the Russian nuclear sector has never stopped raking in export revenue. Russian state-operated nuclear energy firm Rosatom remains

a key global source of nuclear fuel, enrichment services, and lines of funding for new nuclear facilities, all of which are prohibitively expensive for nearly any private company. Nearly one in five nuclear power plants worldwide are either in Russia or are Russian-built. And the long arm of Rosatom is still growing. Currently, the company is involved in the construction of 15 more nuclear plants around the world. In fact, Russia has been using nuclear expansion as a tactic to increase influence in African countries that could not otherwise afford to build the massively expensive plants. According to the Royal United Services Institute in London, companies in the United States alone sent nearly \$1 billion to Rosatom in 2022. "That's money that's going right into the defense complex in Russia," Scott Melbye, executive vice president of uranium miner Uranium Energy and president of the Uranium Producers of America, was quoted by the Wall Street Journal. "We're funding both sides of the war." But slapping sanctions on Russian nuclear would be a logistical and political nightmare, thanks to a "Russian doll's worth of interlocking dependencies," in the words of Paul Dorfman, chair of Nuclear Consulting Group. — Courtesy: OIL PRICE

Letters to the Editor

Drug addiction
I would like to draw attention to the problem of drug addiction through an article in your newspaper. Many young individuals that I know have developed drug addictions, and lately, I have noticed a significant increase in the number of drug addicts around me. Having worked with addicts before, I know how dangerous it can be, especial-

ly when the addict is young. Drug abuse or drug use, in general, has destroyed the lives of many individuals. They experience psychological and social effects in addition to physical ones. Drug users often are not conscious of what they are doing. The use of drugs can cause innocent people to commit crimes like theft, larceny, and even homicide. Drug abuse should be pre-

vented and treated. It is important to educate young people about the negative impacts that drugs can have on their lives. Your newspaper's column will aid in tackling this pressing problem and assist in educating readers and officials on the subject.
— Batool Ali
— Karachi

NA Deputy Speaker emphasises strengthening Pak-Azerbaijan ties, pays tribute to Heydar Aliyev

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Deputy Speaker, Zahid Akram Durrani, paid tribute to the National Leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev and emphasized the strengthening of Pak-Azerbaijan ties during his address at the special session of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Baku. The session, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Heydar Aliyev's birth, witnessed the convergence of esteemed guests, parliamentarians, and international representa-

tives. Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani expressed his profound gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation. Recognizing the rich history and vibrant culture of Baku, he highlighted the significance of addressing such a dynamic and forward-looking audience. Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani conveyed warm greetings and good wishes from the people of Pakistan, emphasizing the deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan

and Azerbaijan. He acknowledges the exceptional contributions of Heydar Aliyev, to the progress and development of his country. Heydar Aliyev's visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to his people were emphasized by Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani. He highlighted the National Leader's instrumental role in steering Azerbaijan towards progress and prosperity, fortifying its economy, and establishing an efficient public administration.

IT minister stresses importance of high-speed access to internet by every citizen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque on Wednesday stressed for importance to make easy access to high-speed internet a right for every citizen. Talking to a private news channel, he said on 9th May, the suspension of mobile data services had incurred financial losses caused to the national exchequer and private businesses, adding, the use of illegal VPN to access blocked sites was not the solution to the problem and people need to be broadminded.

"Connectivity provides a life-changing opportunity to connect more people and businesses with the services and supports they need to succeed and compete in a global economy", he added. "Today, technology forms a major part of our lives not only in personal but in the professional sphere as well," Amin said. The IT minister said under the law, "we will ban the live streaming of extremist, hateful, obscene and violent content on social media platforms" and would remove content against Pakistan's integrity and defence.

Annual colourful 'Chilam Joshi' festival welcomes large crowd of tourists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The annual religious festival of the Kalash Valley, known as 'Chilam Joshi' has become the center of attraction for a large number of tourist crowds with diversified cultural activities and the influx of tourists to the Kalash Valley has opened up opportunities for the hospitality industry in the country. The exchange of customs, traditions, and folklore in the festival among the attendees creates a vibrant tapestry of cultural diversity, said a report aired by ptv news channel. The Chitral tourism authority's efforts, along with the dedication of

tourism police officers, ensured a safe and memorable experience for all tourists visiting the valley, allowing them to cherish the beauty and charm of Chitral's festival season, said a local tourist. The people from the three valleys of Kailash, Rambur, and Berar have gathered in Bombur to celebrate the festival. Tourism Police jawans are performing their duties enthusiastically under the auspices of the Tourism Authority, said a tourism department official. The event was being widely promoted on social media as well, said a youngster.

World Bee Day to be marked on May 20

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Bee Day will be marked on May 20 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan under the theme "Bee engaged in pollinator-friendly agricultural production", world Bee Day 2023 calls for global action to support pollinator-friendly agricultural production and highlights the importance of protecting bees and other pollinators, particularly through evidence-based agricultural production practices. Bees and other pollinators are fundamental for the health of ecosystems and food security. They help maintain biodiversity and ensure the production of nutritious food. However, intensive monoculture production and improper use of pesticides pose serious threats to pollinators by reducing their access to food and nest-

ing sites, exposing them to harmful chemicals, and weakening their immune systems. The global World Bee Day ceremony, which will be held in hybrid format at the FAO headquarters on Friday, 19 May, will be an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of adopting pollinator-friendly agricultural production practices to protect bees and other pollinators, while contributing to the resilience, sustainability and efficiency of agrofood system. Bees are under threat. Present species extinction rates are 100 to 1,000 times higher than normal due to human impacts. Close to 35 percent of invertebrate pollinators, particularly bees and butterflies, and about 17 percent of vertebrate pollinators, such as bats, face extinction globally.

Seven arrested at marriage party over public complaint

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Seven persons including two dancers were arrested at a wedding ceremony over a public complaint at Mauza Dabbi Shah in Daira Deen Panah police area of Kot Addu, police said on Wednesday. A police team led by ASI Muhammad Nawaz reached the ceremony venue and arrested two dancers and five marriage party attendants including Asif Iqbal, Muhammad Iqbal, Muhammad Imran, Ramzan, and Ishaq. However, bridegroom Faizullah Sandeela escaped immediately after noticing the arrival of the police team. The seven persons were put behind bars and a case was registered against eight (8) including the bridegroom under provisions of the marriage function act 2016. The arrests were made during Tuesday-Wednesday midnight when dancers were performing with music in the play.

IRSA releases 149,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 149,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 128,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1428.20 feet and 30.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 35,500 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.80 feet, 66.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 41,200 cusecs and 48,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 51,300, 56,300, 42,400 and 13,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 29,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 13,400 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Inter-provincial robbery gang busted

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Local police busted an inter-provincial robbery gang and recovered hefty cash, arms, goods and cattle. According to DPO of Alipur, a special team was constituted under the supervision of DSP to arrest Saddam's gang involved in multiple cases of robbery, theft and coercion. Later after the successful raid, the police arrested the gangs' members including the ring leader, Saddam alias Sadami caste Naech, r/o Mukul Hudir, Asif akias Asifi, caste Naech r/o Mukul Hudir, Mudassar alias Mudasari caste Makool r/o Bunday Shah, Mukhtar alias Mukhtiar caste Aarein r/o Tibi Aarein and Haider caste Aarein r/o Tibi Aarein. Two solar plates, two motorbikes, nine goats, a Peter engine, an electric motor, a five-bore ranged pistol with 15 bullets and total cash worth Rs. 4016000 were recovered from all of the accused.

Two killed, one injured in firing incident

SARGODHA (APP): Two persons were gunned down, while another injured in firing incident here near General bus stand Sargodha- Faisalabad road. Satellite town police said here on Wednesday that Muhammad Ashiq (63), his son Muhammad Wasim (35) and their companion Muhammad Umair (39), all residents of Chak no.39 NB, were traveling on car.

