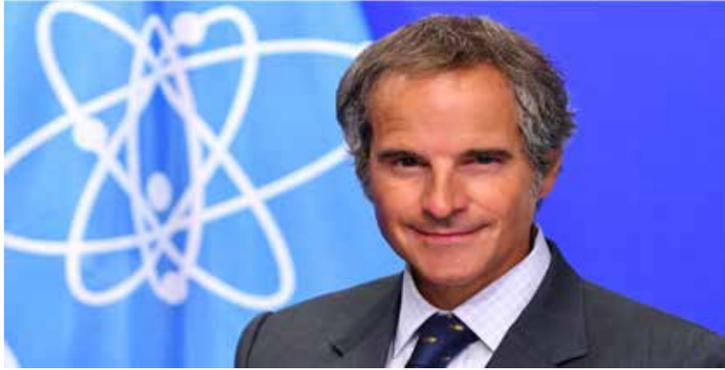




Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to visit Pakistan today

Islamabad: Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will visit Pakistan from 15 - 16 February 2023. During his two-day visit, DG IAEA will hold high-level meetings and undertake visits to different institutions employing nuclear technology in the fields of health, agriculture, industry, and power generation. The visit will provide an opportunity for Pakistan and the IAEA to explore avenues for further strengthening their ongoing cooperation in the area of peaceful applications of nuclear technology for the socio-economic development of the country. Pakistan is a founding Member of the Agency since 1957 and enjoys longstanding and mutually beneficial collaboration with the IAEA.

Earlier, a group of UN Disarmament Fellows comprising officers from 24 countries, visited Pakistan from October 8 to 10 as part of



their international study tour under the auspices of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

During the visit, they received a briefing on Pakistan's perspective on arms control, disarmament, and nuclear non-proliferation as well as the imperative of unhindered access to dual-use technologies for peaceful socio-economic applications, said an official state-

ment issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The group comprised officers from 24 countries including Algeria, Angola, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Cambodia, Egypt, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iran, Libya, Montenegro, Pakistan, Palau, Poland, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Togo, United States, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen. (Agencies)

Poland starts training Ukrainian crew for Leopard 2 tanks

ATHENS: Poland has started training the Ukrainian crew who will operate the Leopard 2 tanks, local media reported on Monday. Visiting the army barracks in the southwestern province of Swietosow where Polish instructors train Ukrainian crew in tank operations, Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak reiterated that the country would lead the efforts for building a coalition of countries that will provide Ukraine with A4 models of the Leopard 2 tanks, according to state-run PAP news agency. Germany, on the other hand, will provide the coalition with more advanced A6 models of the tanks, he added. Blaszczak noted that Cana-



da has already delivered the Leopard 2 tanks to Poland for Ukraine, and talks are underway with Spain. "We expect Norwegian tanks too to arrive soon," he added. "Now the biggest challenge for us is the spare parts. This is the task we set for the German defense industry," Blaszczak explained. (Agencies)

Trial begins for Chadian rebels charged with assassinating ex-president

KIGALI: The trial of more than 400 rebels accused of assassinating former Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno opened Monday in the capital N'Djamena. Around 454 former combatants are facing multiple charges including terrorism, enlisting minors in an armed group, undermining security and territorial integrity and the assassination of the former president at the Specialized Criminal Chamber of the N'Djamena Court of Appeal, according to the Chad Information Agency. At the opening of the trial, Prosecutor General Mahamat El-hadj Baba Nana said the trial was critical for Chadian justice,

which will make it possible to establish the responsibility of the defendants in the case. The trial was adjourned to Wednesday to allow all the suspects to have lawyers. The suspects, belonging to a rebel group calling itself the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), were captured in April 2021 during clashes with the Chadian army in the north of the country in which former President Deby died. Deby, who had ruled the country for 30 years, died on the front line several hundred kilometers north of N'Djamena, where he had gone to visit troops battling the rebels. (Agencies)

Three people killed in shooting on Michigan State University campus

WASHINGTON: Three people were killed and five others wounded Monday when a gunman opened fire on a university campus in the United States, before fleeing the scene, local police said. The suspect opened fire inside a building at Michigan State University shortly after 8 p.m. local time, said Chris Rozman, interim deputy chief of campus police. The gunman then moved on foot to a nearby building where more shots were fired. "There are three confirmed fatalities," Michigan State University police said in a statement on Twitter. "This is in addition to the five victims who have been transported to the hospital." Some of the wounded had suffered life-threatening injuries, Rozman told reporters. Police released a photo of the suspect, a short Black man, wearing red shoes, a denim jacket and a baseball cap. "We currently have hundreds of police officers and law enforcement officials - state, local and federal - on campus working in a coordinated effort to ensure the safety of campus and identify and apprehend the suspect," Rozman said. (Agencies)

EU rejects Israel's decision to legalize 9 West Bank outposts

LONDON: The European Union on Monday rejected Israel's decision to legalise nine illegal outposts in the occupied West Bank and turn them into new settlements. The decision by Israeli authorities was not accepted by the EU, according to Anadolu Agency quoting a statement from the office of EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. The statement said the Jewish settlements are illegal under international law and reiterated that the EU will not recognise any changes made outside of the 1967 borders. It also made a call to Israeli authorities to stop the construction of these settlements and to immediately reverse the recent legalisation decision, it added. An Israeli ministerial committee on Sunday approved a plan to cancel legislation on disengagement



from the northern West Bank that was enacted in 2005. The plan would allow the construction of four settlements that were dismantled in 2005 by former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. According to Anadolu, estimates indicate that around 650,000 settlers are living in 164 settlements and 116 outposts in the occupied West Bank. Under international law, all Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are considered illegal. (Agencies)

MWL condemns settlement operations on the occupied Palestinian territories

Makkah: The Muslim World League (MWL) has expressed its rejection and condemnation of the illegal settlement operations on the occupied Palestinian territories, which violate all relevant international laws and resolutions. In a statement issued on Sunday by the General Secretariat of MWL, the Secretary General of the MWL Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, who is also President of the Association of Muslim Scholars, reiterated



the call for a just and comprehensive peace, and once again for stopping all unilateral measures that undermine the chances of reaching a solution in the occupied territories, emphasizing the firm position of MWL on the side of the Palestinian people. (Agencies)

Russia ready to help India with tanks - senior official



MOSCOW: Moscow is ready to provide technology for India's new tanks, Vladimir Drozhzhov, the deputy director of the Russian Federal Service of Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS), said on Tuesday. According to Drozhzhov, Russia can share its advanced Armata modular tracked platform with India. "The Russian side is planning to participate in joint development of the Indian main battle tank with the use of modern Russian technology," Drozhzhov told RIA Novosti news agency at the Aero India 2023

expo in Bangalore. He added that India plans to launch an international tender for the new tank. Indian media reported last year that New Delhi was seeking to procure tanks under its Future Ready Combat Vehicle project in order to replace the aging fleet of Soviet-designed T-72s. The Armata platform serves as a base for Russia's T-14 heavy tank and the T-15 armored infantry fighting vehicle (AFI). The same modular technology can be used for other hardware, including self-propelled howitzers. The Armata tanks and AFIs were first shown to the public in 2015. The T-14 is equipped with a 125mm gun mounted on an unmanned turret. According to several reports, the tank has been used in Russia's military operation in Ukraine. Moscow and New Delhi have worked together in the past to design India's BrahMos medium-range supersonic cruise missile. (Agencies)

'Terrible toll': Russia's invasion of Ukraine in numbers

PARIS: When Russia's President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, he started a war that has killed tens of thousands of people, ravaged cities, and pummelled the country's economy. A year on, here is the cost of the conflict: According to the latest estimates from Norway, the conflict has wounded or killed 180,000 Russian soldiers and 100,000 Ukrainian troops. Other Western sources estimate the war has caused 150,000 casualties on each side. In comparison, some 15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed in a whole decade of fighting in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. Ukrainian soldiers often use the term "cannon fodder" to describe the Russians sent to their death along the frontline. They are often

poorly trained conscripts who stand little chance against Ukrainian forces determined to defend their country. Others are convicts recruited in Russian jails to swell the ranks of Russian paramilitary group Wagner, who Kyiv and its allies say are deployed on near-impossible missions with the equivalent of a gun pointed to their head. The onslaught has also taken its toll on the Ukrainian side, as shown by the endless blue and yellow national flags fluttering above cemeteries across the embattled country. By the time Moscow's forces seized control of Mariupol in late May after three months of heavy bombardment, the southern port city had been reduced to a sea of rubble strewn with dead bodies. (Agencies)

Chinese embassy temporarily closes Consular Section in Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: Chinese embassy yesterday announced a temporary closure of the Consular Section in Islamabad from February 13 until further notice. The Chinese Embassy issued a notice of temporary closure of the Consular Section on its website for the general public too until further notice," said the announcement. "Applicants with other questions can also contact us at islamabad@csm.mfa.gov.cn." it added: "In case of

emergency, please call 051-8496167 for questions about passport, travel documents, notarization," it said. The Chinese embassy gave no reason for the suspension of the service but growing insecurity could be one of the factors. Earlier, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan directed to take all possible measures to ensure safety of Pakistani and foreign nationals in the country, especially the Chinese nationals.

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.

Iranian Consul General calls on KP Governor

PESHAWAR: Acting Iranian Consul General here on Monday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor House and expressed his deep condolences over the tragic police lines' mosque blast. He said the function about the anniversary of Ira-

nian Revolution was also cancelled due to the police lines' blast. The KP Governor thanked the Iranian Consul General and people of Iran for their enormous love and affection for the people of Pakistan. Haji Ghulam Ali said he had visited Iran on several occasions at the invi-

tation of the brotherly country and was impressed with its overall development, especially with modern technology. The Governor proposed an exchange of trade delegations and a Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran exhibition that was welcomed by the Iranian Consul General. (APP)

Federal govt to be approached for speedy release of funds for merged areas' projects: Governor

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali here Monday said the Federal government would be approached for speedy release of funds to ensure early completion of ongoing development projects in merged districts. He said that the clean drinking water projects were for people's welfare and he along with the provincial government would approach the federal government to ensure speedy release of funds for time-

ly completion of the ongoing projects for merged tribal districts. The governor expressed these views while presiding over a highly level meeting of the department of clean drinking projects, here, at Governor house. Caretaker Minister Hamid Shah also attended the meeting which briefed by its Secretary Idrees Khan. The governor was informed that 74 projects for settled and 12 for merged areas were included in the annual

development program while work on three projects in the sector were underway with financial assistance of Korea and Japan. He said that 32 projects could be completed on time if approved funds were provided. The governor was informed that work on another solar based water project was underway at remote Agra, a border area of Bajaur and Malakand costing Rs 2 million that would benefit six million population. (APP)

Police arrest 30 suspects near Rashaki Economic Zone

PESHAWAR: The police in Nowshera have conducted a search and strike targeted operation near the Rashaki Economic Zone to suppress anti-social elements and provide a peaceful environment for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. During the operation, 30 suspects were arrested, and five pistols, 1120 grams of hashish, and 50 grams of

ice were recovered from their possession. Under the leadership of Sub-Divisional Police Officer, SDPO Akora Ajab Khan, and SHO Masri Banda, Jamshed Khan, RRF, Ladies Police, CTD, and Special Branch personnel participated in the operation. The operation saw the blocking of known criminal hideouts and the searching of the houses of criminals, proclaimed offenders, and suspicious individuals. Two proclaimed offenders and one drug dealer were arrested during the operation. The arrested suspects were investigated

at Misri Banda police station, where they were interrogated. District Police Officer Muhammad Umar Khan emphasized that providing a peaceful and conducive environment for the CPEC project is a top priority for the police and that foolproof security arrangements have been made around the project to ensure its success. The operation in and around the Rashaki Economic Zone is part of these efforts to suppress anti-social elements and create a safe and secure environment for economic growth and development in the country. (APP)

