



Russian Forces Destroy Fifth US-Made Abrams Tank in Ukraine

MOSCOW (Agencies): In a recent escalation of hostilities, Russian forces have successfully neutralized yet another US-supplied M1 Abrams tank operated by Ukrainian forces. The incident occurred near the village of Berdychi in the Yasinovatsky district of Russia's Donetsk People's Republic. The tank, a formidable piece of American military technology, was rendered inoperative by a kamikaze drone strike. The Russian Defence Ministry has confirmed the tank's destruction, although specific details remain undisclosed.



enhance tank survivability and protect soldiers on the frontlines.

- Why Are US-Made Abrams Tanks Struggling in the Ukrainian Conflict? The repeated destruction of US-supplied M1 Abrams tanks raises questions about their vulnerability on the battlefield. Despite their reputation for robustness, these tanks seem to be facing challenges in the ongoing conflict. Analysts speculate that the lack of adequate armor protection may be a contributing factor. As the conflict intensifies, both sides continue to adapt their strategies and weaponry, resulting in a high-stakes battle for supremacy.

- US-Supplied M-1 Abrams Tanks: A Precarious Situation The situation underscores the importance of armor and defensive capabilities in modern warfare. While the M1 Abrams remains a formidable asset, its vulnerabilities are becoming increasingly apparent. As the conflict rages on, military experts closely monitor developments, seeking ways to

- The Kamikaze Drone Strike: A Closer Look

The M1 Abrams tank was targeted by a kamikaze drone, a small unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) equipped with explosives. These drones are designed to fly directly into their target, sacrificing themselves to deliver a precise strike. In this case, the drone homed in on the tank's vulnerable points, exploiting any weaknesses in its armor.

- Armor Composition and Vulnerabilities

The M1 Abrams tank is renowned for its firepower and mobility. However, its armor composition plays a critical role in its survivability. Let's break it down:

1- Composite Armor: The Abrams features composite armor, combining layers of steel, ceramics, and depleted uranium. While this provides excellent protection against kinetic energy penetrators (such as armor-piercing

rounds), it has limitations against chemical energy penetrators (like shaped charges or high-explosive anti-tank rounds).

2- Challenges with Explosive Rounds: The kamikaze drone likely carried an explosive charge. When detonated near the tank, the shockwave can cause spalling (fragmentation of armor) and potentially compromise internal components. The Abrams' composite armor excels against kinetic threats but may struggle against powerful explosions.

3- Active Protection Systems (APS): Some modern tanks incorporate APS to intercept incoming projectiles. However, the M1 Abrams lacks a standard APS, leaving it vulnerable to guided munitions like the kamikaze drone.

4- Turret and Hull Weak Points: The turret ring (where the turret connects to the hull) and the hull roof are relatively weak points. A well-placed explosion can disrupt critical systems or even disable the tank.

CERN Pursues Dark Matter Quest Amid Eclipse Phenomenon



GENEVA (Agencies): In a groundbreaking scientific endeavor, CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest and most potent particle accelerator, is on the brink of embarking on an extraordinary mission. Following an extensive two-year upgrade, the LHC is set to unleash a torrent of trillions of protons, propelling them toward near-light speeds in a relentless pursuit: deciphering the mysteries of dark matter. Dark matter, an elusive cosmic component constituting theoretically 26 to 28% of our observable universe, has remained enigmatic despite its widespread influence. Now, with the LHC back in operation, scientists are resolute in their efforts to shed light on this cosmic enigma. This multi-billion-dollar facility will propel protons into high-energy collisions, recreating conditions reminiscent of the universe's early moments post-Big Bang. Through meticulous analysis of the aftermath

of these particle collisions, researchers aim to uncover the elusive signatures of dark matter particles. Adding to the cosmic intrigue, this scientific endeavor coincides with a celestial spectacle: a solar eclipse. As the moon momentarily obscures the sun, the LHC will ramp up to maximum power, delving into the very essence of reality in search of answers. Inaugurated on September 10, 2008, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) represents the pinnacle of humanity's achievements in particle acceleration. Situated 100 meters below ground in a sprawling tunnel near Geneva, Switzerland, this monumental machine features a 27-kilometer ring of superconducting magnets, intricately designed to propel particles to unprecedented energies. As the LHC springs back to life, it beckons humanity to gaze into the cosmic unknown, endeavoring to unravel the invisible threads that bind our universe together.

Zionist Researchers In Texas Embark On Red Heifer Creation For Sacred Mission

AUSTIN, TEXAS (Agencies): Amidst the serene landscapes of Texas, a team of dedicated researchers has embarked on an extraordinary mission with profound implications for ancient traditions. Their goal? To meticulously engineer the elusive perfect red heifer—a creature revered in Jewish scripture and symbolism—for sacred purposes.



- Inspired by Ancient Prophecies

Drawing inspiration from centuries-old prophecies and driven by unwavering faith, these researchers have set out to fulfill a timeless quest deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. The red heifer, according to biblical mandates, must possess specific characteristics: it must be unblemished, without defect, and never subjected to a yoke. Its crimson hue symbolizes purity, serving as a pivotal link between the earthly and the divine.

- Cross-Continental Pursuit

Led by Yitshak Mamo, a visionary from the group Uvne Jerusalem, this quest has transcended geographical boundaries. Mamo's journey took him from the vast pastures of Texas to the historic hills of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Here, in a discreet and secure location, five meticulously selected red heifers now graze, their very presence a testament to divine providence.

- An Unconventional Path

Remarkably, these sacred creatures didn't originate from traditional Jewish breeders but were discovered among Christian ranchers in the heart of Texas. Identified as Texas Red Angus, these animals were chosen as ideal candidates for this sacred endeavor, their crimson coats aligning with the ancient criteria.

- Merging Science and Faith

The project delves into the realms of genetic manipulation, with each heifer's DNA meticulously examined to ensure conformity to prophetic standards. Yet, for those involved, this is far more than a scientific pursuit—it's a profound expression of religious devotion and adherence to ancient texts.

- A Sacred Destiny

The culmination of this quest will see these crimson creatures offered as sacrifices on a grand white altar overlooking the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Their ashes will play a crucial role in ritual purification, a solemn ceremony meticulously aligned with historical precedent and divine instruction.

- Global Interest and Contemplation

As the world observes, opinions vary widely. Some view this endeavor as a Pandora's box, unlocking cosmic mysteries and theological debates. Others see it as a poignant reminder of the enduring significance of ancient traditions and their resonance in contemporary society.

In the heart of Texas, amidst rolling hills and quiet laboratories, the pursuit of the red heifer continues—a journey marked by faith, science, and the timeless echoes of sacred tradition.

Maintenance staff shortage could clip aviation industry's wings



NEW YORK (Agencies): The United States is grappling with a shortage of maintenance workers in the aviation industry, with baby boomers retiring and others changing jobs during the pandemic. This comes as the global fleet of commercial aircraft is set to balloon a third by 2034, involving more than 36,400 vessels, according to a recent study by consulting firm Oliver Wyman. In its wake, spending in the maintenance, repair and overhaul market is projected to grow almost 20 percent by 2034. But the sector suffers from a shortfall of qualified manpower — and an inadequate pipeline of talent. It lacks some 24,000 aviation maintenance technicians in North America, a figure due to reach nearly 40,000 by 2028, Oliver Wyman notes. This gap is not one that the renowned Aviation High School in Long Island will be able to fill with its cohorts totaling 2,000 students. "I don't think the Aviation High Schools have enough capacity to train enough people," said Steven Jackson, principal of the Aviation High School in Long Island City.

Chinese Scientists Develop Ultra-Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile with 2,000km Kill Range

BELJING (Agencies): Chinese researchers have unveiled a cutting-edge surface-to-air missile (SAM) that surpasses its competitors. According to a peer-reviewed paper published in the Chinese language Journal of Graphics, this missile boasts an impressive kill range of more than 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles). Unlike typical surface-to-air missiles, which usually have flight ranges of tens to a few hundred kilometers, this new weapon pushes the boundaries with its remarkable reach. It is designed to intercept and neutralize early-warning aircraft and bombers, preventing their intervention in potential regional conflicts. The technology is hailed as "of great significance for maintaining regional and global peace and stability" by the researchers. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) sought a cost-effective weapon suitable for daily operations. The missile's specifications include a maximum length of 10 meters (33 feet) and a weight not exceeding 4 tonnes, making it ideal for vehicle-mounted mobile launch systems. Led by Associate Researcher Su Hua from Northwestern Polytechnical University, the team exceeded expectations by crafting an ultra-long-range missile measuring just 8 meters (26 feet) and weighing 2.5 tonnes. The missile employs a solid rocket motor for vertical launch, followed by a ramjet engine that propels



it in the upper atmosphere. Its design parameters resemble the successful Feitian-1 hypersonic vehicle, which uses inexpensive and safe kerosene as fuel. Real-time data from reconnaissance satellites guides the missile, switching to its own sensors during the final approach. Upon reaching an effective kill range, it detonates its warhead. China's powerful global satellite monitoring network renders traditional stealth technology ineffective, even against advanced bombers like the United States' B-2 and B-21. This remarkable achievement underscores China's commitment to advancing its defense capabilities on a global scale. As tensions persist, the world watches closely to see how this game-changing missile will shape the future of air defense systems.

Thousands rally across Israel demanding Netanyahu's resignation, hostage swap deal with Hamas

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Thousands of people on Saturday protested across Israel against the current government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, demanding a hostage swap deal with Palestinian group Hamas, Anadolu news agency reported. Thousands of Israelis began to gather in Kaplan Square, in central Tel Aviv, to participate in the main demonstration demanding a hostage swap deal, the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper

reported. The newspaper said police used trucks to close the streets surrounding Kaplan Square, preventing protesters from reaching the gathering to participate. Thousands of Israelis also demonstrated near Netanyahu's residence in Caesarea (north), demanding his resignation, the daily said. Protesters accused Netanyahu of being "guilty" in the current situation and demanded that his government immediately finalise a deal to free



hostages held in Gaza. Thousands of Israelis demonstrated in Rehavot (central), the Kiryat Gat intersection, Haifa (north), and other cities across the country demanding a hostage swap deal, according to the Israeli Broadcasting Authority. Protests across the country are expected to pick up pace in the coming hours, local media reported. Qatar, Egypt, and the US are trying to reach a hostage swap deal and a ceasefire in Gaza, as

the first pause lasted only a week in late November last year, which resulted in limited aid entering the Gaza Strip, as well as exchanges of Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners, mostly women and children detained in Israeli jails. Tel Aviv currently holds at least 9,100 Palestinian prisoners in its jails, while there are an estimated 134 Israeli hostages in Gaza. Hamas has announced the death of 70 of them in random Israeli airstrikes.

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.

Chief Minister KP greets Christian community on Easter festival

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Sunday congratulated the Christian community living all over the country especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the occasion of their religious festival Easter. The provincial government is participating in the joys of the Christian community, the chief minister said in a message of felicitation issued here. Ali Amin Gandapur said all minorities in Pakistan have equal rights of all kinds as citizens. "Our religion Islam teaches to give equal rights to minorities," he said and added,



our constitution guarantees all religions to celebrate religious worship, rituals and festivals with complete freedom. He said that the welfare of the minority commu-

nity living in the province, the protection of their lives and property and constitutional rights were among the priorities of the current provincial government. He said that steps would be taken on priority basis to ensure the protection of the constitutional rights of everyone. The chief minister said the Christian community has played an important role in the development of the country, which the whole nation values. The current national and international situation demands that inter-religious harmony be promoted at all levels, he added.