British Deputy HC hails work of rural women artisans

KARACHI (APP): Deputy High Commissioner and Director for Trade Pakistan from the British Deputy High Commission Karachi, Sarah Mooney visited Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) Complex on Wednesday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Muhammad Dital Kalhoro welcomed her and briefed her about the aims and objectives of the organization. Mooney explored different parts of the SRSO complex

and sectors, with a particular focus on the Craft Enterprise Development and Sartyoon Sang Crafts Outlet. She showed a keen interest in Sindh's crafts and appreciated the work of rural women artisans. She gain valuable insights into the work being done by SRSO and its impact on the rural communities in Sindh. It also provided an opportunity to foster collaboration and explore potential partnerships.

NHMP sets example of honesty, returns costly cell phone to owner

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has set a high example of honesty by finding a missing mobile worth Rs 75000 and handing it over to the owner. A person while travelling from Islamabad towards Faisalabad stopped at the Chakri service area where he left his valuable mobile phone worth around Rs 75000, a spokesperson of the Motorway Police said. After travelling for some time, he realised that he had forgotten his cell phone

at Chakri. He immediately sought the help of the Motorway Police. As soon as the information was received, the Motorway Police reached the spot and traced the mobile phone and handed it over to the owner who thanked the Motorway Police. During another operation, Motorway Police foiled an attempt to smuggle wheat and recovered 12.5 tons of the commodity from a suspicious truck near Chakri Interchange. The truck was going to Taxila from Pindi Bhattian.

ANF seizes 120.5 kg drugs in three operations: arrests two

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in their ongoing operations against drug smugglers conducted raids in different areas and recovered 120.5 kg of drugs besides netting two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation conducted near Matani on Peshawar Indus Highway, 87.6 kg charras was recovered from

secret cavities of a truck. In a joint operation, ANF and Sindh Ranger conducted a raid near Sukkur-Jacobabad and recovered 30 kg charras from the possession of an accused resident of Pishin. The spokesman said that in the third operation, ANF and Punjab Rangers managed to recover 2.9 kg of heroin from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Sheikhpura.

Best Performance: 161 officials of Livestock Dept get cash prizes, certificates

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Livestock south Punjab Nasir Jamal awarded cash prizes and commendatory certificates to 161 officials of Livestock department for matchless performance in promoting meat and milk production in Multan division. Three doctors in each tehsil of Multan division who examined maximum number of animals at Out Patient Doors (OPDs) were acknowledged. Similarly, the officials who performed amicably in managing artificial insemination and vaccinated maximum number of animals were also appreciated by the

secretary. In a ceremony, the secretary awarded commendatory certificates and cash prizes. The cash prizes were given as per criteria with regard to their basic salaries. Secretary Livestock South Punjab Nasir Jamal stated that livestock was playing important role in strengthening country's economy. He urged officials to work with dedication in order to boost the sector further. Deputy Director Dr Jamshaid informed that the cash prizes and appreciation certificates were given for the first time in the history of the department.

10 gamblers nabbed, valuables recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested ten gamblers on cock fights and recovered stake money of Rs 10,000, nine mobile phones, three motorcycles, a rickshaw and other items from their possession, informed

a police spokesman on Wednesday. According to the details, Taxila Police held ten gamblers namely Sher Wali, Muhammad Ali, Shaukat, Kamran, Sharif, Hashim, Kawish, Azhar, Junaid and Usman.

'Zero compromise for those taking law into their own hands': Tahira Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of National Assembly and Senior leader PML-N, Tahira Aurangzeb on Wednesday criticized the politics of PTI Chief based on fanning chaos in the society and no one would be allowed the violation of the law. Talking to a private news channel she said while democracy gave every citizen the right to present their point of view but no one can blackmail and conspiracies against the state through the use of force, adding, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan has been nominated accused in over a dozen cases,

including rioting, sedition, chaos and armed attacks on the federation. The PDM-led government did not want any confrontation but endeavoured for a peaceful solution to all issues, she mentioned. The political instability and violent acts that happened in the last few days were never seen before in the history of the country, she said, adding, political anarchy, and chaos is a big hurdles in a country's growth. All the stakeholders need to sit together to come up with a long-lasting solution to bring the economy on the right track, she stressed.

FIA arrests outlaw on harassment, blackmailing

MULTAN (APP): Federal Investigation Agency's Cyber Wing claimed to have arrested an alleged outlaw for harassing a woman. According to official sources, an alleged outlaw namely Muhammad Zeeshan son of Anwar Hussain, resident of Shah Rukn-e-Alam was allegedly found involved

in harassment and blackmailing the woman through whatsapp. The accused has objectionable pictures of the complainant Ms (N). FIA Team led by SI Saeed Ahmed and ASI Zeeshan Khan raided and managed to arrest the alleged outlaw. The team also recovered the outlaw's mobile phone.

Saghar thanks UN Special Rapporteur for voicing concern over situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter Mehmood Ahmed Saghar has expressed his profound gratitude to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Fernand de Varennes, for voicing his concern over India's decision to hold the G20 meeting in Srinagar and its implications on the human rights situation in the region. Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad said the UN expert has rightly pointed out that

holding a G20 meeting in Srinagar while massive human rights violations are ongoing was tantamount to lending support to attempts by India to normalize the brutal and repressive denial of democratic and other rights of Kashmiri Muslims and minorities. The APHC leader said the statement should serve as an eye-opener for the world, particularly the G-20 nations who have been invited by New Delhi to attend the event in a territory, which it had occupied illegally against the will of the Kashmiri people.

Food dept achieves initial wheat procurement target in Multan division

MULTAN (APP): The food department has achieved the initial wheat procurement target by purchasing 5,33,378 metric tons of wheat so far as 5,33,214 metric tons initial wheat procurement target set for the Multan division during season 2023-24. Deputy Director Food, Shahid Khokhar expressed these views while talking to APP here on Wednesday. He said that the wheat procurement drive was continued at 48 centres as wheat was being procured in line with the revised target set by the provincial government. He

said that the drive was continued and they were purchasing about 1000 metric tons of wheat daily across the division and added that it would conclude by the end of this month. He further said that payments to growers were also being ensured adding that the growers could contact him over any complaint regarding the delay in payments and their grievances would be resolved on a priority basis. Mr Khokhar said that strict monitoring was also being made to curb the wheat hoarding and smuggling mafia.

Bahawalpur police arrest drug peddler

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The district police have arrested a drug peddler and recovered narcotics from his possession during a raid conducted within the limits of PS Civil Lines. According to a Bahawalpur police spokesman, acting on a tip-off, a Civil Lines police team

conducted a raid in an area lying within their jurisdiction and apprehended a drug peddler. They also recovered 640 grams of heroin from his possession. Civil Lines police have registered a case against the accused under Anti-Narcotics Act and launched investigation.

PM approves conferment of Sitara-e-Imtiaz on mountaineer Naila Kiani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved the conferment of civil award Sitara-i-Imtiaz on renowned mountaineer Naila Kiani in recognition of her achievement to successfully summit the world's highest peak Mount Everest. The Prime Minister's Office issued a notification, containing the prime minister's approval for conferment of the award on the mountaineer who is second Pakistani woman to summit Mount Everest, after Samina Baig who summited the peak in 2013. The PM



Office has directed the Cabinet Secretary to complete all the formalities in this regard. Earlier, the prime minister, had announced to confer Sitara-i-Imtiaz on Naila Kiani as she brought laurels to Pakistan, through her achievement.

