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## Trump pleads not guilty

NEW YORK (Agencies): Former US President Donald Trump reportedly entered a plea of not guilty in Manhattan criminal court on Tuesday to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records and conspiracy, in the first criminal prosecution of a former head of state in U.S. history. Trump, 76, entered the plea around 2:45 p.m. local time (11:45 pm PST) on Tuesday before Manhattan criminal court Judge Juan Merchan, multiple electronic reported. The charges against Trump include conspiracy, elevating the case against him to an unexpected level of seriousness, the reports said. Trump surrendered at Manhattan criminal court just after 1 p.m. (10 pm PST) on Tuesday, and called his imminent arrest a “surreal” moment in a Truth Social post just before entering the courthouse. Trump, who did not speak to reporters before appearing before the judge, looked somber and angry as he sat between his attorneys Susan Necheles and Joe Tacopina inside the courtroom. In addition to Tacopina and Necheles, Trump was



flanked by attorney Todd Blanche, legal advisor Boris Ephsteyn, advisor Jason Miller and aide Walt Nauta at the courthouse, The New York Times reported. Trump was formally arrested, fingerprinted and held in an office off the courtroom before entering his plea, though he did not have his mug shot taken, The New York Times reported (experts speculated prior to his arrest that a mug shot may not be necessary, given that Trump’s appearance is widely known). Trump spent the night at his apartment in Trump Tower after flying from Mar-A-Lago

in Florida to New York on Monday. Pro- and anti-Trump protesters gathered alongside a throng of reporters outside the courthouse on Tuesday morning. While the indictment is under seal and the charges have yet to be made public, Trump reportedly faces 34 counts of falsifying business records in the first degree and conspiracy. The charges are widely expected to be tied to a deal his former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen made with Stormy Daniels in exchange for her silence about their alleged affair in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election. Prosecutors were widely expected to be considering charges of falsifying business records, after federal prosecutors determined in a separate 2018 case against Cohen that the Trump Organization reimbursed Cohen for the payments to Daniels and falsely specified that the services were for legal purposes.

Trump has denied the alleged affair and his attorneys have claimed Daniels extorted him for the \$130,000 payment.

## One dead,dozens injured in Dutch rail crash



VOORSCHOTEN (AFP/APP): A Dutch high-speed passenger train slammed into heavy construction equipment and derailed near The Hague early Tuesday, killing at least one person and injuring 30, emergency services said. The train travelling from Leiden to The Hague hit a crane on the track near the village of Voorschoten around 3:30 am (0130 GMT), while a freight train separately collided with the equipment, rail operators said. The force of the crash left a front double-decker passenger carriage lying in a meadow and a second on its side on an embankment, while two carriages remained on the tracks, AFP reporters at the scene said. Heavy scorch marks could be seen on one carriage, and Dutch media reported a fire had broken out after the accident. “We heard a bang first and then later a much more intense one,” local resident Chris van Engelenburg, 36, told AFP. “Then we heard people screaming. It was not good.” The train was carrying around 50 people when it crashed, Dutch authorities said.

## UK telecoms firm Virgin Media suffers widespread outages



LONDON (Agencies): British telecoms firm Virgin Media said on Tuesday there was an issue impacting its broadband services, after thousands of customers reported widespread problems with internet access and the group’s website also appeared to be down. There were more than 28,000 reports of Virgin Media outages on the Downdetector website as of Tuesday morning, beginning in the early hours, with most users reporting that their internet was not working. “We’re aware of an issue that is affecting broadband services for Virgin Media customers as well as our contact centres,” Virgin Media said on Twitter.

## One in six people worldwide affected by infertility:WHO

UNITED NATIONS (APP): One in six people worldwide is affected by infertility and access to affordable care is insufficient, the World Health Organization (WHO), a Geneva-based UN Agency, has warned in a major new report. Infertility, which affects men and women, is a reproductive condition defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. To compile the new in-depth estimates, the WHO analyzed all relevant studies on infertility from 1990 to 2021. The research shows that 17.5 per cent of the adult population experience infertility in their lifetime. The UN health agency says the rates are “comparable” for high, middle and low-income countries. “The report reveals an important truth - infertility does not discriminate,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, said in a statement. “The sheer proportion of people affected shows the need to widen access to

fertility care and ensure this issue is no longer sidelined in health research and policy, so that safe, effective and affordable ways to attain parenthood are available.” WHO says that despite the prevalence of infertility, diagnosis and treatment - such as in vitro fertilization (IVF) - remain underfunded and patients find themselves priced out. Many have no choice but to cover the costs out of pocket, often with devastating consequences. Dr Pascale Allotey, WHO’s Director of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, said that millions of people faced catastrophic healthcare costs after seeking treatment for infertility and all too often, a “medical poverty trap”. According to WHO, people in the poorest countries spend a greater proportion of their income on fertility care than those in wealthier countries. The UN health agency also quotes separately published new research that it co-funded on infertility costs in low and middle-income countries.

