



## Over 200 dead as Russia sinks Ukraine's last warship

MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian military has destroyed Ukraine's "last warship," the Yury Olefirenko, in a high-precision airstrike, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said on Wednesday. "On May 29, as a result of a strike by a high-precision weapon of the Russian Aerospace Forces on a warship mooring in the port of Odessa, the last warship of the Naval Forces of Ukraine, the Yury Olefirenko, was destroyed," the ministry stated in a report shared on its Telegram channel. A day earlier, war correspondent Andrey Rudenko also reported that the Yury Olefirenko had been sunk after a series of overnight airstrikes on military facilities in Odessa, citing Ukrainian sources. Rudenko claimed that a fire had broken out on the deck of the vessel, which is said to have caused the detonation of ammunition in the hold. The journalist said that significant losses had been reported among the crew. Ukrainian officials have yet to confirm the sinking of the ship. Oleg Chalyk, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian Navy, told Reuters that he would not respond to Russian claims, and that the Ukrainian Navy would not disclose the details of any



losses. Originally named the SDK-137, the Yury Olefirenko was a type 773 medium landing ship that was built by Poland in 1971 for the Soviet Navy. It was transferred to Ukraine in 1994 and renamed the Kirovograd, and was stationed in Crimea. When the peninsula voted to reunite with Russia in 2014, the vessel temporarily came under the control of the Russian fleet. However, it was later returned to Ukraine and towed to Odessa, where it received its latest name in 2016. In

its report, the Russian Defense Ministry also claimed that Ukraine had lost 200 soldiers in the Donetsk area, as well as three armored and 12 transport vehicles, one artillery piece, and two multiple launch rocket systems. In the past 24 hours, Russian air defense systems intercepted 12 missiles launched from US-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), as well as one UK-supplied long-range Storm Shadow missile, the ministry added.

## UN weather agency chooses next chief to lead climate change fight

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: (Agencies): The World Meteorological Organization, which plays a critical global role in tracking climate change, chooses a new leader this week to turbocharge that work over the next four years. The Geneva-based WMO's role in climate change has become increasingly prominent and the new secretary-general will likely become a well-known advocate on this pressing world issue. Four senior figures from within the WMO have put themselves forward for Thursday's vote, including two seeking to become the first woman to run the United Nations agency for weather, water and the climate. One is the WMO's current number two, the Rus-

sian-Swiss deputy secretary-general Elena Manaenkova; the other is first vice-president Celeste Saulo, the director of the Argentinian National Meteorological Service. They are up against the WMO number three, assistant secretary-general Zhang Wenjian, as Beijing seeks to increase the number of Chinese running UN agencies; and second vice-president Albert Martis of Curacao. The current secretary-general, Finland's Petteri Taalas, is nearing the end of his second four-year term, and cannot stand for re-election. The election will round off the World Meteorological Congress, the general assembly of WMO's 193 member states and territories, which takes place every four years.

## Canadian youths' mental health woes a 'ticking time bomb'

Toronto (AFP/APP): Canada is grappling with a ticking time bomb of violence, addiction and suicide linked to failing mental health services for its young people. In the streets and subways of Toronto, Canada's largest city, an ultra-modern metropolis that acts as a window into the nation's economy and culture, many young people can be seen wandering, their eyes staring into space, shouting incomprehensibly. Newspapers are filled with accounts of unprovoked attacks on strangers, opioid overdoses and other societal ills linked to addiction and mental health problems. This was an acute phenomenon in big cities in the United States before also trending north of the border. In Canada, decades of chronic underfunding of mental health services have left many young people struggling in the wake of the punishing Covid-19 pandemic, sometimes with fatal consequences. "The number of young people with mental health and addiction problems across Canada has been growing exponentially for more than a decade," says Bjorg Borgundvaag, an emergency room doctor at

Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. "We try to do our best but we have very limited things that we can offer," he says. In Toronto, the situation has reached a crisis level, such that former mayor John Tory called for a national mental health summit to address it. "Historically, we've underfunded mental health," says David Gratzler at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. "In Canada, for every dollar we spend on health care, we spend seven or eight cents on mental health care," which is far less than most other developed countries, he notes. Canada made a big mistake in the 1960s and 1970s by eliminating many hospital beds for people with mental illness, said Gratzler, who is a psychiatrist. In 2022, demand for psychological services in Ontario increased by 50 percent, with more than one in two youths living with mental illness. Charities have tried to fill the gap left by shortfalls in public services, but have been unable to keep up with the large influx of people in distress. "It's a ticking time bomb," said Jacques Charland of the Quebec help line Ecoute Entraide.

## Israel brings in 10,000 Indian labourers to replace Palestinians

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Instead of relying on Palestinian workers, Israel has decided to import 10,000 workers from India. The Indian Government has signed an agreement with Israel to bring 10,000 Indian workers to the country. Half of these workers are destined for the construction sector, with the remaining half designated for nursing roles. The arrival of these workers will be staged, with 2,500 construction and an equal number of nursing workers due in the first year, according to reports on the Walla website. The Population and Immigration Authority in Israel states that the incoming workers from India are diligent, experienced and fluent in English. They are expected to meet the growing demand for labour in Israel, specifically in the nursing and construction fields. As part of the efforts to reach this agreement, a multi-ministerial mission visited India last March to work on a blueprint for employing workers in the nursing and construction sectors. The delegation toured training centres and expressed its admiration for the training provided to the workers before their arrival.

## US House approves bill to raise debt ceiling

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US House of Representatives approved a bill to raise the debt ceiling on Wednesday, just days before the deadline to avoid a national default. A total of 149 Republicans and 165 Democrats voted for the legislation, while 71 Republicans and 46 Democrats voted against it. The vote comes after Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned on Friday that the government could run out of money to pay its bills by June 5. The bill now moves to the Senate, whose members have to approve it by Monday. The bill suspends the debt limit through January 1, 2025, and caps non-military spending, among

other measures. President Joe Biden thanked House members shortly after the vote for taking "a critical step forward to prevent a first-ever default and protect our country's hard-earned and historic economic recovery." Biden described the deal he struck with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy last Saturday as "a bipartisan compromise," in which "neither side got everything it wanted." This month that Beijing told Washington that there was "little chance" for a meeting between Li and Austin because of the sanctions placed on the Chinese defense minister over his alleged role in the purchase of Russian weapons.

## South Africa considering BRICS change of venue - Reuters

CAPE TOWN (Agencies): Pretoria may ask Beijing to host the BRICS summit in August, so it would not have to deal with the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant against the Russian president, Reuters reported on Wednesday, citing an anonymous government official. The meeting involving Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa is scheduled to start on August 22. Russian President Vladimir Putin was dutifully invited to attend back in January. In March, however, the ICC charged him with war crimes based on Ukraine's claims about "forcible removal" of children during the armed conflict

between the two neighbors. Moscow said the civilians were evacuated from under Ukrainian artillery fire and that, because Russia does not recognize the ICC's jurisdiction, the warrant was null and void. South Africa, however, is a signatory party to the Rome Statute that chartered the ICC, and would be legally obligated to arrest Putin should he come to visit. One of the options "gaining traction" in Pretoria was to ask China to host the BRICS event, said a senior government official who spoke with the agency on condition of anonymity. Like Moscow, Beijing is not a party to the Rome Statute.

## India scraps in-person SCO summit

India's Ministry of External Affairs has announced that the meeting of the heads of state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) slated for July 4 will now be held virtually rather than in person. India holds the rotating presidency for the annual summit. The SCO's other member states are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Iran, Belarus, and Mongolia have been invited as observers for the elite regional event, which holds significance for Eurasia and beyond. "As per SCO tradi-

tion, Turkmenistan has also been invited as the guest of the chair. The heads of six international and regional organizations such as the United Nations (UN), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA)," were also expected to attend, India's Ministry of External Affairs said in a press statement.

## UAE says it withdrew from US-led maritime coalition two months ago

DUBAI (Agencies): The United Arab Emirates withdrew from a US-led Middle East maritime security coalition two months ago, the Gulf state said early on Wednesday, Reuters reports. The Combined Maritime Forces is a 34-nation task force working on security, counter-terrorism and counter-piracy in the Red Sea and Gulf areas, which contain some of the world's most important shipping routes. It is headquartered in Bahrain, alongside the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and Central Command. "As a result of our ongoing evaluation of effective security cooperation with all partners, two months ago, the UAE withdrew its participation in the Combined Maritime Forces," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement carried by state news agency, WAM. It said the UAE was committed to dialogue and diplomatic engagement to advance regional security and stability, and that it was committed to ensuring navigation safety in its seas in accordance with international law.

## Qatar Prime Minister, Taliban chief hold secret Afghan talks - source

KABUL (Agencies): The Qatari Prime Minister held secret talks with the Supreme Leader of the Taliban this month on resolving tension with the international community, a source briefed on the meeting said, signalling a new willingness by Afghanistan's rulers to discuss ways to end their isolation, Reuters reports. The 12 May meeting in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar between Qatari Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and Haibatullah Akhunnadzai is the first the reclusive Taliban chief is known to have held with a foreign leader. US President Joe Biden's administration was briefed on the talks and is "coordinating on all issues discussed" by the pair, including furthering dialogue with the Tali-

ban, said the source. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said other issues Sheikh Mohammed raised with Haibatullah included the need to end the Taliban bans on girls' education and women's employment. The meeting represents a diplomatic success for Qatar, which has criticised Taliban restrictions on women, while using long-standing ties with the Islamist movement to push for deeper engagement with Kabul by the international community. The United States has led demands for the Taliban to end the bans on girls' schooling and women working, including for UN agencies and humanitarian groups, to restore their freedom of movement and bring Afghans from outside Taliban ranks into government.

## Chechen unit on the offensive in Donbass: MOD

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian forces are conducting offensive operations against Ukrainian troops in the area outside Donetsk in Donbass, the Defense Ministry said on Wednesday. In a statement, the ministry announced that assault detachments of the Russian 5th motorized rifle brigade and an Akhmat special forces unit are successfully attacking Ukrainian troops near the town of Maryinka, around 30km west of the capital of Russia's Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). The Akhmat unit is part of Russia's National Guard and is based in the Chechen Republic. It was named after Akhmad Kadyrov, the region's first president and father of current leader, Ramzan Kadyrov. The reports of successful attacks come after Kadyrov declared on Tuesday that Chechen units would face combat in the DPR, adding that



troops "are getting ready for assault action." It added that in the last 24 hours, Russian air defenses had intercepted 12 missiles launched from US-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), as well as one UK-supplied long-range Storm Shadow missile. Since the start of hostilities in Donbass in 2014, which were triggered by a Western-backed coup in Kiev, the town of Maryinka has become a frontline city hosting strong Ukrainian fortifications. The area has also been used by Kiev's troops to repeatedly shell civilians in Donetsk.

**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.

## Kamran Bangash condemns May 9 violent protests

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) former minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Kamran Bangash on Wednesday strongly condemned the vandalism and arson on May 9 and 10 and attacks on military infrastructures and called for indiscriminate actions against the

saboteurs. In a video message released here, Bangash said that like every other Pakistani, he was also saddened by the violent protests on May 9 and 10, especially the desecration of martyrs' monuments. He said that attacks on public and private properties were unacceptable

and such elements should not only be identified but given an exemplary punishment under the law. "We all respect Pak Armed Forces and highly value their sacrifices and we strongly condemn every single move against the armed forces," he affirmed.

## Cop martyred in attack on polio team in NW

PESHAWAR (APP): A police constable embraced martyrdom while another was injured in an attack on a polio team in Spinwam area in North Waziristan district on Wednesday. According to police, the polio workers were engaged in administering polio drops when unknown militant opened fire at the police official deployed on security duty. As a result

of the firing, one police constable embraced martyrdom on the spot while another was shifted to district hospital in an injured condition, the police said adding that polio workers remained unhurt in the attack. The teams of district police and security forces reached on the spot and started search operation in the area.

