



## Ukraine, UN call for extension of Black Sea grain export deal

KYIV (Agencies): Ukraine's President and United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, called on Wednesday for the extension of a deal with Moscow that has allowed Kyiv to export grain via Black Sea ports during Russia's invasion, Reuters reports. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, after talks with Guterres in Kyiv that the Black Sea Grain Initiative was "critically necessary" for the world, and the UN Chief underlined its importance to global food security and food prices. The 120-day deal, initially brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye last July and extended in November, will be renewed on 18 March if no party objects. Russia's demands, however, have not yet been met, a Turkish diplomatic source said, adding that Ankara was "working very hard" to ensure the deal continues. "I want to underscore the critical importance of rolling over the Black Sea Grain Initiative on 18 March and



working to create the conditions to enable the greatest possible use of export infrastructure through the Black Sea in line with the objectives of the initiative," Guterres told reporters in Kyiv. Russia, which lifted a blockade of three Ukrainian Black Sea ports under the deal last July, has signalled that obstacles to its own agricultural exports need to be removed before it lets the deal continue. To help convince Russia to allow Ukraine to resume its Black Sea grain exports, a three-year deal was struck last year in which the UN agreed to help facilitate Russian

food and fertiliser exports. Western powers have hit Russia with tough sanctions over its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine more than one year ago. While Russia's food and fertiliser exports are not subject to sanctions, Moscow says restrictions on its payments, logistics and insurance industries are a "barrier" to such shipments. "Russia's concerns, or the rather the difficulties that it is facing, have not been overcome yet. But Türkiye is doing its part for an agreement between all parties," the Turkish diplomatic source said.

## Exhibition of Tang Dynasty tomb frescos opens in Taiwan

TAIPEI (Xinhua/APP): More than 50 duplicates of tomb frescos dating back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) are on display at a university in Taoyuan from Tuesday, kicking off a touring exhibition in Taiwan. The frescos are all from collections of the Shaanxi History Museum, located in the mainland's north-western city of Xi'an, which was once the capital city of the Tang Dynasty. These exhibits are expected to give audiences insights into life and customs during the Tang Dynasty, including clothes, makeup, diet, sports, and religions. The show is part of a cultural exhibition on Tang Dynasty frescos co-sponsored by organizations from across the Taiwan Strait, which toured several cities on the island in 2022. "We



hope the Tang Dynasty fresco exhibition will be staged at more colleges in Taiwan, providing young people with more chances to better understand the traditional Chinese culture," said Yu Qun, vice chairperson of the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, one of the exhibition's organizers, in a video speech. The tomb fresco exhibition will last until March 31 in Taoyuan and will later be held in Taichung and Kinmen.

## Australia PM says to meet Biden in US, submarine deal expected



SYDNEY (AFP/APP): Australia's prime minister said Wednesday he will soon meet President Joe Biden in the United States, where they are expected to unveil a nuclear submarine deal aimed at countering China's growing assertiveness in the Pacific. After 18 months of negotiations, it's anticipated that Australia will reveal plans to obtain eight nuclear-powered submarines, in what Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has called "the single biggest leap" in defence capability in the country's history. The deal is part of the fledgling regional security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States known as AUKUS. "I'll be meeting with President Biden in the United States,"

Albanese told reporters in Perth on Wednesday. "We'll have further announcements about details soon about the arrangements that will be taking place." Australia does not have the expertise to build its own nuclear subs -- which have an extended range and powerful strike capabilities -- and must buy them from either the United States or Britain. Since September 2021, detailed behind-the-scenes talks have been taking place between the AUKUS partners about how to equip Australia's military with sensitive nuclear-propulsion technology. The deal has worried some of Australia's largest regional allies, with both Indonesia and Malaysia questioning whether it could spark a nuclear arms race in the Indo-Pacific. While the subs will be powered by a nuclear reactor, Australia has ruled out equipping them with nuclear weapons. It is the first time US-derived nuclear submarine technologies will be exported since the 1960s, when the United States helped Britain design its own undersea fleet.

## Women march as rights under threat across the globe



MADRID (AFP/APP): Women were beginning to hit the streets en masse across the globe on Wednesday to defend rights that are coming under increasing attack. To mark International Women's Day, capitals across the world are hosting marches, rallies and demonstrations, including Madrid, where broad tree-lined boulevards are regularly packed with a sea of purple, a colour often associated with women's rights. Marches took place on Wednesday in Thailand and Indonesia, where a few dozen women gathered in front of the country's parliament to urge lawmakers to pass a long-awaited bill to protect domestic workers and some chanted "long live Indonesian women". Global progress on women's rights is "vanishing before our eyes," UN chief Antonio Guterres warned on Monday, saying gender equality would take another three centuries to achieve. "Women's rights are being abused, threatened, and violated around the world,"

## Russia vows to capture Bakhmut, push further into Ukraine

KYIV (AFP/APP): The Russian army vowed on Tuesday to capture the east Ukrainian town of Bakhmut, a move President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said would give Moscow an "open road" for offensives deeper into his country. The intense fighting in the east raged on as Ukraine said it had identified a soldier filmed being shot dead in a video that sparked outrage on social media and as UN chief Antonio Guterres headed to Kyiv for talks. The battle for Bakhmut -- a salt-mining town with a pre-war population of 80,000 -- has been the longest and bloodiest in Russia's more than year-long invasion that has devastated swathes of Ukraine



and displaced millions. Russia has appeared intent to capture it at all costs. "Capturing (Bakhmut) will allow for further offensive operations deep into the defence lines of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu told military officials during a televised meeting on Tuesday.

## M23 rebels clash with DR Congo troops despite ceasefire



GOMA (AFP/APP): M23 rebels clashed with soldiers on two fronts in eastern DR Congo on Tuesday, officials said, despite a regional ceasefire deal due to take effect the same day. After several days of relative calm, fighting erupted on Monday in the flashpoint province of North Kivu, leaving several civilians dead and injured, hospital sources and aid workers said. The fighting continued on Tuesday, with the rebels seizing new villages, despite a ceasefire brokered by Angola last week that was

due to start at noon (1000 GMT). The M23 rebels have captured swathes of territory in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo since re-emerging from dormancy in late 2021, claiming the government had ignored a pledge to integrate them into the army. The Tutsi-led group is hemming in the lakeside trade hub of Goma, taking territory to the north of the city and advancing in the west as well. A security source, who declined to be named, said on Tuesday morning that Karuba, about 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of Goma, "has just fallen into rebel hands". "We attacked them in the night but this morning they launched a counter-attack, and, at the moment, the fighting is continuing," the source added. Witnesses said fighting continued to the north too, where rebels remained on the offensive.

## Clashes in Georgia over contentious 'foreign agents' law

TBILISI (AFP/APP): Georgian police used tear gas and water cannon against protesters Tuesday as thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in the capital Tbilisi to oppose a controversial "foreign agents" bill. At one point a protester opposed to the law, which would impose registration requirements on media and NGOs with foreign ties, threw a Molotov cocktail at a cordon of riot police, according to television footage. The demonstration took place after Georgian lawmakers earlier Tuesday gave their initial backing to the draft law, which is reminiscent of Russia's legislation used to crack down on dissent. In recent years Georgian authorities have faced mounting international criticism over perceived backsliding on democracy, seriously damaging

Tbilisi's ties with Brussels. In 2012, Russia adopted a law that allows authorities to take action against NGOs, media outlets and others deemed "foreign agents". Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili expressed support for the demonstrators and vowed to veto the legislation. "I stand with you because you are representing today the free Georgia which sees its future in Europe and will not let anyone steal this future," she said in a video from the United States where she is on an official visit. "Nobody has the right to take away your future," she said in the address, with the Statue of Liberty seen in the background. The US embassy in Georgia called the legislation "Kremlin-inspired" and said it was incompatible with the country's desire to join the European Union.

## Resilient Pakistan to sail through financial, other challenges: FM

NEW YORK (APP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said the Pakistani nation, with resilience and determination, would effectively overcome the current challenges including the economic crisis. "Pakistan has seen tough times in the past and fought them bravely. This time too, the nation will overcome the difficult situation," he told reporters here in New York on Tuesday. Bilawal arrived in New York Tuesday morning to begin a 5-day visit during which he will preside over a conference on 'Women in Islam', which is set to take place Wednesday on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The foreign minister said Pakistan from the platform of Council of Foreign Ministers is hosting an event on Islamophobia to shun negative perceptions regarding the human rights, particular-



ly of women and minorities. Islam, he said, is the religion which grants rights to women and promotes their emancipation in all fields of life. Asked about the pro-women approach of his party, he termed women as the strength of Pakistan Peoples Party who championed the rights of the women of the country. Earlier, Bilawal welcomed the adoption of national action plans by more than 90 countries around the world, which have empowered women and girls and helped them respond to violence and conflict.

## Opposition besieges Georgian parliament

TBILISI (Agencies): Thousands of demonstrators, some wearing gas masks and helmets, surrounded the parliament building in Tbilisi on Wednesday evening, protesting a law that would curb foreign-funded NGOs. Police used tear gas, water cannons and flash-bangs in an attempt to disperse them. In a repeat of Tuesday's clashes, protesters used Molotov cocktails and fireworks against the police, drawing a forceful response. The authorities are trying to unblock the parliament building and push the demonstrators away, according to local media. Live-streams of the protest showed demonstrators attempting to

breach the gates and enter the parliament building. Several windows on the building were broken. At one point, gunshots could be heard. Protests began after the parliamentary majority voted in favor of a bill requiring any organization receiving more than 20% of its funding from abroad to register as a foreign agent. Opposition politicians denounced the proposal as copying a Russian law and arguing this was somehow endangering Georgian democracy and Euro-Atlantic integrations. Police managed to disperse the riot outside the parliament on Tuesday evening, arresting more than 60 people for disorderly conduct.

## White House applauds bill that would allow TikTok ban



WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The White House on Tuesday welcomed a bill that would allow the United States to ban Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a statement. The bill was backed by Mark Warner, a senior US senator from the Democratic party, and John Thune, a South Dakota Republican, in a rare act of political entente by US lawmakers. "We applaud the bipartisan group of senators, led by Senators Warner and Thune, who today introduced the Restricting the Emergence of Security Threats that Risk Information and Communications Technology Act," Sullivan said. The bipartisan bill "would empower the United States government to prevent certain foreign governments from exploiting technology services."

**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.

## Exclusive protection center for old age, below 18 years transgenders set up in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): An exclusive protection center for old age and below 18 years age persons from transgender community has been set up in Peshawar for providing them with shelter and food free of cost. "The protection shelter has been set up by the Social Welfare Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in pursuance of the directives of Federal Shariat Court issued on December 12, 2022," informs Noor Muhammad District Officer Social Welfare Department. Talking with APP, Noor Muhammad apprised that the Federal Shariat Court during the hearing of a petition filed by a member of the transgender community had directed for establishment of exclu-

sive protection centres at provincial levels for intersex children who are abandoned by their families and old age persons of the same community who face a lot of difficulties in finding any source of livelihood for survival. The exclusive protection has been established at a Panah Gah (Shelter Home) on Pajaggi Road where selected transgenders would be provided stay, and food free of cost, Noor told APP. This center initially comprised two rooms with a staying capacity of five beds in each room, Noor continued. President of TransAction (Provincial Alliance for Transgender Community), Farzana Riaz was the chief guest on the occasion who inaugurated the protection

center. The Social Welfare Department has requested Farzana to identify the most deserving transgenders for availing of the facility. All those recommended by President TransAction, Farzana Riaz would be provided shelter and free food facilities, Noor added. Apart from it, District Officer Social Welfare Department continued, an offer is also being made to the transgender community regarding psychological counselling of children and old age persons. We also have a Child Protection Unit in Peshawar providing services of counselling by professional psychologists and the transgender community can also benefit from the facility on a need basis, Noor disclosed.

## People help sought in countering terrorism, crimes

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has urged the masses to help the security and law enforcement agencies in countering terrorism and crimes by keeping an eye on suspicious activities and persons around them. A public message issued here by the provincial information depart-

ment has asked the people to dial helpline 1125 or mobile numbers 0325-1855653, and 0336-1816106 in case of any suspicious activities assuring that the identity of the informer would be kept secret. It said that unfortunately, the province has witnessed severe terrorist attacks from the last few years. For this pur-

pose, the Government was committed to introducing such initiatives so that the general public could also play their roles and help the security agencies. It said that the general public could play an imperative role by timely updating the information about suspicious activities on the given helpline.

