



Ukrainian Commander-in-chief General Valery Zaluzhny gravely wounded in Russian strike – RIA

MOSCOW (Agencies): The commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, General Valery Zaluzhny, was seriously wounded in a Russian missile strike near the city of Kherson earlier this month, a security source has told RIA Novosti. Zaluzhny, who has recently disappeared from the public eye, suffered a head injury and numerous shrapnel wounds during the attack in early May, which targeted a Ukrainian command post near the village of Posad-Pokrovskoe, the agency reported on Wednesday. The general underwent a craniotomy at a military hospital in Kiev after the strike, the source claimed. Doctors expect the 49-year-old to live, although he will not be able to conduct his duties as commander, the source added. Zaluzhny's recovery is further complicated by an underlying medical condition, said to be diabetes, the agency reported. The new report has already been denied by Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council chief Aleksey Danilov, who took to Twitter to announce that Zaluzhny, as



well as other unspecified members of Kiev's top command, had met on Wednesday with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky to brief him on the current situation. Speculation about Zaluzhny's whereabouts emerged after he missed a high-profile NATO meeting on May 10. The chairman of the bloc's military committee, Rob Bauer, said Brussels had been informed that the Ukrainian commander could not attend in person or via video-link due to the "complex operational situation" in the conflict with Moscow. The general has not been seen in public since then, and footage that emerged online in recent days suggesting he

was in good health turned out to have been filmed before his disappearance. On Saturday, Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Anna Malyyar claimed Zaluzhny was fine and remained in charge of the armed forces. "The commander-in-chief is in his place. He's doing his job. We just talked," she wrote on Telegram. Malyyar suggested that rumors of Zaluzhny's possible injury or death were being spread by Russia in an attempt to demoralize Ukrainian forces during the battle for the strategic city of Artyomovsk, also known as Bakhmut. Moscow announced the "full capture" of Artyomovsk on Saturday, although Kiev has continued to deny the loss of its key stronghold in Donbass. Zaluzhny has been popular with the Western media, which has portrayed him as a key figure in Ukraine's resistance against Russia. Throughout the conflict, the so-called 'Iron General' has given lengthy interviews to outlets such as The Economist and Time, which listed him among the 100 most influential people in the world in 2022.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Trump's top Republican rival formally enters 2024 race



WASHINGTON (Agencies): Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has made his candidacy for US president official, setting up a showdown with former backer Donald Trump for the Republican Party's 2024 nomination. The DeSantis campaign submitted a filing to the US Federal Election Commission confirming his run for president on Wednesday afternoon, hours before the governor is expected to make a public announcement on Twitter. He has long been considered a top contender for the Republican nomination, drawing

the ire of former president Trump. Voter sentiment appeared to be trending in DeSantis' favor last November, after he won re-election by the largest margin for a Florida governor in 40 years and helped congressional candidates on the state's Republican ticket fare better than expected. In fact, a February poll by Yahoo/YouGov indicated that DeSantis had a 45%-41% lead over Trump. Several high-profile candidates endorsed by Trump in the congressional midterms performed worse than expected and lost their races.

Israel company, Morocco university sign agreement for advancement in aerospace, AI

TEL AVIV (Agencies): A prominent Israeli aerospace company has signed an agreement with a key Moroccan university to establish a new research centre for the purpose of advancement in the fields of aeronautics and artificial intelligence. At a signing event in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, this week, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International University of Rabat (UIR) to establish the jointly-run new research centre named the Centre of Excellence. Described as a "pioneering initiative that aims to promote cutting-edge research, innovation, technology and the creation of competitive national tech start-ups", the centre will reportedly serve as a platform for exchange between Moroccan and Israeli companies, as well as between research centres co-developing advanced technological products for the aerospace industry. Strengthening cooperation and partnership in the applied research, innovation, co-development, and incubation, the centre will also contribute to enhancing Morocco's position as an attractive competence hub in those and other fields.

Los Angeles approves robot police dogs

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): The Los Angeles city council has authorized the use of a robotic "dog" device by the local police department, despite protests from residents and some dissenting council members. New York previously unveiled similar tech and faced major public backlash. City lawmakers voted 8-4 on Tuesday to approve a donation of a "Quadruped Unmanned Ground Vehicle" to the LAPD from the non-profit Los Angeles Police Foundation, which supplied the \$277,000-robot to the force free of charge. Designed and manufactured by Boston Dynamics, the robotic dog is capable of navigating terrain and buildings autonomously, and can be equipped with a wide range of surveillance gear, sensors and other "payloads." For police, it is generally intended for use in dangerous situations that could put officers at risk, acting as an extra set of eyes and ears for the department. However, the new addition to the LAPD faced sharp criticism from residents, with several citizens slamming the council's decision during public



comments on Tuesday. One local said "I don't want to arm [artificial intelligence]," while another declared that the use of the robot would eventually lead to "robot cops," asking "Didn't you guys see that movie iRobot or Terminator?" New York's decision in 2020 to employ the robotic dog, which the NYPD dubbed 'Digidog,' proved equally controversial, with the city cutting short its first contract to lease the device after New Yorkers decried the tech as Orwellian. However, officials later reversed course and returned the dog to the force last month, with police commissioner Keechant Sewell stating it would be used in a way that is "transparent, consistent and always done in close collaboration with the people we serve."

Saudi Arabia restores diplomatic relations with Canada



RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday that it is restoring diplomatic relations with Canada. The decision comes after a discussion between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Bangkok in November last year. The desire of both sides to restore relations is based on mutual respect and common interests, the ministry said. The move seeks to restore relations to how they were before a diplomatic rift, in which Riyadh felt that Ottawa was interfering in the Kingdom's internal affairs, damaged ties between the nations in 2018. The Canadian foreign ministry said that Jean-Philippe Linteau will be the new ambassador to the Kingdom. Linteau was most recently

the consul general of Canada in Dubai. The Saudi foreign ministry statement did not mention who the Saudi ambassador to Ottawa will be. The spat led to Riyadh recalling its ambassador and expelling Ottawa's envoy to the Kingdom. Additionally, Saudi Arabia froze new investment in Canada, halted a scholarship program to the North American country, and ended all flights to Canada by national carrier Saudia. Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he was pleased to see the countries restore diplomatic relations and congratulated Linteau on his appointment. "The Kingdom is a longtime regional partner, one with whom we share many interests," Harper tweeted. Dennis Horak, who was the Canadian ambassador expelled from Riyadh in 2018, said the Kingdom was an important regional player.

China responds to NATO initiative in Japan

-The US-led military alliance should not extend its reach beyond the North Atlantic-

BEIJING (Agencies): China has urged Japan to act responsibly after Tokyo confirmed that it is in talks to build a NATO liaison office on its territory, saying it would not accept "bloc confrontation" in the Asia-Pacific. Asked about the plans during a Wednesday press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said NATO should remain within its own sphere of influence and not seek to grow its presence in Asia. "NATO claims to be a regional organization and should not extend its geopolitical reach. The Asia-Pacific does not welcome bloc confrontation or military blocs," she said, adding "Given Japan's history of aggression, it needs

to be prudent on military and security issues and make sure its actions are conducive to regional peace and stability." Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida confirmed reports about the proposed liaison office earlier on Wednesday, telling lawmakers that discussions are underway, but that he was "not aware of any decision made." He noted that Tokyo would not seek to join NATO, despite its stepped-up cooperation with the alliance in recent years. It is unclear exactly what role the NATO office in Japan might serve, but sources cited by the Nikkei Asia outlet said it would likely be a one-man station meant to facilitate consultations with allied officials.

'Queen of rock 'n' roll' Tina Turner dies at 83

NEW YORK (Reuters): Tina Turner, the American-born singer who left a hardscrabble farming community and abusive relationship to become one of the top recording artists of all time, died on Wednesday at the age of 83. She died peacefully after a long illness in her home in Küsnacht near Zurich, Switzerland, her representative said. Turner began her career in the 1950s during the early years of rock and roll and evolved into an MTV phenomenon. In the video for her chart-topping song "What's Love Got to Do with It," in which she called love a "second-hand emotion," Turner epitomized 1980s style as she strutted through New York City streets with her spiky blond hair, wearing a cropped jean jacket, mini skirt, and stiletto heels. With her taste for musical experimentation and bluntly-worded ballads, Turner gelled per-



fectly with a 1980s pop landscape in which music fans valued electronically-produced sounds and scorned hippie-era idealism. Sometimes nicknamed the "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll," Turner won six of her eight Grammy Awards in the 1980s. The decade saw her land a dozen songs on the Top 40, including "Typical Male," "The Best," "Private Dancer" and "Better Be Good to Me." Her 1988 show in Rio de Janeiro drew 180,000 people, which remains one of the largest concert audiences for any single performer.

Turkiye sees signs of oil, natural gas in eastern Black Sea, report says

ANKARA (Agencies): Turkiye is seeing indications of oil and natural gas reserves in the eastern Black Sea, the Energy Minister said Tuesday, local Turkish media reports. According to the report, ramped-up hydrocarbon explorations in the Black Sea have been part of Turkiye's proactive approach to fully assess the region's potential to secure domestic resources to curb its major dependence on external resources. "We have \$500 billion worth of gas. There was abnormal pricing and that is why this figure was estimated at \$1 trillion last year," Donmez told an interview with the private broadcaster, CNN Turk. Turkiye, this April, started pumping natural gas into the national grid from a vast reserve in the Black Sea, discovered gradually since August 2020. The reserve is estimated to hold over 710 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas, which is promising to curb the country's dependence and cut consumer energy prices.

Norway to help train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 jets

OSLO (Agencies): Norway will support training programs for Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16 fighter jets, Norwegian Defense Minister Bjoern Arild Gram said on Wednesday. US President Joe Biden on Friday endorsed training programs for Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky assured Biden that the aircraft would not be used to go into Russian territory. "The government backs this initiative and is considering how Norway can contribute together with allies and partners," Gram said. The Norwegian government



has not decided whether Norway will give any of its F-16 jets to Ukraine, the minister separately told public broadcaster NRK. Russia, whose forces invaded Ukraine 15 months ago, has said any transfer of the US-made F-16s to Ukraine would be pointless and raise the question of NATO's role in the war.

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.

Three ex-lawmakers of PTI get interim bail in corruption case

PESHAWAR (APP): An anti-corruption court has granted interim bail to three former lawmakers of PTI from Swat till June 01 in a corruption reference filed against them. All the three accused MPs of PTI including Azizullah Gran, Mohibullah and Fazal Ha-

keem were booked for misuse of powers and illegal recruitments during the PTI government in the province. They had managed to recruit as many as 66 persons illegally in Nawaz Sharif Kidney Hospital Swat, said the record of the Anti-Corruption Department,

adding that a loss of Rs 13 million was caused to the national exchequer. The three accused had applied for interim bail in the court which was granted to them till June 01 while the court had also sought relevant records from the concerned quarters.

Former PTI MPA among 25 sent on judicial remand in May 9 case

PESHAWAR (APP): An anti-terrorism court here on Wednesday sent the former lawmaker of PTI Arbab Jahandad and 25 other party workers on judicial remand in the May 9 case of vandalism, arson and violent protest in the provincial capital. The ex-MPA was allegedly involved

in blocking the M-1 Peshawar-Islamabad motorway and instigating protesters for damaging public and private properties in the city. He was arrested from Murree by Punjab Police and handed over to Peshawar police where a case was registered against him in Chamkani Police Sta-

tion. The police presented a total of 27 accused in the May 9 case before the ATC judge, who after hearing the arguments sent 25 accused, including Arbab Jahandad, on judicial remand while two accused were referred to police on physical remand.