## Capsized Credit Suisse faces shareholder fury

ZURICH (Agencies): Credit Suisse (CS-GN.S) is expected to face shareholder anger at what will be its final annual general meeting on Tuesday after the bank was rescued last month by rival UBS (UBSG.S). The hastily arranged takeover by Zurich-based UBS, for which Switzerland invoked emergency legislation, bypassed Credit Suisse shareholders, who would otherwise have had a say, and largely wiped out the value of their holdings. The meeting marks an ignominious end for the 167-year-old flagship bank founded by Alfred Escher, a Swiss magnate affectionately dubbed King Alfred I, who helped build the country’s railways and then the bank.



Protesters gathered outside the concert venue where the meeting was taking place, with some erecting a capsized boat to depict the bank’s demise. Shareholder advisory firm Ethos decried the “greed and incompetence of its managers” as well as pay that reached “unimaginable heights”, as it prepared to challenge top executives at the meeting.

## U.S.says its forces kill a senior Islamic State leader in Syria



WASHINGTON (Agencies): The United States carried out a military operation that killed a senior Islamic State leader in Syria on Monday, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Tues-

day, the latest blow to a group that once struck fear across the Middle East. Khalid Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri was responsible for planning Islamic State attacks in Europe and developed the leadership structure for the group, the statement said. The Islamic State controlled swathes of Iraq and Syria at the peak of its power in 2014 before being beaten back in both countries. The group is estimated to have 5,000 to 7,000 members and supporters spread between Syria and Iraq, roughly half of them fighters, a U.N. report said in February.

## Red Cross to cut 1,500 jobs

Geneva (AFP/APP): The Red Cross announced Tuesday that it would cut 1,500 jobs over the next 12 months in a drive to slash costs due to a funding crunch. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said an expected drop in humanitarian assistance budgets over the next two years was forcing it to make significant cuts. “ICRC will need to be more deliberate in directing efforts towards programmes and places where we can have the greatest impact, in line with our mandate to provide life-saving relief and protection services to people living through armed conflict and violence,” it said in a statement. The Geneva-based organisation said that its governing board on March 30 had approved 430 million Swiss francs (\$474 million) in global cost reduction



through early 2024. While the exact details and timelines for the cuts were still being worked through, ICRC said it was clear that “approximately 1,500 jobs worldwide will have to be cut over the coming 12 months.” “The number of people impacted will be minimised as much as possible by reducing positions first and foremost through a recruitment freeze and natural turnover,” it stressed.

## Pakistan pushes for additional non-permanent seats in UNSC to make it representative

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan, which firmly opposes more permanent members in the U.N. Security Council, has reaffirmed its call for ensuring equitable representation in the 15-member body by adding more elected members to make it more democratic and effective. “It is clear from discussions held so far that a common ground among member states does exist on the idea of expanding the seats in the non-permanent category,” Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan, told delegates when the deadlocked Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed at reforming the Council resumed on

Tuesday. Full-scale negotiations to reform the Security Council began in the General Assembly in February 2009 on five key areas -- the categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Security Council, and working methods of the council and its relationship with the General Assembly. Progress towards restructuring the Security Council remains blocked as G-4 countries -- India, Brazil, Germany and Japan -- continue pushing for permanent seats in the Council, while the Italy/Pakistan-led Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group opposes any additional permanent members.

## Branson’s Virgin Orbit files for bankruptcy



WASHINGTON (Agencies): Richard Branson’s Virgin Orbit Holdings (VORB.O) filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Tuesday after the satellite launch company failed to secure the long-term funding needed to help it recover from a January rocket failure. The Long Beach, California-based company

lodged the filing in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware seeking a sale of its assets after announcing the layoff of roughly 85% of its 750 employees last week. “We believe that the Chapter 11 process represents the best path forward to identify and finalize an efficient and value-maximizing sale,” Virgin Orbit CEO Dan Hart said in a statement. The company listed assets of about \$243 million and total debt at \$153.5 million as of Sept. 30 in the filing. Virgin Orbit went public in 2021 through a blank-check deal, raising \$255 million less than expected.

## Khunjerab Pass officially resumes passenger crossing on Monday: Mao Ning

BEIJING (APP): The Khunjerab Pass, a seasonal trade route between Pakistan and China, has officially resumed passenger crossing today after almost three years of closure, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning said on Monday. “The Khunjerab pass is a seasonal pass, which is open from April 1 to November 30 every year. On April 03, this year, the pass officially resumed passenger

crossings,” she said during her regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP correspondent. “The spokesperson said that during Covid-19 pandemic, the port implemented the policy about the passing of goods only. April 1, 2022 the pass has been reopened for the passing of goods and on April 3, this year the pass officially resumed passenger crossings, she added.