Governor KP congratulate Christian community on Easter

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Sunday congratulates the Christian community across the country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the festival of Easter here. Easter is the name of the spirit of love and mutual respect, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said in a message issued on Sunday. The Christian community has an important role in the development and prosperity of the country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam



Ali added. The services of the Christian community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in all sectors including the education sector are commendable,

Haji Ghulam Ali said. According to the constitution of Pakistan, the personal and religious rights of all minorities, including the Christian community, are fully protected, Haji Ghulam Ali said. "We all have to make Pakistan a cradle of peace and stand among developed countries," Haji Ghulam Ali said. A prosperous and developed Pakistan is the guarantor of our best future, Haji Ghulam Ali said, adding, for a bright, better and prosperous future, we have to move forward unitedly.

Health Minister Takes Notice of Measles Spread in KP

PESHAWAR (Agencies): In response to the spreading measles situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah has directed urgent measures to control the epidemic. The Minister seeks a report from the Director of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and emphasizes the importance of promptly vaccinating children against

measles and other diseases. Efforts are underway to establish isolation wards in Medical Teaching Institutes (MTIs) and extend the working hours of vaccine centers. Additionally, vaccinators will be transferred to the District Health Officer (DHO) for better coordination. A provincial breakout committee, led by Director EPI Dr. Arif, has been formed for immediate action.

Director EPI reports 3,889 suspected cases and 1,445 confirmed cases of measles, with children aged two to five years being the most affected group. An ongoing response is in place across 24 districts of the province, including vaccination initiatives and outbreak control measures in high-impact areas such as Dera Ismail Khan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Swabi, and Dir Lower.

Peshawar Launches Night Tourism Initiative

PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): In an effort to highlight the rich cultural heritage of Peshawar, a Night Tourism initiative was launched on Sunday. The joint venture between the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums KP, Tour Da Pekhwar, and the Pakistan Army aims to showcase Peshawar's untapped potential and its identity on a national and international scale. Around 50 individuals, including families from Peshawar and other cities, participated in the Night Tourism event to explore the city's rich history, culture, and



heritage. Tourists visited prominent landmarks such as Peshawar Museum, Qissa Khawani Bazaar, and Sethi House, experiencing the city's vibrant

heritage. The World Bank-assisted KITE Project, through the Department of Tourism, is contributing to the restoration of museums and heritage assets, supporting the 'Heritage By Night' initiative. The illumination of Peshawar Museum, Gor Khatri, and Sethi House aims to promote this initiative. Dr. Abdul Samad, Director of Archaeology, highlighted that Night Tourism offers a unique opportunity for visitors to experience Peshawar's historical sites after sunset, further enriching their cultural exploration.

Pakistanis - a tolerant, compassionate nation

PESHAWAR (By Fakhar e Alam): Despite facing challenges like extremism and divisive propaganda, Pakistan remains a nation deeply rooted in noble values, fostering unity among its diverse communities across regions and languages. From Karachi to Gwadar, Punjab to Sindh, and the hilly landscapes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistanis embody a spirit of brotherhood, transcending at-

tempts to sow discord through extremism. During the holy month of Ramadan, this unity is vividly demonstrated by individuals like Iqbal Khan, a 28-year-old electrician from Peshawar. With a warm smile, Iqbal shares dates and pakoras with fasting Muslims and non-Muslims alike, embodying the essence of generosity and compassion. Reflecting on his actions, Iqbal emphasizes the importance of brotherhood, interfaith

harmony, and tolerance in Pakistani society. Professor Dr. Abdul Ghafoor, former Director of the Sheikh Zayad Islamic Centre in Peshawar, attributes this cohesion to the teachings of Islam, which advocate for peace, tolerance, and interfaith harmony. He highlights historical documents like the Charter of Madina and the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as guiding principles for a toler-

Four outlaws held, arms, drugs recovered in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Agencies): The district police have arrested four outlaws recovering illegal arms and drugs from their possession during different operations, said police spokesman on Sunday. He said that the police was taking indiscriminate actions against all crimes on the instructions of District Police Officer (DPO) Nasir Mehmood. As part of such actions, a team of Kirri Khaisour police station led by Paharpur Circle Syed Sagheer Abbas Gilani along with SHO Faheem Abbas

Khan arrested two suspects during a search and strike operation. During the operation, the police checked 30 houses, 70 vehicles and bikes and 10 sensitive places. During the checking, the police arrested one Abdul Sattar son of Ameer Umar, a resident of Chashma Pakka and recovered a single shot 12-bore rifle along with 12 cartridges. Another accused named Mutti Ullah son of Muhammad Ashraf, a resident of Kacha Malli Khel was arrested with a 12-bore gun along with 15 cartridges.

Peace Essential for Progress: Station Commander

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Agencies): Brigadier Amir Hayat, Station Commander Dera, emphasized that peace is indispensable for the nation's development, and concerted efforts are essential to eliminate terrorism. In a meeting with local journalists, Brigadier Hayat highlighted the significance of the sacrifices made for achieving peace in Dera Ismail Khan, stressing that these achievements must be preserved at all costs. He acknowledged the pivotal role of journalists in fostering peace and urged them to contribute through positive reporting and constructive crit-

icism. Brigadier Hayat assured continued efforts by the Pakistan Army to uphold peace and security in the region. Journalists present at the meeting commended the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army and pledged their cooperation in maintaining a peaceful environment. Deputy Station Commander Colonel Muhammad Adeel also attended the meeting. Brigadier Hayat urged journalists to utilize their influence to promote peace amidst current challenges and underscored the collective efforts of security agencies and civil society in thwarting terrorist activities.

Transgender community invited to Governor House for Ramadan ration distribution

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam invited transgender individuals at the Governor House on Sunday, where he distributed Ramadan ration packages to more than three hundred members of the community. This initiative was held for the first time in history that transgenders have been invited to the Governor House, with Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali personally handing out the essential food items. Transgenders present at the event, including Arezo,

Farzana, and Subia, expressed gratitude for the Governor's gesture and highlighted the importance of this support in meeting their needs. Farzana commended the Governor and the Mayor for their unprecedented efforts in assisting the marginalized community. Governor Haji Ghulam Ali highlighted the importance of government collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by transgender individuals, vowing to advocate for their rights and ensure their inclusion in decision-making processes.

SP Sadar Division visits Lachi police station

KOHAT (Agencies): Superintendent of Police (SP) Sadar Division, Tariq Khan Sunday morning visited the remote Lachi Police Station here on Sunday and reviewed the security arrangements along with inspecting the documentary records. SP also visited Muslimabad Check

Post on the Indus Highway and reviewed the police checking procedure. SP Sadar met the police personnel and inquired about their problems. Tariq Khan urged the Police personnel to remain alert at all times and strictly follow the security standard operating procedures (SOPs).

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Editor: Omer Rizwan

First Floor, Town Heights, Old Bara Road,
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Website: www.thekhybermail.com

E-mail: thekhybermail@gmail.com - Phone: 091-7081579

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Rising Inflation in Pakistan: A Looming Crisis

In the bustling streets of Lahore, where rickshaws weave through traffic and chai vendors beckon passersby, an invisible storm brews. It's a storm that doesn't announce its arrival with thunder or lightning, but rather with price tags and empty pockets. This storm is inflation, and it has enveloped Pakistan in its relentless grip.

- The Stranglehold of Inflation:** Picture a family in Rawalpindi—the Ahmeds. Mr. Ahmed, a middle-aged accountant, used to manage the household budget with precision. But now, he pores over receipts, his brow furrowed. The cost of wheat flour has surged, and the once-affordable lentils now seem like a luxury. Mrs. Ahmed, a schoolteacher, juggles her meager salary against the rising grocery bills. Their children, eyes wide with confusion, ask why the pocket money they receive can't buy as many candies as before.
 - The Impact on Daily Life:** Muhammad Nazir, a shop owner in Sohawa, a town southeast of Islamabad, knows this struggle intimately. His once well-stocked shelves now bear the scars of inflation. Candy, soft drinks, and cookies—once staples for children—are scarce commodities. Many of his customers, too, struggle to afford even basic snacks. The neighborhood tea stall, where friends gathered for gossip and chai, now witnesses hushed conversations about dwindling incomes.
 - Currency Woes:** The Pakistani rupee, once a symbol of resilience, has weakened significantly. Its purchasing power on the global stage has dwindled. As the cost of food and fuel consumes a larger share of meager incomes, citizens find themselves caught in a currency tug-of-war. The exchange rate fluctuations ripple through every transaction, from buying vegetables at the local bazaar to paying utility bills.
 - Political Unrest:** In Islamabad's corridors of power, politicians grapple with the inflation monster. Protests organized by opposition parties erupt across the country, their slogans echoing through the streets. Prime Minister Imran Khan's administration faces mounting pressure. The Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q), a coalition partner, reevaluates its loyalty. Members of Parliament feel the heat from their constituencies, and some even contemplate leaving the alliance. The political landscape trembles, and the people watch with bated breath.
 - A Global Phenomenon:** Government officials downplay the surge in inflation, labeling it a global phenomenon. They point to supply-chain disruptions, energy crises, and external factors. But for the average Pakistani, these explanations ring hollow. The grocery bill doesn't care about global indices; it only knows hunger. The economy teeters on the brink, eroding public support and threatening stability.
 - Immediate Measures:** Pakistan cannot afford to wait for supply-chain bottlenecks to untangle themselves. The recent agreement with the International Monetary Fund for a \$6 billion rescue package is a crucial step. However, mere financial injections won't suffice. Sustained efforts are needed to alleviate the burden on citizens and stabilize the economy. The government must address this crisis head-on, for the well-being of its people hangs in the balance.
- As the sun sets over Karachi's coastline, casting long shadows on the bustling streets, Pakistan grapples with a crisis that transcends numbers and spreadsheets. It's a crisis etched into the lives of millions—a battle for survival against the invisible storm.

Educational Renaissance: A Call for Infrastructure Renewal in Pakistan

— By Muhammad Adnan Shad

The term "Educational Renaissance" describes a thorough and revolutionary era of revival and regeneration in the discipline of education. A deliberate attempt was made to significantly and favorably alter several aspects of the educational system during an educational revolution. This renewal may comprise revisions to curriculum design, instructional practices, infrastructure development, technology integration, and general educational policy. Pakistan, a country full of potential and young vitality, is at a turning point in its history. But one big obstacle preventing it from reaching its full potential is the shortcomings in education. The most obvious problem among these difficulties is the absence of adequate facilities and infrastructure, which calls for immediate action. The present discourse examines the consequences of Pakistan's inadequate education infrastructure, investigates its root causes, and suggests all-encompassing approaches to tackle this urgent issue. The education industry in Pakistan has come a long way over the years, but many schools, particularly those in rural regions, struggle with poor facilities. Many schools have inadequate classroom space, declining infrastructure, inadequate hygienic facilities, and a lack of contemporary teaching resources. Beyond affecting the standard of education, this lack of infrastructure is harmful to students' entire educational experiences. The poor facilities and infrastructure present in educational institutions have a significant effect on student learning outcomes. Students who are overcrowded in the classroom find it difficult to communicate with their teachers to understand difficult material. Student health and attendance are negatively impacted by insufficient sanitary facilities, which also