## KP women equally share in country's development process despite cultural barrier

PESHAWAR (APP): Busy like a hon-

### GOLD PRICE IN PAK

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
Per Tola Gold	Rs 201,500	Rs 184,707	Rs 176,312	Rs 151,125
Per 10 Gram	Rs 172,754	Rs 158,357	Rs 151,160	Rs 129,565
Per Gram Gold	Rs 17,275	Rs 15,836	Rs 15,116	Rs 12,957
Per Ounce	Rs 489,750	Rs 448,935	Rs 428,531	Rs 367,313

### FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	278.2	281
China Yuan	39.64	40.04
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.11
Saudi Riyal	73.5	74.2
U.A.E Dirham	75.5	76.2
UK Pound	329	332
Euro	290	292.5
Australian Dollar	182.5	184.5
Canadian Dollar	202	204.2

### 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
Irnham Hospital	091-9216115
Mission Hospital	091-2212371
Al-Khidmat Hospital	091-2215945
Fauji Foundation Hospital	091-9212771-4
Frontier Foundation Blood Services	091-5703463
Hamza Foundation, Peshawar	091-5841632
Sui Gas, Peshawar	091-9213016
Wapda Complaint Peshawar	091-9212041
PIA, Peshawar	091-9213351
Airport Inquiry	114
Railway Inquiry	117

eybee in tailoring of women suits, Nishat Bibi, 47, a seamstress of Pabbi, Nowshera district with scattered unstitched clothes, scissors and spools around her sewing machine was working against the clock to meet the set declines' orders placed by the customers in the wake of wedding, engagements and academics' results season. Unaware of International Women's Day, observed the world over including Pakistan here on Wednesday, Nishat Bibi, who inherited the pain-sticking tailoring profession from her mother, was busy in measurement of ladies and children suits with measuring tape before its cutting to help her husband in meeting the household

expenses in the wake of high inflation and price-hike in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Enjoying 'Watan ki Matti Gawah Rehana' national song playing in the background at her room's window by the radio along with her daughter and son, the motivated lady tailor told APP that she had entered the painstaking profession after the untimely death of her mother a few years ago and had been associated with it for the last 25 years. "I learnt the art from my mother, who started sewing clothes for brides, children and relatives during occasions of marriages, engagements, Eid and birthday parties from a very young age," Nishat, wearing eyes' glasses, told APP with a smiling face.

## KMU organizes colorful one day fun fair fest 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): A colorful one-day fun fair fest 2023 organized by the sports directorate of Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar kicked off at the main campus here on Wednesday. The festival was inaugurated by the registrar of the university, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Gandapur, besides the director of sports Dr. Inayat Shah, the heads of various institutions and departments, faculty and a large number of students were also present at the occasion, said a press release issued here. The purpose of organizing the fun fair was to highlight the hidden creativity of students through co-curricular activities, it added. In the festival food, cold drinks, ice cream, bangles, books, and other stalls were set up. At the same time, arrangements were also made for the exhibition of paintings, photography, and calligraphy of the students on this occasion in which

the students showed keen interest. In the second part of the fun fair, along with the cultural show, auto show, drama, comic sketches, and mushaira was also organized in urdu, Pashto, and English, in which students actively participated while the mushaira was presided over by a well-known poet Anwar Masood. He received a standing ovation from the participants through his humorous poetry and he appreciated the positive activity of KMU. Speaking at the opening ceremony as the chief guest, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Salim Gandapur said that KMU has the honor that academic and research activities as well as co-curricular activities of students are given equal importance. He said that the purpose of organizing this event is to provide students with opportunities to develop their hidden co-curricular skills in a peaceful and safe educational environment.

## City Police arrest two drug peddlers

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police Peshawar arrested two notorious drug peddlers during a crackdown against narcotics and ice drugs on Wednesday. On a tip of information, Rehman Baba Station House Officer (SHO) Asif Ali Khan along with police personnel conducted raids against drug peddlers in the suburban localities and arrested two accused. The arrested accused have been identified

as Abubakar alias Dada son of Saifulah and Imran son of Mukhtiar. The accused hails from different localities of the district. Police have also recovered two kilograms of hashish and 0.5 kg of ice drug from their possession. Both accused have confessed to peddling ice and other narcotics. Police have registered cases against both accused and further investigations were in progress.

## No consensus reached between KP Governor, ECP on KP Assembly election date

PESHAWAR (APP): No consensus on the election date for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly has been reached during a high-level meeting between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here on Wednesday. The meeting was held between KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and a three-member team of ECP comprising its Secretary, Joint Secretary and Director General Law here at Governor House. However, no consensus on the election date was reached between them. Meanwhile, ECP in a press release said that

full powers were given to the ECP's team for a consultation. The ECP team told the KP Governor during the briefing that he was bound to give a date for the KP Assembly election in the light of law and constitution so that election could be held in 90 days or in minimum time. The governor, while responding about the election date, said that he would hold a final consultative meeting with the Commission at ECP Islamabad next week. The secretary of ECP made it clear to the governor that he just came here in connection with the KP Assembly election date.

## Mufti Naveed-ul-Aser passes away

PESHAWAR (APP): A well-known political and social worker, Mufti Naveed-ul-Aser passed away on Wednesday, at the age of 66. He was a staunch loyalist of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) and was always at the forefront during the political struggle of his party. He has served the party in various offices and remained loyal to his par-

ty till his death. His funeral prayers would be offered today (Wednesday) at 2:30 P.M. in Tehsil Gor Ghat Tree Park. He has left behind two sons Mufti Faizan-ul-Aser and Mufti Sameer-ul-Hassan to mourn his death. Fateha Khawani and Rusm-e-Qul for the eternal peace would be held in his residence at Muslim City, G.T. Road.

## UoP teachers, staff strike continues

PESHAWAR (APP): The strike of teachers and other staff of the University of Peshawar (UoP) on Wednesday continued in the wake of killing of an ex-employee of the varsity allegedly by a security guard in the campus premises. The teachers and employees boycotted educational activities as well as the official matters and demanded dismissal of

the Vice Chancellor and the holding of a judicial inquiry into the murder of Saqlain Bangash. They also demanded an operation to clear the university campus free from weapons and drugs, besides conducting the psychological examination and qualification of security guards. The protesters warned to continue the strike until their demands are met.

## Int'l Women's Day calls for active women's participation in all civic engagements: Farrah

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission Farrah Hamid on Wednesday said that international Women's day is an occasion to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. In her message in connection with the day, she said that the day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's participation in all areas of civic

engagements. She said that KPIC was encouraging women on this special day to equally participate in the transparent governance system in the province, by claiming their right to information whenever required. Farrah Hamid said that the commission was especially focusing on women's participation in its upcoming working plans of awareness on KP's right to information law in the province.

## Terrorism bid foiled; two terrorists with arms, ammunitions arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The Shabqadar Police, district Charsadda along with security agencies on Wednesday conducted an intelligence-based operation and foiled a terrorism bid while arresting two terrorists and recovered huge cache of arms and ammunition. According to the police spokesman, the arrested terrorists belong to a banned outfit and residents

of different districts of the province. They were involved in various sabotage activities in the district. During the operation, Shabqadar police recovered 10 kg of explosive material, two RPG rifles, seven shells, six feet safety fuse, three detonators, three hand grenades and other materials from the possession of the arrested terrorists.

## Three-member ECP team reaches Peshawar for KP election date

PESHAWAR (APP): A three-member team of the Election Commission of Pakistan on Wednesday reached here to hold a meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali to finalise a date for the conduct of the general elections in the province following a Supreme Court's verdict. The team members included the Secretary Election Commission, Special Secretary, and Director General Law. The team reached Peshawar in response to a letter written to the

ECP by the KP Governor for consultation regarding the fixation of a date for the KP Assembly elections. It is worth mentioning here that the apex court, in a 3-2 verdict last week, had ruled that elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces should be held within 90 days. The court, in its judgment, had noted that under the constitution a governor was responsible to fix and announce the election date as soon as he dissolved any provincial assembly.

## KP govt to ensure fortification of flour, cooking oil: Fazal Elahi

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Food, Fazal Elahi has said that the provincial government has approved the Food Fortification Bill, which would be implemented soon to ensure compulsory fortification of flour, cooking oil and ghee in the province. He was addressing a function regarding fortification of oil, ghee and flour here in a local hotel, said an official handout issued on Wednesday. The function was organized under the auspices of KP Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (KP FS-HFA) in collaboration with Nutrition International. Besides, the officials of KP FS & HFA, the representatives of Ghee Mills Association, departments of food, health, Planning & Development (P&D) and others concerned national and international organizations also attended. The caretaker minister said that a large number of children in our country are facing a

shortage of food, saying Federal and provincial governments are taking steps to overcome the deficiency of food and especially of vitamins and iron. He said that good and balanced nutrition is essential for the health of children. He said food fortification is being made compulsory by various countries while 125 are also fortifying salt with iodine. He said that projects like food fortification are of high importance as it provides the opportunity for the capacity building of public sector departments and industries. The caretaker minister commended Nutrition International in the food fortification program and urged the flour milling and cooking oil industry to come forward and extend support to the government in filling vitamin deficiency and on behalf of the provincial government assured them of all possible cooperation.

## AIG put security high alert in provincial capital

PESHAWAR (APP): In pursuance of the instructions of the Additional Inspector General (AIG) of Police, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), the security has been put on high alert in the provincial capital to avoid any untoward incident. A letter of the AIG addressed to KP police Chief said that there were intelligence reports of suspicious activities in Peshawar or its surroundings and needed necessary arrangements to thwart the nefarious designs of anti-state elements. It advised put-

ting in place all possible security measures and strengthening of the security of important offices, buildings, religious places, educational institutions and government installations to refrain from the diehard elements from materialising their evil designs. Meanwhile, the public was also urged to keep an eye on suspicious activities and persons around them and inform the police and security agencies by dialling helpline 1125 from their mobile phones at any time.



Editor-in-Chief: Rizwan Inayat

Editor: Omer Rizwan

First Floor, Town Heights, Old Bara Road,  
University Town Peshawar - Pakistan.

Website: [www.thekhybermail.com](http://www.thekhybermail.com)

E-mail: [thekhybermail@gmail.com](mailto:thekhybermail@gmail.com) - Phone: 091-7081579



## Census Problems

Pakistan's first-ever digital census, a time and resource-costly exercise, is already causing disruptions. The PPP, a part of the ruling PDM coalition, has expressed concern for their continued involvement in the coalition and a reason cited is the census being conducted. According to the FM and party chairman, Bilawal Bhutto, it remains unacceptable that provincial polls are conducted based on different census results. This is the seventh national census, and it is true that the endeavour has been taken on so close to the general elections and that causes complications. He further conditioned the federal government to respond to his claims of fraud in the data collecting activity. This is a serious issue. As with any census, there are concerns about undercounting, inaccuracy, and exclusion of groups. The activity of geotagging, undertaken in the ongoing digital enumeration, reduces these errors to an extent as the data collected is real-time and can be verified. Likewise, given the large miscounting errors in the previous census, discrediting the current one at such an early stage is wrong and some confidence in the activity would benefit the exercise. The question of polling on different data points across the provinces may be addressed and the chairman is right to bring up the ongoing need for transparency in results and accountability of enumerators and data points. However, given that this digital census indicates a wider pivot toward more digitized e-governance, immediate questioning should be put at bay. The government must respond to these claims and investigate the charges levied as a lack of confidence by government officials may trickle down to the masses and enumerators themselves. Steps for improvement need to be taken and training enumerators, as well as their monitoring, is a way to do this. The PDM alliance fracture may have other reasons behind it but the effect on the nationwide data collection activity is serious. It is hoped that we do not make the same mistakes, as with the issues of the 2017 census, and that the exercise proves to be a good investment.