## Massive fire breaks out in market in Bangladesh capital

DHAKA (Xinha/APP): A massive fire broke out in a market at a residential neighborhood of the old part of Bangladesh’s capital on Tuesday morning, with no death reported so far. Brigadier General Md Main Uddin, director general of the department of fire service and civil defense, told Xinhua that 41 fire engines were fighting the fire in

one of the city’s largest Bangabazar markets. The fire, spreading to at least six nearby markets, was sending thick black smoke into the air visible at least several kilometers away. The cause of the fire, which broke out around 6:00 a.m. local time, has not been ascertained, as the security officials have yet to comment on the incident.

## Finland joins NATO

Brussels (AFP/APP): Finland becomes the 31st member of NATO on Tuesday, in a historic strategic shift provoked by Moscow’s war on Ukraine, which doubles the US-led alliance’s border with Russia. Last year, the Kremlin’s all-out invasion of Ukraine upended Europe’s security landscape and prompted Finland and its

neighbour Sweden to drop decades of military non-alignment. Awkward allies Turkey and Hungary, for different reasons of their own, delayed Finland’s bid to come under the NATO umbrella and Stockholm’s progress remains blocked. But last week, the Turkish parliament voted to clear Finland’s final hurdle.

**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.



## Dismissal of law officers from services; case referred to larger bench of PHC

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday referred a review petition for the dismissal of law officers from services by the previous governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the larger bench of the court for a hearing. The two-member bench comprising Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Attiq Shah after hearing the arguments of the Advocate General Amir Javed and the lawyers of the petitioners decided

to refer the case to the larger bench. Advocate General Aamir Javed appeared on behalf of the caretaker government and contended that a review request has come before deciding the case by a three-member bench, adding that the petition was filed by the newly appointed Additional and Assistant Advocate Generals. He said that when the three-member bench was issuing the decision in the case, neither notice was given to

the petitioners nor were they heard, which was mandatory under the law. He said that under the law the petitioners have the right to file a review petition and should be heard, adding that since the case was decided by a three-member bench so a similar bench or larger bench could hear the case rather than a two-member bench. The court referred the matter to the larger bench of PHC and adjourned the hearing.

## Application sought for PM's Youth Skill Development Programme till April 16

PESHAWAR (APP): The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) of Pakistan has sought applications for the fourth batch of the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme (PMYSDP) till April 16. An official of NAVTTTC, Malik Ramzan told APP here Tuesday that with the special interest of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, the fourth batch has started in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Islamabad. He said that more than

1,000 top universities and technical institutions of Pakistan have been included in this program for free education and training to the youth in various disciplines. Under this program, more than 100 conventional trades including beautician, fashion designing, electrician solar, heavy machinery operator, etc. , and more than 150 hi-tech trades including Amazon Virtual Assistant, Artificial Intelligence, internet of Things and Cyber Security, etc would be taught free of charge to selected youth in

three to six months short courses. "The youth aged 18 to 40 can apply for any of the courses and would have to appear in a test on April 18 by applying online on the NAVTTTC website <http://candidate.navttc.gov.pk>," he said adding that special courses were also being offered for persons with disabilities. He said that in case of any inquiry, the applicant can visit the official website of [www.navttc.gov.pk](http://www.navttc.gov.pk) or by dialing toll-free number 0800-888-66 or KP telephone number 091-9217663.

## PHC suspends demotion, new seniority list of KP police, seeks reply from parties

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-mem-

### GOLD PRICE IN PAK

Gold Rate	24K Gold	22K Gold	21K Gold	18K Gold
Per Tola Gold	Rs 210,600	Rs 193,049	Rs 184,275	Rs 157,950
Per 10 Gram	Rs 180,556	Rs 165,508	Rs 157,986	Rs 135,417
Per Gram Gold	Rs 18,056	Rs 16,551	Rs 15,799	Rs 13,542
Per Ounce	Rs 511,868	Rs 469,210	Rs 447,884	Rs 383,901

### FOREX RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	288.5	291
China Yuan	41.26	41.66
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.3
Saudi Riyal	76.5	77.25
U.A.E Dirham	78.3	79
UK Pound	355	359
Euro	311.5	315
Australian Dollar	192.1	195
Canadian Dollar	211.5	214.5