CDA all set to develop new parks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to develop several new modern parks in the Federal capital to provide better recreational facilities to the residents. "The civic authority has already developed around 37 public parks in the federal capital during the last ten years and is working on a policy to increase their number in the coming years," official sources in the CDA told APP on Wednesday. "We need three to four months to develop a new park after completion of the codal formalities."

At present, they said the federal capital had six amusement parks, which were considered sufficient to cater to the recreational needs of Islamabad residents. "But the policy has been made that whenever a new sector will be developed, an amusement park will be constructed along," they added. The sources said that the CDA was developing several new sectors, including I-11, I-12, I-14, I-15, I-16, D-12, and Park Enclave, adding that Model Villages and parks were also being developed in the said areas.

Police approve recruitment of martyred cops children

ISLAMABAD (APP): The police have approved the recruitment of 19 children of martyred cops who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty for the protection of the lives and property of citizens. According to a police spokesperson, "The recruitment board of Islamabad police has approved to induct 19 children one each of 19 martyred cops. The recruitment would be made under Prime Minister (PM) package as Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan directed to ensure the completion of the recruit-

ment process at the earliest. A meeting was held under the chairmanship of the City Police Officer (CPO) headquarters for recruitment which gave formal approval to induct the kids of martyred personnel. A police spokesperson said, "Martyred officers are valuable assets of the police department who sacrificed their lives in the service of citizens." "The services of these cops will be remembered forever and every possible step will be taken to provide relief to their bereaved families."

Rehabilitation work on Quetta-Bostan track in full swing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has started the rehabilitation work of a 33.50-kilometre track 'through sleeper renewal' between Quetta-Bostan and Quetta-Chaman section and the department was putting maximum efforts to complete it as soon as possible. "The track will not only facilitate the passengers and small businessmen, but also connect three major cities of the Balochistan province," an official source in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said the railway network in Balochistan province mainly consisted of Quetta Division having Dera Allah Yar Sibi-Quetta, Quetta-Chaman, Sibi-Khost, Spendez-Dalbandin-Taftan and Bostan-Zhob which were closed for the last 15 years. The source said there were two passenger trains namely Jaffer Express (40Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Pas-

senger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in the Quetta division. He said the overall length of the railway track in Balochistan was 1470.36 kilometer including the closed Bostan-Zhob section. "Most of the track was more than one-hundred-year-old and on certain stretches, engineering speed restrictions have been imposed due to deferred maintenance and owing to resource constraints," he said adding that the routine maintenance of track was being carried out with available resources. To improve railway services in Balochistan, he said the department was taking several steps like approval of PC-I for the track's rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of another 100-km track between Ahmedwal Dalbadin on the Quetta-Taftan section.

'World Telecommunication Day' celebrated

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the world, 'The World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD)' day was observed here on Tuesday, to raise awareness of the importance of telecommunications and the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in promoting social and economic development worldwide. May 17 is the anniversary of the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that's why the day is celebrated worldwide. According to the United Nations (UN), "World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually on May 17, since 1969. It marked the founding

of ITU and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865." However it was, November 2005 when the World Summit on the Information Society called upon the UN General Assembly to declare the date as World Information Society Day. This year the theme for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2023 is "Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies." Federal Minister for Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Sted Amin ul Haq in a message said, "I wish that public and private sectors should make pledges for universal connectivity and digital transformation."

Police arrest five POs wanted in different cases

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Police have arrested five Proclaimed Offenders (POs) wanted in different cases, said a police spokesman here on Wednesday. He said Taxila police managed to arrest two accused namely Tariq and Waris, wanted in a case. Airport police in their operation held a PO, Hasan while Rawat police rounded up Qasim and Mubeen, wanted in two

cases. He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs wanted to be sent behind the bars. SSP Operations, Rawalpindi Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against POs and most wanted criminals, he added.

Roots of May 9 mutinous attack on state, sensitive installations lie in IK speeches: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that roots of the mutinous attack on the state, its symbols and sensitive installations on May 9 lay in the contents of Imran Niazi's speeches over the past one year. On Twitter, the prime minister said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan had liberally deployed religious imagery



to brand his political agitation as a war between truth and falsehood.

Imran Khan had also relentlessly maligned and attacked the armed forces and the sitting Army Chief and very cunningly prepared his cult with the slogans of "Haqeeqi Azadi" aimed at inciting them for violence we witnessed on May 9. "Listen to his speeches and you will get your answers," the prime minister tweeted with a hashtag #SayNoTo9thMay.

Rangers arrest two street criminals

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police, in a joint intelligence-based operation, have arrested two alleged street criminals from Orangi Town area. The arrested were identified as Abu Talib and Tauseef Shah, said a news release on Wednesday. The arrested accused during initial interrogation revealed their involvement in more than 70 street crimes during which they snatched 200 mobile phones and cash over Rs.1 million in Orangi Town, Nazimabad, SITE and adjacent areas. On May 6th this year, the accused snatched cash and a mobile phone from a citizen at gunpoint from outside a house in Bangla Bazar Orangi Town. The CCTV footage of the incident also made rounds on social media, wherein they could be easily identified.

PFA discards 650 adulterated milk

SARGODHA (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) team on Wednesday discarded 650 litres of adulterated milk during checking of milk carrying vehicles in Sargodha city. According to a spokesperson of PFA, food safety teams checked 24 milk carrying vehicles at entry routes of the city and inspected 66,000 litres of milk by the latest mobile lab on the spot. The food safety team discarded 650 litres of contaminated milk and 450 packets of Gutka as well, he added.

Bahawalpur police to form SIU

BAHAWALPUR (APP): District Police Office Bahawalpur has directed to constitute a Special Investigation Unit to deal with cases pertaining to properties' issues. A spokesman for Bahawalpur police said here that District Police Officer, Bahawalpur, Syed Muhammad Abbas had issued directives to establish Specialized Investigation Unit in the district police to deal with FIRs lodged in connection with properties' affairs. He said that a meeting of senior police officials was held here in this regard that was presided over by Superintendent Police (Investigation), Salman Liaquat in chair. The meeting reviewed measures to form a Special Investigation Unit to conduct special investigation into FIRs registered in connection with properties' issues.

Six outlaws arrested in DIK

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): During a successful operation against criminal elements in the limits of Cantt police station on Wednesday, the Dera police arrested six outlaws and recovered stolen items, weapons and ice drug from their possession. According to a police spokesman, on the directives of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, SHO Cantt police station Gul Sher Khan conducted operations against the criminal elements and arrested the suspects wanted in various crimes, including Muhammad Shahid and Jawad, a resident of Lakki Marwat. A 30-bore pistol with 4 cartridges was also recovered from them. During another action, SHO Gul Sher Khan arrested accused Saifullah, after recovering a stolen water pump from his possession. Similarly, three drug peddlers were arrested and ice drug was recovered from them. Police also apprehended Samiullah, a resident of Thaheemabad and recovered 221 grams of ice drug from his possession. Whereas, 111 grams of ice drug was recovered from the possession of accused Muhammad Waleed, a resident of Eidgah and 121 grams of ice drug were recovered from the possession of accused Hasan Raza, a resident of Eidgah Kalan.

Pakistan, UK to join hands to eliminate hate content on social, online media

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and United Kingdom on Wednesday agreed to work together to eliminate content related to hate and terrorist attitudes on social and online media. The decision was made during a meeting between Acting British High Commissioner Andrew Dagleish and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb. During the meeting, the promotion of bilateral diplomatic relations including cooperation in various fields of media, digital media, media training and filmmaking was also discussed. The minister congratulated the ambassador and the people of UK over the coronation of King Charles III. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Prime Minister Sheh-

baz Sharif's recent visit to the United Kingdom and his participation in the coronation of King Charles III were manifestation of the friendship based on respect and trust between the two countries. Stating that Pakistan attached special importance to bilateral relations with Britain, she expressed the determination to further strengthen the bilateral ties. During discussion on the co-operation in film policy and media training, the minister said film and drama played an important role in highlighting the culture and positive identity of any country. Marriyum Aurangzeb appreciated the role of British government for development of health, education, governance and human resource in Pakistan.