## Plastic pollution and Pakistan

— By Fayyaz Salih Hussain

Plastic is a material that has become ubiquitous in modern life due to its low cost, durability, and versatility. However, plastic waste has become a major environmental issue, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan, where the lack of proper waste management and recycling infrastructure has resulted in the accumulation of plastic waste in the environment. Plastic pollution not only affects the environment but also human health, as plastic waste can release harmful chemicals into the soil and water, and be ingested by animals, which can then enter the food chain. In this article, we will discuss the extent of plastic pollution in Pakistan and potential scientific solutions to address this problem. Pakistan is a developing country with a population of over 220 million, and plastic waste has become a significant environmental challenge due to the lack of proper waste management systems. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Pakistan generates approximately 20 million tons of solid waste annually, of which 5 to 10 percent is plastic waste. Additionally, a study conducted by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2018 found that Pakistan is one of the top 10 countries in the world for plastic pollution, with an estimated 90 percent of plastic waste being improperly disposed of. The plastic waste in Pakistan is primarily generated by urban areas, and the waste collection and disposal infrastructure is inadequate to handle the volume of plastic waste generated. As a result, plastic waste is often burned or dumped in open areas, including water bodies, which leads to environmental pollution and health hazards. The plastic pollution problem in Pakistan has severe environmental and human health impacts. The accumulation of plastic waste in the environment leads to soil, air, and water pollution, which can cause long-term damage to the ecosystem. The plastic waste often clogs drains and waterways, leading to flooding during the monsoon season. The burning of plastic waste also releases harmful chemicals into the atmosphere, leading to air pollution. The plastic pollution problem also poses a severe threat to human health. Plastic waste can release harmful chemicals into the soil and water, which can then

enter the food chain, leading to adverse health effects. Additionally, plastic waste can attract pests and vectors that can cause the spread of diseases. The plastic pollution problem in Pakistan is complex and requires a multi-pronged approach to be tackled. The following are some potential scientific solutions to address the plastic pollution problem in Pakistan: The development of efficient waste management systems is critical to reducing plastic waste in Pakistan. Municipal authorities should invest in waste collection infrastructure, including recycling facilities and proper disposal mechanisms. Innovative solutions like waste-to-energy plants can also help reduce plastic waste by converting it into energy. The development and use of biodegradable alternatives to plastic can help reduce plastic waste. Biodegradable plastics break down naturally and do not release harmful chemicals into the environment. Research and development of such materials are required to promote their use. There are several methods of producing biodegradable plastic, including: starch-based bioplastics are made by combining starch, such as corn or potato starch, with a biodegradable polymer such as polylactic acid (PLA) or polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA). The starch acts as a filler material while the polymer acts as a binding agent. The resulting bioplastic is biodegradable, compostable, and has a lower carbon footprint than conventional plastic. Cellulose-based bioplastics are made from cellulose, which is extracted from plant materials such as wood, cotton, or hemp. The cellulose is then chemically modified to produce a biodegradable polymer. These bioplastics are strong, durable, and biodegradable. Microbial bioplastics are produced by bacteria or yeast that ferment organic materials such as sugar or starch to produce a biodegradable polymer. Polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs) are a common type of microbial bioplastic. These bioplastics are biodegradable, compostable, and have a low carbon footprint. Algae-based bioplastics are produced by extracting polysaccharides from algae and converting them into a biodegradable polymer. These bioplastics are renewable, biodegradable, and have a low carbon footprint. Courtesy: Pakistan Today

## Plight of minorities in India

— By Asad Ali

THE once multicultural India following the Nehruvian concept of secular Indian Republic and plurality has now become a radicalized state chanting slogans of Hindutva. Gone are the days when successive Indian governments used to walk on secular footsteps of founding father Gandhi and first Indian PM Nehru. Now, ultranationalist regime of Modi's BJP has been gradually saffronizing India for years. Indian government's ruling factions under PM Modi are working on Hindutva driven policies of Hindu nationalism while showing zero respect towards notions of humanity. This Hindutva posture of Modi government haunts opposition parties and intellectuals believing in principles laid down by Mahatma Gandhi. This Hindu nationalism fostered and promoted by Indian government has not only challenged rather threatened country's pluralistic traditions but has also set 1.4 billion people residing in India astray. The saffron politics and BJP's Hindutva driven policies have helped in re-election of Modi in 2019 but it has also critically exploited ethnic and religious fault lines pre-existing in so-called secular India. After re-election in 2019, Premier Modi has been following footprints of a fascist leader and BJP seems to preach lessons of fascism to general Hindu public in order to get maximum political edge over opposition, which is struggling to find a space in Indian electoral politics. Since BJP-led NDA government took over power in 2014, incidents of mob lynching have increased to greater extent in India. The police and other law enforcement institutions are doing nothing to stop these hardliner Hindus and instead acting like Modi government's mouthpiece. As per information available with Indian Election Commission, BJP has most criminal Members of Parliament as compared to other political parties. One of BJP's female MPs from Bhopal Pragya Thakur is just one example of that list. Mrs Thakur is accused of plotting bomb blasts and killing of some Muslim leaders. Indian political parties strongly condemned BJP's decision to nominate her as their can-

didate for Lok Sabha. However, BJP rejected their criticism and ultimately she won the election and elected to Lok Sabha in 2019. This is just an example of BJP's criminal MPs list. There many others who are involved in various heinous attacks and crimes. But, now world is watching BJP's nationalist policies. This is not the end of Indian nationalist designs. In the recently held state elections in New Delhi, BJP leaders came out openly and threatened Muslims of dire consequences in case of BJP's victory. Previously, Hindu goons had looted the shops of Muslims and killed 50 people in worst ever communal riots in New Delhi. The Delhi police played role of facilitator as they failed to arrest culprits. It is pertinent to mention here that Delhi police directly reports to Indian Home Ministry which is currently under architecture of Hindutva ideology and BJP's former President Amit Shah. The world had already also witnessed Gujarat massacre, which was a byproduct of Hindutva politics. The seeds of mob politics, lynching of minorities and inter-faith animosity have been sown by militant parties such as BJP, RSS and Bajrang Dal, ruling India. BJP seems to preach lessons of fascism to general Hindu public. By preaching such teachings, government and top leadership are destroying social fabric of India. The BJP regime has set the criteria for an Indian national and has redefined a citizen by simply demanding one to be a Hindu. The incumbent Indian Establishment is on the path to accomplish dream of Hindu Rashtra and Akhand Bharat and for that purpose, it is taking all possible steps. The abrogation of Article 35-A and 370 of Indian Constitution which grants special status to disputed territory IIOJK, is another attempt to marginalize Muslims living in the valley. By scrapping autonomy of IIOJK, Indian government is now changing demography and more Hindus are coming to the valley for permanent residence and businesses purpose. To further strengthen its actions and convert them into reality, Indian government has recently introduced Domicile Law in IIOJK which allows

non-Kashmiris to become permanent resident of valley and can purchase property as well. The question that often haunts statesmen and other visionary people is that with this saffronized posture, anti-minority policies and fascist approach is India still able to call itself a democracy? This question not only challenges the doctrine of Indian democracy but also poses an existential threat to the historic ideology of India. The world has to take practical steps to deter Indian government to stop marginalizing Muslims. The rise of Hindutva ideology and Hindu nationalism is test case for the world.

The radicalism and inter-faith animosity bred by BJP and PM Modi has been staunchly criticized by the Opposition and left wing parties as well. Harsh Mander, a former civil servant turned human rights activist stated, "What is happening in Assam and Kashmir is an assault on very imagination of India, of freedom struggle, of Constitution, of idea of a country in which everyone belongs equally." While pointing towards anti-Muslim drive of government, he said calling Muslims enemy is a war on the Indian Constitution. Most of the critics maintain the view that the events happening in Assam and Kashmir are the attempts to change the demography and demographic factors of these areas in the favour of Hindus. The point to ponder is what BJP government is up to and why PM Modi is setting his own house on fire? Why Indian leadership is adamant at making India bleed from Kashmir to Assam? Why rights of minorities are being suppressed in one of the biggest democracies of the world? The question that often haunts the statesmen and the other visionary people is that with this saffronized posture, anti-minority policies and fascist approach is India still able to call itself a democracy? This question not only challenges the doctrine of Indian democracy but also poses an existential threat to the historic Ideology of India. Islamophobia in Modi's India is the norm and not a fringe occurrence.

Courtesy: Pakistan Observer

## Unstable states

— By Dr Niaz Murtaza

We face today one of the worst bouts of political instability to have plagued us since 1947. Some states like India are stable with regular fair polls. Others see polls often, like Italy, yet the power transfer mode remains stable. Others are autocratically stable, like North Korea, but such deceptive stability usually ends in extreme and violent instability, as in Yemen. We see less violence, but have constant power transfers among elite factions, with even the mode of power transfer uncertain. The roots of instability within states usually lie in their prenatal political or economic deficiencies. The British rued our economic viability, even though it was high among post-colonial states given the largest extent of irrigated land, a long coast, major port, big potential internal market, old links with nearby major economic regions and some natural resources. Industry, too, was set up fast by the 1950s by able traders and bureaucrats. Our big prenatal deficiency was political. Most post-colonial states had existed as separate colonial or even pre-colonial states and thus had separate governance structures with a clear and old power centre. However, the two to three dozen postcolonial breakaway states, especially those which did not even have separate provinces earlier, had to create structures from scratch. Most breakaway states like Bangladesh had a high natural nationhood via identity oneness; ie, most of their population

was from one race, faith and ethnicity. We lacked that despite a common faith, given our ethnic divides, and were also the only state bifurcated by 1,600 kilometres of a rival state. Our freedom drive was led by elites, many of whom lacked a pro-poor ideology, did not mobilise the masses at the grassroots level, nor belonged to the areas that became Pakistan. The drive was also based on fears of future Hindu abuse rather than prolonged actual abuse, which may have welded a nation via common suffering. All this meant that non-political institutions like the elitist bureaucracy and military were much stronger than political ones at birth. Thus, Pakistan was perhaps the post-colonial state with the biggest prenatal political gaps globally, notwithstanding its high economic viability. Had the field been developed enough then, a social sciences doctor taking a prenatal scan of the foetus may have easily predicted the political problems it would face later. They may not have advised aborting it, as the political gaps were surmountable given strong expert care. That care was devolved democracy to help develop a cultivated nationhood where disparate groups agree to live together given perceived benefits of size, etc, even in the absence of a natural nationhood, as in India too. Oddly, this was what the 1940 resolution said, under the push of progressive regional voices, but, predictably, elites in the freedom party made

no effort during the seven years to 1947 or even later to operationalise the idea. The most immediate outcome of these traits was an elitist freedom party that largely failed to provide post-birth leadership or stamp a legitimate authority over the disparate nation to develop democratic institutions and became quite irrelevant before non-political institutions. Leftist ideological and ethno-ideological parties challenging elite non-political and political forces to craft an egalitarian state were crushed. The establishment manipulated politics to undercut ideological politics by imposing one abhorrent brand of politics after another, as even these forces soon challenged it. The first one was patronage politics of commercial or landed elites. When they became too big for their boots, those with the biggest boots in the land booted them out on the pretext of corruption and incompetence, forgetting that these parties thrived only due to its own crackdown on ideological politics. But instead of allowing ideological politics to return and challenge patronage politics in communities, the establishment encouraged ethno-populist (MQM) and extremist religious politics (TLP etc.) to counter patronage politics. Slowly those groups too went rogue. The last establishment-imposed political experiment gone awry was populist politics (PTI), whose aftermath we and it are still suffering. Courtesy: DAWN

## Letters to the Editor

**Doctors and medical stores**  
As we all are aware, the world has become so dark that we can't even judge any brightness. The doctors of the 21st century seem more advanced than modern technology. It came into observation that some doctors are linked with medical

stores because of which they prescribe extra tablets that aren't a must for the patients. They also prescribe more than needed. The inflation rate is going higher day by day, the haves are getting richer and the have-nots are getting poorer. The poor are getting cheated by con-

scienceless doctors. Lastly, with a powerful expectation, I request the government to take action against such doctors who just value money, not humanity.  
— Sadina Mohammad Bakhsh  
— Hopela



## Book launching ceremony held at The China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC)

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a book-launch event of three books authored by Chinese writers and translated by Pakistani authors. The books include, "Mao Zedong and Contemporary China", "How the Chinese Communist Party Manages the Development Issue", and "Beyond the Karakoram: A Photographic Dialogue Between a Chinese and a Pakistani Scholar". The Chief Guest at the event was Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, Minister of State for Petroleum; Guest of Honour on the occasion was Mr. Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/SAPM on



Public Communication and Digital Platform. Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, former Ambassador to China, and Dr. Hassan Daud Butt Associate Professor, Bahria University, reviewed the books. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre, welcomed the guests

and highlighted the significance of literature in building people-to-people contacts. DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks, underlined that Pakistan's relations with China were the "cornerstone" of its foreign policy. He highlighted the key features and growing trajectory of Pakistan-China 'All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership'; role of Chairman Mao in the Chinese revolution and China's modernization; the CPC's role in China's socio-economic development; and importance of further strengthening the Public Diplomacy dimension of Pakistan-China relations through such events.