### Emergency Numbers

Organization	Phone No
Rescue 1122 HQrs	091-2264224-25
Rescue 1122 Mardan	0937-9230770
Fire Brigade Cantt:	091-9212534
Fire Brigade City	091-2566666
Police Emergency	091-9212222
Edhi Ambulance	091-2214575
Red Crescent Ambulance	091-2210836
Emergency Ambulance	091-2590846
Civil Defence, Peshawar	091-9212176
Lady Reading Hospital	091-9211430
HMC Peshawar	091-9217140-46
KTH Peshawar	091-9216340-8
Irnarn Hospital	091-9216115
Mission Hospital	091-2212371
Al-Khidmat Hospital	091-2215945
Fauji Foundation Hospital	091-9212771-4
Frontier Foundation Blood Services	091-5703463
Hamza Foundation, Peshawar	091-5841632
Sui Gas, Peshawar	091-9213016
Wapda Complaint Peshawar	091-9212041
PIA, Peshawar	091-9213351
Airport Inquiry	114
Railway Inquiry	117

ber bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Attiq Shah on Tuesday suspended notification of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in which hundreds of DSPs and SHO were demoted, and a new seniority list issued by the department. The court issued notices to the parties to submit their replies to the court in the next hearing on May 3 and allowed the affected police officers to continue working on their posts. It is mentioned here that the KP IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur on March 17 issued a notification regarding the demotion of 800 police officers, who were promoted out-of-turn, in compliance

with the Supreme Court's 2018 order in a case filed by the affected police officers. Despite the passage of almost four-year none of the three KP IGPs implemented the orders of the apex court regarding the demotion of all police officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who received out-of-turn promotions while the provincial government, IGPs or courts had ignored the deserving ones. The KP IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur soon after assuming the charge implemented the orders of the apex court and issued orders for the demotion of 800 police personnel promoted out of turn, of which 65 were from Dera Ismail Khan.

## Cabinet committee seeks formation of Zakat Council for timely payment to beneficiaries

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The Cabinet Committee meeting was held here on Tuesday regarding timely payment of Zakat to deserving beneficiaries in the province. The meeting was attended by Minister Zakat and Information Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Population Welfare Salma Begum, Secretary Zakat and others. In the meeting it was decided that to get permission from Election Commission for formation of Provincial Zakat Council to pay Zakat to deserving people on time. The

Provincial Zakat Council will form committees at the district and local levels for safe and transparent payment. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that transparent and fair distribution of Zakat among the deserving beneficiaries was the first priority of the caretaker government. He said that special care of widows, orphans and disabled would be taken while giving payment from Zakat fund. Salma Begum said that the caretaker government wanted to ensure payment of Zakat to the beneficiaries in the same month.

## Caretaker CM expresses grief,sorrow over martyrdom of two policemen

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan has expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of two police personnel by miscreants in the district Kohat. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the caretaker CM while expressing his heartiest sympathies and condolence

with the families of the martyred personnel has said that the provincial government will not leave their heirs alone and will extend full financial assistance to them.He said the police have rendered unforgettable sacrifices for the establishment of peace saying every government and people of the province are paying tributes to their sacrifices.

## ZAB remembered as champion of democracy,role model for politicians on 44th death anniversary - By Fakhar Alam

PESHAWAR (APP): Many politicians die in bed and some in exile but a few make their way to the hearts and minds of the people and become immortal by fighting for the rights of the people, supremacy of the constitution and democracy. Former prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was considered among such leaders and a charismatic politician of Pakistan, who accepted gallows 44 years ago on April 4, 1979, but did not compromise on the rights of people and supremacy of the constitution and democracy. "Death was meaningless for Z.A. Bhutto, who gave the 1973 constitution and devoted his entire life to the people of Pakistan and died for them," said Malik Azmat Khan, former Minister of State and PPP leader while talking to APP on Tuesday. He said that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto did not bow before dictatorial forces and refused to beg for mercy for a crime that he had never committed. "When Bhutto Sahib heard about

his death sentence as a result of an unfair trial, he said, 'I am not afraid of death. A Muslim's fate is in the hands of God. I can face Him with a clear conscience and would tell Him that I rebuilt His Islamic State from ashes into a respectable nation'," Malik Azmat recalled. He said the strong courage and determination of Shaheed Zulfiqar Bhutto were also reflected throughout his life and political career besides giving ordinary Pakistanis a voice. "Quaid-e-Awam has earned dignity for the country at regional and international levels due to his great political stature, intellect and vision," said former MPA, Nighat Yasmin Orakzai while talking to this news agency. She said Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto broke all the shackles and rejected a compromised foreign policy. She said that Bhutto Shaheed, in a short time, had made Pakistan a strong, progressive and independent nation of the Muslim World. "He had managed to unite Muslim leaders in

## KP police committed to wipe out terrorism, extremism: IGP

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat Khan on Tuesday paid tribute to the courage and bravery of the policemen who embraced martyrdom in a terrorist attack in Tapi area, district Kohat the other night. He said the sacrifices of police officials would not go in vain and soon the perpetrators would be brought to justice, adding that such a cowardly attack could not shake the resolve of KP police to

eliminate terrorism and extremism from the province. "The sacrifice of every martyr gives a new resolve to the police force to fight the menace of terrorism more vigorously," the IGP remarked. He said being a Muslim, attaining the status of martyrdom in the holy month of Ramazan was a great achievement. The IGP reiterated the resolve of KP police to protect the motherland from evil eyes at any cost.

