



www.thekhybermail.com

Chief Editor: Rizwan Inayat



-Your Source for Alternate News-

Pages 8 Price: Rs. 25/-

Vol 11, No 179 - Tuesday 4 April 2023 Ramadan 13, 1444 A.H.

Editor: Omer Rizwan

White House discussing 'freeze for freeze' nuclear deal with Iran-media

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The Biden administration is discussing a potential deal that would see Iran halt progress on parts of its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, Axios reported on Monday. American officials have discussed the hypothetical agreement with their European and Israeli counterparts in recent weeks, the news site reported, citing unnamed Israeli officials, Western diplomats, and "US experts." Under the US proposal, Iran would reportedly halt uranium enrichment at 60% purity in exchange for the lifting of some Western sanctions on its economy. According to a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in February, Iran has enriched nearly 88 kilograms of uranium to 60% purity and trace amounts to 83.7%. Uranium must be enriched to 90% to be considered weapons-grade. Tehran denies that it is seeking a nuclear weapon, and the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran responded to the IAEA by insisting that it is not attempting to enrich beyond 60%. According to Axios' source-



es, the US proposal has been rejected by Iran. Officials in Tehran reportedly said that they don't want to sign an agreement with worse terms than the 2015 nuclear deal. That deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed by Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany and the EU in 2015. Under its terms, Iran agreed to strict oversight of its nuclear program in exchange for relief from US and UN sanctions. Former US President Don-

ald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018, claiming that Iran was not in compliance, and economic sanctions were reimposed. The White House refused to confirm or deny the latest report, which a spokesperson dismissed as "second-hand rumors about diplomatic discussions." No Israeli officials commented on the story, although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in February that Israel favors economic sanctions coupled with a "credible military threat" when dealing with the Islamic Republic.

Oil prices soar almost 6pc after OPEC+ output cut

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Oil prices soared almost six percent in Asian trade on Monday morning after major producers led by Saudi Arabia announced a surprise cut of more than one million barrels per day. The West Texas Intermediate contract jumped 5.74 percent to \$80.01 a barrel, while Brent jumped 5.67 percent to \$84.42. The move by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Algeria and Oman will be in effect from next month until the end of the year and marks the biggest reduction in output since the OPEC+ cartel slashed two million barrels per day in October. The reduction came on top of a Russian decision to extend a cut of 500,000 barrels per day, and in spite of US calls to increase



production. The announcement will fan fresh fears about inflation and put more pressure on central banks to hike interest rates further. Market "sentiment is likely to take a knock... as higher levels of expected inflation assume higher (for longer) interest rates", said Matt Simpson at City Index. "And stocks likely won't appreciate this development, so we could be in for a rocky start to the week."

Wagner claims 'legal' capture of Ukraine's Bakhmut as six killed nearby



MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Russia's Wagner paramilitary group on Monday claimed it had "in a legal sense" captured the eastern Ukraine town of Bakhmut -- the site of the longest battle of Moscow's operation in the country -- with its units now in control of city

hall. The Wagner group has supported Russian troops throughout the offensive to surround Bakhmut, the fight for which both sides have invested heavily, despite analysts' assertions that the city carries little strategic value. "The commanders of the units that took city hall and the whole centre will go and put up this flag," Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin said on his Telegram channel, referencing a Russian flag he is seen holding in a video accompanying the post. "This is the Wagner private military company, these are the guys who took Bakhmut. In a legal sense, it's ours." On March 20, Prigozhin had claimed Wagner units controlled 70 percent of the town.

Paris votes to ban rental e-scooters



PARIS (AFP/APP): Paris voted overwhelmingly Sunday to banish for-hire electric scooters from the streets of the French capital, delivering a blow to operators and a victory for road safety campaigners. The referendum means the City of Light, once a pioneer in embracing e-scooter services, is set to become the only major European capital to outlaw the widespread devices booked on apps such as Lime. The city's residents were asked to weigh in for or against them in a public consultation organised by mayor Anne Hidalgo, with nearly 90 percent of the votes cast against, official results showed. "We're happy. It's what we've been fighting for over four years," said Arnaud Kielbasa, co-founder of the Apacauvi charity, which represents victims of e-scooter accidents. "All Parisians say they are nervous on the pavements, nervous when they cross the roads. You need to look everywhere," Kielbasa, whose wife and infant daughter were hit by an e-scooter driver, told AFP. "That's why they've voted against them."

Deadly storms and tornadoes sweep through US



WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The death toll from a major storm system that lashed the south-central and eastern United States with devastating winds and destructive tornadoes rose to at least 29 by Sunday, officials said. Tennessee, one of the hardest-hit states since the storms began Friday, initially had seven weather-related fatalities. But this rose to 12 after police reported three new deaths Sunday, saying two children and an adult were killed Saturday when a tree fell on a house in Memphis. Scenes of devastation were left in the path of the Tennessee tornado, which twisted trees, flattened homes into piles of wooden boards and ripped walls from still-standing structures.

UN chief urges greater inclusion, marking World Autism Awareness Day

UNITED NATIONS (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for greater support for people with autism, and celebrating their contributions. "Today and every day, let us fully recognize the active and diverse contributions of persons with autism to our societies," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his message to mark World Autism Awareness Day on Sunday, April 02. "Let us work together with persons with autism to build an inclusive and accessible world for all." Approximately one in 100 children has autism, which constitutes a diverse group of conditions related to development of the brain, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Although characteristics may be detected in early childhood, autism is often not diagnosed until much later. The abilities and needs of autistic people vary and can evolve over time, WHO said. While some can live independently, others have severe disabilities and require life-long care and support. Despite important progress, the UN chief said,

persons with autism continue to face social and environmental barriers to the full exercise of their rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "We must do better, by promoting inclusive education, equal employment opportunities, self-determination, and an environment where every person is respected," he said. "As we do so, we also recognize the role of families, caregivers, and support networks in the lives of persons with autism." An UN-hosted global virtual event, Transformation: Toward a Neuro-Inclusive World for All, will feature autistic people from around the world discussing how the transformation in the narrative around neurodiversity can continue to be furthered in order to overcome barriers and improve the lives of autistic people. The event will also address the contributions that autistic people make -- and can make -- to society, and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Israel greenlights new national guard demanded by far-right minister

Jerusalem (AFP/APP): The Israeli government approved Sunday the formation of a national guard, which opponents warn would function as a "private militia" of firebrand National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir who had pushed for the decision. A committee comprised of members of "Israel's security agencies" would propose within 90 days if the police "or another body" would be in charge of the new guard, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement. "The national guard will deal with national emergency situations such as the disturbances that occurred" in Israeli cities during a May 2021 conflict with Palestine in Gaza, the statement added, while noting the committee would also be asked to define the new agency's responsibilities. A statement from Ben-Gvir's office said the guard, which would operate under his ministry, would deal with "emergency scenarios, nationalistic crime, terror, and strengthening sovereignty". The move was a condition set by Ben-Gvir, leader of the far-right Jewish Power party, to agree to freeze the government's controversial judicial reforms following months of protest and a crippling general strike on Monday. Opposition leader Yair Lapid called Sunday's government



decision an "extremist fantasy of delusional people" and slammed a separate decision to cut budgets from other ministries "to fund Ben-Gvir's private militia". Former public security minister Omer Bar-Lev, who had advanced the formation of a national guard in 2022 as part of the border police, said it was already that force's responsibility to be dealing with the issues Ben-Gvir was tasking the national guard with. "The thought that a private militia would be formed by an embarrassing minister who lacks understanding and was convicted of support of a terror group and incitement to racism is shocking," Bar-Lev wrote of Ben-Gvir on Twitter. Earlier on Sunday, Ben-Gvir spoke of the need to use the guard to combat "illegal arms, organised crime, and agricultural terror", the latter referring to damage to fields, produce and farming tools the minister blames Arabs for.

Petteri Orpo, Finland's low-key conservative set to become PM

HELSINKI (AFP/APP): With his calm demeanor, sober suits and an insistence on budget austerity, conservative leader Petteri Orpo might not appear the most exciting prospect on Finland's political landscape. But the 53-year-old Orpo could well be the country's next prime minister after his centre-right National Coalition Party beat out charismatic incumbent Sanna Marin, of the Social Democrats, in Sunday's general election. Orpo, who was first elected to parliament in 2007 and has previously served as a finance, interior and agriculture minister, is a politician to his core. Raised in southwestern Finland, he became involved in student politics while studying economics at university. It ended up taking up so much of his time that it took him 12 years to graduate with a master's degree in political science, majoring in economics. Throughout the election campaign, he has kept his eye firmly focused on the country's finances -- something



he claimed Marin had neglected. "The most important thing the National Coalition wants to change in Finland is that we stop increasing debt," Orpo told AFP before the vote. His election -- and attention to budgetary rigour -- could spark some concern in Brussels, with Finland already one of the "frugal" EU countries that have called on southern European countries to rein in deficits. Considered a pragmatic leader who listens and aims to be inclusive, Orpo took over the party leadership in 2016 when he unseated former prime minister Alexander Stubb, who had suffered an election defeat the previous year.