Four including three security men martyred in N Waziristan suicide attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Four people including two security personnel and a policeman were martyred and two injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up at Liaquat checkpoint in Dattakhel tehsil of North Waziristan on Wednesday. The deputy commissioner of the

tribal district and police told media persons that the suicide attack took place during routine checking. The martyred included two security personnel, one policeman and a civilian. The DC said bodies and the injured had been shifted to Miranshah hospital while security

forces had cordoned off the area to collect evidence. The injured included Hawaldar Manzoor and policeman, Shakir. Prior to the successful operations conducted by the armed forces, North Waziristan was known as a stronghold of the militant Pakistani Taliban group.

PHC suspends arrest warrant of five PTI workers under MPO

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday suspended the arrest warrant of five Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers, including former provincial minister Anwar Zaib and Ajmal Khan under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). The bench comprising Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah heard the case and directed each accused to submit Rs 200,000 surety bonds to the DC office concerned that they would not participate in any such activities in the future. The peti-

tioners' lawyers submitted that his applicants were peaceful citizens and the cases had been registered against them on the basis of their affiliation with PTI. The court restrained the district administration of Bajaur from arresting the accused under the MPO-3 and suspended the arrest warrants. The bench also directed the district administration to submit the evidence within three days.

PESCO announces suspension of Power Supply due to maintenance of work

PESHAWAR (APP): Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rehman Baba Grid Station on May 25 and May 29th from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm due to maintenance work, resultant 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. According to PESCO spokesman, Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Kohat Road Grid Station on May 25 and May 29 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultant consumers of 11 KV PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Bagh, Sonehri Masjid, Bana Mari, Civil Quarter, Nothia, Murshad Abad, Abasin, Old Deh Bahadar, Deh Bhabdar, Wazir Abad, Ameen Jan Colony Bara, Nodhya Payan, Murshid Ababad, Dora Road, Nodiya Bahadar, Lundi Arbab

1,2,3, Sheikh Muhamadi, Pishtakara, Swati Gate, Gulbarg, Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience. Likewise, the Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar City Grid Station on May 25 and May 29 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultant consumers of 11 KV Sikhandar Abad, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home, Bana Mari, Urmar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molvi G, Nishtarabad, NHA feeders will face inconvenience. Similarly, Power Supply will remain suspended from 220 KV Mardan Grid Station on May 27 and May 31st from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultant 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, Gujjar Garhi feeders will face inconvenience.

Three drug peddlers held; 13kg hashish recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): The Capital City Police on Wednesday foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of hashish from Peshawar to Punjab and arrested three drug peddlers. According to spokesman of the police, the accused were trying to smuggle 13kg of hashish from Peshawar to different cities of Punjab while riding on a vehicle

No LZS-3409. The City police stopped the vehicle on Motorway toll plaza and during checking recovered 13 kg hashish from secret compartments of the car. The police immediately arrested all the three accused identified as Muntazir, Fayyaz and Omar Farooq and shifted them to police station for further interrogation.

DPO warns of touts blackmailing people

LOWER DIR (APP): District Police Office (DPO) Tariq Iqbal on Wednesday said that in the wake of May 9 violent protests in the district, certain elements and touts became active and were reportedly blackmailing innocent people of the arrest. In an official statement issued here, he said that such persons were reportedly contacting public in the guise of any govern-

ment official and telling them that their names were on the list of saboteurs of May 9. These elements then demand money for removing the names from the list, he said, adding that such individuals were defaming the police force. If someone receives any similar phone call, he should contact directly on Whatsapp Number 0341-4441175 and lodge a complaint, he advised.

KP CM condemns terrorist attacks in Hangu, NW

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Muhammad Azam Khan on Wednesday strongly condemned the terrorists' attacks on the gas plant in Hangu the other day and a suicide attack on a police check-post in North Waziristan (NW). The CM expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives including security personnel in the two attacks and prayed that may Allah bless the departed soul and

give strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude. He said that such cowardly attacks were aimed to sabotage peace in the country and hamper the process of development and prosperity. He said these attacks could not shake the resolve of the security forces to wipe out terrorism and extremism in all forms and manifestations. Azam Khan said that soon perpetrators of the attacks would soon be brought to justice.

NBEAC-PRT Visit of IMSciences for Re-accreditation of Business Programs



PESHAWAR (Staff Report): A Peer Review Team (PRT) of National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC) visited the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar from May 22 to May 24, 2023, for re-accreditation of BBA and MBA programs. The PRT was headed by Prof. Dr. Abdul Raziq, Dean, BUITEMS, Quetta. Other members of the PRT included Prof. Dr. Khurram Shehzad, Dean, Riphah International University Islamabad, Dr. Rameez Khalid, Associate Professor, IBA Karachi, Dr. Ghulam Ali Arain, Associate Professor, LUMS, Mr. Saad Khan Zahid, Regional Manager Head, EA Consultant (Pvt. Ltd.), Peshawar and Mr. Usman Ali Jadoon, Assistant Manager Accreditation, NBEAC. During

the three-day visit, the PRT assessed BBA and MBA programs of the Institute as per the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Continuous Improvement Report (CIR) submitted to the NBEAC by the Quality Enhancement Cell of IMSciences. The PRT had meetings with faculty, students, section heads and top management of the Institute to review how IMSciences functions with respect to the nine key areas prescribed by NBEAC. An insightful feedback was shared by the PRT in their exit meeting with the top management of the Institute enumerating the unique strengths of IMSciences and also rendered some suggestions for further enhancing the quality of business education provision at the Institute.

2 nabbed in police operation against drug peddlers

PESHAWAR (APP):The Sarband Police in a successful operation arrested two inter-provincial drug smugglers here on Wednesday. According to a Police spokesman, "The Sarband Police in a successful operation have arrested Naveed and Muhammad Hussain, the alleged drug smugglers. Among the arrested alleged drug smugglers one of the arrested accused belongs to Punjab while the other belongs to Khyber district." The accused were trying to smuggle drugs to other

cities of the country by rickshaw from the Khyber district and used to change vehicles for every attempt, the spokesman informed the media men. During the operation, the alleged drug smugglers were arrested during the blockade of the old Bara check post. "A total of more than seven kilograms of high-quality hashish has been recovered from the secret compartments of the rickshaw," he said. "Investigation started after registering a case against the arrested accused," the spokesman added.

RTI Act termed powerful tool to fight corruption, promote democratic ideology

PESHAWAR (APP): Right to Information Act (RTI) is a powerful tool to fight against corruption and an effective means to promote democratic ideology. It makes the government system accountable to the public. These observations were made by Syed Saadat Jahan, Assistant Director of Communication, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) while speaking in a seminar held on Wednesday here at Jirga Hall Jamrud. According to a press release issued here, the seminar was arranged by KPIC aiming to sensitize Village Secretaries and Chairmen of district Khyber, which are notified as Public Information Officers (PIOs) under the Local Government Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa notification

in Nov 2022. More than 100 Village Council Secretaries and Chairmen participated in the seminar, added the press release. Syed Saadat Jahan imparted a detailed lecture on the procedure of public information provision. While addressing to the participants he asserted that being PIOs you are responsible to facilitate and guide citizens specifically the illiterate segment of society. "KPIC is committed to educating every single citizen regarding this law, to ensure transparency in the province" he added. The said seminar was part of the KPIC and Government and Public Policy Project (GPP) Merged Areas collaboration project's awareness seminars on RTI law in Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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	306	308
China Yuan	42.70	41.14
Japanese Yen	2.15	2.1
Saudi Riyal	81	81.9
U.A.E Dirham	83.5	84.3
UK Pound	372	376
Euro	380	383.5
Australian Dollar	200	202
Canadian Dollar	225	227.5

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
Irnam 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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Data Privacy Law

The Ministry of Information, Technology and Telecommunication should be lauded for finalising the Personal Data Protection Bill 2023. This draft legislation is the first step in the Pakistani state recognizing the right to data privacy, which is globally recognised as an important freedom, particularly made more significant with the increased use of the internet. The proposed legislation importantly criminalises the dissemination of personal data with a potential fine of \$2 million, which is significant enough to act as a deterrent. The bill ultimately aims to address two sides of the same problem—data protection for private individuals and for businesses. For individuals, the problems range from identity theft to customer exploitation, online scams and more. For businesses, the issue of data security, and protection against illegal actions are central to running an enterprise in today's world. There have been reports that international companies have brought up the lack of a robust law for data privacy as a reason for not investing in Pakistan in the past. It is hoped that the law, once passed, starts to change that and brings substantial legal cover for both businesses and individuals. On the individual level, there is little in the way of any mechanisms currently that protect users from companies seeking out their data. How much data is requested, who can access this information once received, how securely it is kept and for how long are just some of the issues that the legislation needs to address. It is also heartening to see that the idea of 'consent' in giving access to data is introduced by this bill. Nevertheless, even once the legislation is passed, there will always be a struggle in clarifying what is 'justified' in data requests and how consent is taken, given that companies might make this consent mandatory for users to consume specific services. This is just the first step on the long road to protecting the data privacy of citizens, but it is good to see the government finally move in this direction.

LIFE: AN OPPORTUNITY TO 'CONTRIBUTE' NOT A 'COMPETITION'

— By Syed Irfan Iqbal

Nations are in race: to be economic power, to be winner in the race of amassing weapons of mass destruction, to be influential in technological fields; to be unmatched in every contour and every nation is competing and running to be better than others. Similarly, the merciless corporate sector is breathing in the thick fog of competition; brand supremacy is modern mania. Educational achievements: a road of cut throat competition; Every individual living in modern cities is running as he is being chased by many; running for his comfort ; running for his livelihood ; running for his life ; even competing with global warming to take breathe in clean and pure air. Have strong heart and observe all around! Individuals competing in Homes, in offices, in play grounds, in business centers. Politicians are competing for power; each organ of state is competing for substantial chunk in decision making and influence; children are competing in schools, in debates, getting grades and marks. The list of this madness goes on like ever running water of ocean. Behold! Social media; a new universe of competition where ratings, subscribers, viewers, comments pushing most of us on the verge of insanity. Look at Media as it is in cutthroat competition to break the news come what may! Worst of all competition is to have large and spacious houses, luxury vehicles and marriage, birthdays; even graveyards have prominent graves to soothe the souls of those who survive .Thus, competition does not spare us even after death. This global mania of 'Competition' has eroded away the very dignity of being value-oriented in this age of 'C' as C for 'Capitalism' and C for 'Competition' both have already pushed us too far even to imagine about values, traditions and culture. Let us cross the bar of time and meet with personalities whose names are engraved in hearts and minds of millions and millions, the personalities whose actions and deeds are sparkling the souls of millions and millions fellow humans. Let us ask respectfully to Quaid-e Azam Muhammad



