



- Moscow Vs Wagner - Prigozhin to leave for Belarus, as rebellion ends: Kremlin - Wagner head says group standing down after claims of deal - Kremlin says Wagner fighters will return to base and sign contracts with military

MOSCOW (Agencies): Less than 24 hours after Wagner Group mercenaries took control of the strategic southern city of Rostov and began an armed convoy march towards Moscow, Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin abruptly announced late Saturday that his violent, attempted insurrection was over. "The moment has come when blood may spill. That's why, understanding the responsibility for spilling Russian blood on one of the sides, we are turning back our convoys and going back to field camps according to the plan," Prigozhin said on an official Telegram channel. Within a few hours of the statement, Wagner mercenaries in Rostov were filmed climbing into their trucks and departing the city. As they did, civilians took selfies with the Wagner troops and cheered for them. The apparent end of Wagner's march on Moscow came as the result of a deal reached between Prigozhin and the Kremlin, brokered by an unlikely intermediary: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. In exchange for his turning back, the criminal case against Prigozhin had been dropped, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov



told Russian reporters, according to the state controlled outlet TASS. Prigozhin himself "will go to Belarus," Peskov said, describing what appeared to be a sort of official exile. Wagner mercenaries who participated in Prigozhin's "walk" would not be prosecuted, said Peskov, citing their service to Russia so far in the Ukraine war. Instead, they would be given the opportunity to sign contracts to join the Russian military, ostensibly to return to the fight

in Ukraine, TASS reported. At first glance, the deal appeared to signal the end of the Wagner Group, and the integration of its fighters into the Russian armed forces. Peskov also said Russian President Vladimir Putin would not be delivering an address or live comments on the events of the past 24 hours. Putin's absence from the public eye as his grip on power faced its greatest challenge was yet another remarkable detail of the failed insurrection.

What happened in Russia?

Tensions in Russia have reached unprecedented levels as a powerful mercenary chief, brought in by President Vladimir V. Putin to assist in the Ukrainian invasion, has turned his forces against the Russian military itself. The mercenary leader, Yevgeny V. Prigozhin, who heads the notorious private army known as Wagner, initially achieved some victories in Ukraine. However, it became apparent that Prigozhin's ambitions extended beyond a single front. He began to openly criticize Russian military leaders, accusing them of incompetence and undermining his own fighters. Recently, Prigozhin's criticism escalated into action. His Wagner forces seized control of strategic military facilities in Rostov-on-Don, in the southwest, and even posed a threat to Moscow. Prigozhin later announced a retreat but not before challenging President Putin's authority. This development poses the most significant challenge to Putin's grip on power since he assumed the presidency in 1999. The Wagner group, a shadowy private military company, emerged before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and has since expanded significantly. Estimates suggest that Wagner may have around 50,000 fighters at its disposal, although Prigozhin mentioned deploying a force half that size against the Russian Defense Ministry. Prigozhin, an ally of Pu-



tin with close ties to Russian oligarchs, has proven useful to the Kremlin both domestically and internationally. Wagner has been instrumental in exerting Russian influence in countries like Syria, Libya, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Mali, and Mozambique. Notably, Prigozhin was also implicated in the U.S. political scandal surrounding interference in the 2016 American election. While Prigozhin denies any coup attempt, Russian generals have opened an investigation into his leadership for "organizing an armed rebellion." Prigozhin claims his target is the Defense Ministry, accusing the military leadership of corruption and incompetence. However, his decision to deploy forces within Russia has sparked

a response from President Putin, who mobilized troops to quell the assault. The fighting has disrupted military and civilian operations in a crucial military hub for the war in Ukraine, indicating some success for Prigozhin. As the situation unfolds, Ukraine's armed forces are closely monitoring the events. The conflict was triggered by Prigozhin's longstanding grievances against military leaders. He has accused them of neglecting his forces' needs and mishandling the war effort. His recent claims of military attacks on his fighters' encampments further fueled the conflict, as he vowed to retaliate and criticized the invasion of Ukraine as a corrupt enterprise orchestrated by the Russian elite.

Netanyahu says IDF is training to fight Arab Israelis in 'all-out war'

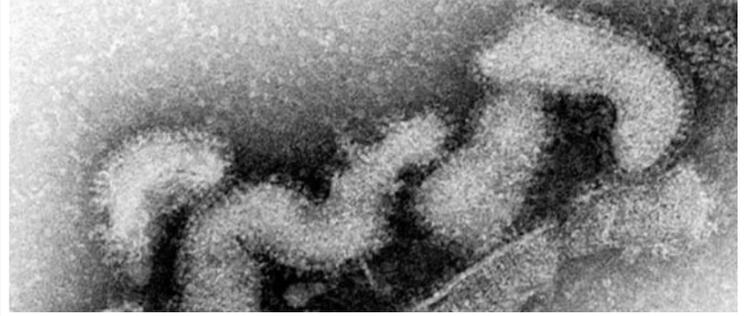
TEL AVIV (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told a closed meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that the Israeli army (IDF) has conducted exercises that simulate the outbreak of fighting within the Arab Israeli community in the context of a war being waged on several fronts simultaneously, public broadcaster Kan reported on Monday. The Israeli leader took part in the committee meeting last Tuesday. His statements confirm that the IDF is not only training to fight on the fronts, but also against Israel's own Palestinian Arab citizens, who make up 20 per cent of all Israelis. It is not known why such exercises are being conducted now, given that nothing more than peaceful protests and demonstrations has been



organised within the Arab community to condemn the aggressive wars waged by Israel. However, the Israeli army's preparations for such a scenario are reminiscent of the attempt to displace the residents of Kafr Qassem after a massacre there during the tripartite — British, French and Israeli — aggression against Egypt in 1956. Kan noted that Netanyahu did not address this

issue in his briefing to the committee, but rather during his answers to questions raised by committee members. A question was asked about whether the Israeli army was preparing for the possibility that elements in the Arab community would "join the fight against the state". Netanyahu replied, "This is a scenario the Israeli army is training for, as part of preparations for a multi-front war." In his answer to a question about whether there is readiness for an all-out war on several fronts that includes fighting by parties in the Arab community, Netanyahu said: "The Israeli army is preparing for this, and ten military battalions are training for this. Although they [the ten battalions] are not enough, they are preparing for this exact day."

Japan records the first-ever fatal case of the Oz Virus worldwide



Tokyo (Agencies): A Japanese woman in her 70s who lived in Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, died of myocarditis after contracting the Oz virus, making her death the world's first fatal case of the virus. The virus, first detected in 2018, and there may be cases of infection among humans and wild animals, according to the NIID. According to the report jointly released on Friday by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and the National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID), she visited a medical institution last summer with symptoms including fever, fatigue, and

joint pain and was diagnosed with pneumonia. After her condition worsened, she was hospitalized, and a hard tick was found sucking blood on the base of her right thigh, they said. She died of myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart, 26 days after she was hospitalized. The Oz virus is thought to be transmitted through the bite of the tick, the institute said, with the species existing across a wide area of Japan. The virus is not necessarily fatal, but more studies need to be conducted on its symptoms and dangers, according to the NIID.

Battle of the billionaires: Elon Musk vs Mark Zuckerberg cage match could make over \$1 billion

Billionaires Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are gearing up for a potentially epic showdown inside the Octagon, and it seems they are both dead serious about it. Fans eager to witness this clash of tech titans will have to reach into their pockets as the spectacle is expected to be a pay-per-view event. UFC president Dana White recently revealed to TMZ Sports that he had engaged in conversations with both billionaires regarding their ongoing social media feud. Zuckerberg, inquisitive about Musk's challenge, reached out to White to gauge the situation. Meanwhile, Musk, true to his bold nature, confirmed his genuine intentions to participate in the fight. White wasted no time in stoking the excitement surrounding the anticipated bout. While still in the early stages of planning, he proclaimed that this would be the most colossal fight in the history of the world, surpassing anything witnessed before. His confidence soared as he predicted that the fight would shatter all previous pay-per-view records, leaving the McGregor-Mayweather extravaganza in the dust. "This would be the biggest fight ever in the history of the world, bigger than anything that's ever been done. It would break all pay-per-



view records. I think it triples [Mayweather-McGregor]. There's no limit on what this thing can make," he said. The rivalry between the tech moguls stems from their history of animosity, with the fight challenge emerging as reports circulated about Zuckerberg's Meta working on a Twitter competitor. The brewing conflict between their respective companies adds fuel to the fire, heightening the anticipation for their physical confrontation. While a typical UFC pay-per-view event commands a price of \$80, White announced that the Musk-Zuckerberg spectacle would require a slightly heftier sum of \$100. Nonetheless, considering the combined net worth of these two billionaires, who currently hold the top and tenth positions on the global wealth list with a staggering \$340 billion in total, the fight is poised to break all financial records.

Sierra Leone votes amid cost-of-living crisis

Freetown (AFP/APP): Vote counting began in Sierra Leone on Saturday following a mostly peaceful general election despite a late start in some polling stations, as the opposition denounced alleged irregularities. President Julius Maada Bio is seeking a second term amid a crippling cost-of-living crisis that sparked deadly riots last year. Twelve men and one woman are vying for the top job, though Bio's main challenger

is Samura Kamara of the All People's Congress (APC). Bio, 59, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), narrowly beat Kamara, who is aged 72, in a runoff in 2018. Polling stations were scheduled to open at 7:00 am and close at 5:00 pm (1700 GMT), but many stations in the capital Freetown opened late, AFP journalists saw. By 5:40 pm (1740 GMT), tallying had begun at the Aberdeen Police Station in Freetown,

IBM nears \$5 billion deal for software provider Apptio

NEW YORK (Reuters): IBM (IBM.N) is nearing a deal to acquire software company Apptio for about \$5 billion, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter. A deal between the companies could be completed over the weekend, the Journal reported, adding that it was unclear whether the purchase price includes debt. IBM declined to comment on the report. Apptio did not immediately respond to Reuters request for comment. Apptio, taken private by Vista Equity Partners in 2018 for \$1.94 billion, provides products including cloud-based



and hybrid business management software, a possible asset for technology giant IBM. The deal follows IBM's 2021 purchase of software provider Turbo-nomic for over \$1.5 billion and its 2019 acquisition of software company Red Hat for \$34 billion.

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.

Shehzad Club, City club to clash in Inter-Club Kabaddi in Bannu

PESHAWAR (APP): Shehzad Club and City Club clashed in the grand final of the Bannu Inter-Club Kabaddi Championship being played at Malik Riaz Kabaddi Arena with hundreds and thousands of spectators witnessing the semi-final matches on Friday. Additional Deputy Commissioner Mehmood Ahmad was the chief guest on the occasion who along with thousands of enthusiastic spectators witnessed the semi-finals matches. Regional Sports Officer Amir Zahir Shah, and other officials were also

present. In the first semi-final Shehzad Club defeated Serat Khail Club by 44-43 points. Both Shehzad Club and Serat Khail played well and gave each other a tough fight wherein they were also tied 23-23 at the half-time. The vociferous crowd were at the toes when the riders either Shehzad Club or Serat Khail were on attack on each other's court. Shehzad Club played well, especially in the last quarters of the match. Shehzad Club had local support while the villagers of the Serat Khail were also there and support-

ed their respective teams. It was 44-43 when Shehzad Club defeated Serat Khail club and marched into the final. On the other hand Serat Khail also played well but their last rider due to mistake failed to get a point and thus Shehzad Club won the semi-final. In the second semi-final Bannu City Club defeated Kanda Club by 45-41 in another closely contested encounter played on hot-note. Bannu City has the services of a national Kabaddi player, who gave a tough fight to Kanda Club.

Joint committee to restructure procedure of petrol pumps inspection: Meher Elahi

PESHAWAR (APP): The caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to constitute a joint committee to address the reservations of Pakistan Petroleum Association with regard to procedure and method of the inspection of the petrol pumps. In this connection, Special Assistant to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Labour, Malik Meher Elahi on Friday held a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Petroleum Association, headed by former president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce Anwar Maqsood Pervez, Chairman Abdul Majid and representatives here. The delegation apprised the Special Assistant on issues related to proposed gauges and actions

by the Labor Department against the petrol pumps. The delegation demanded that amendments may be made in the procedure after consultation with the petroleum representatives because the past government had given the powers to non-technical staff and imposed the law of penalties. The delegation further said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the inspection method of petrol pumps was different then other provinces that was undermining the rights of petrol pump owners. The Special Assistant Malik Meher Elahi assured the delegation that people associated with the petroleum business will be facilitated so that investment could get a boost in the province.