Trump to fly to New York for court surrender amid tight security



NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump is set to fly from Florida to New York City on Monday, ahead of his scheduled arraignment related to hush money paid to a porn star before the 2016 election, as security tightens in Manhattan. Trump, the first former US president to face criminal charges, is due to be arraigned, fingerprinted and photographed at the downtown Manhattan

courthouse on Tuesday. His lawyers have said he will enter a plea of not guilty. The specific charges included in the grand jury indictment have not been disclosed; Tuesday's arraignment marks Trump's first appearance in court and in front of a judge in the case. The Republican businessman-turned-politician plans to travel from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach midday on Monday, arriving later in the day in New York and spending the night at Trump Tower in Manhattan before arriving at the courthouse on Tuesday morning, an adviser said. A court official said the arraignment is planned for 2:15 p.m. (1815 GMT) on Tuesday. Trump then will return to Florida and deliver remarks at Mar-a-Lago at 8:15 p.m. on Tuesday (0015 GMT on Wednesday), his office said.

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.

thekhybermail@gmail.com

APHC urges UN,HR to take notice of India's settler colonialism drive in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Illegally detained senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, has urged the United Nations and world human rights organizations to take effective notice of India's ongoing settler colonialism campaign, fully at work, in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which is under military siege since August 2019 when Indian abrogated Kashmir's special status. According to Kashmir Media

Service, Nayeem Ahmed Khan in a message from New Delhi's infamous Tihar Jail said that the authoritarian move was part of India's settler colonialism policy to strangle Kashmiris economically. "Economic strangulation of Kashmiris has since long been a part of India's systematic settler colonialism campaign in the territory that includes illegal confiscations, dispossession, forced evictions, demolition of the civilian properties and disempowering

indigenous people," he added. He said vicious agenda aimed at marginalizing the majority community in Kashmir is in force since the Modi government revoked Articles 370 and 35-A on 5th August 2019. Since then, Khan said, dozens of Kashmiris have been dismissed from their jobs on bogus charges and properties including houses and lands were seized while the apartheid regime has opened floodgates of employment for non-locals under a wicked plan.

Ahsan Iqbal holds important meetings with Chinese authorities

BEIJING (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal reached here, after attending the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference-2023, to hold important meetings with Chinese authorities. During a meeting with President of 'Power China' Chan Guanfu, the minister appreciated the contribution of Chinese enterprises in the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Ahsan Iqbal said the people of Pakistan would never forget that China helped them at a time when the whole country was plunged into darkness due to power shortages. Through CPEC energy projects Pakistan was able to overcome its energy shortage, he said recalling Power China's longstanding friendship with Pakistan and many important projects undertaken for enhancing Pakistan's energy & infrastructure including coal-fired power plants in Port Qasim, RLNG power plant in Haveli Bahadur Shah and Dawood Wind Power Project. He invited the power China to invest in solar energy for which the government has announced a special initiative to launch 10,000 MW. He assured 'Power China' of the government's full facilitation for the implementation of the projects and resolution of all issues. Later Chairman of 'China Road and Bridge Corporation Du Fei called upon the Planning minister. Ahsan Iqbal underscored the importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in strengthening and modernizing infrastructure in Pakistan in the last few years. He highlighted the role of connectivity projects in the socio-economic development of Pakistan, acknowledging CRBC's contributions

to executing important transport and infrastructure development in Pakistan from the construction of KKH in 1966 to the construction of the Havelian-Thakot motorway in 2017-18. The minister welcomed the proposed Karachi coastal comprehensive development zone (KCCDZ) project, which envisaged an investment of over \$ 3 billion in Karachi, Babusar Tunnel Project, feasibility study for the new Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway alignment (M9) and other important projects. Ahsan Iqbal expressed confidence that these projects would act as an emerging hub for tourism, IT, ports, shipping and services as it would also create thousands of new jobs for talented youth. He assured the government's full support for the successful implementation of the proposed projects. The Planning Minister also highlighted the special friendship and iron brotherhood between China and Pakistan, which is time-tested and timeless. He hoped to promote cultural exchanges and enhance people-to-people contacts between the two countries to further strengthen the existing friendship and foster better understanding to explore each other countries' rich history, natural beauty and cultural heritage. Chinese company representatives appreciated the contribution of the minister in making the CPEC a success, assuring full support in taking CPEC into the next phase of cooperation. They thanked the minister for the assurance to address the concerns of the companies. Ahsan Iqbal assured that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was personally supervising the progress of CPEC projects and that the new government was committed to reviving the same speed with which CPEC was moving during 2013-18.

IRSA releases 89,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 89,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 65,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1428.75 feet and was 30.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 21,900 cusecs while outflow was 7,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1102.90 feet, which was 52.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 19,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur has recorded 31,200, 45,000, 40,900 and 9,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 14,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Funeral prayers of martyrs in Kech terrorist attack offered

RAWALPINDI (APP): The funeral prayers of the four martyred soldiers of the Pakistan Army were offered in their native towns and were laid to rest with full military honours on Sunday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Namaz-e-Janaza of Naik Shair Ahmed, Lance Naik Muhammad Asghar, Sepoy Nursing Abdur Rasheed and Sepoy Muhammad Irfan was offered in Kehrar Buzdar (Taunsa), Kot Addu (Muzaffargarh), Manjhipur (Sohbat pur) and Dab Gorweel (Dera Ghazi Khan) respectively. All four martyrs embraced martyrdom in an attack by a group of terrorists operating from the Iranian side of the border during a routine border patrol along the Pakistan-Iran Border in Jalgai Sector, District Kech, Balochistan. Meanwhile, senior serving and retired officers and soldiers, relatives and a large number of people attended the funerals. "Armed Forces of Pakistan stand resolute to eliminate the menace of terrorism at all costs. These sacrifices reaffirm our resolve and strengthen our faith in the fight against terrorism to provide a peaceful Pakistan to our future generations," the ISPR said.

Fertilizer dealers fined

SARGODHA (APP):The district administration imposed fines on various fertilizer shops accused of overcharging during the last month. According to a spokesperson here on Monday, in the line with special directives of Deputy Commissioner Capt (retd) Shoaib Ali,the price control magistrate and Assistant Director Agriculture department Sargodha Aslam Khan inspected various fertilizer shops and imposed fines amounting to Rs 40,000 to various fertilizer dealers for overcharging.

ANF recovers over 447 kg drugs; arrests eight

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in eight operations managed to recover over 447 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that ANF managed to recover five charras-filled capsules from the possession of an Abu Dhabi-bound passenger, a resident of Bannu, netted at Islamabad International Airport. In another operation, 1.2 kg heroin was recovered from a private courier company office near Chandni Chowk Rawalpindi. The parcel was booked for Birmingham. In third operation near Motorway Toll Plaza, 3.6 kg charras was recovered from the possession of an Afghan national.

Expert stresses for more autism awareness, acceptance in society

ISLAMABAD (APP): Expert on Monday stressed for increasin parents' awareness and tolerance in society to address autism as early-age behavioral therapy programs could help children with this condition to live a normal life. Renowned neurologist/psychiatrist, Jawahar Shahid Anwar while talking t the PTV news channel explained that many autistic individuals remain undiagnosed, especially in rural areas, where surveillance was rarel done for any neuro-developmental disorder. "Families often have limited access to evaluations and other resources to assess and respond to autism or other neuro-developmental conditions," she added. Dr Anwar said many families were not seeking out assessment or treatment due to limited awareness about autism, social and cultural stig-

ma related to neuro-developmental conditions, and financial barriers. Behavioural therapies and support for autistic children could help children learn new behaviours and skills, she said, adding, parents should skip sugary food items in the diet of the child with autism. Replying to a question, she said the diagnosis and therapy of autism in Pakistan occur in various settings and were provided by various health professionals. She regretted that unfortunately, awareness concerning autism was still low among Pakistani healthcare professionals, adding, society needs to know everything about autism first. To another question, she said autism was a complex group of neuro-developmental disorders, also referred to as autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

PML-N, coalition partners to support elections in October: Khurram Dastgir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir Khan on Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and coalition partners would support holding elections in October. Organizing elections in two provinces (KP, Punjab) would raise issues because work on collecting data through census was still underway, he said while talking to a private news channel. After the completion of the Census exercise, he held, the Election Commis-

sion of Pakistan (ECP) could conduct the national polls in a proper manner. The government, he said, would provide funds to the ECP and security at polling stations. To a question about early elections, he said elections in two provinces were not feasible in the current political and economic situation. The minister also asked the Supreme Court to constitute a full-court bench at the request of the coalition government to hear the Punjab polls case.

As per directions of PM, Rs 40 mln fund for University of Gwadar released

QUETTA (APP): The federal government on Saturday released Rs 40 million for the University of Gwadar, a handout issued by the DGPR said. The funds were released following the meeting of Member of National Assembly Mohammad Aslam Bhootani with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Earlier, the PM was requested to release the funds required for the construction of the new building of the University of Gwadar. The people of Gwadar and Lasbella expressed their gratitude to PM Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and MNA Aslam Bhutani

for the release of funds for educational development projects. MNA Mohammad Aslam Bhootani said that the provision of funds would start a new era of educational development in the coastal belt of the province. "With the release of Rs 40 million funds, the establishment and construction of the new building of the University of Gwadar will begin soon," he added. Lauding the unflinching support of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, he said that the release of funds was made possible due to their personal interest.