Ali Jinnah with whom was he competing? Probably No One. He was struggling; he was daring every antagonistic force. He knows well Competing with enemies make us enemies alike. Definitely, Quaid had never imagined to compete with antagonists. Definitely, he achieved the best Of best qualities remain perseverant and consistent, dedicated to his and millions of humans' cause, by standing tall in every adversity. With achieving excellence in his personal life, he led the nations on the path of freedom and independent. He did not compete but contributed substantially and still every Pakistani is praying for him as his contribution allowed millions of women, men and children to take breathe in free land i.e. Pakistan. Let us move to another continent: Had Rosa Park (American civil Rights Activist) been competing with Ku Klux Klan (American white supremacist group), she would never have been alive in annals of history. She denied conceding the prevailing notion of segregation, suppression and denial of basic rights. It was fearless act of personal strength and she is alive in heart of every coloured soul for her contribution and struggle for imparting respect and meanings to their lives. Let us travel in literary world, Sadaat Hussain Manto: a writer who exposed the social taboos so loudly that his voice is still resonated in Urdu speaking region. Definitely! He had been honest to his thoughts and remained steadfast. His written words still speak clearly to expose dark realities of life. He was never in completion with any other literary figure. He just kept on moving

in circle of his own interest and give voice to such issues which had never been talked about in close rooms. The subcontinent had been a place where many Muslim Rulers competed for throne but one Muslim Ruler having shortest tenure just five years (1540-45) Sher Shah Suri stood tall and prominent due to his contributions: introduced systematic bureaucratic administration, built roads, rest houses, and wells for his people and being tolerant to non-Muslims. Let us be in present! Malala Yousif Zai; An insignificant student rose to international fame by rising herself against suppression and fear of Taliban. She did not compete! She rose to the occasion which enable her to become the youngest child education activist and thus her contribution to raise awareness for girls 'education is sparking the lives of hundreds of girls with knowledge and education. Nature is the best guide. Do flowers compete to bloom? No! Every flower has its time to blossom and time to fade away, every tree grows not to copy other tree but with its own fate. Dose falcon fly high rose above all other birds to defeat them. Definitely, No! Falcon and Eagle bestowed more strength so their approach is different from other birds. Observing lives of effective personalities and to the phenomenal Nature all around us ; it is as clear as sunlight of summer sun that life is to contribute and achieve whatever we decide or fate decides for us. Let us pause and rethink to contribute at whatever level we can in our lives. Have we ever wondered! Why graveyards are so green and why graveyards are full of large and shadowy trees! In fact, our dead bodies get decomposed and made the land fertile where these are buried. We humans contribute to Earth's ecosystem even after our deaths. Let us be contributor in whatever opportunity life offers us! Let this unleashed capitalism and materialism not diminish us to be a contributor.

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Is the debt ceiling the real issue for the US economy right now?

— By Dr. Radhika Desai

The debt ceiling drama unfolding in Washington DC is, as commentators around the world have noted, distracting US president Joe Biden from his geopolitical agenda. Though initial fears that the standoff would prevent his participation at the Hiroshima G7 summit were unrealized, he was forced to cancel trips to Australia and Papua New Guinea, both of which were to involve attempts at containing China's growing influence in the Pacific. He even had to promise to call Senate Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy from aboard Air Force One on his way home. Over the weekend, debt ceiling talks stalled and evidently could not be restarted without the president's personal intervention. Republicans are demanding massive social spending cuts over the next decade as a precondition for lifting the debt ceiling, while Democrats are determined to keep any cuts to a minimum. Reconciling the right wing and the left wing on issues such as work requirements for eligibility for various welfare payments looks very difficult and talks have stalled more than once. However, the Democrats will be true to form if they prove willing to give in to a far greater extent than they currently admit and agree to cuts, now conveniently blamed on the Republicans and the urgent need to lift the debt ceiling. Indeed, if the Biden administration really cared about the working poor in the US, not to mention its crumbling infrastructure and a declining economy that could use a heavy dose of fiscal stimulus and industrial strategy, it would heed the advice of legal experts who have clarified that the so-called debt ceiling in fact does not exist. By voting on the budget, Congress has already agreed to borrow the shortfall. No wonder so many in Washington DC are still sanguine about a deal. Still, a resolution this time around definitely looks harder than ever as Janet Yellen and nearly 150 CEOs of major US corporations have warned of disaster in the event of a default. Jamie Dimon, CEO of the biggest US bank (recently made bigger by absorbing failed banks), convened a war room on the possibility and warned of market panic. However, even if a resolution is reached this time too, the current prolonged standoff will have consequences. Back in 2011, when there was a similar standoff, a resolution was reached in time but Standard and Poor downgraded US debt from its AAA rating anyway. Today, the economic situation in the US is far worse

and the financial situation, caught between the rock of inflation and the hard place of asset-busting rising interest rates, is extremely fragile. Markets are already demonstrating an awareness of these conditions. They remain awash with funds that need some hope for profit, however desperate that hope is and however thin the profit margin. This condition should normally boost markets for all assets, but investors are turning away from both US stocks and bonds. While some investors are moving funds from the US to China, attracted by the country's brighter economic prospects, better valuations and a more benign outlook for inflation, others may prove unwilling to bet on US companies that promise to make a profit sometime in the future and prefer "the steadier dividend-paying companies that Europe has in abundance." Moreover, the US faces an even bigger and more immediate threat given its large debt – a crash in the Treasuries market. Thanks almost entirely to repetition, the world has come to take as truth the fiction that the US enjoys an "exorbitant privilege" of issuing debt without limit, which the world will be only too happy to buy. Unfortunately, not only was this never true, lately it has become more blatantly false than ever. The US has long borrowed at higher rates than some other major governments, such as Germany. Additionally, over the past decade and before, Federal Reserve support for the US Treasury market has been critical in holding prices up and pressing yields down. Even so, the bottom fell out of the market for US Treasuries at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 and, for over a year now, rising interest rates have also been supporting them. Yet, there are worries about the liquidity of the market for Treasuries, particularly about whether sellers can find buyers. No wonder then that President Biden could not afford to yield to the siren calls of the Modern Monetary Theory lobby, which argued that the US at least had the capacity to issue debt without limit. Instead, he has had to prudently limit spending in his budget, keeping down the size of the much-anticipated programs he promised during his election campaign, and even then had to fund them substantially with increased taxes rather than financing them with debt alone. So much for the "exorbitant privilege" and Modern Monetary Theory. Courtesy: RT

BRI: Harbinger of peace and prosperity in the Middle East — By Arhama Siddiq

On 19 May, 2023, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad attended the Arab League Summit for the first time in over a decade. The re-coalescence of Syria back in the Arab fold is part of a broader regional normalisation process, which was brought about by Chinese facilitation on 10 March, 2023 between Saudi Arabia and Iran, where the two sides agreed to resume diplomatic relations; it is an open secret that their enmity has long been a cornerstone of Middle Eastern strife. Since then, as part of the regional rapprochement, there have been visits between the high echelons of various countries with their Syrian counterparts; this includes, President Raisi's visit to Damascus, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan meeting with President Assad, as well as Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad's trip to Egypt after more than a decade. In retrospect, the thread which ties these countries together is China, the bedrock being its billion dollar mega-project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was initiated exactly ten years ago, in 2013.

The BRI is predicated on enhancing connectivity and promoting economic cooperation among participating countries. The initiative consists of two main components: a land-based route and a maritime route. To date, the BRI is the most concrete example of Chinese implementation of South-South Cooperation (SSC), which is based on the principle of solidarity, mutual benefit and shared development objectives among partner countries. The central tenets of SSC are economic interdependence, self-reliance, mutual benefit, all postulated on equality and mutual respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Chinese investment, infrastructure and technology, as well as the multilateral organisations created by Beijing, have become an increasingly vital component of the economic and political diversification strategies of numerous Arab states. Examples include UAE's Khalifa Port, Qatar's Lusail Stadium and the Haramain High-Speed Railway in Saudi Arabia. This also helps explain why the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait have applied to join the

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as dialogue partners. Saudi Arabia became a dialogue partner earlier this year. Similarly, the Middle East is of crucial importance due to its location at the crossroads of three major continents – Europe, Africa, and Asia – and the convergence of the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. Both China and the Middle East states have mutual interests in integrating the BRI into national regeneration schemes, such as Saudi Vision 2030, UAE Vision 2021, Jordan 2025, Turkiye's Middle Corridor and Kuwait's Vision 2035. In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in trade between China and the Middle East, especially in the energy sector which remains the substratum of China's associations with the region. China has also signed comprehensive strategic partnership agreements with a number of countries, such as with Egypt (2014), Saudi Arabia (2016) and Iran (2021). In 2022, Syria, too, came under the BRI fold. Courtesy: Middle East Monitor

Letters to the Editor

Smuggling of wheat, sugar, and fertilizer
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's latest orders to stop the smuggling of wheat, sugar, and urea fertilizer to Afghanistan are urgent and welcome developments in the context of the country's economic crisis, which he announced yesterday in a high-level review meeting. A steering committee was formed for the implementation of which he himself will be the head. The practical situation is that the Pa-

kistan-Afghan border has been a haven for smugglers for a long time. Through this open border, not only wheat, urea fertilizer, and sugar but also US dollars are being smuggled to neighboring countries, which is creating a crisis in Pakistan. He expressed his determination that he will not sit down from China until the scourge of smuggling ends. He also said that the government planned to provide an uninterrupted supply of fertilizer to the farmers in order to

get more production of wheat next year than this year, by implementing which Pakistan will once again become a wheat exporting country. It is very unfortunate that a country with the reputation of being an agricultural country in the world is now forced to buy wheat from other countries. Agricultural production can be increased by smart planning and stopping smuggling. Prime Minister's actions in this regard are recommended.
— Khalida Khalid, Turbat

Expert on 'World schizophrenia day' stresses awareness for early detection in patient's recovery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health expert Wednesday on 'World schizophrenia day' called upon society to play an active role in public awareness about early detection in patients' s recovery and educate people about the challenges faced by the patients as millions of people are suffering from it. Talking to a private news channel Associate Professor Dr Javed Akbar Dars said explained that 'Schizophrenia' is linked with considerable disability and could

affect educational and occupational performance. Schizophrenia, on the other hand, is a chronic and severe mental disorder affecting a person's thinking, perception, emotions, and behaviour, he added. People with schizophrenia are 2-3 times more likely to die at an early age in comparison to the average population, he mentioned. Schizophrenia is associated with physical illnesses, such as cardiovascular, metabolic, and infectious diseases, he

added. Replying to a question, he said this day is to acknowledge how much work remains to lift the stigma surrounding this condition and to create a more just end equitable world for people diagnosed with serious mental illness. He also described that the main two most commonly misunderstood conditions are bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, adding, it is essential to recognize their distinct symptoms and characteristics at an early stage.

Convention being held today to pay homage to martyrs: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that "Azmat-e-Shuhada Convention" will be held at Islamabad Convention Center today to pay homage to the martyrs of the country and show solidarity with

them by the entire nation. In a tweet, the minister said that the families of martyrs will also participate in the convention. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will condemn the May 9 tragedy and pay homage to the martyrs and Ghazis.