## Two police officials martyred in Kohat

KOHAT (APP): In a tragic incident, two police officials were martyred on Monday while on duty near Masjid Shuhda Merozai in Tapi Kohat. According to reports, the officials identified as Constable Qasim and Constable Ayaz were deployed on security duty of the mosque (Isha prayer) during the holy month of Ramazan, when unknown persons opened fire on them. Both officials sustained severe injuries which

resulted in their martyrdom. Following the incident, the police quickly cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to apprehend the attackers. The bodies of the martyred officials had been shifted to KDA Hospital for further investigation. Meanwhile, the police launched an investigation into the matter and are determined to bring the perpetrators to justice.

## Bid to smuggle narcotics from KP to Punjab foiled,three held

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise Department while tightening the noose around the drug smugglers on Tuesday foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of narcotics from Peshawar to Punjab and arrested two drug peddlers and a facilitator. The spokesman of Excise Police Mardan said that acting on a tip-off, the Excise police carried out an operation in Rashakai and intercepted a vehicle. In search of the vehicle, Excise

police recovered 18 kg of hashish from secret compartments. The police arrested two drug smugglers resident of Faisalabad along with their facilitator, the spokesman, said adding that the accused have previous criminal records, about whom more information is being sought. A case has been registered against the three accused in Mardan Excise Police Station under the anti-narcotics provisions.

## PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) on Tuesday notified power suspension from Kuram Ghari and Bannu Grid Stations on April 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15 due to unavoidable maintenance work. A press release issued here said that power supply would remain suspended from 66 KV Kuram Ghari Grid Station from 9 a.m. to 1300

hours on the given dates resultantly consumers of 66 KV Kuram Ghari Transmission Line connected 11 KV feeders would face inconvenience. Similarly, power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Bannu Grid Station from 9 a.m. to 1300 hours, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Shurmangi feeders would face power outage.

## Murder in Ghazi weekly bazaar

TARBELA GHAZI: (By: Dr. Pervaiz Awan / Correspondent) : Personal enmity or terrorism, indiscriminate firing by unknown motorcyclist in weekly bazaar at Ghazi claimed a life whereas one passerby injured, despite a quick response by Ghazi police killer managed to be escaped when police mobile chasing the culprits met with an accident and sustaining injuries by two police contingents. According to the details, one Ismail Khan, 45, was busy in shopping in the weekly bazaar at Ghazi near Khalo Chowk when suddenly two motorcyclist waving pistols in their hands appeared and opened indiscriminate firing on him. Ismail Khan received bullets in his head and died at the spot whereas one passerby also came in the range of firing and sustained injuries in his leg who was later identified as Wajad Ali s/o Shenchhi resident of village Jalo, Ghazi. The eye witnesses told that firing was so sudden and heavy that a sever wave of fear got

over the people of surrounding area. On receipt of information regarding the incident heavy contingent of Ghazi police led by DSP Ghazi Tahir Qureshi and SHO Ejaz Khan reached the spot immediately. SHO Ijaz Khan along with police contingents chased the alleged killers in the police mobile but when they were about to held them, the police mobile met with an accident due to over speed which injured the Constables Riaz and Alamzeb then the killers got time to be escaped from the scene. The accused left their motorcycle and a mobile at the crime scene which police has taken in its custody. Ghazi police while ruling out the impression of any terrorism in that incident said that deceased Ismail Khan son of Niazmin Gul was resident of district Mohmand and had shifted to Ghazi due to an enmity with his relatives Muhammad Asad son of Muhammad Gul and Ha-keem Khan son of Jan Muhammad resident of Bajor.









## ‘Food delivery apps an emerging trend among youngsters during Ramzan’

ISLAMABAD (APP): With the holy month of Ramzan, the trend of buying food items online has been witnessing a tremendous increase during the sehri and iftar time where food chains are offering discount deals to attract the customers specially youngsters. Food delivery apps saw a significant boost this Ramadan as compared to last year, said a report aired by a private news channel. The food delivery apps have made it easier for us to order food from any restaurant by paying minimum delivery charges, said a youngster, adding, these services offer an option

to the customers for availing countless discount rate delivery items. A housewife, who recently convenient with these E-commerce apps commented that it was too difficult for me to wake up in sehri so now after downloading the food app i can easily order online sehri deals at my door step. Another young girl said that after fasting from dusk till dawn, customers are mostly preferring to have access to restaurants nearby serving their preferred type of cuisine and that is where the more cravings app steps in. These platform are promoting fresh and healthy foods and gro-

ceries during Ramzan to encourage customers to make healthier choices, as well as remind them to take advantage of the ease and convenience that e-commerce offers, said a delivery boy. An online fast food dealer said, like every year, many eateries are once again offering one of the most pocket friendly iftar and sehri deals for customers. There is a significant rise in the number of orders as part of Ramadan food delivery as many people find it more convenient to order food at home instead of going out for dining in or a take away, said a worker in online fast food platform.