## President urges students to enhance their intellectual abilities



ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday asked the students to enhance their intellectual abilities and play their role in the development of the country. He said that it was essential to improve intellectual resources as well as IT knowledge and skills to help address the socio-economic challenges being faced by the country. The president expressed these views while talking to the students and staff of the Cadet College, Jaffarabad, Balochistan, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Highlighting the importance of education, the President stated that nations had

achieved progress by focusing on science and education. He regretted that 22 million children were out of school whereas the countries in the region had achieved almost 100 per cent primary enrolment rate, adding that tangible and immediate steps needed to be taken to bring these children into schools. He also underlined the need to equip the youth with skills and education to improve the economic health of the country. The president said that Pakistan had great potential in terms of both its natural and human resources that needed to be fully harnessed for the uplift of the country.

## ANF recovers over 97 kg drugs in four operations; arrests two

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) recovered over 97 kg drugs while conducting four operations and arrested two accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Quetta to Punjab and recovered 50 kg charras from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Faisalabad. In another operation at Port Qasim, ANF recovered 43 kg charras and one kg Ice drug booked for Dubai.

The drugs were concealed tactfully in machinery. The spokesman informed that in the third operation, a raid was conducted in Faisal Town Lahore and ANF managed to net a female drug trafficker resident of Toba Tek Singh on recovery of 3.6 kg Ice drug. In the fourth operation, ANF recovered 150 grams of weed from a parcel booked for America at International Mail Office, Sialkot. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

## 131 criminals arrested in February

SARGODHA (APP): Police claimed to have arrested 131 criminals, including 75 court absconders, in the district during the last month. According to a police report issued here on Wednesday, 168 cases were registered against illegal weapon holders. Police also registered 136 cases against drug pushers, 38 cases against accused for kite flying, 12 cases were filed against gamblers, 15 cases were registered under the Sound System Act and 39 cases were registered under Temporary Residency Act. Police also claimed to have busted six criminal gangs during the last month.

## 142 arrested for kite flying

FAISALABAD (APP): Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested 142 people for kite flying in the city. A police spokesman said various teams were constituted to arrest those involved in kite flying or manufacturing, selling, purchasing or transporting its material. The teams arrested 18 accused from Factory Area police station limits, 17 from Batala Colony police station area, 16 from Ghulam Muhammad Abad police station area, 16 from Raza Abad police station area, 13 from People's Colony police station area, 12 from Thikriwala police station, 11 from Gulberg police station area, 10 from Sargodha Road police station area, 7 from Millat Town police station area, six from Madina Town police station area, six from Mansoorabad police station area, five from Samanabad police station area, two from Jhang Bazaar police station area, two from Civil Lines police station area and one from Sadar police station area.

## Kasur police arrests nine outlaws

KASUR (APP): Kasur police arrested nine outlaws and recovered cash, valuables and fire works material from their possession. Police said here on Wednesday that city Pattoki patrolling police team signaled three dacoits near railway crossing line but the accused opened fire at the team. During exchange of gunshots, one dacoit suffered bullet injuries and arrested by police while other two managed to escape. The accused was identified as--Ali Shair r/o Manga Mandi.

## Eight robbers arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): The police busted three dacoit gangs by arresting their eight active members and recovered four stolen motorcycles, animals, weapons and other items from their possession. Police spokesman said here on Wednesday that Nishatabad police conducted raid in Chak No.52-GB and arrested three dacoits including Ahsan Latif, Shahid and Bilal alias Bhola who were wanted by police in a number of dacoity, robbery and other cases. The police recovered 2 motorcycles, 3 pistols, cash and mobile phones from them. Similarly, Sadar Tandianwala police also arrested three dacoits including Zameer-ul-Hasan, Gulam Abbas and Muhammad Imran along with 2 motorcycles, illegal pistols, cash and mobile phones from Chak No.412-GB. Meanwhile, Lundianwala police nabbed two robbers of a gang including Qasim r/o Bucheki and Nawaz alias Bojha Waseer r/o Chak No.629-GB and recovered stolen animals worth Rs.700,000/- and cash amounting to Rs.40,000/- from them.

## China, Pakistan to jointly promote agricultural technology under CPEC

BEIJING (APP): In a move to promote China-Pakistan industry-university-research strategic cooperation on modern agriculture, a Documents of Understanding (DoU) was signed between National University of Sciences and Technology, Pakistan (NUST), Weifang Engineering Vocational College, Qingzhou Municipal Government and Weifang National Comprehensive Pilot Agriculture Zone at Weifang, China. The four sides agreed to work together in promoting bilateral agricultural technology cooperation under the framework of CPEC, with the focus on construction of the entire agricultural indus-

try chain system, deep processing of agricultural products and related industrialization development, CEN reported. "Agriculture in the South Asian Region is struggling with low productivity, supply shortfalls, low returns to farmers, lack of advanced technology, and lack of trained professionals and thus threatening our food security," Pro Rector Academics of NUST Dr. Osman Hassan noted in his speech. "These problems are related to people's livelihood and well-being closely, particularly in Pakistan, as it is an agro-economic country with immense potential for crop production and research in agricultural sciences" he said.

## India using molestation of Kashmiri women as weapon of war: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Incarcerated All Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman, Masarrat Alam Butt, has deplored that India is using the molestation of women in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir as a weapon of war to suppress the Kashmiris' freedom movement. According to Kashmir Media Service, Masarrat Alam Butt in a message from New Delhi's infamous Tihar jail on the eve of International Women's Day strongly condemned the atrocities of Indian troops on the women in IIOJK. He urged the Kashmiris and their sympathizers across the world to raise their voices in support of the Kashmiri mothers,

sisters and daughters on the occasion of International Women's Day and play their role to draw the attention of the United Nations, European Union, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and international human rights organizations to the Indian atrocities on the women in IIOJK. He said that the Indian forces' personnel had gang-raped and tortured women in Chhanapura area of Srinagar in March 1990 after the Kashmiris intensified their freedom struggle. The APHC Chairman said India has violated all international laws related to women's rights through the worst state oppression and violence on Kashmiri women.

## Education, financial independence keys to empower women in society: MPA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-N Member Provincial Assembly Hina Parvez Butt Wednesday on the occasion of 'International Women's day stressed quality education and financial independence which are the main keys to empowering women in society. Talking to the pvt news channel, Hina Pervaiz while paying tributes to Pakistani women, said that they proved their mettle in every field of life. She said that all-out efforts were being made to provide equal opportunities to women. She said islam and the constitution of

Pakistan negated all discrimination against women, adding that it was essential to provide resources and support to women entrepreneurs and business owners to make them financially independent. The entire society needs to work collectively to ensure more empowerment, protection and fair rights for women, she added. She said youngsters especially girls were blessed with capabilities and determined to serve the nation, adding, "the youth is our asset and we are formulating comprehensive policies and programs for them".

## Thousand of Kashmiri women paying heavy price for Indian siege: Mishal Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mishal Malik, wife of Jailed Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik on Wednesday lamented that India was committing worst state terrorism and violence against millions of Kashmiri innocent Women including young girls in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She expressed these words on the occasion of International Women's day being celebrated today across the world including Pakistan. Talking to a private news channel, she said women's suffering had been doubled in IIOJK due to the consequences of the latest India offensive, as they have been enduring hard and complicated living conditions. She said that besides sexual violence, the Kashmiri women had been suffering

psychological and physical horrors at the hands of brutal Indian troops. "Day by day, conditions of Kashmiri women in IIOJK are going from bad to worse," she added. She said that the aim of international women's day is to raise awareness about the sufferings of Kashmiri widows and half-widows. "The world must not forget the trauma Kashmiri widows and half-widows are enduring. She urged the world must raise its voice over the plight of Kashmiri half-widows whose husbands have disappeared in the custody of Indian troops. Thousands of women have lost their husbands, brothers and sons as they were martyred or subjected to custodial disappearance by Indian troops, she mentioned.

## Renowned dermatologist brutally murdered by driver

HYDERABAD (APP): A famous skin specialist of Hyderabad, Dr Dharam Dev Rathi was brutally murdered by his personal driver inside his home on Tuesday night. According to SSP Amjad Ahmed Shaikh, the driver killed Dr Rathi by slitting his throat with a knife. Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Dr Giyan Chand Iessarani, taking notice of the brutal murder, sought a report from SSP Hyderabad Amjad Ahmed and asked him for immediate arrest of

the accused. The SSP told the minister that Dr Rathi had an altercation with the driver on way to home and on reaching there, the accused took a knife from the kitchen and killed the doctor. After the incident, the driver fled the scene with the doctor's car while the police cordoned off the area and started operation to arrest the accused, he added. SSP Amjad assured that the suspect would be arrested soon and brought to justice.

## Govt releases over Rs 5.156 for IT projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has released funds amounting to Rs 5.156 billion to execute Information Technology related projects during the first seven months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23). According to official data available with APP, the government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 5,156.57 million out of a total allocation of Rs. 6330.70 million for various ongoing and new projects of the Ministry of Information Technology

and Telecommunication. Out of the total authorized/distributed amount, the total amount spent on the development projects during the corresponding period (July-January) stood at Rs 3,747.87 million. According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20 per cent in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30 per cent each in the second and third quarters, and the remaining 20 per cent in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year.

## 'NADRA' playing pivotal role to empower women in digital age: Chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Database and Registration Authority, Tariq Malik Wednesday said that NADRA was playing a pivotal role to empower Pakistani women in the digital age by ensuring their social, economic and political rights and by providing them with computerised national identity cards (CNIC). "Nadra is the only organisation that has provided equal opportunities to the women to get higher seats and be a part of the organisation", he said while talking to the pvt news. A number of initiatives have been taken for social political and economic empowerment of women, he said, adding, the government is determined to mainstream women's issues in its policies. "CNIC has been made mandatory to get registered in voters list and vote casting, he said, adding, women's right to vote can only be ensured by having a copy of CNIC." He highlighted that with pub-

lic awareness Nadra was providing technical advice about gender equality and empowerment of women. He said Nadra had set up 19 women-only centres and 222 mobile registration vans across the country, adding, women drivers, security guards and female staff was being appointed in NADRA offices. He said 97% population was being registered in a short span of time, adding, a 121 million voter list has been finalised countrywide. He said Nadra was sending female-only mobile units to register women in selected districts of KPK, Balochistan, Chaman and many others to end cultural barriers. Chairman said that soon after taking over charge as Nadra chairman, he established a separate Inclusive Registration Department (IRD) headed by women and female biker service for carrying out processes of CNIC renewal and modification at the doorsteps of applicants.

## 'Jashn-e-Baharan 2023' to start from March 13

KHANEWAL (APP): The district administration has started arrangements to organize 'Jashn-e-Baharan 2023' (Spring Festival) commencing from March 13-15 across the province here. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Waseem Sindhu said, "March 14 will be observed as a cultural day as well in the district." The relevant departments were given tasks in connection with the day and they will ensure maximum participation of the locals, he added. Moreover, The DC in the meeting told that

the local artists, folk performers, and artisans would entertain the audiences through their performances and demonstrations. He said the schedule of the event promised to have something for everyone. He said, "Its the perfect opportunity to explore the city's rich culture and traditions." It is pertinent to mention here that Basant (Kites flying festival) was its part but now the government has imposed a ban on it due to some fatal accidents during the past few years.