Govt to make all-out efforts to solve problems of CPNE: Barrister Feroze

PESHAWAR (APP): The Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (CPNE) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa committee meeting was held here on Friday in a hotel under the chairmanship of Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil. In the meeting, Secretary Information and Public Relations Mukhtiar Ahmed, Director General Information and Public

Relations Basir Ali Rehman Khan, President CPNE Irshad Ahmed Arif, General Secretary Ijazul Haq, Vice President Tahir Farooq, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Committee FCPNE Rahatullah, Qaiser Rizvi, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Wazirzada, Mumtaz Sadiq, Arshad Khan, Jamshed Baghwan, Rashid Iqbal, Amjad Aziz Malik, Zahir Shah Shirazi, Salman Khan, Nauman Khan, Sardar Naeem, Maqsood Khan, Mumtaz

Bangash, Najeebullah, and Aitzaz Hussain Shah and others participated. On this occasion, the participants of CPNE demanded the caretaker government and caretaker information minister take steps to pay the arrears of the newspapers. Addressing the meeting, Caretaker Information Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that efforts will be made to solve the problems of CPNE.

Public health department Abbottabad at the verge of collapse, 53 tube-wells are out of order

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Public Health Department Abbottabad Saturday facing severe economic crises, 53 tube wells in the region are out of order and 43 million rupees of electricity bills are also due to pay. According to the details, the provincial government and district administration of Abbottabad is also watching the situation but did not play any role resolve the grave concern of the people who are facing an acute shortage of clean drinking water during extreme weather condition. The public health department in Abbottabad runs the operation of 170 tube wells to provide water to the masses where 53 are out of order while the department is also

a defaulter of 35 million rupees of the contractor. Unfortunately, the post of XEN public health department Abbottabad is lying vacant for the last year and nobody is willing to take over the charge as the department is facing severe financial crises. On the other side, a couple of years ago the same post of public health was a hotcake for the officers of the department. Sources claimed that the former XEN who was twice appointed in Abbottabad during the PTI government played a vital role in the financial embezzlement which lead the department to the collapse and failure to provide water and other services to the people of Abbottabad.

KP CS for preparation of contingency plan for rainy season

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry has underlined the need for the preparation of a con-

tingency plan for the rainy season. He expressed this while chairing a high-level meeting to review preparations for monsoon rains here on Friday. Additional Chief Secretary, Secretaries Irrigation, Relief, C&W along with representatives of Army, Rescue 1122, PDMA attended the meeting. While all commissioners and deputy commissioners participated virtually. The meeting was informed that the Provincial Development Working Party meeting accorded approval to important projects meant for combating floods. It was told that ongoing work on restoration of Bahrain Bazar Road in Swat would be completed by the end of this week. The Chief Secretary asked district administration and line departments to make augmented efforts to minimize possible damages due to rains, windstorms and flash floods.

ment Working Party meeting accorded approval to important projects meant for combating floods. It was told that ongoing work on restoration of Bahrain Bazar Road in Swat would be completed by the end of this week. The Chief Secretary asked district administration and line departments to make augmented efforts to minimize possible damages due to rains, windstorms and flash floods.

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	289.5	292
China Yuan	40.1	40.41
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.17
Saudi Riyal	76.3	77
U.A.E Dirham	80.2	81
UK Pound	369	375
Euro	317.5	320.5
Australian Dollar	202	204
Canadian Dollar	224	226

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
Railway Inquiry	117

Caretaker minister accuses PTI government of ignoring CPEC

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Information Minister, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhil accused the PTI government of ignoring the importance of CPEC projects and said the country had achieved milestones if CPEC was pursued sagaciously by previous rulers. He expressed these views in a ceremony held to mark ten years of completion of the Belt Road Initiative and CPEC project. He said that nation would

forget the injustices and indifferent attitude of PTI relating to CPEC. He said that some elements tried to harm Pakistan and tarnish its image reiterating the commitment that we would defend our country and its assets. Nations cannot prosper without giving due importance to their infrastructure, he said adding that it is our duty to liaise and work in cohesion for the progress and prosperity of the country.

Protesters blocked road against uncalled load shedding

PESHAWAR (APP): Residents of the Yaka Tut area came out on the streets against unannounced load shedding of electricity in Peshawar with the protesters blocking the road for all kinds of traffic. There is no electricity since morning due to extreme heat in neighboring areas including Zargarabad, Shahi Bagh, Fidabad, Bari Bagh and even at night, the series of electric shocks continue, the protestors said during their protest. Due to illegal load-shedding neither the electricity in the day nor

in the night due to which the people of the area have been facing adequate drinking water in this hot weather. The children and women are also suffering badly due to uncalled load-shedding, protestors said. The protestors shouted slogans against WAPDA officials. Due to the power outage, drinking water has also disappeared in the houses, the protestors said. They also demanded to the chief minister and governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for taking immediate action in this regard,

One-day orientation session for journalists held

TANK (APP): The United Nations Children Fund (Unicef) here on Saturday arranged an orientation and awareness session for the journalists and social media activists of District Press Club Wana to highlight the role of media in public awareness in eradicating polio from Pakistan. In their separate briefings, DHCSO Aamir Abbas Wazir, DSO Mohammad Munir Wazir, District Coordinator Dr. Asmat Wazir, Immunization Officer Dr. Naveed Khattak, DASS Surveillance Officer Dr. Riyyaz Ahmed Wazir from WHO and Coordinator EPI Dr. Hidayatullah stressed on regular involvement of media persons to make the polio campaign successful. District Coordinator WHO Lower South Waziristan Dr. Asmat Wazir expressed his views that journalists had a key role in bringing social reforms by avoiding sensational journalism. Afghanistan and Pakistan are at the

top of the polio virus in the world. Unfortunately, these two countries where the polio virus still exists which can be effectively eradicated through compulsory immunization, he said. On behalf of COMNet, Amir Abbas said that we all have to play our part to make Pakistan a polio-free country so that we can reach hundred percent children in future polio campaigns. He said that apart from polio, we can protect our children from twelve other dangerous diseases in compulsory immunization. Later, the participants of the media workshop appreciated the efforts of the COMNet team in spreading awareness through Health Council South Waziristan Lower WhatsApp group. They acknowledged that the group was regularly updated with health-related informative contents, playing a major role in creating health awareness in the community.

DC chairs meeting to review performance

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal Friday said the improvement of the health department and the provision of better healthcare facilities to the citizens are the top priorities of the district administration. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the District Steering Committee (Health) at his office. The DC said that attendance of all Rural Health Centers (RHCs), Basic

Health units (BHUs), and District Headquarters hospitals (DHQs) should be ensured. Khalid Iqbal said that the administration officers, area magistrates and IMU should monitor the BHUs and ensure reporting and action against absent doctors and staff. By improving staff availability in RHCs, BHUs, and dispensaries, the provision of better facilities to the citizens should be ensured.

Governor highlights bureaucracy role in country's development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Friday highlighted the significance of bureaucracy in the country's development and said they should work with dedication and honesty to facilitate people. He was talking to 14-members delegation of officers belonging to 33rd Senior Management Course that called on him in Governor House. The delegation that was on the study tour included officers of various occupational groups and ministries. Faculty Director, Zoabia Masood was also present on the occasion. The delega-

tion was briefed about constitutional responsibilities of the governor and matters relating to security, mining, higher education, local government system and natural resources of KP. Speaking in an interaction session after briefing, the governor said that steps have been taken by federal and provincial government to address issues that come to forefront after the merger of tribal areas. He termed unemployment the main reason behind law and order situation and said that a policy of transparency, justice and merit would help controlling unemployment.

17 accused including an absconder held; drugs, arms, ammunition recovered

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police on Saturday claimed to have arrested 17 accused including an absconder during a search and strike operation and snap-checking in several areas of the district. According to a police spokesman, following the instructions of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani the police conducted search and strike operations and snap-checking in several areas in the limits of Shaheed Nawab, Kulachi, Chaudhwan, Dera Town and Gomal University police stations. During the operations and snap-checking, dozens of vehicles, motorcycles and suspected persons were checked. Shaheed Nawab Police station SHO Umar Iqbal arrested accused Amin son of Muhammad Afzal who was wanted to police in an attempt to murder case while

two accused Muhammad Tufail son of Mir Baz and Abdul Rehman son of Pyad Khan were arrested recovering one pistol and ammunition from each of them. Similarly, Dera Town Police Station SHO Khalid Javed Lashari along with his team arrested an accused for carrying an illicit pistol and two others over a charge of violating the National Action Plan (NAP). Kulachi Police Station SHO Faheem Mumtaz Khan along with his team, during snap checking in Garah Mohabbat, Garah Guldad and Rohri areas, recovered one 12-bore gun, one dagger, 255 grams of hashish from various accused and arrested them accordingly. Gomal University Police Station SHO Sardar Azim Ullah and his team, during snap checking, removed black papers from the windows of around 25 vehicles.

Three children killed, parents injured due gas leakage

PESHAWAR (APP): Three children were killed and their parents were injured due to a gas leak explosion at Kohat road, said Rescue 1122 on Saturday. The incident took place on Kohat Road, Dora Chowk, Street No. 4. As a result of the incident, the roof of the house was collapsed.



Rescue 1122 responded to the emergency, provided medical assistance and police and locals also conducted a search operation to retrieve them from the debris. The injured individuals have been identified as Shahzad and his wife, who were shifted to a nearby hospital.



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Wagner vs Russian Government

The recent rupture between the Wagner Group and the Russian government has raised troubling concerns regarding the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the larger issue of militarized non-state actors. The Wagner Group, a powerful private military contractor with deep ties to the Kremlin, has played a significant role in conflicts such as Syria and Ukraine. The implications of this split are complex and far-reaching, demanding immediate attention. First and foremost, this split raises questions about the extent of control the Russian government had over the Wagner Group. Previously believed to be receiving support and direction from the state, the group allowed Russia to maintain a certain level of plausible deniability while pursuing its objectives. However, if the Wagner Group now operates independently, it could complicate Russia's strategic calculations and undermine its ability to distance itself from conflicts it is involved in. The consequences of this split extend beyond the relationship between Russia and the Wagner Group. The conflict in Ukraine, where the Wagner Group has been actively supporting pro-Russian separatist forces since 2014, is directly impacted. The group's fighters have played a significant role, providing Russia with a presence and influence on the ground. However, if the Wagner Group is no longer under direct control, the dynamics of the conflict may shift dramatically. This could potentially lead to an escalation of the situation, with the group engaging in unpredictable actions that could further destabilize the region. Furthermore, this split highlights a larger problem concerning militarized non-state actors operating with little to no accountability. Private military contractors like the Wagner Group operate outside the bounds of international law, presenting risks of violence, human rights abuses, and regional destabilization. Their unchecked actions can have severe consequences for both the immediate conflict zone and the broader international community. To effectively address these pressing issues, it is imperative that international mechanisms be put in place to regulate the activities of private military contractors. The rupture between the Wagner Group and the Russian government carries significant implications for the Ukraine conflict and the broader issue of militarized non-state actors. It raises questions about the level of control Russia exerted over the group and introduces new uncertainties into an already volatile situation. To mitigate risks and safeguard human rights in conflicts involving private military contractors, international regulation and oversight are crucial. Only through comprehensive measures can we address the challenges posed by these actors and strive for a more stable and just world.