## Eminent religious scholars, health experts take part in PBC Ramazan transmission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Eminent religious scholars and health experts participated in the special Ramazan transmission “Paigham-e-Ramazan on the 12th consecutive day on Monday and guided the listeners on matters pertaining to fasting. Religious scholar Ahmed Hammad talked about the conquest of Makkah which was a significant event in the history of islam. He said it was the beginning of Muslim dominance over entire Arabia and increased political power of Muslims, said a press release issued here. Health Expert Dr Irfan Ali Ringchan said that patients of acute

hepatitis and peptic ulcer must consult their physician before fasting. He further added that excessive exercise during the fasting hours should be avoided. He advised that incorporating balanced meals and adequate hydration is essential for optimizing energy and health. Naat Khawan Tasneem Akhtar paid tribute to the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW) while Tilawat-e-Quran-e-Pak along with translation was a regular part of transmission. People across the country can participate in the live transmission by calling at 051-9208940 from 5 pm. to 9 p.m.

## HMC removes illegal structures during anti encroachment drive

HYDERABAD (Agencies): The Anti Encroachment Cell of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (HMC) removed the soft encroachment from the roads and footpaths as well as from intersections in Latifabad units 8, 10, 11 and 12 here on Monday. The HMC’s spokesman informed that the action was part of the ongoing cam-

paign being carried out to comply with the Sindh High Court’s order. He added that the cell also warned the shopkeepers against placing their goods on the footpaths and roads. He said the encroachment was obstructing the flow of traffic besides making the movement of the pedestrians difficult.

## Secretary for introducing new projects keeping in view needs of Livestock dept

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Livestock Secretary Muhammad Masood Anwar has directed the authorities to introduce all new projects keeping in view the needs of the department. He presided over a meeting on comprehensive planning related to Livestock department here on Monday. He said that practical steps were required for export of halal meat in Eastern Asia, Central Asia, China and European countries. Officers were directed to prepare strategy for control of foot-mouth-disease besides its implementation on im-

mediate basis. Action plan related to foot-and-mouth disease should be shared with federal government, he added. He said that Punjab Agriculture and Meat Company had been assigned special task for boosting export of halal meat. Secretary said that for promotion of smart Livestock farming steps should be taken with the support of Livestock and Dairy Development Board. He further said that digital data base on Livestock and poultry sectors should be made for ensuring stability in market system.

## SC larger bench only way forward to stable country: PPP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said that the formation of a larger bench of the Supreme Court was the only way to a stable country. Talking to a private news channel, he said that despite reservations, the PPP government has always respected the Supreme Court’s decisions. He said the formation of a larger bench will lead the country out of constitutional crises and ensure the continuity

of the democratic set-up. “PPP has always believed in a truly independent and impartial judiciary which was a fundamental component of a democratic Pakistan”, he added. Replying to a question, he said that the country will always remember the great sacrifices of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for democracy. He also paid tribute to the founder of the People’s Party Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on the occasion of his 44th death anniversary.

## Death sentence awarded to accused for killing his wife

HARIPUR (APP): Additional District and Session Judge Haripur on Tuesday awarded a death sentence to the accused in a murder case of his wife in Sarai Saleh. According to details, the accused Muhammad Javed killed his wife Shaista daughter of Gul Zaman in Sarai Saleh and managed to escape from the crime scene on July 20, 2017. The family of the deceased registered a case against Muhammad Javed section 302/34. Sarai Saleh police during

a search operation arrested the accused and presented him before the court where after initial investigation he was sent to jail on judicial remand. After hearing the arguments of both sides the judge Haripur found Muhammad Javed guilty in the murder of his wife and awarded him the death sentence and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.5 million. In case of non-payment of the fine, the accused would face six months more imprisonment.

## Motorway Police reunites lost child with mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Motorway Police’s timely action on Tuesday reunited a lost child with his mother. According to Spokesperson Motorway Police, the Motorway Police officers near M-1 Swabi saw a seven-year-old child in distress. On seeking information, it was

found that the child was studying in a madrasa in the Attock district from where he left but lost his way to home. The child did not have any contact number or address. Therefore, the child was taken into protective custody by the Motorway Police.

## Funeral prayer of police constables offered

KOHAT (Agencies): The funeral prayer of police constable Muhammad Ayaz and Qasim Khan, who embraced martyrdom in an attack by terrorists last night was offered at Police Lines Kohat. Regional Police Officer, District Police Officer Kohat, officers of Army, politicians and local elders attended the funeral prayer. A fresh contingent of police presented a salute to the martyr and later the body was sent to native town for burial with official protocol.