1.2 mln metric ton of wheat ordered to PASSCO: Director Food

PESHAWAR: Director of Food department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Yasir on Tuesday said that there was no shortage of flour or wheat in the province as enough flour was being supplied from Punjab. He told the media here that the food department had already ordered 1.2 million metric

tons of wheat to Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation Ltd (PASSCO) to meet the flour demand adding that 0.9 metric tons of wheat had already been provided by the company. He said that at present flour was being supplied to the market without any issue. (APP)

Nominations of 20 candidates okayed for Nowshera by-election

PESHAWAR: The stage has been set for a by-election on two national assembly seats in the Nowshera district, scheduled to be held on March 16th. 20 aspirants have filed nomination papers to contest the by-election on NA-25 and NA-26. The Returning Officer has declared all the 20 nomination papers as cleared. The offices of Returning Officer for NA-25, Election Commissioner Nowshera, Tahir Khan, and Returning Officer for NA 26 Hassan Raza remained busy the other day for scrutiny of the nomination papers. From NA-25, the

nomination papers of Pervaiz Khat-tak (PTI), Khan Pervaiz (PPP), Mian Wahajhat Kakakhel (ANP), Ikhtiar Wali, and Malik Fayyaz (PMLN), and Mehmood Ahmad of Tehrik e Labbaik while from NA-26, the nomination papers of Imran Khattak, Ashfaq Ahmad Khan and Mia Khaliq of PTI, Muhammad Abdullah Khattak and Ghulam Idrees of PPP, Zahid Khan of ANP, Jan Muhammad of PMLN and Aziz ul Haq of Tehrik e Labbaik were accepted. The final candidates will be allotted election symbols on 23RD February. (APP)

Orakzai district administration establish collection point for Turkey-Syria earthquake victims

PESHAWAR: In response to the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, the district administration of Orakzai has established a collection point at the district headquarters Babar Mela. The collection point was made following the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Adnan Farid Afridi to provide aid to the affected communities. Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also announced his decision to assist Turkish brothers in this difficult time.

The collection point is expected to ensure the smooth and efficient distribution of aid to the earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria. The Orakzai district administration has called on the residents of the district to come forward and contribute to the collection point by donating generously. The administration has also assured the donors that all necessary measures will be taken to ensure the safe and timely delivery of aid to the needy. (APP)

NAB to be contacted to re-open Malam Jabba scam case of PTI: Ikhtiar Wali

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ikhtiar Wali on Tuesday said that a letter would be written to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to re-open the Malam Jabba property corruption case. In a media statement issued here, he said that the party would also pursue a stay order against multi-billion BRT corrup-

tion case while an application would be filed in the NAB to expedite the probe of the billion Tree Tsunami scam of the PTI government. He further said that the facts would be disclosed to the nation about the closure of the Provincial Ehtesab Commission and the recommendations of General (R) Hamid Khan in this regard. (APP)

Al-Khidmat foundation appeals to collect donations for earthquake victims of Turkiye, Syria

PESHAWAR: Al-Khidmat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Khalid Waqas on Tuesday directed the district presidents of all districts of the province to speed up the process of collecting donations for the relief of Turkiye and Syria earthquake victims. In a statement issued here, he directed to accelerate the series of meetings with philanthropists includ-

ing the shop-to-shop campaign for obtaining donations and run a special campaign for at least one week. He said that Mian Abdul Shakoor, the Central Vice President of Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan, was supervising the self-help activities in Turkiye and Syria, while our volunteer teams were also engaged in search and rescue activities in the affected areas. (APP)

SP seeks data for issuing parking cards at Police Lines

PESHAWAR: The Superintendent of Police Headquarters has issued a notification to the concerned authorities, requesting information for issuing parking cards and stickers for vehicles

in Peshawar Police Lines. The notification was issued in the wake of a tragic incident last month, in which over 100 people were killed in an explosion at a mosque in the Police Lines. (APP)

Terrorists attack on police repulsed, no casualty reported

BANNU: The police have repulsed a terrorists attack on a police picket at Kashu Pull on late Monday night and no casualty was reported. According to police, terrorists armed with automatic weapons attacked the Kashu Pull police picket in the limits of police sta-

tion Domel in Bannu and opened fire at the police personnel. The terrorists escaped by taking advantage of darkness, after the police retaliation. District Police Officer, Muhammad Iqbal visited the police picket and lauded the policemen for prompt action. (APP)

Action starts against hoarding of gasoline; 25,000 litres petrol recovered

DIR LOWER: On the directives of Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Deputy Commissioner Zubair Khan, the district administration started crackdowns against hoarding of petroleum products and recovered 25,000 litres of gasoline from an under construction pump. According to an official communique, all the additional assistant commissioners (ADC) and Assistant Commissioners (AC) visited their respective sub-divisions and checked the supply of petrol and diesel to the public besides the computerised gauge. Assistant Commissioner Adenzai Muhammad Daud acting on a tip-off conducted a raid on an under construction petrol pump and recov-

ered 25,000 litres of petrol illegally stored by the owner. The AC arrested the owner and started legal action against him while taking the petrol tanker into custody. Similarly, ADC Samar Bagh Noman Pervez visited various petrol pumps in sub-division Jandol and checked the gauge, facilities and storage of gasoline as per the quota. He warned that if owner of any petrol pump would be found guilty of hoarding, he would be penalised under the law. Meanwhile, AC Batkhela Noor Nawaz also visited petrol pumps and advised the owners to ensure uninterrupted supply of gasoline to consumers and warned of strict legal action against hoarders. (APP)

Cold and dry weather to prevail in most KP

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted that cold and dry weather is expected over most districts of the province, while very cold in upper districts and hilly areas. It said that isolated light rain and drizzle with light snowfall over hills is likely to occur over Chitral, Upper Dir and Upper Swat districts. During the last 24 hours cold and dry weather occurred over most districts of the province, while very cold in upper districts. The maximum and minimum

temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 23/05, Chitral 10/01, Timergara 18/04, Dir 16/-04, Mirkhani 13/-01, Kalam 09/-13, Drosht 11/-01, Saidu Sharif 18/-01, Pattan 16/09, Malam Jabba 07/-05, Takht Bhai 22/03, Kakul 15/-00, Balakot 20/01, Parachinar 17/-03, Bannu 24/04, Cherat 12/02, D.I. Khan 26/08. The minimum temperatures recorded in the province were, Kalam -13 C, Malam Jabba -05 C and Dir-04 C. (APP)

Five godowns sealed in residential areas

PESHAWAR: Taking notice of unauthorised commercial activities in residential areas, the district administration on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Shafiqullah Khan sealed five illegal godowns in Kohati area here and arrested the owners. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar received complaints that the commercial activities were being carried out inside houses in the residential area of Kohati due to which the residents were facing severe problems. In this regard, Assistant Commissioner Rao Hashim along with Additional Assistant Com-

missioner Junaid Shah visited the area and found warehouses inside residential units. The administrative officers sealed all the five godowns, arrested the owners and started legal action against them. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar directed administrative officers to regularly visit residential areas and take legal action against commercial activities. He appealed to the public to report complaints about commercial activities in residential areas to the control room number 0919211338 of the district administration Peshawar. (APP)

PTI workers join JUI-F

PESHAWAR: PTI workers of Mashoggar, Village Council Zagali announced to quit their party and join JUI(F). In a press release issued here on Tuesday, it has been said that in this regard, a public meeting of JUI(F) workers was held at NA-29 Peshawar under the chairmanship of former MNA Nasir Khan Musazai.

Besides, Haji Sighatullah, ameer of the provincial assembly constituency PK-74, Qaiser Khan and general secretary, Qari Fayyaz, and other office bearers of JUI were also present on the occasion. During the public meeting, Haji Gul Jamal and Haji Daud of PTI quit their party and joined JUI-F. (APP)

DC for increasing night time patrolling to maintain peace, order

MALAKAND: Deputy Commissioner Shahid Khan Mohmand on Tuesday directed the concerned officials and Malakand Levies to increase night time patrolling in the district to maintain peace and order. He directed the assistant commissioners to regularly visit their respective areas and review the security situation from time to time and take measures accordingly. Following the directives of the DC,

Assistant Commissioner Batkhela Shakil Khan along with officials of Malakand Levies visited Levis Post Khar and Batkhela late at night and checked duty records and officials on duty. He said that the protection of the lives and properties of the masses was the top priority and warned that any security official to be found guilty of showing lethargy in his duty would be dealt with strictly. (APP)

Application to fill 84 vacancies of district courts' judges sent

PESHAWAR: A proper application has been sent to the Public Service Commission for appointments on 84 vacancies of civil judges and magistrates that were lying vacant for a long in different districts of the province. According to the Registrar Office Peshawar High Court (PHC), the requisition in the application sent in the name of the Chairman Public Ser-

vice Commission said at the moment 84 posts of civil judges, magistrates, and area Qazis were vacant in the lower courts of the various districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that needed to be filled on a priority basis. The letter said appointments on these posts were necessary to dispose of scores of the cases waiting for hearing in these courts. (APP)

GOLD PRICE IN PAK

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
Per Tola Gold	Rs 197,400	Rs 180,949	Rs 172,725	Rs 148,050
Per 10 Gram	Rs 169,239	Rs 155,135	Rs 148,084	Rs 126,929
Per Gram Gold	Rs 16,924	Rs 15,513	Rs 14,808	Rs 12,693
Per Ounce	Rs 479,785	Rs 439,801	Rs 419,812	Rs 359,839

FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	271.00	274.00
China Yuan	40.68	41.08
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Saudi Riyal	71.5	72.5
U.A.E Dirham	74.30	75.00
UK Pound	326.5	329.2
Euro	287	289.50
Australian Dollar	183	185
Canadian Dollar	206	208.2

Emergency Numbers

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

After a drawn-out meeting with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), citizens of the country must brace themselves for radical fiscal adjustments. According to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, the government will introduce a mini-budget to generate an additional revenue of Rs.170 billion through taxes and unbudgeted subsidies. The fact of the matter is, we have no other choice but to comply with the conditions set forth. Had these steps been taken earlier, by countless previous governments, our circumstances may not have been so severe. The next four months are crucial when it comes to the early disbursement of \$1.2 billion from the IMF and in order to secure the tranche, our government will have to make some policy changes. The first sector targeted is power and fuel, each subjected to a Rs.3.39 increase per unit and Rs.4 per unit respectively. The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) deemed these steps to be essential if we are to cut down on costs. Of course there is a certain segment of the population that has to be protected from this burden and for this purpose, the ECC decided that 300 units of consumption should be set as the limit beyond which charges would apply. This is not all, general sales tax (GST) is expected to rise to 18% and blanket subsidies will be revoked. This means that certain sectors of the economy that enjoyed cheaper facilities will no longer experience that luxury. All in all, tough times are ahead but we have little negotiating power as of right now. These are all problems that have culminated after years' worth of neglect and wrongful prioritisation of politics over the economy. Keeping all this in mind, the focus of the government should not only extend towards generating revenue directly through taxation but also through encouraging growth-oriented measures like directing subsidies towards promising industries—like the IT sector—that have been contributing positively to the economy. Reducing the anti-export bias will also come in handy; in times like these, we need the balance of trade to work in our favor. Local industries should be given a boost so that they have enough power, agency and resources to create outputs that can be exported. Misallocated resources need to be redirected and we must focus on diversification of revenue streams. Very evidently so, there are still many opportunities in Pakistan should the government choose to take advantage of them. What remains most pertinent is that we take the first step towards utilising them.