Putin is at risk of losing his iron grip on power. The next 24 hours are critical — By Nick Paton Walsh

This just does not happen in Vladimir Putin's Russia. Especially in public. The Russian president is facing the most serious threat to his hold on power in all the 23 years he's run the nuclear state. And it is staggering to behold the veneer of total control he has maintained all that time – the ultimate selling point of his autocracy – crumble overnight. It was both inevitable and impossible. Inevitable, as the mismanagement of the war had meant only a system as homogeneously closed and immune to criticism as the Kremlin could survive such a heinous misadventure. And impossible as Putin's critics simply vanish, or fall out of windows, or are poisoned savagely. Yet now the fifth largest army in the world is facing a weekend in which fratricide – the turning of their guns upon their fellow soldiers – is the only thing that can save the Moscow elite from collapse. So accustomed are we to viewing Putin as a master tactician, that the opening salvos of Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin's disobedience were at times assessed as a feint – a bid by Putin to keep his generals on edge with a loyal henchman as their outspoken critic. But what we are seeing today – with Putin forced to admit that Rostov-on-Don, his main military hub, is out of his control – puts paid to any idea that this was managed by the Kremlin. It is likely however Wagner's units have planned some of this for a while. The justification for this rebellion appeared urgent and spontaneous – an apparent air strike on a Wagner camp in the

forest, which the Russian Ministry of Defense has denied – appeared hours after a remarkable dissection of the rationale behind the war by Prigozhin. He partially spoke the truth about the war's disastrous beginnings: Russia was not under threat from NATO attack, and Russians were not being persecuted. The one deceit he maintained was to suggest Russia's top brass was behind the invasion plan, and not Putin himself. Wagner's forces have pulled themselves together very fast and moved quickly into Rostov. That's hard to do spontaneously in one afternoon. Perhaps Prigozhin dreamt he could push Putin into a change at the top of a ministry of defense the Wagner chief has publicly berated for months. But Putin's address on Saturday morning has eradicated that prospect. This is now an existential choice for Russia's elite – between the president's faltering regime, and the dark, mercenary Frankenstein it created to do its dirty work, which has turned on its masters. It is a moment of clarity for Russia's military too. A few years ago, Prigozhin's mild critiques would have led to elite special forces in balaclavas walking him away. But now he roams freely, with his sights openly on marching to Moscow. Where are the FSB's special forces? Decimated by the war, or not eager to take on their armed and experienced comrades in Wagner? This is not the first time this spring we have seen Moscow look weak. The drone attack on the Kremlin in May must have caused the elite around Putin to question

how on earth the capital's defenses were so weak. Days later, elite country houses were targeted by yet more Ukrainian drones. Among the Russian rich, Friday's events will remove any question about whether they should doubt Putin's grip on power. Ukraine will likely be celebrating the disastrous timing of this insurrection inside Russia's ranks. It will likely alter the course of the war in Kyiv's favor. But rebellions rarely end in Russia – or anywhere – with the results they set out to achieve. The 1917 removal of Tsar Nicholas II in Russia turned into the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin and then the Soviet Empire. As this rare Jacobean drama of Russian basic human frailty plays out, it is not inevitable that improvements will follow. Prigozhin may not win, and the foundations of the Kremlin's control may not collapse. But a weakened Putin may do irrational things to prove his strength. He may prove unable to accept the logic of defeat in the coming months on the frontlines in Ukraine. He may be unaware of the depth of discontent among his own armed forces, and lack proper control over their actions. Russia's position as a responsible nuclear power rests on stability at the top. A lot more can go wrong than it can go right. But it is impossible to imagine Putin's regime will ever go back to its previous heights of control from this moment. And it is inevitable that further turmoil and change is ahead.

- Courtesy: CNN

Why energy could help bring Iraq back into the Arab economic mainstream — By Robin Mills

- A constructive relationship with the GCC is emerging, centred on energy, water and climate
Over the past two decades, Iraq has faced economic structural issues, an underdeveloped private sector, political instability and violence, making it a challenging business environment. While the country remains fragile it has the fourth-largest population in the Arab world, is the second-biggest oil producer in Opec and has the third-biggest conventional oil reserves globally. Now, the stars may be aligning for a constructive relationship between Iraq and GCC member states, centred on energy, water and climate. The newish government under Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al Sudani has, for the first time, managed to pass a three-year, rather than a one-year, budget, promising some more continuity of planning. The budget is almost entirely underpinned by oil revenue and would only break even at an oil price of \$119 per barrel. Brent crude closed last week at \$76.61. Oil and gas industry in Iraq – in pictures
Out of \$153 billion of spending, only \$37.9 billion is for investment, much of it relating to old, uncompleted projects. Baghdad will have to attract much more foreign direct investment to progress its ambitious oil and gas sector targets, build industries to diversify the economy, fix the woeful electricity and water sectors, and construct the infrastructure to support everything else. Iraq's population is expected to reach 75 million by 2050, from nearly 44 million today, which would be second only to Egypt in the Arab world. And these young people want water, electricity, air conditioning, clean air – and beyond that, jobs and opportunities. Iraqi politics and its economy are heavily influenced by its big eastern neighbour, Iran. Iraq has had some positive features from energy co-operation with Iran, such as the construction of a three gigawatt gas power station in Basra and another plant in Najaf by Iranian company Mapna. Iran is a major supplier of electricity and gas. But these provisions are frequently interrupted by shortages on the Iranian side, technical problems, or attempts to extract overdue payment or exert political leverage, as happened last month. Dams in Iran reduce water flows into Iraq, although Turkey is much more culpable.

Last Thursday, Baghdad agreed to pay Tehran \$2.76 billion of debts for gas and power after a US sanctions waiver. Iran may also be behind rocket attacks on gas installations and the home of a leading Kurdish oil businessman last year, designed to exert political pressure on the Kurds to fall in line with Tehran's plans for the new government. Even when Iran wants to be more constructive, its offerings are limited by sanctions constraining access to international technology and finance. The Russians are also hampered by sanctions and have priorities elsewhere. Chinese companies are strong in the oil sector, but have perhaps become too dominant for Baghdad's comfort, after western corporations scaled back their presence. Turkish engineering contractors are major players, but have not directly invested much in the energy sector. So there is a need for GCC investment. There have been some encouraging, tangible recent developments. Sharjah-based Crescent Petroleum finally got a sign-off in February on three oil and gas blocks it was awarded in 2018. In April, QatarEnergy took a 25 per cent stake in a major integrated gas, oil, water and solar project near Basra with France's TotalEnergies. Saudi Arabia's Acwa Power will join the French company on the solar component of the deal. Acwa is also trying to advance a one gigawatt solar project in central Iraq, while Abu Dhabi's state clean energy developer, Masdar, has plans for projects across four governorates totalling one gigawatt. The GCC Interconnection Authority has launched long-discussed plans to connect electricity-starved Iraq to its grid, with a 1,800 megawatt capacity line through Kuwait initially providing 500 megawatts. Iraq's electricity demand in summer reaches more than 34 gigawatts, while its creaking plants and leaky grid can crank out only about 21 gigawatts, leading to lengthy power cuts and the use of noisy, dirty, expensive neighbourhood diesel generators. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman host some of the world's largest and lowest-cost solar farms. More familiar with the risks and idiosyncrasies of Iraq than their western counterparts, their state-owned and private power and water companies can develop large solar, wind and desalination projects. - Courtesy: The National News

We're Still Arguing Over Women in the Military?—By Eileen Bjorkman

- The U.S. armed forces need women, and suggestions to the contrary hurt recruiting and readiness. Women in the military, especially aviators, have a lot to celebrate this year. It's the 75th anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which established a permanent presence for women in the U.S. military. It's been three decades since female pilots, long limited to flying support aircraft, began training for combat roles. The Navy marked a half-century of female naval aviators with an all-woman flyover at the Super Bowl. Women may now serve in all military career fields, both support and combat specialties, and they make up about 17.4 percent of the active-duty force, up seven-fold from 1973. But even with opportunities for women in the military at an all-time high, I'm disheartened by the way some civilians, especially those who have never served, treat military women. For example, in March 2021, when the services debuted body armor sized for women and maternity flight suits to help women fly longer during pregnancy, Tucker Carlson mocked the new equipment that allowed women to do their jobs. Within hours, Carlson's rant filled my Twitter feed, along with misogynistic comments—almost all of them from civilian men. More recently, Maj. Gen. Patrick Donahue ignited a Twitter feud that delayed his planned retirement from the army after he defended women in the military. These battles send a revolting message to young women who might

be thinking about the military: You're a joke. This attitude towards women is compounded by a larger movement that would have us believe military classes in diversity, equity, and inclusion, or DEI, are driving away recruits. It's true that the Army missed their 2022 recruiting goal of 60,000 by 15,000, but DEI isn't to blame. Military recruiting often drops during times of high employment, such as that currently in the U.S. Another current factor cited by the Army is a narrowing of benefits between the military and the private sector, along with outreach difficulties created by the pandemic. Assigning blame to DEI is ludicrous. The Army's senior enlisted leader, Sgt. Maj. Michael Grinston, pointed out in recent Congressional testimony that recruits receive 92 hours of rifle marksmanship training in boot camp, but only one hour of equal-opportunity training. During the same testimony, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Joanne S. Bass pushed back on assertions that the military has "gone woke," dismissing a suggestion that the Air Force conducts "pronoun training." If anything, the anti-DEI movement may be creating problems for the military by further reducing the propensity of women to serve. According to a 2017 Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies survey, women are already only about half as confident as men that they can be successful in a military career. JAMRS also reports that young people rely heavily on their perceptions about the military in forming their propensity

to serve. From my own experience, I understand the impact of negative reporting on women. After joining the Air Force in 1980, for the next decade I read about a continuous stream of studies commissioned that seemed determined to prove that the presence of women undermined readiness, with the goal to reduce the number of women in the military. In essence, the studies were attacks that caused me, from time to time, to question my own commitment to the military. As the number of qualified people with a propensity to serve continues to dwindle, the military needs women, who make up half the candidate pool. Reducing the size of that pool because women don't feel welcome will hurt military readiness. For proof that women don't hurt readiness but instead contribute to a military that wins wars, look at the current fight in Europe. The Ukrainian military, made up of 22 percent women, 5,000 of whom serve on the front lines, are pounding the Russia military, made up of 96 percent men. It's not manliness that matters; it's readiness. The Defense Department recognizes that women are part of the team, and I applaud the unequivocal signal of support sent by recent efforts to remove barriers to service, such as the maternity flight suits and increased maternity (and paternity) leave. I hope that celebrating the trifecta of milestones for women in the military this year helps achieve that same level of acceptance and support from all Americans. - Courtesy: Defense One

Passport counters

Taking notice of the lack of passport offices in the country, the PDM government has decided to provide this facility in 30 centres of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for public convenience. According to the notification issued by the Ministry of Interior, one counter in the Islamabad region, 12 in Lahore, two in Karachi, six in Multan, three in Sargodha, and five counters are being set up in ID card offices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will inaugurate this programme on June 10. Three

Letters to the Editor

months ago, taking notice of the lack of passport offices, he directed NADRA to open counters in ID card centres. The book mentioned is a continuation of the series. In the last two decades, including the establishment of NADRA, the process of issuing national identity cards and passports has become secure and simplified to a great extent, with the main objective of eliminating transparency and falsification of personal information. Similarly, Seeing the growing need, NADRA started issuing passports through an internet app for the citizens of Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and

Lahore in 2016, and last year its scope was extended to the entire country; however, because a large part of the population is illiterate, it is difficult to get this facility. The establishment of 30 passport counters in ID card offices is an effective measure, but this number is still insufficient to cater to the entire population. Moving to the Tehsil level by building upon the District-level initiative would serve as the ideal step in the right direction.

– Muhammad Amin, Kech

Prime Minister Meets Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Paris

PARIS: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Mr. Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of China met today on the sidelines of the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact in Paris. It was the first in-person meeting between the two leaders since Premier Li assumed office in March this year. The conversation was marked by traditional warmth and cordiality that has been the hallmark of Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.



During the meeting, the two leaders held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relationship including China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as well

as bilateral economic cooperation. Reiterating support to China on its core issues, the Prime Minister appreciated China's unflinching support to Pakistan's territorial integrity, sovereignty and socio-economic development. He noted that China's firm opposition to holding any G20 meeting in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir was a vivid reflection of China's principled stance for upholding international law and UN resolutions.