Govt urged to remain steadfast on its decision of increasing tobacco taxation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health activists urged the government to remain steadfast on its decision of increasing tobacco taxation in order to generate more revenue for the national exchequer. During an event organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) here Wednesday, the health activists presented a Simulation Model on Tobacco Taxation which explained how increased tobacco taxation is a win-win situation for the government and the people of Pakistan. Malik Imran, Country Head, Campaign for tobacco-free kids (CTFK), mentioned that taxation was a key revenue source for any government and taxing non-essential items such as

tobacco must be taxed to maximum in order to ensure fiscal imbalance, so the national exchequer does not suffer by it. He mentioned that due to the government's decision of increasing Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes in February 2023, an additional 11.3 billion FED revenue was obtained in fiscal year 2022-23 which is an increase of 9.7 percent from the previous year. Furthermore, an additional 4.4 billion VAT revenue was obtained in fiscal year 2022-23 which is an increase of 11.5 percent from the previous year. This additional 15.7 billion revenue makes up 0.201 percent of our GDP which is a significant boost for a struggling economy like Pakistan.

Sindh Healthcare Commission takes strong measures against 'Quackery'

KARACHI (Staff Report): Sindh Healthcare Commission takes strong measures against 'Quackery'. According to the Director-Anti Quackery, Sindh Healthcare Commission (SHCC) conducted effective actions to curb quackery. Results announced for the 3rd quarter of the current fiscal year continued to show strong momentum by the SHCC- Directorate of Anti-Quackery, through targeted operations (Anti-Quackery Drive) anti-quackery within specific districts, resulting in 2061 inspection & enforcement (I&E) actions taken across the province. 'We will continue to protect and preserve the public's basic right to affordable good health'; said Director Anti Quackery, SHCC Mr. Syed Zeeshan Ali Shah From January to March 2023, over 356 outlets were sealed on the spot, under section U/S 39 (G&H) of SHCC Regulations 2017. Moreover, to control the illegal de-sealing of outlets by quacks, strict



legal action was taken on 204 repeat offenders and unauthorized outlets were re-sealed, by SHCC legal team, with the support of law enforcement agencies (LEAs). Warning notices were issued to over 682 healthcare establishments (HCEs) as per law under SHCC Act 2013, while 606 HCEs were found to be following the rules and abiding by the law. The overall compliance ratio improved by 50% over the last quarter.

France Embassy to Celebrate 'French Alumni Day' in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first-ever 'French Alumni Day', the world day of international graduates from French Higher Education, will be held in May 2023 in France and worldwide, including Pakistan. "In France, Alumni from all countries will be celebrated during a special gathering hosted by the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna, at the Ministry on May 23, "said a news release issued here on Wednesday. In Pakistan, the French Embassy, Campus France Pakistan, and France Alumni Pakistan will invite all Pakistanis who got a part of their higher education and professional training in France to meet each other and with Embassy representatives and companies. The Alumni gatherings will be arranged in Karachi on May

19, Islamabad on May 20, and Lahore on May 28, respectively. The events in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore will open with a welcome speech given by respectively Nicolas Galey, the Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Alexis Chahtahtinsky, Consul General of France in Karachi and Habib Anwar, Honorary Consul of France in Lahore. The Higher Education and Scientific Attach of the French Embassy in Pakistan and the Campus France Pakistan officer will present the French Alumni Network in Pakistan. Outstanding Pak-France Alumni will be invited to share their life and success stories. There will also be time for alumni to do networking with representatives from the French community, corporate and academic sectors.

Commerzbank profits soar on higher interest rates

BERLIN (Agencies): Germany's second-biggest lender Commerzbank on Wednesday said net profit almost doubled in the first quarter, thanks to "a tailwind" from higher interest rates. The group said it made a bottom-line profit of €580 million (US\$630 million), compared with €298 million over the same period a year earlier. "We had a very good start to 2023," CEO Manfred Knof said in a statement. "The interest



rate development continues to give us a tailwind, and the fee business has delivered a good result," he said. Like other lenders in Europe,

Commerzbank has benefited from a higher interest rate environment as the European Central Bank has raised borrowing costs at an unprecedented rate in recent months to combat inflation. Inflation in Germany, Europe's biggest economy, eased to 7.2% in April after peaking at 8.8% last October. Commerzbank said quarterly revenues fell slightly to just under €2.7 billion, from €2.8 billion euros a year earlier.

Europe car sales up 16% on supply chain recovery

LONDON (Agencies): Auto sales in Europe rose in April for a ninth month as supply chains improved and carmakers worked through backlogs of orders. New-car registrations increased 16% to 964,932, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association said Wednesday. While the recovery continues, deliveries during the first four months of the year remain roughly a fifth below pre-pandemic levels. Carmak-



ers across the volume, premium and luxury segments have continued to post strong results even as inflation remains elevated and concerns

about the economic outlook deepen. But with supply chains improving and more vehicles coming to market, the manufacturers are set to lose pricing power, and investors are signalling tougher times are ahead. "There is likely to be a lot of instability in the next 12 months as new electric models try to gain traction and Tesla continues to add pressure," said Felipe Munoz, senior analyst at JATO Dynamics.

Global inflows push Indian stocks to record highs

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Foreign funds have accelerated buying of Indian stocks, pouring in more than US\$1 billion in each of the past three weeks, as Asia's fastest-growing economy is seen as a safe haven amid concerns of a global slowdown. The strongest inflow to Indian equities since last August comes amid disappointment over China's economic recovery as well as fears that an impending recession in the US may pressure corporate earnings in export-focused economies in-



cluding Taiwan and South Korea. "India's economy is going from strength to strength," Chetan Ahya, chief Asia economist at Morgan Stanley Asia Ltd., wrote in a note earlier this week.

A report from BofA Securities on Tuesday said that India has "leaped" from the bottom of the preference list of Asian fund managers to a net overweight position. India's Nifty 50 and Sensex are closing in on fresh record highs, and are the best-performing benchmarks in the Asia Pacific region this quarter, after those in Japan. Overseas funds have supported that, with a net inflow of US\$4.4 billion since end-March, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

China's home-price growth slows as housing rebound fizzles

BEIJING (Agencies): China's home price growth slowed in April, underscoring the challenges the market is facing following a brief recovery. New-home prices in 70 cities, excluding state-subsidised housing, rose 0.32% last month from March when they grew 0.44%, National Bureau of Statistics figures showed Wednesday. Price gains slowed to just 0.01% in the secondary market, after climbing 0.26% a



month earlier. Signs of weakness are emerging in the residential property market after sales and prices rebound-

ed briefly following a historical slump of about 18 months. High-frequency indicators in recent weeks show momentum in home purchases has fizzled, despite Beijing's effort to prop up the market. "Property policies will likely remain loose in the short term," said Chen Wenjing, associate research director at China Index Holdings. "It's vital to maintain the confidence of prospective homebuyers."

Japan's GDP growth beats expectations in first quarter

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan's economy grew faster than expected in the first quarter, official data showed Wednesday, helped by a recovery in inbound tourism after pandemic border restrictions were lifted. The 0.4% rise in gross domestic product beat market expectations of 0.2%, after hopes of a rebound fell flat in the final quar-

ter of last year. In the three months to March, spending by tourists visiting Japan "rapidly recovered," Ryutaro Kono, chief economist at BNP Paribas, said ahead of the GDP data release. "Domestic household spending also appears to have recovered at an accelerated pace," he added. The world's third-largest economy fully

reopened its borders to foreign tourists in October after two-and-a-half years of tough Covid restrictions that pummelled the economy. Economists said a rise in private consumption centered around the service sector, including restaurants and hotels, helped offset a negative impact from external trade.