## Faithful observe 'Shab-e-Baraat' with religious reverence

RAWALPINDI (APP): The faithful observed 'Shab-e-Baraat', a night of forgiveness with religious reverence here on Tuesday night. With the setting of sun, the faithful started gathering at mosques to offer special prayers for peace, progress and prosperity of the country, besides seeking forgiveness for their sins. The faithful also organized several gatherings and 'Mahafil-e-Naat' to achieve the Almighty's blessing in the world and the life hereafter. They prayed for getting rid of the menace of terrorism besides showing the right path to disgruntled

people, playing in the hands of anti-state elements. The ulema and religious scholars in their sermons highlighted the teachings of Islam and various aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) so that the followers could lead their lives in line with the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Houses, streets and mosques were decorated with colourful pennants and bunting whereas at night these were well illuminated by means of electric lights, candles and oil lamps. Special security arrangements were made for peaceful observance of the 'Shab-e-Baraat'.

## ICTP issues 11,457 fine tickets over use of fancy number plates

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Traffic Police issued 11,457 fine tickets to vehicles and bikes during the ongoing year for having fancy or non-pattern number plates. According to a police spokesperson, the ICTP has intensified action against vehicles having fancy and non-pattern number plates while the crackdown is also being made against those vendors preparing such number plates. He said that a total of 11,457 vehicles and bikes have been fined for violating traffic rules and using fancy or non-pattern number plates. The purpose of this campaign is to maintain law and order as well as effective security. He urged the motorists to display the

number plates issued by Excise and Taxation Office and also keep with them their driving licenses and vehicle documents. A police spokesperson said that special squads have been constituted to take action against those using unauthorized number plates. Citizens are also requested to cooperate with police and display authorized number plates issued by the Excise and Taxation Office. All zonal DSPs have been directed to accelerate efforts to ensure the success of this campaign so that the use of unauthorized number plates can be reduced. Action against vehicles with non-pattern numbers will be continued till the complete implementation of the law.

## SoLF conducts 3-day bootcamp under Green Acceleration Programme in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The school of Leadership Foundation (SoLF) on Wednesday successfully completed a 3-day bootcamp under the Green Acceleration Programme (GAP) to support social entrepreneurs working in specific districts of Sindh on Green Innovation. The programme aimed to promote social entrepreneurship and support social entrepreneurs in five thematic areas, including Water, Sanitation, Plantation, Hygiene, and Solid Waste Management. The overarching goal was to support green job creation experiments and help social enterprises plan and sustain their businesses through capacity-building workshops and follow-up assistance, a news release said. Some 18 participants joined the programme, with the winners announced as Pak

Bioenergy, Crop Care, and Majid Enterprise. These three social enterprises were chosen based on their pitch and participation throughout the bootcamp, and will each receive a Rs150,000 acceleration fund to invest in their business over the next two months. They will be monitored throughout the process, which will include two major follow-ups, five weeks apart, to evaluate their progress and provide guidance as needed. Pak Bioenergy specializes in the production of biomass fuels, Crop Care utilizes artificial intelligence to detect crop diseases and recommend treatment options, and Majid Enterprise produces fiber and liquid potassium from banana trees. These enterprises are committed to sustainable practices and making a positive impact on their communities.

## 'International Women's Day' observed in AJK

MIRPUR (APP): Like the rest of the world, 'International Women's Day' was also observed in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) on Wednesday. The purpose of celebrating the day is to ensure due empowerment, safeguard equal rights and dignified status, and maintain high respect, honor, and dignity of the women folk at par with the opposite gender in all segments of society. Special ceremonies including walks, seminars, and symposiums were observed across AJK in connection with the day with the resolution to maintain the equal rights and status of the females who have reached about 51 percent of the total population of the coun-

try irrespective of any discrimination of gender besides maintaining their respect, honor, and dignity to ensure the maximum utilization of the talent and abilities of the women folk for the betterment and uplift of the country and the nation. The day is observed on March 8 every year since the year 1900 across the globe in light of the charter under the manifesto of the United Nations (UN) to highlight the importance of women's role in society. Several ceremonies were also held to celebrate Universal Women's Day under the auspices of various local NGOs of Women and the state-run women's development institution.

## 'Pakistani women have proved their mettle in every field': Romina Khurshid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Romina Khurshid Alam while paying tribute to women on Wednesday said that Pakistani women had proved their mettle in all spheres of life for the glory and honour of the country. "No sector can progress without empowering the women," she said

while talking to a private news channel. She further stressed that the nation needs to increase women's access to technology and digital literacy programs, especially in remote areas. She said that women entrepreneurship and business ownership were need of the time to make them financially independent.

## CPSC launches three Chinese books at ISSI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has hosted a book launch ceremony for three books authored by Chinese writers and translated by Pakistani authors. The books included, "Mao Zedong and Contemporary China", "How the Chinese Communist Party Manages the Development Issue", and "Beyond the Karakoram: A Photograph-

ic Dialogue Between a Chinese and a Pakistani Scholar". Senator Dr Musadik Malik, Minister of State for Petroleum, and Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/SAPM on Public Communication and Digital Platform were the chief guests at the event held the other day. Former Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi and Dr Hassan Daud Butt, Associate Professor from Bahria University reviewed the books.

## Role of BB, Nusrat beacon for country's women: Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari has said that the roles played by the mother of democracy, Begum Nusrat Bhutto and martyr of democracy, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto (BB) for the sake of the nation are beacons for the women. In his International Women's Day message, he said the PPP is trying to provide a digni-

fied place and safe society to women by following the philosophy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. Highlighting initiatives of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, he said Mohtarma had ensured the participation of women in state affairs. The appointment of women judges in high courts, the establishment of the first women's bank, women's police station and women health workers were

her golden initiatives. Asif Zardari said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had fought against the darkness of ignorance throughout her life. He said the Benazir Income Support Program's gift of agricultural land to women in Sindh and their full participation in various sectors of the Thar Coal Project is the realization of the beautiful dreams of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

## PFA destroys vegetables grown with sewage

SARGODHA (APP): Punjab food Authority (PFA) on Wednesday destroyed vegetables cultivated over 16 kanal lands with sewerage water in Sargodha. According to a PFA spokesman, a team headed by Deputy Director Operation Shahbaz Sarwar carried out an operation near at Alanawaz city in tehsil Bhalwal and destroyed mustard, turnips and spinach crops by plowing with the help of a tractor. Vegetables grown in toxic water cause dangerous diseases and there was a complete ban on the cultivation of vegetables with sewage water throughout the province, he added.

## Six injured in car-rickshaw collision

FAISALABAD (APP): Six people including 3 girls and a woman suffered injuries in car-rickshaw collision near Chak no.2-JB Ramdewali, Sargodha road here on Wednesday. Rescue 1122 spokesman said that the victims -- Imran (40) s/o Samoul, Muhammad Boota (50) s/o Rehmat Ali, Farzana (40) w/o Sajjad, Roqaya (15) d/o Sardar, Sumaira (15) d/o Taaj and Sonia (13) d/o Mukhtar received serious injuries and were shifted to Allied Hospital where their condition was stated out of danger. Concerned police impounded both vehicles while further investigation was underway.

## 8000 bags of hoarded sugar recovered

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): At least 8000 bags of hoarded sugar were recovered from private godown by joint raid of special branch and local administration here Wednesday. According to AC Asghar Iqbal, the godown was sealed and its salesman whose identity yet to be revealed, held on the spot. The owner named Haji Abid Ali succeeded to escape the scene. Both of the accused were booked with police station of the concerned jurisdiction. Assistant Commissioner said action against profiteers and hoarders would be continued on permanent basis in future.

## 14 cartons of firecrackers seized

SARGODHA (APP): Police launched a comprehensive crack down against firecracker dealers during Shab-e-Barat and seized 14 cartons of firecrackers and arrested 11 dealers from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours. The accused were identified as-- Zawar, Wajid, Shamus, Sohail, Tahir, Kamran, Shakeel, Usman, Anwar, Rohail and Inaam ullah. Further investigation was under way.

## MWMC asked to clean all vacant plots of city

MULTAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir directed Multan Waste Management Company (MWMC) to clean all the vacant plots of the city in connection with the ongoing cleanliness campaign under the slogan "Cleanliness half faith". He ordered to display of panaflexes there after clearing the plots by appealing to the citizens not to throw garbage. DC asked the company officials to clean the neglected areas on a priority basis and prepare a schedule for washing the city roads with water. Mr Umar Jahangir ordered the beautification of the city in view of the arrival of the month of Ramazan and the spring season. On the other hand, MWMC has started implementing the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner and started the process of waste lifting from vacant plots in Lodhi Colony, Usmanabad, Naqshband Colony, Vehari road and New Multan through loader squad.

## Samina Alvi for women's inclusion in decision-making, equal jobs opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday terming talented women the 'future of Pakistan' said their inclusion in decision-making and equal job opportunities was crucial for the country's progress. Speaking here at an event to mark 'International Women's Day', she said the day serves as an important opportunity to reflect on the challenges that stand in the way of women's rights. Samina Alvi said women being the country's fifty percent population still had a long way to go in terms of their inclusion and empowerment.

"Pakistan can only progress with the participation of women in all fields of life, particularly in trade, business, FinTech (financial technology), digitalization, and finance," she said. She emphasized programmes by national and international agencies to set up micro-enterprises, women's chambers, and industrial academia linkages. According to Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022, she said, Pakistan ranked low in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival, but was placed higher in political empowerment.

## Speakers demand urgent revamp of Pakistan's existing defence production model

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers here on Wednesday were of the view that given the prevailing geopolitical and geo-economic environment, there was an urgent need to revamp and transform Pakistan's existing archaic public-controlled model regarding defence production. "To exploit its defence production potential to the fullest, Pakistan needs to develop and progress in the fields of education, quality human resource, research and development, industrialization, technology, academia-industry linkages and provide an enabling environment to the private sector." This was the

key message of the eminent speakers at the seminar on 'Defence Production Potential in Pakistan: Increasing through Public-Private Partnership-A Policy Construct' organized by the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), a news release said. The keynote address was delivered by former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General (R) Zubair Mehmood Hayat. The seminar was chaired by President CASS Air Marshal (R) Farhat Hussain Khan, while Air Vice Marshal Faheem Ullah Malik, Director at CASS moderated the proceedings.

## Police issue 44,952 general verification certificates in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Police facilitation centres of Islamabad district facilitated the citizens with different services and issued over 44,952 character certificates in 2023, a police spokesman said. According to police, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan has directed to ensure maximum facilitation and services to citizens with the main objective of minimizing the gap between public

and the police. Police facilitation centers, the source said, received 45,458 applications for general police verification certificates during the ongoing year. As many as 44,952 certificates were issued so far. The applicants have to bring original NICs for general police verification certificates. Residential proof or rental agreement is produced in case of local address is not mentioned on NIC of an applicant.

## Imran's 'save judiciary' campaign slap on face of justice system: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's "save the judiciary" movement was a slap on the face of the justice system of the country. In a tweet, the minister termed Imran Khan as a foreign-funded agent and Tosha Khana thief who handed over a \$190 million amount from the national exchequer to an individual

and received bribery through Al Qadir Trust. She said that a judicial absconder's campaign was not to save the judiciary but an effort to avoid appearing in courts to escape arrest. Taking a jibe at Imran, she said that a brave leader like Nawaz Sharif can save the judiciary, not a cowardly person like Imran Khan. She said instead of hiding behind the "save the judiciary" campaign, Imran should face the law of the land.

## DC directs officials concerned to provide facilities to citizens

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A meeting was held with Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Arshad in the chair to review the performance of the district administration. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Tariq Mahmood, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning) Arshad Abbasi, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) Ahad

Yousaf and Assistant Commissioners. The meeting discussed the performance of the administration regarding the cleanliness situation in the city, facilities at schools, patwari khana, and health units. The meeting also reviewed matters about the inspection of development projects, action against encroachments, holding of open courts and pending cases in revenue courts.

## DC Abbottabad visits Lower Tanawal to review SDC facilities

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal Wednesday said that all possible facilities will be ensured to provide revenue services to the people of Lower Tanawal. H said this during his visit to Lower Tanawal. Khalid Iqbal said that the provision of services is being ensured through the Service Delivery Center (SDC) in Lower Tanawal. He also met the citizens and reviewed the provision of services in the Service Delivery Center; inspected the records and issued necessary instructions for the

improvement of the services. Earlier the DC also visited under construction Sherwan Adventure Park under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa City Improvement Project (KPCIP) and reviewed the ongoing work where he was briefed by KP SUP and the WSSCA team. Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal also visited the under-construction cricket ground, cafeteria, parking lot and other construction works and issued instructions to the project officers to complete the work as per building codes and international standards.