President directs SNGPL to rectify gas bill, apologize to consumer

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) to rectify the gas bill of a consumer and apologize to him as he had been wrongly billed for two solar geysers instead one at his residence. The contractor had wrongfully mentioned the installation of two geysers in forms, provided his own contact number to manipulate the verification process, submitted the documents to the SNGPL office and then absconded after committing fraud, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Saturday. "It is shameful that the management is ignoring corruption within SNGPL and harassing the members of the public. Rather than investigating its contractor, SNGPL is

further burdening the public because of its incompetence and connivance by defending its illegal action. An inquiry must be done and persons involved be brought to justice", president ordered while rejecting a representation filed by SNGPL against a decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. As per the details, Tahir Hussain (the complainant) had lodged a complaint with Wafaqi Mohtasib saying that an SNGPL official installed one solar geyser in his house and told him that the payment for the geyser would be claimed in installments in bills. The SNGPL, however, issued him the bill with two solar geysers. He visited the office where he was told that, as per documents, two geysers were installed at his residence.

ICCI for supporting Food Authority

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Friday assured full support of the business community in implementing food standards set by the food authority. He said that the chamber would also organize training programs for staff relating to the food industry in order to fulfill the required standards. Addressing a training workshop for the staff of hotels and restaurants organized by the Food Authority, he said that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including food authorities, and restaurants, to ensure the provision of healthy food to citizens in a clean environment. He said that Islamabad as the Federal capital has global recognition, as ambassadors, guests and other people from all over the world are constantly visiting this city.

Saudi Arabia hosted 99m pilgrims over 54 Years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Arabia's endeavor to serve pilgrims and make Hajj an easy journey has been exceptionally successful Makkah, June 23, 2023, SPA -- For Muslims, Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, has been a distinguished ritual that the faithful have always been keen on performing when they could. To perform Hajj, Muslims from all over the world, irrespective of their country, race or status, travel to Makkah. The journey of Hajj, including arriving in Makkah, witnessing Kaabah and visiting the holy sites, is a goal and wish for all believers. Means of transporting pilgrims in the past and present but traveling to Makkah was not always easy. According to Dr. Fawaz bin Ali Al-Dahas, former director general of the Makkah History Center, in the past "the means of transport were primitive and slow. Pilgrims faced all sorts of difficulties, travelling from all around the world to Makkah by ships, on camelback and some even on foot. This journey was not easy.

Health Ministry preparing 160 Beds, 15 specialist clinics to serve pilgrims at Mina Al-Wadi Hospital

Mina (APP): The Mina Al-Wadi Hospital at the holy sites completed all the necessary preparations to provide healthcare services to pilgrims during this year's Hajj season. The ministry noted that the hospital is fully ready to receive patients among pilgrims whose health status requires follow-up through allocating 15 clinics in several specialties, intensive care cases and emergencies. The ministry pointed out that the hospital has a capacity of 160 beds.

Under training officers visit CPO

LAHORE (APP): Under training officers included in the 33rd Senior Management Course made a study visit to the Central Police Office (CPO) here on Friday. The delegation from National Institute of Management Islamabad included 14 officers including four women. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar met the officers under training. The delegation was informed about anti-crime, modern IT applications and working system of public service delivery. DIG Operations Punjab Waqas Nazir briefed the delegation about modern services of Punjab Police, field formations and other professional matters.

Pakistani pilgrim overcomes adversity to fulfill 30-year dream of Hajj despite amputation

MAKKAH (APP): In an awe-inspiring display of determination and unwavering faith, a Pakistani pilgrim, Muhammad Shafeeq, defied all odds to fulfill his lifelong dream of embarking on the sacred pilgrimage to Makkah. Despite losing one of his feet in a tragic road accident three decades ago, his indomitable spirit propelled him forward, enabling him to answer the call of Allah Almighty. Shafeeq, now 43 years old, firmly believed in the adage, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Undeterred by his physical challenges, he set out on a remarkable journey from Pakistan to Makkah, propelled by enthu-

siasm, optimism, and an unyielding determination to undertake the Hajj pilgrimage. Having personally saved enough money through years of hard work, he exemplified the virtues of persistence, resilience, and seizing opportunities in the face of adversity. He proudly shared, "The loss of my foot gave me enthusiasm, optimism, and determination to strive for undertaking the lifetime spiritual journey. I will perform the stoning ritual at the Jamarat myself during the days of Al-Tashreeq, leaning on my crutches." Shafeeq's inspiring story serves as a testament to his unwavering commitment to his faith.

Academic staff condemns malicious campaign against UAJK

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Academic and Administrative Staff Associations of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) have strongly condemned a malicious campaign aimed at defaming the state's largest and most prestigious institution of higher education. A delegation led by Dr Nazanin Habib, President of the UAJK's Academic Staff Association, and Israr Saeed Qadri, President of the Administrative Staff Association, held a meeting the other day with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi to address the ongoing campaign against the university. The delegation assured Vice Chancellor Abbasi of their complete awareness of this

attempt to tarnish the reputation of UAJK and pledged to vigorously counter the efforts made by this particular group. They emphasized that the university's current standing, achieved through perseverance and dedication, would not be compromised by personal ego or the interests of vested parties. Expressing unwavering trust in the leadership of Vice Chancellor Abbasi, the delegations acknowledged his role in the university's achievements in educational development, research advancement, and the establishment of modern infrastructure. They expressed their belief in the university's continued progress in the months and years ahead.

ISSI organizes roundtable discussion to mark Int'l Day of Women in Diplomacy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a 'Roundtable Discussion' to mark the 'International Day of Women Diplomacy' here on Friday. The discussion was chaired by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, said a press release. In the introductory remarks, Director of CSP Dr. Neelum Nigar said that celebrating this important day today serves as a powerful reminder of the significant contributions women have made and continue to make in the field of diplomacy. It provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and aspirations of women diplomats worldwide. In the welcoming remarks, DG

ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stated that the UNGA resolution of 20 June 2022 that proclaimed 24 June to be the 'International Day of Women in Diplomacy' calls upon member states to observe this Day annually, promoting women's equal participation in diplomacy through education and awareness-raising activities. He said the field of diplomacy, traditionally male-dominated, is undergoing positive transformation with the number of women diplomats increasing sharply. Some countries have achieved gender parity, while others are progressing. Pakistan has made significant strides in the past two decades, appointing its first women Foreign Minister, Foreign Secretary, and Spokesperson.

Meeting of the the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet. Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of State for Petroleum Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Coordinator to the PM on Economy Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers attended the meeting. The ECC considered and approved a Summary of Ministry of Commerce regarding the extension of period for export of Sugar quota by sugar mills in Sindh and allowed them to export the remaining sugar quota of 32,000 MT within 60 days with effect from 12th June onwards



in accordance with the Sindh High Court decision. The ECC also considered a Summary of Ministry of Railways for Provision of additional funds in Grant in Aid to Pakistan Railways for discharge of pending liabilities including salaries and pensions of the staff. It was decided that an additional grant-in-aid of Rs. 2.5 billion may be released to address the shortfall in order to ensure the continuation of operations without interruption.

Senate Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs discusses important matters

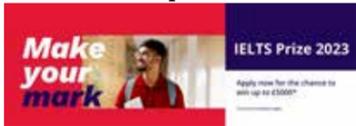


ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs met under the Chair of Senator Rubina Khalid. The Committee discussed Public Petition No.PP-5278. The Secretary, Ministry of Maritime Affairs directed the KPT authorities to recruit Mr. Shahnawaz Baloch on daily wage basis without further delay. Another significant issue discussed during the meeting was about advertising the vacant posts in Gwadar Port Authority. Senator Rubina Khalid directed the Secretary Maritime Affairs to gather relevant information regarding the recruitment at the Gwadar port. The committee expressed its displeasure over the non-timely provision of working papers and the lack of preparation related to the agenda items. This lack of readiness led the

committee to defer several agenda items for future consideration. The deferred items included report on procurement tenders issued by the KPT in the last ten years; detailed of all machinery and equipment which was used or is being used by KPT on rental charges basis since 2013 with complete detail of rent charges paid or being paid by the KPT on monthly basis; outstanding rental charges payable to the Gwadar Port Authority by the KPT, as well as the return of a tug boat to the GPA; provision of details by the KPT and Port Qasim Authority (PQA) regarding dredged volume expenditure on maintenance dredging, along with average costs on a monthly and yearly basis during the last five years; and way forward for future maintenance dredging of Gwadar.

Applications for the British Council IELTS Prize 2023 in Pakistan are now open

ISLAMABAD (APP): The annual competition supports IELTS test-takers with up to £5,000 towards university tuition fees in English-speaking universities. This year, the IELTS Prize is open to test takers living in Pakistan, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. It will be open to students who have applied for undergraduate or post-graduate studies locally or overseas through IELTS and will start their



course between January 2023 and March 2024. The deadline for submitting completed applications is September 15, 2023. A total of three winners will be selected through a competitive application process in each country to receive the cash prize to support their studies. Country Director British Council Pakistan, Amir Ramzan said:

Repair of damaged water supply line on University road started

KARACHI (APP): Trans Karachi authorities in collaboration with Karachi Water and Sewerage board (KWSB) stopped leakage and started repair work on the water supply line that was damaged during construction work on BRT Redline project near the University of Karachi. According to a handout issued here on Friday, Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon while taking immediate notice of the issue directed Secretary Transport and CEO Trans Karachi to extend cooperation with KWSB to ensure completion of the repair work at the earliest. The minister called for immediate measures for the repair of the water sup-

ply line so that people do not face any issue of traffic or shortage of water. He also instructed to maintain close coordination with KWSB and other relevant departments to ensure timely completion of repair work and prevent occurrence of such incidents in future during ongoing work on the Karachi Red Line bus project. General Manager Trans Karachi Pir Sajjad Jan Sarhandi informed that leakage in the water supply line has been stopped and repair work started that would be completed in the shortest possible time. He said that Karachi Red Line was a comprehensive project of modern transport facilities and work on the project was being carried out in a swift manner.

Zong 4G, PAGE join forces to empower girls' education in Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications provider, is proud to announce a strategic partnership with PAGE (Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education), an esteemed organization dedicated to creating an enabling environment for gender equity in education, employment, rights, and leadership. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony took place on Wednesday, 21st June, solidifying the commitment of both organizations to collaborate and empower girls' education in Pakistan. The ceremony was attended by representatives from both Zong 4G and PAGE. Under this MoU, Zong 4G and PAGE will work together to achieve their shared goal of transforming the environment of girls' education in Pakistan. The cooperation will en-

compass a range of activities, including workshops conducted by trainers, the provision of internet devices in areas with limited access, career training initiatives, rehabilitation of flood-affected schools, and workshops in women's vocational centres. Zong 4G is committed to supporting PAGE in its mission to bridge the gender gap in education. The official spokesperson for Zong 4G expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "At Zong 4G, we firmly believe that education is the cornerstone of progress. By collaborating with PAGE, we are committed to empowering girls and ensuring equal access to quality education." Zong 4G and PAGE have previously partnered for several initiatives such as the formation of an independent Digital Lab in Pir Chinasi, Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Feast arranged to honor sacrifices of policemen

ISLAMABAD (APP): A special dinner was organized to honor the sacrifices of martyrs, veterans (Ghazis) and their families. Upon the directive of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (IC-CPO), the Islamabad Capital Police arranged a special dinner at a local restaurant to pay tribute and show solidarity with the martyrs, veterans, and their families. All families of the martyrs and veterans were cordially invited to the dinner. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed senior police officers, including ICCPO, CPO Safe City, CPO Security Division, CPO Law and Order, AIG Operations, SSP Security Division, SSP Logistics, SSP Safe City, and other officers. Personally, Islamabad Capital

City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan met with the families of the martyrs and veterans, conveying his sincere condolences for the sacrifices of their loved ones. He emphasized that the purpose of this dinner was to foster unity and strengthen the relationship with the families of martyrs and survivors, who made immense sacrifices for the protection and safety of the nation. He commended the bravery of the martyrs and veterans, assuring them that their sacrifices would always be remembered. Additionally, he expressed the determination of the Islamabad Capital Police to utilize all available resources for the welfare, education, and the promising future of the families of martyrs and veterans.