## SCCI Demands Pragmatic Steps To Boost Up Auto Industry In KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry demanded of the government to take pragmatic steps for promoting the auto industry in the province. Ejaz Khan Afridi, acting president of the SCCI, presented this demand while talking to a delegation led by CEO MG Khyber Motors Peshawar Naeem Afridi and General Manager Sheikh Abdul Karim at the chamber house here on Wednesday. The SCCI acting chief said that vast investment opportunities were available in various sectors in KP. He was of the view that setting up new industries would not only stabilize the national economy but it would also create new employment opportunities for locals.

He emphasized that the promotion of the auto industry was the dire need of the hour. He, however, said that initiatives should be made to provide facilities and special incentives to investors attached to the auto industry to boost it to an optimal level. Ejaz went on to say that allied industries would also be promoted with the auto industry which could create employment opportunities in the province. The SCCI acting president said the business community had confronted difficulties owing to present depressing economic conditions. He asked the government to resolve issues of the business community on a priority basis to stabilize the ailing national economy and put it on a

path of sustainable growth. Earlier, while talking to a social worker of the Waziristan district, Jalat Khan Wazir, Afridi called for the launching of new schemes to generate economic activities and bring economic prosperity and development in the newly merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He noted abundant natural resources were available in the merged tribal districts, wherein "local and foreign investments can be attracted". On the occasion, the SCCI acting president assured the visiting delegations of taking every possible step for providing relief to the business community and raising their issues at every forum for their redressal.

## Two teachers involved in torching toll plaza suspended

PESHAWAR (APP): Two school teachers from Malakand district were suspended from service on Wednesday for their participation in the violent riots of 9th May. According to the education Department Malakand, the teachers were involved in setting the Chakdara Expressway Toll Plaza on fire. The

department said both the teachers were identified through CCTV footage of different areas. District Education Officer Madrar Ullah on Wednesday issued letters of suspension to both the teachers. One of the teachers is from Totakan area while the other belongs to Dargai area of Malakand.

## Two more PTI MPA from Kohistan quits party

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Two more former members provincial assembly (MPAs) from Kohistan which was a stronghold of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), have resigned from the party, expressing dissatisfaction over the party policies. Mohammad Dildar Khan (PK-25 Kohistan) and Abdul Ghaffar Shah (PK-26 Lower Kohistan) announced their party resignations in a press conference at Abbottabad Press Club. Both have paid tribute to Pak Army and strongly condemned what happened on May 9th. Mohammad Dildar Khan, who will contest the

next elections independently, stated that he will not join any other party. Abdul Ghafoor Shah said he distanced himself from PTI and continue to work for the welfare of the people of his constituency. Earlier, yesterday former Advisor to the Chief Minister KPK and Secretary General of the PTI district Mansehra, Syed Ahmad Hussain Shah announced his resignation from the PTI. Ahmed Shah was the first PTI member who announced his resignation from the Hazara division. Syed Ahmad Hussain Shah strongly condemned the events of 9th May.

## Varsities' Role In Peace, Development Highlighted

PESHAWAR (APP): Students at a speech contest here on Wednesday highlighted the role of universities

in fostering sustainable peace, development and countering extremism. The Higher Education Regulatory Authority (HERA) provided an opportunity to the youth by organizing an inter-university speech competition for them. The event was arranged at the Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar for students from various private institutions. The theme was "The Role of Universities in Sustainable Development, Peace, and Counter-Violent Extremism,"

which pertained to the global challenges at hand. The organizers said the competition provided a platform for innovative ideas and collaboration, inspiring a commitment to an inclusive and harmonious society. Distinguished guests, including chief guest HERA Chairman Fazal-e-Qadir, Director of National Counter Terrorism Authority Saleha Zakir Shah, representatives from Sarhad University, and Iqra National University distributed certificates to the participants.

### 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	313	316
China Yuan	40.34	40.74
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.41
Saudi Riyal	82.7	83.5
U.A.E Dirham	84.9	85.7
UK Pound	382	385
Euro	331.5	334.5
Australian Dollar	201	203
Canadian Dollar	228	230.2

### Emergency Numbers

Organization	Phone No
Rescue 1122 HQrs	091-2264224-25
Rescue 1122 Mardan	0937-9230770
Fire Brigade Cantt:	091-9212534
Fire Brigade City	091-2566666
Police Emergency	091-9212222
Edhi Ambulance	091-2214575
Red Crescent Ambulance	091-2210836
Emergency Ambulance	091-2590846
Civil Defence, Peshawar	091-9212176
Lady Reading Hospital	091-9211430
HMC Peshawar	091-9217140-46
KTH Peshawar	091-9216340-8
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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## PTI Ex-MPA, Dozens Party Workers, Get Bail From ATCs

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Arbab Jehandad was among the dozens of PTI workers who were granted bail by the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) on Wednesday. The city police said so far 310 accused, arrested in vandalism and arson cases, have been released on bail, adding these includ-

ed 51 accused named in FIR No. 221, 34 in FIR No. 222; 77 accused in FIR No 433, 88 in FIR No. 614; 48 in FIR No 787 and 12 in FIR No 100. The accused were arrested by Faqirabad, Sharqi, Hayatabad, Khan Raziq Shaheed and Landi Kotal Police Stations for damaging public and private properties on May 9 and 10.

## Provincial Convention On 'Women Building Peaceful Communities' Held

PESHAWAR (APP): The PAIMAN Trust organized a provincial convention on 'Women Building Peaceful Communities' here on Wednesday. Mossarat Qadeem, Executive Director of PAIMAN Trust, in her welcome address, highlighted that the aim of the convention was to discuss the importance of women's role in building social cohesion in Pakistan, the opportunities and challenges and share best practices regarding women's role in peacebuilding in the country. She elucidated that PAIMAN localized women's peace and security agenda in the context of "our culture and religion" and added, "We expect that it will make its footprint on policy-making in Pakistan

as well since it is now an essential pillar in global affairs." Qadeem said that PAIMAN Trust, under its 'Let's Live in Peace' initiative, had been empowering women socio-economically to play a leading role in building social cohesion in their communities since 2007 through Women TOLANA, a community peace group. "This flagship intervention has contributed to the development of hundreds and thousands of women leaders at various levels who have established their agency as effective peacemakers by introducing concepts of tolerance, interfaith, intra-faith harmony, and pluralism, bringing communities together," she added.

## Consultative workshop holds threadbare discussion on mainstreaming of transgender community

PESHAWAR (APP): An insightful consultative workshop here on Wednesday discussed measures for bringing the highly marginalized community of transgender into the mainstream by enhancing their registration process with Social Welfare Department, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Human Rights and other institutions. The workshop was jointly organized by Social Welfare, Special education and Women Empowerment Department, Peace and Justice Network and Blue Veins. People from different walks of life participated in the workshop and gave their inputs on hurdles hampering registration of transgender in official data. "The initiative of registration of transgender community is a crucial step towards creating a more inclusive society and will help in reaching out to the marginalized segment in execution of any welfare oriented scheme or rehabilitation process," observed Qamar Naseem, Programme Manager, Blue Veins. Speaking in the welcome address, Qamar Naseem said

by holding consultation of the relevant departments we can facilitate a comprehensive understanding and shape a more effective strategy for transgender registration. Due to lack of registration, the transgender community is not added in data on basis of which government's scheme for the welfare of marginalized communities are chalked out and executed. After registration this segment can be brought to the mainstream and will get an opportunity from benefiting the policies chalked out for their betterment, Qamar added. President Transgender Association and a social activist, Arzo apprised participants of the workshop that majority of transgender are not availing from Benazir Income Support programme due to lack of official documents and non-inclusion in official data. Similarly, a large number of transgender who were affected due to devastating floods of 2022 have totally missed relief and rehabilitation measures due to lack of any official identity cards with them, she added. She said there are some concerns of transgender over issuance of X cards to them

which according to them reduces their share from inheritance by declaring them as 'Shemal'. Furthermore, Arzo continued, not allowing of Saudi government to bearer of X cards from entering into holy land for performance of religious pilgrimage also caused reluctance in obtaining of the card. Reem Sharif, first transgender who is serving as government servant, stressed on capacity building of staffers of relevant departments including NADRA, Social Welfare in registration of transgender. She said the visiting transgender are not treated properly which discourages them from visiting again to government offices. There should a training programme for all government departments on dealing of non-binary person for their inclusion in system and for making them as useful citizen, Reem added. Sohail Ahmad of Provincial Election Commission informed participants that since 2018, ECP is engaging transgender for registration and for using their right of franchise. The ECP staff, he continued, is regularly approaching them even by visiting their homes

and even dens (deras) for apprising about the importance and benefits of getting themselves registered with ECP. A Police official attending the workshop urged the participants to arrange lectures for Policemen about understanding the sensitivities of transgender communities. He said Policemen are not aware about gender technicalities of transgender and can file wrong cases against them. Amina Durrani, Director Programme Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women (KPCSW) also spoke on the occasion and expressed resolve of working for the benefits of transgender community. Noor Muhammad of Social Welfare department said this is a pilot project started from Peshawar and will be replicated in other districts for reaching out all the transgender of the province. Officials representing Social Welfare, NADRA, Human Rights department also spoke on the occasion and expressed their views. Later, a draft of form for registration of transgender was also shared with participants and approved after some amendments in it.

## UET Mardan suspends ACE on charges of vandalism on May 9

PESHAWAR (APP): The University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Mardan on Wednesday notified suspension of an assistant controller of examination (ACE) over charges of his alleged involvement in vandalism on May 9 in the district. According to the notification issued by the Registrar UET Mardan, the vice chancellor had approved the suspension of the services of ACE Muhammad Ismail in light of the investigation of the Superintendent of Police. It said that the accused

ACE was booked by the police under FIR No 833 dated May 9 under sections 341, 324, 435, 427, 120B, 147, 148, 149, 7ATA, 143, 188, 500, 501, 337A(I), 337 F1 PPC and 16-18MPO. The notification said that SP Investigation Mardan through a letter no 1473/GB/Inv, dated May 26, conveyed the involvement of the officials in sabotage activities on May 9, adding that the Syndicate would give formal approval to termination of the official from services under the rules in vogue.

## Sher Haider Successfully Defends LLM Thesis

PESHAWAR (APP): A very proud son of Chitral, Peshawar, Sher Haider has successfully defended his LLM thesis from the Department of Sharia and Law, International Islamic University Islamabad. It was held under the supervision of Dr Atta Al-Mustafi, Internal Examiner

Prof. Dr Muhammad Muneer from LA. The external examiner for the defence was Muhammad Akif Khan, Advocate Supreme Court. Sher Haider is practising law at Peshawar High Court and is also the Senior Vice President of Chitral Lawyers Forum Peshawar.



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### IMF and Pakistan

The IMF saga continues to linger on as on Monday the international lender urged Pakistan to follow the Constitution in order to resolve its political disputes. This was said following PM Shehbaz Sharif's conversation with Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva to revive the derailed \$6.5 billion bailout package apparently in a last-ditch effort to avoid default. While the IMF traditionally does not comment on political matters, all of these domains are interconnected and it would be naïve to assume that all that is taking place will not have a spillover effect. As things stand, it appears that there is still a gap in expectations as the IMF and Islamabad are still not on the same page.

The discussion between PM Shehbaz and the IMF MD took place on Saturday after the finance ministry could not break the deadlock over the loan talks during the past four months. The comments regarding the political situation came two days later from Nathan Porter who is the IMF Mission Chief to Pakistan. In addition to this, Mr Porter highlighted that Pakistan is yet to reach an agreement with the IMF, which includes arranging foreign loans (there has been partial progress on this), approval of the new budget in line with the IMF framework, and restoration of foreign exchange market's proper functioning. Sources reveal that following his conversation, PM Shehbaz instructed the finance ministry to share details of the next budget with the IMF. However, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has been criticizing the IMF again recently, pointing out that the lender continues to shift the goalpost and insinuated that there may be bias in play. Such statements do not help the situation, especially given the position that Islamabad finds itself in. The fact of the matter is that time is not on our side as there remains only one month before the expiry of the programme. Further, Pakistan is not currently meeting the three conditions outlined by the IMF. The rupee was traded at Rs 285.41 in the interbank market on Monday but its value was around Rs 316 to a dollar in the open market. The new budget is also completely off track with a framework that the IMF had discussed, so this will also require adjustments which will be painful for the ruling government. Perhaps the increasing instability and our reputation of not sticking through with tough reforms is pushing the IMF to seek further re-assurances. Whatever the reasoning may be, we are not in a position to negotiate and should do whatever it takes to unlock this tranche so that other partners and lenders are also given the green light to provide us with financing. Proudly claiming that we have escaped the threat of default is a sorry state of affairs. What we need is a structural reform that will pull us out of this perpetual cycle of dependency. The focus of the government currently seems to be on ensuring that the economy can survive on a ventilator, and that is not a feather the PDM coalition should want to have in its cap in the run-up to the general elections.