AKF appealed public to participate in 'Smog Free Lahore' drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan (AKF) Senior vice President Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Mangat on Wednesday has appealed the public to take active part in ongoing "Smog free Lahore" tree plantation drive for safeguarding the environment from the negative effects of climate change. "We need to take practical steps for environment protection and enhance green areas in the urban areas too", he said while talking to a private news channel. He said Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan with the collaboration of government and PHA has kicked off 'Smog Free Lahore'

campaign today (May 24) in which over 100,000 trees will be planted. "We have to make Pakistan green, he said, adding, it is need of hour to abstain from negative effects of climate change". He said the students of universities of the city in large numbers would take participate in the campaign. "This campaign is a big step towards protecting the country from negative effects of the climate change, he said." We would continue encouraging the nation and volunteers to participate in this charity campaign and hoped that the nation would benefit from its positive effects soon.

Fed Minister Khurram Dastagir to hold press conference on May 25

HYDERABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Engineer Khurram Dastagir Khan will hold a press conference here at a local hotel on Thursday (May 25). According to the program, Engineer Khurram Dast-

agir will visit Hyderabad to inaugurate the 220 km long 500 kv Thar- Matiari transmission line in Matiari district at about 3 pm. The Federal Minister will also hold a press conference in Indus Hotel at about 7 pm.

NEPRA concludes public hearing into XWDICOs' 3rd quarterly adjustment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday concluded a public hearing into XWAPDA Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) for quarterly adjustment about the 3rd quarter of the current fiscal year 2022-23. The hearing was presided by the NEPRA Authority comprising of Chairman NEPRA, Mr Tauseef H. Farooqi, Member (Technical), Engr. Rafique Ahmad Shaikh, Member (Licensing), Engr. Maqsood Anwar Khan and Member (Law), Ms. Amina Ahmed. The XWDICOs sought

an amount of Rs. 46.28 billion on account of the quarterly adjustment for the said period. The Authority heard the petitioners and would decide the matter after due diligence and considering the comments of all stakeholders. The allowed quarterly adjustment will be recovered on a uniform basis from all consumers except for Lifeline. The hearing was attended by a large number of representatives and senior officials of XWDICOs, CPPA-G, NTDC/NPCC as well as a business community, Journalists and the general public.

Chief Secretary GB meets representatives of Line Departments

GILGIT (APP): The representatives of various line departments gathered to meet Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan, along with Additional Chief Secretary, Secretary Services, Secretary Law, Secretary Services, and Secretary Education. In an official statement from CS GB office, it was informed that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the concerns and grievances of the departments and find viable solutions to address them effectively. "The forum provided a platform for representatives from key line departments including Planning & Development (P&D), Education, Health, Power, Works, Food, Social Welfare, and CMIT, among others, to present their issues and challenges". The Chief Secretary, heading the forum, attentively listened to their concerns and found them to be genuine and deserving attention. As a result of the constructive dialogue, the fol-

lowing decisions were made in the meeting: 1. Competent officers from various departments such as School Education, Higher Education, Health, Power, and PWD will be designated as Additional Secretaries Technical and Deputy Secretaries Technical at their respective secretariats. This re-designation will grant them the status of civil servants and provide them with perks and privileges similar to cadre officers. Their valuable expertise will play a crucial role in policy-making processes. 2. The case for the creation of a technical cadre within the secretariat will be initiated, presenting the proposal to the appropriate competent forum. Recognizing the technical capabilities of officers, it is understood that their presence within the secretariat can greatly contribute to the effective functioning of their respective departments.

Fake caller booked

KHANEWAL (APP): A fake caller was booked on the report of an official of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) on Wednesday. According to police sources, Umar Farooq, a resident of 79/10-R, called on the helpline 130 of NH&MP and claimed that two unidentified persons snatched his motorbike and mobile phone near

79/10 R along the highway. After the call, the admin officer of the motorway police, Malik Saleem Shahid reached the spot, where he found no evidence of occurrence of any robbery incident. Nor any such activity was detected when the CCTV footage was viewed, the sources added. A case against the accused has been registered.

Man kills wife, injured daughter

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A man killed his wife and injured his daughter with an axe in the Sharifabad district of the city on Wednesday. According to Police sources, a man attacked his wife, Sughra Bibi (55) with an axe and injured his daughter Tania Bibi (20) after a quarrel with his wife. The dead body of a woman and injured were shifted to the Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital where the condition of the injured girl was critical. The police have registered a case against the accused and started an investigation.

Tractor trolleys seized, thieves escape

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Police seized two tractor-trolleys when thieves fled after a raid at the official pond area situated at the head sauna barrage. According to police sources, earlier it was informed that the kiln owners of the area were involved in stealing soil from the pond owned by the Irrigation Department. Upon repeated complaints, police conducted a raid on Wednesday after the accused left the scene leaving behind tractor-trolleys filled with soil. The police spokesperson said that the super dam made of mud has suffered major damage after continuous theft of mud. Officials of the irrigation department said that the accused would not be spared and they would be brought to justice.

Robbers stole a motorbike at gunpoint

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Armed robbers have stolen a motorbike from a man and escaped here late Tuesday night. According to Police, Azhar Abbas, a retired official was on his way to home when the robbers intercepted him at Muzaffargarh- Mahmoud Kot road where they took his motor-cycle to a gunpoint. Soon after the incident police started a search to arrest the accused.

26 POs held

SARGODHA (APP): Sargodha police during a crackdown against law breakers and violators arrested 26 proclaimed offenders so far across the district during the ongoing month of May 2023. Police said here on Wednesday that the teams conducted 34 general and 18 small crackdowns and arrested three bike lifter gangs, two cattle thief gang. The police also recovered 2345-liters liquor, 4.8-kg hashish, 1.3-kg of opium, 18 pistols, 9 guns, five rifles, unearthed three working distilleries, 2388 bullets and valuables worth in millions of rupees from them.

Vice Chancellor SABS University recognized By WIPO

HYDERABAD (APP): The Vice Chancellor Shaheed Allah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritages Jamshoro Prof. Dr Arabella Bhutto has been recognized by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for her extraordinary contribution to innovation, entrepreneurship and business sector for the year 2023. The university spokesman informed here on Wednesday that WIPO has uploaded the profile of Dr Arabella Bhutto on the website along with dignitaries from Uruguay, Colombia, Switzerland, Venezuela, Antigua, Barbuda, Costa Rica, Brazil, Russia, India, Egypt, Chile, Singapore, England, Mexico, Trinidad, Tobago, United States of America, Kuwait, China, Romania, Peru, Thailand, Canada, Albania, Sri Lanka, France and other countries in various fields.

Health screening of Bahawalpur police held

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Health screening of Bahawalpur Police was conducted at Police Lines Bahawalpur on the instructions of Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar. According to the Bahawalpur Police spokesperson, these instructions were issued to ensure the conduct of health screening camps for the district police across the Punjab province. "District Police Officer, Bahawalpur, Syed Muhammad Ab-

bas has supervised and monitored the health screening process of Bahawalpur police," he said. He further said that all-important health tests including CBC, LFT, RFT, Uric Acid, Blood Sugar Fasting, HBV, HCV, Lipid Profile Test, HIV and others were held at the health screening camp set here. He added that an anti-hepatitis vaccine was also being injected into the police officials and personnel to protect them from hepatitis.

Govt to present people friendly budget 2023-24: Rana Ihsaan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan on Wednesday said economic team will use all possible resources to provide maximum relief to low income people and budget 2023-24 would have enough for improving poor sections of society. The fiscal year 2022-23 would change the economic landscape by stabilizing the national economy, he said while talking to PTV news channel. He said despite the difficult circumstances, the budget would not only provide relief to the masses, but also boost the indus-

try, trade, commerce, and agriculture sector in the country. Replying a question, he said that PML-N-led coalition government, after coming into power, launched various welfare projects to put country on road to development and progress. These development initiatives include Orange Metro Bus Service, Utility Store Package, BISP, interest free loans to youth, provision of free flour to deserving families, Youth Laptop Scheme, Talent Hunt Youth Sports League, Prime Minister Youth Internship Programme, and Thar Coal Power Plant, he explained.

Tourism minister congratulates leadership for sector's progress in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Tourism Ahmed bin Aqeel Al-Khateeb extended congratulations and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, over the progress achieved by the tourism sector in the Kingdom. The Saudi Cabinet highlighted on Tuesday the positive results achieved in the tourism sector in the two indicators of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) for the number of international tourists and tourism revenues for 2022. In this regard, the Minister of Tourism stressed that such achievement reflects the leadership's follow-up and interest in strengthening the tourism sector and raising its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) in line with the Saudi Vision 2030. He also commended the achievement

as an addition to the successes being achieved by the Kingdom in various fields and came as a culmination of the directives of the Kingdom's leadership to seek to strengthen the Kingdom's position on the global tourism map. Al-Khateeb also indicated that the development of visas and facilitating their procedures, the promotional campaigns in the targeted countries, and the diversity of tourism options and destinations in the Kingdom were among the reasons for achieving these achievements, affirming the Ministry ongoing efforts in cooperation with all partners from the public and private sectors to move forward in achieving the aspirations of leadership by making the Kingdom a global tourism destination. According to the UNWTO report, the Kingdom has made a massive leap in the ranking of the countries that received the most international tourists in 2022, advancing 12 places to reach 13th place, compared to 25th place in 2019.

Death anniversary of renowned comedian, film actor Rangeela observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 18th death anniversary of comedian, singer and film actor Rangeela was observed on Wednesday. Born on January 1, 1937 in Parachinar, his real name was Muhammad Saeed Khan. His family migrated to Peshawar when he was still a child. Later, Rangeela moved to Lahore at a young age and earned his livelihood by painting billboards for the Pakistani film industry. By the stroke of luck when he was 20, Rangeela was asked to substitute an absent comedian at the set. His career formally started at the age of 21 with a Punjabi feature film 'Jatti' (1958) and from that moment

on, he never looked back and soon emerged as one of the Lollywood's most sought-after comedians. He founded Rangeela Productions and manifested his multi-faceted talents by directing 'Diya aur Toofan' that was released in 1969. He further introduced himself as a singer with blockbusters like 'Ga mairay manwa gata jaray, Jana hai hamka dour'. Rangeela dexterously played three characters in "Parda Na Uthao". With political satire 'Insaan aur Gaha', he established himself as a writer with profundity in his works. 'Qubra Ashiq' was his interpretation of Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris.

ANF seizes over 50 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in four operations recovered over 50 kg of drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Multan Airport arrested two Qatar-bound passengers, residents of Khanewal, going on flight no QR-617 and recovered 215 Ice filled capsules from their possession. In another operation, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle

drugs and recovered 1900 grams of Ice drug from the Peshawar 'Swati Phatak Old Bara' area from the possession of two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber. In the third operation near Quetta Qambrani Road, four kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Qilla Abdullah while in the fourth operation, a 48 kg Ice drug concealed underground in the Gwadar Klak area was recovered.

NA felicitates people of Gujjar Khan on approval of Punjab University Potohar Campus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf here on Wednesday felicitated the people of Gujjar Khan on the approval of 'Punjab University Potohar Campus' by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP). In a statement, he said, "The establishment of Punjab University Potohar Campus would usher in the new era of prosperity and development in Gujjar Khan." Punjab University's Potohar Campus Gujjar Khan,

Rawalpindi was approved at the cost of four billion rupees in the meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal held the other day. Ashraf was of the view that the campus would upskill the youth of Gujjar Khan with quality higher education at their doorstep. He added, "In this age of knowledge-based economies, higher education is the only tool of progress and development."