## Asia tracks Wall St losses after Powell's rate hike warning

HONG KONG (Agencies): Markets sank Wednesday, the dollar held big gains and oil struggled to recover from hefty losses after Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell opened the door to a quicker pace of interest rate hikes as officials battle to tame inflation. In much-anticipated testimony to US lawmakers, Powell dealt a hammer blow to traders who had

held faint hopes that the central bank could pause its tightening campaign soon and give a much-needed boost to equities. A string of data in recent weeks has indicated the world's top economy remained in rude health, including strong employment, consumer spending, factory activity and inflation figures. "The latest economic data have come in stronger than

expected, which suggests that the ultimate level of interest rates is likely to be higher than previously anticipated," Powell told the Senate Banking Committee. "If the totality of the data were to indicate that faster tightening is warranted, we would be prepared to increase the pace of rate hikes." He said officials would "stay the course until the job is done".

## Inflation to remain higher than target, yet rate hike closer to pause: RBA governor

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's inflation is likely to remain higher than the target for a few years, while a pause in interest rate hikes is coming closer, Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) Governor Philip Lowe has said. Lowe made the remarks on Wednesday morning during the second day of the Australian Financial Review Business Summit held here, after a 10th straight increase took the bank's official cash rate to a record high 3.6 percent since May 2012. The

judgment remains that further tightening of monetary policy is likely to be required to bring inflation back to target within a reasonable timeframe, Lowe addressed the summit. Inflation is still too high and while it looks to be on a declining path, it is likely to remain higher than target for a few years, the governor of Australia's central bank warned, "If we don't get inflation down fairly soon, the end result will be even higher interest rates and more unemploy-

ment." In the December quarter, Australia's headline inflation rate reached 7.8 percent, which is the highest level in more than three decades. Though the monthly consumer price index (CPI) indicator, published last week, showed a "welcome decline" from 8.4 percent in December to 7.4 percent in January, Lowe argued that it will take some time before the "still too high" inflation gets back within the 2-3 percent target range.

## S. Korea's industrial lending growth slows for 2nd quarter in Q4

SEOUL (Agencies): South Korea's industrial lending growth slowed down for the second consecutive quarter in the fourth quarter of last year due to rapid interest rate hikes, central bank data showed Wednesday. Debts owed by all industries to deposit-taking financial institutions came in at 1,797.7 trillion won (1.37 trillion U.S. dollars) at the end of December, up 28 trillion won (21.3

billion dollars) from three months earlier, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK). The fourth-quarter growth was lower than increases of 56.6 trillion won (43 billion dollars) in the third quarter and 68.4 trillion won (52 billion dollars) in the second quarter. The slower expansion came as the BOK began to raise its key rate in August 2021 from a record low of 0.50 percent to 3.50 percent. It was

also attributed to the tighter management of loan soundness among financial institutions and the temporary repayment of loans to manage the debt ratio at the end of the year. Lending to the services industry gained 15.9 trillion won (12.1 billion dollars) during the October-December quarter, after soaring 38.8 trillion won (29.5 billion dollars) in the previous quarter.

## Stocks fall, dollar climbs on Fed rate warning

NEW YORK (Agencies): Stock markets tumbled, oil prices fell and the dollar firmed on Tuesday as Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned that the central bank could step up its rate hike campaign to fight inflation. Investors had been eagerly awaiting fresh signals about when the Fed might pause its rate-tightening cycle. But Powell said in prepared remarks before two days of testimony in Con-

gress that the central bank "would be prepared to increase the pace of rate hikes" following strong economic data. The Fed and other central banks worldwide have been hiking rates in efforts to tame decades-high inflation, but the policy could also tip economies into recession. "A big sigh of disappointment has rippled through stock markets as investors once again are jolted by the realiza-

tion that the work of the Federal Reserve, in trying to tame wild inflation in the US, is far from over," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown. The Fed raised rates by 25 basis points last month after a half-point increase in December that followed a series of three-quarter-point hikes. "We will stay the course until the job is done," Powell said in his remarks.

## Saudi Cabinet approves regional center for climate change

RIYADH (Agencies): A Regional Center for Climate Change will be established in Saudi Arabia after the Kingdom's cabinet signed off on the plan as part of its initiatives to protect the environment. During the meeting, chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at Irqah Palace in Riyadh, the cabinet announced that the focus of the center will be to build the knowledge base required to encourage adaptation to climate change, reduce its effects and achieve



sustainability in line with the goals of the Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The cabinet also endorsed the first wave of projects supported by the Private Sector

Partnership Reinforcement Program, also known as Shareek. It said the program, worth over SR192 billion (\$51.14 billion), affirmed economic growth by fostering private-sector investment, boosting domestic content and raising the Kingdom's gross domestic product. The cabinet's recommendations also included launching the Saudi Program for Attracting International Companies Headquarters under the supervision of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City.

## Qatar Airways eyes rapid growth as travel demand rebounds

BERLIN (Agencies): Qatar Airways announced plans for rapid growth on Tuesday, as the travel industry recovers from the pandemic. Announcing objectives at the ITB tourism fair in Berlin, the Gulf carrier said it would add seven destinations, restore 11 others and boost the frequency of flights to 35 markets — marking a 21 percent rise in flights by July 2023, compared with the same month last year. Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker, speaking in his first appearance since settling a



major legal dispute with Airbus, said the airline was being conservative because of its dependence on deliveries from Airbus or Boeing amid supply woes. "Unfortunately, it is not in their

hands; I think supply chain problems will last a bit longer," Al Baker told a news conference during the world's largest tourism expo. Newly planned airline destinations include five in Europe, including three in France, and two in Africa. "The aviation industry is slowly rebounding ... (from) unprecedented pressures," Al Baker said. Al Baker noted upward inflationary pressure on ticket prices but said the airline was not passing on all fuel increases.

## China sees 112% jump in entry-exit trips as numbers hit nearly 40m in 2 months

BEIJING (Agencies): China logged 39.72 million entry and exit trips between Jan. 8 to March 7, according to National Immigration Administration data, showing the revival in travel after COVID-19 restrictions were dismantled. The numbers were up 112.4 percent year-over-year. Data showed 122,000 visas and resi-

dence permits for foreigners were issued by immigration administration agencies nationwide by March 7, up 33.1 percent from before the policy U-turn. Chinese citizens flocked to travel sites and airports after the country re-opened its borders, allowing people to take advantage of travel after being cut off from the

rest of the world. During the recent Lunar New Year in late January holiday trips surged in the country. The number of people entering and leaving the country hit 1.013 million on Feb. 25, exceeding one million in a single day for the first time since 2020, said the National Immigration Administration.

## Adidas slashes dividend, sidesteps question on Yeezy

BERLIN (Agencies): Adidas AG slashed its dividend and offered no concrete plans for disposing of US\$1.3 billion in Yeezy gear as new chief executive officer Bjorn Gulden tries to turn around the crisis-beset German sports brand. Yet the CEO aims to return the company to profitable growth in 2024 by reducing inventories of products and cutting discounts, Adidas said Wednesday, affirming its gloomy outlook for this year. If Adidas writes off the unsold



Yeezy products — old versions of which continue to fetch high prices on sites like eBay — it would lower the company's operating profit by €500 million (US\$527 million) and lead to Adidas's first annual loss in

more than 30 years. In October, Adidas cut ties with the rapper and designer Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, after he unleashed a string of hateful and antisemitic rhetoric. Gulden is looking to pivot beyond the Yeezy fiasco and build brand heat again with a strategy that "balances global direction with local needs, that is fast and agile", he said in the statement. Catering products to local markets is becoming a particularly urgent problem in China.

## Activist investor triggers real-life K-pop industry drama

SEOUL (Agencies): It is the kind of K-drama that rivets millions of viewers -- bitter boardroom battles, expensive lawyers, hostile takeover claims and high-stakes shareholder meetings. Except this is playing out in real life as the godfather of K-pop fights his nephew for control of the music company he founded. It features HYBE, the agency behind the smash-hit group BTS, and tech giant Kakao in an A-list battle that could also determine the billion-dollar industry's future. And it was triggered largely by one man: South Korean activist investor Lee Chang-hwan. Lee's fund Align Partners bought a one percent stake early last year in SM Entertainment,

one of South Korea's leading music companies that helped bring K-pop to the world, managing early hit groups such as boy bands Super Junior and SHINee. He used that stake to argue for corporate reform, saying that SM founder Lee Soo-man -- the so-called Godfather of K-pop -- was, in effect, syphoning off millions of dollars every year in bogus consulting fees. "It didn't make sense," Lee Chang-hwan told AFP in a recent interview, saying the money -- six percent of publicly listed SM Entertainment's sales every year -- was paid to a private entity called Like Planning, which was entirely owned and controlled by Lee Soo-man.

## Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific reports first operating profit since 2019

HONG KONG (Agencies): Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific on Wednesday reported its first annual operating profit since 2019 as the airline fights to return to pre-pandemic flight capacity. The airline has struggled to catch up with regional rivals such as Singapore Airlines as the city's government only began axing harsh pandemic curbs -- including mandatory hotel quarantine and strict testing requirements -- in the second half of last year. "Cathay Pacific has experienced three challenging years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with 2022 very much being a year of two halves," chairman Patrick Healy said in a statement announcing

the results, referring to a "marked improvement" in performance later in the year. The company said in its statement Wednesday that it operated at one-third of pre-pandemic passenger flight capacity in December but expects to reach 70 percent by the end of 2023. It reported an operating profit of HK\$3.55 billion (\$452 million) last year, but suffered a loss attributable to shareholders of HK\$6.5 billion, weighed down by losses incurred by its associate companies. Cathay faced record losses in 2020 as the pandemic hit, and was dealt a further blow last year when Hong Kong tightened travel restrictions amid its worst-ever coronavirus outbreak.

## China's central bank continues to add liquidity via reverse repos

BEIJING (Agencies): China's central bank continued to inject funds into the financial system through open market operations on Wednesday. The People's Bank of China said on its website that it has conducted 4 billion yuan (about 575.33 million U.S. dollars) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest

rate of 2 percent. The move is aimed at keeping liquidity reasonable and ample in the banking system, according to the central bank. A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

## Japan books record current account deficit in January

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan logged a record current account deficit in January, the government said in a report on Wednesday. According to the Finance Ministry, the current account deficit in the recording period stood at 1.98 trillion yen (14.4 billion U.S. dollars). The ministry said in its preliminary report that the country had a goods trade deficit of 3.18 trillion yen (23.1 billion dollars), while services trade stood at a deficit of 758.4 billion yen (5.5 billion dollars), in the recording period. Japan's primary income, meanwhile, which reflects returns on investments made overseas, logged a surplus of 2.29 trillion yen

(16.6 billion dollars), the ministry also said. The data is keenly eyed by the Bank of Japan (BOJ) and the Finance Ministry ahead of new potential policy changes or monetary easing or tapering measures. In Japan, a current account surplus increases the nation's net foreign assets by the corresponding amount, and a current account deficit, as was the case in January, does the reverse. Both the Japanese government and private payments are included in the calculation and it is called the current account because goods and services are generally consumed in the current period.

## Chinese yuan weakens to 6.9525 against USD Wednesday

BEIJING (Agencies): The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 369 pips to 6.9525 against the U.S. dollar Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed

to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the U.S. dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

## US stock market closes lower

NEW YORK (APP): The main stock indexes on Wall Street closed sharply lower at the end of the day's trading. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 574.98 points, or 1.72%, to record 32,856.46 points. The

Standard & Poor's 500 Index lost 62.05 points, or 1.53%, to end trading at 3,986.37 points. The Nasdaq Composite Index fell 145.40 points, or 1.25%, to close at 11,530.33 points.