Deep effects of depression

— By Rajkumar Rao

Depression is a mental health disorder characterised by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities. It can also cause a variety of physical and emotional symptoms, such as fatigue, difficulty in concentrating, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Depression is a common condition that affects people of all ages, and it can have a significant impact on a person's ability to function in daily life. It can be treated with a combination of therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes. The development of depression in an individual can be influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychological factors. Studies have shown that people with a family history of depression are more likely to develop the condition. Researchers believe that certain genes may make an individual more susceptible to the condition, but that other factors are also involved. Environmental factors, life events or ongoing stressors such as loss of loved one, financial troubles, a traumatic event, or chronic stress can increase the risk of depression. People who are low self-esteemed and who are pessimistic, or who tend to ruminate or dwell on negative thoughts may be more at risk of developing depression. In addition, negative cognitive patterns such as rumination and maladaptive coping strategies can make an individual more vulnerable to depression. It's also worth mentioning here that depression can also be caused by some medical conditions, medications, or substance abuse and can develop differently in each individual and the cause of it can be complex and multi-factorial. An accurate diagnosis and treatment are best done under the guidance of a mental health professional.

— Kinds of depression

There are several different types of depression, each with its own set of symptoms and causes. Some of the most common types include: a. Major depressive disorder (MDD): This is the most common type of depression and is characterised by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities. People with MDD may also experience physical symptoms such as fatigue, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and difficulty concentrating. b. Persistent depressive disorder (PDD): It is also known as dysthymia, and this type of depression is characterised by a low-grade depression that lasts for at least two years. People with PDD may experience symptoms similar to those of MDD, but they may be less severe and longer-lasting. c. Bipolar disorder: This type of depression is characterised by swings between episodes of mania or hypomania and depression. People with bipolar disorder may experience extreme highs (mania) and lows (depression) that can last for days, weeks, or months. d. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD): This type of depression is characterised by a recurring pattern of depression that begins in the fall or winter and ends in the spring or summer. SAD is thought to be caused by the decreased amount of sunlight during the fall and winter months. e. Postpartum depression: This type of depression occurs in women after giving birth. It is characterised by feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and difficulty bonding with the baby. f. Psychotic depression: This type of depression is characterised by symptoms of both depression and psychosis, such as hallucinations or delusions. It's important to note that depression can be highly individual and it can take different forms. (...to be continued)

Courtesy: Pakistan Today

When the world is no longer the same

— By Atle Hetland

We live in a time when many things are uncertain and change happens unexpectedly and in ways we don't want. In the past, things improved and became better, we thought, in more or less straight and linear lines. In the last five years, even ten or twenty years, it hasn't always been like that, from the SARS pandemic in 2002, the financial crises from 2008, and the Corona pandemic from early 2020 till date. Health specialists, including those at the World Health Organisation (WHO), had warned against the pandemic, but few listened; it was cheaper just to hope for the best. In the future, new and possibly more dangerous pandemics are bound to occur, but still, preparedness is not given high priority. The world has seen economic growth in the last decades, indeed in China and the West, and also in the Global South. But development has been quite uncontrolled and erratic, making some individuals and multinationals unbelievably rich and most poor people poorer. Overall, the global capitalist system has failed, indeed so because the political economists and politicians have not put in place regulations to curtail transnational companies, rich countries, and ruthless individuals. This has been unethical and risky for all. In the future, better systems must be found. But perhaps that will only happen when those at the top realise that the current unequal and competitive system has too many shortcomings, mainly benefitting the select few, being a disaster for the last, the least, and the lowest. There are some decent-thinking people in the private sector who have begun airing views, writing books and articles about this, saying that less competitiveness and inequality will be more productive even for those at the top, and certainly for those lower down. You may say this analysis is not quite new. True, it isn't, but it has now gone too far. We have placed patches on some of the worst wounds, for example, development aid from rich to poor countries since the 1950s when many former colonies gained independence. The UN has recommended that 0.7 percent of rich countries' GDP should be allocated to development aid, but just a few countries reach that target, although even if they did it would rather just be a token. A New International Economic Order (NIEO) was talked about by the United Nations and progressive countries in the 1970s, but it was shelved before it was introduced, and resisted by the rich countries. Hopefully, there will be new initiatives

to increase and restructure development aid in the future, but it is hardly on today's agenda. However, a positive sign came at the COP27 summit in Egypt in November last year when a resolution was passed to compensate poor countries for loss and damage caused by climate-induced disasters. Let us see how bold the plans and real transfers will be when they are formulated this year. In the future, the private sector must play a much more prominent role in development aid and transfers from rich to poor countries, including the introduction of taxes on companies taking out profit from poor countries. Governments, the UN and multilateral organisations must do more and better work. An example of a private initiative is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Yet, there is a basic democratic problem with private development aid, in spite of good intentions, because the donors make all the decisions and choose projects and areas alone. Well, donor governments are often not much better. The most serious reason for saying that 'the world is no longer the same' is that super-powers and big countries don't cooperate. That goes for trade, technology, and certainly military issues. Russia's conflict with Ukraine went to outright annexation of Crimea in 2014, where Russia has its major military bases on the Black Sea; earlier, the land was on lease from Ukraine. The West placed sanctions on Russia and relations with the West deteriorated. A full war between Russia and Ukraine broke out with the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022. Four provinces in the east of Ukraine have been annexed by Russia, approved by its national assembly, the 'Duma', although against international law. If NATO, USA, EU, and Russia, had done their work politically, economically and diplomatically since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, none of this would have happened, well, maybe except for Russia annexing Crimea due to NATO countries having crept closer to Russia and its sphere of interest, against agreements when the Soviet Union ended. It was Russia that started the terrible war in Ukraine, but the West is also responsible for provocations, and it must have expected some form of armed conflict. When it happened, though, the West should immediately have called for a ceasefire and peace talks. Instead, the West has kept supplying Ukraine with more and more weapons, hoping they will win the war and downsize Russia drastically from its earlier empire status. However, it is only a matter

of time before everyone sees that it is not just a war between Russia and Ukraine, but between Russia and the West. NATO underlines that it is not a part of it, but most of the 30 member countries and other partners, help Ukraine in a united effort. The parties have unrealistic red lines for peace talks and ending the war – which should never have started or stopped at the outset. Caused mainly by the war in Ukraine and Russian oil and gas supplies to Europe having ended, energy prices have increased tremendously in Europe, with further effects on other prices in all countries around the world. Many people fall below the poverty line. In Europe, governments provide subsidies to help households and companies, which alleviates some of the negative consequences. In poorer countries, including Pakistan, the price increases have serious effects on many people. We can safely say that 'the world is no longer the same', and it will take a long time for things to improve. Once the war in Ukraine is over, perhaps earliest by the end of 2023 – if not escalated and spread – Russia and the West must begin to cooperate again, in trade, politics and other fields. They must do what was neglected since the fall of the Soviet Union, and Russia must be assisted to develop democratic institutions. Assistance to rebuild Ukraine must also be provided. The current polarisation between and within many countries must be overcome, including the USA and China. The West's enormous rearmament must be changed for economic, political and social development. Finally, there are many issues about 'the world not being the same' which I have not discussed in this article, indeed many armed conflicts and wars, including the Kashmir and Palestinian situations. Also, climate change and environmental issues need to be addressed more seriously in all countries, with concrete measures urgently. On a positive note, the Internet and other modern communication and other technology have great potential for the good. Let us hope that young people will engage not only on social media but become more active politically, in parties, organisations and companies. In some countries, young people spend up to six or eight hours daily on new devices. What a resource that is if diverted to activities in politics, education, health and more. Instead of less political engagement, there is a need for more.

Courtesy: The Nation

Time for a solution! — By M Ghazanfar Sakrani

THE precarious state of Pakistan's economy requires long-term planning, across the board consensus and structural reforms. Early elections may provide respite and lead to the reduction of political instability thus providing clarity, nonetheless, the new government should also brace itself for harsh criticism from the opposition benches and resentment of the public as they will have to keep the economic turmoil at bay. The economic crisis seems far from over, no more dilly-dally in the IMF program is highly essential and in order to enter the program the government will have to abide by the harsh conditions of the Fund which will irk the general public and turn out to be a nadir in their popularity. The government needs to focus on fixing the un-resolved structural issues which remain inherent in our economic system since decades. Focus should be on increasing and diversifying exports, widening the tax base, luring foreign investment, reducing cir-

cular debt, increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing climate resilience and taking measures for curtailing 'brain drain'. Fiscal deficit needs to be checked which is a significant source of economic crisis. The availability of easy loans from US and other friendly countries along with high remittance inflows in the past lead policy-makers to pull the plug on reforms, however, now we need to that foreign loans are not something to be relied upon, rather they are a short-term solution and are not always guaranteed. The present state of economy is in deep waters as the economic indicators like exports, remittances and LSM growth are on the downward trajectory whereas inflation remains elevated. Inflation pressure is not expected to subside despite SBP adopted hawkish stance in the recent monetary policy. The global economy is also experiencing a slowdown which may further aggravate the local economic conditions. The continu-

ity of IMF program remains in limbo as the incumbent government is unable to take concrete measures to win the confidence of the Fund. No doubt the government remains wary of the political cost it may have to bear undertaking these measures considering fresh elections in a few months. With reserves shrinking to \$4.601 billion, a liability of approximately \$3 billion in the remaining half of FY-23 and emergent requirement of \$8 to \$10 billion in foreign loans, restoring IMF program is inevitable. This will also open other avenues of foreign aids for the dollar starved economy. However, rather than just celebrating securing external financing, we need to understand these measures may definitely provide short-term relief, nonetheless, the long-term outlook remains gloomy. \$6 billion has already been rolled over in first half of FY-23 and \$3 billion will be rolled over in remaining half which eventually has to be paid. (Courtesy: Pakistan Observer)

Letters to the Editor

Medical Colleges

I am a Student at Sukkur IBA University. I want to show the difficulties that a student faces in the pre-medical field when he gives the admission test. Before 2020, there was PM&DC "Pakistan Medical and Dental Council" and PM&DC every year introduces a separate test system for each province i.e., MCAT for Sindh, ETEA for KPK. But then after PM&DC dissolved and PMC "Pakistan Medical Commission" came, the whole system changed. PMC conducts a single test all over the country

on a single day in 2020. Then again in 2021 PMC regulated the entrance test system and conducted tests in 30 days online. Recently i.e., in 2022 PMC dissolved, and PM&DC again regulated the entry test system and gave responsibility to provinces for test regulation. The problem comes when a student is depressed due to that. Every year trauma begins that what will going to happen next. Every Government changes the system accordingly but they don't think that what will happen to any student when the system changes. Single

test all over the country was good but it was also changed by Government. Now PM&DC again dissolved and going to take a provisional test in 2023. There should be one system either PMC or PM&DC which clarifies the instructions to the students. Government should have to look over there so that students cannot disturb due to them. The regulatory authority should also have to ensure strict compliance with the entrance test system.