lead to poor cleanliness. The lack of contemporary services like computer laboratories, libraries, and sports facilities further restricts students' comprehensive development and exposure to a balanced education. Pakistan's education sector lacks infrastructure and facilities due to several problems. Resources are diverted from urgently required changes by limited allocations to budgets, inadequate financial management and institutional corruption. Furthermore, the prioritization of quantity over quality in the formulation of educational policies frequently results in the neglect of crucial infrastructural development. This issue is made harsher by the gap between rural and urban regions, where poor infrastructure is mostly found in rural areas as a result of negligence and lack of funding. A comprehensive strategy that includes regulatory changes, higher funding allotments, and community involvement is needed to address Pakistan's education sector's infrastructural shortfall. Budget allocations for education must be given top priority by the government, which should also make sure that significant funding goes toward infrastructure development. Money misappropriation and diversion may be avoided with the support of strict anti-corruption measures and transparent financial management. Partnerships with non-governmental groups, the corporate sector, and international organizations can provide more resources and experience to overcome infrastructure deficiencies. To ensure sustainable development, public-private partnerships might be investigated for the construction and maintenance of educational buildings. Involving local people in infrastructure project design and implementation promotes a sense of accountability and ownership. Governmental efforts

may be strengthened by community-driven projects, which will produce more lasting and beneficial results. By offering virtual classrooms, online materials, and e-learning platforms, and adopting technology helps reduce educational inequalities. Ensuring internet access and setting up computer laboratories in schools may improve education and prepare students for the digital era. By funding teacher education programs, educators may better utilize the resources at their fingertips. Even with little infrastructure, empowered instructors may design creative learning spaces. Educational strategies must provide equal importance to rural and urban regions, taking into account unique requirements. Equitable development is ensured when infrastructure designs are adapted to fit numerous geographical and cultural situations. In Pakistan, the need for a renaissance in education is not just an idealistic slogan but also a practical imperative for the country's progress. The key to realizing Pakistan's youth's potential lies in the revitalization of the educational system, which is at the forefront of this movement. Pakistan may take a revolutionary step towards a better educational future by making strategic investments in infrastructure, incorporating technology, interacting with communities, creating partnerships and emphasizing quality. Pakistan can only cross the educational divide and open the door to a new era of knowledge, creativity, and social advancement by means of coordinated efforts and a collective dedication to change. Ultimately, it seeks to further the more general objectives of social growth and advancement by establishing an educational environment that is dynamic, inclusive and sensitive to the changing requirements of both individuals and society.

British generosity: The UK is loaning back African gold it stole. Is it the best it can do? - By: David Okpatuma

At the end of January, the British Museum and Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum announced that more than 30 Asante 'crown jewels', gold artifacts that once belonged to the royals of Asante (or Ashanti) in modern-day Ghana, would be brought to the Ghanaian city of Kumasi in April. This, however, is only a loan deal between the UK museums and the Ghanaian Manhyia Palace Museum. British laws ban museums from permanently returning contested artifacts to their original owners, which means that despite the announced 'repatriation', the golden items, illegally extracted some 150 years ago, will only be temporarily placed in Ghana. Will they ever be returned for good? Historical artifacts aptly depict the culture of a people. Given the waning influence of African traditional institutions, largely eroded by Westernization and cultural importation, societal narratives find resonance when historical events and souvenirs are relied upon. When discussing the legacy of culture, tracing back to a time of overpowering community influence on legal, religious, and nuptial relationships, these artifacts lend credence to the veracity of handed-down stories. Despite fluctuations in the gold trade over the years, Africa's role as a significant player in the gold market is firmly established. In 2022, a cohort consisting of Switzerland, the UK, US, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates accounted for about 60.6% of global gold sales. However, Africa still holds over 40% of the world's gold reserves. This reality underscores the enduring importance of the continent in the gold industry. Central to this narrative is the story of the Ashanti Gold. The Ashanti

region, formerly known as Asante, holds historical significance for its involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade during the 19th century. Despite this dark past, it was also renowned for its exquisite gold and brass craftsmanship, as well as its production of Kente, a brightly colored woven cloth. These contributions to the global trade market earned the region, which later became part of Ghana, the moniker 'Gold Coast'. It was an easily targeted spot for slave traders and gold grabbers who covertly masqueraded as traders. Therefore, it features prominently in the African historical narrative of capital and human exploitation by Europeans. Dr. Judith Spicksley, a historian at the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) at the University of Hull, in her seminal article 'Pawns on the Gold Coast', describes how early in the trade relationship, Europeans took gold pawns as security for debt. However, as unorthodox rules for slave operations weakened and the lust for more gold overshadowed the emergent supply, Europeans turned increasingly toward the use of human pawns. This is no different from other exploitative processes that led to the loss of precious resources on the continent. Official evidence of the looting of Ashanti Gold began during the Anglo-Asante War of 1874, when Britain's military invasion of the Kumasi empire, sitting on the largest gold reserves in the region, inflicted much damage. Armed with explosives and superior firearms, the British military went on a sordid quest for Ashanti's Gold Royal regalia – like the Mponponsuo sword created 300 years ago by the Kingdom's Okomfo

(spiritual leader) Anokye, which led the list of looted items in 1874. Under the pretext of ending slavery, British military incursions and lopsided trade treaties enforced with superior military might on African leaders occurred. Leaders who resisted were exiled, like the Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh, who was exiled to Seychelles in 1874. The British established trading ports, ensuring Britain declared itself a legitimate ruler on foreign soil. The rulers of several African kingdoms acted as middlemen in these trades, often against their will, but had to consent for self-preservation. The spoils from these conquered kingdoms paid for these wars. In Asante, the Asantehene, ruler of the Ashanti people, signed the harsh Treaty of Fomena in July 1874 to end the war. A standout clause in the treaty between Queen Victoria and Kofi Karikari, King of Ashanti, was the payment of 50,000 ounces (over 1,400kg) of approved gold as indemnity for the expenses caused to the Queen of England by the war. Britain incurred costs from these wars at the expense of its opponents, destroying Africa's biggest empires. 1874 wasn't the only instance of looting. In 1896, ceremonial swords, cups, and other vital items measuring a palace's royalty were stolen. In his 2020 book 'The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution', Dan Hicks, a British archaeologist, anthropologist, and professor at the University of Oxford, repudiates the presence of these artifacts in Western museums, which perpetuates a narrative of colonial superiority and cultural dominance while erasing the histories and voices of the communities from which they were

stolen. Although discussions about the restitution of African artifacts predate independence in most African countries, they intensified in the latter half of the 20th century. Archaeologist and Nigeria's head of the Federal Department of Antiquities, Ekpo Eyo, sent circulars to several European embassies in 1972 about the repatriation of the Benin Bronzes (thousands of 14th- to 16th-century plaques and sculptures taken by the British from the African Kingdom of Benin in the late 19th century) and spurred official pronouncements like the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This convention offers a shared framework among state parties regarding actions required to prohibit and prevent cultural property import, export, and transfer. The convention emphasizes that the return and restitution of these cultural properties are the linchpin of the convention, which mandates safeguarding the identity of peoples and promoting peaceful societies to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and stifle the expansionary rise of black-market trades across the continent. After 150 years, the Ashanti Gold artifacts are held in various museums around the world, including major museums in Europe and North America. The British Museum in London holds 32 of the 39 historical artifacts, while seven treasures are at the Fowler Museum of the University of California in Los Angeles. Other minor artifacts, which receive little attention, are held in museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Musee du quai Branly-Jacques

Chirac in Paris, and other smaller regional museums or private collections. In restitution efforts for the Ashanti Gold artifacts, complex legal and logistical hurdles are at play. Firstly, there has to be established provenance through examining documentation, archives, and historical records, owing to the difficulty arising from the long years of history and multiple transfers. Variations in international laws governing the repatriation of cultural property also add to the myriad of challenges. Transporting the artifacts from current holders to their destination and settling associated legal disputes or financial concerns provides further complication. Collaboration among international partners toward this is essential for successfully repatriating these artifacts. In conclusion, this extensive discussion about restitution aims to deepen existing Euro-African diplomatic relationships. The emphasis on restitution primarily lies in its utility as a building block for reconciliation; it aims to rectify pre-colonial injustices, foster international dialogue, and advance the growing bilateral trade between countries on both continents. The Ghana restitution experience will provide the policy framework and lead the roundtable engagement for restitution claims from other countries in Africa. As noted earlier, this action will not only demonstrate contrition but also make the most declarative statement from the West and other collaborators regarding their penitence during this ruinous expedition in colonial Africa.

- Courtesy: RT

Letter to the Editor

Private Educational Institution - need for a holistic approach

I write to express my views on the critical role of private educational institutions and the need for a holistic approach in our education system. As our nation strives for progress, it is imperative that we address the challenges faced by both public and private educational institutions.

- Quality Education for All: Providing quality and affordable education to all citizens is a fundamental responsibility of the state. To achieve this, the government must establish an adequate number of educational institutions, ensure necessary infrastructure, and implement effective teacher selection and training mechanisms. Additionally, improving examination and teacher evaluation

systems in the public sector is crucial.
- Balancing Regulation and Quality: While regulating private educational institutions, the government must strike a balance. It should monitor their growth, quality standards, fee structures, and minimum pay for teachers. Ensuring transparency and accountability is essential.
- Complementing Public Sector Efforts: Acknowledging the challenges faced by the government

education sector—such as low performance, insufficient enrollment facilities, and teacher quality—we must recognize the role of private institutions. Rather than merely encouraging them, the government should actively facilitate their contributions to education. In conclusion, a holistic approach—one that combines the strengths of both

public and private sectors—is essential for achieving comprehensive educational development. Let us work together to create an environment where every student has access to quality education, regardless of the institution they attend. Sincerely,
M Aisf Qureshi
Chairman E-hujra, Peshawar



PM Emphasizes Social and Economic Uplift for Minorities

LAHORE (Agencies): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reiterated his commitment to promoting the social uplift and integration of all minorities in Pakistan. In a message commemorating Easter, he extended heartfelt greetings to the Christian community, emphasizing the values of love, tolerance, and forgiveness advocated by Prophet Isa (AS). He



praised the significant contributions of the Christian community to Pakistan's creation and socio-economic development, expressing confidence in their continued proactive role. The Prime Minister urged unity in building a tolerant and cohesive society, standing against divisive forces. He wished the Christian community a joyful and peaceful Easter.

President felicitates Christian community on Easter



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday felicitated the Christian community on observance of Easter. The president said that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed constitutional rights to all religious communities. The president, in a message, said that all the communities enjoyed religious, political, social and economic rights in Pakistan. "The Christian com-

munity is a precious asset for Pakistan," he said, adding that Easter was an occasion that brought a message of hope, affection and prosperity. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Appreciating the Christian community's contributions to national progress, he further observed that the Christian community had always played their role in the progress and prosperity of the country. The president reaffirmed that Pakistan was committed to the protection of the rights of all communities and would ensure all steps for their prosperity. For the country's progress and prosperity, the entire nation including minorities would have to collectively work together, he added.

Government Adjusts Fuel Prices

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The government announced change in the prices of petroleum products increasing the cost of Motor Spirit (MS) Petrol by Rs 6.66 per liter while reducing the price of High-Speed Diesel (HS-Diesel) by Rs 3.32 per liter. Effective from April 1, 2024, the new price of MS Petrol stands at Rs 289.41 per liter, up from Rs 279.75 per liter. Conversely, HS-Diesel will now be priced at Rs 282.24 per liter, down from Rs 285.56 per liter. The decision was made in response to fluctuations in international market prices, with petrol prices seeing an increase while HS-Diesel experienced



a marginal decline. This adjustment aligns with the government's policy of reflecting international market variations in domestic prices. Notably, this reduction in HS-Diesel prices follows a previous downward revision made in mid-March 2024.