Azerbaijan wants to further improve bilateral trade relations with Pakistan



ISLAMABAD (Press Release): Azerbaijan considers Pakistan and Turkiye as its special friends and wants to further strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations with them. Azerbaijan-Turkiye bilateral trade is approximately USD 6 billion and Azerbaijan wants a similar trade volume with Pakistan that would be very beneficial for both countries. This was said by H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan while exchanging views with the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Khazar Farhadov said that direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan operated by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had improved bilateral trade three times between the two countries in 2022 and Azerbaijan Airlines will also start direct flights with Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad very soon and is also considering to start direct flights to industrial and export centres of Pakistan, which would further contribute to increase bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries. He said that Azerbaijan under the instructions of President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev has given exemption from customs duty on import of rice from Pakistan, and the Pakistani business community should take benefit of this facility. He said that Azerbaijan and Pakistan have formed Working Groups under Joint Ministerial Commission to increase bilateral cooperation in various sectors including agriculture, trade, banking, IT, tourism, transport, energy, health and said that ICCI should cooperate in identifying companies for these workings groups so that private sectors could lead the promotion of bilateral cooperation in these sectors between the two countries. Ambassador informed that 2023

marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, the founder of the independent state of Azerbaijan. He said that the Embassy of Azerbaijan in collaboration with ICCI is planning to organize a joint event on the founding role of Heydar Aliyev in development of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pak-Azerbaijan bilateral trade is not up to the real potential of both countries and stressed for exploring new ways of increasing trade between both countries. He emphasized creating better awareness in the private sectors of both countries about each other's markets to increase business ties. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items and there is a need of finding new product lines and avenues of cooperation for enhancing trade volume between the two countries. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, ICCI said that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation. He assured that ICCI would provide a list of companies for Working Groups to make them more effective and result-oriented. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI welcomed the establishment of direct airlinks between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which are very important to promote people-to-people and trade relations. He said that ICCI would cooperate in promoting "Made in Azerbaijan" in Pakistan and hoped that the Ambassador would also cooperate in promoting "Made in Pakistan" in Azerbaijan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Raja Imtiaz, Rizwan Chheena and others were also present at the occasion.

Federal govt files plea seeking reconstitution of bench hearing elections case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government on Monday filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the reconstitution of the bench hearing the election case. A three-member SC bench comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan resumed the hearing of the case. During the course of proceedings, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry appeared before the bench and complained to the chief justice about the strict arrangements for the red zone entry. He pleaded with the court to take notice of the matter. The Chief Justice rejected Fawad Chaudhry's request to open entry routes to the Red Zone. He said that the administration was taking necessary steps to maintain law and order. It was not necessary for lawyers to come in large numbers for the case, he added. Earlier, Attorney General for Pakistan

(AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan filed a miscellaneous plea in the court ahead of the scheduled hearing of the suo motu as well as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition challenging the order of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for postponing the Punjab election to October 8. The AGP requested the court to dismiss the election delay case in view of the majority (4-3) order and judgment of March 01. He stated that the proceedings in the instant petition should be postponed in light of the order passed by Justice Qazi Faez Isa. "This Hon'ble Bench, in view of submissions made in paragraphs 11 and 12, may graciously recuse from hearing the instant petition and a bench comprising of all remaining Hon'ble Judges of this court, who did not hear SMC No. 1/2023, CPs No 1 and 2 of 2023, may kindly be constituted to decide the questions raised herein," it added.

Pakistan, China ought to join hands to face climate change

BEIJING (APP): Despite contributing less than 1 percent of global emissions, Pakistan was among the 10 countries most affected by the climatic impacts in the past two decades, noted Dr Ahmad Ali Gul, an expert of China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF) Climate Change Working Group. "Our agriculture-based economy is sensitive to climate-related shocks, and disasters can exacerbate the water security challenges," he said in an interview. Half a month ago, Dr Gul, also Assistant Professor and Director of Center for Disaster Management, University of Management and Technology, participated in the disaster risk management symposium organised by the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), making a speech on Pakistan's lessons and opportunities in the context of global climate change, China Economic Net reported. "Accord-

ing to the official post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) 2022, the damages and losses were USD 14.9 billion and USD 15.3 billion respectively, with roughly 33 million people affected, of which 8 million were displaced. Preliminary estimates suggest that, as a direct consequence of these floods, the national poverty rate could jump to 4.0 percent, pushing up to 9 million people into poverty," Dr Gul emphasised. Even worse, Pakistan is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. Only 36 percent of Pakistanis have access to safely managed drinking water, down from 38 percent in 2004. "Fundamentally, Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change is deeply linked with its socio-economic challenges and governance," he said. As per Dr Gul, besides the climate itself, other factors perpetuate a state of vulnerability and turn a hazard into a disaster.

AJK PM orders withdrawal of resolution on Kartarpur style corridor opening,pledges probe

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan ordered an inquiry into the submission as well as approval of a resolution by the AJK Legislative Assembly regarding the opening of the Kartarpur-style corridor. He made the announcement while addressing an Iftar dinner hosted for APHC-AJK leadership at Kashmir Houses, said a press release. Responding to the AJK PM’s announcement, APHC-AJK Conveyor Mehmood Ahmad Saghar said that the AJK PM gave a positive message to the people of India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir by taking the Hurriyat leadership into confidence and the controversial resolution would be withdrawn. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas paid tribute to all Kashmiri detainees in-

cluding All Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman Maasrrat Aalam Butt, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Nayeem Ahmad Khan, Ameer Hamza, Syeda Aasiya Andrabi and Dr. Hameed Fayyaz languishing in jails of India and the occupied territory. He said that Kashmiri delegations would be sent abroad to make the international community aware of false cases registered by India against Kashmiri Hurriyat leadership. The AJK Prime Minister expressed concern over the resolution presented in the AJK Assembly seeking the opening of the Kartarpur-style corridor and announced the investigation of the matter. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the right to self-determination is the fundamental right of the Kashmiri people and assured the Hurriyat lead-

ership of extending all-out support to the Kashmir freedom movement. AJK Ministers Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Dewan Ali Chaghatai, Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary Asim Sharif, Political Advisor Sardar Iftikhar Rashid Chughtai, Spokesman Dr. Irfan Ashraf, Hurriyat Leaders Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Syed Yusuf Naseem, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Mushtaqul Islam, Muhammad Sultan Butt, Imtiaz Wani, Muhammad Rafiq Dar, Sanaullah Dar, Muhammad Ashraf Dar, Gulshan Iqbal, Abdul Majeed Lone, Manzoor Ahmad Dar, Zahid Ashraf, Sheikh Majid, Mushtaq Ahmad Butt, Shaheen Iqbal, Zahid Safi, Syed Manzoor Shah, and Uzair Ahmed Ghazali were also present on the occasion.

Senator Moula Bux Chandio’s brother passes away

HYDERABAD (APP): Rindan Chandio, the younger brother of PPP leader Senator Moula Bux Chandio, passed away here on Sunday. The funeral prayer of late Rindan was held in Tando Wali Muhammad, area of Hyderabad, and was attended by a large number of relatives, friends and PPP leaders and workers. Former provincial minister Zahid Ali Bhurgari, Ex MNA Qazi Asad Abid, Senator Aajiz Dhamrah and other party leaders expressed condolences to Senator Chandio over the death of his younger brother and prayed for the departed soul.

DPO reviews security of worship,sensitive places

KOHAT (APP): The District Police Officer (DPO) Shahzada Umar Abbas Babar on Monday paid a detailed visit to various mosques and sensitive places in the city and reviewed security arrangements of mosques, Imambarghas and other worship and sensitive places. The DPO met the police personnel deployed at various mosques and sensitive places and directed them to remain on high alert during duty and keep a close watch on suspicious persons. He also inspected the security arrangements of mosques, Imambarghas and worship places of minorities community and issued necessary directives. He reiterated that the police would ensure the safety of the people by all means and said that all the security measures have been taken in this regard.

Balochistan-KP roads opened for traffic

ISLAMABAD (APP): The roads of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which were affected due to landslides, were opened for traffic within 12 hours after National Highway Authority’s (NHA) stern measures on emergency basis. According to the details, due to landslides caused by recent heavy rains in Danasar, an area adjacent to Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the main highway was severely affected and all traffic was suspended. Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Maulana Asa Mahmood had issued immediate instructions to the concerned authorities of NHA that the affected road should be restored for traffic on an emergency basis. The field staff of NHA was immediately mobilized, supervised by NHA Member West Zone Shahid Ehsanullah and were in communication with the Minister and the Federal Secretary to inform them about the latest situation. General Manager Balochistan North Agha Inayat, Director Raheel Ahmed and Deputy Director Maintenance also contributed in the restoration works. Through all these efforts, the affected national highway in remote area like Dhana Sar was restored to minor traffic within 12 hours and for all traffic within 24 hours. It could have taken several days, but NHA engineers and other related staff completed the work while fasting during Ramazan. The efforts of the officers and staff were highly appreciated.

standing committees

bill referred by the Chairman, The Export Processing Zones Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was moved by Senators Faisal Saleem Rehman, Bilawar Khan, Manzoor Ahmed, and Hidayatullah. The bill aims to introduce amendments to the Export Processing Zones Authority Ordinance, 1980.