— Muhammad Osaf, Sukkur



NDMA dispatches 20-member medical, rescue team, relief items for Syria

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority on Tuesday dispatched emergency relief goods along with a 20-member medical and rescue team for relief operations in earthquake-hit Syria. The Authority on the instructions of the Prime Minister has dispatched the 20-member medical and rescue teams for the earthquake victims of

Syria, a news release said. The relief team for Syria consists of 10 doctors from Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and a 10-member rescue team from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) whereas relief items were also sent along with the teams for Damascus. The supplies included 131 winterized family tents and 3,966 kilogrammes

of medicine. Federal Minister for States and Frontier Region (SA-FRON) Talha Mehmood and Special Assistant Hamid Hameed sent the teams off for Syria. The rescue team will participate in urban search and rescue operations in the affected areas of Syria that will reach Damascus by PIA chartered aircraft Boeing 777. (APP)

NHMP takes initiative to protect lives of citizens through road safety campaign

ISLAMABAD: National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) has launched an extensive awareness campaign on various highways and motorways across the country to promote road safety and prevent traffic road crashes. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, an official of NHMP said that the drive was initiated on the instructions of the Inspector General of NHMP, Khalid Mahmood and during this drive, NHMP officials are educating travelers about the importance of wearing seat belts, avoiding lane jumping, and refraining from using mobile phones while driving. He informed that the campaign also includes special persons who are ac-

tively involved in spreading awareness and holding placards with messages related to road safety. The official highlighted that former test cricketer, Shoaib Muhammad has also joined the NHMP awareness campaign to encourage travelers to follow traffic rules and safe driving practices. "The campaign is being widely appreciated by commuters", he added. Moreover, he said that the NHMP has recorded testimonials of the travelers and shared them on social media platforms to expand the scope of the campaign. He said that the NHMP's efforts to promote road safety and protect the lives and property of citizens are highly appreciated by the citizens. (APP)

Anti-Polio campaign starts in Haripur under strict security



- By DR. M. Pervaiz Akhtar Awan
HARIPUR: District Police Officer Haripur has directed all Circle Officers and SHOs of the district to perform their duties vigilantly and actively with the polio teams in the whole district due to current law and order situation in the country so that the polio campaign could be concluded peacefully and safely. According to the details, following the government's measures to eradicate polio disease from the country, an antipolio campaign has been started in Haripur district which would continue from Feb-

ruary 13 to February 17. Anti-polio campaign in Afghan camp in Haripur and Ghazi is underway peacefully in the tight and fool proof security arrangements for which more than 200 police officers and other contingents are performing security duties with polio teams. On the all internal and external routes of the district, additional force has been deployed for strict checking whereas snap checking is also underway. Supervisory and contingent staff has been directed to ensure the use of helmet and bullet proof jackets. At the occasion district Police office Haripur has instructed all circle officers and SHOs that in view of the current situation, all officers and Jawans deployed with polio teams should be alert and perform their duties valiantly and actively so that the polio campaign could be concluded safely and peacefully.

Elections in phases may bring 'anarchy': Rana Sana Ullah

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan said on Monday the elections in the country should be held together, otherwise, in his opinion, conducting them in phases would raise doubts about its credibility. "Instead of stability in the country, there is a risk of anarchy (if elections are held in phases)," he added. Talking to a private news channel, the interior

minister said the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) had started preparing for elections. For that reason, Party's Vice President Maryam Nawaz had traveled to Bahawalpur and Multan Divisions in Punjab and Hazara Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he added. On February 19, she would re-start the campaign in the remaining divisions of Punjab, he added. (APP)

Imran's "absolutely not" narrative "shattered" by constant U-turns: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif on Monday slammed the narrative of "absolutely not", attributed to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan, saying by taking U-turns on day-to-day basis had shattered the latter's said narrative. "Imran Khan has misled the people by changing his narrative on "regime change conspiracy," said Javed Latif, who also sought apology from the former prime minister in a talk show aired on a private news channel. The minister held said that the people were tired of Imran's changing

narratives, also quipping that the PTI chief was suffering from "confused state of mind". He said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was against political victimization, always supported democracy and had taken steps to strengthen it further. He said the survival of Pakistan relied in all the institutions working within their constitutional limits, while the political parties should pin their hopes of success on Pakistani nation. He further demanded accountability for those who had brought Pakistan's economy. (APP)

WDD strives to ensure equal opportunities for women

LAHORE: Punjab Women Department (WDD) is striving to ensure equal opportunities and dignity of life for women as these are the key factors which play a key role in sustainable economic growth and social development. In order to achieve these objectives, WDD is organizing training workshops for officers of various government departments and institutions on gender mainstreaming, gender responsive planning and gender responsive budgeting in FY 2022-23. In this context, the department here Monday organized a two-day training workshop for officers and scholars of Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department, so that they could effectively implement

strategies to bring women into mainstream and play a positive role for their betterment. The WDD Secretary Samira Samad said that when women have equal opportunities with men, the family and society will progress. She added that it is the responsibility of the state to highlight the potential of women on the basis of gender equality, for which this is the first attempt of a government institution like WDD to have a training session with Auqaf Department. This training would help the government to formulate the laws in consideration of religious and social principles which would benefit the women to have equal opportunities. (APP)

ANF recovers over 28 kg drugs; arrests two

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in two operations managed to recover over 28 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that ANF foiled a bid to smuggle narcotics to Peshawar and managed to seized 19.430 kg Ice drug and 5.220 kg suspected material near Torkham Border area. An accused resident of Khyber was also rounded up. He informed that in another operation near Lasbela Toll Plaza, ANF recovered three kg heroin and one kg Ice drug from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Turbat. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. (APP)

AIOU opens spring semester admission

MULTAN: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Local Campus Regional Director Qaiser Abbas Kazmi said that the admission schedule for the spring 2023 semester has been released and sent to all regional offices and tutors. He was addressing to introductory session with the tutors in Khanewal about the semester spring 2023 admissions. Admissions would continue till February 21, 2023, while admissions for BS Science subjects, MPhil, and Ph.D. until February 15. Apart from this, other admissions are starting from the first of March 2023. He directed the tutors to play their role with the Allama Iqbal Open University administration in making the admission campaign successful in their areas. (APP)

Police executive board meeting held

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar on Monday presided over meeting of the Police Executive Board at the Central Police Office. In the Police Executive Board, the Punjab Constabulary's postings were approved as field postings. The IG Punjab said that any officer or official who went to Punjab Constabulary on deputation would be considered as field service during this period. In the meeting, it was approved to increase the time limit for filing an appeal against the punishment received by the officers and officials from one month to three months, while in this regard, the time for filing the appeal would start on receipt of show cause notice to concerned Police official. In the meeting, the issue of appointment of DSPs in the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) was discussed, on which the Police Executive Board approved setting a limit of 55 years for the appointment of DSPs in the CTD, while the appointment would be for two years. (APP)

MQM-P blames HESCO for troubling consumers

HYDERABAD: The MNAs of Mutahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Sabir Qaimkhani and Salahuddin had blamed Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) for troubling the consumers because of alleged corruption and inabilities of the employees. In a statement issued here on Monday, the MNAs said the heavy electricity bills on one hand and long outages on the other hand were badly affecting the residential, commercial and industrial consumers. They added the trade activity had also been adversely affected because of the long and unscheduled outages. "The people are made to run from pillar to post in the offices of HESCO with no service," they alleged. (APP)

Five vehicles smuggling wheat impounded with 1240 flour bags

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police have caught five vehicles with 1240 wheat flour bags while five accused were sent behind the bars. According to a district administration spokesman, the food Department Rawalpindi and Potohar Division Police conducted raids in Sadder Wah and Taxila police station areas and rounded up Saddam, Haseeb, Aftab, Adil, and Murad on recovery of 1240 wheat flour bags. He informed that the authorities of the

food department along with Potohar Division Police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up the wheat flour smugglers. He said that the accused were trying to illegally ship out wheat flour and wheat out of the Rawalpindi division. The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the authorities concerned were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids, he added. (APP)

Ivory Coast delegation head plants sapling in Parliament House

ISLAMABAD: Ivory Coast's National Assembly President Adama Bictogo, the head of visiting parliamentary delegation on Tuesday planted a sapling of grandiflora in the lawn of the Parliament House. National Assembly Speaker Raja

Pervaiz Ashraf, members of visiting delegation, top officials of National Assembly Secretariat welcomed the delegation on arrival at Parliament House. Special prayers were held for the progress and prosperity of both the countries. (APP)

CJP's 'honest prime minister' remarks misconstrued: Tarar told Senate

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazir Tarar on Tuesday criticized social media for attributing Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umer Atta Bandial's 'honest prime minister' remarks misconstrued and totally out of the context. Speaking on a point of order in Senate, Tarar debunked the CJP's comments, saying the remarks were misinterpreted. The Minister said Attorney General Barrister Shehzad Ata Elahi wrote a letter to him, stating that the remarks were reported out of the context. The Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) said he was present in the court during the hearing and could confirm that the Chief Justice in his remarks did not say that only one prime minister was

honest in the history of Pakistan. Azam Nazir criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for deliberately leaving the assemblies and not participating in the law making process. "An incorrect version of certain observations by the Chief Justice of Pakistan made that day during the proceedings of Constitution petition no. 21/2022 titled Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi vs Federation of Pakistan (is being) circulated on social media platforms," the AGP said in the letter. Leader of the opposition in Senate, Dr Shahzad Waseem once again asked the government to announce election schedule for Punjab Assembly polls. He criticized the government for what he said using delaying tactics for announcing polls. (APP)

LDA approves crossing bridge at PECO road after involvement of Ombudsman Punjab

LAHORE: Lahore Development Authority (LDA) approved the construction of a crossing bridge at Peco Road, following the orders of Ombudsman Punjab Major (R) Azam Suleman Khan. The project, estimated to cost Rs.78 million, will especially benefit the elderly, women, and children by providing a safe and convenient way to cross the busy road. The spokesman of the office of the ombudsman Punjab reported this in a statement issued on Tuesday. In response to the ombudsman's involvement in an issue of public importance, the Sheikhpura administration has taken measures to enhance the experience of visitors to the city's Ayesha Park, by assigning four gardeners and carrying out necessary repairs, to maintain its green surroundings. This effort was aimed

at creating a pleasant environment for the daily visitors to enjoy, the spokesman added. Alongside this, the spokesman noted that the intercession of the ombudsman's office in the complaint of one Khazaima Azhar of Sheikhpura district resulted in forfeiture of one year's service and stoppage of one increment of ASI Qamar Abbas. Additionally, the police registered the FIR of the plaintiff. Following the orders of the ombudsman office, issued on a separate application of Tariq Aslam Sheikh of Jhang, departmental proceedings under PEEDA Act, 2006 were initiated against 22 officers and officials of the Jhang municipal committee for failing to take action against the land mafia involved in illegal construction and occupation of state lands, the spokesman stated. (APP)

White cane helpful in empowering individuals with visual impairments: Experts

ISLAMABAD: White cane and mental optimization experts have weighed the importance of white cane as assistive tool for people with visual impairments that can greatly enhance mobility and independence for individuals with visual impairments. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, an Instructor of white cane at National Mobility and Independence Training Center Muhammad Jabbar Khan said that the white cane tool allows individuals to navigate through their surroundings by utilizing a range of techniques, including foot counting, landmarks, speed breakers, the two-touch technique, the three-touch technique, and the dots technique. He said that the foot counting technique involves counting the number of steps taken

in a particular direction, while landmarks and speed breakers serve as points of reference for navigation. Jabbar informed that the two-touch technique involves using the white cane to detect obstacles and changes in terrain, while the three-touch technique involves using the cane to detect obstacles on the ground, as well as those at waist and head level. "The dots technique involves using a raised dot system to mark specific locations and landmarks", he added. The expert went on to highlight the importance of mental optimization when it comes to using the white cane saying that the tool can greatly enhance mobility and it requires a certain level of mental focus and concentration to use effectively. (APP)

Iranian embassy celebrates 44th victory of Islamic revolution

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Hosseini has wished bright, promising and prosperous future with all-round improvement of the relations and ties between the two brotherly, friendly and neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan. Celebrating the 44th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic

revolution of Iran at a hotel here, he highlighted the role and leadership of Imam Khomeini (R.A), following the revolution in 1979, forty-four years, despite obstacles such as the imposed war, sanctions, pressures and propaganda, Iranian people could attain great scientific, economic and technological achievements. (APP)