Credit Suisse faces restrictions on business till deal closure

ZURICH (Agencies): Credit Suisse Group AG faces certain restrictions in its ability to do business until its acquisition by rival UBS Group AG is completed, according to a regulatory filing on Tuesday. In certain cases, without prior UBS approval, Credit Suisse cannot grant a new credit facility or credit line in an amount exceeding 100 million Swiss francs (US\$113 million) to investment grade borrowers or more than



50 million francs to non-investment grade borrowers, the filing showed. In addition, Credit Suisse cannot undertake any capital expenditure

of more than 10 million francs or enter into certain contracts worth more than 3 million francs per year. The filing also showed Credit Suisse cannot order any "material amendments" to its employee terms and conditions, including remuneration and pension entitlements, while the merger is underway. UBS is in the process of integrating its major rival following a government-orchestrated takeover in March.

Musk reverses course, says Tesla will advertise cars

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Tesla Inc boss Elon Musk, who has never used traditional advertising to sell cars, said on Tuesday that the automaker would try it and see whether it produced results. Musk said it was "ironic" that as CEO of Tesla, he now owns Twitter. The social media platform is highly dependent on ads and will soon be led by advertising veteran Linda Yaccarino, who he hired last week. "So I guess



I should say advertising is awesome, and everyone should do it," Musk said at Tesla's annual shareholder meeting in Austin, Texas. "We'll try

out a little advertising and see how it goes." It underscores his efforts to shore up investor confidence in the car maker's prospects at a time when rising competition and a slow economy has forced Tesla to slash prices. Since Musk acquired Twitter in October, advertisers have fled the social media platform, worried that their ads could appear next to inappropriate content after the company lost nearly 80% of its staff.

Philips says sleep respirators 'unlikely' to harm

THE HAGUE (Agencies): Dutch medical tech firm Philips said Tuesday that independent tests on sleep respirators at the centre of a massive recall showed the devices are unlikely to harm patients. The medical device manufacturer had in 2021 announced a recall of its DreamStation machines for sleep apnoea, a disorder in which breathing stops and starts during sleep. Users were at risk of inhaling or swallowing pieces of toxic sound-



proofing foam that could cause irritation or headaches. The Amsterdam-based firm had also mentioned a "potential" cancer risk in the long term. But Philips said Tuesday that

tests covering 95% of its products globally showed similar results to another study in December that concluded the devices were "within safety limits". Additional tests will be done on the first-generation DreamStation which has been exposed to ozone cleaning. Exposure to both emissions from the foam and ozone cleaning, according to the evaluation, "is unlikely to result in an appreciable harm to health in patients".

Tokyo shares close up with Nikkei at 20-month high

TOKYO (Agencies): Tokyo shares closed higher for a fourth straight day on Wednesday, helped by a weaker yen and Japan's first-quarter economic growth. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 0.84%, or 250.60 points, to end at 30,093.59 – breaching the 30,000 mark for the first time since September 2021. Meanwhile, the broader Topix index added 0.30%, or 6.43 points, to 2,133.61. "The weaker yen provided a tailwind, and better-than-expected

GDP renewed awareness of the relatively favourable investment environment compared to the US and Europe, where fears of an economic slowdown are still smouldering," Iwai Cosmo Securities said. The dollar stood at ¥136.85, against ¥136.37 in New York, and up from around 134 a week ago. Shortly before the opening bell, official data showed Japan's economy grew 0.4% in the first quarter of 2023, helped by a recovery in inbound tourism.

Vietnam bets big on LNG, South China gas fields

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam's plan to quadruple by 2030 its gas processing capacity, by turning it into its first source of energy, marks a big bet on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) and its reserves in the South China Sea, despite supply and geopolitical risks. The plan, which was approved by the government late on Monday, would turn the Southeast Asian nation from a very small player in the gas market into one of the largest users in the region. LNG imports are projected to jump from zero now to volumes that would cover nearly 15% of the country's booming energy needs by the end of the decade,



according to the government's adopted targets published on Tuesday. Locally produced gas would be given priority over LNG, the government said, with output expected to jump by about 65% to 15 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 – but its share in the country's power mix is set to drop to 10% from 13% in 2020.

US debt drama, solid spending data hoist dollar

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The dollar held firm on Wednesday, as traders trimmed bets on imminent US rate cuts following solid consumer spending data, while the greenback also benefitted from its status as a safe haven so long as the risk of a US debt default remained. President Joe Biden and top congressional Republican Kevin McCarthy have edged closer to a deal to raise the US debt ceiling – but nothing is clinched yet. While Biden warned that any default would land the economy in recession, investors fear the impact globally would be negative, and consequently see the greenback as a safe haven. The dollar hit a two-week peak of 136.69 overnight and hovered just below that at 136.54 on



Asia open. It has also broken above its 50-day moving average against the euro to trade at US\$1.0866 to the common currency. "A crushing blow to the world's number one economy can only have negative shockwaves to the global economy, and reduce risk appetite, which would thus become a safe-haven event," Rabobank strategist Jane Foley said. Rabobank forecast the euro falling to US\$1.06 in six months.

China and Central Asian countries to develop 'Air Silk Road'

BEIJING (Agencies): China will increase flights to and from the five countries of Central Asia in a bid to strengthen regional connectivity and economic exchanges, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), the country's aviation regulator. Xi'an, capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province, will open an air route to Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, on Thursday, Sun Wensheng, deputy head of the CAAC's general department, told a press conference on Tuesday. Xi'an, the starting point of the ancient Silk Road and host city of the upcoming China-Central



Asia Summit, will have passenger air routes to all Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Qi Qi, an industry observer, told the Global Times on Tuesday that the move will improve the accessibility of the air route network between Xi'an and Central Asia, and their close connections will reach a new high.

Taco Bell seeks to cancel smaller rivals' 'Taco Tuesday' trademarks

IRVINE (Agencies): Yum Brands Inc' Taco Bell Corp on Tuesday asked the US Trademark Office to cancel two smaller rivals' "Taco Tuesday" trademarks in what the largest Mexican fast-food chain in the US called a bid to "liberate the phrase for restaurants nationwide." Taco Bell's petitions said the trademarks, owned by Gregory's Restaurant & Bar in New Jersey and Wyoming-based Taco John's in the rest of the country, wrongly monopolise the use of the phrase in the restaurant industry. "Nobody should have exclusive rights in a common phrase," the petitions said. "Can you imagine if we weren't allowed to say



'what's up' or 'brunch'? Chaos." The company said in a statement that it was not requesting money damages or its own "Taco Tuesday" trademark, but "simply seeks common sense for usage of a common term." Gregory's Restaurant & Bar co-owner Gregory Gregory told Reuters the Somers Point, New Jersey, restaurant came up with "Taco Tuesday" in 1979 and has been using it to sell "hundreds of thousands, if not millions" of tacos since.

Baidu confident chatbot won't make mistakes on 'sensitive topics'

BEIJING (Agencies): Baidu Inc's experience in tailoring its search engine to Chinese regulatory requirements makes it confident its AI-driven chatbot won't make mistakes on "important and sensitive topics", the company said on Tuesday. On a call with analysts, Baidu CEO Robin Li said the company was waiting for government approval before launching its ChatGPT-like Ernie bot, which Reuters tests have found refuses to answer a wide range of questions on politics, par-

ticularly those pertaining to Chinese government leaders. "For important and sensitive topics, we have to make sure artificial intelligence will not hallucinate," Li said, using the industry term for when AI models generate outputs different from what is expected. "Given that LLM (large-language model) is more or less a probabilistic model, this task is not trivial at all," he added, referring to the model used by many AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT and Ernie bot.