FBR Exceeds Revenue Targets

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) announced that it has collected Rs6,710 billion in revenues during the first nine months of the current financial year, surpassing the set target of Rs6,707 billion. This achievement marks a significant growth of 30% compared to the same period last year. During the July-March period of 2023-24, the FBR has not only met but exceeded its revenue targets. Additionally, the FBR has processed refunds totaling Rs369 billion, a notable increase from Rs254 billion

issued during the corresponding period last year. In March 2024 alone, the FBR collected the assigned target of Rs879 billion, demonstrating consistent performance. Furthermore, refunds amounting to Rs67 billion were issued during this month, significantly higher than the Rs22 billion issued in March 2023. These figures reflect the FBR's continued efforts to enhance revenue collection and streamline refund processes, contributing positively to the country's fiscal stability and economic growth.

Enhancing Ties: Ambassador Hashmi's Visit to Guangdong Province

BEIJING (Agencies): Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, embarked on an official visit to Shenzhen and Guangzhou in the Guangdong province of China, aimed at bolstering political, cultural, academic, trade, and investment ties between Pakistan and the two cities. This inaugural visit by Ambassador Hashmi to the province coincided with the closing ceremony of the year-long Gandhara Art Exhibition, a collaborative effort between Pakistan and China. During his visit, Ambassador Hashmi engaged in a range of activities to strengthen relations with Shenzhen and Guangzhou. On the political front, he met with top leaders from both cities, acknowledging their economic achievements and highlighting investment opportunities in Pakistan for Guangdong investors. Cultural exchanges were also a focus, with Ambassador Hashmi attending

the Gandhara Art Exhibition's closing ceremony and discussing avenues for further cultural cooperation with Chinese counterparts. Economically, Ambassador Hashmi interacted with key Chinese enterprises, discussing their engagement with Pakistan and future investment plans. He assured them of Pakistan's supportive investment policies. In academia, Ambassador Hashmi explored collaborations with Shenzhen University and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, discussing potential research centers and interacting with Pakistani students. Lastly, Ambassador Hashmi engaged with the Pakistani diaspora, acknowledging their contributions and assuring them of embassy support. Shenzhen and Guangzhou, known for their economic prowess and industrial significance, serve as crucial partners for Pakistan in advancing bilateral relations with China.

IGP orders crackdown on power thieves

LAHORE (Agencies): Inspector General Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, has instructed to escalate efforts against electricity theft, emphasizing immediate registration of FIRs and prompt execution of challans. Presiding over a video-link meeting at the Central Police Office in Lahore, Dr. Anwar highlighted the need for swift action against culprits across all districts of the province. Praising Punjab Police's performance in curbing electricity theft, Dr. Usman Anwar disclosed that 83,645 cases were registered against offenders in the past six months, showcasing the province's commitment to combatting this crime. Additionally, he emphasized the enhanced security measures for Chinese

residents and secured traffic routes. Furthermore, the meeting delved into various tasks outlined by the Chief Minister of Punjab, including crime control, operations in rural areas, and addressing issues related to women and children. Dr. Anwar directed officials to intensify efforts against kite flying, drug peddling, and motorcycle theft, while also prioritizing traffic flow improvement on highways. With a zero-tolerance approach towards aerial firing, display of weapons, and vehicles with tinted glasses, IG Punjab stressed the importance of maintaining law and order. Additionally, security arrangements for the upcoming martyrdom day of Hazrat Ali (RA) were reviewed during the meeting.

Rescue 1122 rescued 10,653 people in February

FAISALABAD (Agencies): The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) rescued 10,653 people by responding to 11,395 emergency calls in Faisalabad during February. District Emergency Officer Zafar Iqbal said here on Sunday that the Rescue 1122 had received 11,395 calls last month. Out of them, 2549 calls were related to road accidents, 7747 medical emergencies, 174 fire incidents, 206 crimes, 4 drowning incidents, 6 building collapse and 709 miscellaneous calls. Rescue 1122 teams rescued 10,653 people by providing first aid to 4971 victims and shifting 5,125 others to various hospitals for treatment, he added. Earlier, the District Emergency Officer also presided over a meeting at the Rescue Central Station where Rescue Control Room Incharge Ghulam Shabbir briefed him about the performance of the rescuers while Emergency Officer (Operations) Engineer Tariq Mehmood and others were also present.

KP govt contacts FBR to discuss arrears

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Adviser Muzamil Aslam Sunday contacted Chairman Federal Board of Revenue of Pakistan (FBR) on the telephone to discuss arrears of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority on Sunday. Muzamil Aslam said that the telephonic conversation has been made for arrears of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority. A delegation meeting with FBR on the understanding of cross input tax adjustment would be made soon, he added. He said that 9.4 billion rupees pending agreement, of which 4.1 billion rupees have been received in February 2024 and Rs. 5.3 billion pending with FBR for reconciliation and settlement. He said that the FBR officials are likely to meet Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) officials next week for reconciliation.

Matric scholarship announced for girl students

PESHAWAR (Agencies): International volunteer organization "Volunteer Service Overseas" and Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS) announced scholarships for those female students leaving their school prematurely without completing their education, due to poverty, lack of access, cultural barriers and other issues. Through this initiative, scholarship will be awarded to girls aged 13 to 17 years in selected districts of the province. In this regard, an agreement has also been reached between VSO, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and PRDS. According to the Program Manager MYRP KP, Tariq Hayat Yousafzai the dropped out or those girls who had left their education due to certain impeding factors can apply for free admission in the Matric program. Interested girls students can submit their applications till 20th April 2024 in the AIOU regional campus in Peshawar. According to the agreement, 1200 female students in three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar, Nowshera and Charsadda will be offered free admission in the two-year matriculation course through the distance learning system of AIOU during this year. Program Manager, Tariq Hayat told the media persons in Peshawar that this initiative aims to encourage those female students, who couldn't continue their studies due to poverty, lack of access to schools, cultural barriers and other reasons. Under the ECW Multi-Year Resilience Program, free textbooks will also be distributed among the students besides giving them free admission.

CM takes notice of midwife's rape in Mianwali hospital

LAHORE (Agencies): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif took notice of an incident of alleged rape of a midwife by two persons in Mianwali Mother and Child Hospital. The CM

sought a report in this regard from the IG Police. She said that a comprehensive investigation of the incident should be conducted and the perpetrators should be dealt with iron hands.

Mega Projects Underway to Tackle Rawalpindi's Water Supply Issues: WASA MD

Rawalpindi (Agencies): The Managing Director of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Muhammad Saleem Ashraf, highlighted ongoing mega projects aimed at addressing the city's water supply challenges. These projects focus on reducing water wastage through repairing underground pipes and upgrading filtration plants. Additionally, efforts include adding chlorine for improved water quality and installing

rainwater harvesting systems on 30 buildings to conserve water. Ashraf emphasized citizen cooperation in paying water bills on time and announced initiatives such as supplying water from Chahan Dam and Rawal Dam, supported by the Asian Development Bank. Furthermore, WASA ensures uninterrupted water supply during Ramadan and vows swift action in case of malfunctioning tubewells.

RDA Ordered to Crack Down on Illegal Housing Schemes

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Kinza Murtaza, the Director General of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), has instructed authorities to take decisive action against unlawful housing projects. The RDA has intensified its crackdown, with FIRs lodged against 12 illegal schemes. Owners of these projects, including Gulshan-e-Kashmir and Rawal Enclave, face legal consequences for

violating regulations. The RDA warns citizens against investing in unauthorized schemes and urges project owners to obtain proper approvals. Additionally, the RDA has notified relevant authorities and agencies about illegal advertisements on social media. The MP&TE Directorate has been tasked with impartially enforcing regulations on unauthorized constructions and encroachments.

CWAs to boost overseas employment opportunities for Pakistanis abroad

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) has given the task to the Community Welfare Attaches (CWAs) stationed abroad to strategically enhance job opportunities for Pakistanis in the international market. An official source told APP that currently, there were 21 CWAs posted abroad by the Government of Pakistan. The main aim of this task was to evaluate and improve the progress of CWAs in identifying and exploring targeted demand for employment prospects for Pakistani nationals through engagements with foreign employers. This involved the formulation, signing, and execution of Letters of Intent (LOIs) and agreements with foreign companies, critical in

amplifying the export of Pakistani manpower. It has emphasized the crucial need for close collaboration between CWAs and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, particularly in sharing information related to employment demands abroad and the necessary skills required for those jobs. This step will facilitate the design of training programs specifically tailored to the skills demanded by foreign companies, ensuring that Pakistani workers are well-equipped and aligned with global standards. While underscoring the significance of this initiative, highlighted its dual impact, not only in enhancing employment opportunities for Pakistanis abroad but also in contributing to the economic growth of the nation.

Syed posted as MD, Cholistan Development Authority

BAHAWALPUR (Agencies): The Government of Punjab has notified the posting of senior official, Naeem Iqbal Syed as Managing Director, Cholistan Development Authority (CDA). According to official sources at the CDA, the Government of Punjab has notified the posting of Naeem Iqbal

Syed as Managing Director, Cholistan Development Authority with immediate effect and until further orders. It is recalled here that Syed had also performed his duties as MD, CDA few years back. He also performed service as Secretary, Transport Department of the Government of Punjab.

Ayaz Sadiq and Ghulam Mustafa Shah Extend Easter Greetings

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah have extended warm greetings to the Christian Members of Parliament and the Christian community on the occasion of Easter. Sadiq emphasized the invaluable contribution of non-Muslim communities to Pakistan's development and highlighted the constitutional provisions ensuring basic rights for minorities. He urged parliamentarians and citizens to actively promote peace and interfaith harmony for societal progress. Additionally, Sadiq reiterated the con-

stitutional guarantee of rights for all citizens regardless of religious beliefs and called for bipartisan legislation to enhance interfaith harmony. He commended the Christian community for their contributions to Pakistan's socio-economic progress and echoed the principles of equality laid out by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Shah echoed Sadiq's sentiments, emphasizing the rights of all non-Muslim communities to freely practice their religion as per the constitution and Jinnah's vision. He applauded minorities for their loyalty to Pakistan and their contributions to its progress.

Besant Hall Cultural Centre honoring Pir Hassam din Rashdi to take place on April 1

HYDERABAD (Agencies): Besant Hall Cultural centre (BHCC) will organize a programme to mark the 43rd death anniversary of noted historian Pir Hassam din Rashdi on 01 April (Monday) at 4. pm. The Director BHCC Sobia Ali Shaikh informed that the event will be presided over by Ghulam Muhammad Lakho while key speakers Paras Rashdi, Imam Rashdi, Taj Joyo and

Gohar Noshahi will shed light on the life, career and literary contribution of Pir Hassam din Rashdi. Pir Hassam Din Rashdi was born on 20 September 1911 in District Larkana. He served as an editor/ Co editor in a number of newspapers and Magazines including Al-Munir (Magazines), Peigham (Magazine), Sindh Zamindar (Newspaper) and Mehran (Magazine).

AJK PM vows indiscriminate socio-economic uplift

MIRPUR (Agencies): AJK PM Anwar ul Haq pledges inclusive development and unveils new initiatives during an Iftar dinner in his honor. He emphasizes boosting tourism, improving infrastructure, and supporting marginalized communities.

The government is committed to combating corruption and prioritizing environmental conservation. Additionally, PM laid the foundation for new link roads, signaling progress in the region's development goals.