Maryam Nawaz to chair PML-N young leaders meeting in Lahore today: Marriyum



ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that a meeting of the party's young leaders from across the Punjab will be held today in Model Town, Lahore. In a statement, Marriyum Aurangzeb, who is also minister for information and broadcasting, said that the party's Senior Vice Presi-

dent and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz would preside over the meeting. She said the organizational structure of youth will be reviewed in the meeting. Proposals related to youth development, employment, and business will be considered, she said adding that the role of youth in social media and performance at the party level would also be considered. Maryam Nawaz would express her views on the party's youth development policy, she added. The PML-N spokesperson said in the organizational meeting suggestions would be taken on the preparation of the youth charter and there would be consultation on the future strategy. (APP)

Terrorist attack on check post in Dera injures police constable

D.I.KHAN: A policeman got injured after the terrorists opened fire on Khutti Police check post in the limits of Dera Town Police Station, on Monday night. According to police spokesman, terrorists, armed with heavy and advanced weapons, opened fire at the check post situated on Dera-Zhob road in the precincts of Dera Town Police station. Due to the firing, police

constable Imran got injured in the attack. Meanwhile, terrorists managed to flee from the scene. After receiving the information, a heavy police contingent reached the site and started a search operation. District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Shoaib along with DSP Sadar Hafiz Muhammad Adnan and his squad also reached the site in quick response. (APP)

Chief Of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi meets US Ambassador Donald Blome

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Donald Blome called on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi in Karachi during the ongoing Multinational Exercise AMAN 23, on Monday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional

maritime security and bilateral collaboration were discussed, a news release received here said. The dignitaries renewed the resolve to enhance maritime cooperation and defence collaboration between the two countries. (APP)

Joint Session offers Fateha for departed souls of Amjad Islam, Zia Mohyeddin, security personnel

ISLAMABAD: The joint session of Parliament on Monday offered Fateha for the departed souls of Amjad Islam Amjad, Zia Mohyeddin and two security personnel. National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf asked the Jamaat-e-Islami's MNA Abdul Akbar Chitrali to lead the prayer. Abdul Akbar Chitrali prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in Jannah and give patience to the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity. It is

pertinent to mention here that popular urdu poet and playwright Amjad Islam Amjad died of heart attack on Friday. He was 78. Internationally renowned artist and President Emeritus of the National academy of Performing Arts (Napa), Zia Mohyeddin, passed away in Karachi early Monday morning. He was 91. Two personnel of security forces were martyred in an improvised explosive device blast in the Kohlu area of Balochistan on Friday. (APP)

Tribal leaders congratulate Sardar Shah Zaman as Chairman of MC

QUETTA: Tribal leaders including Malik Shaukat Alizai and others congratulated Sardar Shah Zaman Alizai as elected Chairman of Municipal Committee (MC) Mastung. People including Malik Muhammad Afzal, Malik Shaukat Alizai, Malik Bashir Ahmad, Malik Shah Rukh, Malik Babar, Malik Naseer, Malik Zaheer, Malik Zuhair, Malik Fahad, Malik Noor Muhammad, Haji Abdul Samad Alizai, Malik Bilal Alizai, Malik Muzmal Alizai, Malik Adnan Alizai congratulated the Sardar Shah Zaman Alizai as elected Chairman of Municipal Committee at his residence. They also hoped that he would

play his role in resolving issues of the public in Mastung. On this occasion, the newly elected Chairman Sardar Shah Zaman Alizai thanked the people and said that the main problems of Mastung, apart from education and health, the development of the city and using all our abilities to make public services possible without discrimination, opportunities would be created for the people to live in the best and beautiful environment. Sardar Shah Zaman Alizai said that with the guidance of his people and the consultation of all colleagues, preferences would be determined. (APP)

ECC approves gas price revision, debt rescheduling, BISP grant

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Monday approved gas price revision for domestic, commercial and power sectors for six months from January to June, 2023. The Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) tabled a summary on Natural Gas Sale Pricing for FY 2022-23 and presented tariff proposals for all consumer categories in accordance with Review of Estimated Revenue Requirement (RERR) for fiscal year 2022-23, according to press statement issued by the finance ministry. The cabinet committee also allowed the Ministry of Economic Affairs for signing of debt rescheduling agreement with Russia for debt sus-

pension of Covid related amount US\$ 14.53 million. The approval was given after the ministry presented a summary on G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). This debt relief was announced in April 2020 for IDA eligible countries to mitigate the socio-economic impact of Covid-19. Under this initiative debt relief was extended through the suspension of principle and interest payments. So far, 37 debt rescheduling agreements with 15 creditor countries have been signed. The ECC granted Rs. 40 billion as Technical Supplementary Grant to Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to meet its budgetary requirements for increase in the unconditional and conditional grants. (APP)

Minister apprised on PHFA's 'Peshawar Residencia Housing' project

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF) on Monday apprised Federal Minister of Housing and Works Maulana Abdul Wasay about relaunching the Residencia Housing Project in Peshawar which was stuck for years. During a meeting

with the board of Directors of PHAF, the minister was also briefed about the different ongoing and completed projects pertaining to the department. Wasay directed the authorities concerned to complete all the projects in the stipulated time. (APP)

Minister Abdul Shakoor for measures to root out corruption from country

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor on Monday said the government should take adequate measures to meet the scourge of corruption in the country. Taking part in debate on terrorism in the joint session of parliament, he said the "state institutions performance are declining with every passing day as officials concerned are allegedly involved in the corrupt practices". To bring them at par with profitable organizations, the social evil of corruption should be

eliminated from every nook and cranny of the country, he maintained. Abdul Shakoor said terrorism was a big issue of the country for a long time. He said the economic terrorism was one of the biggest issues and it should be properly handled at the grassroots level because it had badly disturbed the normal lives of the people, socially and economically. He accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Imran Khan for financial destruction in the country by introducing bad economic policies during his almost

four-year tenure of government. He said Imran Khan brought a bad name to the country in the comity of nations by "accusing foreign country for hatching conspiracy against his government". He asked the government to make Imran Khan "accountable" for his wrong doings who "dragged the country at the brink of bankruptcy". The minister said the PTI chief was blaming former army chief "to save his own skin" as Imran himself provided extension in the tenure of General Bajwa's service. (APP)

SSP reviews security arrangements of PSX

KARACHI: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) City Arif Aziz on Monday visited the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and reviewed the security arrangements. The SSP met the PSX officials, where he was briefed about the security and other arrangements at the Stock Exchange, said a spokesperson of the District City Police Karachi. He assured the officials concerned to immediately resolve their problems regarding security arrangements. Aziz directed the SDP Kharadar and SHO Methadar to provide more foolproof security. He also checked the CCTV cameras installed in the Stock Exchange and issued necessary instructions on the spot. (APP)

LDA seals another 15 building over non-payment

LAHORE: Lahore Development Authority, during its ongoing grand operation against non-payment of commercial fee, sealed another 15 buildings here in the provincial capital on Tuesday. On directions of the Director General LDA Amir Ahmed Khan, special team of Town Planning Zone-II led by Chief Town Planner Asad-Ul-Zaman and Director Salman Mehfooz, took action against the violators in Sabzazar and Mustafa Town. It may be mentioned here that a team of Town Planning Zone-III had sealed 24 offices, shops and academies last day due to non-payment of annual commercialization fee in Faisal Town and Garden Town. (APP)

Solo art show by Safwan Bashir concludes

ISLAMABAD: A solo art show by Safwan Bashir titled 'ABD - A Blessed Devotee' concluded here Tuesday at Gallery 6 jointly curated by Dr. Arjumand Faisal and Irfan Gul Dahri. The exhibition showed the brilliance in which Safwan has painted the messages of Quranic verses in his peculiar and unique way, which is both highly symbolic and also iconic miniature work. The artworks are distinguished not only by their large sizes but also the powerful concepts that are presented with meaningful vocabulary that is well executed and presented in brilliant compositions with utmost details. With the quality of work, one can predict that Safwan has great potential to become one of the prominent artists of the country, said the organizers. The Curator, Irfan Gul Dahri said 'A curious mind is like a flexible container filled with questions and puzzles, always trying to connect the dots and figure out the possibilities that the universe has to offer. It holds enough courage to recognize the flaws and weaknesses within itself and the outer world. (APP)

Robbers gang busted

SIALKOT: District police busted a dacoit gang and recovered motorcycles, cash and weapon from their possession. Police said here on Tuesday that Sabzpir police team conducted raid in the area under their jurisdiction and arrested 5-member gang including its ring leader Laeeq alias Laeeqa, Bazal Javed, Akhtar alias Akhtara, Muhammed Arshad and Muhammed Zahid. The team recovered cash Rs. 480,000, motorcycles, mobile phones and illicit weapons from them. The accused confessed to have committed a number of robberies in other districts including Zafarwal and Narowal. (APP)

Pakistan stands with people of Turkiye in testing times: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday assured Turkish ambassador Mehmet Paçacı that in the testing times, the government and the people of Pakistan stood in strong solidarity with the people of Turkiye. He made the remarks during his visit to the Turkish Embassy here to express condolences over the loss of life and property in the devastating earthquake in Turkiye. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayyaz Sadiq, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarrar, Special Assistants to the Prime Minister Attaullah Tarrar and Tariq Fatemi. The Prime Minister conveyed his condolences to the Turkish ambassador and prayed

for the victims of the earthquake in Turkiye. He reiterated that Pakistan will continue its rescue and relief efforts for Turkish brothers and sisters until the last affected person was rehabilitated. The Prime Minister also highlighted the relief efforts of Pakistan for the earthquake victims of Turkiye. He told that Pakistan was sending winter tents, blankets, warm clothes and other essential items for the people of Turkey. The PM said brothers in Turkey were sent assistance through air, sea and road while the government was also considering to send aid through trains. He informed that assistance was being provided on the basis of daily reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Pakistan's ambassador to Turkey. (APP)

PMDC starts issuing registration certificates to local medical graduates

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has started issuing permanent registration certificates to Pakistani doctors, without the requirement of the National Licensing Examination (NLE). According to Registrar PMDC Dr. Suleman Ahmed, this exam was mandatory earlier as per the previous law of PMC, the local graduates had to appear and pass the NLE exam before getting their permanent registration, even after graduation from Pakistani medical and dental colleges. He said in this regard several protests and demonstrations were held by different doctor forums and organizations at different levels and the past government appealed repeatedly to withdraw the said black law. Previ-

ously as per PMC law, NLE was undertaken by doctors who graduated from Pakistan's approved medical and dental colleges which was highly criticized by the doctors' community throughout the country. He said keeping in view the demand of the doctors, on the direction of Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel, this step was taken after signing the concerned legislation by the President. Taking up all the relevant matters and affairs, PMDC started its registration portal as a priority after making all necessary arrangements for the transition from PMC to PMDC. In this regard, an interactive PMDC online portal has been launched to facilitate doctors throughout the country. (APP)

CDA to plant saplings on retrieved land for increased green cover

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to increase the city's green cover by planting saplings on billions of rupees of land it recovered from illegal occupants under the anti-encroachment drive. "The authority has recently launched a massive drive in the Federal capital against the land grabbers to recover its precious land that had been unlawfully occupied by the mafia," an official told APP. He said the tree-plantation decision was taken on the direction of CDA Chairman Noor ul Amin Mengal, and the authority would carry out a comprehensive

drive aimed at preventing re-encroachment of retrieved land and increasing green spaces across the capital. The official said the CDA had recovered encroached land in several locations of Islamabad including the Kuri Area, F-7, F-10, F-11, E-12 sectors, C-12 sector, Sarai Kharboza along the Grand Trunk Road, and the Margalla Hills National Park. He said the authority also launched an awareness campaign to educate people from all segments of society particularly students about the importance of tree plantation so that green cover could be increased in the city by planting more trees. (APP)