Minister unveils plan to attract foreign, domestic investment in AI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Wednesday said the incumbent government was working on a strategy to attract more and more foreign as well as domestic investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI), considered a key element in strengthening economies in the modern world. In a statement, he said, at least 60 countries, including India and Sri Lanka, have adopted the AI laws and policies since 2017. The minister said Bangladesh's draft policy has recently been opened for public feedback and consultation. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommu-

nication has also uploaded a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Policy (AIP) on its official webpage, seeking public feedback and suggestions from public and private sector organizations, academia, civil society, and industry to finalize the document. Artificial Intelligence Policy is a pivotal milestone for transforming Pakistan into a knowledge-based economy as it spells out a national strategy to establish an ecosystem necessary for AI adoption. The policy will harness an agile framework to address different aspects of unique user journeys encompassing different market horizontals and industry verticals by ensuring the responsible use of AI.

Khawaja Asif reiterates Pakistan's desire to strengthen partnership with Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Colonel General Karim Valiyev called on Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif. Khawaja Muhammad Asif reiterated Pakistan's strong desire to strengthen its partnership with Azerbaijan in all fields including defense cooperation, said a news release issued here on Wednesday. The de-

fense minister further said that both countries share common religions, cultures, and history. Both countries would thus continue to support each other on various international fora, he added. The visiting dignitary said, "Azerbaijan desires to work closely with Pakistan." "Azerbaijan considers Pakistan important because of its rich experience in various fields including Defense," Karim Valiyev said.

Wfp Welcomes Contribution from the Philippines to support flood response in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of US\$ 100,000 from the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan for its ongoing flood response to reach the most vulnerable flood-affected communities with relief, recovery and rehabilitation support. The Ambassador-designate of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, handed over the donation to Rathi Palakrishnan, WFP's Country Director a.i., during a ceremony held at the WFP office in Islamabad on 18 May. "The Philippine Government is always ready to provide whatever help it could give to the people of Pakistan, with the Philippines and Pakistan considered as most vulnerable to climate change. This is an extension of our appreciation to



Pakistan for its assistance after Typhoon Yolanda brought devastation to a large part of the Philippines", said Ambassador-designate Maria Agnes M. Cervantes. The contribution comes at a critical time and will support thousands of people in need after the devastating floods last year. Malnutrition was already a major public health concern across the country before the floods, but now its acute form is an increasing concern in the worst-affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan, especially among children under 5.

Deputy Defence Minister of Azerbaijan calls on Army Chief

RAWALPINDI (APP): The first Deputy Minister of Defence of Republic of Azerbaijan and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Army, Colonel General Karim Valiyev called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ) here on Tuesday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, matters related to defence and security cooperation between the two brotherly countries were discussed during the meeting. They emphasized on enhancing mutual cooperation in military and professional matters.



Paf Pays Tribute To 1965 War Hero Sqn Ldr Muniruddin Ahmed (Shaheed)

ISLAMABAD: As a tribute to the bravery and valour of Squadron Leader Muniruddin Ahmed (Shaheed), Directorate General Public Relations (Air Force) has released a special promo commemorating the heroics of the 1965 war hero. During the war, Sqn Ldr Munir Shaheed flew several combat missions causing significant damage to valuable enemy infrastructure. On 10 September, 1965 he led his formation into Indian territory to seek out enemy fighters and shot down an IAF Gnat fighter jet. On the eve of 11 September, 1965 he made the supreme sacrifice when his aircraft was fatally hit by the heavy concentration of enemy's



ack-ack guns during a ground attack mission. In recognition of his utmost professionalism and bravery, the war hero was honored with the prestigious 'Sitara-i-Jurat' posthumously.

Seminar on cotton growing held

KASUR (APP): A seminar was held in connection with "More Cotton Growing Campaign 2023" under the auspices of the district administration and the agriculture department here on Wednesday. According to the spokesperson, Deputy Director Agriculture Department (Extension) Muhammad Akram Tahir, Assistant Director Dr Muhammad Waqas,

Agriculture Officer Muhammad Asif and a large number of farmers attended the event. On this occasion, awareness was given to farmers regarding cotton cultivation and increase its production. Addressing the participants, Deputy Director Akram Tahir said steps were being taken on a priority basis to increase cultivation and production of cotton.

Analytical thinking, enhanced school enrollment must for Pakistan to join highly competitive world: President

TAXILA (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday emphasising the promotion of analytical thinking, said that the highly competitive world necessitated Pakistan to enhance access to education and enrollment in schools. The president, addressing the first convocation of HITEC Institute of Medical Sciences, said Pakistan was faced with a crisis of 27 million out school children. He said comparatively, the ratio of children's school enrollment in India and Ban-

gladesh stood at 98-100 percent. He told the gathering that through a dedicated focus on education and health sectors, Pakistan could excel within eight years, citing the case study of China. The president, who earlier distributed medals and degrees among the graduates of medicine and dentistry, said the country could not afford the women giving up the career after getting higher education and called it a "tremendous wastage". However, he said it was incumbent

upon the state to provide the women a safe working atmosphere as the institutions like Federal Mohtasib were already functioning for the purpose. He said in Pakistan, only nine percent youngsters enroll for higher education which needed to be increased by introducing modern education tools like online education. Citing nine percent prevalence of hepatitis and 40 percent stunting, the president said the country direly needed workforce to cope with the challenge.

Seven criminals nabbed

SARGODHA (APP): Police nabbed seven criminals and recovered narcotics and weapons from their possession. Police said on Wednesday that the raiding teams nabbed Ansar, Wajid, Bashir, Kamran, Tahir, Tariq and Iqbal and recovered 80-litres liquor, 1.7-kg hashish, 0.8-kg opium, five pistols, three guns, 233 bullets and huge amount of cash from them.

Man commits suicide

FAISALABAD (APP): A man committed suicide over domestic issues here at Zafar colony on Wednesday. According to Millat Town police, the victim Ashraf (45) was upset over some domestic issues. On the day of incident, he strangled himself. Police took the body into custody for further legal action.

IRSA releases 164,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 164,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 186,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.87 feet and was 28.87 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 64,500 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.25 feet, which was 66.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 50,400 cusecs and 43,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,500, 61,100, 42,900 and 14,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 39,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 23,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

DG Rangers visit BQATI

KARACHI (APP): Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas said on Wednesday that the restoration of peace in Karachi was due to the joint efforts of citizens and businessmen and the sacrifices of law enforcement officials. According to the Rangers spokesperson, he said this while addressing the Bin Qasim Association of Trade and Industry (BQATI) during his visit to BQATI. The DG Rangers said the industrialists and business community of Karachi had played a prominent role in health, education and other social services in the city. He said the business community had always actively participated in the welfare of the people of Sindh. Earlier, the DG Rangers upon his arrival was welcomed by President BQATI Abdul Rasheed and other office bearers.

Fake honey unit unearthed

FAISALABAD (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) unearthed a fake honey unit and confiscated 440 bottles and other items. A PFA spokesman said on Wednesday that a team conducted a raid at West Canal Road and detected a factory where spurious honey was being prepared with the help of chemicals. The PFA team got its samples analyzed from a laboratory and the lab report proved them spurious. To which, the team confiscated 440 bottles of fake honey and other items in addition to sealing premises of the factory. Further action against the accused was underway, he added.

NDMA Pak Delegation Attended World Bank Partnership Days Event

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A two-member delegation comprising of Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, Chairman NDMA and Mr. Idrees Mehsud, Member Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) attended Partnership Days Event of Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) on invite of World Bank in Washington DC. The Chairman as panelist highlighted the requirements for making Pakistan a resilient country, "Developing economies critically need innovative DRR approaches based on local challenges and necessities" he mentioned. Chairman unveiled the way forward for a remodelled NDMA that will be able to tackle upcoming challenges owing to multiple hazards, particularly climate change induced. He emphasized need for collaboration to incorporate community centric AI based/tech driven early warning capabilities to forecast disasters, which also could be a key solution to minimize time and again financial assis-



tance by donors in affected regions. The Chairman, during panel discussion also suggested that the World Bank financial strategy developments for DRR and other frameworks must include spontaneity and shared DRR instruments. Pakistan has demonstrated default resilience and adaptation, which requires support in value addition of protocols, he added. At later part of the day, the delegation also held productive sessions with Ms. Afreen Akhter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the US state Department and Ms. Marcia Wong, Deputy Assistant to the Administrator, in USAID HQs Washington.

President of Al-Shifa Trust Maj. Gen (r) Rehmat Khan met Ambassador Masood Khan

Al-Shifa Trust providing relief to millions of needy, destitute annually

- New medical facility to be launched in Gilgit-Baltistan soon
- Plans in place to treat 1.5 million patients next year, including 200,000 surgeries. Free treatment to 80%
- Generous contributions by Pak-US Philanthropists instrumental in supporting the cause
- Masood Khan lauds diaspora for their generosity, empathy and philanthropic spirit

WASHINGTON (Agencies): President of Al-Shifa Trust Maj. Gen (r) Rehmat Khan met Ambassador Masood Khan. President Al-Shifa Trust was accompanied by Chief of Medical Service of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospitals Dr. Wajid Ali Khan and President Al-Shifa Trust Foundation of North America (AFNA) Tahir Zafar. During the meeting, Maj. Gen (r) Rehmat Khan briefed



Ambassador Masood Khan about Al-Shifa Trust's work in Pakistan, stating that the Trust, since its inception was providing medical treatment to millions of patients. Nearly 75% of all patients were being treated free of charge, 20% subsidized and only 5% were private patients, stated President Al-Shifa Trust. The Trust is determined for prevention and control of blindness by providing standard and sustainable eye care services which are accessible and affordable to all. The Trust has specialized pediatric treatment facilities.

Police officers get cash prizes, certificates in recognition of their performances

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ismail Khan Abdul Ghafoor Afridi on Wednesday distributed cash prizes and certificates of appreciation among the police officers in recognition of their excellent professional performance. A formal ceremony was held here at the Range office of Dera Ismail Khan in this regard which was also attended by District Police Officer (DPO) Tank Waqar Ahmed. During the ceremony, the RPO said the dignity of the entire force was enhanced by the performance of the policemen who brave-

ly face the challenges of terrorism. He said no effort would be spared to encourage police officers and personnel who always performed their duties by putting their own lives at risk. He said any act against the rule of law, justice and merit would not be acceptable so police officers should carry out their professional duties by setting aside their relations. The regional police chief said the policemen should use their all energies only for fighting crime, maintaining law and order and providing justice to the people without any discrimination.

VC AIOU visits regional campus Sargodha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor (VC) of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood has said the university was taking various steps to further improve the quality of education. The VC said, "Consultation with all stakeholders is necessary to achieve the goals." He made these remarks during his visit to the AIOU's Regional Campus Sargodha yesterday. He met with the tutors, examiners, and staff and said, "Providing all possible facilities to the students and improvement of the academic quality of AIOU are my top priorities." Dr Nasir Mahmood said, "The faculty members, principal officers, regional directors, employees, tutors,

resource persons, examination, and other staff are the stakeholders of the university, and we all must work together to raise the quality of education of AIOU. " He was accompanied by the Director General (DG) of Regional Services Dr Malik Tauqeer Ahmad Khan, and the Head of Sargodha Regional Campus Dr Zubair Ahmad Shah. Dr Nasir along with his team visited the under-construction building of the University's Regional Campus. He inspected the construction work and directed the early completion of the project. "The new regional campus of the university will provide state-of-the-art educational facilities to the students of the Sargodha region," he informed.