### Battling health challenges for a better future – By Dr M Ahmed Abdullah

IN the fast-paced world of pharmaceuticals, medical representatives play a vital role in promoting and selling medications to healthcare professionals. However, their demanding job comes with a host of health problems that can seriously impact their well-being. Let's take a closer look at the challenges faced by these dedicated individuals in Pakistan and why it's crucial to address these issues. One of the major concerns for medical representatives is their poor diet patterns. With their busy schedules, they often rely on eating out, which means consuming varied quality food from restaurants and hotels. Unfortunately, this can lead to digestive issues like acid peptic disease, chronic diarrhea, and irritable bowel syndrome. Moreover, the high-calorie diet they often consume can contribute to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic conditions. Another challenge they face is the risk of infection. Medical representatives spend a considerable amount of time waiting in crowded hospital waiting rooms to meet doctors. This constant exposure increases their chances of contracting respiratory infections and other

communicable diseases, which can seriously affect their health. On top of health issues, medical representatives also encounter strained professional relationships. Sometimes, they face limits on their hospital entry or even disrespectful behavior from hospital guards. These experiences can have a negative impact on their self-esteem and overall job satisfaction. The demanding nature of their work takes a toll on the mental health of medical representatives. The pressure to meet high sales targets can lead to anxiety and depression. Finding ways to address mental health issues and creating a supportive work environment are crucial to ensuring their overall well-being. Furthermore, the irregular work hours and extensive travel can disrupt their sleep patterns and work-life balance. This not only affects their productivity and mood but also puts a strain on their personal lives. Medical representatives also face occupational hazards, especially when they are constantly on the road. Road traffic accidents pose a significant risk, and their sedentary lifestyle during travel can contribute to various health problems. Additionally, exposure to dust

during travel can lead to respiratory allergies and musculoskeletal issues. Coping with stress, some turn to smoking, which further increases their risk of developing respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and certain types of cancer. Addressing these health challenges requires a collective effort from pharmaceutical companies, healthcare institutions, and policymakers. Encouraging medical representatives to adopt healthy lifestyle choices, providing support for their mental well-being, promoting work-life balance, and implementing occupational health and safety measures are crucial steps towards improving their quality of life. The well-being of medical representatives is not just important for them but also for the healthcare system as a whole. By addressing their health concerns, we can ensure that they are able to perform their vital roles more effectively and contribute to the betterment of healthcare in Pakistan. It's time to prioritize the well-being of these hardworking individuals and create a healthier future for everyone involved.

- Courtesy: Pakistan Observer

### Pakistan-Korea Diplomatic Relations – By Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

Pakistan and Korea are celebrating the 40th anniversary of their bilateral relations this year (1983-2023). Relations between the two countries in the fields of trade, investment, education, culture, and sports have strengthened in the past decades and presently growing in many fields of daily life from economic trade investment and more especially cultural and people to people interaction as a good number of Pakistani Students are studying in Korean universities & their numbers are increasing every year. The present Korean Ambassador in Pakistan Suh Sangpyo is very active in further developing Korean-Pakistan relations from education, and culture to economic and commercial interactions and mentions that "Pakistan is a rapidly growing country with more than 200 million population and abundant natural resources. Located between the Middle East and Asia and as a country the ancient Silk Road passed through, it is geopolitically getting more important. Moreover, Pakistan, where the Indus Civilization began, has a rich and diverse cultural heritage such as the Mohenjo Daro civilization, the Gandhara Buddhist Arts, and Islamic Traditions. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1983, the bilateral ties between the two countries have been enlarged substantially in the areas of trade, investment, human exchange, and development cooperation. Nevertheless, considering the immense potential of Pakistan, the current level of ties is not sufficient and needs to be upgraded. He assured that Korean Government will spare no efforts to support all the people who are interested in enhancing relations between Korea and Pakistan". This clear and loud statement of the Chief Korean Diplomat in Pakistan clearly shows their attachment and seriousness to further enhance both countries' relationship for the mutual benefit of both nations. The Republic of Korea or commonly known as South Korea is one of the most developed economies and having technological advancement is the tenth largest economy in the world with a GDP of 2.76 trillion dollars. Despite this, the trade volume between Pakistan and Korea is approximately 1.9 billion dollars. From an economic and business perspective, there are currently more than 800 Korean citi-

zens living in Pakistan, while 20 plus Korean companies are also investing in Pakistan. The demand for Korean vehicles is also increasing rapidly recently. Korea is playing a vital role in helping Pakistan with its economic front. With the help of 350 million US dollar loans given by Korea on soft terms, 5 development projects are ongoing in Pakistan while The IT Park in Islamabad has already been completed with the support of Korea. Now the construction of a similar park is going on in Karachi, which is not only a source of employment but also a source of development in technology. The Korean company is also building a modern children's hospital in Sukkar and it is expected that the amount of the Korea Economic Development Cooperation Fund will be increased to one billion dollars in the next five years. South Korea has given more than 3 million dollars to help flood victims in Pakistan, while Korean companies given 5 millions dollars. The number of Pakistani workers in South Korea is relatively less compared to European countries. 10,000 Pakistani citizens are employed in various cities including Seoul, while 1,500 Pakistani students are studying in Korean universities. Pakistan has enough manpower in other sectors too, which we want to send to Korea. Both countries agree to export Pakistani manpower in other sectors such as agriculture, services, and fisheries and especially in IT. Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) is the only government agency authorized to implement this employment system in Pakistan. At that time, OEC Korean Language Training became the most outstanding Korean language training center in Pakistan. Presently leading internationally renowned Korean brands like DAEWOO, KEPKO (Electric), Sambu Construction Co. Ltd, DOOSAN Korea Midland Power Company Limited (KOMIPO) Korea Electric Power Hyundai and KIA Motors, Samsung, LG, LOTTE Group, Star Hydropower Limited (SHPL) POSCO, CK Solar, K-Water, and many others Korean multinationals are looking for investment and business opportunities in Pakistan collectively they direct and indirect business relations opportunities further enhanced the not only foreign investment here but also the economic relationship will further improved. Korea wants to increase financing for the development of IT

sector, social sector and infrastructure projects in Pakistan. Under the financing of 343 million dollars from the Bank of Korea, five development projects are currently underway, including Islamabad Technology Park, Chitral Road, Chakdara-Timergara Road, Malakand Tunnel and Children's Hospital in Sukkur. The Pakistani Minister has announced various development projects by the Korean government and to combat the covid-19 pandemic and locust disease in Pakistan. Appreciated their increased support for disaster management including disaster management. On the occasion of the meeting, a loan agreement was also signed for the establishment of an IT park in Karachi. The total cost of the project is about \$199 million, out of which Korean Exim Bank will provide \$158 million. The project aims to provide high-tech infrastructure for the IT sector through which IT companies can improve each other's skills and promote entrepreneurship in Pakistan. The IT Park will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure for national and international IT firms to set up their offices in Karachi. During the initiative, a high-level officer from both sides attaches great importance to its relations with Korea. They appreciate the efforts of the Korean Exim Bank for possible projects in health care, road infrastructure development, the IT sector, and mitigation of climate change. Discussed the future roadmap to mobilize financing for projects and speed up the implementation of projects. In short in the recent past, the Korean Ambassador Suh Sangpyo, apart from socio-economic relationships strengthen specially focused on Cultural Heritage and Korea new initiative at the highest level which was very much appreciated as the soft image of Pakistan as a land of Cultural connectivity with the rest of the world further enhanced. Korean Government also donates funds for the purpose. The above discussion proves that the leadership of Pakistan and South Korea wants good commercial, economic, and social relations in the future; therefore the efforts made by both sides for the mutual reconciliation of citizens will benefit both countries. We, it is hoped that the leadership of South Korea and Pakistan will further improve diplomatic relations for the betterment of their people.

- Courtesy: Daily Times

**You were born to make mistakes, not to fake perfection.**

### 13 years since Israel's attack on the Gaza-bound aid ship the Mavi Marmara

Today marks the 13th anniversary of the massacre carried out by the Israeli occupation's naval forces against the Freedom Flotilla as it was on its way to break the siege on Gaza in 2010. The Freedom Flotilla included several ships, including the Turkish Mavi Marmara, which was carrying more than 500 activists, most of them Turkish, and three other ships belonging to the European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG). Among the people who participated in the first Freedom Flotilla were Raed Salah, the head of the Islamic movement in the Palestinian interior, Haneen Zoabi, a member of the Israeli Knesset at the time, parliamentarians from Germany, Ireland, Egypt and Yemen, artists and writers from Sweden, and media professionals from several countries. The flotilla departed from the ports of Turkiye and countries in southern Europe, heading first to Limassol, south of Cyprus, and then setting sail towards Gaza. However, the Mavi Marmara, one of the most main ships of the flotilla, was attacked in international wa-

ters on 31 May 2010 by Israeli naval commandos who used live bullets and tear gas, preventing the flotilla from reaching the Gaza Strip. The occupation forces began contacting the ship's crew at 10:30pm on 30 May, while it was in international waters. The crew told them that they were heading to Gaza and that they were in international waters and no party had the right to stop them. Contact was then cut off at about 2am on 31 May. The attack began at 4:30am with a barrage of live bullets, resulting in casualties and injuries. According to the report of the Medical Examination Institute, the Israeli attack on the Mavi Marmara ship killed ten people and injured 56, most of them Turks. The attack drew widespread international criticism, and officials from around the world called on the UN to conduct an investigation. The Israeli prime minister cancelled his trip to the US during which he was scheduled to meet then-President Barack Obama, and returned to the occupied territories from Canada. - Courtesy: Middle East Monitor

### Lahore Ring Road

The Lahore Ring Road, a marvel of modern infrastructure that has transformed the transportation landscape of Lahore, Pakistan. This monumental project has revolutionized the way people move around the city, easing traffic congestion and enhancing connectivity like never before. It links to the M-2 Motorway, the M-11 Motorway, and

### Letters to the Editor

the N5 National Highway while going around the city of Lahore. The Lahore Ring Road project brought together a dedicated team of engineers, architects, urban planners, and construction professionals who worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality. Their expertise and unwavering commitment have resulted in the creation of a world-class road network that has transformed

the city's landscape. Since its completion, the Lahore Ring Road has made a significant impact on the daily lives of millions of Lahoris. It has reduced travel times, alleviated congestion, and provided a faster and more convenient means of transportation. Additionally, the Challenges and Issues in Lahore Ring Road Project – YASHWA AYUB, Lahore

## Time ripe for collective efforts to achieve national development: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday stressed the need for making collective efforts to put the country on a consistent path of progress and development; saying it was high time to take all Pakistanis along in achieving the national goals. "The time has come to bring all Pakistanis forward and give them an opportunity to play a role in the development of the country," he said while addressing

a two-day conference titled "Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit-2023," here. He was of the view to extend all possible support to the business companies earning dollars and contributing to build the country's foreign exchange reserves. The minister said this year, the country faced worst impacts of global climate change, and now the incumbent government was working to overcome the issues of water and food security by switching over to smart agriculture system. He said the

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a key component of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was a game-changer project for Pakistani besides the entire region of South Asia. He said around \$ 29 billion had been invested in the CPEC-related project in a period of three years. Ahsan Iqbal regretted that the economic policies and projects faced considerable dent during the tenure of PTI government, which caused serious damage to the national economy and development.