Govt disburses Rs 371.88 bn under PSDP 2022-23 in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 371.88 billion out of a total allocation of Rs727 billion for various ongoing and new social sector uplift projects of the federal ministries and division in the first seven months (July-January) of the fiscal year 2022-23 under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Out of the total authorized/dispensed amount, the total amount

spent so far on the development projects during the corresponding period stood at Rs 203.11 billion. According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20% in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30% each in the second and third quarters, and the remaining 20% in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year. (APP)

Sugar mill re-functions after five years

MULTAN: Haseeb Waqqas Sugar Mill (HWSML), a public limited company being closed for the last five years in Alipur was made re-functional on Tuesday. Farmers of the area organized here a ceremony in the connection with pump and show. The boiler of the mill was switched on and a fire was lit in the boiler. Prayers were offered followed by sweets distributed to mark jubilation. Farmers including Allah Dad Khan, Ghulam Sarwar, Shaukat Ali, Rahim Bakhsh and many others on the occasion, expressed their happi-

ness on re-starting of the mill. They said that after the closure of the mill some 5 years ago, about 900 families of Alipur and beyond were unemployed with development stopped across the entire region following reduction of the cash flow. They further said that the sugarcane farmers had to face many difficulties to sell their sugarcane as the mill seized its functioning. "I was forced to carry sugarcane and sell it in pieces on account of enormous increase in sugarcane transportation costs" a farmer Ali Ghazanfar told APP. (APP)

Asian issuers turn to convertible bonds for cheap funding

SINGAPORE: Asian companies are turning to convertible bonds as an appealing cheap instrument to raise funds and refinance debt while interest rates remain high, according to bankers in the region. Popular early in the pandemic, Asia's issuance of equity-linked notes last year slowed to about US\$46 billion, the lowest amount since 2016, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Activity has picked up in the first weeks of 2023, with companies from Japan to Singapore and Taiwan



tapping the market. "In a higher interest-rate environment, this is a good instrument. The product is growing and increasingly getting more attention from issuers," said Christian Lhert, a

managing director responsible for equity-linked origination in Asia ex-Japan at Goldman Sachs. In the next few months, "we will see more existing CB issuers seeking to refinance prior notes", he said in an interview. Convertibles allow companies to borrow at lower rates than regular debt — in some recent cases for free. The notes also give investors the chance to profit from a rise in the underlying share price, which is attractive in volatile markets. (Agencies)

Ford taps China's CATL tech in new US EV plant

WASHINGTON: Ford Motor on Monday announced plans to invest US\$3.5 billion to build an electric-vehicle battery plant in Michigan, betting that making the batteries in the US will help it and Chinese partner CATL attract US customers to embrace a lower-cost technology pioneered in China. Ford's plan to build the battery plant near Marshall, Michigan, hinges on a judgment that lower cost and faster recharging will attract many customers, including



commercial fleet buyers, to accept the limitations of lithium iron phosphate, or LFP, batteries. Ford is also counting on its decision to manufacture LFP batteries in the US at the

wholly-owned plant to take the political risk out of relying on a Chinese technology partner. "Manufacturing in America will bring us closer to battery independence," Ford chairman Bill Ford said during an event in Romulus, Michigan, to announce the investment. Building LFP batteries in Michigan also gives Ford a shot at significant US battery manufacturing subsidies that could help it hit a goal of 8% profit margins on its EV operations by 2026. (Agencies)

Alibaba exits India's Paytm app with US\$166mil sale

SHANGHAI: Alibaba Group Holding has sold off its remaining stake in Indian digital payment platform Paytm, a move that hints at a shakeup of the Chinese tech giant's investment strategy in India. An Alibaba unit in Singapore offloaded 21.43 million shares in Paytm's operator One97 Communications, India's National Stock Exchange reports. The transaction is worth 13.7 billion rupees



(US\$166 million) as each share was priced at 642.74 rupees. This sell-off

revealed in a notice dated Friday, follows Alibaba's disposal of 19.2 million Paytm shares on Jan 12. Last year, Alibaba pulled its ownership in Paytm's online shopping app, Paytm Mall. Alibaba owned about 6% of One97 Communications at the end of December. Ant Group, Alibaba's fintech affiliate, holds an approximately 25% stake in Paytm and remains a major shareholder. (Agencies)

Indonesia, China agree US\$1.2bil cost overrun for high-speed train

JAKARTA: Indonesia and China have agreed to a budget overrun to the tune of US\$1.2 billion for the first high-speed railway project in the Southeast Asian country, an Indonesian government official told parliament today. The project was previously estimated to be US\$2 billion over budget, raising the total cost to 113 trillion Indonesian rupiah (US\$7.36 billion), according to the consortium of Indonesian and Chinese state companies building the railway, known as PT KCIC. "We agreed on



the cost overrun figure of US\$1.2 billion. There are several items that they are still reviewing regarding taxes, frequency clearing fees, but we have agreed on the numbers," said deputy minister of state-owned enterprises, Kartika Wirjoatmodjo. Further details

including an additional loan from the China Development Bank to cover the extra costs are to be finalised within a month, he added. Companies involved in the consortium were expected to increase their equity participation, while Indonesia's state-owned railway firm PT KAI, which along with state-owned construction company Wijaya Karya controls 60% of KCIC, received a 3.2 trillion Indonesian rupiah capital injection from the government last month to help complete the project. (Agencies)

Saudi Tadawul Group signs deal to implement ESG framework in capital market

RIYADH: The operator of the Saudi stock market, Saudi Tadawul Group, has signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Planning and Economy and the Capital Market Authority to help the group implement environmental, social and governance framework in the capital market. This was disclosed by the group's CEO Khalid Al-Hussan on Monday. In an exclusive interview with Arab News on

the sidelines of the two-day Capital Market Forum in Riyadh, the top official said the MoU signed with the top authorities focussed on the "sustainability and ESG framework" that we want to implement in the Kingdom's capital market. "That includes several aspects of the taxonomy set up for the Saudi market and the approach toward how we can enable Saudi corporates as well as investors to access this information," Al-Hus-

san added. The Tadawul chief also confirmed signing cooperation deals with other Gulf bourses. The latest was signed with Qatar exchange on the first day of the forum. Al-Hussan said with the signing of a deal with Qatar, "we concluded signing MoUs with all the GCC exchanges." During the event, Saudi Tadawul Group also signed an MoU with the Singapore Exchange, Al-Hussan highlighted. (Agencies)

EU preparing more economic sanctions against Russia – Politico

BRUSSELS: The EU is set to propose a new package of sanctions on Russia, Politico reported on Monday, citing unnamed European officials and diplomats. The sources told the outlet that the latest set of measures would include proposals for new financial sanctions against four Russian banks, including the country's largest private lender, Alfa Bank. Russian nationals are also expected to be

banned from serving on the boards of critical infrastructure companies in the EU, such as electricity grids or gas providers. Additional trade bans could be imposed on imports into the EU of Russian rubber and asphalt or bitumen (an oil product) and on exports to Russia of a range of EU goods such as trucks, other heavy vehicles, construction machines, pumps, and other machines used in the construc-

tion sector. The package reportedly also includes additional export bans on electronic components that Russia could use to make weapons. It's unclear whether Russian diamonds will be included in the package, the sources said. The report indicated that Brussels is also planning to blacklist a Dubai-based shipping company, "suspected of helping Russia circumvent sanctions on oil exports." (Agencies)

Saudi Arabia keen to join BRICS and SCO – envoy

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is interested in joining the BRICS group of the world's five major developing economies, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, according to Russia's Ambassador to the kingdom, Sergey Kozlov. The five BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – currently account for more than 40% of the world's population and nearly a quarter of global GDP. Meanwhile, the



China and Russia-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional security bloc, includes major powers like

India in its ranks. "As part of the diversification of the kingdom's foreign policy, Saudi Arabia is keen to join such international associations as the SCO and BRICS," Kozlov said on Sunday in an interview with RIA Novosti. According to the ambassador, the possibility of the Gulf nation's membership in the SCO is being actively discussed, while the idea of joining BRICS is under consideration. (Agencies)

Nissan, Renault invest US\$600mil to make new models in India

TOKYO: Japanese carmaker Nissan Motor and French counterpart Renault on Monday unveiled plans to invest US\$600 million to develop new models in India, as they push to accelerate their business in one of the world's fastest-growing auto markets. The companies – which last week announced a revamp of their

partnership amid fierce competition in areas such as emerging markets and electric vehicles – said they would collaborate on six new cars for customers in India as well as for export. The package, the sources said. The report indicated that Brussels is also planning to blacklist a Dubai-based shipping company, "suspected of helping

Russia circumvent sanctions on oil exports." Nissan said in a statement that two of the models would be small electric vehicles, marking the first electric offerings from the companies in the South Asian nation, which last year eclipsed Japan to become the world's third-largest auto market. (Agencies)

T-Mobile outage hits users across the US

NEW YORK: T-Mobile users across the US reported network outages late on Monday, according to an outage tracking website, as the company said it was quickly addressing a disruption that had affected some cellular services. The US wireless carrier said it was working on resolving a problem that had caused intermittent issues with voice, messaging, and data services in several areas. It did not say how many users had been affected. The number of reports of T-Mobile outages over the preceding 24 hours had peaked at more than 83,000 at around 10.20pm ET (0320 GMT), said Downtetector.com, which tracks outages by collating status reports from sources including user-submitted errors on its platform. The number had



fallen to about 9,000 by midnight ET. T-Mobile's help page responded to Twitter messages from users experiencing problems, saying it would review the complaints. It provided no details on the extent of or reason for the outage. "Our teams are rapidly addressing a 3rd party fibre interruption issue that has intermittently impacted some voice, messaging and data services in several areas," T-Mobile's president of technology Neville Ray said on Twitter. (Agencies)

China's wind, solar almost enough to power every home

BEIJING: Wind turbines and solar panels are now generating almost enough electricity to power every home in China. Wind and solar output jumped 21% last year to 1,190 terawatt-hours of electricity, the National Energy Administration said at a briefing on Monday. That's not far off total residential power consumption of 1,340 terawatt-hours, the NEA said, which was a 14% increase on the prior year as more people spent time at home because of the government's stringent virus restrictions. The near

match underscores two important things about China's power system. One, of course, is the rapid growth in renewables as the country sinks hundreds of billions of dollars into meeting climate goals and reducing its reliance on expensive fossil fuels. But tempering that is a second point: the relative insignificance of household power when it comes to energy demand in China. Just 17% of electricity use there was classified as residential in 2020, according to the International Energy Agency. (Agencies)

Cars' sale decreases 43% in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: The sale of cars during the first seven months of the current fiscal year 2022-23, has dropped by 43.12 percent as compared to the same months of last year, the latest data released by the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). According to the data, as many as 74,933 cars were sold during July-January 2022-23 as opposed to 131,759 units during July-January 2021-22. The break-up figures showed that 10,526 units of Honda Civic and City were sold during the corresponding period of the year 2022-23 as compared to the sale of 21,266 units last year, thus showing a dip of 50.50 percent. Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars sales also decreased by 60.22 percent as it went down to 13,784 units the current year



from 34,654 units in the same period of the previous year. However, Suzuki Swift's sales went up by 1437.22 percent as sales increased to 7,640 units from 497 units last year. Sale of Suzuki Cultus decreased to 5,686 units during the current year, whereas during the same period last year, the sale was recorded at 15,688 units while the sale of Suzuki WagonR also decreased to 4,440 units from 13,166 units in the same period of last year. (Agencies)

Ma'aden records 87% rise in net profit in 2022

RIYADH: Saudi Arabian Mining Co., the largest multi-commodity mining and metals company in the Middle East, on Monday reported a surge of 87 percent in its net profit for the year 2022 driven by higher sales and higher commodity prices. The listed company, also known as Ma'aden, posted SR12.13 billion (\$3.23 billion) in net profit, it said in a press release. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization increased 51 percent at the end of the reporting period to more than SR16.68 percent. Following the launch of the company's 2040 strategy for growth and the initiation of a transformation program, Ma'aden has reported record sales of