AJK government postpones Gazetted holidays following on 24 and 25 June

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has postponed the gazetted holidays following on June 24 and 25 in view of to make special arrangements for utilization of developmental and non-developmental expenditures before the closing of the current financial year 2023. All

the government institutions would remain open except the educational institutions on Saturday and Sunday whereas, the Department of the Services and General Administration Government of the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has issued formally a notification in this regard here on Friday.

Joint efforts to yield far-reaching results for higher education institutions: Dr. Shafiqur Rehman

QUETTA (APP): Vice Chancellor of Balochistan University Prof. Dr. Shafiqur Rehman on Friday said that joint efforts would yield far-reaching results for the higher education institutions of the province to cope with the modern demands and development. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting at the Hall of Balochistan University. The meeting was attended by the vice-chancellors of the universities of the province, senior teachers, and relevant representatives. In the meeting, various issues including better relations between the universities of the province, promotion of education, research, training activities, financial and other

issues were discussed. Despite, this regard, academic memorandum agreements were signed between the universities. The Vice-Chancellor said that the purpose of this was to utilize each other's educational, research experiences and knowledge, including seminars, workshops, and teacher exchanges, and ensure measures to implement future educational projects. While thanking the heads of the universities of the province, the Vice-Chancellor of Balochistan University said that joint efforts would yield far-reaching results for the higher education institutions of the province to cope with the modern demands and development.

Farmers advised to take extraordinary care of their crops during sizzling weather

FAISALABAD (APP): Chief Scientist of Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) Dr. Muhammad Akhtar has advised the growers to take extraordinary care of their crops to protect them from sizzling and scorching summer weather. In an advisory here on Friday, he said that weather temperature was recorded at 40-45 degree centigrade during the last few weeks and this heat wave might continue for next week also. Such high degree temperature was much injurious to many crops

including cotton, maize, sugarcane, vegetables, green fodders, mangoes, peach, guavas, dates, etc. Therefore, the farmers should immediately consult their nearest office of Agriculture department and act upon the advice of agriculture experts for protection of their crops. He said that the growers should water their crops lightly but repeatedly after every 3 to 4 days or with an interval of a week so that impact of extra high heat could be minimized on the crops and their fruits.

Jinnah House attack: ATC remands PTI women wing leader in police custody

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday handed over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Women Wing leader Shabnam Jahangir to police on three-day physical remand in Jinnah House attack case. Earlier, Shabnam Jahangir was produced before ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan, amid strict security. The investigation officer submitted that the accused was involved in the Jinnah House attack case. He submitted that custody of the accused was required for investigations.

He pleaded with the court to grant physical remand of the accused for investigations. The court allowed the investigation officer's plea and handed over Shabnam Jahangir to police on three-day physical remand. The Sarwar Road police had registered a case against PTI leaders and workers for attacking the Jinnah House (the corps commander house) in Lahore Cantt, looting valuables worth over Rs150 million and setting it on fire, during May-9 riots.

BISP temporarily suspends disbursements amid heatwave

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has decided to temporarily suspend cash disbursements to beneficiaries on June 24 and 25 (Saturday and Sunday), in response to the ongoing heatwave affecting the country. This decision has been taken in the best interest of protecting precious lives, particularly women and children, from potential harm and inconvenience. The move to close the cash

disbursement from the designated campsites comes after careful consideration of recommendations from relevant authorities. Despite the adequate arrangements made by BISP, in coordination with provincial/regional governments and partner banks, it has been determined that the existing measures may not be sufficient to ensure the convenient and safe delivery of funds to the beneficiaries during the heatwave. Cash disbursement on

the same campsites will be resumed on Monday (June 26) and will continue until Wednesday (June 28) across the country. The arrangements for disbursements will remain the same as those implemented on Friday, the 23rd June. As of 6:00 pm today (June 23), over 2.9 million beneficiaries have already been served, with an impressive amount of Rs. 26.12 billion disbursed from the campsites established nationwide.

IGP promotes 64 DEOs

LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, the process of promotion is going on in all the formations of Punjab Police according to merit and seniority. According to the details, at least 64 DEOs were promoted from Grade 07 to Grade 12 on the order of Usman Anwar. The post of DEOs in CTD was upgraded as Junior Computer Operators. IG Punjab recently promoted 228 CTD corporals of grade 14 as under officers. IG Punjab said that the service and promotion rules have been formulated for the most important field formation (CTD) of Punjab Police. Now the corporals serving in CTD will be promoted to grade 19. Dr. Usman Anwar congratulated the promoted technical staff and expressed best wishes for the future endeavours.

Governor inaugurates '2nd Bachat Expo'

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Friday inaugurated a three-day 2nd Bachat Expo here at Expo Centre, which will continue till June 25. The Governor after the inauguration reviewed the prices of essential commodities at the expo. He said that people could get essential items at this expo at concessional prices. The availability of sacrificial animals at the expo at concessional prices was appreciated. The Governor said I.T. courses test would be conducted after Eidul Adha.

Sikh Yatees visit Gurdwara Sacha Souda in Sheikhpura

SHEIKHUPURA (APP): More than 400 Sikh Yatees, who are in Pakistan currently to attend the 184th death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, visited Gurdwara Sacha Souda Farooqabad in Sheikhpura, here on Friday. Assistant Commissioner Laraib Aslam and the district administration officials welcomes the Sikh Yatees at the gurdwara. The visiting yatees performed their religious rites at the Gurdwara Sacha Souda. They were provided food and medical facilities at the gurdwara.

PM condoles demise of Romanian ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday condoled demise of ambassador of Romania to Pakistan Nicolae Goia. In a tweet, he said, "It is with great sadness that I received the news of the passing away of Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan, Mr. Nicolae Goia. He will be remembered for his services for Romania as well as for his active role in strengthening Pakistan-Romania relations. May his soul rest in peace! I extend my most sincere condolences to the bereaved family."

WAPDA, UAE firm sign MoUs for capacity enhancement of existing small HPPs, development of floating solar power

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) signed two Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) with the Private Office of Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook Al Maktoum of United Arab Emirates on Friday. The MoUs were signed by Chairman WAPDA Lt Gen (Retd) Sajjad Ghani and Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook Al Maktoum on behalf of their respective organizations, said a press release. The first MoU is aimed at establishing a framework for cooperation and collaboration between the Private Office of Sheikh Ahmed Dalmook Al Maktoum and WAPDA to explore

investment opportunities for WAPDA's small hydel power stations including 1MW-Renala, 22 MW-Rasul, 13.2 MW-Chichokimalian and 13.8 MW-Nandipur. The second MoU is related to exploring investment opportunities in the energy sector of Pakistan, specifically for the development of floating solar power project on water reservoirs and water bodies of the existing hydel power stations of WAPDA. Under the two MoU, both organizations will work together to assess the technical and economic feasibility of these projects and develop a plan for their implementation.

Chitrali demands laptop computers for AIOU, religious seminary students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali on Saturday demanded to include students of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and religious seminaries registered with Wafaqul Madaris in the Prime Minister's Laptop Computer Scheme, providing them equal opportunities to get education on modern lines. Speaking on point of order in the National Assembly, he said the AIOU students of Ph.D and MPhil have been completely deprived in the PM's Laptop Scheme and they were re-

peatedly demanding to include them in the scheme. He said around 4 million children were getting free education in religious seminaries across the country. The administrators of the religious seminaries were providing them free education, lodging, meal and other facilities to them, he said. He said the government should consider providing laptop computers to excelling students of the seminaries registered with Wafaqul Madaris so they could get benefit from the latest technology.

MOFA condoles demise of Romanian ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday here condoled the passing away of Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan Niculaie Goia. In a message, the spokesperson said, "It is announced with profound sorrow that Romanian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Niculaie Goia has passed away. A seasoned professional, Ambassador Goia shall be remembered for his contribution towards strengthening Pakistan-Romania relations. Our thoughts are with the family of Ambassador Goia in this difficult time. May his soul rest in eternal peace."



Biggest ever professional boxing event commenced

GILGIT (Agencies): The biggest professional boxing event commenced here at Lalak Jan Stadium Gilgit on Saturday, featuring 20 international boxers from 10 countries, including Pakistan's top-class boxers Usman Wazir and Asif Hazara. Pakistani Asian Boxing Champion, Wazir, will be seen in action for the first time in his hometown as he will encounter an

Indonesian opponent for the World Boxing Association (WBA) title. Meanwhile, Hazara will step into the ring to fight for the WBA South Asian championship title. Renowned cricket stars will also be in attendance to observe the historic event, while Sohail Tanvir and Musa Khan have already reached Gilgit to show their support for the Asian Champion, Wazir.

Commissioner directs for immediate removal of unnecessary U-turns from Express Way

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed has directed for immediate removal of unnecessary U-turns from Express Way. During a meeting here on Satur-

day, she discussed various issues being faced by the users of Express Way and said that unnecessary U-turns were creating problems for the road users in addition to causing traffic accidents.

CWDP clears 29 development projects worth Rs309.11 bln

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Saturday cleared 28 development projects worth Rs 309.14 billion. The CDWP met under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, said a press release. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry, members Planning Commission and representatives from the various ministries. The forum principally approved the Program for Flood Response Through Reconstruction of Education Facilities in Sindh, assisted by JICA worth Rs 1.566.628 million Establishment of One Stop Service Center for Special Economic Zones worth Rs698 million. The meeting also approved the Modernization of Academic & Research

Facilities for Students at MUET, Jamshoro worth Rs2000.368 million, Immediate Needs for Artistic Innovation and Technology Integration at Aror University of Art, Architecture, Design & Heritage Sindh worth Rs Rs964.305; Up-Gradation & Improvement of People Nursing School, Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro worth Rs786.149 million. The CDWP also approved the Up-Gradation of HPT Rawat Transmitting Station by Installing A 1000 Kw DRM-Enabled Medium Wave Transmitter Under Foreign Funded Grant worth Rs 4,000.000 million; the Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Boys at Skardu (Baltistan Region) worth Rs 978.929 million, Infrastructure Development of Islamabad Technopolis worth Rs 7,338.000

million; Construction of Audit House, Lahore worth Rs 1,997.675 million; Women on wheels worth Rs4,476.170 million. The meeting approved the Construction of the Interchange on Lahore-Karachi Motorway (M-3) at Bucheki-Nankana Road in the Name of Rai Mansab Ali Khan Kharal worth Rs 1,332.605 million; construction of Lundianwala Interchange on Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway (M-3) worth Rs 1706.688 million; construction of Road from More Khunda to Habo By Bala, District Nankana Sahib worth Rs5,680.358 million and dualization of road from Chistian to Chak no 46/3R via Dahnawala (41.154 km) including two-lane Link Road from Dahnawala to Chak 175m (4.859 km) worth Rs8,962.000 million. Rehabilitation and Special

Repair of Track Maintenance Machinery worth Rs5,532.157 million construction of Road from Main Duki Road to Kharshang via Baghaw and Shinlaiz Sanjavi District Ziarat worth Rs1,501.566 million and dualization of the road from Larkano to Lakhi worth Rs4,925.462 million also approved by the CDWP. The construction of Sunni Gar Dam (revised) Rs5,114.782 million; establishment of the Institute of Sports worth Rs 2100.836 million, challenges faced to address the Out of School Children OOSC worth Rs 25000 million and Strengthening of the University of Narowal (revised) worth Rs 3522.785 million was also approved. The forum referred several projects to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval

which includes Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project, KP-HCIP, (revised Health Component) worth Rs24,224.921 million, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Institutional Support Project worth Rs11,070.000 million; PC-I for Construction of Abdul khel- Dhakki-Kallurkot Road; D.I Khan Development Package worth Rs14,257.294 million; I Khan Road Development Package Construction of Road from Isa Khel - Lakki Marwat Road, worth Rs13,825.600 million, construction of Harnai to Sibi Road via Spin Tangi District Sibi worth Rs 19,092.984 million; Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme worth Rs 17500.030 million and Prime Minister High-Tech Skills Training & Global Skills worth Rs 19,330.00 million.