## Common Asian leopard spotted in Margalla’s Trail-5

ISLAMABAD (APP): A common Asian Leopard was spotted on Trail-5 of the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP), here, on Monday by a trekker early in the morning. According to the Islamabad Wildlife Management board (IWMB) Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan that during Ramazan very few people visit trails at MHNP which makes the national park deserted and open for wildlife to stroll. Rina Saeed Khan said leopard though nocturnal was a very shy and solitary wildcat that deliberately evades human encounters. As, it is visible in the video that the leopard noticed the human being making his or her video but soon left the spot and disappeared in the wild, she added. The IWMB Chairperson emphasised that the leopards were least interested in humans and were not a threat in the protected area but rather indicated a healthy ecosystem. She urged the masses to avoid disturbing the wildlife in national park as it is their habitat and the humans are intruding into it.

## ANF seizes over 105 kg drugs; arrests seven

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations managed to recover over 105 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar recovered 1.7 kg Ice drug from the possession of a Jeddah-bound passenger, resident of Mardan, going on flight no ER-703. ANF and FC in an operation at Faisalabad Airport recovered 38 grams of heroin from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger, a resident of Faisalabad, going on flight no G-9583. He informed that in an operation near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, ANF seized 32. 4 kg charras, 2 kg Ice drug, and 1.2 kg opium and arrested an accused resident of Jhelum. In the fourth operation conducted near Attock Burhan Interchange, ANF recovered 18 kg charras from secret cavities of a car and rounded up two accused, residents of Sheikhpura. In the fifth operation on Coastal Highway near Pasni Zero Point, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Balochistan to Karachi and recovered 50 kg of opium from secret cavities of a van.

By using all resources, including contacting the district police and announcements in mosques, the child’s home was eventually traced. The child’s father had died, and he was safely handed over to his mother to which she thanked the Motorway Police.

## DG PHA for effective action against encroachments

MULTAN (APP): Director General (DG) Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Asif Rauf Khan on Tuesday said that a coordinated plan has been chalked out to launch effective action against encroachments. Addressing a meeting, he said PHA local chapter prepared a comprehensive plan to lift garbage around parks, adding that steps would be taken to provide awareness to the public in this regard. He directed the subordinate staff to ensure cleanliness inside and outside the parks as well. Garbage will not

be tolerated at all, he stressed. He said parks were for healthy activities. People should cooperate with PHA. They would take action against illegal activities inside parks as per law, he maintained. He said efforts were being made to ensure a hundred percent utilization of the horticulture fund to get better facilities into the parks’ premises. Director Marketing Hafiz Usama, Director Horticulture Saad Qureshi and Director Engineering Adnan Butt were present on the occasion.

## Govt taking steps to improve bilateral relations with neighbouring countries:MNA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly PML (N) Romina Khurshid Alam on Tuesday said that Pakistan highly values its ties with all friendly countries where foreign minister and prime minister were taking concrete steps to improve relations with its neighbours. Talking to Radio Pakistan’s current Affair program, she said, “Imran Khan government during its tenure spoiled the diplomatic relations with friendly countries including China, United States and isolated Pakistan in the

world”. MNA said that the prime minister while addressing the meeting of PML-N’s Parliamentary Party and in the parliament expressed determination to bring the country out of the economic crises soon. The PTI Chief was responsible for the country’s current situation as he dissolved two provincial assemblies, she added. Replying to a question, she said it was the need of the hour that all the political parties should develop a mutual consensus for safeguarding national interests.

## Federal govt withdraws services SC’s Registrar Ishrat Ali

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal government has withdrawn the services of Registrar of Supreme Court and directed him to report to the Establishment DivisionAccording to the notification issued here on Monday, on the direction of the federal cabinet conveyed vide case No 55/12/2023

dated 03-04-2023, the services of Ishrat Ali, BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Registrar Supreme Court on deputation basis are hereby withdrawn and he is directed to report to the to Establishment Division with immediate effect and until further orders.

## Caretaker govt in Centre to organize general elections in October: Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan on Monday said a new caretaker government in the centre would organize general elections in October across Pakistan. “The coalition government is engaged in conducting census exercise and gathering data,” he said while talking in a state news channel program. He also said that as of now elections could not be held in the current situation owing to security and economic issues. Holding elections before the completion of the census exercise or with the old census data could create many issues, he warned. He made it clear that a caretaker government in the center formed after the completion of the constitutional tenure of the National Assembly would organize

the general elections in October 2023 in a free and transparent manner. To a question about financial needs in preparation for elections, he said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had damaged the economy, besides creating problems for the people due to its wrong policies. He said the coalition government was trying to restore the economy so that it could provide necessary financial resources to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for holding the general elections in a transparent manner. He said security institutions were presently engaged to provide security to the census staff carrying out the national duty. The PML(N) leader said the government had increased allocations for the Benazir Income Support Programe (BISP) to help poor people.