SR40.28 billion, up 50 percent, driven by higher commodity prices and increased efficiencies across business units. Cash generated from operations jumped 71 percent on an annual basis to SR16.21 billion. Ma'aden is also making progress on its health and safety record, recording its safest year through further progress in the downward trajectory of the AIFR (All Injuries Frequency Rate) metric to 0.13. (Agencies)

Ruble slips to nine-month low

MOSCOW: The Russian ruble dropped to a nearly nine-month low against the US dollar on the Moscow Exchange on Monday, following volatile trading last week and expectations of new EU sanctions. The currency slipped to 73.68 rubles to the US dollar in afternoon trading, the weakest rate since the end of April. Analysts expect the ruble to remain under pressure until the end of February, when exporters will begin converting their foreign currency earnings into rubles to pay taxes. The ruble's depreciation versus the dol-



lar and the euro has also been driven by expectations of another batch of financial restrictions and lower oil prices. The EU is set to propose a new package of sanctions on Russia, which among other penalties, would target four Russian banks, including the country's largest private lender, Alfa Bank. (Agencies)

Soaring energy costs drive Swiss inflation higher – data

Switzerland at the start of the year, largely reflecting higher food and energy prices, figures from the Federal Statistical Office showed on Monday. Inflation rose 3.3% year-on-year in January, driven by surging gas and electricity prices. The rate exceeded economists' forecasts of 2.9% and was the highest since August 2022. On a monthly basis, consumer prices gained 0.6% in contrast to the 0.2%

drop in the previous month. The annual increase in inflation was largely propelled by a 5.6% rise in prices for food and non-alcoholic beverages. Housing and energy prices surged 5.1%, while public transport costs climbed 4.7% year-on-year. Gas prices alone rocketed by 40.3% in January in annual terms, while electricity soared by 25.5%, the statistics service said. (Agencies)

Inter fall further behind leaders Napoli after Samp stalemate

GENOA: Inter Milan allowed Napoli to pull 15 points clear at the top of Serie A after being held to a goalless draw at struggling Sampdoria on Monday. Simone Inzaghi's side already had little hope of recapturing the league title conceded to local rivals AC Milan last season and the yawning gap between them and Napoli widened following an underwhelming display in Genoa. Napoli cruised past Cremonese 3-0 on Sunday and look with each passing week more likely to claim a first league crown since 1990. Second-placed Inter are three points ahead of Atalanta, Roma and Milan in the race for next



season's Champions League. Lazio are five points back in sixth after being beaten by Atalanta in Rome on Saturday night. When asked if the title was beyond his team, Inzaghi said "I keep saying we can only look at ourselves". "We're not satisfied with the result, in fact we're very disappointed as we should be." Inzaghi picked

Romelu Lukaku alongside in-form Lautaro Martinez, the powerful strike partnership which won Inter the 2021 Scudetto. But Lukaku is nowhere near the form which led to Chelsea paying a club-record fee for his services the following summer and the Belgium forward was replaced by Edin Dzeko midway through the second half having made little impact. Turkey midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu went close with distance efforts in either half on a night in which the Inter fans in the stands at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris honoured the victims of the devastating recent earthquake which hit his country and Syria. (Agencies)

Jokic leads nuggets over heat, Mitchell Sparks Cavs

Los Angeles: Nikola Jokic narrowly missed out on his 21st triple double of the season as the Denver Nuggets battled to a 112-108 road victory over the Miami Heat on Monday. Two-time NBA MVP Jokic finished with 27 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists as Denver stretched their lead at the top of the Western Conference to five games. Denver, who improved to 40-18, trailed by nine points after a shaky first quarter but roared back in the second to outscore Miami 38-26 for a 65-62 lead at the break. The Nuggets held on to the advantage for most of the second half and although Miami got within three points in the final minute, Denver held on for victory. While Jokic led the scoring, Denver's balanced offense



spread the points around with seven players finishing in double figures and sharing 34 assists between them. Michael Porter Jr. scored 17 points while Bruce Brown had 16. "I think we like to play for each other," Jokic said. "We try to find open guys and we're just going to work for the best shot possible." "The team buys into that and that's why I think we have so many assists," the Serbian star said. (Agencies)

England, South Africa ignore auction distractions and gain key wins

PAARL: England and South Africa overcame the distractions of a player auction in India and pulled off important wins on the fourth day of the Women's T20 World Cup at Boland Park in Paarl. England took command of Group Two, beating Ireland by four wickets to notch their second successive win, while South Africa played themselves back into contention in Group One with a 65-run win over New Zealand. Monday's double-header was played while the auction in India's Women's Premier League was being held in Mumbai, with potential



life-changing deals for players from both teams, as well as those from New Zealand. England captain Heather Knight said her players were able to focus on the cricket. She said they left their hotel in Cape Town while hearing shouts of excitement from

Indian players who were the main focus of bidders from Indian franchises. "Whatever happens in the IPL doesn't affect the value of the players in our team," she said. Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone showed why she was bought by the Uttar Pradesh Warriorz franchise for the equivalent of about US\$220 000 when she sparked an Ireland collapse to 105 all out. Ecclestone took three for 13. Another WPL target, Alice Capsey, bought by Delhi Capitals for \$91 000, set up an early finish by hitting 51 off 22 balls in England's reply. (Agencies)

Salah sees fresh start for Liverpool in derby win



LIVERPOOL: Mohamed Salah said Liverpool's 2-0 win over Everton in the Merseyside derby on Monday is just the start of a revival for the Reds. Salah scored for the first time in the Premier League since Boxing Day as Jurgen Klopp's men snapped a four-game winless streak. Cody Gakpo then grabbed his first goal for the club in the second half. A positive night for Liverpool was

rounded off by the return of Diogo Jota and Roberto Firmino from injury, while Virgil van Dijk made the bench after six weeks on the sidelines. "It's a huge win for us," said Salah. "We had a perfect week to train and the players were so excited and we couldn't wait for the game to turn everything around. Hopefully it was a start." Liverpool are still nine points off the top four in ninth. But that gap to fourth-placed Newcastle could be cut to six points when they travel to St. James' Park next weekend. That clash comes just days before Real Madrid's trip to Anfield in the Champions League last 16 and Klopp will be hoping he has finally stumbled upon a solution to some of his side's woes in time for another tilt at the European Cup. (Agencies)

PSF holds reception for medalwinning Pakistan squash team

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) has arranged a reception in honour of Pakistan team on their return from India after winning the gold medal in the 21st Asian Junior Squash Team Championship in Chennai, India. A group of 10 teams participated in the championship and the four-member Pakistan squash team comprising Noor Zaman, Hamza Khan, M Ashab Irfan



and Anas Ali Shah outclassed hosts India with superb performance in the finals. On their arrival at Sialkot In-

ternational Airport in the morning, a large number of squash lovers were present to receive the national team. Meanwhile in the evening, a reception was also held here at the Pakistan Sports Complex for the national team on Monday. The President, Senior Vice President and all Pakistan Squash Federation staff congratulated the national team for their victory in the championship. (APP)

Saudi team wins gold in Asian Athletics C'ship for Futsal in Kazakhstan

RIYADH: Closing its participation in the 10th Asian Athletics Championship for Futsal held in Astana, Kazakhstan from February 10 - 12, 2023, the Saudi team snatched gold and broke a number of national records. Hussein Al-Huzam, won the gold for his team in the event which witnessed the participation of athletes from 31 countries. (Agencies)



Islamabad, Abbottabad victorious in national physical disabled cricket C'ship

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and Abbottabad earned victories in the ongoing National Championship organized by Pakistan Physical Disability Cricket Association here at Bhutto Ground on Monday. Islamabad PD defeated Azad Kashmir PD by 8 wickets while Abbottabad PD defeated Rawalpindi PD by 5 wickets and qualified for the second round. Islamabad PD easily defeated Azad Kashmir PD by 8 wickets in the first match of the ongoing National Championship organized by Pakistan Physical Disability Cricket Association



at Bhutto Ground and qualified for the next round. Azad Kashmir batted first and in 18.4 overs the entire team was bundled out for 90 runs. Ahmed Majeed was outstanding by scoring 26 runs. Sajjad Hussain, Sakhid Khan

and Waqif Shah took two wickets each. Captain and wicket keeper Usman Paracha hunted 3 players behind the wickets. In response, Islamabad achieved the required target of 92 runs for 2 wickets in 12 overs. Captain Usman Paracha hit 4 fours and made 32 runs not out. Adil Abbasi scored 23 runs and Usman Ghani scored 21 runs. At the end of the match, Chief Guest, Deputy Director of Navy, Khaleeq Khan, gave a cash award along with Man of the Match trophy to Usman Pracha. (APP)

Aussie Olympian Bol has doping ban lifted

MELBOURNE: Australian athlete Peter Bol, who finished fourth in the 800m at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, has had his provisional doping suspension lifted after the 'B' sample of his test did not match his 'A' sample, Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) said. The middle distance runner had been suspended since Jan 10 after testing positive for synthetic erythropoietin (EPO) in an out-of-competition urine test last October. Bol's 'A' sample had returned an "adverse analytical finding" but his 'B' sample produced an "atypical finding" (ATF) for recombi-



nant EPO, anti-doping watchdog SIA said today. Recombinant EPO is not produced naturally by the human body and is banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency. SIA said they have lifted

Bol's suspension but that the ATF was not the same as a negative test result and they will continue its investigation. "Sport Integrity Australia will, as part of its investigation, proceed to consider whether any anti-doping rule violations have been committed," the anti-doping watchdog said. "It is not possible to provide a timeframe at this point." Bol, 28, said he had been exonerated. "Last month I told everyone that I was innocent and asked that everyone in Australia believe me and let the process play out," he wrote on social media. (Agencies)

Riyadh Marathon sees over 15,000 runners take part

RIYADH: More than 15,000 competitors from 120 nations took part in the second edition of the Riyadh Marathon, organizers the Saudi Sports for All Federation have revealed. The race on Feb. 11 was a collaboration between the SFA, Ministry of Sports, Quality of Life program and Saudi Arabian Athletic Federation. A total of \$267,000 (SR1 million) was up for grabs in the elite races. Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al-Saud, president of the SFA, awarded the winners their prizes, in the presence of Prince Nawaf bin Moham-



med bin Abdullah, vice president of the International Athletics Federation, and Shaima Saleh Al-Husseini, SFA's managing director. Prince Khaled praised the community members for their commitment to raising awareness of

the importance of physical activities. "The SFA hopes to continue taking part in the Kingdom's aims to become a worldwide sports hub, by encouraging all members of society to get active and increase national education levels around the relevance of physical fitness as a key metric in overall life satisfaction and wellness," said Prince Khaled. He thanked the Ministry of Sports and Quality of Life program for helping to grow the marathon, which was held over 42 km, 21 km, 10 km and 4 km. (Agencies)

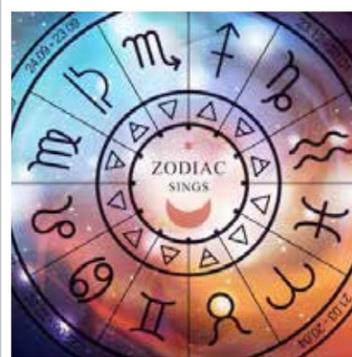
Olympics chief responds to Ukraine's boycott calls