Gold set for biggest weekly drop since Feb on hawkish Fed

RIYADH (Agencies): Gold prices were en route to their worst week since early February on Friday as the dollar strengthened after US Federal Reserve Chief Jerome Powell reiterated that more interest rate hikes were in the offing, according to Reuters. Spot gold was up 0.4 percent to \$1,921.29 per ounce by 1543 p.m. Saudi time, yet stayed close to a three-month low hit earlier in the session. Prices are down 1.8 percent for the week. US gold fu-



tures gained 0.4 percent to \$1,931.40. "Gold is clearly an asset in demand but taking a short-term view on where the price is today, we still think there's a little bit (of) room for gold to under-

perform," said Edward Gardner, commodities economist at Capital Economics. The dollar was up 0.5 percent and bound for its first weekly rise in four, making bullion more expensive for holders of other currencies. Powell, in his second day of testimony, said the Fed would continue to raise interest rates at a "careful pace." The market now sees a 75 percent chance of a 25 basis-point rate hike in July, with cuts seen only 2024 onwards.

Amazon commits to US\$15bil India investment

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Amazon.com Inc will invest an additional US\$15 billion in India, the company's chief executive Andy Jassy told Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his meeting on Friday. The investment will take the e-commerce giant's total India investment across all businesses to US\$26 billion by 2030, he said. Modi and Jassy spoke about supporting Indian startups, creating jobs, enabling exports, digitisation, and empower-



ing individuals and small businesses to compete globally, an Amazon blog post said. This announcement follows Amazon's cloud computing unit Amazon Web Services (AWS) saying last

month it will invest 1.06 trillion rupees (US\$12.9 billion) in the country by the end of 2030. Separately, Google will open a global fintech operation centre in GIFT City in India's western state of Gujarat, CEO Sundar Pichai told reporters in a video shared on Twitter by Reuters partner ANI company. "We shared Google is investing US\$10 billion in the India digitisation fund, and we are continuing to invest through that," Pichai said.

AI chip giant Nvidia 'extremely likely' to invest in Europe

SANTA CLARA (Agencies): The CEO of Nvidia on Friday said that the world's most valuable chipmaker is "extremely likely" to invest in Europe. Nvidia's Jensen Huang told reporters that expanding in Europe was a "wonderful idea." By investing money in Europe, Nvidia would join other semiconductor giants like Intel that are also looking to open new operations in the EU, with the help of government subsidies. "I would say it is extreme-



ly likely and the reason for that is because Nvidia would like to be a global international company and who could imagine a better place to invest in," Jensen said. The US firm, which spe-

cialises in chips coveted in the artificial intelligence boom, has seen its value hover around US\$1 trillion in recent weeks, after the company's last quarterly earnings blew past expectations. The CEO spoke after a meeting with the EU's top tech official Thierry Breton at Nvidia's headquarters in Silicon Valley. "AI is about data, AI is about algorithms, and AI is about computing power," said Breton after his meeting with Huang.

JPMorgan cuts nearly 40 investment bankers in US, says source

NEW YORK (Agencies): JPMorgan Chase & Co is cutting nearly 40 investment bankers in the US, a source with knowledge of the matter said. The reductions come after months of sluggish markets that have depressed dealmaking across Wall Street and prompted banks to lay off thousands of employees. JPMorgan's investment banking and trading rev-



enue are both expected to decline 15% in the second quarter, its president Daniel Pinto warned last month.

Rivals Goldman Sachs Group, Morgan Stanley and Citigroup have also laid off investment bankers as uncertainty weighs on economic activity. JPMorgan's staff reductions are typical given the environment, the source said, noting that the bank is still hiring executives and bankers in key areas. Bloomberg first reported about the job cuts on Friday.

Honda recalls 1.3 million vehicles worldwide

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Honda Motor is recalling 1.3 million vehicles worldwide due to a potential issue with the rearview camera image, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said on Friday. The recall covers some 2018-2023 Odyssey, 2019-2022 Pilot, and 2019-2023 Passport vehicles. Due to a faulty communication coaxial cable connector, the rearview camera image may not appear on the display.



The recall includes 1.2 million US vehicles, 88,000 in Canada and 16,000 in Mexico, Honda said. Honda previously extended the warranty to vehicles affected by the issue in 2021.

The automaker said in a filing with NHTSA it has received 273,870 warranty claims related to the issue between May 2017 and June this year, and no reports of injuries or deaths related to the recall issue. Dealers will install an improved cable harness between the existing display audio and vehicle terminal connections and a straightening cover over the vehicle cable connector to properly connect the audio display unit.

SpaceX tender offer values it at around US\$150bil

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Elon Musk's company SpaceX is offering to sell insider shares at a price that lifts its valuation to around US\$150 billion, according to a Bloomberg News report Friday. The company - the first private company to send astronauts into orbit, among many other firsts - is initially seeking a US\$750 million tender offer, the report added. Its valuation has climbed in recent years as it raised



billions to finance its work, and according to Bloomberg, SpaceX is offering shares at over \$80 apiece. A CNBC report in January noted that SpaceX was raising US\$750

million in a round of funding that valued it at US\$137 billion. According to Bloomberg News, SpaceX has around US\$5 billion of cash on its balance sheet. In April, SpaceX saw the most powerful rocket ever built - Starship - blow up on its first flight, although Musk congratulated his SpaceX team on the test of the next-generation spacecraft designed to send astronauts to the Moon, Mars and beyond.

Nissan investigates claims CEO put deputy under surveillance

TOKYO (Agencies): Nissan has launched an investigation into claims by a senior adviser that chief executive Makoto Uchida carried out surveillance of his deputy Ashwani Gupta, four people with direct knowledge of the matter said. The surveillance claims, first reported by the Financial Times, were made by Hari Nada, 58, a senior adviser at Nissan, in a letter dated April 19 to the independent directors on the Japanese automaker's board. Reuters, which has reviewed the letter,



is the first to disclose its specific details. They relate to the surveillance claims, a stark split in senior management over Nissan's relationship with Renault and concerns about transfers of intellectual property to the French carmaker. In the letter,

Nada said Uchida carried out surveillance over a long period. Nada said it was an effort to acquire leverage to remove an executive and board member the Nissan chief executive regarded as an obstacle to reaching a new deal with alliance partner Renault. Gupta, appointed chief operating officer in 2019, had questioned the terms of the revised agreement Uchida is looking to finalise with Renault, according to Nada's letter and the four people with knowledge of the matter.

Volkswagen prevails against US counties' diesel emissions claims

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): A federal judge has ruled in favor of Volkswagen in lawsuits brought against the automaker by two US counties over its diesel emissions cheating scandal. US district judge Charles Breyer in San Francisco ruled Thursday that Utah's Salt Lake County and Florida's Hillsborough County could not prove that Volkswagen violated



their regulations against tampering with vehicles' emission control systems. The counties can still appeal

to the San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals. Robert Giffra, a lawyer for Volkswagen, said the decision puts the company "near the end of the diesel litigation road in the US." The company in May reached a US\$85 million settlement with Texas, the last remaining state suing the company, though that deal is not yet final.

Vietnam on financial grey list over weapons-proliferation risks

HANOI (Agencies): Vietnam was added to the watch list of the FATF international financial crime watchdog, which said the nation has nonetheless committed to proving it effectively prevents the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Friday's decision adds the southeast Asian nation to the "grey list" of two dozens countries across the world subject to closer scrutiny, including Panama, the Cayman Islands, the UAE and Syria. Myanmar, Iran and North Korea are the only countries on the group's "black list". Vietnam is one of the few states with good relations with North Korea,



which is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons programme despite widespread global denunciations and international sanctions. Hanoi enacted rules in March to fight money laundering and terrorism financing, but the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) did not consider the overhaul sufficient to avoid the greylisting.

Indian PM Modi meets tech CEOs

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with US and Indian technology CEOs in Washington on Friday, the final day of a state visit marked by pledges of deeper US-India cooperation on areas including space, artificial intelligence and quantum computing. President Joe Biden rolled out the red carpet for Modi on Thursday, declaring after about 2 -1/2 hours of talks that their countries' economic relationship was "booming." Trade has more than doubled over the past decade. Biden and Modi gathered with CEOs in-

cluding Apple's Tim Cook, Google's Sundar Pichai and Microsoft's Satya Nadella. Also present were Sam Altman of OpenAI, Nasa astronaut Sunita Williams, and Indian tech leaders including Anand Mahindra, chairman of Mahindra Group, and Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, the White House said. "Our partnership between India and the US will go a long way, in my view, to define what the 21st century looks like," Biden told the group, adding that technological cooperation would be a big part of that partnership.

Eurozone economic growth slows sharply in June

BRUSSELS (Agencies): Eurozone economic activity worsened in June to a five-month low, hit hard by a fall in industrial production, a keenly watched survey showed on Friday. The eurozone entered a technical recession at the start of the year, according to official figures published earlier this month. But inflation remains well above the European Central Bank's target of 2%, which will keep pressure on the Frankfurt-based body to keep raising interest rates despite the stagnant economy. Data from the HCOB Flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) survey published by S&P Global fell to 50.3 in June from 52.8 in May. A figure above 50 indicates growth. The data demonstrated "renewed weakness in the economy after the brief growth



revival recorded in the spring," S&P Global said. It noted the first fall in new business orders since January, slowing employment growth and pessimism over future production. "After Eurozone GDP fell for the second time in a row in the first quarter, the probability has increased somewhat that the GDP change will again carry a negative sign in the current quarter, due in part to weak services activity in France," said Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank.

Qatar's wealth fund to buy stake in NBA's Wizards

NEW YORK (Agencies): In a first for US sports, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund has struck a deal to buy a stake in a company that owns a trio of franchises, including the National Basketball League's Washington Wizards, according to a person familiar with the situation. The Qatar Investment Authority plans to acquire 5% of Monumental Sports and Entertainment, according to the person, who asked not to be identified because negotiations were private. Sportico reported the deal earlier and said the transaction would value Monumental, which also owns the Na-



tional Hockey League's Washington Capitals and the Women's National Basketball Association's Washington Mystics, at about US\$4 billion. NHL owners have already approved the transaction, but the NBA Board of Directors must vote on it, the website said. A spokesperson for Monumental declined to comment.

PwC Australia seeks to offload govt consulting arm

SYDNEY (Agencies): PricewaterhouseCoopers' Australia unit is seeking to sell the government consulting operation at the centre of a tax scandal to Allegro Funds, the Australian Financial Review reported. The firm has prepared a term sheet for a prospective sale of its government, education and healthcare practice, and is in negotiations with the private equity firm, the AFR reported Friday, without citing sources for the information. "We do not comment on

market speculation," a PwC spokesperson said in an emailed statement to Bloomberg. A representative for Allegro couldn't be reached for comment. In a memo in May, acting chief executive Kristin Stubbins disclosed plans to split off the troubled government, education and healthcare business from the rest of the Australian partnership and flagged that the unit's new board would "have the responsibility to consider the strategic options for the business."

Indonesian streamers cash in on TikTok live craze

JAKARTA (Agencies): Indonesian livestreamer Christine Febriyanti stood in a room crammed with clothes in Jakarta, hawking colourful garments to hundreds of viewers on a TikTok livestream for a local fashion brand. "For the Vitamin C kind of girls, you'll fulfil all of your nutrient needs with these orange pants," the 25-year-old told the sales session. Her pitch is part of a clamour for TikTok shopping in Indonesia, where users spent more money on the app than anywhere else in Southeast Asia over the past year. The region is a bright spot for TikTok, owned by Chi-

nese tech firm ByteDance, following months of intense scrutiny in the US and other nations over users' data security and the company's alleged ties to Beijing. TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew announced plans last week to invest billions of dollars in Southeast Asia, where it counts 325 million users, of whom 125 million are in Indonesia. As TikTok Shop grows in popularity, with Indonesians buying more than a third of goods sold in Southeast Asia over the past year, entrepreneurs are flocking to the platform to promote a range of tech, fashion and homemade products.