PFC CEO Calls for Interest-Free Loans to Boost Furniture Industry

LAHORE (Agencies): Mian Kashif Ashfaq, CEO of the Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC), has urged the government to provide interest-free loans to furniture manufacturers for five years. This initiative aims to facilitate the import of new technology, enhancing the industry's infrastructure. Speaking to a delegation of furniture producers led by Mian Faryad Ahmad Raza, he emphasized the need to streamline existing markets and explore new opportunities in Far-East, Central Asian Republics, Latin America, and Russia for 'Made-in-Pakistan' products. Ashfaq highlighted the importance

of the "Marketing Intelligence Cell" at the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) in assisting manufacturers with international market information. He urged both public and private sectors to collaborate to tap into international markets effectively. Ashfaq emphasized the immense potential of Pakistan's furniture industry, stressing that with government support, it could double its growth within two to three years. Additionally, he called for government support in terms of grants for exhibiting and traveling to trade shows to promote Pakistani exports globally.

Citizens can use 'Text to CPO' service to send direct message to CPO

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): The citizens can use 'Text to CPO' service to send a direct message to City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani, said a police spokesman. He informed that CPO, Syed Khalid Hamdani taking an initiative had launched 'Text to CPO' service to facilitate the citizens and improve service delivery. Through this service, the citizens could send a direct message to CPO on cell number 0300-4911720, he added. According to a police spokesman, during last six months, a total of 1560 complaints were received from the citizens. More than 99

percent of the complaints of the citizens were resolved, he said adding, in this regard, 103 cases were registered while 14 complaints were being processed. A complainant can whatsapp/text messages regarding abuse of civic authority, corruption/bribery, police violence, misbehavior, poor investigation, delay in FIR or any other complaint related to police. Action on merit would be ensured on the complaint, as per the vision of Chief Minister Punjab and Inspector General of Police Punjab and best service delivery was being ensured for the citizens, he added.

Revamping Hosiery Industry to Drive Exports

Faisalabad (APP): Amidst challenges faced by Pakistan's industrial sector, the hosiery industry emerges as a crucial player with potential for growth and export expansion. Despite setbacks in recent years, there's optimism for transformation under the new government's leadership. Outdated machinery and high energy costs have hindered the hosiery sector's competitiveness in the global market. Industrialists, like Mian Abdur Rashid, highlight the need for modernization to enhance efficiency and reduce energy wastage. In areas like Jinnah Colony and Millat Town, Faisalabad, small hosiery units thrive for local consumption, while export-focused units are concentrated in industrial belts like Jaranwala-Khurrianwala. However, industry-wide challenges such as high business costs and raw material scarcity persist. The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA)

underscores the industry's vital role in exports but calls for urgent measures to address energy tariffs and raw material availability. Khawaja Muhammad Amjad stresses the importance of pro-industry policies, advocating for modern technology adoption, reduced taxation, and improved business conditions. Muhammad Idrees of the Pakistan Textile Exporters Association emphasizes lean manufacturing and sustainable practices to boost productivity. Experts, including Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawab, advocate for collaboration between industry, academia, and policymakers to drive innovation and skill development. They urge the government to realign policies, incentivize exports, and prioritize industrial revival for sustainable economic growth. In conclusion, modernizing the hosiery industry holds the key to enhancing Pakistan's export potential, generating employment, and achieving economic stability in the long run.

PPP to hold ZA Bhutto death anniversary public meeting after Eid: Nisar Khuhro

KARACHI (Agencies): Pakistan People's Party Sindh has announced that Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's death anniversary will be observed at district and Taluka level due to the Holy month of Ramadan while public meeting will be organized at Garhi Khuda Bux after Eid-ul-Fitr. The provincial president of Pakistan People's Party Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said in a statement that the public meeting in connection with ZA Bhutto's martyrdom day will be held at Garhi Khuda Bux on April 14 after

Eid. He asked the party's district and Taluka organizations to organize Quran Khwani and prayer ceremonies in respective areas on April 4 due to the Holy month of Ramadan. PPP workers and leaders will pay tribute to their party's founder chairman and former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and other martyrs on April 4 but the major public meeting will be organized on April 14 at Garhi Khuda Bux after the fasting month of Ramadan is over, Nisar Khuhro said.

SNGPL intensifies operations against individuals involved in gas theft

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Gas Task Force has escalated its operation against gas theft in the region, resulting in the apprehension of individuals engaged in illegal activity. General Manager Islamabad, Adnan Ahmed said that swift action has been taken against suspected perpetrators of gas theft. In Chatha Bakhtawar, the owners of a Girls Hostel are currently under investigation for their alleged involvement in gas theft. Similarly, in Sector G-10, a culprit involved in gas theft through a direct connection has been apprehended. As a consequence of

their actions, the gas connections of the accused have been promptly disconnected, and legal proceedings have commenced against them. In addition to lodging FIRs at relevant police stations, efforts are underway to assess the extent of stolen gas, and appropriate charges will be filed accordingly. Those responsible for jeopardizing national assets will face the full force of the law and will not be spared, regardless of any external pressure exerted. The SNGPL Gas Task Force remains steadfast in its commitment to combating gas theft and safeguarding the integrity of the nation's resources.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Makes Historic Visit to Maryamabad Church

LAHORE (Agencies): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz made history by becoming the first CM Punjab to visit the Maryamabad Church in 131 years. Her visit coincided with the Christian festivities on Easter, marking a significant moment in Punjab's history. For the first time, an Easter grant was disbursed during her visit. Maryam Nawaz visited the residential locality of the Christian community in Sheikhpura suburbs and presented Easter grant cheques to

Christian families. She warmly greeted the Christian community, embracing them and participating in their celebrations. Maryam Nawaz engaged with Christian women, discussing their Easter preparations and activities. Expressing her commitment to inclusivity, Maryam Nawaz emphasized equal participation in the festivities of all communities. She also cut the Easter cake jointly with Christian leaders, further fostering unity and harmony. Addition-

Power Cement Makes Historic Entry into the US Market

Karachi (Agencies): In a groundbreaking move, Power Cement, one of Pakistan's leading cement manufacturers, has successfully exported its maiden shipment of cement to the United States. Following its successful ventures in Europe, particularly the UK, this strategic move aligns with Power Cement's mission to explore new markets and expand its global footprint. Power Cement's journey began as a relatively small producer near Karachi, Pakistan. However, a transformative decision in 2017 changed its trajectory. The company embarked on an ambitious modernization project, upgrading its plant to meet rapidly-changing demands and elevate its standing within the Pakistani cement industry. The investment paid off. In 2020, Power Cement unveiled a state-of-the-art production line, boosting its capacity from 3000 tons per day

to a staggering 10,700 tons per day. This capacity increase, equivalent to approximately 3.2 million tons annually, positioned Power Cement as a major player in the industry. Notably, the quality of its products now ranks as the highest in the country. But the story doesn't end there. Power Cement's recent export to the US signifies a significant milestone. The company's innovative approach, which prioritizes European technology and quality, sets it apart. Unlike the usual assembly of cement plants using low-cost Chinese components, Power Cement's investment ensures superior product quality, lower operating costs, and a longer lifespan. The new line's impressive performance includes reduced heat consumption and energy usage, contributing to cost savings and environmental compliance. The US market, hungry for construction materials due to Presi-

dent Biden's \$6 trillion infrastructure package, welcomed Power Cement's shipment. The company's commitment to excellence and adherence to strict environmental standards positioned it favorably. Moreover, Power Cement's forward-thinking approach extends beyond the US. With a keen eye on the UK market and a focus on low-chromium cement, the company continues to explore new horizons.

This achievement underscores the impact of State Bank of Pakistan's policy, which links import Letters of Credit (LCs) to export proceeds. By incentivizing companies to develop new export markets, the State Bank's approach encourages growth, innovation, and global competitiveness. Power Cement's successful foray into the US exemplifies the power of strategic policies in shaping Pakistan's economic landscape.

IRSA releases 127,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 127,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 156,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1415.67 feet and was 17.67 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 35,100 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1076.60 feet, which was 26.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 46,100 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 70,000, 36,800, 27,100 and 6,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 52,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 16,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Supreme Court Admits Writ Petition on University Teachers' Service Structure

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has admitted a writ petition filed by the All Public Universities BPS Teachers Association (APUBTA) regarding the lack of service structure for teachers in public sector universities across the country. The petition, filed by APUBTA President Dr. Sami Ur Rahman, represents the interests of nearly 50,000 BPS teachers and aims to address the violation of their basic rights and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) ordinance. The petition highlights the severe issues faced by university teachers due to the absence of a service structure, which is in violation of their basic rights and the HEC ordinance. It emphasizes the failure of the HEC to implement Section 10(1)(c) and (q) of the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, leading to a lack of promotion policy for BPS teachers compared to the Tenure Track System (TTS) teachers. The petition seeks to bring attention to the fact that the majority of university teachers (93.5%) have no promotion channel, resulting in a dead-end career structure. Despite commitments made during a meeting with the HEC Chairman in 2020 to draft a promotion policy for BPS teachers, the HEC failed to fulfill its commitment. The petitioners request the Hon'ble Court to direct the HEC to ensure the rights of around two million students studying in public sector universities by implementing a promotion policy for BPS teachers and ensuring due regard to their seniority compared to TTS faculty.

Clean Punjab drive: MWMC disposes of 25,000 tons waste

MULTAN (Agencies): Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) disposed of over 25,000 tons of waste from the city during the "Clean Punjab" campaign. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) MWMC Shahid Yaqoob said that the vigorous cleanliness operation remained continued on the last day of the Suthra Punjab campaign. The operation cleanup was launched by the company to eliminate long-standing filth depots at Syedanwala Bypass. A grand cleanliness operation was conducted in the public interest on the bypass and

Head Muhammad Wala road outside the company limits. A squad consisting of more than 100 sanitary workers conducted operation clean-up despite the holiday. Shahid Yaqoob said that the company would provide a clean environment by clearing all areas under the directions of Commissioner Maryam Khan. District Council and Cantonment Boards have been contacted for the permanent cleaning of Head Muhammad Wala road. The intensive cleanliness operation will continue without interruption in connection with Eid-ul-Fitr, he concluded.

SAU Tandojam and ITC Partner to Boost Agricultural Exports

HYDERABAD (Agencies): Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam and the International Trade Center (ITC) have signed an MoU to introduce an undergraduate degree program focusing on enhancing Pakistan's agricultural exports and meeting global standards. The initiative aims to provide comprehensive training to youth and establish a state-of-the-art testing laboratory at SAU Tandojam. Additionally, an elective course on Sanitary Phytosanitary (SPs) will be launched, pending approval from the Higher Education Commission.

ITC will support SMEs in rural areas of Sindh and Balochistan through the GRASP program to meet international standards and global market demands. Dr. Fateh Marri, Vice Chancellor of SAU Tandojam, emphasized the importance of improving the quality of Pakistani agricultural goods, while Rizwan Tariq, ITC Provincial Lead, highlighted the potential of enhanced rural agricultural standards to alleviate poverty. The signing ceremony was attended by university officials and other notable attendees from the academic community.

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اس رمضان آپ کی زکوٰۃ مستحق مریضوں کی نگہبان

سول ہسپتال کراچی میں موجودہ نگہبان جو اپنے علاج کے لیے کسی نگہبان کی تلاش میں ہیں، آئیں مل کر ان کے لیے مفت علاج اور ادویات کی فراہمی کو یقینی بنائیں۔ اس ماہ رمضان اپنی زکوٰۃ/عطیات اور صدقات نگہبان و ملیفیر ایسوسی ایشن کو دیں۔

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Foreign firms' losses from exiting Russia top US\$107 billion

LONDON (Agencies): The corporate exodus from Russia since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine has cost foreign companies more than US\$107 billion in writedowns and lost revenue, a Reuters analysis of company filings and statements showed. The volume of losses have increased by one third since the last tally in August last year, underscoring the scale of the financial hit to the corporate world from Moscow's invasion, as well as highlighting the sudden loss of Western expertise from Russia's economy. "As Russia's invasion continues



amid faltering Western military aid, and the granularity of Western sanctions regimes increases, companies still aiming to exit Russia will likely face further difficulties and have to accept greater writedowns and losses," said Ian Massey, Head of Cor-

porate Intelligence, EMEA, at global risk consultancy S-RM. President Vladimir Putin, fresh from securing re-election in a landslide victory widely condemned in the West as unfair and undemocratic, now has a renewed mandate to pursue further isolation from the West, including through additional asset seizures and political pressure, Massey added. Moscow demands discounts of at least 50% on foreign asset sales and has steadily tightened exit requirements, often accepting nominal fees as little as one rouble.