Ahsan Iqbal briefs Chinese Think Tank on Pak-China relations,CPEC

BEIJING (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary held an exclusive session with the heads and representatives of leading Chinese Think Tanks and emphasized the importance of Pakistan China relationship and reaffirmed Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership with China, which is time-tested and timeless. The Minister reiterated that as the flagship of BRI, CPEC had strategic significance for both Pakistan and China and has delivered tangible benefits to the people of the two countries. He noted that CPEC early-harvest projects have transformed Pakistan’s economic landscape thus laying a solid foundation for sustainable economic growth. The Minister emphasized that both China and Pakistan should continue to expedite efforts to achieve Gwadar’s potential as a hub of regional commerce and industry, while also prioritizing work on ML-1 and other key energy projects. He appreciated China’s positive and key role in helping to normalise relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. This will give great impetus to regional peace and trade. Ukraine war has proven that conflicts bring shocks for the entire world. Pakistan has seen conflicts too closely therefore it appreciates China’s role in promoting global peace and stability. Ahsan Iqbal said that China has become Pakistan’s

largest investment and trade partner in the last ten years due to CPEC, and both sides are keen to maintain the momentum of overall economic and trade ties in future as well. The next phase of CPEC envisages industrial cooperation and Business to Business links. The Minister appreciated the interest of the Chinese companies to invest in Pakistan, highlighting deepening economic and trade ties between the two countries, he sought ideas and suggestions from Chinese think tanks about steps to create conducive environment for Chinese investment in the export-oriented industries in Pakistan and development of Pakistani SEZs and industries on the Chinese model. He underscored the need to learn from the Chinese experience of export sector development as a permanent solution to Pakistan’s economic crisis lies in fast and speedy growth of exports. He highlighted the need for joint research projects for Pakistani and Chinese businessmen by think tanks of the both countries for identifying opportunities of mutual cooperation and removing knowledge gaps. He said 2023 is year of CPEC’s decade and a delegation of Chinese scholars will be invited to Pakistan to observe the progress of CPEC. The think tanks appreciated Minister’s views and shared their ideas for building Pakistan-China Community with shared future in the New Era.

Dr. Niamatullah represents Turbat University in International Congress of Zoology

QUETTA (APP): Dr. Niamatullah Kakar, Assistant Professor, Department of Natural and Basic Sciences, University of Turbat (UoT) presented his research work and posters in the “41st Pakistan Congress of Zoology (International)” at the University of Punjab, Lahore. The event was organized by the Institute of Zoology, University of Punjab, and Zoology Society of Pakistan (ZSP). Professors, researchers, and scientists from Europe, the USA, China, and Pakistan presented their re-

search work at the conference. Dr. Kakar, while representing the University of Turbat, presented his research work on the Characterization of Heavy Metal Contamination in Water and Fish. Dr. Kakar further presented a poster presentation titled “Deciphering the effect of locally circulating SARS_CoV-2 variants on the hematological profile of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infected patients”. The research work of Dr. Kakar was highly appreciated by the organizers and participants.

Trains punctuality ratio improves from 76 to 87 percent in two months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overall punctuality ratio of train services has improved from 76 to 87 per cent in two months owing to close monitoring by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels. “With the punctuality of trains and concrete measures taken by the present government in last two months, the number of passengers has increased by over 20 million, which is ample proof of the department’s achievement,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP on Monday. He said the punctuality of passenger trains, which was around 60 percent during the tenure of the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, was now improving day by day on the directives of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique.

Planning Minister lauds contribution of Chinese enterprises in success of CPEC

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal reiterated that the people of Pakistan will never forget that China helped them at a time when the whole country was plunged into darkness due to power shortages. The Minister made these remarks while meeting with President of Power China Mr. Chan Guanfu in Beijing after attending Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2023. Power China’s long standing friendship with Pakistan and many important projects undertaken for enhancing Pakistan’s energy and infrastructure including coal-fired power plants in Port Qasim, RLNG power plant in Haveli Bahadur Shah and Dawood Wind Power Project. The Minister appreciated the contribution of Chinese enterprises in the success of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) while inviting Power China to invest in solar energy for which the government has announced a special initiative to launch 10,000 MW. The Minister assured Power China of the government’s full facilitation for implementation of the projects and resolution of all issues. Meanwhile, Chairman of “China

Road and Bridge Corporation” Mr. Du Fei called upon the Minister. During the meeting, the Minister underscored the importance of CPEC, the flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in strengthening and modernizing infrastructure in Pakistan in the last few years. He highlighted the role of connectivity projects in sociology-economic development of Pakistan. In this regard, he acknowledged CRBC contributions for executing important transport and infrastructure development in Pakistan from construction of KKH in 1966 to construction of Havelian-Thakot motorway in 2017-18. The Minister welcomed the proposed Karachi coastal comprehensive development zone (KCCDZ) project, which envisages an investment of over \$3billions in Karachi, Babusar Tunnel Project, feasibility study for new Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway alignment (M-9) and other important projects. Prof Iqbal expressed his confidence that these projects will act as an emerging hub for tourism, IT, ports, shipping and services as it will also create thousands of new jobs for talented youth. He assured the government’s full support for successful implementation of proposed projects.

Census teams collects data of 1.888m houses in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Lahore completes data of 1,888,849 houses under 7th Digital Housing and Population Census. This was disclosed in a meeting chaired by Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider to evaluate the working process of the census, the DC office spokesman told media here Sunday. During the meeting, the DC directed the relevant teams to complete the census process till 4th April, the last day of the census. She confirmed that data of 1,888,849 houses had so far been collected in Lahore district, asserting that as compared to 2017, a total of 131,158 houses had been in-

creased in Lahore particularly in its Tehsil Raiwind. The DC directed the census teams to pay special attention towards university hostels, Madaris and residential areas of labourers to achieve 100 percent target ans accuracy in 7th Digital Housing and Population Census. She also directed all ACs (Assistant Commissioners) to review the performance of census teams on a daily basis in their respective areas. “The Public is requested to call 57574-0800 if the team doesn’t reach any home, and the team can also be called by texting the full address of their residence to 9727,” she added.

Government promotes Urdu as medium of instruction in Govt departments,Senate told

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Minister for Law and Justice, Shahadat Awan, on Monday announced that the Pakistani government was taking concrete steps to promote Urdu as the medium of instruction in various government departments. The move aims to reinforce the country’s national language and cultural identity. During Senate proceedings, responding to a motion by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, Awan reiterated the statement made by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan’s founding father, that Urdu would be the official language of the country. Awan emphasized that without a single state language, no nation could remain tied together and function effectively. To

this end, the National Language Promotion Department (National Language Authority) has already been established to promote Urdu language. It has published translations of over 800 books and trained 45,000 officers to play their role in the promotion of Urdu. Moreover, instructions given in signboards in important government departments have already been in Urdu language. Earlier, the mover of the motion, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed emphasized the importance of promoting Urdu language in offices and other areas, suggesting that product ingredients should also be published in Urdu and that the Central Superior Services (CSS) examinations should be conducted in Urdu language.

Urs celebrations of Sachal Sarmast to start from 14th Ramzan

SUKKUR (APP): The 202nd Urs celebrations of poet and Sufi saint Hazrat Sachal Sarmast will start from the 14th Ramzan-ul-Mubarak in Daraza Sharif, Khairpur. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is likely to inaugurate the urs celebrations by laying floral wreaths on the Sufi saint’s grave and offering Fateha. The celebrations will comprise

various events such as Mehfil-e-Sama, Mehfil-e-Naat, the national literacy conference at Daraza Sharif auditorium, mushaira and others. Besides, the Sachal Awards will also be presented to the eminent personalities of the country as renowned scholars, ulemas, mashaikh, and a large number of devotees will attend the urs.

Pakistani students role in Australia bringing two countries closed,Neil Hawkin

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): H.E Mr. Neil Hawkins, High Commissioner of Australia, called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division. Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomed H.E Mr. Neil Hawkins, High Commissioner of Australia, and highlighted the friendly relations between the two countries. The two sides discussed the existing level of bilateral cooperation between the two countries and exchanged views on enhancing bilateral ties and cooperation in trade, economic and investment fields. The Finance Minister briefed the envoy about the current economic outlook of the country and apprised of pragmatic policy reforms initiated by the government for the socio-economic uplift of the masses as well as economic progress and development of the country. The Finance Minister commended Australian support for relief and rehabilitation of flood affectees in Pakistan. The

High Commissioner informed that the entire amount pledged by the Australian Government had been disbursed. The Finance Minister apprised the High commissioner of the progress in talks held with the IMF Mission. H.E Mr. Neil Hawkins, High Commissioner of Australia, extending greetings on the Holy month of Ramdan, shared his views about the deep rooted friendly relations between Pakistan and Australia. He further shared the willingness to boost the ties further in terms of trade and investment. The Envoy also apprised the Minister that 100,000 strong Pakistan Diaspora and 15,000 Pakistani students in Australia are playing an important role in bringing the two countries closed. The High Commissioner also appreciated the policies and programs of the government for socio-economic development and economic growth. He stated that Australia wanted to see Pakistan as a strong, peaceful and prosperous country.