M&S expects 'modest' revenue growth in 2023/24

LONDON (Agencies): British clothing and food retailer Marks & Spencer on Wednesday forecast "modest" growth in revenue in its new financial year after 2022-23 profit beat expectations and said it would resume its dividend with an interim payout in November. For the year to April 2, M&S made a profit before tax and adjusting items of £482 million (US\$608 million) – ahead of analysts' average forecast of £436 million but down from the £523



million made in 2021/22. Profit fell in 2022/23 despite a 9.6% rise in revenue to £11.9 billion, due to higher energy and labour costs and unhelpful

currency moves. It was also dented by M&S's exit from Russia, the lack of the prior year's government support on business rates, and a share of losses from its online grocery joint venture with Ocado. M&S said food sales increased 8.7% over the year, while clothing and home sales were up 11.5%, with its bias towards older, more affluent customers giving it some protection from an ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Wanda mulls sale of 20 malls in wealthy parts of China

SHANGHAI (Agencies): Dalian Wanda Group Co is weighing the sale of as many as 20 shopping malls in wealthy areas of China, according to people familiar with the matter, as the indebted conglomerate tries to avert a liquidity crunch. The company has reached out to prospective investors including insurance companies and asset management firms about divesting some of its malls in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces as well as in Shanghai, said the



people, who asked not to be identified as the information is private. Wanda is seeking a valuation of about 700 million yuan (US\$99 million) to 800 mil-

lion yuan for each mall, depending on their location and business, the people said. A mall in Shanghai could fetch as much as 1 billion yuan as the city's average household income ranks among the highest in the country, another person said. It's unclear whether all properties will attract interest from investors, the people said. The firm may also explore other options for the malls including selling stakes, one of the people said.

Sony prepares 'aggressive' cloud gaming push

TOKYO (Agencies): Sony Group Corp is gearing up for a push into cloud gaming in the coming months as it works to expand its reach beyond consoles. Cloud computing will be fundamental to tapping into mobile gaming trends, Sony Interactive Entertainment President Jim Ryan said at an investor relations event Wednesday. The company is building on its acquisition of Bungie Inc last year, which it touted as an acceler-



ant for its efforts to offer more live services on PlayStation consoles and beyond. Sony has "some fairly interesting and quite aggressive plans

to accelerate our initiatives in the space of the cloud", Ryan said, without elaborating further. A year earlier, Sony articulated a strategy for carving out a bigger share of mobile and PC gaming with the help of live services. Among those, cloud-based gaming, which involves streaming from data centres to devices such as smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs, remains a tiny segment of the video games market.

Honda to supply Aston Martin engines from 2026

PARIS (Agencies): High-flying Aston Martin will be powered by Honda engines from 2026 in what the Formula One team says is "the last piece of the jigsaw". This represents a return to F1 for Honda, who left in 2021 but retain links with Red Bull and AlphaTauri. The tie-up, announced on Wednesday, comes in the run-up to this weekend's Monaco Grand Prix with Aston Martin a surprise second to world champions Red Bull in the constructors'



standings. That lofty position is in no small part down to Fernando Alonso, the two-time former champion who has made the podium in four of this

season's five races as he revels in his switch from Alpine. Hailing the Honda link-up, Martin Whitmarsh, Group CEO of Aston Martin Performance Technologies, said: "Our future works partnership with Honda is one of the last parts of the jigsaw puzzle slotting into place for Aston Martin's ambitious plans in Formula One." Aston will continue to be powered by Mercedes power units until 2026 when there is a sizeable shift in F1's technical landscape.

Netflix expands password-sharing crackdown worldwide

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Netflix on Tuesday expanded its crackdown on users sharing passwords with people beyond their immediate family as it seeks to shore up revenue at the leading streaming television service. "A Netflix account is for use by one household," the company said in a statement. Netflix said early this year that more than 100 million households were sharing accounts at the service, "impacting our ability to invest in



great new TV and films". Netflix has experimented in a few markets with "borrower" or "shared" accounts, in which subscribers can add extra users for a higher price or transfer viewing profiles to separate accounts. On Tues-

day, it announced it was expanding the policy to more than 100 countries. As growth at Netflix cooled last year, the Silicon Valley-based streaming giant set out to nudge people watching for free with shared passwords to begin paying for the service without alienating subscribers. "This account sharing initiative helps us have a larger base of potential paying members and grow Netflix long term," co-chief executive Ted Sarandos said on an earnings call.

Global dividends hit first quarter record US\$326.7bil

PARIS (Agencies): Companies worldwide doled out a record US\$326.7 billion in dividends to shareholders in the first quarter, pushed up by banks, oil giants, and automakers, a study showed on Wednesday. Global dividends surged 12% between January and March compared to the same period in 2022, which was already an all-time high, according to the report by asset management firm Janus Henderson. The first quarter's "strong dividend



growth is all the more impressive considering that 2022 was a difficult year for the global economy with high inflation, rising interest rates, conflict, and continuing Covid lockdowns", said Ben Lofthouse, head of global equity

income at Janus Henderson. One-off special dividends reached US\$28.8 billion over the three-month period, the second biggest amount since the first quarter in 2014, the report showed. US automaker Ford and German rival Volkswagen accounted for almost a third of all special dividends. "Headline payouts from the vehicles sector were 10 times larger year-on-year as a consequence," the Janus Henderson report said.

Apple to spend billions of dollars on US-made 5G tech

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Apple on Tuesday announced a multi-billion-dollar collaboration with US tech firm Broadcom to make "cutting edge" components for wirelessly connecting to high-speed 5G telecom networks. The iPhone maker did not specify exactly how many billions of dollars it would put into the Broadcom alliance but said it is part of a commitment to invest in the US economy. "We're thrilled to make commitments that harness the inge-



nuity, creativity, and innovative spirit of American manufacturing," Apple chief executive Tim Cook said in a statement. "All of Apple's products depend on technology engineered and built here in the US, and we'll continue to deepen our investments

in the US economy because we have an unshakable belief in America's future." The alliance will include designing and manufacturing sophisticated radio frequency components and other "cutting-edge wireless connectivity" parts in the US, according to Apple. "5G technology is shaping the future of next-generation consumer electronics – and Apple is spending tens of billions of dollars to develop this field in the US," the company said.

US House votes to overturn heavy duty truck emissions rules

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US House of Representatives voted 221 to 203 on Tuesday to overturn Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules that aim to drastically cut smog- and soot-forming emissions from heavy-duty trucks. The White House said President Joe Biden would veto the measure that now goes to his desk after being



passed by the Senate in April. It said the EPA rule "cuts pollution, boosts public health, and advances environ-

mental justice." Republicans argue the new rules, finalised in December, are overly challenging to implement, will increase supply chain costs and will make trucks too expensive for small business owners. Republican senator Deb Fischer said "every American consumer will feel the effects of this rule and its price increases."

Chinese stocks shed 2023 gains as headwinds intensify

BEIJING (Agencies): China's benchmark stock index erased all its gains for the year as a weaker yuan and developers' debt woes added to persistent worries over growth and geopolitics. The CSI 300 Index closed down 1.4% Wednesday, with the energy and financial sectors leading the decline. The benchmark is among the worst performers in Asia this year, compared to a more than 3% advance in the MSCI Asia Pacific Index and double-digit gains for gauges in Japan and South Korea. Chinese stocks have steadily fallen out of favour since a reopening rally fizzled at the end of January, belying



bullish conviction calls from Wall Street analysts at the start of 2023. Weaker-than-expected economic data have prompted banks from JPMorgan Chase & Co to Barclays Plc to slash their growth forecasts, while worries over worsening ties with Western countries have also hurt sentiment.

UK inflation slides to 8.7% as core prices surge

LONDON (Agencies): British consumer price inflation fell by less than expected to 8.7% in April from March's 10.1% and a measure of core inflation unexpectedly rose, figures from the Office for National Statistics showed on Wednesday. The data are likely to reinforce expectations that the Bank of England will be forced to raise interest rates again. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast that the headline CPI annual rate would drop to 8.2% in April, moving further away from October's 41-year high of



11.1%. Earlier this month, the BoE forecast inflation of 8.4% for April. Ahead of the inflation data release, financial markets had fully priced in Bank Rate rising to 5% by the end of the year, from 4.5% now.

Climate woes risk Asia's water, energy supplies

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Climate-related disruptions to the crucial Hindu Kush-Himalayan water system are posing risks to economic development and energy security in 16 Asian countries, and concerted action is needed to protect regional water flows, researchers said on Wednesday. The basins of the 10 major rivers that flow from the Hindu Kush-Himalayan water towers are home to 1.9 trillion people and generate US\$4.3 trillion in annual GDP, and climate change impacts like glacial melt and extreme weather are already posing "grave threats", the



China Water Risk think tank said. The researchers warned that all rivers would face "escalating and compounding water risks ... if we are unable to rein in emissions," and that the further construction of water-intensive energy infrastructure was aggravating the problems.

Asian markets sink as US debt talks stall

HONG KONG (Agencies): Asian markets tracked losses in Wall Street on Wednesday as investors grow increasingly concerned about stalled US debt ceiling talks to avert a painful default. The optimism that flowed through trading floors at the start of the week has given way to trepidation, with several Republicans questioning an early June deadline, and some even saying the country is nowhere near running out of cash anyway. All eyes are now on Washington, where President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy have had a number



of meetings to find a path to lifting the borrowing limit from the current US\$31.8 trillion. The two men said Monday that talks had been "productive" and were confident a deal would be coming. Republicans have set cutting spending next year to 2022 levels as a "red line", but Democrats have so far refused to commit to that.

Lawsuits pile up over Credit Suisse bonds write-down

ZURICH (Agencies): Switzerland's justice authorities said Tuesday that 230 complaints had been filed over a decision by financial regulators to cut the value of high-risk Credit Suisse bonds to zero, to facilitate the stricken bank's takeover by UBS. Switzerland's biggest bank bought out its rival for US\$3.25 billion on March 19, under strong pressure from the regulators Finma, the government and the central bank, to prevent Credit Suisse from collapsing. Finma required that 16 billion Swiss francs (US\$17.9 billion) of so-called additional tier 1 (AT1) bonds be rendered worthless in the



mega-merger. The order infuriated bondholders, who are typically better protected than shareholders. Investors challenged the decision. "The Federal Administrative Court has received approximately 230 appeals, involving roughly 2,500 appellants, against Finma's ruling of March 19, 2023, regarding the write-down of the AT1 instruments," the court said in a statement.

Satellite launch firm Virgin Orbit shuts operations

NEW YORK (Agencies): Virgin Orbit, the satellite launch company founded by British billionaire Richard Branson, announced Tuesday it is permanently ceasing operations, just months after a major mission failure. The California-based firm, which had already filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the US in early April, auctioned off its main assets, recovering just over US\$36 million. That is barely 1% of the temporary worth it reached in late 2021 on Wall Street when it was valued at some US\$3.5 billion. In a statement announcing it is selling its assets to four winning bidders and then folding, Virgin Orbit thanked its employees and stakeholders and said the company will be remembered for



its "groundbreaking technologies". "Throughout its history, Virgin Orbit has been at the forefront of innovation and has made substantial contributions to the field of commercial rocket launch," the company said. Virgin Orbit was created in 2017 by splitting from Virgin Galactic, Branson's space tourism company. Its goal was to provide swift and adaptable space launch services for the growing small satellites market, by air-launching mini rockets from a modified Boeing 747-400 aircraft.