The Wembanyama sweepstakes and draft lottery has a winner: It's the Spurs

CHICAGO (Agencies): Victor Wembanyama is now set to begin his NBA career with the San Antonio Spurs, after they won the NBA draft lottery and the No. 1 overall pick on Tuesday night. The Spurs were one of three teams with the best odds — 14 percent — to land the No. 1 pick, which they'll almost certainly use on Wembanyama. The 7-foot-3 French 19-year-old is one of the most highly touted prospects in NBA history and will be expected to make an immediate impact on the league. And he



had a message for San Antonio. "I'm trying to win a ring ASAP," Wembanyama told ESPN after the lottery results. "So be ready." It's the third

time the Spurs have won the lottery, and on both previous occasions they made picks that paid off for decades. They chose David Robinson in 1987, Tim Duncan in 1997, and those selections were a major part of how the Spurs became a team that won five NBA titles under coach Gregg Popovich. "Our future was already bright," Spurs managing partner Peter J. Holt said. "Now, it's going to be through the moon." General manager Brian Wright called it "an incredible day" for the franchise and the fans.

Star-studded crowd watches French phenom Victor Wembanyama turn it on late, hours before NBA draft lottery

PARIS (Agencies): Hours before finding out his likely destination in the NBA, Victor Wembanyama drew a star-studded crowd in his last regular-season game in France and delivered another game-winning performance in the fourth quarter. Soccer star Kylian Mbappe and popular French actor Omar Sy were both on hand to watch Wembanyama put up 22 points as his Boulogne-Levallois side won 93-85 in a local derby against Paris Basketball. The 19-year-old French phenom — and much of the basketball world — then turned their attention to



the NBA draft lottery in Chicago later Tuesday. The winning team is all but certain to make Wembanyama the No. 1 pick in the draft in June. Wembanyama showed a glimpse of why as he scored 14 of his game-high 22 points

in the fourth quarter, with the crowd of about 4,000 chanting "Wemby, Wemby" as he turned it on late after a slow start. "He seemed elsewhere early on, probably at the lottery," Metropolitans 92 coach Vincent Collet said. "But he responded so well. ... He's 19 and his life is going to totally change. Can you understand that? Tonight is a massive moment in his career. It's totally understandable that things were going on in his head." Wembanyama treated the crowd to a late one-handed dunk, then tapped his own head repeatedly in appreciation.

Qatar's Sheikh Jassim increases bid for Man Utd

MANCHESTER (Agencies): Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani has made an improved bid to secure Manchester United from the Glazer family, a source close to the bid told AFP on Tuesday. Sheikh Jassim is in a bidding war with British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe after the pair emerged as the main contenders to buy the Premier League giants. Ratcliffe appeared to be the front-runner when a third round of bidding closed last month. INEOS chemical company founder Ratcliffe, a boyhood Unit-



ed fan, had reportedly placed a higher valuation on the club as he seeks a majority stake. However, his bid could allow for executive co-chair-

men Avram and Joel Glazer to remain invested in the Red Devils — a move that would be deeply unpopular with supporters. By contrast, Sheikh Jassim's bid is for 100% control of the club and promises to wipe United's £970 million (US\$1.2 billion) debt. The Glazers, who have failed to win over the fans since they saddled the club with debt in a £790 million leveraged takeover in 2005, appeared ready to cash out at an enormous profit when they first invited external investment in November.

Malaysia end SEA Games campaign with worst-ever showing

PHNOM PENH (Agencies): Malaysia recorded their worst-ever performance in the history of the SEA Games by finishing in seventh position and failing to meet their 40-gold target in Cambodia last night. With all competitions completed, Malaysia's medal haul of 34 golds, 45 silvers and 97 bronzes was worse than in the last games held in Hanoi, Vietnam last year, when Malaysia finished sixth. Malaysia also finished sixth in Singapore in 1983. In the Phnom Penh games, Malaysia,



represented by 676 athletes, fell behind countries like Singapore, the Philippines and hosts Cambodia, and was

ahead only of Myanmar, Laos, Brunei and Timor Leste. Vietnam emerged overall champions with 136 gold, 105 silver and 114 bronze medals, followed by Thailand (108-95-108), Indonesia (85-81-109), Cambodia (81-74-126), the Philippines (58-86-116) and Singapore (51-42-64). In final action yesterday, Malaysia added four more gold medals through Sam Jee Lek (dance sport), the men's and women's hockey teams, and Ahmad Nor Iman Hakim Rakib (kick-boxing).

Sky's the limit for Yahya Al-Ghassani after title win with Shabab Al-Ahli

Yahya Al-Ghassani is a breath of fresh air. The 25-year-old with boyish looks has the perfect mix of modesty and gratitude, grounded in his humble upbringing, and the confident swagger of a man who finally feels at home, not just in his own skin, but on the football pitch. The winger has long been touted as the next big thing in Emirati football, and after a standout campaign helping Shabab Al-Ahli to the ADNOC Pro League title, in which he scored seven goals and provided four assists, if there



was any doubt, he now knows his best is good enough. Speaking to Arab News from a cafe in the suburbs of Dubai, any

mention of the drought-breaking title for Shabab Al-Ahli lit up Al-Ghassani's face with a beaming, broad smile. "It's an amazing feeling," he said. "I think all my teammates, the president, everyone is feeling the same. This feeling is really, really, really amazing; I can't even describe it." For Al-Ghassani, a product of the Shabab Al-Ahli youth system, the title-winning moment was even more special as it was his goal that clinched the victory against Baniyas and confirmed their first league title since 2016.

Malaysia beat Taiwan 4-1 to top Sudirman Cup group

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): The national badminton squad continued its winning streak when it managed to emerge as the group champion in the last game of Group C at the Sudirman Cup after a 4-1 victory over Taiwan in Suzhou, China, today. The national team's victory started with Orleans Masters champions Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei collecting the first point for Malaysia when they recovered from a first game loss to edge Ye Hong Wei and Lee Chia Hsin 17-21, 21-19, 21-17



in the opening match. National professional men's singles player Lee Zii Jia then continued the country's momentum by overpowering world No 5 Chou

Tien Chen 21-14, 23-21 in an intense encounter that lasted 52 minutes. However, Tai Tzu Ying, ranked third in the world and a silver medallist at the Tokyo Olympic Games, snatched a point for Taiwan when she easily defeated national women's singles player Goh Jin Wei 21-8, 21-10 in just 28 minutes. The defeat did not discourage men's doubles pair Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi from collecting the third point for Malaysia by defeating Lu Ching Yao and Yang Po Han 21-8, 21-10.

Moroccan nomads keep alive ancient sport of sand hockey

MOROCCO (Agencies): In a Moroccan oasis town on the edge of the Sahara, nomads in turbans and tunics are thwacking a camel-wool ball across the desert in a traditional pastime: sand hockey. Similar in many ways to field and ice hockey, but played barefoot and with palm wood sticks, the ancient game is called "mokhacha" in the local Hassani Arabic dialect. "We play mokhacha in our spare time," said one participant, Hamadi Boudani, at the recent International Nomads Festival in the southern town



of M'hamid El Ghizlane. "Our ancestors were nomads and as soon as they pitched their camp somewhere they would first rest and then, to pass the time, they would start a game," he explained. "This game is part of Sa-

haran tradition." They were wearing the daraa, an ample tunic favoured by nomadic tribes, and the cheche cloth turban to cover their heads and faces from the desert sun. The two teams, one in white the other in blue, had a go at it on 1 May, during the annual Nomads Festival which also celebrates song and dance and other desert traditions. Each team is made up of at least seven players, the outline of the pitch is crudely traced by hand in the sand, and the referee is simply known as the sheikh.