Senate Chairman refers three Bills to relevant

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, has referred three bills to relevant Standing Committees of the Upper House of Parliament. One bill, the Toshakhana (Maintenance, Administration and Regulation) Bill, 2023, moved by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, aims

to provide for the maintenance, administration, and regulation of Toshakhana. Another bill, The National Commission on the Rights of Child (Amendment) Bill, 2023, moved by Prof Dr Mehr Taj Roghani, seeks to amend the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017. The third

McDonald's closes US offices ahead of corporate job cuts

NEW YORK (Agencies): Fast food chain McDonald's is temporarily closing its US offices this week ahead of an expected announcement on corporate job cuts. The Wall Street Journal, which first reported the move, said McDonald's had told US and some international staff to work from home so it can deliver decisions on jobs virtually. The burger chain has declined to comment on how many posts are affected. The cuts are part of a wider company reorganisation it announced in January. At the time, McDonald's boss Chris Kempczinski said the com-



pany was being hurt by an "outdated and self-limiting" structure. The Wall Street Journal said it had seen a message from the company stating that: "During the week of April 3, we will communicate key decisions related

to roles and staffing levels across the organization." McDonald's has also asked employees to cancel all in-person meetings at its headquarters, the paper said. In a memo sent to staff in January, McDonald's warned there would be "difficult discussions and decisions ahead", adding it would review corporate staffing levels by April. The memo said the proposals - which also aim to speed up plans for new restaurants - would help it to "move faster as an organization, while reducing our global costs and freeing up resources to invest in our growth".

L'Oreal buys Australian brand Aesop in \$2.5bn deal

CLICHY (Agencies): L'Oreal has agreed to buy Australian skincare brand Aesop in a deal worth \$2.53bn (£2bn), the French beauty giant's largest takeover in decades. The brand is a "superb combination of urbanity, hedonism and undeniable luxury," L'Oreal chief executive Nicolas Hieronimus said. Since its founding 36 years ago, Aesop has developed a cult following around the world for its products including soaps, lotions and creams. Aesop has almost 400 stores globally. The deal, which is subject to regulatory approvals, is



expected to close in the third quarter of this year. Mr Hieronimus said that L'Oreal will help Aesop expand in China, where it opened its first store in 2022. "Aesop taps into all of today's ascending currents and L'Oreal will con-

tribute to unleash its massive potential, notably in China and travel retail," he added. Brazilian cosmetics company Natura & Co bought a majority stake in Aesop in 2012, before taking full ownership of the brand four years later. It became Natura's highest revenue earner over the decade between 2012 and 2022. Aesop, gross sales jumped from \$28m to \$537m during the period. Aesop was founded in 1987 by hairdresser Dennis Paphitis, who had started blending essential oils into products at his salon in Melbourne, Australia.

Tesla: Carmaker told to pay ex-worker \$3.2m over racism case

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): Electric carmaker Tesla has been ordered to pay almost \$3.2m (£2.6m) to a black former worker after he won a racial harassment lawsuit. Owen Diaz, a lift operator from 2015 to 2016 at its Fremont factory, was subjected to a racially hostile work environment, a federal jury found. However, the payment has been slashed by 98% from the \$137m that he was originally awarded in 2021. A judge ruled last year that the initial amount was excessive. On Monday,



Mr Diaz was awarded \$3m in punitive damages and \$175,000 in damages for emotional distress. "If we had been allowed to introduce new evidence, the verdict would've been zero imo," Tesla chief executive Elon Musk said on

Twitter. "Jury did the best they could with the information they had. I respect the decision," he added. Mr Musk did not provide details of what new evidence Tesla would have presented. Tesla's lawyer Alex Spiro declined to comment. The company did not immediately respond to a BBC request for comment. In the original lawsuit, Mr Diaz alleged that African-American workers "encountered a scene straight from the Jim Crow era" at the firm's plant in Fremont, California.

Riyadh records lowest unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (Agencies): Riyadh has recorded the lowest unemployment rate across Saudi Arabia of 6.7 percent, as the Kingdom steadily progresses in achieving the goals outlined in its Vision 2030. According to the latest data released by the General Authority for Statistics, the unemployment rate in Madinah was recorded at 12.2 percent, followed by Jazan at 11 percent and Makkah at 7 percent at the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. The Kingdom has



set a target unemployment rate of 7 percent by 2030. The report further noted that the unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province stands at 6.9 percent by the end of

2022. The unemployment rate among Saudis also decreased significantly in the fourth quarter of 2022, reaching 8 percent, compared to 9.9 percent in the third quarter. The unemployment rate of the overall population in Saudi Arabia in the fourth quarter reached 4.8 percent. "The impressive decrease in the unemployment rate resulted from a double effect of the decrease in labor force participation and at the same time the employment growth," GASTAT said in its report.

Michael Jordan's 'Last Dance' shoes may break auction records

NEW YORK (Agencies): Michael Jordan's "Last Dance" game shoes are set to break the record for most expensive sneakers ever auctioned, Sotheby's says. Bidding on the Air Jordan XIII's hit \$1.8m (£1.4m) just a few hours after the auction opened. That is well past the current record of \$1.47m for a pair of Jordan's Nike Air Ships auctioned in 2021. Some estimates say the sneakers may go for as much as \$4m by the end of bidding on 11 April. The basketball star wore



the Air Jordan XIII's during his last championship season with the Chicago Bulls in 1997-1998. Jordan was wearing the shoes when he scored 37 points in Game 2 of the 1998 NBA

Finals series, carrying the Bulls to a 93-88 victory over the Utah Jazz. The Bulls went on to win the championship, a story told by the 2020 documentary series "Last Dance" about the megastar's last season with the team. It was Jordan's sixth NBA championships and the fifth time he'd be named the NBA's Most Valuable Player. Right after the Game 2 victory, Jordan gave the shoes to a ball boy in the locker room as thanks for finding a lost jacket, Sotheby's auction house says.

Bahrain launches 'golden license' for companies to attract investment

RIYADH (Agencies): Bahrain on Monday said it was introducing a "golden license" offering benefits to companies bringing large-scale investment projects to the Gulf state. The move is part of an economic recovery plan launched by the oil-producing state in October 2021 to boost growth and job creation. "Companies with major investment and strategic projects that will create more than 500 jobs in Bahrain, or those with investment value exceeding \$50



million, will be eligible for the license," the government's media office said. The golden license will be offered to local and foreign businesses and ben-

efits include prioritized allocation of land, infrastructure and services, easier access to government services and support from government development funds, the statement said. It said other advantages include integrated cooperation with various government departments, a designated account manager from Bahrain's Economic Development Board, as well as potential review of existing laws or regulations where necessary and applicable.

Swiss sight deposits fall, suggesting Credit Suisse, UBS took less emergency help

ZURICH (Agencies): Sight deposits held by the Swiss National Bank declined last week, data showed on Monday, suggesting that Credit Suisse and UBS may have cut back on use of emergency funds offered them to facilitate their planned merger, according to Reuters. Total sight deposits — meaning commercial bank cash held by the central bank overnight — fell to 563.566 billion Swiss francs (\$614.71 billion) from 567.003 billion francs in the previous week, the SNB data showed. Sight deposits had risen 51.8 billion francs the week before, the second biggest increase on record and



probably linked to UBS and Credit Suisse tapping the liquidity lines offered by the SNB and Swiss government after the takeover was announced. Both banks have been offered 200 billion francs in emergency liquidity after Credit Suisse suffered massive outflows from worried investors. Swiss finance minister Karin Keller-Sutter

said last week it had tapped a "large multi-billion" sum Credit Suisse had already tapped 50 billion francs under ordinary liquidity help before the takeover was announced. The SNB and Credit Suisse both declined to comment on the changes in sight deposits on Monday. UBS did not respond to a request for comment. The data indicated that the two commercial banks were probably accessing less liquidity than the week before, said Karsten Junius, an economist at J.Safra Sarasin. "This is a good sign as it indicates that stress in the Swiss banking system is falling a bit," Junius said.

Swiss bankers face mass layoffs – media



BERN (Agencies): UBS Group AG will slash its workforce by between 20% and 30% after completing its takeover of rival Credit Suisse, letting go as many as 36,000 employees globally, the newspaper Sonntagszeitung has reported, citing a senior manager at UBS. The newspaper highlighted that some 11,000 employees would be dismissed in Switzerland, although it did not provide any details about which positions would be targeted. The two lenders together employed almost 125,000 people worldwide at the end of 2022, about 30% of which were in Switzerland, according to the report. Last month, the two Swiss banks announced a historic

merger, with UBS agreeing to pay 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.24 billion) in stock to acquire its embattled rival in a deal underpinned by government guarantees and 100 billion francs (just over \$1 billion) in liquidity assistance from Switzerland's central bank. The government-brokered deal was aimed at shoring up public confidence in the Western financial system and averting a global crisis after the collapses of two regional banks in the US. The banking crisis exacerbated the troubles of Credit Suisse, which had been already battling a string of scandals, legal issues, and customer outflows. On top of that, its biggest investor, Saudi National Bank, announced in March it would not be able to provide financial assistance due to regulatory and statutory limits. Credit Suisse reported a 2022 net loss of 7.3 billion francs (nearly \$8 billion) and warned that it would incur another "substantial" loss in 2023 before returning to profitability in 2024.