## Small Dams Imperative for Climate Resilience and Sustainable Communities, agree experts

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with the Human Development Foundation (HDF) hosted a roundtable discussion on Small Dams in Pakistan: Combating Climate Change Impact and Enhancing Water Resilience. The event brought together field experts and relevant stakeholders to discuss the pressing challenges of climate change and sustainable development with a special focus on Soon Valley, Khushab District. Mr. Mehboob ul-Haq, CEO HDF, in his opening remarks commented that it was through our collective efforts that we could chart a clear path towards a more resilient and sustainable future through the construction of small dams. He reflected on HDF's remarkable projects in Soon Valley to establish a climate-resilient smart community, including the construction of Afaf Dam, cultivation of olive, peach, and blueberries as well as pioneering the use of smokeless stoves that run on biomass pellet fuel. The panelists shared passionate insights and expertise on these transformational initiatives. Asim Jamal from



the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) pointed out the need for plantation of crops that require less water and produce maximum economic benefits for the local communities. The speakers emphasized the sustainability of interventions taken in this regard as well as the engagement of community in development projects. Selina Irfan from Climate Chain Consulting suggested taking a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down one, contending that community engagement lied at the heart of all development initiatives and had to be registered as such. The conservation of wetlands, biodiversity and the overall ecosystem at the Ramsar sites in Soon Valley was also stressed upon, exploring the significance of undertaking eco-tourism initiatives in the region.

## IoU initiates students, experts mobilisation GUD Programme at QAU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Urbanism (IoU) on Wednesday initiated its Green Urban Development (GUD) programme with a special focus on the life cycle approach to sustainable Urban Development through capacity enhancement and fostering partnership among multi-stakeholders including the public sector, youth, policymakers and media. The focused group discussion and awareness sessions were organized for students and subject experts of Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU). Head of Department, Environmental Sciences Department of QAU, Dr Sohail Rana, introduced the audience to the agenda of the session and welcomed the guests, said a news release issued here on Wednesday. Dr Rana said that the sessions were aimed to encourage students and experts to have an understand-

ing of the GUD program and related activities. Managing Director (MD) of the school of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), Maryam Irfan briefed the audience that GUD was a joint initiative of the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the SoLF with the financial support of the US Embassy. She shared, "The programme has three key thematic areas; water conservation, green infrastructure and waste management in the urban developed landscape. The program is divided into two phases; research on the urban development landscape, and establishment of a platform for building capacity & facilitating synergies among relevant stakeholders." While explaining the segments of GUD program, Maryam said that it has two segments; Green Urban Development School (GUDS) and Urban Co-Creation Hub (UCCH).

## VC distributes certificates among graduates of different courses

SUKKUR (APP): Over 171 male and female students of Batch-1 of the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University of Technology and Skill Development Khairpur were awarded certificates on completion of six-month courses in 13 different trades. The certificate distribution ceremony was held at the Vice-Chancellor Secretariat of the varsity, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. Students had completed courses in different trades, including civil engineering, solar technician, mobile repairing, health & safety, petroleum technology and others. This first technical university of Sindh provides skill training with a monthly stipend of Rs. 5000. While distributing the certificates to the students, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Rasool Bux Mahar, highlighted the importance of technical education and said that it was the need of the present era.

## WASA establishes monsoon emergency camps

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) has established nine monsoon emergency camps at different points in the city to cope with emergency during expected rains in monsoon season. WASA spokesman said here on Wednesday that the emergency camps were set up at main Susan Road Madina Town, LMC school Summandri Road, Mandi Morr Allama Iqbal Colony, Bohar Wali Ground Raja Ghulam Rasool Nagar, Sheikhpura Road near Total petrol Pump, Gulshan Colony Narwala Road, Jhang Road near Rescue 1122 station, Kalmay Wali Tenki Gulistan Colony and Ahmad Nagar (drainage division). He said that most essential staff had been deployed at monsoon emergency camps besides arranging necessary machinery and other gadgets for immediate disposal of rainwater from low-lying areas.

## PTI's Ex-MNA from Bahawalpur quits politics

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Former member National Assembly of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from Bahawalpur has announced on Wednesday quitting politics due to prolonged ailment. He also condemned the violence incidents of 9th May. In a video message issued here, Farooq Aazam Malik, ex-MNA of PTI from Bahawalpur said that he condemned the incidents of 9th May 2023. He said that he had reached age 80 and suffering from ailments therefore, he announced to quit politics. "I am leaving politics due to my poor health condition," he said. It is recalled here that Farooq Aazam Malik had been elected against several important portfolio and offices including member of parliament and local bodies. He had also performed his duty as Federal Minister for Railways in the regime of Pakistan Peoples' Party.

## Inter (Part-I) exams to start from June 05

FAISALABAD (APP): Annual Intermediate (Part-I) Examinations 2023 would commence under the aegis of Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) Faisalabad here from June 05, 2023. Controller Examinations BISE Faisalabad Dr Jaffar Ali told APP here on Wednesday that roll number slips of private candidates had been dispatched on their given postal addresses while the regular students could get their roll number slips from their educational institutes concerned. However, the same were also available on board website www.bisefsd.edu.pk from where they could download.

## Zong 4G partners with 'Roshan Packages' to enhance digital business solutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading digital company, has partnered with Roshan Packages Limited, one of the country's largest packaging manufacturers, to provide bespoke connectivity for its business. This partnership will enable Roshan Packages Limited to employ Zong 4G's business solutions to optimize the efficacy and reliability of its daily operations across the board. As part of this partnership, Zong 4G will provide Roshan Packages Limited with customized connectivity solutions tailored to meet their specific business needs. By leveraging Zong's

sophisticated services, Roshan Packages Ltd. aims to achieve increased operational efficiency and reliability in their day-to-day activities. The official spokesperson of Zong 4G said, "We are delighted to join hands with Roshan Packages Limited in enhancing their daily operations. Zong 4G is committed to digitizing Pakistan's corporate landscape by providing next-generation business solutions that are crucial for sustainable business growth. We look forward to unlocking this potential with Roshan Packages Limited through this alliance."

## Karandaaz launches findings of comprehensive report on private healthcare in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Karandaaz here on Wednesday conducted a highly anticipated webinar to unveil the findings of its groundbreaking report titled "Private Healthcare in Pakistan - Gaps, Opportunities, and Possibilities." The report, comprising volume 1 and 2, is now available to the public on Karandaaz's website. The webinar commenced with welcome remarks from Waqas ul Hasan, CEO, Karandaaz followed by the opening remarks by Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Chairperson, Karandaaz Board. Special Secretary (Health), Govt of Punjab Fatima Sheikh delivered the keynote address, highlighting the initiatives being taken in the public sector for health delivery, significance of the report and its potential impact on the healthcare sector,

according to a press release issued here on Wednesday. Karandaaz is a leading impact investor in Pakistan with the aim to promote access to finance for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) and financial inclusion of unbanked individuals. The report is one of the most extensive scoping of the private healthcare landscape in Pakistan, it offers comprehensive solutions and grounded recommendations for addressing various challenges that prevail in the private healthcare sector of Pakistan. It aims to inform academia, industry stakeholders, policymakers, and investors, providing a roadmap for collaboration and improvement in access, affordability, and quality of healthcare for the people of Pakistan.

## President calls for timely justice delivery to avoid aggravation of disputes

QUETTA (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for early disposal of the small domestic cases to avoid the aggravation of disputes and bloodshed. He said the federal and provincial ombudsman had their key role in the promotion of public service and good governance. Addressing a seminar here, the president said as a member of National Assembly (NA) in 2017, he proactively worked for passing a bill related to alternate dispute resolution to reduce the burden on the mainstream judiciary. Dr Arif Alvi pointed out, "When physical interaction was not possible owing to security issues, the executives including himself must have arranged online setups such as "Zoom meetings" to ensure direct communication with the common people to guarantee timely justice delivery." Last night, he said, "He disposed of 10 cases of the federal ombudsman and normally he disposes of the cases of appeals in

just a few hours. The president also stressed the need to raise awareness about the role of the ombudsman as few people were currently aware of its role. He also directed for removal of obstacles in the way of interaction between government officials and the common people. He said, "Islam teaches people to show patience and forgiveness to promote peace and harmony in society." "No nation needs any foreign aid if they truly follow the values and teachings of Islam." Referring to the living standards of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the His companions, the president also asked the country's executives to follow them and adopt the living standard of the common man. Speaking about the importance of woman's rights and their participation in society, the president said, "Islam is the first religion that emphasized to provide an inheritance to women and in Quran it has been emphasized with clarity."

## CM urges airlines to increase Quetta flights

QUETTA (APP): Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Qudus Bizenjo on Wednesday urged the national flag carrier and other airlines to increase flights for Quetta after the up-gradation of the main runway. Bizenjo in a statement CM extended its gratitude to Civil Aviation Authority for completing the project as Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight landed today at the Quetta International Airport after the up-gradation of its main runway. "With this latest development, now Boeing 777 and its equivalent passenger heavy aircraft will be able to land in Quetta

in types of weather day and night," said CM. He said Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan is an important city in terms of its geographical location. Besides, due to its proximity to neighboring countries Iran and Afghanistan, it has significant commercial importance. "The operation of heavy aircraft will not only increase trade activities but eventually boost the tourism industry of the province," he noted. It may be recalled that the runway constructed at a cost of five billion rupees is equipped with the latest airfield lighting system.

## Asim Azhar, Shae Gill's latest track 'Bulleya' trends at YouTube

ISLAMABAD (APP): Global sensation Asim Azhar and Shae Gill's latest soul-stirring track 'Bulleya' left netizens in awe, trends on YouTube for music with over 200k views in just a day. Shattering global records with her debut track 'Pasoori', Gill has cemented herself among the promising singers within the music industry with her powerful vocals and soulful voice. Asim Azhar in his official YouTube channel video informed, "He is collaborating with Shae Gill for the first time in a song titled 'Bulleya' which gives a powerful message of peace, harmony & love." Produced by the ace producer Adil Malik and directed under the

vital direction of Bilawal Hussain Abbasi, the enchanting music video trends at #23 on YouTube for music. Hitting all the right chords, the duo's much-loved track has amassed over 200k views on YouTube in just a day along with tons of comments appreciating the starlets for their latest masterpiece. A fan commented, "When I first heard the song, it took me to another world and I literally felt that it's magic all around me." "The vibe and energy this song radiates is so beautiful," another fan wrote. Previously, Azhar shared a captivating poster on his Instagram story updating his huge fan following about Bulleya's ongoing success.

## European film festival to start in five cities across Pakistan from June 2

ISLAMABAD (APP): The film enthusiasts from the twin cities and four other cities across the country will get a unique opportunity to discover European cinema at the second European Film Festival, commencing on June 2023 at the Pakistan National Council of Arts in Islamabad. The film festival will take place in five cities across Pakistan including Islamabad, Multan, Gilgit, Peshawar, and Quetta from June 2 to 24, said a news release issued here on Wednesday. The European Film Festival is a celebration of cinema that brings together filmmakers, actors, and cinema enthusiasts. It provides an opportunity for Pakistani audiences to discover the rich and diverse world of European cinema and get a glimpse into the cultural and social issues that shape modern European societies. Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr

Riina Kionka said, "In the EU, we actively support filmmaking as an art form and a medium to address important topics that our societies are grappling with today. Cinema provides an opportunity to dive into the worlds and minds of characters that live very different lives than ours. It allows us to see the world through different eyes, develop compassion and respect for others." The festival showcases a selection of unique and thought-provoking films that are best experienced with fellow movie enthusiasts. The screenings include feature films and short films on various topics such as gender equality, relations between generations, embracing diversity, climate change, and human rights. Many of the films shown are co-productions made possible through collaborations of professionals and organizations from different European countries.

## NEPRA concludes public hearings into FCA, quarterly adjustment for K-Electric

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Wednesday concluded public hearings into two separate petitions including fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for April and quarterly adjustment ending March submitted by K-Electric. KE requested an FCA of Rs 0.489 per unit on account of monthly Fuel price Adjustment pertaining to April 2023

and Quarterly adjustment of Rs 5.170 per unit for the quarter ending March 2023 (Jan-Mar, 2023). The hearings were presided by the NEPRA Authority comprising of Chairman NEPRA, Tauseef H. Farooqi, Member (Licensing), Engr. Maqsood Anwar Khan, Member (Technical & Finance), Mathar Niaz Rana and Member (Law), Ms. Amina Ahmed.