Bradley, McCarthy share lead as McIlroy climbs at Travelers Cship

NEW YORK (AFP): Keegan Bradley birdied five straight holes in a seven-under-par 63 on Friday, June 23, to join Denny McCarthy atop the leaderboard at the US PGA Tour Travelers Championship, where Rory McIlroy was among those in the mix. McCarthy, who led by two after a 10-under-par first-round 60, followed up with a five-under-par 65 at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell, Connecticut. Bradley blistered the back nine to join him on 15-under-par 125 -- a 36-hole course record -- rolling in five straight birdies from the 12th through the 16th.



Bradley had kick started his round with a 58-foot birdie putt at the third hole and drained a 10-footer at eight. He sank a 34-foot birdie at the 12th to launch his back-nine surge. "Felt like I could make every putt I looked

at," Bradley said. "I was just reading them really good. When you're putting good everything feels easy and it's automatic." McCarthy shook off a bogey at the second hole, where he missed the green, carding six birdies the rest of the way. That included a 43-foot birdie putt at the 10th and another from just inside 20 feet at 18. McCarthy said it was "nice" to post the 36-hole scoring record for the course, but he remained focused on claiming a first PGA Tour title. "Golf tournaments aren't 36 holes unfortunately, so I know there is still a lot of golf left," he said.

Saudi Arabian Abdullah Al-Qahtani victorious at American debut for PFL

Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Al-Qahtani on Friday night claimed victory at his Professional Fighters League debut, which took place at the Over-time Elite Arena in Atlanta. Fighting in the featherweight division, "The Reaper" wasted no time in defeating his opponent, American Lamar Brown, via a face-crank submission in just 95 seconds. The 24-year-old dominated the fight from the first bell. Following a brief striking ex-



change, Al-Qahtani dictated the geography of the fight, swarming his opponent with punches before

engaging his grappling skills. After seeking a rear naked choke, Al-Qahtani employed a face-crank and forced his opponent to submit. "I'm so happy today. It was a great fight and a great event here. Thank you to the PFL," said Al-Qahtani. "Thanks to KHK Team, Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al-Khalifah and my mom. I did it. I'm so happy. I'm ready for everyone. I will be a champion in PFL, inshallah. Let's do it."

Reuben Neves joins Al-Hilal at the peak of his powers

Ruben Neves has finally landed in Riyadh to finalize his move to Saudi Pro League side Al-Hilal, and it is a move that seems to have attracted attention for one thing above all else: his age. The Portuguese international is undoubtedly a massive talent in his own right but, in terms of profile, he is not quite in the same bracket as fellow Pro League players Cristiano Ronaldo or Karim Benzema. What he does have, though, is time on his side to reach that level. Al-Nassr star Ronaldo and Al-Ittihad's Benzema are highly decorated megastars of the game but, as we all know, they are in the twilight of their careers. Ronaldo is 38; an incredibly fit 38, certainly, but not even a specimen



as fine as the Portuguese legend can play forever. Benzema, meanwhile, is 35. This is only natural. When a league in a country outside of the traditional elite of world football — England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France — start to foster ambitions of attracting the best talent on the planet, the first to arrive are usually players in their 30s. In the past,

older stars were the ones more likely to come to this part of the world, perhaps because after successful careers in which they had won all there is to win, they were more open to new challenges and experiences. The Saudi league has only just started to attract the attention of the rest of the world. It is going to take time for this global audience and players to become familiar with one another. Yet there are signs that this might be happening relatively quickly, as the arrival of Neves at Al-Hilal shows. His is a different kind of signing, and not only because it is the first major deal for the club after they were banned from transfers during the past two windows.

US picked to host 2025 Club World Cup, an expanded soccer tournament with 32 teams

GENEVA: The United States will host the Club World Cup in 2025, the first time the FIFA tournament will have 32 teams. Real Madrid, Manchester City and Chelsea already earned places as recent Champions League winners for the expanded tournament lineup that is set to test stadiums and operations one year before the 2026 World Cup. The United States will host the men's World Cup with Canada and Mexico, and FIFA could yet give some Club World Cup games to those countries. The Club World Cup will take place in June-July 2025. The United States was chosen as host



Friday during an online meeting of the FIFA Council. FIFA praised "the United States' position as a proven leader in staging global events and because it would allow FIFA to maximize synergies with the delivery" of the 2026 tournament. The Seattle Sounders also are in the lineup

for the Club World Cup as the 2022 champion of North American soccer region CONCACAF. The Americans should get another entry as the host nation. Storied European teams have visited the United States for preseason friendly games for years but the expanded club tournament will give fans a rare chance to see 12 of them play competitive games. FIFA said in March the basic qualification path for clubs was to win a continental championship in any of the four years from 2021 to 2024 in the five main confederations: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America.

Wei Chong-Kai Wun one step away from men's doubles title

KUALA LUMPUR: National men's doubles pair Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun and mixed doubles pair Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei have made it to the finals of the 2023 Taiwan Open Championship which will take place at the Tian-Mu Arena, Taipei tomorrow. In today's semifinal action, Wei Chong-Kai Wun, who are the defending champions, were forced to fight up to three sets before defeating national senior pair and the tournament's top seeds, Ong Yew Sin-Teo Ee Yi, 17-21, 21-19 and 21-9. Awaiting the fifth seeds in the



final will either be Lin Chia Yu-Lin Yong Sheng or Lu Ching Yao-Yang Po Han, both pairs from Taiwan, whose semifinal clash is later today. Meanwhile, Tang Jie-Ee Wei are one step closer to their second Badminton

World Federation (BWF) World Tour title after they easily dismissed the challenge of the host pair of Ye Hong Wei-Lee Chia Hsin 21-14, 21-19 in a 34-minute battle. The pair, ranked 19th in the world, previously won their first BWF World Tour title when they emerged champions of the Orleans Masters Championships in France last April. Awaiting them in the final are the home pair of Chiu Hsiang Chieh-Lin Xiao Min who defeated their compatriots Tseng Min Hao-Hsieh Pei Shan 21-10, 21-8.

Maguire makes late push to grab lead at Women's PGA

SPRINGFIELD: Ireland's Leona Maguire birdied three of her final four holes to shoot a 3-under 68 and take control of the lead after two rounds of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship on Friday in Springfield, NJ. Maguire punctuated her afternoon at Baltusrol Golf Club with a short birdie putt at the par-3 ninth hole that put her alone on top at 5-under 137. Maguire won last week at the Meijer LPGA Classic in Belmont, Michigan, for her second career victory on tour. The 28-year-old has three top-10s at majors but is seeking her first title. Xiyu Lin of China made a short eagle putt during an even-par 71 and held the lead midway through the second round at 4 under. Mel Reid of



England joined her in the afternoon by posting the low round of the day to that point, a 4-under 67 with five birdies and a single bogey. LPGA rookie Celine Borge of Norway shot her second straight 69 to join the group at 4 under. World No 5 Minjee Lee of Australia matched Reid's 67 to make a late push to 3 under. She was tied for fifth with Lee-Anne Pace

(73). The South African led after one round and moved to 6 under early Friday before making three bogeys over her final seven holes. The top 70 and ties will make the cut, projected to be 5 over par. Lexi Thompson made four birdies in a row at Nos. 5-8 toward the end of her round in order to reach 4 over and make the cut. World No 2 Nelly Korda, in her first start after missing more than a month with back pain, won't play the weekend after going 11-over 153 (76-77) and tying for 129th. Also missing the cut were recent major winners Lilia Vu (6 over), Jenni Kupcho (7 over), Patty Tavatanakit of Thailand (8 over) and Sei Young Kim of South Korea (8 over).

Rivals seek to profit from Chelsea's fire sale

MANCHESTER (APP): Chelsea have embarked on a fire sale following their stunning spending spree, trimming their bloated squad in an effort to comply with financial regulations as they prepare for a new era under Mauricio Pochettino. In their first year under the ownership of an American consortium, Chelsea spent more on transfer fees than any club has ever done in a 12-month period, only to finish 12th in the Premier League -- their lowest placing since 1994. The arrival of RB Leipzig forward Christopher Nkunku this week has added to the outlay of more than £500 million (\$635 million). But most of Chelsea's business is focused on departures, with key players in the squad that won the Champions League just two years ago set to

leave. France midfielder N'Golo Kante has already said his goodbyes to join a wave of star footballers heading to Saudi Arabia, with other Chelsea players expected to follow him. A potential influx of Saudi cash could prove vital to Chelsea's chances of complying with the Premier League's financial fair play (FFP) rules. Clubs are allowed a maximum loss of £105 million over a three-year period, with deductions allowed for spending on infrastructure, youth and women's football. Chelsea looked set to be well over that limit, having posted £275 million worth of losses in the final two years of Roman Abramovich's reign, even before LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly and private equity group Clearlake Capital took charge.

Pakistan's Faiza, Naheen win gold in Badminton Doubles; Noshiwan, Arif grab Silver in Men's Double

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan's Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan has won the gold medal in the Badminton Women's Doubles Unified event of the ongoing 16th Special Olympic World Games at Berlin, Germany. In the badminton event played at Messe Berlin, Pakistani players won the gold medal by defeating Uzbekistan by 21-5 and 21-17 points, Malaysia by 21-14 and 21-6 and Kyrgyz Republic by 21-12 and 21-13, according to a communique issued here on Friday. On the occasion, Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan said that we are very happy that our hard work paid off and we were able to win a gold medal for our country. Our coaches played an important role in our success. We will try our best to

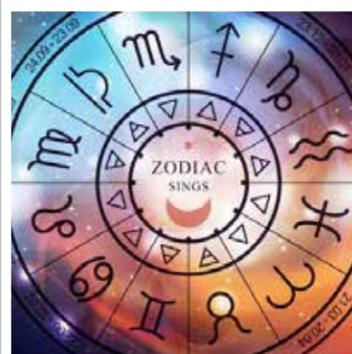
maintain this streak of success in future events as well. Head coach Muta-hir Sohail and coach Qamar Ali Mona of Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan from Lahore said that both players have been preparing for the World Games for the past two years. They stayed busy in this regard, they also participated fully in the training camps organized by Special Olympics Pakistan in Karachi and Islamabad. Meanwhile, in the men's unified doubles event of Badminton, Pakistan's Noshiwan Arif Raja and Talha Asif won the silver medal after defeating Paraguay 21-18 and 21-12 and Macau by 21-12 and 21-16. However, Pakistan suffered a defeat against Hong Kong by the margin of 16-21 and 18-21.

Top seed Medvedev crashes out at Wimbledon warm-up Halle

BERLIN (APP): Top seed Daniil Medvedev has crashed out of the Halle Open, a traditional Wimbledon warm-up, beaten in straight sets by Roberto Bautista Agut on Friday. Medvedev lost 7-5, 7-6 (7-3) against the 35-year-old Spaniard. Eighth seed Bautista Agut now boasts a 5-2 career record against the 2021 US Open winner. "To beat Daniil on this court, you have to play really good" said Bautista Agut. "I didn't feel good (for) some months this year, but I kept working hard. I know tennis is sometimes very difficult, but today it showed that I have been working hard." Medvedev, the former world number one, was runner-up on the Halle grass in 2022, losing to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in straight sets in the final. With a poor record

on the surface Medvedev has never reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, missing last year's tournament due to a ban on Russian athletes over the war in Ukraine. In Friday's final match, third seed Andrey Rublev came from behind to defeat Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor, setting up a meeting with Bautista Agut. Rublev lost the first set 3-6 but won the next two 6-3, 6-4, making it the second time he beat Griekspoor this season after another three-set win at the Qatar Open in Doha in February. Olympic gold medalist Alexander Zverev also progressed into the semi-finals after defeating Chilean Nicolas Jarry. The 26-year-old German, who made it to the semi finals of this year's French Open, defeated Jarry in straight sets 7-5, 6-3.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: JUNE 25, 2023



make sure that you're pushing yourself a bit and getting yourself out in the world. Things are good and getting better!

- **VIRGO**: If the small stuff isn't getting in your way today, something is wrong or you're just not noticing! It's perfectly okay to suffer through minor setbacks, because things should still be on track.
- **LIBRA**: Your artistic side is out in force, though you are probably feeling more appreciative than creative at the moment. You should be able to spruce up your home or office and make it much more livable.

- It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.