## US Justice Dept sues to block JetBlue-Spirit airline merger

NEW YORK (APP): The US Justice Department on Tuesday sued to block a \$3.8 billion JetBlue-Spirit airline merger, saying that the combination would harm consumers and violate antitrust law. The suit puts in jeopardy a transaction that JetBlue has characterized as consumer-friendly because it would create a stronger competitor to the "Big Four" carriers that dominate the United States market. On Tuesday, the Justice Department said removing Spirit from the travel market would "eliminate the unique competition" it provides as a low-cost carrier. This would "leave tens of millions of travelers to face higher

fares and fewer options," the department added in its complaint. Neither JetBlue nor Spirit responded immediately to a request for comment on Tuesday's Department of Justice (DOJ) action. A JetBlue statement released Monday in anticipation of Tuesday's move laid out "procompetitive" aspects of the deal, including "the JetBlue Effect," when larger airlines Delta, United, American and Southwest were forced to cut fares due to JetBlue. But the DOJ dismissed this argument in its complaint, saying that JetBlue has evolved from a "disruptor to closer ally of the Big Four."

## Golf hero Ramayah's dying wish for needy caddies melts hearts

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): As his health worsened, golf legend M Ramayah made a dying wish that turned him from recipient of public donations for his cancer treatment into a donor. He requested that upon his death, part of the donations he received be used to assist caddies at the Royal Selangor Golf Club (RSGC) to develop their game. The man with a big heart conveyed his desire last week to his long-time friend George Das, a former sportswriter who reported widely on



his glittering career. Another wish of Ramayah, to provide quality education for his 14-year-old daughter Bhakialakshmi, was fulfilled by a group of

golfers called Heineken Buaya, who raised RM82,500 for the purpose. In thanking the donors, Ramayah told Das: "Golf gave me so much joy. And I tried giving back. I don't know if I can beat this cancer with my 7-iron. But I have no regrets. Thank you everyone for your support." An FMT report on Feb 15 about the plight of Ramayah generated donations totalling about RM200,000 for his treatment of stage four spinal cancer, as he could not afford it.

## S.Korea's new coach Klinsmann targets Asian cup title

INCEON (Agencies): Newly appointed South Korea coach Juergen Klinsmann wasted little time in setting his first target for the team after arriving at Incheon airport on Wednesday, saying he wants to end their Asian Cup drought, which has spanned more than 60 years. Former Germany coach Klinsmann, 58, has signed a contract until the 2026 World Cup and succeeds Paulo Bento, who stepped down in December after South Korea's World Cup round of 16 defeat by Brazil in Qatar. South Korea were the inaugural Asian Cup champions in 1956 and last won the competition when they retained the trophy as hosts in 1960. They have already qualified for the 2023 tournament in



Qatar, which has been delayed until January. "Our goal is to win the Asian Cup next year," Klinsmann told reporters, reeling off the names of previous South Korea coaches and their recent successes. "When you have a team and a history for the last 20-25 years here that was built by coaches like Guus Hiddink, Uli Stielike, Paulo Bento, I think the goal has to be winning the Asian Cup," he said.

## Ukraine's Ryzhykova fighting the best way she can – on the track

MANCHESTER (Agencies): Hurdler Anna Ryzhykova, one of an estimated 40,000 athletes across all sports forced to flee Ukraine to train abroad after Russia's invasion, says she is fighting for her homeland in the best way she can – with her results on the track. The Olympic bronze medalist has already qualified for the World Athletics Championships in August and the renewal of the Ukraine Solidarity Fund, announced by the sport's global governing body on Wednesday,



will help ease her road there. The World Athletics backed fund distributed US\$220,000 to more than 100 Ukraine athletes in 2022. Ryzhykova fled her eastern Ukraine home of Dnipro within weeks of Russia in-

vading the country in February last year in what Moscow calls a "special operation." Her coach Volodymyr Kravchenko joined Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces. "Every Ukrainian stood up to defend our homeland... as is the case in sport," Ryzhykova told a small group of reporters on a call from Fort Worth, Texas, where she is temporarily living and training. "By participating in competitions, we do not let the world forget about such a country as Ukraine."

## Second Rally Jameel kicks off on International Women's Day

ALULA (Agencies): Rally Jameel, the region's first women's only navigational rally, kicked off its second edition on Wednesday against the dramatic backdrop of AlUla's Elephant Rock On International Women's Day, 82 competitors, including drivers and co-drivers, representing 25 countries embarked on a race that will cover 1,600 km of challenging desert terrain over five days. Competitors' precision driving and navigational skills will be tested as



they deepen their knowledge of local culture and history on a journey that began in AlUla and will end in Qassim via Hail. "I'm happy to be taking on this incredible journey again with fellow

women from all over the world during International Women's Day," Saudi participant and third-place finisher in the first edition Maha Al-Hamali said. "This rally is a testament that women have the courage and drive to take on new and challenging experiences, especially Saudi women who recently started driving and now have a strong presence in Rally Jameel. I wish all participants the best of luck and let's take on this beautiful journey together."

## Benfica crush Brugge 5-1 to reach Champions League quarterfinals

LISBON (Agencies): Clinical Benfica thrashed shell-shocked Club Brugge 5-1 to knock them out of the Champions League and reach the quarterfinals 7-1 on aggregate at the Estadio da Luz on Tuesday. Benfica took the lead in the 38th minute through Rafa Silva who dribbled past two defenders and fired a left-



foot strike into the net after a counter-attack started by Goncalo Ramos

who sped up the left channel before crossing to the far post. Ramos then scored either side of the break before Joao Mario extended the lead with a penalty in the 71st minute. Substitute David Neres grabbed the fifth six minutes later before Bjorn Meijer got a consolation Brugge in the 87th.

## NEOM all set to host Extreme E Season 3 opener

JEDDAH (Agencies): NEOM has concluded preparations to host the first race of Season 3 of the all-electric off-roading series Extreme E. For the third consecutive year, Saudi Arabia will serve as the host country for the international racing series, with the Desert X Prix taking place on March 11-12, featuring 10 international teams competing over the course of two days. Extreme E races take place in desti-



nations affected by climate change around the world, with the five races

promoting the trend toward the use of electric vehicles and supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions and create a better future for the planet. For the second consecutive year, the series will return to NEOM, where the drivers will race across desert landscapes, with male and female drivers from each team driving the Odyssey 21 electric car over the duration of the two days of competition.

## No Giannis, no problem as Bucks top Orlando; Sixers down Wolves

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): The Milwaukee Bucks shrugged off the injury absence of Giannis Antetokounmpo to tighten their grip on top spot in the Eastern Conference on Tuesday with a 134-123 defeat of the Orlando Magic. The Bucks moved 2.5 games clear of the Boston Celtics at the top of the standings with a clinical offensive display that saw Brook Lopez, Khris Middleton and Jevon Carter share the scoring around. Lopez finished with 26 points after shooting 64.3 percent from



the field while Middleton and Carter both chipped in with 24 points apiece for Milwaukee. Bobby Portis, Jae

Crowder, and Joe Ingles also finished in double digits for the Bucks, who have now won nine straight games on the road. Milwaukee — who saw their 16-game unbeaten streak snapped by Philadelphia on Saturday — improved to 47-18 at the top of the Eastern Conference. The Celtics are 45-21. The Bucks were always in control against Orlando on Tuesday, leading from the end of the first quarter onwards and maintaining a comfortable double-digit lead for most of the fourth quarter.

## Formula E star Antonio Felix da Costa ranks South Africa victory as best yet

RIYADH (Agencies): Formula E driver Antonio Felix da Costa has described his recent Cape Town E-Prix victory as being among the greatest wins of his career and that he was determined to bring more success to his new team TAG Heuer Porsche. The 31-year-old season six champion went into the race on the back of a third-place finish in Hyderabad but having started in 11th, he worked his way through the top 10 and top three by lap 20. On lap 21, Da



Costa then performed a stunning overtaking maneuver on Jean-Eric Vergne to seal a memorable race win. It was his

first victory for Porsche since moving to the team last year and the Portuguese racer noted that the manner of the win was among his best. He said: "The last couple of months have been slightly tricky and took a small toll on me, so coming back to register a win like this is fantastic. "There have been a few other times where I've stood on top of a race car following this victory and I felt a huge amount of joy. All the ingredients came together so it's super special."

## Chelsea beat Dortmund 2-0 to reach Champions League quarters

LONDON (Agencies): A first-half goal from Raheem Sterling and a controversial penalty by Kai Havertz overturned a first-leg deficit on Tuesday and propelled Chelsea into the Champions League quarterfinals with a 2-1 aggregate win over Borussia Dortmund. Just as they had in Germany three weeks ago when Dortmund won 1-0, 2021 champions Chelsea squandered chance after chance in the first half,



with Germany's Havertz hitting the post. But in the 43rd minute Ben Chil-

well crossed into the box and found England team mate Raheem Sterling. Sterling airkicked his first effort, then sidestepped Marco Reus and sent his second high into the net to put the teams level on aggregate. Early in the second half a Chilwell cross smacked into the outstretched hand of defender Marius Wolf and Dutch referee Danny Makkelie gave the penalty after being called to the VAR screen.

## 'I'm still here,' says Potter after Chelsea beat Dortmund



LONDON (Agencies): Chelsea boss Graham Potter looked like the most relieved man in London as he punched the air and blew kisses into the crowd after his struggling side's 2-1 aggregate win over Borussia Dortmund in the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday. Chelsea fans, many of whom had booed Potter loudly when defeat followed defeat in recent weeks, cheered the team off the

pitch after a goal by Raheem Sterling and a re-taken penalty by Kai Havertz earned the Blues a 2-0 win on the night. That turned a 1-0 deficit in the first leg in Germany into a ticket for the quarterfinals and kicked off celebrations that harked back to some of Chelsea's great nights in Europe's top competition over the past 20 years. For Potter, the victory was personal too. "Inevitably in life, you are going to have bad times and you're going to have good times," Potter told reporters when asked about how he felt after shouldering much of the blame for Chelsea's bleak run of form that began as far back as October. "Things are never bad forever, thankfully. But it felt like that sometimes," he said.

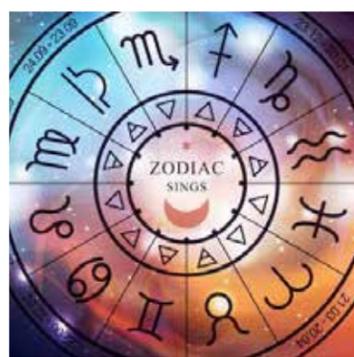
## Milan's Serie A setback won't affect trip to Spurs, says Pioli

LONDON (Agencies): AC Milan will not be affected by their weekend Serie A defeat when they visit Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League last-16 second leg on Wednesday, coach Stefano Pioli said. The Italians beat Spurs 1-0 at San Siro last month but suffered a Serie A setback as their four-game winning streak in all competitions ended with Saturday's 2-1 loss at Fiorentina. "This is a different story compared to Florence, but also compared to the first leg," Pioli told a news conference on Tuesday. "I expect a different attitude from them... Tottenham will probably try to attack more than at San Siro." The visitors have been boosted as forward Brahim Diaz and striker Olivier Giroud will both be available for the clash after they rejoined the team in training



on Tuesday. "They're both doing well, all 24 players can play from the start, then I'll make the choices," Pioli said. Both players were a doubt for the London trip after Diaz missed the game at Fiorentina with a knee problem while Giroud did not train on Monday due to flu, Italian media reported. Tottenham's Italian boss Antonio Conte will be back on the touchline on Wednesday after gallbladder surgery kept him out of action for a month, which will help Spurs according to Pioli.

## DAILY HOROSCOPE: MARCH 9, 2023



you're extra careful, you might be able to curtail it.

– **VIRGO**: It's a great day for communication of all kinds, from subtle body language to complex legal documents. You're in the right position to receive messages from all of the day's key players.

– **LIBRA**: You're going through some interesting business right now that could change the way you see certain people in your life, largely for the better. It's a good time for you to absorb new information.

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

– **ARIES**: Your emotional side is out in the open right now, and that might cause some weird feelings to arise between you and a certain family member. Try your best not to let them go overboard!

– **TAURUS**: You need to deal with some serious emotions that are welling up today, but it's nothing you can't take care of pretty easily once you've made the decision to confront them. Get help if you need it!

– **GEMINI**: Your health should be your top priority today, so try to make decisions with that in mind. It may be that you need to forgo that sugary snack or you decide to take the stairs instead of the elevator.

– **CANCER**: You need to slow down and let your emotions sweep over you today, the good and the bad. You should feel cleansed after they're done and able to clearly see the next few steps.