## Pakistan and the United Nations celebrate 75 years of UN Peacekeeping

ISLAMABAD: Today an event was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad, in collaboration with the United Nations, to celebrate 75 years of United Nations peacekeeping, paying homage to the more than 200,000 Pakistani service women and men who have served in 46 UN Missions since 1960 – including 171 who lost their lives. Pakistan is among the largest troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping with nearly 4,334 military and police personnel currently serving in nine locations around the world. “Pakistan is proud of its long-standing association and contribution to UN peacekeeping,” said the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar at the event. The Minister of State paid tribute to the services and sacrifices rendered by UN peacekeepers for advancing the shared goals of peace



all over the world, and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment and support to the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture. “Today we are celebrating the more than 80,000 brave peacekeepers – women and men – who are carrying out the extremely important task of creating peace around the world. We also thank Pakistan, the fifth largest contributor to peacekeeping globally,” said Knut Ostby, UNDP Representative in Pakistan, who spoke on behalf of the United Nations. “The UN was created to work on three pillars that are interlinked: peace, development and human rights.

## Pakistan-Italy JEC agrees establishment of joint framework encompassing multisectoral areas

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and Italy's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Maria Tripodi on Tuesday co-chaired the 5th meeting of the ‘Pakistan-Italy Joint Economic Commission’ (JEC) at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two sides agreed to set up a joint framework to tackle climate change and cooperation in water management, hailing the establishment of an Italian Trade Agency office in Islamabad the next week. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Sherry Rehman said it was a pleasure to co-chair the 5th meeting of the Pakistan-Italy JEC in Rome with the Deputy Minister. Sherry added that the establishment of the Italian



Trade Agency office in Islamabad would boost bilateral trade. “We are building a common framework with Italy to tackle climate change and improve water management. The trade partnership between Pakistan and Italy is stronger than ever. Our bilateral trade is to reach \$2 billion in 2022, and Pakistan's exports will cross \$1 billion.” The next JEC meeting would be hosted in Islamabad at a mutually convenient time, which we look forward to, she added.

## Expert on ‘No Tobacco Day’ urges media to raise awareness

ISLAMABAD (APP): A health expert on ‘No Tobacco Day’ stressed social media website owners to raise more awareness among youth of the harmful effects of tobacco on human life which killed million of people each year, despite the steady reduction in tobacco use globally. Dermatologist Lt. Col. (R). Dr. Ishrat Abuzar talking to a private news channel advised smokers to either quit smoking or prepare for increased risk of smoke-related illnesses including mouth related cancers that could also prove fatal. The World No-Tobacco Day is marked annually on May 31 to raise awareness about the negative health impact of tobacco and to advocate effective tobacco control policies, she highlighted. Like other

parts of the world, Pakistan is also marking the “World No Tobacco Day” in which awareness would be created among the masses about the dangers and adverse effects of tobacco on our health. She demanded that the government should continue to strive to raise awareness and promote a smoke-free society by providing a counter-marketing campaign, awareness against nicotine use and empower young people to engage in the fight against tobacco. She called upon every Pakistani to participate to safeguard the health and of new generation. She said 90 per cent of lung cancers were caused by smoking, while the smoking in the surroundings adversely affected the health of non-smokers, too.

## Kazakh Ambassador for improving trade ties between both countries

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin has visited Bahawalpur on a one-day visit. He attended a meeting at Al-Zamir on Wednesday where he was briefed about the history of the region and its role in possible opportunities for mutual corporation between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Kistafin met Principal Sadiq Public school Bahawalpur David Dowdles and Dean of Faculty Management Sciences, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Prof. Dr Jawad Iqbal, and discussed opportunities for mutual cooperation in education. He also met Director Cholistan Development Authority Liaqat Gilani who told him about the rich history of Cholistan and the indigenous products of the area. Consul General Kazakhstan Consulate Lahore Rao Khalid Khan, Former President Ba-

hawwalpur Press Club Naseer Ahmad Nasir, Director of Media and Publications, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Shahzad Ahmad Khalid, Senior Journalist Baqa-ul-Mohsin, and others were also present at the meeting. Later, the Kazakh envoy visited Noor Mahal where he was briefed about the history of Bahawalpur State and the contributions of Nawab of Bahawalpur Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi to Pakistan. He also attended a dinner held in his honor at the Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) where he was welcomed by President of the Chamber Zulfiqar Maan and given a presentation about the history and role of BCCI. Speaking on the occasion, the Kazakh envoy said, “Both countries have rich potential to benefit from each other in various sectors.”

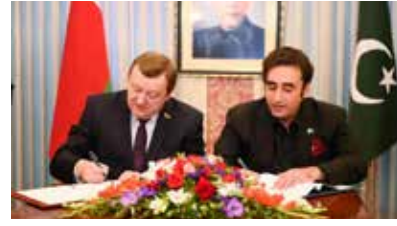
## Versatile multi-talented artist Inayat Hussain Bhatti remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): A great multi-talented artist Inayat Hussain Bhatti was remembered on the occasion of 24th death anniversary in which fans from all walks of life through media platforms paid him rich tributes for his unforgettable life time achievements in entertainment industry. He was born in 1928 in Gujrat and moved

to Lahore to pursue further studies. As fate would have it, he ended up singing for Radio Pakistan and subsequently, for the 1949 Punjabi hit ‘Phera’, private news channels reported. He was a multi-talented distinguished singer, actor, director author, social leader, columnists, religious scholar and zakir.

## Joint Statement on the Results of the Official Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: On the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik visited Islamabad from May 30 - 31, 2023 on an official visit. During the visit, Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, in addition to holding comprehensive delegation-level bilateral talks. H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik also held meetings with the Minister of Eco-



nomics of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. During their meeting, the two Foreign Ministers had a wide-ranging and substantive discussion on a variety of topics including political, economic, technological, cultural, educational and multilateral coop-

eration in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding. The two sides agreed to take practical measures to translate the mutual goodwill between the two governments and their peoples into tangible cooperation in different fields. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the friendly relations based on mutual respect, friendship and trust established between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and highly appreciated the bilateral meetings and interaction at the highest and high levels that have taken place in recent years.

## French envoy visits NUML

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Department of French, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) organized the celebration ceremony of the Academic Cooperation Agreement on Wednesday. This Agreement Française d'Islamabad and NUML but the ceremony of this accord could not be held due to covid-19. The Ambassador of France, Nicolas Galey, was the Chief Guest, while Pro-Rector RSI Dr. Zubair Iqbal, Dean faculty of Languages Jamil Asghar Jami, Ms. Gaëlle Le Breton, Director of all Alliance Françaises in Pakistan, Mr. Ali Bhatti, Director, Alliance Française d'Islamabad and Ms. Hannah Bieber, Education Officer of French as a Foreign Language at French Embassy graced the event with their presence. The Ambassador of France emphasized the need for cooperation in education and science and technology between the two countries.

## IRSA releases 167,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 167,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 173,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.84 feet and was 28.84 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 55,900 cusecs and 64,900 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1125.30 feet, which was 75.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 49,300 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 79,500, 81,900, 50,000 and 14,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 37,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 13,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## Three injure in firing at clock tower

MULTAN (APP): At least three people were wounded as result of blind firing at clock tower square, police said. SHO of Chehlyak police station claimed to have arrested two of the accused while chasing them after the incident. Accused identified as Tahir, Shehzad, Ali, Abrar and their unidentified accomplices succeeded to escape after the crime. The injured were identified as Sabir, Jaffer and Imran transported to hospital for treatment. Police suspected the incident caused due to the old enmity.

## Drug Supplier Held With 1 Kg Hashish

HYDERABAD (APP): The police on Wednesday arrested a suspected drug supplier and seized one kg of hashish from his possession. According to a police spokesman, A-Section Police arrested a suspect identified as Fareed Jamali and seized 1,050 grams of hashish from him during a raid in the Lati-fabad area. As per the criminal record obtained by the police, the arrested accused was wanted in murder, other crimes, and drug supply cases to different police stations of the province, he added. A-Section Police registered under Narcotics Act against the arrested accused and started investigation.

## Pakistan lauds Muslim body, ICNA, for promoting Islam in US; offers thanks for helping flood victims

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, has praised the role of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), an organization that promotes the Islamic way of life among American Muslims, and thanked it for mobilizing \$15 million to help Pakistani flood victims. “We will always remember ICNA for generating \$15 million to help victims of floods and its leaders for visiting flood areas during the height of the catastrophe,” he said in the course of a discussion on ‘Scholars and Community Leaders Recognition Lunch’ at ICNA's annual held in Baltimore, Maryland, this year. The same spirit of humanitarianism drove ICNA's campaign to collect funds for the victims of devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria early this year, raising more than \$10 million, the ambassador said. More than 25,000 people

attended the three-day convention during which 160 speaking sessions were held, addressed by more than 100 distinguished speakers. American Muslims from across the US and different parts of the world along with their families participated. Senator Mushtaq Ahmed from Pakistan and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Hasan Murat Mercan, were also present. In his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan said that ICNA has, over the years, raised awareness about the tenets and practices of Islam anchored in humanitarianism. “In doing so, ICNA has contributed to individual self-development and community connectivity,” he added. Paying tributes to Dr Mohsin Ansari, the President of ICNA, he said that this organization had advocated the protection of the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike to create a harmonious society.

## ANF seizes over 45 kg Ice drug in two operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to seize over 45 kg Ice drug, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation at International Cargo Office, Rawalpindi, ANF recovered Ice drug from a parcel consisting 10 cartons with a total 104 kg weight

booked for Australia. Ice was absorbed in garments, he added. He said, in another operation conducted in Kach Balochistan, 45 kg crystal methamphetamine (Ice drug) was recovered from a far-flung rural area. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

## NA observes 1-minute silence over five non-Muslim youth demise in Mithi thunderbolt

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday observed a minute's silence to condole the demise of five non-Muslim youth after a thunderbolt struck in Mithi area of Tharparkar District of Sindh. Member of National Assembly (MNA), Mahesh Kumar Malani of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) requested the

Speaker National Assembly to observe a one-minute silence to express condolence and sympathies to the aggrieved who perished and got injured during the natural disaster. Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf also expressed condolence on the matter and directed the House to observe silence for a minute.

## Pakistan calls for ‘practical actions’ to address special problems of Small Island Developing States

UNITED NATIONS (APP) :Pakistan on Tuesday expressed the hope that the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to be hosted by the Caribbean country of Antigua and Barbuda next year, would “effectively” deal with the special problems of the 37-member group of vulnerable nations. “The Conference is a timely opportunity to reinvigorate international support and solidarity for effectively addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions,” Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the first meeting of the 2024 conference's preparatory committee. The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States was held from September 1-4, 2014 in Apia, Samoa, a country in the central South Pacific Ocean. “The Fourth International Conference is taking place at a time when the developing world is in crisis; the crises of food, fuel and finance; of rising water scarcity; of unsustainable debt burdens; of increasing poverty and hunger; and of climate change -- all threatening the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people in the Global South,” the Pakistani envoy said. In this dire situation, he said, the small island developing States are particularly impacted, as they continue to face

the combined challenges arising, in particular, from their geographical remoteness, the small scale of their economies, high costs and vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters. In this regard, Aamir Khan called for addressing the issue of financing, as, he said, the existing international financial architecture was inadequate to support the needs of developing countries. Multilateral Development Banks must be reformed in order to scale up concessional finance and grants, ODA (official development assistance) commitments must be fulfilled, and SDRs (special drawing rights) must be reallocated, Aamir stressed. Noting that the world is in a debt crisis, he underscored the need for improving existing mechanisms by seeking an expansion of eligibility to all vulnerable countries and finding ways to ensure that all creditors participate on an equal footing. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries was not possible without significant private investment, the Pakistani envoy said. Pakistan, he said, has consistently advocated the formation of a facility under UN auspices, a public-private partnership enterprise, to mobilize investments in sustainable infrastructure. Pakistan will extend its full support to SIDS in the efforts to ensure that the Fourth International Conference is a success, the Pakistani envoy added.