Argentina to visit Indonesia for football friendly

JAKARTA (Agencies): World Cup winners Argentina will visit Indonesia next month for a friendly against its national team, a top football official said today, in a boost for a country that has suffered a succession of recent football setbacks. The visit will be part of an Asian tour by the South American side that also includes a June 15 stop in Beijing for a friendly against Australia. The announcement comes at a time when Argentina is hosting the Under-20 World Cup as a replacement for Muslim-majority Indonesia, which



in March was stripped of the tournament over domestic resistance to the participation of Israel. The friendly will take place eight months after Indone-

sia suffered one of the world's deadliest stadium stampedes, with 135 people killed in a scramble to flee as police fired tear gas into the stands in Malang in East Java. Though football is huge in the country of 270 million people, Indonesia has struggled to make its mark in the international game since a single World Cup appearance back in 1938 as the Dutch East Indies. Its fans are, however, currently on a high from last week winning the gold medal at the South East Asian Games for the first time since 1991.

Ronaldo magic rescues Al-Nassr and keeps title race alive

RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo saved his best goal since arriving in Saudi Arabia for when Al-Nassr needed it most on Tuesday, scoring the decisive strike in a dramatic 3-2 victory against Al-Shabab. The Yellows found themselves 2-0 down in this crucial Riyadh derby that they had to win, and a spectacular second-half strike from the five-time Ballon D'Or winner achieved just that. The result also keeps alive Ronaldo's dreams of adding the Roshn Saudi League title to the dozens of tro-



phies already won in a glittering career as it prevented leaders Al-Ittihad from

celebrating a first league championship since 2009. At the same time, Al-Ittihad defeated bottom, and now relegated, team Al-Batin 1-0 to stay three points clear with two games of the season remaining. With a better head-to-head record — goal difference does not separate teams level on points — the Jeddah giants can lift the trophy with a win against Al-Feiha on Saturday. The pressure will now be on, however, thanks to a determined performance from Al-Nassr to defeat their local rivals.

Gamers Without Borders raises \$10m for humanitarian aid

RIYADH (Agencies): Gamers Without Borders, the world's largest charitable esports event, has concluded this year's edition by raising a total of \$10 million for its humanitarian aid partners. The money will go to Direct Relief, International Medical Corps, UNICEF, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, the UN's World Food Programme and the UNHCR. The donations were made by teams, players and gamers worldwide. The funds will be used for urgent humanitarian projects



and add to the work achieved through the \$30 million in donations from the GWB's three previous editions. Orga-

nized and held virtually by the Saudi Esports Federation, this year's event was titled "Gamers Without Borders: Gaming For Good." From April 10, six weeks of action saw the GWB host five tournaments across four major gaming titles: StarCraft II, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), Rocket League and Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege. One particularly special moment saw NAVI Javelins triumph at the first all-women CS:GO tournament at GWB to claim a \$1 million prize for charity.

Thomas boosts bid to become oldest Giro winner, Almeida wins tough 16th stage

MONTE BONDONE (Agencies): Geraint Thomas boosted his bid to become the Giro d'Italia's oldest winner by moving back into the leader's pink jersey on Tuesday as the race exploded into life at the start of a dramatic and decisive final week in the Dolomites. Joao Almeida won the tough 16th stage atop Monte Bondone for his first victory in a Grand Tour. The Portuguese cyclist crossed the summit finish just ahead of Thomas, who also picked up



valuable bonus seconds. Primož Roglič was third 25 seconds further behind.

The result saw Thomas move back into the lead, 18 seconds ahead of Almeida and 29 in front of Roglič. "Yeah it would have been nice to win the stage, but it was one of them where I had to keep riding, didn't want to play cat and mouse with João with Roglič behind," said Thomas, who rides for Ineos Grenadiers. "So we worked well together ... and unfortunately he had the jump on me and won the sprint. But it's nice to be back in pink and to gain some time."

Rodrygo raises fist in Vinicius tribute as Madrid beat Rayo

Madrid (AFP/APP): Rodrygo struck a late winner for Real Madrid in a 2-1 La Liga victory over Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday and raised his fist into the air in a nod to team-mate Vinicius Junior. Brazilian winger Vinicius received racist abuse against Valencia on Sunday, but was watching on from the president's box because of a knee problem. Rodrygo struck in the 89th minute to send Madrid second and bowed his head while lifting his fist in a "Black Power" salute. Karim Benzema sent Madrid into the lead in the first half before Raul de Tomas equalised for the visitors at the Santiago Bernabeu, with Rodrygo deciding the game in the final stages. Vinicius was not present on the pitch but was not far from the players' thoughts, as Madrid lined up before the game wearing his number 20 shirt as a gesture of support. The forward was sent off against Valencia and although the card was revoked on Tuesday night, he was not able to recover from his knee issue to play. It was the first time Madrid have played since the abuse occurred and many sports stars and other significant figures across the world have offered Vinicius their support. Supporters chanted his name after 20 minutes and a banner in one stand read "We are all Vinicius, enough already!" "I think ev-



everyone in football, not just in football, in all of sport, the whole world, (is reacting to) these actions, they should not be allowed," Madrid defender Dani Carvajal told Movistar after the game. "We have to all improve, try to make this not happen, because in the end it's not fair." Benzema broke the deadlock by taking the ball around the goalkeeper after Fede Valverde played him through. Madrid created few further notable chances in a drab performance, with Carlo Ancelotti's

side without a clear goal in the final weeks of the season. Rayo struck back through De Tomas, and the former Real Madrid youth player did not celebrate his goal. Rodrygo steered home well from the edge of the box to ensure Madrid had the last laugh and brought Vinicius back into focus with his celebration. "He's doing well, all the support he has received in the last days is good for him," Ancelotti told reporters. "If he didn't have the knee problem he would have played, certainly.

Brilliant Madhwal takes 5-5 as Mumbai knock Lucknow out of IPL

Chennai, India (AFP/APP): Akash Madhwal took five wickets for as many runs to lead Mumbai Indians to a crushing 81-run win in the second IPL playoff game and knock Lucknow Super Giants out of the tournament on Wednesday. Australia's Cameron Green (41) and Suryakumar Yadav (33) put on 66 to help guide five-time champions Mumbai to 182-8 after they elected to bat first in the knockout contest in Chennai. Madhwal then returned figures of 5-5 in

3.3 overs to dismiss Lucknow for 101 as Mumbai booked a meeting with holders and regular season table-toppers Gujarat Titans in the next play-off encounter on Friday in Ahmedabad. The winners of that clash will meet Chennai Super Kings in the final on Sunday. "It's nice that it's going well at the moment," Green said. "Our batting's been really good. Madhwal has been the game changer for us; five today, and got four for the other day." Green, who was the

second-most expensive player bought in the auction at \$2.11 million, added: "Gujarat are the best team. It's going to be a tough challenge, especially on their home turf." Lucknow's innings imploded as they collapsed from 69-2 to be bowled out in 16.3 overs, losing three key wickets to run outs. Green, who hit his maiden T20 century in Mumbai's previous win, looked in control during a 23-ball knock laced with six fours and one six until his departure.

Celtics rally past Heat, prevent East finals sweep

MIAMI (Agencies): Jayson Tatum collected 33 points and 11 rebounds as the visiting Boston Celtics staved off elimination with a 116-99 victory over the Miami Heat on Tuesday in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference finals. Tatum made 14 of 22 shots from the floor — including 4 of 8 from 3-point range. He also had seven assists for the second-seeded Celtics, who trail 3-1 in the best-of-seven series heading into Thursday's Game 5 in Boston. Jaylen Brown scored 17 points and Derrick White added 16 to help the Celtics prevent Miami from becoming the second eighth-seeded team to advance to the NBA Finals. The 1998-99 New York Knicks accomplished the feat during a lock-out-shortened season. Grant Williams scored 14 points off the bench and Al



Horford added 12 points and seven rebounds for the Celtics, who turned the tide by outscoring the Heat 38-23 in the third quarter. Boston shot 51.2% from the floor (43 of 84) for the game and 40.9% from 3-point range (18 of 44). Miami's Jimmy Butler overcame a slow start to record 29 points and nine rebounds. Gabe Vincent scored 17 points and Caleb Martin added 16 off the bench for the Heat, who fell to 6-1 at home in the playoffs.

City's Guardiola want financial charges dealt with quickly



MANCHESTER (Agencies): Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola would like the financial charges against the club to be dealt with "as soon as possible". City, who secured their fifth league title in six seasons under Guardiola last weekend, were charged by the Premier League in February with more than 100 alleged breaches of the league's financial rules between 2009 and 2018. They were also accused of not cooperating with the investigation since it began in

December 2018. The club have denied any wrongdoing. "What I would like is if the Premier League and judges could make something as soon as possible," Guardiola told reporters ahead of Wednesday's trip to sixth-placed Brighton & Hove Albion. "Then, if we have done something wrong everybody will know it and, if we are like we believe as a club for many years, (done things) in the right way, then the people will stop talking about it. "We would love it tomorrow. This afternoon better than tomorrow." City, who were acquired by the Abu Dhabi-based City Football Group in 2008, are alleged to have breached rules relating to the provision of accurate financial information, "in particular with respect to its revenue ... and its operating costs".

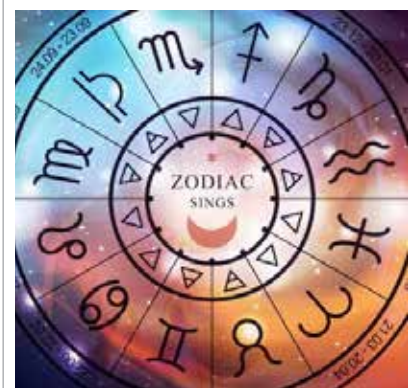
Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr has red card rescinded

MADRID (Agencies): Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr's red card in Sunday's LaLiga match at Valencia, in which he was also racially abused, has been rescinded, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) said on Tuesday. The Brazilian winger was sent off in stoppage time by referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea for striking an opponent following a scuffle with Valencia players in which Vinicius appeared to be grabbed around the neck. Vinicius had earlier been racially abused by fans at the Mestalla Stadium, which led to the game being halted for 10 minutes as the player pointed out people who were abusing him in the stands. "The RFEF Competition Committee considers that the referee's assessment was determined by the omission of the entirety of



the play that took place, which affected the refereeing decision," the federation said. "The fact that he (the referee) was deprived of a decisive part of the facts led him to adopt an arbitrary decision. And this is because it was impossible for him to properly assess what happened." Seven people accused of different hate crimes against Vinicius were detained by the Spanish police earlier on Tuesday.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: MAY 25, 2023



enough to stop asking you! You're just a little low energy now.

– **VIRGO**: You feel better than you have in quite some time and might idly tidy up around the office or home without even realizing that it's work. Why not? Everyone enjoys the order you create.

– **LIBRA**: Your willingness to hear people out is already quite high, but today ramps it up to new levels! You may learn all sorts of new things about peers at work or around the neighborhood.