Dubai's allure dims for Russians amid costs, US sanction pressure

DUBAI (Agencies): Two years ago, Dubai became a hot favourite with Russians looking to park money or build new lives after President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. That allure is now dimming as the cost of living in the glitzy emirate surges and its banks get stricter in enforcing US sanctions. Russian money flows into the United Arab Emirates — which Dubai is part of — are showing signs of slowing, according to bankers, executives and investment professionals. None of them predict a widespread exodus of cash already in the UAE, yet executives say



it seems to have absorbed most of the benefits of Russian money and is unlikely to see more large inflows. Some Russian arrivals are considering moving to new jurisdictions or even returning home as an expat rush into Dubai drives up rents and daily expenses. Un-

like the US and the EU, the Gulf country doesn't have sanctions on Russia. Still, Russian entities setting up bank accounts are now more likely to face scrutiny from local banks as the UAE comes under increased US pressure to tackle potential sanctions evasion, according to people familiar with the matter, who asked not to be identified in discussing information that is private. Investment based immigration firm Henley & Partners is seeing fewer Russians establishing in the UAE, "so the trendline is going down," said Philippe Amarante, its head of the Middle East.

Australia's A\$1bil domestic solar push aims to cut China's reliance

CANBERRA (Agencies): Australia will invest A\$1 billion (US\$652 million) to ensure more solar panels are made domestically, as the nation looks to reduce its dependence on imports from China. The Solar Sunshot programme will offer production subsidies and grants to help Australia capture more of the global solar manufacturing supply chain, the government said in a release. While the nation has the highest uptake of rooftop solar in the world — with panels on one in three house-



holds — just 1% of those have been made locally, it said. Australia's rapid shift away from its aging fleet of coal power stations and massive uptake of household solar has made it a test case

for the global energy transition. The new programme follows similar moves by countries including the US and India in encouraging local supply, but may still struggle to push out manufacturers from China, which provide more than 90% of Australia's panels. "Australia should not be the last link in a global supply chain built on an Australian invention," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in the release, referring to pioneering work on the technology at the University of New South Wales.

Amazon boosts generative AI with US\$2.75bil Anthropic deal

NEW YORK (Agencies): Amazon.com Inc says it's investing an additional US\$2.75 billion in Anthropic, completing a deal it made last year to back the artificial intelligence start-up and expand a partnership between the companies. The infusion brings Amazon's total investment in Anthropic, a well-regarded builder of AI tools able to generate text and analysis, to US\$4 billion, following an earlier investment announced in September. As part of that deal, Amazon had the right to contribute the additional funds in the form of



a convertible note, provided it did so before the end of March. As part of the tie-up, Anthropic has also agreed to use Amazon Web Services data centres to power some of its operations, and to use Amazon's custom-built computer chips.

Anthropic, based in San Francisco, has also committed to using chips from Alphabet Inc's Google, another close partner. Anthropic is tied up with multiple big tech companies, including Google, which joined a US\$450 million round of financing last May led by Spark Capital. Google and Amazon Web Services are both Anthropic's cloud computing partners. Anthropic was formed in 2021 by former employees of OpenAI, including Daniela Amodei and her brother Dario, who serves as its chief executive officer.

Asian shares subdued with yen on intervention watch

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The yen languished near its weakest in decades on Thursday though the threat of intervention from Japanese authorities kept investors leery of pushing the currency to a new low, while Asian stocks fell ahead of a key US inflation reading. Markets were largely range bound ahead of Friday's much-anticipated US core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index data, the Federal Reserve's preferred measure of inflation. Few markets will be open to digest the new reading, however, given the long Easter weekend



in many countries. Heightened focus was also on the yen, which was last little changed at 151.30 per dollar, having slid to a 34-year low of 151.975 in the previous session. Japan's three main monetary authorities held an emergency meeting on Wednesday to

discuss the weak yen, and suggested they were ready to intervene in the market to stop what they described as disorderly and speculative moves in the currency. That came after officials ramped up verbal warnings to stem the yen's fall, with finance minister Shunichi Suzuki saying "decisive steps" will be taken against excessive currency moves. Japanese authorities last intervened to support the yen in 2022, when they also used phrases such as "deeply concerned" and pledged to take "decisive steps" prior to intervention.

Yellen warns China's industrial ramp-up is distorting global economy

WASHINGTON (Agencies): US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen slammed China's use of subsidies to give its manufacturers in key new industries a competitive advantage, at the cost of distorting the global economy, and said she plans to press China on the issue in an upcoming visit. "There is no country in the world that subsidises its preferred, or priority, industries as heavily as China does," Yellen said in an interview with MSNBC Wednesday — highlighting "massive" aid to electric-car, battery



and solar producers. "China's desire is to really have global domination of these industries." The treasury chief was speaking from Norcross, Georgia, where she's showcasing the reopening

of a US solar-cell manufacturing facility that had shut in 2017 under the pressure of "cheap imports flooding the market." Speaking to reporters after the event, Yellen declined to say whether the Biden administration was prepared to threaten Beijing with retaliatory trade actions if China doesn't reduce its subsidies. "It's important for the Chinese to understand why we have a concern," she said. "But I don't want to get to retaliation. We want to see what we can do that's constructive."

China's 5G subscribers exceed 850 million in February

BEIJING (Agencies): The number of 5G mobile subscribers in China had reached 851 million as of the end of February, official data showed. This figure accounted for 48.8 percent of the total number of mobile subscribers using either one of China's three major telecommunication enterprises or China Broadnet. China's total number of mobile subscribers stood at 1.75 billion as of the end of February, the



Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said. The aforementioned three major telecommunication operators are China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom. Data also revealed that the number of fixed broadband subscribers using these three firms had amounted to 643 million by the end of February, with gigabit broadband users accounting for 26.7 percent of the total.

Jakarta to remain economic hub despite capital city move

JAKARTA (Agencies): Indonesia's parliament on Thursday designated special status for Jakarta, keeping the metropolis as the country's economic epicentre, amid plans to move the capital city to Borneo island. Indonesia plans to move its capital city away from congested and sinking Jakarta, to Nusantara, a US\$32-billion city under construction in the jungles of East Kalimantan on Borneo. The city is a flagship project of outgoing president Joko Widodo, who pledged to redistribute wealth and development currently concentrated in Java, across the archipelago. An "agglomeration" council will be created to harmonise development



plans between Jakarta and its satellite cities, according to a copy of the new law dated March 18 seen by Reuters. Home affairs minister Tito Karnavian said after deliberation in parliament that Jakarta should still be improved to compete with other "world-class cities" once the seat of government has been moved to Nusantara.

iPhone maker Foxconn sets record high as AI frenzy persists

TAIPEI (Agencies): Shares of Hon Hai Precision Industry Co, also known as Foxconn globally, soared to a record as a frenzy over artificial intelligence outweighs concerns about a sluggish recovery in the smartphone sector. The Taiwanese maker of Apple Inc's iPhones rose as much as 5.1% to NT\$156 on Thursday. Shares took off this month as its strong quarterly earnings fuelled optimism over demand for the company's AI servers. The AI craze has brought big gains in companies like Nvidia Corp as investors see massive growth potential for the sector. Hon Hai's AI server revenue is likely to reach 18% of its total revenue in 2025 due to the rising



share of Nvidia shipments, JPMorgan Chase & Co analysts including Gokul Hariharan wrote in a note Wednesday. To be sure, Hon Hai's total revenue exposure to AI is likely to remain at 10% to 12% this year, compared with about 20% for its competitors like Wiyynn Corp, Quanta Computer Inc and Wistron Corp, according to a JPMorgan note earlier this month.

Unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia drops to 4.4% in Q4 2023: GASTAT



RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's overall unemployment rate dropped to 4.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023, marking a decrease of 0.4 percentage points from the same period in 2022. When compared with the previous three months, the latest report from the General Authority for Statistics revealed a 0.7 percentage point decline in the Kingdom's joblessness rate in the

fourth quarter of 2023. GASTAT data showed that non-employment among Saudi nationals stood at 7.7 percent in the fourth quarter of last year, indicating a decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared to the same period in 2022. However, the participation of locals in the labor force during the last three months of 2023 decreased by 1.2 percentage points year on year, reaching 51.3 percent. Reducing the number of people without jobs is a crucial objective outlined in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, with goals set for such rate to decrease to 7 percent by the end of the decade, alongside a projected women's participation rate in the workforce of 30 percent.

Tech giant Xiaomi enters China's cut-throat EV market

BEIJING (Agencies): Chinese consumer tech giant Xiaomi will launch its first-ever EV at a press conference in Beijing Thursday, injecting itself into a fiercely competitive sector in the world's largest car market. China's EV sector has grown rapidly in recent years — propelled by purchasing subsidies that were discontinued in late 2022 — and dozens of domestic automakers are engaged in a stiff price war to get ahead in a crowded market. Xiaomi is known around the world for affordable smartphones and sleek home appliances, and CEO Lei Jun says he is now putting his "reputation on the line" with the SU7 EV, and challenging Chinese car giant BYD and Elon Musk's Tesla. Sleek, sporty, and available in blue bay, olive green or elegant grey, the SU7 even includes "sound simula-



tion", Lei says, "to recreate the thrill of driving a sports car". Lei has not divulged the price, but has promised it will be "the best-looking, best-driving and smartest car" costing under 500,000 yuan (US\$69,200). Analysts have said they expect it to come in at half that price. "If my guess is correct, the 200,000 to 250,000 yuan range, that actually is the most competitive segment in the China EV space at the moment," Johnson Wan, an analyst at Jefferies Financial Group Inc, told Bloomberg.

Japanese drugmaker reports 2 more deaths in supplement scare



TOKYO (Agencies): A Japanese drugmaker whose dietary supplements are at the centre of a growing health scare reported on Thursday two more deaths potentially related to its tablets. Last week, Kobayashi Pharmaceutical recalled three supplement brands — "Beni Koji Choleste Help" and two other products — which contain an ingredient called red yeast rice, or "beni koji", supposed to help lower cholesterol. Thursday's announcement brings the total number of deaths under investigation by the

company and health ministry to four, with more than 100 other people hospitalised. "We were told yesterday by a bereaved family that a person who had been using Choleste Help had passed away due to kidney disease," the drugmaker said in a statement Thursday. It added that it had been told separately that another person who had used Choleste Help in recent years had died. "We are in the process of confirming the facts and causal relationships in both of these cases. However, we decided to make this report public from the viewpoint of prompt disclosure." The Osaka-based company says it has also supplied red yeast rice to around 50 other firms in Japan and two in Taiwan. Kobayashi Pharmaceutical sells a wide range of health products marketed through television adverts in Japan.