## India exports entire sugar quota of 6.1 million tonnes

MUMBAI (Agencies): Indian mills have shipped out the entire 6.1 million tonnes of sugar allowed for exports, industry officials told Reuters, cashing in on multi-year high prices in the world market and robust demand. The world's second-biggest producer of the sweetener is, however, unlikely to allow additional exports in the current marketing year ending on Sept 30, due to a likely drop in production. This could lift global prices and allow



top producer Brazil to sell more sugar on the world market. "The mills have shipped the entire allocated quantity, and nothing has left since global

prices became attractive," Prakash Naiknavare, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd, told Reuters. Mills were getting more than 50,000 rupees (US\$604.6) per tonne from the overseas sale against the local price of 36,500 rupees, dealers said. A rumour earlier this month that India could ban exports prompted mills to accelerate the remaining shipments, he said.

## UAE's healthcare sector sets global benchmark in medical services and innovation

RIYADH (Agencies): The UAE's healthcare sector continues to lead regionally and globally in medical services and scientific achievements this year, according to a study. The Legatum Institute Prosperity Index Report ranked the UAE in the top position in three key global competitiveness indexes in the healthcare sector: early detection programs, scope of medical coverage and antenatal care coverage. The Gulf country also secured the second global



rank and the top regional spot in the Health Outcomes Index, according to the 2022 Open Data Inventory report by Open Data Watch. Furthermore, it emerged as a regional leader in the Middle East and Afri-

ca, topping the list in drug innovation and regulatory approval processes, reported the state-run news agency WAM. But that is not all. The country also leads the Gulf Cooperation Council countries' healthcare spending growth rate with a projected investment of \$30.7 billion in the sector by 2027, marking an annual growth rate of 7.4 percent, according to the international investment banking advisory firm Alpen Capital.

## ECB flags euro zone home price slump as rates rise

FRANKFURT (Agencies): Home prices in the eurozone may be headed for a "disorderly" decline as high mortgage rates make purchases unaffordable for households and unattractive for investors, the European Central Bank (ECB) said on Wednesday. It was one of several risks flagged in the ECB's Financial Stability Review (FSR), along with higher borrowing costs and slower growth hurting companies and households and, in turn, casting a shadow on traditional lenders and shadow banks.



The ECB has been raising interest rates from record lows since July in a bid to fight inflation, and looks set to continue doing so in coming months. But the impact of the steepest increase in decades is only beginning to be felt by the property market, which

has boomed over a decade of easy credit. "Looking ahead, a fall in prices could become disorderly as rising interest rates on new mortgage lending increasingly compromise affordability and increase the interest burden on existing mortgages, especially in countries where variable-rate mortgages predominate," the ECB said. It did not list those countries but ECB data indicates that Portugal, Spain, and the Baltic countries are among those where the proportion of mortgages with a floating rate is highest.

## SAMA permits 2 fintech firms to offer flexible consumer spending options

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi shoppers can soon find more flexible payment options with two more buy now, pay later companies entering the consumer finance market. The Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, has granted permits to Spotii and Madfu to provide consumer finance through the BNPL platform, the Saudi Press Agency reported. This move is projected to attract a new segment of investors and value-added firms that



can help achieve more efficient operations while maintaining adherence to the regulatory and supervisory guidelines defined by the central bank. Additionally, this initiative will help

Saudi Arabia come one step closer to achieving the objectives of the Financial Sector Development Program in making the Kingdom among the leading nations in financial technology. SAMA has been working toward increasing the adoption of the fintech sector to boost the effectiveness and flexibility of financial transactions. Moreover, it has also been promoting financial inclusion for the various segments of society.

## Bitcoin faces first monthly drop as AI shines

HONG KONG (Agencies): The crypto rebound is losing steam, leaving Bitcoin on course for its worst month since the FTX exchange collapsed in November last year. The roughly 6% drop in May is Bitcoin's first monthly retreat of 2023. A gauge of the top 100 digital assets has dropped by a similar magnitude. The largest crypto coin bounced 84% from the turn of the year through mid-April, briefly scaling US\$31,000, but the



climb has since fizzled to 67%. Ebbing liquidity and restrictive monetary policy has curbed enthusiasm for crypto. Crypto geeks had seized on the collapse of US regional banks in

March as validating a distrust of fiat currency, sparking gains for Bitcoin, but that proved to be a temporary prop as officials steadied the financial sector. "What you really need to do to get another wave of Bitcoin and crypto-asset buying is to show real utility and development to get those crypto-curious people to get into the crypto ecosystem," John Wu, president of Ava Labs Inc, said on Bloomberg Television.

## Musk, China's industry head hold 'new energy' talks

BEIJING (Agencies): Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Chinese industry minister Jin Zhuanglong held talks on "new energy vehicles" Wednesday, Beijing said. The two "exchanged views on the development of new energy vehicles and intelligent connected vehicles", China's ministry of industry and information technology said in a readout on its website. It did not share further details. Tesla representatives did not



respond to AFP requests for further information on Musk's itinerary. Musk arrived in Beijing Tuesday on his first trip to China in more than three years. China is the world's

biggest electric vehicle market and Tesla announced in April it would build a second massive factory in Shanghai. That factory will be Tesla's second plant in Shanghai after Gigafactory, which broke ground in 2019. In a meeting with Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang on Tuesday, Musk said he was "willing to continue to expand its business in China", according to a foreign ministry readout.

## Oil Update — crude falls as weak China data offsets US debt ceiling progress

RIYADH (Agencies): Oil prices extended losses early on Wednesday as worries of slowing demand from top oil importer China after releasing weaker-than-expected economic data outweighed some positive progress on the US debt ceiling bill. Brent crude futures for August delivery slipped 50 cents to \$73.04 a bar-



rel by 11:20 a.m. Saudi time, while US West Texas Intermediate crude fell 46 cents to \$69 a barrel, with

earlier gains reversed after China manufacturing data was released. Both benchmarks fell by more than 4 percent on Tuesday. China's manufacturing activity contracted faster than expected in May on weakening demand, with the official manufacturing purchasing managers' index dipping to 48.8 from 49.2 in April.

## Nvidia tops US\$1 trillion in market value on Wall Street

NEW YORK (Agencies): Chip company Nvidia exceeded US\$1 trillion in market value today as Wall Street stocks mostly rose, following an agreement between President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to avoid a US debt default. All three major indices were in positive territory,



while Nvidia jumped more than

7% on bullish sentiment over its role in artificial intelligence breakthrough technology. About 20 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.2% at 33,021.07. The broad-based S&P 500 climbed 0.4% to 4,223.64, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index gained 1.1% to 13,116.93.

## Saudi banking sector growth driven by mortgages: report

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's banking sector has experienced rapid growth over the past few years, primarily driven by mortgages and thanks to continued government support, according to a new report from S&P Global Ratings. The US-based agency pointed out that the Saudi government "has created the infrastructure for banks to divest their mortgage portfolios and improve the structure of their balance sheets" to boost home ownership to 70 percent, a key Vision 2030 objective. Private sector deposit growth averaged about 5 percent over the



past five years, compared with 14 percent growth in deposits from the government and its related entities. The rating agency noted that the government still held significant deposits with the Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, amounting to SR637.5 billion (\$170 billion) at the end of 2022.

## Credit Suisse shares no longer fit for New York listing

ZURICH (Agencies): Battered shares in crisis-hit Credit Suisse no longer meet criteria for listing on the New York Stock Exchange, the bank said Wednesday, adding that its upcoming sale to UBS would resolve the issue. "The New York Stock Exchange notified Credit Suisse on May 1... that it is no longer in compliance with the NYSE's continued listing minimum price criteria," Credit Suisse said in a statement. Credit Suisse is listed in New York under a "Depositary Shares" scheme that allows foreign firms to sell stock in the US. Under NYSE



rules, shares must trade for at least US\$1.00 for 30 consecutive days to qualify for listing. But the financial firm, whose share price crumbled under the pressure of fears of contagion from the collapse of three US regional banks, is slated to be taken over by historic rival UBS in a rescue organised by Bern.

## Toyota setting error risks Asia, Oceania users' data

TOKYO (Agencies): Toyota Motor Corp said on Wednesday that information on customers in some countries in Asia, excluding Japan, and Oceania may have been left publicly accessible from October 2016 to May 2023 because of a setting error in the cloud environment. Customer information that may have been accessible externally included names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and vehicle identification and registration numbers, the company said. The incident follows its announcement earlier this month that the vehicle data of 2.15 million



users in Japan, or almost the entire customer base who signed up for its main cloud service platforms since 2012, had been publicly available for a decade due to human error. Toyota said the latest issue was discovered after it launched a broad investigation following the earlier incident.

## Mexico minister sees 'infinite opportunities' in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (Agencies): Mexico's Deputy Finance Minister has affirmed his country's interest in strengthening its economic ties with Saudi Arabia, saying there are "infinite opportunities" in a rapidly transforming nation. During a two-day visit to Riyadh, Gabriel Yorio Gonzalez said that Mexico wants to be a partner as the Kingdom rapidly transforms. "We do see infinite opportunities for partnering ... to strengthen ties, including sustainable financial markets," Gonzalez said. "We have shared interest to increase trade,



food security, energy transition, sustainable infrastructure, and water." The minister visited the Kingdom from May 28-May 29 as a part of a Gulf-wide tour with the mission of attracting inward investment in Mexico and strengthening economic cooperation with the Gulf states.

## PwC Australia barred from all new RBA contracts

SYDNEY (Agencies): Reserve Bank of Australia governor Philip Lowe said he is "appalled" by the tax scandal that has engulfed PricewaterhouseCoopers and the central bank will not enter into any new contracts with the consultancy giant until a satisfactory resolution is reached. "We are as appalled as you are," Lowe told lawmakers in a Senate committee hearing in Canberra Wednesday. "The use of private information sought for commercial gains is wrong. It destroys trust and, as you know, it is unacceptable." PwC is under scrutiny after revelations that a former senior partner obtained secret information on tax policy while advising the government, before leaking it to colleagues



who used it to give tax-planning advice to global clients. "It should come with very serious consequences for those who did the wrong thing," Lowe said. Detailing the current arrangements between the two organisations, Lowe said the RBA has one ongoing consulting agreement with PwC for audit and risk management services, and the cost associated with changing that is not worth it. PwC is also doing some work for the central bank related to wages, Lowe said.

## Amman Mineral eyes US\$861 mil in record Jakarta IPO

JAKARTA (Agencies): PT Amman Mineral Internasional, which owns the second-largest gold and copper mine in Indonesia, plans to raise up to 12.9 trillion rupiah (US\$861 million) in what would so far be the country's largest initial public offering this year. The company will offer 7.29 billion shares at 1,650 to 1,775 rupiah each, with a listing at the Jakarta stock exchange scheduled for July 5, according to a prospectus published on Wednesday. This offering would surpass PT Trimegah Bangun Persada, known as Harita



Nickel, as the country's biggest IPO in 2023 after raising 10 trillion rupiah in April. The plan adds to a slew of public offerings in Indonesia, which has been the most active IPO market in Southeast Asia this year. Proceeds will be used for working capital, debt repayment and to fund refinery projects in West Nusa Tenggara province, according to the prospectus.

## Baseball United announces official partnership with PFB

ISLAMABAD (APP): Baseball is all set to rise in Pakistan as Baseball United, the first-ever professional baseball league focused on the middle East and Indian Subcontinent on Wednesday entered into an exclusive partnership with Pakistan Federation Baseball (PFB). The agreement will enable strategic integration of the two organization's growth plans with a focus on player development, national team training, fan experience, community outreach, global publicity, and sponsorship. "It is a watershed moment for the develop-

ment of baseball in Pakistan. It will give a major boost to the sport there. I am sure the country's true potential in the game will be known to the world now," Syed Fakhra Ali Shah, the president of the PFB told APP on the phone from Ohio, US where the agreement was signed. "We extend our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to Kash Shaikh (President, CEO and Co-Owner, Baseball United) and Baseball United for their exceptional leadership, unwavering support, and extraordinary vision," he said. "As the son of late Syed Khawar Shah, the

revered founder of Pakistan Baseball, words cannot express the immense joy I feel as I witness the realization of our shared dream. For over three decades, Pakistan Federation Baseball has tirelessly worked to promote and expand the game of baseball within our cherished nation. We are deeply honoured to work alongside Baseball United as they establish a groundbreaking professional baseball league that will inspire young players from around the world to step onto the field and ignite a passion for the sport across Pakistan," he added.