Nikola Jokic leads Nuggets past Lakers 132-126 in West opener

DENVER (Agencies): Nikola Jokic recorded his sixth triple-double of these playoffs with 34 points, 21 rebounds and 14 assists, powering the Denver Nuggets to a 132-126 win over the Los Angeles Lakers in the opener of the Western Conference finals on Tuesday night. Behind Jokic's sizzling start and strong finish, and Jamal Murray's 31 points, Denver beat the Lakers in the opener of the West finals for the first time ever. After a slow start, Anthony Davis had 40 points and 10 rebounds, and LeBron James finished with 26 points, 12 boards and nine assists. Austin Reaves chipped in 23 points and fueled L.A.'s desperate fourth-quar-



ter run that nearly erased Denver's 14-point cushion after three quarters. The Nuggets led by as many as 21 but the Lakers pulled within three points twice in the fourth quarter, once on Reaves' 3-pointer at 124-121 and again on James' pair of free throws that made it 129-126 with 1:12 remaining.

Jon Rahm looking to add to his big year and facing a big test at PGA Championship



PITTSFORD (Agencies): Jon Rahm watched video of the last PGA Championship at Oak Hill, which would not seem to be of much value considering the restoration work on the East Course, the rain-soaked week in 2013 and the fact that it was in August. Rahm picked up a few details that could serve him or anyone well, particularly the discipline Jason Dufner showed when he got in trouble off the tee and how he relied on his

wedge game. More than a student of the game, the 28-year-old Spaniard is simply a golf nerd who recently described himself as "beyond addicted to the game." "I do it pretty much for every major," Rahm said Tuesday of his film study. "I just like it. Even if it's not major season, I'm doing it at home. I've seen on social media about every Sunday round you can find about Augusta and most majors. It's not research. I just like it. It's just fun." So is winning, and Rahm is having the time of his life. The Masters was his fourth victory of the year, and he is among the leading favorites in the PGA Championship at an Oak Hill course that would seem suited to his game — bullish strength, clean contact, great wedge play. Rahm is bold.

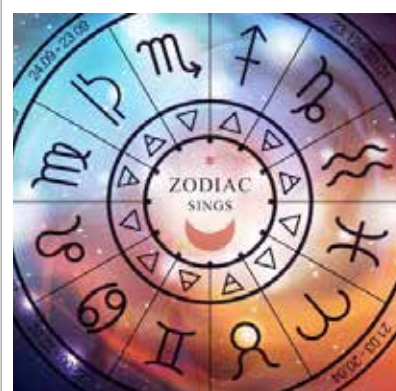
Luton advance in playoffs, earn shot at playing in Premier League for first time

LONDON (Agencies): Luton are heading to Wembley Stadium for a shot at playing in the Premier League for the first time. Luton beat Sunderland 2-0 on Tuesday to clinch a 3-2 win on aggregate and a place in the Championship playoff final, often labeled the world's most lucrative one-off soccer game because of guaranteed future earnings for the winning team. The final will be played at Wembley on May 27, with Middlesbrough and Coventry vying to be Luton's opponent. The second leg of their playoff semifinal takes place on Wednesday, with the teams locked at 0-0. Luton, a club located just north of London, was last in England's top division in 1991-92 — the season before it was rebranded as the Premier League. The team have



since dropped as low as English soccer's fifth tier and was playing at that level as recently as 2014. Luton finished third in the Championship's regular season behind champion Burnley and Sheffield United, who both earned automatic promotion. Sunderland were sixth and seeking a return to the Premier League after a six-year absence, during which time the northeast club has been the subject of a Netflix documentary.

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make it fun. The good news is that once this is past, it's smooth sailing!

– **VIRGO**: See if you can branch out a bit from your usual activities. You might need to try something totally new or even a little scary (to you) in order to really push past your current obstacles. – **LIBRA**: Try not to go too far into any one activity today, even if it's incredibly fun or compelling. You may need to drop out of something before it's completed, but that shouldn't be too bad for anyone.

– **SCORPIO**: You discover something early today that feels like a big find, so investigate further! It's one of those days when you might just find that the game has changed on you in a really neat way!

– **SAGITTARIUS**: It's not the best time for you to deal with big-picture stuff, so see if you can fix some of the small-scale issues that have been facing you lately. It's one of those days when the mundane beats all!

– **CAPRICORN**: You need to let someone close have their way today. But you're much more indulgent than usual, so it's no big deal. In fact, it may score you a big set of bonus points for future use!

– **ACQUARIUS**: Education of all kinds is extremely important today, from formal classes to the school of hard knocks. You may learn much more than you expect and should be able to put it all to good use soon!

– **PISCES**: Play around a little bit with the new stuff and people in your life. There's got to be at least one thing out of place that doesn't feel right. Once that's settled, life will be much more pleasant.

Seven children seriously injured in school bus crash in Australia

CANBERRA (Agencies): Some of the most seriously injured school children sustained head injuries, arm amputations and suspected spinal injuries. Seven children remain hospitalised after suffering serious injuries – some described as life-altering – when a truck smashed into a school bus carrying as many as 45 pupils on the outskirts of Australia's Melbourne city. Hospital staff said some children sustained head injuries, arm amputations and suspected spinal injuries from the impact of the dump truck, which rammed the school bus from the rear causing it to turn over on Tuesday afternoon in a semi-rural community west of Melbourne. Six children were reported as initially trapped in the wrecked bus, the Country Fire Au-



thority said, and emergency crews had to enter the stricken vehicle through a skylight in its roof, and then the smashed-out windshield was used as the main emergency exit. A total of 21 children were initially taken by ambulance from the scene of the crash for medical care and seven remain in hospital. The 49-year-old truck driver, identified by local media as Jamie Gleeson, was granted bail on Wednesday afternoon after appearing in court to face four counts of dangerous driv-

ing causing serious injury, Australia's 9News reported. "Speed will be considered as well as part of the investigation," Police Superintendent Michael Cruse said on Tuesday. At the time of the crash, the children were returning to school after competing in an athletics event. Cruse paid tribute to passersby and the injured driver of the school bus who helped children from the vehicle. One of the children is in intensive care, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne CEO Bernadette McDonald said, noting they range in age from five to 11 years old. "The children have suffered multiple and traumatic injuries including partial and complete amputations of arms, multiple crushing injuries, severe lacerations of the head and body.

Russian café selling \$8 breast-milk coffee



MOSCOW (Agencies): Around nine nursing moms are currently supplying the enterprise, and the café owner is seeking to expand. A small café network in the Urals city of Perm has begun brewing and serving breast-milk coffee, Russian online outlet Mash reported on Tuesday. It included an interview with the café's owner and with one of its suppliers, a breastfeeding mom. So far, the extraordinary enterprise remains small-scale, with around 50 cups of the special cappuccino sold every day at three cafés owned by businessman Maxim Kobelev. Currently, around nine mothers are supplying the business, he told Mash, yielding around five liters of breast milk per day for his outlets' coffee-brewing needs. The enterprise appears to be quite lucrative, given that the brew is sold at the unusually high price per cup of 650 rubles (around \$8), while a regular cappuccino the same size costs some 150 rubles (less than \$2) on average in Russia. At the same time, the mom-suppliers are being paid 1,000 rubles (\$12) per milk bag by the café owner, who insists they provide all the necessary medical documents to prove their milk is safe for use.