Red Bull cliff divers conquer Jazan wadis

JAZAN (Agencies): Cliff divers Catalin Preda of Romania and David Colturi, from the USA, became the first to dive into Saudi Arabia's wadis on Tuesday in the run-up to the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series 2024. During a hike and dive experience through the rough and rugged natural landscapes of Wadis Lajab and Al-Rough in Jazan, Preda and Colturi explored canyons, valleys, waterfalls and freshwater ponds. A two-time World Series stop winner, Preda said he was in awe of the Kingdom's cliff search experience. "It was beautiful



to see the majesty and the special nature of these particular spots. Arriving at the locations was absolutely mind blowing, seeing what they actually look in real life, only having seen a couple of pictures," said the

Romanian. At 2.15 million sq. km, Saudi Arabia's arid climate makes it the largest country in the world devoid of rivers, lakes or areas of lush natural vegetation. The duo had to embark on an expedition to discover hidden pools for their diving adventures. In Jazan, the Kingdom's heartland and an area noted for its fruit production, Preda and Colturi found what they were looking for in the form of two wadis with fresh water and dramatic views. This also meant interesting rock formations and unique take-off spots.

Prosecutor seeks 2-1/2-year jail term for Spain's ex-soccer chief Rubiales over kiss

MADRID (Agencies): A prosecutor at Spain's High Court is seeking a prison sentence of 2-1/2 years for former soccer federation chief Luis Rubiales over his unsolicited kiss on player Jenni Hermoso, a court document seen by Reuters on Wednesday showed. Prosecutor Marta Duran charged Rubiales with one count of sexual assault and one of coercion for his alleged actions in the aftermath of the kiss, offenses carrying jail terms of one year and 18 months, respectively. Rubiales, 46, grabbed Hermoso and kissed her on the lips on Aug. 20 of last year during the



awards ceremony after Spain's victory in the women's World Cup in Sydney, making global headlines and causing a national debate in Spain about sexism. Hermoso and her teammates said the kiss was unwanted and demeaning, but Ru-

biales argued it was consensual and denied any wrongdoing. The prosecutor also accused the former coach of the women's national team, Jorge Vilda, the current sporting director of the Spanish federation (RFEF), Albert Luque, and the RFEF's marketing chief, Ruben Rivera, of coercing Hermoso into saying the kiss was consensual. The indictment said the three officials harassed Hermoso by exerting "constant and repeated acts of pressure" directly on the player and through her friends and family. They each face 18 months behind bars as well.

Germany celebrate turnaround as confidence grows before hosting Euro 2024

BERLIN (Agencies): What a difference a game makes. The pessimism and frustration shrouding Germany's soccer team ahead this summer's European Championship has been lifted and replaced by confidence that the host can now win the tournament. All it took was a win over France for the Germans to cast aside their doubts. "Everything fits together," former Germany great Lothar Matthäus said after the France game, which was followed up by a 2-1 win over the Netherlands on Tuesday. "The team not only can be European champion, they must be European champi-



on!" It's a remarkable turnaround for a team that had lost their previous games against Austria and Turkey in November, and which had only two wins from their previous 10 matches before beating France 2-0 in Lyon on Saturday. "Something has come out

of the last week that wasn't there before," said Toni Kroos, who came out of international retirement to rejoin the team for Euro 2024. "There's a confidence in our actions and I hope we take that with us toward the tournament because then we can be confident of always doing well." Germany needed to dig deep to beat the Dutch in Frankfurt after Joey Veerman's fourth-minute goal for the visitors, but goals from Maximilian Mittelstädt and Niclas Füllkrug consolidated the team's new-found bullishness and rewarded coach Julian Nagelsmann for some brave calls in squad selection.

Former China coach Li Tie goes on trial

BEIJING (Agencies): Former China coach and ex-Everton midfielder Li Tie went on trial Friday on allegations of bribery, state media said, part of a broader crackdown on corruption in football in the country. His former boss, the fallen Chinese Football Association chairman Chen Xuyuan, was jailed for life this week for taking bribes worth US\$11 million. The Chinese legal system is tightly controlled by the ruling Communist Party and courts have a near-100 percent conviction rate in criminal cases. Local journalists



gathered in front of the court in Hubei province where the 46-year-old Li's case will be heard. Li, who was China coach from January 2020 until December 2021, is accused of giving and taking bribes, state broadcast-

er CCTV said. Li, who played in the Premier League 34 times between 2002 and 2004, featured in a documentary aired on CCTV in January about widespread corruption in Chinese football. CCTV regularly airs confessions by criminal suspects before they have appeared in court, a practice widely condemned by rights groups. In the programme Li said he had arranged nearly US\$421,000 in bribes to secure the head coach position, and helped to fix matches when he was a club coach in the Chinese Super League.

Suns eclipse Nuggets, Rockets silence Thunder

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Kevin Durant scored 30 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to lead the Phoenix Suns to a 104-97 victory over reigning NBA champions Denver on Wednesday to keep things close at the top of the Western Conference. The Suns made 16 three-pointers and never trailed after the first quarter in Denver. Durant said it wasn't a matter of making a statement, but of paying attention to detail in a demanding final playoff push. "I don't



know if you're trying to show anybody anything," Durant said. "I think (we're) just trying to keep getting better... we're

just trying to play good ball." Denver's two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic, playing with a sore back and hip, scored 22 points with nine rebounds and 10 assists. But the Nuggets clearly felt the absence of point guard Jamal Murray, who missed a third straight game with a sprained left ankle. It was just their third defeat in their 18 games since the All-Star break, but left them just one half-game ahead of Oklahoma City and Minnesota atop the West.

Babar Azam Reinstated as T20I and ODI Captain

LAHORE (Agencies): Stylish batsman Babar Azam has been reinstated as the captain of Pakistan's national T20I and ODI teams, announced the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) selection committee on Sunday. The decision was made unanimously, marking Azam's return to leadership roles after being replaced last November due to the team's performance at the ICC ODI World Cup. Fast bowler Shaheen



Shah Afridi had temporarily taken over the T20I captaincy. The move to strip Azam of captaincy had previously drawn criticism, prompting PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi to delegate captaincy appointment powers to a five-member selection committee in March. Azam first took on the T20I captaincy in 2019 and later assumed the ODI and red-ball leadership roles in 2020.

Mendis Guides Sri Lanka's Batting Domination

Chittagong, Bangladesh (Agencies): In the second Test against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka continued their batting dominance as they reached 476-7 by tea on the second day. Kamindu Mendis, aiming for a third consecutive century in the series, remained unbeaten on 54, adding to Sri Lanka's impressive total. Despite Dhananjaya de Silva missing out on a century, Sri



Lanka's batting depth was evident

as they piled on runs. Prabath Jayasuriya also contributed with 28 runs before tea. Bangladesh struggled to make breakthroughs, managing to take only three wickets in two sessions. De Silva's dismissal for 70 and Mendis's fifty off 99 balls were notable highlights. Although Mendis survived a caught-behind scare on 35, he continued to anchor Sri Lanka's innings.

Collins beats Rybakina to win Miami Open

Miami (Agencies): American Danielle Collins upset the odds to win the Miami Open WTA title on Saturday, beating Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan 7-5, 6-3 to clinch her first WTA 1000 title in her final season on the tour. The 30-year-old Collins, number 53 in the world, is the lowest ranked woman ever to win the tournament, clinching her biggest career win in a two-hour triumph. Collins announced in January that she will be retiring from the sport at the end of this year and her unexpected run to the final and victory over the world number four delighted the home crowd. "I couldn't think of a better way to win my first 1000 title," said Collins before being presented with the trophy. It was a disappointing second straight loss



in a Miami final for Rybakina, who missed out to Petra Kvitova last year. Both players looked strong on their serve in the early exchanges but Florida's Collins broke at the end of the first set, capitalizing on a third break point to win the set when Rybakina went long. Then the momentum shifted heavily in Collins' direction when she broke Rybakina's first service game of the second set.

Chelsea and Lyon advance to the Women's Champions League semifinals



LONDON (Agencies): Emma Hayes' hopes of going out on the ultimate high at Chelsea moved a step closer on Wednesday as the London club reached the Women's Champions League semifinals after a 1-1 draw with Ajax. Chelsea advanced 4-1 on aggregate after winning the first leg in Amsterdam 3-0. Hayes takes over the US women's national team at the end of the season, when she will lead their bid to win Olympic gold in Paris. Before that, she is aiming to win a

quadruple of trophies with Chelsea — including the Champions League for the first time. The Women's Super League champion had effectively secured their place in the next round after a dominant performance in the first leg of the quarterfinals at Ajax. And they extended their overall advantage to 4-0 on aggregate after Mayra Ramirez's goal in the 33rd minute at Stamford Bridge. Chastity Grant scored in the 65th to give Ajax some consolation and a 1-1 draw on the night. While Chelsea are searching for their first Women's Champions League trophy, Lyon are hunting a record-extending ninth. The French champion advanced to the semifinals for a record 13th time after a 4-1 win over Benfica.

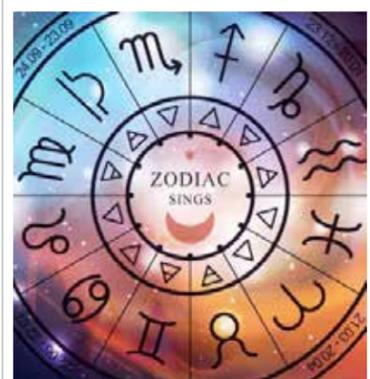
Saudi contenders fly flag in Dubai for World Cup night

DUBAI (Agencies): Unbeaten Asfan Al-Khalediah and this year's Saudi Cup third, Saudi Crown, are among a contingent of Saudi-owned or trained horses heading to the Dubai World Cup at Meydan Racecourse on Saturday. Asfan Al-Khalediah extended his unbeaten career run to a remarkable 17 wins by comfortably landing the G1 Diriyah Gate Development Authority Obayiah Arabian Classic on dirt on Saudi Cup night last month. He will line up in the G1 Dubai Kahayla Classic over the same 2000m at Meydan alongside his stablemate, Tital Al-Khalediah, himself a G1 winner after his victory in the 2100m Ministry of Culture Al-Mneefah Cup on turf and



winner of nine out of 11 career starts. This will be the first time the two have clashed on the racecourse. Mutlaq bin Mishriff, stable representative at Al-Khalediah Stables, said: "Both are illustrious champions, with golden records. Undoubtedly, the aspiration is to secure victories under the banner of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, championed by Prince Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz and Al-Khalediah."

DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 01, 2024



It may take quite a while, but your innate flexibility means you can get it done!

– **VIRGO**: Your impulses may be all over the map today, but it's vital that you take care of first things first. In fact, you may want to hold off on giving important feedback to someone close to let it ferment a bit.

– **LIBRA**: You're having lots of fun with your friends and anyone else lucky enough to tag along. It's one of those days when you're full of great energy and should be able to convince anyone of anything.

– **SCORPIO**: You're usually pretty open-minded, but right now you're not so sure you want to be. It's a good idea to hear people out, at least. Today of all days, good ideas can come from any direction!

– **SAGITTARIUS**: Your understanding of new ideas is quite intense right now, so make sure you're absorbing as much as you can! It's a really good time for you to explore and learn what's possible out there.

– **CAPRICORN**: Your financial acumen is pretty strong right now, so it's a good time to make decisions in that field. See if you can get your friends or family to go along with you. There is power in numbers.

– **ACQUARIUS**: You and your amazing energy are incredibly attractive to the right people today, so get out there and see what you can shake up! It's a great time for you to get a new social groove going.

– **PISCES**: Something small happens, maybe rather late in the day, that makes you question your plans. It's a good time to reconsider big moves even if you end up going along with them in the end.