London no longer clear leader as world's top financial center – data

LONDON (Agencies): The UK capital has surrendered its lead as the world's top financial center, partly due to the country's exit from the EU, research published by the City of London on Thursday has revealed. New figures show that London and New York now share first place as leading financial centers globally. According to benchmarking data by the City of London's governing body, this is the first year that the UK capital has not been the clear leader as other financial centers are growing faster. Financial services executives have raised concerns about London's competitiveness, saying the city risks losing its top spot in the wake of Brexit, which prompted a number of companies to move their headquarters to the EU. "The UK remains one of the most open and global financial centers with better access to international markets than the US,



France, or Japan. But our competitive advantage is at risk," said Chris Hayward, policy chairman at the City of London Corporation. Data shows that "the number of international companies listed in London is falling" and fewer international companies are choosing the UK capital for listing, opting instead for New York. In recent months, Arm, a major chip designer owned by Japan's SoftBank and Dublin-based building materials giant CRH, announced its decision to move from the UK and seek a listing in the US.

Gold drops as inflation risks after OPEC+ oil target cut raise Fed hike odds



BENGALURU (Agencies): Gold prices slid on Monday after a surprise announcement from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+, about a cut to oil output sparked inflation concerns and raised bets of an interest rate hike at the US Federal Reserve's upcoming May meeting, according to Reuters. Spot gold was down 0.6 percent at \$1,956.89 per ounce, as of 0709 GMT, its lowest in nearly a week. US gold futures shed 0.7 percent to \$1,971.30. The opportunity cost of holding non-yield-

ing bullion rises when interest rates are increased to lower inflation. Gold has fallen "as investors weigh up the lure of gold as a safe-haven asset, versus the potential for higher-for-longer interest rates. Clearly, fears of inflation and higher interest rates has won the argument," said Matt Simpson, senior market analyst at City Index. Oil prices surged after Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ oil producers announced a round of output cuts, a potentially ominous sign for global inflation just days after a slowdown in US price data had boosted market optimism. US consumer spending rose moderately in February and showed signs of cooling, even though it remained elevated. "Gold is now vulnerable to a move down to \$1,900, given the potential for a higher terminal Fed rate that markets are currently pricing in," Simpson added.

Makkah's hotel occupancy rises to 80%, the highest since 2020



RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's hotel sector is witnessing a significant resurgence, with room occupancy in Makkah reaching 80 percent during the holy month of Ramadan this year, the highest level in the last three years. This resulted in room rates also climbing to record levels due to high demand, especially during the last 10 days of the season, according to the chairman of the Hajj and Umrah Committee of the Makkah Chamber, Abdullah Al-Qadi. Al-Qadi noted that hotel rates, particularly in Makkah, are determined by certain factors, including supply and demand, proximity to the Grand Mosque, room views and amenities. He also added that the hotel rates are similar to the prices of the airline tickets, especially those in the central region, where prices increase gradually as the season approaches. Al-Qadi revealed that the Ministry of Tourism worked with investors in

Makkah with total transparency and clarity to restore the hotel sector's recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that several remote meetings were held to address various issues faced by the investors – something that helped the sector achieve a speedy recovery. According to a survey conducted by the Saudi newspaper Al-Eqtisadiyah on hotel room prices in Makkah's central district during the last ten years, the rates soared between SR3,000 (\$800) and SR9,000 per room per day. This year's Ramadan season also saw a large turnout, particularly with the opening of visas and the facilities offered by the Kingdom to pilgrims from abroad. According to the Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Saudi Arabia initiated 10 new policies in December to expand the tourism sector and protect tourists, describing the new laws as "a promising step toward a prosperous tourism future" in a tweet.

Benzema nets 7-minute hattrick as Real Madrid thrash Valladolid

MADRID (Agencies): Karim Benzema scored three goals in seven first-half minutes as Real Madrid thrashed Real Valladolid 6-0 on Sunday to cut Barcelona's lead in LaLiga to 12 points. The hattrick moved Benzema up to 14 league goals this season and second on the list of top scorers – three behind Barca's Robert Lewandowski. Rodrygo's opener from a smooth counter-attack after 22 minutes opened the floodgates as Benzema took charge



at the Santiago Bernabeu, netting a first half hattrick for Real Madrid for the first time in his career. Benzema

scored his first with a diving header from a Vinicius Jr cross while narrowly avoiding a collision with the far post and the Brazilian also created the second with a simple pass for the French striker to score from the edge of the box. The 35-year-old completed his hattrick when he adjusted his run into the six-yard box to turn on the spot and scoop a Rodrygo cross that was behind him to score while his back was towards goal.

Medvedev beats Sinner in straight sets to clinch Miami Open title

MIAMI GARDENS (Agencies): Daniil Medvedev won his fourth ATP title of the year Sunday, beating Jannik Sinner 7-5, 6-3 in the Miami Open to move to 6-0 in their career matchup. Medvedev is now the most sizzling player on the men's tour, winning 24 of his last 25 matches after the 1-hour, 34-minute triumph. His only loss has come against top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz in the Indian Wells final. He's made five straight finals and he compared this



run to 2019 when he advanced to the championship round in six straight events. "It's kind of the same," Medvedev said. "It's the best start to a sea-

son I've ever had. It's been amazing amount of (ATP points) won. I'm super happy." Sinner ran out of magic, with his three-hour win late Friday night over Alcaraz in the semifinals — when he had mild cramping in the second set — taking a toll on the 21-year-old Italian. Sinner was visited by an ATP trainer midway through the first set Sunday. During the changeover at 4-3, Sinner received a packet of salt that he dumped into a water bottle to drink.

AC Milan routs Napoli 4-0 in Champions League warning

ROME (Agencies): If this was just the antipasto, Napoli should be concerned about what AC Milan will serve up for the main course. In the first of three matchups between Milan and Napoli this month, the defending Serie A champion routed this season's runaway leader 4-0 on Sunday ahead of two more clashes in the Champions League quarterfinals. Rafael Leao scored twice and Brahim Diaz set up one goal and scored another to hand Napoli their



heaviest defeat of what otherwise has been an extraordinary season. "We're happy with the performance but it's just one game," Milan coach Stefano Pioli said. "Tonight's result

has nothing to do with the Champions League games, because that's a different competition. That will be a very balanced contest." Napoli's only other losses in the Italian league this season both came by scores of 1-0, to Inter Milan in January and to Lazio a month ago. Napoli were also beaten 2-0 by Liverpool in the final match of the Champions League group phase but that loss came after the Partenopei had already clinched a spot in the round of 16.

Million dollar pay packets for women after new Australia deal

SYDNEY (Agencies): Top Australian women cricketers could earn more than A\$1 million (\$666 600) a year with increases from a new pay deal topped up by cash earned in India's Women's Premier League and The Hundred in England, Cricket Australia (CA) said on Monday. The five-year deal includes a headline funding increase of 66 per cent for the women with a player who holds a top-tier contract and also plays in the Women's Big Bash League now able to earn



A\$800 000 a year. "I am particularly pleased this (deal) represents another major step forward in the rise of women's cricket," CA chief executive Nick Hockley said in a news release.

"Cricket now clearly offers the best earning opportunities of any team sport for elite female sportspeople." The Memorandum of Understanding, agreed between CA and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA), also included an increase of 25 per cent in the minimum and average CA contracts for women. The contracts and retainers will be guaranteed while players are on parental leave and further payments will be offered to help make up for lost match fees.

Damok secures five valuable points at Argentina GP

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): Starting the race in 20th position on the grid, national Moto3 rider Syarifuddin Azman displayed a stunning ride to finish the Argentina Grand Prix (GP) on Sunday in the points group. Syarifuddin, nicknamed Damok, finished the race in 11th place with a time of 35 minutes and 32.132 seconds (s) despite having to face wet and slippery conditions at the Termas de Rio Hondo Circuit. The MT Helmets-MSI rider secured his first five points after two races, having struggling to find his form in the first race at



the Portuguese GP the previous weekend. The race was won by Japanese

rider Tatsuki Suzuki (35:18.099s) while second place went to Diogo Moreira from Brazil (35:22.670s). Andrea Migno from Italy (35:22.798s) came in third. "Thank God I managed to finish the race in 11th position. With the circuit being quite wet I admit it was quite difficult with the conditions being quite slippery and some riders in front of me fell, making it even more difficult. "I am very happy because I was able to finish the race and take 11th place. This is my first time racing on this track," Damok said in a statement.