– **SCORPIO**: You've got more information than you need, but you can file away the best of it for later. It's a good time for you to look into the next few weeks' activities to adjust your schedule.

– **SAGITTARIUS**: It's one of those days when your coworkers or kids seem to leave too much undone, which leaves you to clean up after them! Try to set your temper on simmer or things might get really crazy!

– **CAPRICORN**: You're getting the dirt on someone you thought you knew quite well, and you may end up liking them better as a result! Let the facts come in at their own pace. You can't rush them.

– **ACQUARIUS**: You've got to tread lightly with the others in your life. They've got touchier feelings than usual right now, and you might accidentally step on them without meaning any harm at all.

– **PISCES**: It's very easy for you to lash out or snipe at friends or family members today, but (of course) you should try to hold it in. If you're still bugged in a few days, let them know.

US imprisons ex-Hezbollah spy for photographing popular landmarks for potential attacks

NEW JERSEY (AGENCIES): Authorities in the United States have sentenced to 12 years in prison a man linked to the Iran-backed militant group, Hezbollah, who had reportedly photographed American landmarks for potential attacks. 46-year-old Alexei Saab, a software developer based in New Jersey, was arrested back in 2019 on suspicion of having ties to the Iran-backed and Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant movement, with prosecutors at a trial last year accusing him of being a highly trained terrorist who scouted out landmarks in the US, France, Turkiye and the Czech Republic. According to those prosecutors, Saab acted as a sleeper cell waiting to become operational within the US if Washington attacked Tehran in a potential conflict.

In preparation for such an operation, he reportedly took photographs of and researched weak points in landmarks, particularly in the US, providing the information to Hezbollah. Those landmarks included the Empire State Building, the World Trade Centre, the Rockefeller Centre, Grand Central Station, along with airports, bridges and tunnels within New York alone. At the sentencing yesterday, the jury convicted Saab of receiving military-type training from Hezbollah, conspiring to commit marriage fraud and making false statements. It was not able to reach a verdict regarding the charge of Saab gathering material support for a terrorist group, however, and it acquitted him of three other charges. The judge, Paul G. Gardephe, noted that the defendant

has been cooperative with authorities throughout the investigation and case, fully allowing Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) agents to interview him in 2019, 11 times over four months, with him being able to go home each time until his arrest after his 12th session. Gardephe revealed that the "facts and circumstances" indicate that Saab no longer posed a danger to the community and that there was little risk he would commit any further crimes. He supported the initial argument that Saab should serve no more than a decade in prison, and asserted that he has become a model prisoner by helping other convicts at New York City's federal jails to get high school equivalency certificates, learn English and find relief from psychological problems.

All forms of settlement building in West Bank illegal: EU

WEST BANK (AGENCIES): European Union Representative in Palestine, Sven Kuhn von Burgsdorff, said Wednesday that all forms of Israeli settlement building in the West Bank are illegal, Anadolu News Agency reports. This statement came during a visit by a delegation of European ambassadors and consuls to the Palestinian towns of Sebastia and Burqa in the northern West Bank. "Legalising the return of settlers to evacuated outposts in the northern West Bank is contrary to the decisions of Israel's Supreme Court and to international law," von Burgsdorff told reporters. "All forms of set-

tlements are illegal," he added. Last week, the chief of the Israeli military's Central Command signed an order that allows Israelis to enter the Homesh outpost near Nablus, paving the way for a formal settlement to be built there, according to the Times of Israel newspaper. "Israel must stop such measures, stop violence, and prevent settler attacks," von Burgsdorff said. "Israel as an occupying power has to protect the Palestinians against these measures." In March, The Knesset (Israel's parliament) passed a bill to allow Israeli settlers to resettle in four settlements in the Occupied West Bank.

Lebanon Central Bank chief faces travel ban after Interpol Red Notice

BEIRUT (AGENCIES): Lebanon's Central Bank Governor, Riad Salameh, attended a judicial hearing in Beirut on Wednesday where his Lebanese and French passports were confiscated following an Interpol Red Notice against him over embezzlement and money-laundering charges, Reuters reports. Salameh faces charges in Lebanon, France and Germany over accusations that he colluded with his brother to take hundreds of millions of dollars from the Central Bank to the detriment of the Lebanese

State, and then laundered the money abroad. He denies the accusations. On Wednesday, he attended a hearing in Beirut that lasted over an hour and during which he handed over his Lebanese and French passports to Lebanese authorities, a senior judicial source told Reuters. France issued a warrant for Salameh's arrest on 16 May, after he failed to show up for a Paris court hearing. Days later, Interpol issued a "red notice" for the Governor, an alert typically issued for international fugitives.

Microsoft says China-sponsored hackers targeted infrastructure

Taipei, Taiwan - Microsoft and the "Five Eyes" network of Western intelligence partners have accused Chinese state-sponsored hackers of carrying out attacks against critical infrastructure in the United States. Volt Typhoon, a Chinese state-sponsored hacking group linked to espionage activities in the past, was behind the attacks, which used techniques that could be used in other countries besides the US, spy and cybersecurity agencies from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the US said on Thursday. Microsoft said in a separate statement the campaign had been active since mid-2021 and targeted the manufacturing, utility, transportation, construction, maritime, government, information technology and education sectors in Guam and elsewhere in the US. China, meanwhile, accused the US and its allies of waging a "disinformation campaign". "This is an extremely unprofessional report with

a missing chain of evidence. This is just scissors-and-paste work," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said, claiming the allegations were "a collective disinformation campaign of the Five Eyes coalition countries". Microsoft said it had "moderate confidence" the attack was intent on disrupting "critical communications infrastructure between the United States and Asia region during future crises". Such a crisis would likely include an attack or blockade targeting Taiwan, an island democracy of 23 million people, which is claimed by China and is the focus of much of Beijing's military activity. Beijing has pledged to "reunify" with Taiwan by 2049 and has not ruled out the use of force. The US is treaty-bound to help Taiwan defend itself and its military bases in Guam, a US territory in the western Pacific, and elsewhere in Asia would likely play a key role during any political or military crisis.

Fake Pentagon explosion photo goes viral

WASHINGTON (AGENCIES): An apparently artificial intelligence-made (AI) picture went viral on social media showing a large plume of smoke rising up in the air from the site of a purported explosion near a Pentagon-like building in Arlington, Virginia, which was also shared by a number of verified social media accounts. As a result of the false information that spread Monday, the stock market fell briefly. The picture was later verified by the fact-checkers as false. Around 10:27am, the Arlington, Virginia, fire department tweeted that "there is NO explosion or incident taking place at or near the Pentagon reservation, and there is no immediate danger or hazards to the public," the Arlington Police Department tweeted Monday. Though it has not been yet confirmed whether the image was made using AI it does show some features of AI-generated

images. Information about the false explosion was shared by the Twitter account @Deltaone at 10:06am. By 10:10, the market had fallen 0.26% but quickly bounced back. Nick Waters, an investigator at the digital investigations firm Bellingcat, told NBC News that the panic around the image "never made any sense." "There are quite a few red flags in this picture. When you try to actually place this picture in space and geolocate it, you can't because it's not a real place. It's not a building that's anywhere in Washington authentically," said Waters. He also noted that the fences in front of the fake building morph and meld into one another. After the fake Pentagon image, a copycat hoaxer pushed a similar image of the White House on fire. Waters noted that the image didn't take off in quite the same way the Pentagon image did, in part because "it didn't look anything like



the White House." "AI is still really not great at producing accurate locations,

Germany pledges \$134m to support Palestine

BERLIN (AGENCIES): The Palestinian Advisor to the Prime Minister for Planning and Aid Coordination, Estephan Salameh, and the German Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Niels Annen, signed the deal today following the annual Palestinian-German government consultations in Berlin. The \$134 million donation package aims to finance local government development projects, including agriculture, civil society and the health sector for Palestinian families based in the Gaza Strip, the Occupied West Bank and Jerusalem. Moreover, the funding will also focus on drinking water in Gaza, where quality and quantity of water per capita remains below international standards, as well as employment and small and medium

enterprises (SMEs). Among the German delegation, staff from the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development was present, along with officials from the KfW Development Bank, the German Agency for International Cooperation and a representative of the German Federal Foreign Office. According to Wafa, Salameh delivered the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, Mohammad Shtayyeh's greetings to the German delegation and welcomed their generous donation for the provision of essential humanitarian support. He added that the government of Palestine hopes to enhance cooperation with the German government at all levels and will ensure German-funded projects are aligned with Palestine's development needs.

Greek PM says migrant 'push back' inquiry underway, AFP reports



ATHENS (AGENCIES): The Greek government is investigating claims of migrant push backs at the Aegean Sea following the emergence of video footage showing Greek coastguard units forcefully putting migrants on a black inflatable life raft and setting them adrift, Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis said, AFP reports. According to the report, the footage, published Friday by The New York Times, shows what appear to be masked men on April 11 accosting migrants — including a baby — who had arrived in Greece by boat and bundling them in a van. In the video, the migrants are then taken out into the Aegean Sea, transferred to an inflatable raft and set adrift. Turkish coast guard boats are seen rescuing them around an hour later, AFP added. The report says the UN High Commission on Human Rights and the EU Home Affairs Commissioner, Ylva Johansson, have demanded a full investigation. The Greek government has rejected the accusations, and Mitsotakis said that what was shown in the video was "completely unacceptable practice".

Man with paralysis walks naturally after brain, spine implants

(CNN) New research reveals how a medical device helped one man with paralysis walk naturally again, more than a decade after an injury. Dr. Grégoire Courtine and colleagues from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne developed and implanted a "brain-spine interface" that creates a direct neurological link between the brain and spinal cord. Implants in the brain track intentions for movement, which are wirelessly transferred to a processing unit that a person wears externally, like a backpack. The intentions are translated into commands that the processing unit sends back through the second implant to stimulate muscles.

China's new ambassador assumes office amid resumption of high-level re-engagement between Beijing and Washington



China's new ambassador to the US, Xie Feng, a former Vice Foreign Minister who is widely known as a specialist in US-related affairs for his vast experiences in the field over the past decades, arrived in New York on Tuesday to assume office. His appointment comes as bilateral relations face "serious difficulties and challenges," the Chinese envoy said. Some Chinese experts believe that filling the Chinese ambassador vacancy signals more progress in the recent resumption of high-level re-engagements between Beijing and Washington, and that stabilizing the current complex and fragile bilateral relations will be Xie's priority. "As a representative of the Chinese people, I have come here to safeguard the interests of China, and I take this as my sacred responsibility. As an envoy of the Chinese people, I have come here to enhance China-US exchanges and cooperation, and I take this as my important mission," Xie told media. The China-US relationship faces serious difficulties and challenges, Xie said, noting that he hoped that the US will move in the same direction as China, and act in the common interests of the two peoples and the world, properly handling important and sensitive issues, such as the Taiwan question in accordance with the principles in the three Sino-US joint communiqués. Xie's arrival comes as US President Joe Biden hinted there will soon be a "thaw" in the frosty bilateral relations following the latest G7 summit and Quad meeting in Japan - which descended into an anti-China workshop. Yet the two countries have seen a gradual resumption of high-level interactions, such as the recent exchanges between China's top diplomat Wang Yi and US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Vienna, and the meeting between the US ambassador to China Nicholas Burns and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Beijing.

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