## Title-holder Tszyu recovering from surgery after 'dog bite'

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's Tim Tszyu insisted Wednesday the defence of his interim WBO super welterweight title will go ahead despite needing surgery after reportedly being bitten by a dog just weeks ahead of the bout. The unbeaten 28-year-old stopped American Tony Harrison in March to earn the belt and is scheduled to defend it against Mexican Carlos Ocampo on Queensland's Gold Coast on June 18. But Tszyu, son of renowned former world champion Kostya Tszyu, suffered a laceration to his right fore-

arm at the weekend from a dog bite that reportedly required 26 stitches. He was adamant the bout was not in jeopardy, jokingly posting a picture of a Chihuahua on his Instagram account with the caption: "Don't worry. Round 2 coming up!" "I had a little bit of an incident on the weekend but I'm good to go," he said. "The show goes on. Nothing changes. I'm ready. June 18, let's get it on." His manager Glen Jennings also said the fight would go ahead as planned. "Tim Tszyu was treated by the team doctor and surgeon on Saturday afternoon

for a laceration on his right forearm," Jennings told Australian media. "The wound was superficial. The post-surgical report is all good. There is no doubt that Tim will be ready and 100 percent healthy and focused to take on Carlos Ocampo on June 18." Tszyu's bout is a tune-up for his shot at undisputed champion Jermell Charlo, who holds all four major sanctioning body world crowns. Tszyu was poised to fight Charlo in Las Vegas in January before the American broke his left hand during training and it was postponed.

## Meet Kash Shaikh, man bringing 'baseball diplomacy' to Middle East, South Asia

DUBAI (Agencies): For Kash Shaikh, it is all about "bringing people together." It, in this case, is the monumental task of bringing professional baseball to the Middle East and South Asia. He described it as "baseball diplomacy." Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Baseball United, the first-ever professional baseball league focused on the Middle East and Indian subcontinent, Shaikh told Arab News: "Everyone on our leadership team is a lifelong baseball fan. 'We've been connected to the game, either as executives or players or fans, for really our whole life. We have a collective 500 years of baseball experience within our leadership team. 'About a year-and-a-half ago, we all came together with this idea, this vision to grow the game of baseball. And as we were thinking through the potential opportunities with the game, what we realised pretty quickly was that the biggest opportunity for growth was international. And the best place for that growth would be the Middle East and South Asia, for a few reasons.' He referred to his target region as "the epicenter of bat and ball sports," with more than 1 billion cricket fans. Shaikh said: "It's also a region that's fully embracing sport and investing in sport. Dubai, and the UAE is a big example, so too is Saudi Arabia, Qatar, obviously, and other countries throughout the region. "And it's a region where this is a completely white-space opportunity from a business and a brand-building standpoint. There are no professional baseball leagues in the region, we're the first, and there's not much professional baseball and baseball infrastructure at all within the region. "There are passionate people who love the game though. There are kids who have tools and talent, there are coaches who want to teach, there are federations speckled across the region that have been working really hard for decades, but just haven't got the resources, the funding, and the support that are necessary to grow. We call those nations, the forgotten nations of baseball," he added. There are currently 141 members of the World Baseball Softball Confederation, the sport's governing body. Most of those beyond the top 30 were considered among the so-called forgotten nations. "That's our constituency," he said. "The fan base is there, people don't realize there's actually over 50 million avid baseball fans within India and over 60 million avid baseball fans within the region. That's more avid baseball fans than we have in the United States right now. So, it's a huge, huge opportunity." When it came to picking a base of operation for the new project, Shaikh opted for a location he had become familiar with over the years. "Dubai is amazing. The leadership is amazing. The government vision is inspiring. When the UAE and Dubai get behind sport, it really step-changes the engagement across the region. "We've seen what has happened with golf in the region. We've seen what's happened with



MMA, we've seen what's happened with F1. And actually, there are more avid baseball fans than there are avid golf fans, MMA fans, or F1 fans in the region. "Everything about Dubai, the infrastructure, the leadership, the innovation, the beauty of the city, was what drew us to the city," he added. Shaikh was born in Houston, Texas to a father from Mumbai and a mother from Islamabad. After attending The University of Texas at Austin — where he founded the first ever South Asian fraternity in the US — he worked for American multi-national corporation Procter and Gamble for 10 years, and had a stint with GoPro, before going on to start several successful businesses of his own. His career allowed him to spend long stretches of time in the Middle East region. Getting Baseball United off the ground has been far from easy, but Shaikh pointed out that he had the right partners to make it a success. He said: "I'm grateful for the partners we have on the ground. We've got a great, great relationship with the Sports Council, we've got a great relationship with Dubai Sports City. And we wouldn't be able to do this without them." Already two franchises have been established, the first being the Mumbai Cobras and the second — following recent talks with the Pakistan Federation Baseball — the Karachi Monarchs. Once the last two of the initial group of four are named, eyes will turn to Dubai in November. "We're starting in November, with our first four franchises playing a Showcase event in Dubai. Nov. 5 through 12, we're calling Baseball Week in Dubai. And we'll have a series of different events that are going to be exciting for fans and for people within the region that we're going to announce soon. That week will culminate on Nov. 10 through 12, with the Showcase." The action, involving four games, will take place at the 25,000-capacity Dubai International Stadium, one of cricket's homes in the UAE. "If we can get 5,000 people in the stands, we're going to be doing great. We'll probably be setting records for leagues," he added. The next big landmark date after that for Baseball United will be November 2024, when an eight-franchise league will be launched in Dubai. Shaikh

noted that 800 players, from 30 countries, currently on Baseball United's database had been vetted and scouted, with 200 already notified that they had made the list to potentially play in the Showcase in November, as well as in 2024's Season 1. He said: "We have some of the best players from Finland, some of the best players from the Dominican Republic, we have some of the best players from the Far East, coming to play in the league. We have some really exciting former Major League Baseball players too, and that's going to be cool when announced. So, we have those as the core." The next step in terms of rosters will be to introduce local talent, whether from existing national teams, or through grass-roots projects and training programs in the region — starting with India and Pakistan and then expanding into the Middle East. "We're going to be in Saudi Arabia (in June) meeting with the federation there, so I'm really excited," Shaikh added. An array of baseball stars past and present have in recent months backed Baseball United, not just through endorsements, but by investing their own money in the project. Among them are Felix Hernandez, Adrian Beltre, Mariano Rivera, and Barry Larkin, as well as Elvis Andrus, still an active player with the Chicago White Sox. "There's no way we could have done this without our Major League Baseball legends who've come on board. They've added credibility, they've driven excitement. And they have also ensured that the culture of the organization is focused on not just building a business and making money, but helping people, inspiring people, building community, and changing culture, all those things that I've been passionate about. "They're calling me all the time asking what's up, what's next?" Shaikh was a big sports fan growing up in Texas and played basketball through college, and he has carried his experiences into his career, in particular the new venture. He said: "It's a fascinating thing. We run our businesses, including Baseball United, like a sports team. "We have a culture that's about camaraderie and accountability and discipline. I feel really blessed because I played team sports my whole life, I'm passionate about it."

## World 172 Seyboth Wild stuns Medvedev at French Open amid Djokovic fallout

PARIS (Agencies): World number two Daniil Medvedev was knocked out of the French Open in the first round on Tuesday, losing in five sets to 172nd-ranked Thiago Seyboth Wild of Brazil as Roland Garros attempted to move on from Novak Djokovic's Kosovo controversy. Seyboth Wild, who came through the qualifiers and had never previously won a Grand Slam match, triumphed 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. It was Medvedev's fifth loss in the opening round at Roland Garros in seven appearances. "It's a dream come true to beat these kinds of players on this court," said the 23-year-old Brazilian who unleashed 69 winners on Court Philippe Chatrier. "I was cramping in the second set and couldn't really serve the way I wanted but I tried to play my best



tennis." Seyboth Wild, without a win on the main tour since February 2022, held his nerve in the conclusion of the four-hour 15-minute match, one of a Grand Slam record 21 first round ties to require five sets. He twice saw breaks retrieved by Medvedev in the deciding set before finally backing up a third break with a hold for 5-3. Two giant forehands secured victory. Medvedev arrived in Paris buoyed by winning his first ever clay court title at the Italian Open last week for his fifth trophy of 2023.

## PSB to hold 4 coaching courses in June

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Sports board (PSB) will be organizing refresher coaching courses in June with an aim to advance the skills and techniques of all stakeholders associated with the games. Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board Shahid Islam informed APP that PSB had prepared a plan to organize four coaching courses in June. "The courses are being held on special instructions of the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari and Director General Pakistan Sports Board Shoaib Khosa. These courses will be held in Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and

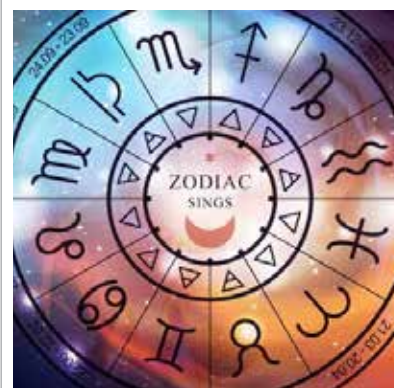
Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)," he said. Shahid Islam said earlier, courses have been organized in Islamabad and Lahore as well. "Male, female coaches, players and technical officials (judges, referees and umpires) from different sports will participate in the courses," he said. He said speakers would give lectures on various matters of different sports to the participants in the courses. "These will cover coaching and training theories, nutrition, doping, sports psychology, sports injuries, injuries and first aid and skills education," he said and added that the course would continue for three days.

## French sports minister condemns Djokovic message on Kosovo

PARIS (Agencies): France's sports minister condemned Novak Djokovic on Wednesday after he wrote a message saying Kosovo was at the "heart of Serbia" following his victory in the opening round of Roland Garros. The Belgrade-born tennis superstar scrawled "Kosovo is the heart of Serbia. Stop the violence" on a camera on Monday in Paris amid clashes between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the territory. Kosovo, mostly populated by Muslim ethnic Albanians, broke away from the then-Yugoslavia in the late 1990s and declared independence in 2008, in a move that has never been accepted by neighbouring Christian-majority Serbia or its ally Russia. French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera told broadcaster France 2 that Djokovic's message was "not appropriate, clearly".

"There's a principle of neutrality for the field of play. When you carry messages about defending human rights, messages that bring peoples together around universal values, a sportsperson is free to express them. "But in this case it was a message that is very activist, that is very political. You shouldn't get involved, especially in the current circumstances, and it shouldn't happen again," added Oudea-Castera, who is the former head of the French tennis federation. She added that the director of Roland Garros had spoken to Djokovic and his entourage. Thirty peacekeepers from a NATO-led force in Kosovo were injured in clashes with ethnic Serb demonstrators on Monday during protests about the installation of ethnic Albanian mayors in northern Kosovo.