South Korea to expand nonlethal aid to Ukraine



SEOUL (Agencies): South Korea — South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol vowed to expand the country's nonlethal aid to Ukraine when he met the European country's first lady Tuesday in Seoul. Olena Zelenska visited South Korea as a special envoy of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. During her meeting with Yoon, Zelenska requested South Korea expand its support of nonlethal military supplies, including equipment for detecting and removing mines and ambulance vehicles, according to Yoon's office. Yoon replied that his government would closely coordinate with NATO and other international partners to "actively support the Ukrainian people," his spokesperson Lee Do Woon said during a briefing. Yoon also condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying the "horrific losses of innocent lives, especially women and children, are unacceptable under any circumstances," according to remarks shared by his office. Lee said Zelenska made no request for South Korean weapons supplies during her conversation with Yoon. South Korea, a growing arms exporter with a well-equipped military backed by the United States, has provided humanitarian aid and other support to Ukraine while joining U.S.-led economic sanctions against Moscow. But it has not directly provided arms to Ukraine, citing a long-standing policy of not supplying weapons to countries actively engaged in conflict.

Report: 76 Palestinian prisoners had children through smuggled sperm

The number of Palestinian prisoners who have successfully had children through smuggled sperm rose to 76 after the success of the latest attempts by Mohammad Al-Harroub. Al-Harroub, 39, from the Deir Samet neighbourhood in Hebron has been detained in Israeli prisons since 2010. The father of two is serving a life sentence. His wife gave birth to their first son, Ismail, last week after Mohammad managed to smuggle his sperm out of the jail. Ismail's birth brings the number of babies born via smuggled sperm to 118. Ahmad Shamali from Gaza also smuggled his sperm out of prison and his wife gave birth to twins last week. The



Palestine Centre for Prisoners Studies said that 76 prisoners have had children via smuggled sperm, including 56 from the occupied West Bank, 13 from Gaza, six from Jerusalem and one from Israel. "The Israeli occupation is planting despair in the lives of Palestinian prisoners, but they insist on making life, having hope and victories through having 'freedom ambassadors'," it said.

India Looks To Lock In Long-Term LNG Deals

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's largest natural gas importers are looking into long-term supply deals with the exporters of liquefied natural gas. India is planning to significantly increase the share of LNG in its energy mix, and so wants to ensure it is protected against price spikes. Last year, when LNG spot prices surged after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, India was forced to withdraw from the spot market. Major Indian natural gas importers are discussing long-term supply deals with the biggest LNG exporting countries to lock in future supply and avoid volatility and uncertainty in case of spot price spikes, traders and executives tell Bloomberg. India plans to significantly increase its natural gas consumption as it looks to boost its

share in the energy mix. But the country and its LNG importers are particularly sensitive to surging spot LNG prices and often retreat from the spot market when prices jump. Such was the case last year when high spot LNG prices priced out many Asian buyers as Europe bid up for supply and became the primary destination of spot LNG cargoes. For most of 2022, India — alongside other countries in South Asia such as Bangladesh and Thailand — withdrew from the spot market due to the record high prices. In India, LNG imports fell by 15.2% in 2022, but the total import costs soared by 44.5% due to high LNG prices, the Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis said in a report in February.

China Receives First Yuan-Settled LNG Cargo From UAE

BELJING (Agencies): China's CNOOC reported the receipt of the first cargo of liquefied natural gas that the company paid for in Chinese yuan in the latest instance of the ongoing diversification of international energy trade. The state energy firm, as quoted by China Daily, said it had bought 65,000 tons of LNG from the UAE, noting that settling international trade deals in the local currency was becoming more mature. International trade in the Chinese currency has been expanding rapidly over the past year, after the West cut Russia out of the SWIFT system, which encouraged the latter to seek alternatives. To date, almost all the commodities that China buys

from Russia are paid for in yuan, Reuters reported earlier this month, as Chinese banks expand their presence in Russia, complete with an alternative payment settlement system dubbed CIPS. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the volume of commodity trade between Russia and China has reached \$88 billion, the report noted, contributing significantly to the internationalization of the Chinese currency although it still constitutes a tiny portion of the total. International trade in yuan stands at 2.5%, while trade in U.S. dollars accounts for 39.4% of the total and trade in euros accounts for 35.8%, according to data from SWIFT.

China's Bayi Aerobatic Team converts to flying J-10C fighter jets, to make first overseas performance in Malaysia

BELJING (Agencies): New aircraft to make first overseas performance in Malaysia, displaying confidence. The Bayi Aerobatic Team of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force has converted to flying J-10C fighter jets, and will make its first overseas performance with the new aircraft at an upcoming maritime and aerospace exhibition in Malaysia. With the use of the J-10C, China has become only the third country in the world after Russia and the US to deliver flight performances with 4.5-generation fighter jets, and the overseas performance shows the PLA Air Force's confidence and openness to the world, experts said on Tuesday. Based on the PLA Air Force's equipment development plan, the Bayi Aerobatic Team has converted to flying J-10C fighter jets, marking the



seventh aircraft conversion since the team was established, Senior Colonel Xie Peng, a spokesperson at the PLA Air Force, announced on Tuesday, a week before the team's scheduled participation in the 16th Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) in Malaysia from May 23 to 27, China Central Television (CCTV) reported on Tuesday. Seven J-10C performance aircraft and two Y-20 transport aircraft set out from a PLA Air Force airfield in Southwest China for Malaysia on Tuesday, CCTV reported. Since its establishment in

Aid groups seek green light from Myanmar junta to access cyclone-hit state

Relief organisations were awaiting clearance from Myanmar's military rulers on Wednesday to access areas of Rakhine State devastated by a deadly cyclone three days ago, and deliver food and medicine to communities in urgent need. Hundreds of people are estimated to have been killed in the impoverished region after cyclone Mocha on Sunday tore down houses, communication towers and bridges with winds of up to 210 kph (130 mph) and triggered a storm surge that inundated the state capital Sittwe. Residents contacted by Reuters said no help had arrived even days after the storm and volunteers were digging through debris to search for the missing. One resident who declined to be identified for safety reasons said about 400 people had died and more were at risk of dying "for not having



food, purified water and emergency treatment. There are no ... search and rescue teams." Rakhine State, with a population of more than three million, is particularly vulnerable, and is home to the persecuted Rohingya Muslims minority that successive governments in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar have refused to recognise. Some 600,000 Rohingya still live in the state, while more than a million live in sprawling camps in neighbouring Bangladesh, having fled military crackdowns in recent years. Some still embark on perilous boat journeys to Malaysia and Indonesia.

US Aid to Ukraine On Track to Run Out in September



WASHINGTON (Agencies): In Washington, some are beginning to wonder what Biden is waiting for. The flow of U.S. military aid so vital to Ukraine's defense will slow—or even stop—by August unless Congress approves new funds, according to a Defense One review of Pentagon data. Since the Russian invasion of February 2022, lawmakers have approved the disbursement of \$48.9 billion in military aid to Ukraine. As of May 15, \$36.4 billion of that total has been delivered, contracted, or otherwise committed. At the average rate of disbursement since the invasion began, the remaining \$11.3 billion will run out in about four months. Ukraine may desperately need replenishment at just that moment. The looming campaign to dislodge Russian forces is expected to require a heavy expenditure in lives and equipment. Congress may approve a fifth package of supplemental spending, adding to the ones it passed last year in March, May, September, and December. But the Biden administration has yet to formally request one, and officials are keeping mum. The Defense Department directed questions about a new supplemental to the National Security Council. The NSC and White House did not respond to multiple emails and phone calls. The potential squeeze worries some in Congress and Ukraine, and highlights the administration's political balancing act. "My belief, based on some conversations, is that the administration is planning on moving ahead with a serious aid package this calendar year," said John Herbst, a former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. But political considerations are at play, said Mark Cancian, a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "They don't want to go in too high with all the attention and pushback a big number would entail," before they have to, he said.

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