- **ARIES**: Things might seem kind of troubling at first today, but as long as you're open to what people are saying, you should be able to figure out a creative solution to whatever is bothering you.

- **TAURUS**: You need to stay balanced today, though it would be easy to fall in the deep end. Something feels so right that you don't want to stop, though you know it isn't good for you in high doses.

- **GEMINI**: Use your brainy energy to make some small but important changes in your family life. It's a really good time to change up schedules or meal times so more people can come together.

- **CANCER**: Try not to jump on any new project that comes along. You've got to be sure that you're making progress on other stuff before you tackle any new challenges. Put them off until tomorrow.

- **LEO**: Your good energy is keeping you happy and feeling good today, so

- **SCORPIO**: Life is a whole lot easier than others are making it out to be and you need to make sure that you're leading by example for now. It may be long past the time for you to show them what's what.

- **SAGITTARIUS**: You need to deal with a legal issue that has been on your mind for some time. It may not be huge, but it isn't going to go away until you do something proactive. The sooner the better!

- **CAPRICORN**: You're feeling pretty great about the way things have been going at work. Even if results are mixed, you can tell that your career is shaping up. Keep pushing down the same track for now.

- **ACQUARIUS**: Your mental energy is great for solving puzzles and problems. Reach out to folks who might be going through troubles of their own and see what you can do for them.

- **PISCES**: Choose something new to do, though it can be minor. Today is perfect for making decisions of all kinds, especially those that affect your future in interesting new ways.

Saudi security forces bust 83 fake Hajj campaigns, turn back 160,000 residents without permits: Gen Al-Bassami

MAKKAH (APP): Director of Public Security and Head of Hajj Security Committee, Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Bassami revealed that Saudi security forces, in a significant operation, had successfully dismantled 83 fraudulent Hajj campaigns and thwarted the plans of approximately 160,000 residents seeking to perform Hajj without the required permits. Revealing these astonishing numbers to the national and international media persons during a press conference here at the National Center for Security Operations the other day, he emphasized the impeccable

readiness and heightened presence of security officers, which had enabled them to effectively execute their duties during the Hajj pilgrimage. He proudly announced the arrest of over 5,800 individuals who violated residence and work regulations in Makkah. The meticulous security plans devised for this year's Hajj season, under the direct approval of the Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Hajj, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud, played a crucial role in maintaining order, he said adding that these comprehensive plans outlined the tasks and responsibilities

of public security officers, including the implementation of stringent measures to counter any threats to security, safeguard the 'Guests of God' and prevent all actions that could jeopardize their safety. To achieve these objectives, General Al-Bassami said the security forces significantly increased their presence in the field, ensuring effective monitoring and swift response to emergency situations. The measures also encompassed proactive steps to prevent pickpocketing and address any other potential incidents that could compromise the security and well-being of the pilgrims.

Cheers in Zambia after landmark debt deal



Hope and relief spread across Zambia on Friday after foreign lenders agreed to restructure part of the country's debt, a win for president Hakainde Hichilema who was elected on a promise to strengthen a buckling economy. Zambia, whose total debt amounts to \$32.8 billion, defaulted on its \$18.6-billion foreign debt in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic. The restructuring deal, covering around a third of the tab, came on Thursday at a two-day summit in Paris hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron. The deal, which was secured over two years of tough negotiations, also paves the way to unlock a \$1.3 billion three-year aid plan obtained in 2022 from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In a statement, Hichilema said the agreement was a "significant milestone in our journey towards economic recovery (and) growth." The government hailed a "significant step towards restoring Zambia's long-term debt sustainability," adding that it looked forward to working with the creditors to ensure "prompt implementation." Zambia is Africa's biggest copper producer, with a population of nearly 20 million people. It ran up huge debts under former president Edgar Lungu, who was criticised for borrowing huge sums to finance infrastructure projects during his six years in power before he lost elections in 2021.

3-day literary Pashto literary conference inaugurated

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Three day literary Pashto conference has been inaugurated at Nishtar Hall. The conference was inaugurated by renowned literary figures, including Dr. Yar Muhammad Maghmom, Dr. Khalid Khan Khattak, Dr. Abaseen Yousafzai, Haseena Gul Tanha, and Kalsoom Zaib, among others. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), in collaboration with Pashto Jirga Pakistan, organized the conference. Its aim is to provide a platform for literary individuals, particularly poets and scholars of Pashto literature, to present their works concerning the preservation and promotion of language and literature. The inauguration ceremony was followed by various sessions covering themes such as poetic and literary personalities, preservation and promotion of the Pashto language and the history of language. Audience from diverse backgrounds attended the conference and enjoyed the sessions. The first day of the conference was followed by different sessions on the next two days (June 24th & 25th, 2023). KPCTA has initiated the activity to preserve and promote the Pashto language and to attract an enthusiastic literary audience to a platform where they can learn and share the experience of linguistics and advancements in language preservation and promotion.

New Russian missile strikes hit Ukraine

KYIV: Russia launched a fresh barrage of missiles against Ukraine early Saturday, causing damage and casualties, according to Ukrainian authorities. In the central city of Dnipro, "several houses were completely destroyed. Huge crater after the explosion", mayor Borys Filatov said on Telegram. Air defences also "detected and destroyed more than 20 missiles in the airspace around Kyiv", said Sergiy Popko, head of the Kyiv military administration. Falling debris caused a fire in a 24-storey building, leaving at least two injured, he said. KYIV: Russia launched a fresh barrage of missiles against Ukraine early Saturday, causing damage and casualties, ac-



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Pakistan calls for fully integrating women diplomats into global decision-making

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Recognizing the key roles women play as diplomats in addressing global challenges, Pakistan has called for their further empowerment, ensuring that women are fully integrated into global decision-making. "While historically underrepresented, they have today shattered barriers and made remarkable strides, leaving an indelible mark in diplomacy and international relations, Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said on Friday. Addressing a high-level forum celebrating "International Day of Women in Diplomacy", the Pakistani envoy said that women have the ability to foster dialogue, resolve conflicts and provide long-term solutions in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and humanitarian

efforts. In Pakistan, he said, 22.64% of Pakistan's diplomats are women, many of them serving as Ambassadors. "Our women diplomats represent Pakistan today with dynamism to advance our foreign policy objectives through hard work and dedication while keeping Pakistan's flag high." Similarly, he added, the role of Pakistani women peacekeepers is no different either — deployed in conflict and post-conflict situations around the globe, they have served with distinction and honour to promote peace. "While the rise of women in diplomacy serves as an inspiring example and a catalyst for other women, there are some serious and persistent challenges and gaps that still remain and need to be addressed at all levels, and in different countries,

Beijing experiences high temperature above 40 C

BELJING (Agencies): Beijing experienced a record-breaking heat wave with temperatures surpassing 40 C for three consecutive days from Thursday to Saturday. Although a slight decrease in the intensity of high temperatures is expected on Sunday and Monday, the forecast predicts a "prolonged battle" against high temperatures in the following week, Global Times reported. Beijing's Nanjiao Meteorological Observatory recorded the third consecutive high-temperature day of above 40 C around 1:51 pm on Saturday, according to weather.com.cn.

As of Saturday, Beijing has experienced 11 high-temperature days in June, tying with the record set previously. The previous record of 11 high-temperature days in June in Beijing was set in 1952 and 2000, according to The Beijing News. Besides, Beijing has experienced three consecutive days with ground surface temperatures exceeding 60 C, per the observatory. As of 3 pm on Saturday, the highest ground surface temperature



reached 66.1 C, the Nanjiao Meteorological Observatory observed. On Thursday, the ground surface temperature reached 71.8 C, the second-highest in history, and the highest land surface temperature reached 61.8 C on Friday, according to the Beijing meteorological observatory. Beijing is experiencing the third heat wave this year. The Beijing weather forecast bureau has predicted the temperature will reach 37 C on Sunday and 35 C on Monday, and after the brief decrease in intensity of high temperature over the two days, Beijing will enter into a "prolonged battle" against high temperatures for the following week, with the possibility of the high heat once again exceeding 40 C.

Workshop on digital literacy to empower young women, girls held

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins, in partnership with Aurat Foundation and with support from UN Women, organized a two-day training workshop on digital literacy here on Saturday. The workshop aimed to empower young women and girls in the digital sphere and enhance their understanding of women's rights. Participants from various districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Peshawar, Kohat, Swat, Mardan, Khyber, Kurram, and Bajaur, attended the intensive program. The training focused on equipping the participants with essential skills to effectively utilize social media platforms. It aimed to raise awareness about women's rights and shed light on the legal frameworks available for women's protection and the procedures to access justice. The organizers recognized the power of

social media in amplifying marginalized voices and driving meaningful change, making it a valuable tool for advocacy. Sana Ahmad, the Program Coordinator at Blue Veins, said that social media has the potential to turn every woman into a powerful agent of change. Through sharing experiences, advocating for equality, and utilizing social media, individuals across the globe can come together and contribute to positive transformations. Shabina Ayaz from the Aurat Foundation highlighted that digital literacy goes beyond computer skills. It encompasses the ability to leverage digital tools for social advocacy, network-building, and driving change. The training aimed to equip the participants with these skills, enabling them to become effective advocates for women's rights, she said.

Around 40 missing in Italy migrant boat shipwreck: UN

ROME (Agencies): More than 40 people are missing after a migrant boat capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa, the UN said. The shipwreck took place on Thursday and at least one newborn baby is among those missing, said UNHCR representative to Italy Chiara Cardoletti. The vessel left from Sfax in Tunisia and was carrying 46 migrants from Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the UN migration agency IOM, said Friday. The boat capsized in strong winds and high waves, he said. "Some survivors were taken to Lampedusa and others were brought back to Tunisia." "Among those missing were seven women and a minor. The survivors are all adult men," he added. "We have noticed more arrivals of migrants from sub-Saharan



Africa than Tunisians" via the Tunisian route since November, he said. He explained this was due to people from sub-Saharan Africa fleeing discrimination in Tunisia. "It is unacceptable to continue counting the dead at the gates of Europe," Cardoletti wrote on Twitter, referring to deadly shipwrecks of migrant boats which have already occurred in Italy, Greece and Spain. "A coordinated and shared rescue mechanism at sea between states is now also a matter of conscience."

NA acknowledges int'l support in Pakistan's fight against climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Saturday unanimously recognized and expressed gratitude for the contributions of international and civil society organizations, besides the Pakistani diaspora in tackling the issues of related to climate change. In a resolution moved by Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Romina Khurshid Alam appreciated the assistance in rehabilitating vulnerable communities affected by climate-induced disasters was particularly commended. The House highlighted the urgent need for global cooperation to combat climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. It acknowledged that extreme weather events, such as the 2022 flood, have disproportionately impacted vulnerable communities, placing a significant burden on women and children and exacerbating existing climate issues. Emphasizing the importance of collective action, the House underscored the significance of protecting and uplifting these marginalized segments of society in the face of climate-related crises. Islamic Relief Worldwide and the United Nations (UN) were specifically recognized and deeply appreciated for their vital role in guiding Pakistan's climate action. Their initiatives have facilitated the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, improved disaster risk management systems, and promoted sustainable livelihoods. Encouraging the government of Pakistan to strengthen collaboration with international organizations, the House emphasized the potential benefits of leveraging their expertise and resources to enhance the country's climate change mitigation policies and disaster risk reduction strategies.

Argentine economy minister to run for president



Buenos Aires (Agencies): Argentina's economy minister, Sergio Massa, will run as the presidential candidate for the ruling center-left Peronist bloc in October elections, the coalition said on Friday, June 23. Joining Massa on the ticket as vice-presidential candidate will be Agustin Rossi, current cabinet chief for President Alberto Fernandez, a tweet by the Homeland Union bloc said. The decision removes ambassador to Brazil Daniel Scioli and Interior Minister Eduardo "Wado" de Pedro from contention as aspirants for the ruling bloc. "For institutional, political and social responsibility, our space has decided to form a unity list ... Our candidate for president will be @SergioMassa and accompanying him as candidate for vice president will be @RossiAgustinOk," the tweet said. Primary elections occur in Argentina on August 13, and the first round presidential vote will take place October 22.

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