## DAILY HOROSCOPE: JUNE 01, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES:** You're in the right mood and frame of mind to take some kind of bold action today, maybe at work or in your love life. The good energy coursing through you won't last forever, so act!  
– **TAURUS:** You can see the reality behind the weirdest of today's opportunities, and you won't jump on any of them. If anyone asks, counsel patience. You can see that things aren't what they seem to be.  
– **GEMINI:** You feel the need to work together as much as possible today, and some of your coworkers or family members should be amenable to that. If not, you may need to defer some big projects.  
– **CANCER:** Let yourself do something nice for yourself! It's one of those days when everyone else seems to be taking care of their own selves, so there's no reason for you to break your back for them  
– **LEO:** You're not in the mood to hear people's complaints today, but most likely you're too busy with life's rich

bounty to worry about their pettiness. On the whole, this should be a great day.  
– **VIRGO:** You need to try something bold today, and it's easy because lots of others folks are doing the same thing! You may sneak a kiss, tell off the boss, or push back against an unreasonable request  
– **LIBRA:** You're busy checking out new people, places, and things today, and your good energy makes exploration simple and fun! Try not to push too hard on people who might not want to join in  
– **SCORPIO:** Your gut-level instincts are pretty sharp today, and you should trust them even when your rational side is screaming in terror! If you listen to your intuition, everything will work out just fine  
– **SAGITTARIUS:** You can improve almost anyone's mood without doing or saying much of anything. Your mere presence is enough to tip them into the good times! You're feeling great yourself, so enjoy  
– **CAPRICORN:** You need to think about every step of the plan today or you're sure to run into trouble! As long as you're focused and on track, though, everything should work almost perfectly  
– **ACQUARIUS:** You're feeling pretty great about how much progress you've made lately and ought to be able to open a few new doors as a result. It's a good time to take or make new opportunities.  
– **PISCES:** An authority figure is trying to ruin your day, but you don't have to take it. You might need to hear them out at least, but once that's over, you should have more freedom than anyone realizes

## South American leaders reach consensus on regional integration

BRASILIA (Agencies): Leaders of the South American countries reached the Brasilia Consensus on Tuesday at the regional summit here convened by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, seeking to facilitate regional integration. Twelve leaders of the former and current member states of the regional bloc the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) attended the summit with the aim of relaunching the languished organization. "What brings us together today in Brasilia is the sense of urgency to collectively look at our region again," the Brazilian president noted at the summit. The South American leaders reaffirm in the Brasilia Consensus the common vision of South America as a region of peace and cooperation, underlining the rule of law and institutional stabil-

ity, the upholding of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Based on dialogue and on respect for the diversity of our peoples, they are committed to democracy and human rights, sustainable development and social justice, said the consensus. "Regional integration should be part of the solution to the common challenges of building a peaceful world," the consensus said, where the leaders concurred that the world is facing multiples challenges such as climate crisis, threats to peace and international security, pressure on food and energy chains, the risk of new pandemics, increase in social inequalities and threats to institutional and democratic stability. The leaders pledged to work towards increasing trade and investment among the countries of the

region, improving infrastructure and logistics, strengthening regional value chains, and effectively implementing trade facilitation and financial integration measures, with the aim of reaching an effective South American Free Trade Area. The consensus also recognized the importance of maintaining regular dialogue, with a view to furthering the integration process in South America and projecting the region's voice in the world. Founded in 2008, Unasur has been languishing as some heads of member states, including Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro, withdrew from the bloc. Present at the summit were the presidents of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela, and an official of Peru representing its president.

## Beijing blames US 'provocation' for South China Sea fighter jet incident

BEIJING (Agencies): Beijing blamed US "provocation" Wednesday for an incident last week when a Chinese plane crossed in front of an American surveillance aircraft over the South China Sea. The United States' long-term and frequent sending of ships and planes to conduct close surveillance on China seriously harms China's national sovereignty and security," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said when asked about the incident. "This kind of provocative, dangerous activity is the cause of the security issues on the seas," Mao said, calling on Washington to "immediately stop this form of dangerous provocation". "China will continue to take all necessary steps to resolutely protect its own sovereignty and security," she said. The US military said Tuesday a Chinese fighter pilot performed an "unnecessarily aggressive maneuver" near an American surveillance aircraft operating over the South China Sea on Friday. Video footage declassified and released by the US military shows a Chinese fighter plane crossing in front of the American aircraft, which can be seen shaking from the resulting turbulence. The Chinese plane "flew directly in front of and within 400 feet of the nose of the RC-135, forcing the US aircraft to fly through its wake turbulence", the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) said in a statement. "The RC-135 was conducting safe and routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace, in accordance with international law," it said. The Pentagon said the incident was part of a pattern of behaviour by China.

## Radio broadcaster killed in the Philippines: police

MANILA (Agencies): A radio broadcaster was shot dead outside his home in the central Philippines on Wednesday, police said, the latest in a long list of journalists killed in the country. Cresenciano Bunduquin, 50, was killed by motorcycle-riding gunmen in Calapan City in Oriental Mindoro province, Colonel Samuel Delorino told Agence France-Presse. One of the assailants died after Bunduquin's son hit the gunmen with his vehicle as they fled the scene of the pre-dawn attack. "The remaining suspect was able to run off. The hot pursuit operation is still ongoing," said Delorino. The archipelago nation is one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists, and most of the killers go unpunished. Radio broadcasters outside the capital are often the target. Bunduquin is the third journalist to be killed since President Ferdinand Marcos took office in June 2022. Bunduquin hosted a programme on radio station 101.7 DWXR as well as on Facebook, said station manager Jester Joaquin, who described the broadcaster as "hard-hitting" on local issues. He had been outspoken about a recent oil spill affecting the province, illegal gambling and politics. "He told me before that he's receiving threats but he didn't elaborate," Joaquin told AFP. "He mentioned to me that he wanted a change in his line of work, that's why he put up a chicken farm, because he wants to go quiet."

## Millennia-old settlement site found in northwest China's Shaanxi

XI'AN (Agencies): A settlement site dating back to about 3,200 years ago has been excavated in Qingjian County, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, according to the local archaeological institution. Large-scale rammed-earth buildings, tombs, ash pits and pottery molds have been found at the Zhaigou site, which spans some 3 million square meters on the Loess Plateau, according to Sun Zhanwei, a researcher with the Shaanxi Academy of Archaeology. A large number of bronze chariots and horses, jade ware, bone ware, lacquerware and tortoise shells were found in the tombs of the nobles at the site, which resemble those previously unearthed from tombs of similar social ranks in YinXu, also known as the

Yin Ruins. The 3,300-year-old YinXu, located in the central plains of China, has been confirmed as the capital of the late Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.). The northern Shaanxi area where the Zhaigou site is located was ruled by a regional regime during that period. The new discoveries reflect the close economic and cultural exchanges between the territory of the Shang Dynasty and the region of today's northern Shaanxi as well as the strong influence of the Shang civilization on its surrounding areas. They also show that there was a highly developed bronze civilization in northern Shaanxi in the late Shang Dynasty, marking a breakthrough in the archaeological study of the Shang Dynasty, said Sun.

## Iranian, Turkish presidents vow to expand bilateral relations

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday expressed willingness and determination to expand bilateral relations and regional cooperation, according to a statement published on the website of the Iranian president's office. In a phone conversation, Raisi congratulated Erdogan on his re-election as Türkiye's president, expressing hope that the two sides could further strengthen cooperation in the economic, political, security, cultural, and trade sectors during Erdogan's new term. Referring to the "effective role" of the two countries' regional cooperation in ensuring and improving regional stability and security, Raisi called for the acceleration of such collaboration to safeguard the interests of regional states. Erdogan, for his part, said Türkiye's relations with

Iran in different areas will "definitely" continue with greater strength. He voiced Ankara's willingness to continue regional cooperation with Tehran to achieve "positive and effective" outcomes in terms of ensuring stability in the region. Erdogan also voiced his country's interest in expanding economic and trade cooperation with Iran. Erdogan was re-elected Türkiye's president in a runoff election on Sunday by winning 52.14 percent of the votes, securing another five-year term. Raisi on Sunday sent a congratulatory message to Erdogan on his election victory, expressing confidence that the bilateral "friendly" relations will be further strengthened during his new term in office on the basis of the two countries' strong historical, cultural and religious links, good neighborliness, mutual respect for one another and common interests.

## Nepali PM leaves for 4-day visit to India

KATHMANDU (Agencies): Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal left for a four-day visit to India on Wednesday afternoon, with a number of deals expected to be inked during the tour. Dahal is leading a delegation comprising nearly 100 members for his first foreign trip since he took office in December last year. Different agreements are expected to be signed during the prime minister's visit, Nepal's Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud said at a press meeting on Tuesday. "Attracting Indian investment



in hydropower projects, the expansion of transmission lines and seeking Indian support in the export of energy to Bangladesh are our priorities," he said, adding that they will also request the Indian government to allow the air routes.

## Republican DeSantis begins presidential bid in Trump's shadow

CLIVE (Agencies): Republican governor Ron DeSantis kicked off his 2024 presidential campaign tour in Iowa on Tuesday by pitching himself as the best alternative to Donald Trump. Though he did not name the septuagenarian ex-president directly during his speech, DeSantis, 44, nevertheless evoked Trump, attempting to draw a study of parallels and contrasts. America needs an "energetic" president capable of serving two terms, he said, a reference to the fact that Trump is constitutionally limited to one more four-year stint in office. "Leadership is not about entertainment," DeSantis told Iowans. "It's about results." But he also tried to ingratiate himself with Trump's voter base, most obviously with a campaign slogan -- "Our great American comeback" -- that strongly echoed Trump's "Make

America great again" mantra. - Wooing evangelicals - In an appeal to religious voters previously won over by Trump, the Florida governor started his White House bid at the evangelical Eternity Church in Clive, Iowa under a giant portrait of Jesus Christ. The practicing Catholic has in recent interviews sought to emphasize his conservative policy achievements, including a ban on discussing gender identity and sexual orientation in schools, a block on funding efforts for promoting diversity at public universities, and one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country. While he lacks the Republican frontrunner's national profile, DeSantis has tried to position himself as an effective policymaker, implicitly contrasting himself with Trump's reputation for legislative inertia. In

## Chinese scientists set new record in long-haul quantum communication



HEFEI (Agencies): Chinese scientists have set a world record by achieving twin-field quantum key distribution (QKD) through a 1,002-kilometer optical fiber, marking a critical step toward a future large-scale quantum network. QKD, a key method in quantum communication, allows two remote users to generate a shared key known only to them, which is used to encrypt and decrypt messages. Its practical application, however, faces a major bottleneck that is distance limit, as a quantum signal can not be amplified and channel transmit-

tance decreases exponentially with distance. Previously, twin-field QKD was demonstrated in lab settings through spooled fiber of up to 830 kilometers. In a study published in the journal Physical Review Letters, scientists from institutions such as the University of Science and Technology of China, the Jinan Institute of Quantum Technology, the Shanghai Institute of Microsystem and Information Technology said that the longest distribution distance reached was 1,002 kilometers with a secure key rate of 0.0034 bits per second. During their experiments, the scientists developed dual-band phase estimation and ultra-low noise superconducting nanowire single-photon detectors to suppress system noise, which impedes the production of secure keys in the long distance.

## 'BTS' To mark 10th anniversary with new song 'Take Two'



ISLAMABAD (APP): The new digital song titled 'Take Two' by the music group 'BTS' will be released on June 09 (Friday) at 1 PM (KST), to mark the 10th anniversary of the music group, the official music agency 'Big Hit' announced on Wednesday. Having a global fan following including many top singers & other artists namely John Cena, Becky G, Halsey & more who also adore the seven members music group, 'BTS' has always been in the news for something big and trendy for their fans. Apart from making great music, they have been acclaimed as Influencers of positive change around the world which is why they have been ambassadors for the United Nations (UN) campaigns along with appearing as a special presidential envoy of Korean Culture on behalf of their country at the special session of UN General Assembly. Recently, the group has been on their solo journey while two of the members J-hope & Seokjin are serving in the military as the compulsory military enlistment which every South Korean male has to fulfill during his life due to this fans have been missing their group activities and group music. The upcoming song titled 'Take Two' is said to be a gift for the army, for their endless support and love towards 'BTS' which has made the group continue their musical journey for a decade and is considered a great & hard achieve the mark in the K-pop world. Shared via an official announcement from Big Hit, the company stated, "To celebrate their 10th anniversary, 'BTS' will release the digital single 'Take Two' this June in which all seven members of this music gang participated and will appear onscreen together. The song conveys their appreciation toward the army for all the love you shower them with and their desire to always be together with you." It also added, "We sincerely express our gratitude to the army for making the 10th anniversary possible with your endless love for 'BTS', and we hope that 'Take Two' will become a precious gift from 'BTS' to you all."

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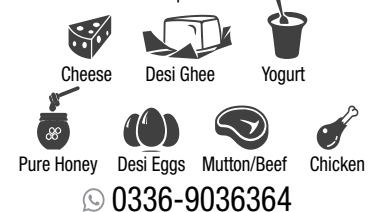
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