Enaam Ahmed: most successful Asian driver in Formula history

ISLAMABAD (APP): Proudly waving the flag of Pakistan across the world in the Formula racing circuit, Enaam Ahmed has become the first ever and the only Pakistani to be a World Champion in Karting, beating the records of Formula One drivers Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen. Not only that, Enaam Ahmed is also the British Formula 3 Champion, the first ever high-level Formula Championship winner in the history of Pakistan and beating the record of Ayrton Senna by winning 13 races in one season. The 23-year-old is going places around the world with his winning streaks on the dangerous tracks, driving cars at an average 200 miles per hour – making sure that his car carries both British and Pakistani flags. Enaam is one of the brightest and most exciting young racing talents in motorsport. He has been winning Championships and breaking records from the age of 14. Enaam Ahmed is also the most successful Pakistani heritage racing driver ever in the history of motorsport because he is also known as the most successful British Formula 3 driver in history. Enaam Ahmed was born to Pakistani parents in London 23 years ago. It was at the age of eight that he started taking interest in racing. His parents started funding their son's passion by sending him to local Go-karting tracks for children but they had no idea that their son would



become a European and world champion at the age of 14 - winning it one year younger than Lewis Hamilton who was 15 when he became the world champion. When Enaam announced his decision for car racing to his parents, they told him they will not be funding him anymore and he would need to learn to stand on his own feet to explore his opportunities or return to normal life and finish a university degree and then do whatever he wants to. Enaam Ahmed left the comfort of his home immediately to live in Japan, Spain, Italy, New Zealand and the United States to focus on professional driving. He has not looked back ever since. In an interview, the star racer explained his achievements. He said: "I was 14 years old when I won five championships in one year, the two most important ones being the European Championship in Go-Karting. I won that when I was 14 years old while Lewis Hamilton had won when he was 15 years old. At the

age of 17, I became the British Formula 3 Champion, the first time ever a Pakistani won a major Motorsport championship beating the record of Ayrton Senna." Naturally, Enaam Ahmed felt very proud when he beat Lewis Hamilton's record at the age of 14 in Go Karting which is the most competitive racing one can do at that age and beating Lewis Hamilton's record was a huge achievement. There was a lot of pressure on him to win those competitions for himself so he could make his name but also to impress his parents and to show them he made the right decision of leaving home at a very young age – when most of his childhood friends played around the nearby Hyde Park. The most important factor for Enaam Ahmed has been to win these accomplishments as a Pakistani-origin racer. He says with pride: "For me it matters the most that I won these races at the world stage as a Pakistani and races at the world championship level and at the European Championship level as a Pakistani. Not just to do it but to win it, this makes me very proud and there is a long way to go." Enaam Ahmed has a driving simulator set up at his home in London when he's with his parents. He's in the United States where he spends most time as that's where he drives cars as a professional. He said: "The training is usually twice a day. That's not the hardest part though.

Leao strikes twice as Milan humiliate Napoli 4-0



NAPLES (Agencies): AC Milan striker Rafael Leao netted twice to give his side a superb 4-0 away victory over leaders Napoli in Serie A on Sunday, moving Stefano Pioli's side up to third place in the standings. Milan have 51 points, one ahead of fourth-placed Inter Milan, and are four behind second-placed Lazio. Napoli are 20 points clear at the top. "This is only the first step. There are another nine Serie A games where we must have the same attitude, because we threw away opportunities in the past and cannot do it again. This is a

fine win, but it is only one match," Pioli told DAZN. The match was the first of three clashes between the clubs. Later this month, they will also play against each other in the Champions League quarterfinals. "Whatever the result was going to be this evening, it would not affect the Champions League, as that will be a different experience, atmosphere and everything. It will allow us to study this match and see where we did well or could've done better," Pioli added. The visitors went ahead after 17 minutes when Brahim Diaz sent a through ball to Leao who took a touch and chipped it elegantly over Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret. Napoli, who are seeking their first Serie A title since 1989-90, after being runners-up four times since 2013, were without injured Serie A top scorer Victor Osimhen and they rarely threatened to reduce the deficit.

Koepka becomes LIV's 1st multi-winner as Connors seizes 2nd PGA Tour title

ORLANDO (Agencies): Brooks Koepka became the first multiple winner in LIV Golf on Sunday, while Corey Connors won the Valero Texas Open for the second time in five years for his second PGA Tour title. Koepka closed with a 3-under 68, making a 4-foot par putt on the final hole for a one-shot victory over Sebastian Munoz. Munoz was trying to stay with Koepka along the back nine and didn't go away easily. He fell two shots behind when he sent a bunker shot flying over the green at the par-5 14th. And while he did well to scramble for par, Koepka made a short birdie. Munoz bounced back by holing a chip for birdie on the 16th to cut the deficit to one. But on the par-5 17th, the easiest hole at Orange County, the Colom-



bian again hit a bunker shot over the green. He made another par, and Koepka gave him hope by missing a 5-foot birdie. The final hole shed some insight into the team component of LIV Golf. Koepka and Munoz both were about 40 feet away for birdie. Koepka went first and left the putt just over 4 feet away. Munoz needed to make birdie to force a playoff. However, his Torque team had a one-shot lead over the Smash team led by Koepka.

Antetokounmpo sparks Bucks in Sixers rout, Dallas on brink



LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points as the Milwaukee Bucks returned to form with a statement 117-104 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday. Eastern Conference top seed favorites Milwaukee — routed 140-99 by Boston in their last outing on

Thursday — bounced back in style to score an emphatic win over the third-placed Sixers. Antetokounmpo led a balanced Milwaukee offensive display that saw five players finish in double figures in a wire-to-wire victory at Fiserv Forum. Antetokounmpo finished with 14 rebounds and six assists in addition to his 33-point haul, while Brook Lopez (21 points), Khris Middleton (19) and Jrue Holiday (18) all contributed. Tyrese Maxey led the Sixers scoring with 29 points while Joel Embiid added 28. The win edged Milwaukee closer to sealing top spot in the Eastern Conference.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 4, 2023



if you're single. It's the best time to be clear about your feelings. You should get a good response!
- **VIRGO**: You're prone to acting on impulse today, but you need to try hard to rein in your wallet! It's not that you'll break the bank, but you might start something in motion that could be hard to stop.
- **LIBRA**: You've got plenty of social energy, so much that you might decide to throw an informal party even if it's a workday. Most people are glad for the chance to loosen up a little, so go for it.
- **SCORPIO**: It's a great day for brainstorming. You need to develop more ideas and see what comes of them, and your family or coworkers are in the right frame of mind to get creative. Lead the way!
- **SAGITTARIUS**: You could have people lined up at your desk or wherever you are today. You seem to know the answer to any question, or you can at least spin something that sounds plausible on demand.
- **CAPRICORN**: Work or school is consuming you right now, however you define it, and that may cause some friction with friends or family. Reassure them that it's temporary and then get on with it.
- **ACQUARIUS**: Your big brain gets a boost today, so if any problems have been bothering you lately, now is a great time to lay them to rest. Great, creative solutions are easy to come by if you think they're worth it.
- **PISCES**: You're feeling pretty unsettled about an old debt, probably one you're owed rather than the other way around. It may be a good time to forgive it or to find some other way to set it right.

Nasa names first woman and black man on Moon mission

NEW YORK (Agencies): The US space agency Nasa has named the four astronauts who will take humanity back to the Moon, after a 50-year gap. Christina Koch will become the first woman astronaut ever assigned to a lunar mission, while Victor Glover will be the first black astronaut on one. They will join Reid Wiseman and Jeremy Hansen to fly a capsule around the Moon late next year or early in 2025. The astronauts won't land on the Moon, but their mission will pave the way for a touchdown by a subsequent crew. The three



US citizens and one Canadian were presented to the public in a ceremony in Houston, Texas. They will now begin a period of intense training to get themselves ready. In selecting a woman and a person of colour, Nasa is keeping

its promise to bring greater diversity to its exploration efforts. All the previous crewed missions to the Moon were made by white men. Reid Wiseman (47): A US Navy pilot who served for a time as the head of Nasa's astronaut office. He's flown one previous space mission, to the International Space station in 2015. Victor Glover (46): A US Navy test pilot. He joined Nasa in 2013 and made his first spaceflight in 2020. He was the first African American to stay on the space station for an extended period of six months.

Super Mario: Nintendo's decades of star power



PARIS (AFP/APP): Hollywood is having its second bash at sprinkling some movie magic on the "Super Mario Bros" video game franchise, three decades after the last attempt. The pint-sized plumber from Japanese game maker Nintendo has enjoyed 40 years of extraordinary popularity that has transformed the character into a truly global icon. Nintendo owes a lot to its moustachioed hero, created by a young game designer called Shigeru Miyamoto initially as the protagonist in the "Donkey Kong" arcade game 1981. The firm had been struggling to crack the North American market and, according to some accounts, was on the verge of financial ruin. With Kong, the Japanese studio finally succeeded in the United States -- and invented the platform video game along the way. The hero was known as "Jumpman" until 1983 when he was given the name "Mario". Miyamoto then let him loose in his own "Super Mario Bros" game in 1985, where he was finally renamed "Super Mario". The main Super Mario games have since shifted more than 400 million units. And that does not account for wildly popular spinoffs like "Mario Kart" and "Mario Odyssey" or "Mario Golf" and "Mario Tennis".