LAUSANNE: International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach has criticized Ukraine's calls to boycott the Paris 2024 Games if Russian athletes are allowed to take part. The role of the Olympics is to unify, not escalate and contribute to confrontation, he said. "It's not up to governments to decide who can take part in which sports competitions because this would be the end of international

sport competitions... as we know it," Bach told journalists on Sunday. In late January, the IOC said it may allow athletes from Russia and Belarus who do not publicly support Moscow's military operation in Ukraine to participate in the 2024 Summer Olympics under a neutral flag. The announcement angered Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, who called on countries to boycott the Games if this

happens. Speaking on Friday, Zelensky said the presence of Russian athletes would be a "manifestation of violence" that "cannot be covered up with some pretended neutrality or a white flag." In comments cited by France 24, Bach stated that "history will show who is doing more for peace, the ones who try to keep lines open and communicate or the ones who want to isolate and divide." (Agencies)

DAILY HOROSCOPE: FEBRUARY 15, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.
 – **ARIES:** You need to make sure that you are down to earth and connected with the most important people in your life today -- it's not so hard! In fact, you should see if you can bring someone else back down, too!
 – **TAURUS:** Someone close to you knows a lot more than they are letting on -- but it's not so hard to get them to share their wisdom with you. If you open up a bit yourself, everyone turns out to be a winner!
 – **GEMINI:** You're not playing all your cards right now -- and that is exactly the right strategy. You should make sure that you're still able to see what all the other players are up to, though, as that might change things.
 – **CANCER:** Work-related issues are on your mind in a serious way, but you almost certainly need to get some perspective before you can handle them in the right way. Take a deep breath and a giant step back.
 – **LEO:** Take in as much information as you can today, because your decision-making process is wholly dependent on what you know. You may

want to defer action until as late in the day as possible.
 – **VIRGO:** Jump into the creative process, if possible -- but make sure that you turn off your internal editor or critic for the time being. It's a handy feature to have, but for now it just gets in the way of the flow.
 – **LIBRA:** You're feeling a bit off-kilter today and that could mean that you've got to slow down and avoid any heavy-duty interpersonal business. If you can't avoid it, don't read too much into it all.
 – **SCORPIO:** Someone you need to get approval from today is in a great mood, so that form or smile or assent is coming your way soon. You may still need to go through the motions to get there, though!
 – **SAGITTARIUS:** You're not ordinarily all that cheap, but on days like today, you can't help but keep your wallet shut tightly. It's a good impulse and you should find that it's well worth your while to cut off spending for now.
 – **CAPRICORN:** You've got plenty of great personal energy today that should be useful for pretty much anything you choose to do. Work, school, romance, parties -- the world is your oyster, so go for it!
 – **ACQUARIUS:** Don't stick your neck out today, because your energy levels may be somewhat deceptive and that could mean that you end up stuck in the middle of a job or date or something else running on fumes.
 – **PISCES:** You are in tune with the group's energy today (at work or at home) and should be able to identify a few small changes that should make things ten thousand times better for everyone.

US Air Force secretary signs condolence book at Turkish embassy in Washington

WASHINGTON: US Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall signed the condolence book Monday at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C. in tribute to the victims of last week's earthquakes in southern Türkiye. "Sincere thanks to Secretary of the Air Force, Frank Kendall, for signing the book of condolence for the memory of the victims of the earthquakes in Türkiye," the embassy tweeted. "We appreciate our ally's support and solidarity in this time of sorrow," it wrote. Kendall



was welcomed by Ambassador Hasan Murat Mercan and Turkish military attach Hakan Camli. At least 31,643 people died in the two strong earthquakes

that jolted southern Türkiye on Feb. 6. More than 80,000 others were injured. The magnitude 7.7 and 7.6 quakes, centered in Kahramanmaraş province, affected more than 13 million people across 10 provinces, which also included Hatay, Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Malatya, Adana, Diyarbakir, Kilis, Osmaniye and Sanliurfa. Several countries in the region, including Syria and Lebanon, also felt the strong tremors that struck Türkiye in the space of less than 10 hours. (Agencies)

Italian PM's Coalition Wins Regional Elections

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's right-wing coalition on Monday secured victory in regional elections, cementing her position almost four months after taking office. In the northern region of Lombardy, Italy's economic powerhouse that includes Milan, Attilio Fontana was easily re-elected president with the coalition's support. With the vast majority of ballots counted after voting on Sunday and Monday, Fontana was on 55 percent, his centre-left rival on almost 34 percent, official figures showed. In Lazio, the region that includes the capital Rome, coalition candidate Francesco Rocca, the former head of Italy's Red Cross, was on 53 percent with his main opponent trailing on around 34 percent. Despite low turnout of around 40 percent, Meloni hailed a "clear victory". "A result that consolidates the centre-right's coherence, and strengthens the work of the government," she wrote on Twitter. Meloni's post-fascist Brothers of Italy party made history in September by winning 26 percent of the vote in national elections. She formed a government with Matteo Salvini's far-right League and former premier Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing Forza Italia. Salvini was quick to congratulate Fontana, a member of the League, writing on Instagram: "Victory. (Agencies)

Equatorial Guinea says nine dead in Marburg virus outbreak

MALABO: Nine people have died in Equatorial Guinea from an "outbreak" of the Marburg virus, which causes a hemorrhagic fever nearly as deadly as Ebola, the health minister said Monday, and put a province in quarantine. The government had announced last week that it was investigating the cause of suspect cases of hemorrhagic fever in a rural eastern region of dense forest near the borders of Gabon and Cameroon, but said only three people had shown "light symptoms". Health Minister Mitoha Ondo'o Ayekaba said a "health alert" had been declared in the Kie-Ntem province and the neighbouring district of Mongomo, with a "lockdown plan implemented" after consulting with the World Health Organization and the United Nations. The Marburg virus is a highly dangerous pathogen that causes severe fever that often in-



cludes bleeding, often targeting several organs and often reducing the body's ability to function on its own. It is part of the so-called filovirus family that also includes the Ebola virus, which has wreaked havoc in several previous outbreaks in Africa. The natural of the Marburg virus is the African fruit bat, which carry the virus but do not fall sick from it. But the animals can pass the virus to primates in close proximity, including humans, and human-to-human transmission then occurs through contact with blood or other bodily fluids. (Agencies)

Pakistani parliamentarians urge int'l cooperation, aid to developing countries at hearing on water crisis



UNITED NATIONS: Pakistani parliamentarians, speaking at the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the UN, have called for enhanced international cooperation to deal with the growing water crisis as global climate change was increasingly impacting water availability, leading to water scarcity in some regions and flooding in others. Entitled 'Water for People and Planet: Stop the waste, change the game, invest in the future,' the Hearing, a joint initiative between the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), opened on Monday. UN officials said that the Hearing will provide a parlia-

mentary contribution to the UN Water Conference, which is being held from March 22-24, 2023, in New York. The Deputy Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, Zahid Akram Durrani, is leading the Pakistani parliamentary delegation, which includes, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Sana Jamali, Senator Naseema Ehsan, Senator Farooq Hamid Naek, Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir and Senator Faisal Saleem Rahman. More than 250 members of parliament, Speakers, advisers and related officials from 60 countries are participating in the event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. (Agencies)

India tax department raids BBC Delhi office: journalist



NEW DELHI: Indian tax authorities raided the BBC's New Delhi offices on Tuesday, a journalist at the broadcaster told AFP, weeks after it aired a documentary critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "There's income tax raid in office, they're confiscating all phones," the employee said. Police were at the BBC's office in the centre of the capital to prevent people from entering or leaving, an AFP journalist at the scene saw. "There is government procedure

happening inside the office," an official said, declining to disclose their department. Last month the broadcaster aired a two-part documentary alleging that Modi, premier of Gujarat state at the time, ordered police to turn a blind eye to sectarian riots there in 2002. The violence left at least 1,000 people dead, most of them members of the country's Muslim minority. India's government blocked videos and tweets sharing links to the documentary soon after its release, calling it "hostile propaganda and anti-India garbage". University student groups then organised viewings of the documentary, despite campus bans, to defy government efforts to stop its airing. (Agencies)

Dollar crash coming – Robert Kiyosaki

NEW YORK: Famed writer and economist Robert Kiyosaki has warned investors that the stock markets are about to crash and the US economy is heading into a "depression." According to the 'Rich Dad Poor Dad' co-author, this will be fueled by the fact that the US Federal Reserve will print billions in "fake money." "Giant crash is coming. Depression possible," Kiyosaki tweeted late Sunday. He also wrote that by 2025, Bitcoin will hit \$500,000, followed by \$5,000 and \$500 price marks for gold and silver respectively. He explained that this will be "because faith in the US dollar, fake money, will be destroyed," adding that Bitcoin is the people's money, and gold and silver are



"God's money." The spot price for gold is currently at \$1,856.58 per ounce, with spot silver at \$21.99 per ounce and Bitcoin at \$21,864. This is not the first time Kiyosaki has tweeted about an approaching market crash. He has made several similar warnings, tweeting that everything will crash, including the prices of gold, silver, and Bitcoin. This has caused some skepticism regarding his predictions. (Agencies)

Cruise outshines Oscars rivals as Academy readies for award show

LOS ANGELES: Tom Cruise lived up to his billing as the "last true movie star" as nearly 200 of this year's Oscar nominees gathered to celebrate — and size up their competition — at the Academy's boozy annual luncheon Monday. In a room packed with A-listers such as Steven Spielberg and Cate Blanchett, there was no doubt Cruise remained the biggest draw, with a crowd of wellwishers from Hollywood moguls to Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai lining up to greet him throughout the event. Cruise is nominated this year as a producer of "Top Gun: Maverick," in which he also starred. The film is considered a growing frontrunner for the best picture Oscar — Hollywood's most prestigious prize. "It's been incredible... I just want to get people into theatres," Cruise told AFP. "But this is lovely," he admitted, motioning to the



Beverly Hills ballroom, packed with Oscar nominees and Academy voters, and kitted out with giant golden statuettes and open champagne bars. The 95th Academy Awards will be held on March 12. Academy voters this year handed out various nominations for box office smash hits such as "Maverick," "Avatar: The Way of Water" and "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" — raising hopes that Oscars TV audiences will pick back up. (Agencies)

Still unknown if unidentified flying objects were spying: White House



WASHINGTON: The United States does not know if unidentified objects shot down by American warplanes in recent days were spying, the White House said Monday. "We don't know for sure whether they had a surveillance aspect to them, but we can't rule it out," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said in a press conference. The White House also said there is no sign of alien activity related to the unidentified objects, after a top US officer declined to rule it out. "There is no indication of aliens... with these recent takedowns, (I) wanted to make sure that the American people knew that," Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told journalists. The day before, General Glen VanHerck — the head of the US Northern Command — was asked during a briefing if aliens or extraterrestrials had been ruled out. "I haven't ruled out anything. At this point, we continue to assess every threat or potential threats unknown that approaches North America with an attempt to identify it," VanHerck said. A US warplane shot down an alleged Chinese surveillance balloon on February 4 and three unidentified objects were downed in subsequent days. It is not clear whether the three unidentified objects — shot down Friday over Alaska, Saturday over Canada and Sunday over Lake Huron — have any connection to a much bigger white balloon that was downed over the Atlantic. (Agencies)

Bus And Armoured Truck Crash Kills 20 In South Africa



JOHANNESBURG: A crash between an armoured truck and a bus has killed 20 people and injured another 60 in South Africa's northern province of Limpopo, the regional transport department said on Tuesday. "Twenty people were tragically killed in an accident, where a cash-in-transit truck lost control and collided head-on with an oncoming bus" on a highway on Monday, the department said in a statement. Ten of the injured were in serious condition and have been transported to the hospital. Police divers were searching a river that runs along the highway "for people who might have been swept away." The cause of the accident is under investigation, but heavy rains have been drenching the region in recent days, a spokesman for the department, Timalo Chuene, told AFP. Downpours have caused flooding in several regions of South Africa in recent days, killing at least seven people and leading the government to declare a national disaster. (APP)

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