Russian Ground Robots Clash with Ukrainian FPV Aerial Drone

MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian-Ukrainian conflict witnessed its first known drone combat on March 29, 2024. This historic encounter featured a confrontation between land-based Russian unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) armed with an AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher and a TM-62 mine-laying system, and an ag-

ile Ukrainian First Person View (FPV) drone. The Ukrainian FPV drone emerged victorious, destroying both Russian UGVs, marking a significant leap in unmanned warfare. The event underscores the escalating sophistication in drone engagements, with both sides pushing the boundaries of conventional warfare. The AGS-17

Plamya, a Soviet-designed automatic grenade launcher, played a pivotal role in the combat, known for its firepower and an effective firing range of up to 1,700 meters. This drone duel serves as a testament to the rapid adoption and adaptation of unmanned technology for combat scenarios, shaping the future of air defense systems.

New Toad Species Found in South China's Guangdong



GUANGZHOU (Agencies): Researchers in China have identified a new horned toad species, dubbed Boulenophrys elongata sp. nov., in the Lianhua Mountains of Guangdong Province. Published in Asian Herpetological Research, the study highlights its discovery in the region's high-altitude areas surrounded by lush subtropical forests. This toad, characterized by its small size and elongated limbs, differs notably from other species in the area. The research attributes its uniqueness to a combination of distinct physical features and genetic variations in mitochondrial genes 16S, 12S, and CO1.

Cambodia Plans UNESCO Heritage Listings



Cambodia (Agencies): Prime Minister Hun Manet announced Cambodia's intention to nominate seven tangible and three intangible cultural properties for UNESCO's World Heritage List. The tangible sites include historical landmarks like former M-13 prison, Banteay Chhmar Temple, and Kulen Mountain, while intangible treasures like Cambodian Songkran and Khmer wedding traditions are among those proposed. Hun Manet expressed the significance of preserving ancestral culture through international recognition. He outlined the nomination process, indicating Cambodia's goal to register Cambodian Songkran on UNESCO's intangible heritage list by 2026. Presently, Cambodia boasts four tangible and six intangible cultural heritages listed by UNESCO, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity and history.

Malta shuts down national airline, opens new one



VALLETTA (Agencies): Malta's national airline, Air Malta, ceased operations on Saturday, 50 years after its first flight, making way for a new flag carrier that starts flying on Sunday. Air Malta began operations in 1974 but eventually became loss-making, forcing successive governments to implement measures to stop the hemorrhage. The decision to shut down the debt-ridden airline came last year when the European Commission refused to allow the Maltese government to save the ailing airline through a 300 million euro (324 million U.S. dollars) injection. The Commission said this would have breached EU State-aid rules. The new KM Malta Airlines will take over as the flag carrier for the Maltese islands, operating a smaller number of routes and with a leaner staff complement.

Indian opposition protest arrest of leader ahead of polls

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Top leaders of India's opposition coalition and thousands of supporters rallied in the capital Sunday, decrying "autocracy" in protest at the arrest of a senior colleague ahead of gener-

al elections. Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of Delhi and a key leader in an opposition alliance formed to compete against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was detained this month in connection with a

long-running corruption probe. Kejriwal's government is accused of receiving kickbacks while handing out liquor licences to private companies. Kejriwal, 55, denies the charges.

Argentina reports over 163,000 dengue cases

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): Argentina has reported a total of 163,419 cases of dengue fever so far in 2024, its Ministry of Health said Saturday. The ministry said in its National Epidemiological Bulletin (BEN) that the central region reported the largest number of cases, followed by the northeastern region, while the western and southern regions reported the fewest cases. So far, the cumulative incidence rate is 384 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. "Deaths were recorded in all age groups, with the highest mortality rate among those over 80 years of age," the BEN said. The Ministry of Health has advised individuals to



enhance their preventive measures against the disease carried by the Aedes aegypti mosquito. These measures include eliminating possible mosquito breeding sites, avoiding bites with the use of repellents, and seeking prompt medical attention if symptoms of the illness develop.

Japan and China Discuss Fukushima Wastewater Release

BELJING (Agencies): Japan and China engaged in discussions regarding the release of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The talks, held in Dalian, northeastern China, marked the first publicly acknowledged dialogue between the two countries on this issue. Japanese officials emphasized the safety measures and ongoing radiation monitoring activities surrounding the water release. China, represented by research experts, exchanged technical opinions during the dialogue. The release of treated wastewater from the Fukushima plant began last August, sparking concerns from China and opposition



parties in South Korea and the Solomon Islands. Despite the challenges, Japan is committed to a 30-year process of releasing more than 1 million tons of treated water. The recent incident of water leakage at the plant, caused by human error, has raised further scrutiny but reportedly had no environmental impact.

UN Staff Wounded in Southern Lebanon Blast

Beirut (Agencies): United Nations peacekeepers reported that three military observers and a translator sustained injuries on Saturday due to an explosion in southern Lebanon. The personnel were conducting a foot patrol near the UN-demarcated border between Israel and Lebanon. They were affiliated with the UN Truce Supervision Organization, which supports the UN peacekeeping force. The United Nations is actively investigating the origin of the explosion. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah escalated after the Palestinian militant group

Hamas carried out an unprecedented attack on southern Israel on October 7, leading to war in Gaza. An "enemy (Israeli) drone" targeted the Rmeish area in southern Lebanon, where the incident occurred. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the incident as "dangerous," while the foreign ministry labeled it a violation of international law. The Israeli army denies any involvement in the area, emphasizing that they did not strike there. Hezbollah, known for its formidable arsenal of rockets and missiles, claims its attacks on Israel are in support of Hamas.

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Bulgaria, Romania take first steps into Europe's visa-free zone

BUCHAREST (Agencies): Bulgaria and Romania joined Europe's vast Schengen area of free movement on Sunday, opening up travel by air and sea without border checks after a 13-year wait. A veto by Austria however means the new status will not apply to land routes, after Vienna expressed concerns over a potential influx of asylum seekers. Despite the partial membership, the lifting of controls at the two countries' air and sea borders is of significant symbolic value. Admission to Schengen is an "important milestone" for Bulgaria and Romania, symbolising a "question of dignity, of belonging to the European Union", according to

foreign policy analyst Stefan Popescu. "Any Romanian who had to walk down a lane separate from other European citizens felt being treated differently," he told AFP. Ivan Petrov, a 35-year-old Bulgarian marketing executive who lives in France, said he was enthusiastic about less stressful travelling and the time he would be able to save. "This is a great success for both countries, and a historic moment for the Schengen area -- the largest area of free movement in the world," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement Saturday. "Together, we are building a stronger, more united Europe for all our citizens."

World Bank Debars Two Pakistan-Based Consultancy Firms for Fraudulent Practices

Washington (Agencies): The World Bank has taken decisive action against fraudulent practices in connection with the Sindh Resilience Project in Pakistan. The project aims to mitigate flood and drought risks in selected areas of the province and strengthen its capacity to manage natural disasters and public health emergencies. The Pakistan-based consultancy companies Solutions for Development Support (Pvt.) Ltd. and Community Resilience Initiative, along with Mr. Malik Nasir Hussain Tanoli, a Pakistani national, have been blacklisted by the World Bank. Their failure to disclose their close affiliation during tenders financed under the project constitutes fraudulent practices under the World Bank's Consultant Guidelines. Mr. Hussain, acting as the procurement and contract management specialist for the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Sindh, was directly involved in implementing the project. However, the lack of transparency regarding their affiliations led to their debarment. As

part of a settlement agreement, Solutions for Development Support (Pvt.) Ltd., Community Resilience Initiative, and Mr. Hussain have acknowledged responsibility for the underlying sanctionable practices. They have agreed to meet specified integrity compliance conditions to be released from debarment. These conditions include developing and implementing integrity compliance measures consistent with the World Bank's Integrity Compliance Guidelines. The debarment renders the companies, Mr. Hussain, and any of their controlled affiliates ineligible to participate in World Bank Group-financed projects and operations until at least October 20, 2027. Additionally, their cooperation and acceptance of responsibility have resulted in a reduced period of debarment. This action by the World Bank underscores the importance of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in development projects, ensuring that funds are used effectively and for the benefit of the communities they serve.

Pope Francis presides over Easter Sunday Mass

Vatican City (Agencies): Pope Francis on Sunday gave Easter Mass with tens of thousands of Catholics at Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City before his traditional blessing, as concerns persist over his health. The 87-year-old arrived in a wheelchair to preside over the mass from 10:00 am (0800 GMT) in cloudy and windy weather, with the events broadcast live around the globe. France will pronounce the "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) blessing at midday where he is expected to bring up the international conflicts raging worldwide. Easter Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is the culmination of Holy Week, a major part of the Catholic calendar followed by 1.3 billion people. The pope on Saturday presided over the Easter Vigil at the Vatican in front of some 6,000 people from around the world, a day after his last-minute cancellation at a major Good Friday procession revived ques-



tions about his health. He delivered a 10-minute homily in Italian, speaking without any undue difficulty and condemning "the walls of selfishness and indifference" in the world. At the end of the two-and-a-half-hour service he showed little sign of fatigue, taking time to greet and bless some of the worshippers. In a brief statement Friday, the Vatican had said that "to preserve his health ahead of tomorrow's vigil and the Easter Sunday mass, Pope Francis will this evening follow the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum from the Santa Marta Residence", where he lives.

NY 'trash revolution' targets overflowing waste, and the rats feasting on it



NEW YORK (Agencies): New York City is iconic for its yellow taxis, pizza slices, bright lights on Broadway and its rats. Mountains of black garbage bags line cramped city sidewalks, a feast for the millions of rodents who call New York home. But such unsanitary eyesores could soon be a remnant of the city's past, with local authorities launching a "trash revolution" to clean

up the streets. Since the beginning of March more than 200,000 food-selling businesses have been required to use hard-lidded bins to store the millions of tons of garbage they produce annually. By 2026 residential buildings will also be required to use such containers, a plan inspired by the approach used in cities including Barcelona, Madrid and Buenos Aires. A pilot program is underway in Manhattan's northern Harlem neighborhood. The city will eventually lose some 150,000 parking spaces -- an eternal sore spot for many New Yorkers -- as a result of the new container rollout, but advocates say any protest might be diluted by the pleasing results of the clean-up.

Cyprus church rocked by monk fraud allegations

NICOSIA (Agencies): The powerful Orthodox church on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus has been embroiled in a scandal involving two monks accused of fraud. Cypriot police are investigating events at Osiou Avakoum monastery, located in the picturesque village of Fterikoudi in the foothills of the Troodos mountains, after allegations against the now-suspended clergymen were first made public by a leading bishop earlier in March. CCTV footage leaked to local media appeared to show the two men plotting to trick parishioners into donating money to the church by secretly placing myrrh inside a cross to make it seem as if it were bleeding. They were also reportedly caught on camera engaging in sexual activity with each other. Same-sex relations are frowned upon by the church. In a letter issued by their lawyer, the two clergymen have denied all the allegations made against them. Both monks had been active on social media for some time with posts claiming to have seen various "miracles" like curing cancer, a deaf baby regaining its hearing and infertile couples unexpectedly bearing children. Some 800,000 euros in cash was also reportedly found in a safe at the property earlier in March during a raid ordered by Bishop Isaias of Tamassos, who has direct authority over the monastery.

Thousands of faithful had been drawn to the monastery from across the island and were strongly encouraged to make donations. Police spokesperson Christos Andreou told local media they were investigating "crimes of a financial nature by the Osiou Avvakoum monks", as well as a complaint by the men who say they were kidnapped by hooded men during the church raid.

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