– **LEO**: You may find that people are going behind your back to get things done without your permission today. That may or may not bug you, but if

– **SCORPIO**: You're like a magnet for smart, interesting people. It helps that you're one yourself! Now is a great time to acquire new friends or love interests, so make sure you're interacting with a wide range of people!

– **SAGITTARIUS**: Your wildest dreams seem down-to-earth right now, and with good reason. They are much closer to reality than you thought! Now is a good time to make seemingly crazy stuff happen.

– **CAPRICORN**: You're still feeling a bit upset over a recent power play, but you can turn the tables quickly if you're paying attention! Make sure that you aren't just playing the game for its own sake, though.

– **ACQUARIUS**: Your deepest emotions are running rampant today, which could cause a few uncomfortable (but ultimately necessary) scenes. Once today is over, you'll be glad it all happened the way it did.

– **PISCES**: Unless you're certain things are going your way, you shouldn't say yes to any new engagements today. Your intuition is pretty strong on a day like today and it should help you sort it all out.

## Chinese researchers discover recessive virus-resistant wheat gene

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): Chinese researchers have discovered a gene that can enhance resistance to wheat yellow mosaic disease, which causes significant losses in crop yield, according to a report in China Science Daily on Tuesday. The wheat yellow mosaic disease is prevalent in China and is caused by a soil-borne virus known as the wheat yellow mosaic virus (WYMV). The best defense against this disease is to cultivate resistant varieties of wheat, making it crucial to explore gene resources with antiviral properties. The researchers from the Institute of Crop Science



under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences used genome-editing technology to create wheat editing material by knocking out a translation initiation factor gene called TaEIF4E, and cultivated its single, double and triple mutant varieties. The study found

that after being infected by WYMV, only the triple mutant variety showed total resistance to the virus and normal seed setting without yield penalty. The single and double mutant varieties showed severely stunted growth and lower seed setting. It proved that TaEIF4E takes part in WYMV infection as a susceptibility factor gene, said the study, highlighting the potential of engineering virus resistance by genome editing of this gene among major wheat varieties. The study was published in the journal Plant Biotechnology Journal.

## Major supermarkets in Australia unveil new plan to restore soft plastic recycling

SYDNEY (Xinhua/APP): A joint task force of Aldi, Coles and Woolworths, three major supermarket retailers in Australia, has released a roadmap plan, aiming to resume soft plastic collection following the suspension of the previous REDcycle program. The "Roadmap to Restart," released on Tuesday, outlines the steps needed to launch an in-store collection pilot in late 2023, as well as the beforehand clearing of existing stockpiles that were not processed by the former recycling operator REDcycle. "For the vast majority of Australian households, the only avenue to recycle their soft plastic waste has been through the REDcycle bins available at Coles and Woolworths supermarkets ... We owe it to consumers to get this right," said a spokesperson for the taskforce. The soft plastics taskforce is formed in response to the suspension of the



REDcycle program since November 2022. REDcycle, launched in 2011, was Australia's largest plastic bag recycling program, which had partnered with supermarkets and manufacturers to collect and recycle soft plastic items over the years. According to the new taskforce roadmap plan, the stockpile remediation action plan is scheduled to be finalized by the end of April, including safety risk assessment, safe storage and development of processing options. The implementation of the plan would also start in April.

## China, Bangladesh remain natural cooperation partners: new Chinese ambassador



DHAKA (Xinhua/APP): "China and Bangladesh are natural cooperation partners," the newly-appointed Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said here on Tuesday. "The potential of China-Bangladesh relations is unlimited," he said at a welcome reception held in his honor at the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka Tuesday night. "There are no unresolved disputes or historical burdens between us." Yao said the cooperation on economy, trade and mega projects serves as the pillar of the bilateral relations, he said, adding, "The China-Bangladesh cooperation improves well-being of our two peoples." A good number of roads, bridges, power plants, ports and other

infrastructure projects have been completed, which have reshaped the landscape of Bangladesh, provided more than 1 million jobs, and promoted socio-economic development as well as people's livelihood in Bangladesh, he said. China and Bangladesh would also closely cooperate and coordinate on regional and multilateral affairs, so as to inject more stability and certainty into this uncertain and unstable world, Yao noted. "As close neighbors, the people of the two countries enjoy a natural sense of intimacy and similar ideas and values," he said, adding that he is confident that China-Bangladesh relations will set a good example for developing countries to understand, trust and support each other. Bangladeshi Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman, Chief of Army Staff General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed and Secretary (West) of Foreign Ministry Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury, along with over 400 dignitaries attended the reception.

## 1st Palestinian female pastor aspires to become bishop

JERUSALEM (Agencies): After a long academic journey, Palestinian Sally Azar has made her lifetime dream of becoming the first female pastor in Palestine, Anadolu News Agency reports. Now, she is pursuing another dream of becoming the first female bishop in the Palestinian Territories. "I am the first female pastor in Palestine," Azar, 26, told Anadolu in an interview at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Old City of East Jerusalem. Azar grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is very close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and studied at the Schmidt School located near the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. She is the daughter of



Archbishop Sani Ibrahim Azar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who impressed her since childhood by his religious role. "I grew up in the church and I used to see my father as a pastor. I always thought it was beautiful. I loved being like him. I love theology and I want to become a pastor," Azar said.

## Twenty years later, US Senate may finally end authorisation for war on Iraq



WASHINGTON: A US Senate Committee backed legislation on Wednesday to repeal two authorisations for past wars in Iraq, paving the way for a possible vote in the full Senate before the 20th anniversary of the last invasion by American troops, Reuters reports. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 13-8 to approve a Bill to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Authorisations for

the Use of Military Force, or AUMFs, against Iraq, the latest attempt to reassert Congress' role in deciding to send troops into combat. Senate Democratic Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, has said the full Senate could vote on the legislation in the next few weeks. That would coincide with the 20th anniversary of the 19 March, 2003, invasion of Iraq. Senator Tim Kaine, a leader of efforts to repeal old AUMFs, said it makes no sense to have the authorisations on the books. "Iraq was an enemy in '02," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. "Increasingly, they are a security partner. We work with Iraq to defeat ISIS and continue to guard against terrorist activity."

## Two US citizens kidnapped in Mexico found dead, two others alive

MATAMOROS (AFP/APP): Two US citizens kidnapped by suspected Mexican drug traffickers were found dead Tuesday while two others survived, in what officials said appeared to be a tragic case of mistaken identity. Washington vowed to do everything in its power to ensure justice for the victims, who crossed the border into the crime-plagued city of Matamoros in Tamaulipas state on Friday for medical reasons. Initial indications were that the abduction was the result of a "mix-up" rather than a targeted attack, Tamaulipas Attorney General Irving Barrios told reporters. The two survivors were returned to the United States via a land border crossing, officials said. US media named them as Latavia Washington McGee and Eric James Williams. One suffered a gunshot wound to the leg and the other was unharmed, accord-



ing to Tamaulipas Governor Americo Villarreal. The victims visited Mexico because one of them was planning to have cosmetic surgery, he said. It was not immediately clear whether the two deaths occurred before or during the rescue operation, but Villarreal said preliminary investigations suggested all four were alive until at least Monday. "During the three days after the criminal act, the four people deprived of their liberty were transferred to various places, including a clinic, in order to create confusion and avoid rescue efforts," he said.

## Prosecutor probes Peru president over protester deaths



LIMA (AFP/APP): Peru President Dina Boluarte was on Tuesday questioned by a prosecutor investigating the deaths of anti-government protesters, amid accusations by rights groups that security forces used excessive and lethal force. Peru has been embroiled in a political crisis since Boluarte's predecessor Pedro Castillo was ousted and arrested on December 7, charged with rebellion for trying to dissolve congress and rule by decree. At least 54 people have been killed and more than 600 injured in clashes between security forces and protesters who support Castillo. Boluarte, 60, was questioned for almost an hour and a half by attorney general Patricia Benavides. In a Twitter post, the presidency said Boluarte had "provided statements related to the investigation." Castillo, 53, appeared in court on Tuesday in a separate hearing following a request by the public prosecutor to extend his 18-month pre-trial detention to 36 months. Prosecutors want to add charges of "criminal organization, collusion and influence trafficking" to that of rebellion that has already been levied against Castillo. "I strongly and categorically deny being responsible for and part of a criminal network," said Castillo in the virtual hearing. "The only crime I committed was serving my country as president of the republic," added the former president, who said he felt "kidnapped." Earlier in the day, the public prosecutor's office said Boluarte had been called to give evidence relating to "the case of the civilian deaths that occurred during social mobilizations from December 2022 to January 2023."

## Greece faces fresh strikes, protests over rail crash



ATHENS (AFP/APP): Greece faces a fresh round of mass strikes and nationwide protests on Wednesday as anger mounts over the country's worst rail tragedy that killed 57 people last week. Fourteen people remain in hospital after a freight train crashed head-on with a passenger train, carrying mostly students, near the central city of Larissa on February 28. A station master, who admitted forgetting to reroute one of the trains, has been arrested and charged with negligent homicide and transport disruption. He faces life in jail if convicted. But public anger remains widespread in Greece over decades of government mismanagement of the rail network and a failure to pursue safety reforms. On Wednesday, Greek civil servants are to stage a fresh 24-hour walkout alongside doctors, schoolteachers, bus drivers and ferry crew. Railways will remain paralysed for an eighth straight day, as train workers extend strike action they launched in the aftermath of the accident. Last week protests triggered by the crash saw riot police clash repeatedly with demonstrators, including in Athens. The public order ministry has said talks are being held with protest organisers to avert new violence.

## Newly appointed minister of Media, minister of State take oath of office in Riyadh



RIYADH (SPA/APP): The newly appointed Minister of Media Salman bin Yousef bin Ali Al-Dosari, and Minister of State and Cabinet's Member Eng. Ibrahim bin Mohammed Al-Sultan took oath of office in front of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister at Irqah palace in Riyadh on Wednesday. This came following the issuance of the royal order appointing them for the two posts. Each of the two ministers said, (I swear by Almighty Allah to be loyal to my religion, then to my King and my country, and not to reveal any of the state's secrets, and to preserve its interests and its regulations, and to perform my duties with honesty, trustworthiness and sincerity).

## Two dead, 16 hurt in Egypt train accident: health ministry



QALYUB (AFP/APP): Two people were killed and several others injured Tuesday in a train accident north of Cairo, Egypt's health ministry said after the country's latest rail tragedy. A ministry statement said there were "two dead in the train accident at Qalyub, while the injured are in a stable condition." An earlier ministry toll that reported one dead also listed 16 injured, including six already treated and released. The incident occurred in Qalyub, just north of the capital Cairo in the Nile Delta. Egypt's national rail authority said the accident occurred when a passenger train entering Qalyub station went through a stop signal. "That led to the derailment of the locomotive and the first carriage," the authority said in a statement. Pictures from the scene showed first responders converging on rail cars which still appeared to be right side up, behind a high wall in a built-up area. Police formed a perimeter to hold back crowds who perched on other walls nearby. A crane was later brought in to lift a derailed car which appeared to be partially crumpled. Egyptian rail accidents have mostly been blamed on poor infrastructure and maintenance. In April 2021, Transport Minister Kamel el-Wazir fired the rail authority's head following an uproar in the Arab world's most populous country over mismanagement of dilapidated train lines. The sacking came two days after an accident that cost 23 lives.

## CLASSIFIED

### COMMANDER ESTATES

Property Consultants

Lt Cdr (R)

**Asmat Ullah Tariq**  
CEO

Authorized Dealer for

**- DHA Peshawar**  
**- New Peshawar Valley**

0345-8282666

0336-8282666



UG-356 Deans Trade Center, Peshawar Cantt.



commanderestates@gmail.com

ESTB: 2020



**MILK**

- 100% Pure and Farm Fresh Whole Milk
- Freshly packed pollution and dust free
- No preservatives and no harmful medications

Also provide:



0336-9036364

This Newspaper has been digitally printed at



**Khyber Prints**

- Instant Digital Printing Solutions -  
First Floor, Town Heights, Old Bara Road,  
University Town - Peshawar  
Cell/Whatsapp: 0309-0055000  
E-mail: khyberprints@gmail.com