Montenegro's veteran leader Djukanovic loses presidential run-off



PODGORICA (AFP/APP): Montenegro's political establishment was rocked Sunday after long-time leader Milo Djukanovic suffered a crushing defeat in a presidential run-off to the upstart Jakov Milatovic, ending decades of rule by the incumbent. Djukanovic has been a political mainstay in Montenegro for decades, rotating through various positions -- including multiple stints as both president and prime minister. "Together with all the citizens of Montenegro, we said a decisive goodbye to crime and corruption," Milatovic said during a victory speech at the headquarters of his Europe Now party. "Tonight is the night we've been waiting for for more than 30 years," he added.

7.0-magnitude quake hits western Papua New Guinea: USGS



SYDNEY (AFP/APP): A powerful 7.0-magnitude earthquake shook northwestern Papua New Guinea before dawn Monday, according to the US Geological Survey. The tremor struck 97 kilometers (60 miles) from the coastal town of Wewak at a depth of 62 kilometers, and occurred shortly after 4:00 am local time, the USGS reported.

Kenyan opposition leader calls off anti-government protests

NAIROBI (AFP/APP): Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga on Sunday called off demonstrations planned for Monday and said his party would sit down for dialogue with the government after two weeks of protests. "We stand down our demonstrations for Monday, that is tomorrow, April 3, 2023. But in doing so, we want to emphasise that the right to assemble, to demonstrate, petition, and speak are iron-clad as provided for in our constitution," the veteran opposition leader told reporters. The announcement came after President William Ruto urged the opposition to cancel their protest and participate in a bipartisan parliamentary committee to work through their concerns related to last year's elections. Odinga has accused Ruto of stealing the presidency and considers his government illegiti-



mate, although the Supreme Court of Kenya upheld the results. The opposition leader welcomed Ruto's "olive branch" but warned they could resume protests if progress was not made. "We reserve our right to call for demonstrations should this process not bear fruit," he added. "Should there be no meaningful engagement or response from Hon(Honourable) Ruto to our counter-offer, we resolve to resume our demonstrations after one week."

2 dead in U.S. medical helicopter crash



WASHINGTON (Xinhua/APP): A medical helicopter on Sunday crashed in northeast Shelby County, the southern U.S. state of Alabama, killing two crew members. The helicopter was reportedly requested to assist in the extraction of a patient who went hiking in the

area and suffered breathing problems and chest pains. A Shelby County deputy called 911 to report the crash of the aircraft on Sunday evening. "Deputies and other first responders are currently on the scene of an aircraft accident in the area of Bear Creek Road (Co Rd 43) and Mountain Oaks Drive," the Shelby County Sheriff's Office wrote in a Facebook post. The road is closed in both directions, and will likely be closed for an extended period of time, the post read. There were three crew members on-board, according to Shelby County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Clay Hammac.

UK passport workers launch five-week walkout over pay



LONDON (AFP/APP): UK passport office workers launched a five-week stoppage Monday, the latest walkout in strike-hit Britain as the country reels from the worst cost of living crisis in a generation. The Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) accused the government of failing to deal even-handedly with public sector workers. The UK has been hit by a wave of industrial action across the economy in recent months ranging from ambulance staff and rail staff to doctors, teachers and dock workers. Unions say their members have been

hit by a combination of decades-high inflation and stagnating wages that has left them struggling to pay their bills. Ministers had failed to "hold any meaningful talks" with civil servants despite negotiations having been opened with unions representing health workers and teachers, PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said. "They're treating their own workforce worse than anyone else. They've had six months to resolve this dispute but for six months have refused to improve their two percent imposed pay rise, and failed to address our members' other issues of concern," he said. "They seem to think if they ignore our members, they'll go away. But how can our members ignore the cost-of-living crisis when 40,000 civil servants are using foodbanks and 45,000 of them are claiming the benefits they administer themselves?" he added.

Pakistan dismisses reports of trade ties with Israel

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan has today denied reports of trade relations with Israel and has vowed to investigate any goods allegedly "exported" to the occupation state, with which Islamabad has no diplomatic relations. On 30 March, the American Jewish Congress (AJC) issued a statement on "Trade Between the State of Israel and Pakistan," claiming that the first shipment from the country had been received in Israel. "This week, the first shipment of Pakistan-origin food products was offloaded in Israel, in a transaction that involved Pakistani-Jewish businessman Fishel Benkhalid, based in Pakistan's business hub of Karachi, and three Israeli businessmen from Jerusalem and Haifa," the statement read. However, spokesperson for Pakistan's Foreign Office, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch dismissed the claims, saying "There is no change in the policy," referring to Islamabad's position on having no diplomatic or trade ties with Israel. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce also said "Rumours about beginning of Pakistan-Israel trade are pure propaganda. We



neither have nor do we intend to start trade relations with Israel," while Commerce and Trade Secretary Sualeh Ahmad Faruqi denied sending any export consignment to Israel, stating that "any claims suggesting otherwise are mere disinformation and politically motivated." Earlier in the week, Karachi-based Pakistani-Jewish businessman Fishel BenKhalid announced on Twitter that he had successfully exported the first batch of Pakistani produce to Israel, including dates, dry fruit and spices and shared a video purportedly of his food items on display at a Jerusalem market. According to the Ministry of Commerce, BenKhalid's shipment was made through the UAE in a "personal capacity" and "was not supported by the Pakistani government and no banking or official channel was involved."

Swiss prosecutors say investigating UBS-Credit Suisse merger

GENEVA (AFP/APP): Swiss federal prosecutors said Sunday that they had opened an inquiry into the UBS takeover of its embattled banking rival Credit Suisse, following pressure from federal authorities and media leaks. In an email to AFP, prosecutors said they issued orders to investigate after "taking stock of the situation with all the relevant internal services" and contacting national and local authorities. The probe will aim to ensure Switzerland's financial centre remains "clean" and identify any criminal offences within their remit, they said. A "surveillance system" has also been put in place that will allow prosecutors to intervene if necessary. The prosecutors added that they wanted to "have an overall view of the many aspects" of the events relating to the near-collapse of Credit Suisse, including those reported in the media,



and to "secure and assess the available information". "Different internal and external bodies have been mandated or contacted with the aim of clarifying and gathering information," they added. - 'Any criminal offence' - Switzerland's GDP relies heavily on the financial sector that employs tens of thousands of people in the alpine country. On the weekend of March 18-19, the marriage of Switzerland's two biggest banks was hastily arranged by the government to prevent a global financial meltdown, following fears of contagion from the collapse of three US regional banks.

Pioneering composer and eco-warrior Ryuichi Sakamoto dies age 71



TOKYO (AFP/APP): Pioneering composer and green activist Ryuichi Sakamoto, whose score for "The Last Emperor" scooped an Oscar and a Grammy, has died aged 71 after his second cancer diagnosis. Having shot to fame in the 1970s with the influential Japanese group Yellow Magic Orchestra, Sakamoto's electronic innovations helped lay the foundations for synth-pop, house music and hip-hop. But he was perhaps best known for his film soundtracks, including for the World War II drama "Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence", in which he also acted opposite his friend David Bowie as a prisoner-of-war camp commandant. The hauntingly catchy track "Forbidden Colours" from the 1983 film, with vocals by David Sylvian, became a global hit for Sakamoto, who also collaborated with Thomas Dolby and punk legend Iggy Pop in the 80s. Sakamoto went on to win an Academy Award with his score for the 1987 period epic "The Last Emperor", directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, which tells the story of China's last emperor Puyi.

Leading military blogger killed in St Petersburg cafe blast



MOSCOW (AFP/APP): A leading Russian military blogger was killed Sunday in an explosion at a cafe in Russia's second-largest city of Saint Petersburg, the interior ministry said. "One person was killed in the incident. He was military correspondent Vladlen Tatarsky," the ministry said on Telegram. Investigators later said they had confirmed "an unidentified explosive device exploded in a cafe in central St Petersburg." "19 people were also injured to varying degrees," they said in a statement. The TASS news agency quoted a law enforcement source as saying the blast was "caused by an improvised explosive device hidden inside a statue given to Tatarsky as a gift". Tatarsky, whose real name is Maxim Fomin, has more than 500,000 followers on Telegram and is in favour of Russia's campaign in Ukraine. The explosion occurred at "Street Food Bar No. 1" in the city centre, with the interior ministry saying police had been called to the scene at 6:13 pm (1513 GMT). A group called Cyber Front Z, which refers to itself on social media as "Russia's information troops", said it had hired out the cafe for the evening. "There was a terrorist attack. We took certain security measures but unfortunately, they were not enough," the group said on Telegram. "Condolences to everyone who knew the excellent war correspondent and our friend Vladlen Tatarsky," it said.

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

AN DAIRY FARM
- 100% ORGANIC FOOD -

MILK

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

Also provide:

Cheese Desi Ghee Yogurt
Pure Honey Desi Eggs Mutton/Beef Chicken

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

For latest news visit our website www.thekhybermail.com

Follow us @ [f](https://www.facebook.com/thekhybermail) [t](https://www.twitter.com/thekhybermail) [i](https://www.instagram.com/thekhybermail) [y](https://www.youtube.com/thekhybermail) [thekhybermail](https://www.thekhybermail.com)

thekhybermail@gmail.com