## CM GB takes decisive steps to promote investment, enhance business ease in GB

GILGIT (Agencies): Acknowledging the substantial role played by private sector investment in advancing economic and social development, the Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid has taken decisive steps to promote investment and enhance business ease in Gilgit-Baltistan through the Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative. To this end, a committee led by the Chief Secretary has developed a purposeful and robust website, [www.investgilgitbaltistan.com](http://www.investgilgitbaltistan.com), aimed at encouraging investors, said a press release. Within a brief period, the committee was able to identify six sectors with significant investment and growth potential. These sectors are agriculture, tourism, information technology, livestock & fisheries, and

minerals. After thorough consultations, the committee has streamlined cumbersome procedures by simplifying the steps, shortened timelines and offering a digital roadmap to prospective investors. Prospective investors can now easily submit their applications online, and the implementation procedures will be overseen directly by the Chief Secretary’s office. Additionally, the initiative has implemented a mechanism for addressing any delays or complaints that investors may encounter. As part of the initiative, captivating digital data and documentaries have been linked to showcase the stunning natural beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan, giving potential investors a sense of the region’s aesthetic charm.

## 70 varsity teachers, employees receive performance awards

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Department of Universities and Boards on Monday, granted performance-based awards to 70 faculty members and employees of higher education institutions, educational boards and the department. The award distribution ceremony, held here at the office of the Secretary of Universities and Boards, was attended by Sindh Minister of Universities and Boards Ismail Rahu and secretary of the department Muhammad Mureed Rahimoon. Vice Chancellors of different universities of the province, officers of universities, boards and the department also were in attendance. Sindh Minister Ismail Raho and the Secretary Department of Universities and Boards distributed

awards to the professors, teachers and other employees for showing excellent performance in their respective fields. Mureed Rahimoon informed that 59 faculty members and other employees of 26 universities, and 11 employees of the Department of Universities and Boards received the awards. He said that Rs5.5 million were distributed among the winners from performance awards funds while separate amounts had been granted as awards to vice-chancellors, professors and other employees. Speaking at the occasion the secretary said that it was the era of Information Technology and all universities should focus on the fastest growing technology to equip their students with IT education.



Rs 16.239 bln proposed for widening, rehabilitation of existing N-35 in forthcoming PSDP 2023-24: Senate told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on Tuesday informed the Senate that an amount of Rs 16.239 billion had been proposed for widening and rehabilitation of existing N-35 (Karakoram Highway), passing through Abbottabad in the forthcoming Public Sector Development Prorgamme (PSDP) for year 2023-24. Replying to a calling attention notice raised by Kamran Murtaza about severe traffic jams in Abbottabad city due to non-construction of flyovers and underpasses, the minister said the project had been included in the PSDP for 2023-24 in order to address longstanding issue

of traffic jams in Abbottabad City. The project has been divided into three packages with an estimated cost of Rs 16.239 billion, he added. He said Package one included road from Muslim Abad to Bus Stand, Package-2 from Allah-Hu Chowk to Allah-hu Chowk and Package-3 from Allah-hu Chowk to APS school. A total 269 land would also be acquired to address the traffic jam issue. He said it was a longstanding issue and was already under government consideration. Earlier, Kamran Murtaza said that the people particularly tourists faced immense problems due to traffic jams in Abbottabad city.

Bhutto family, PPP & nation awaiting justice in ZAB’s judicial murder case: Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday in her message on the death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) said the Bhutto family, the Pakistan Peoples Party, and the nation were waiting for justice in the judicial murder case of their leader for the past 44 years. The Minister said, “On the occasion of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s 44th Martyrdom Day, I pay tribute to his courage, sacrifices and services for the country and the nation.” She said the leader of the nation, the creator of the 1973 consensus constitution, nuclear power and democracy could never be forgotten. Senator Rehman said he made the

people and Parliament the center of power and decision-making. The people’s leader was taken away from us through judicial murder, she added. She said that the darkest judgment was a blot on the face of the judiciary, adding, “Through an organized plan, a decision was made against the leader of the people. The role played by our justice system in the killing of the leader of the people makes one bow in shame.”Former President, Asif Ali Zardari filed a reference in 2011 for justice in the judicial killing of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. “For the last 12 years that reference is buried under files in the High Court,” Sherry Rehman regretted.

Flour distribution centres remain closed due to rain

MULTAN (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Umar Jahangir on Tuesday said that the centres for free flour distribution were remain closed here following heavy rains that lashed the city in the past couple of days. He said these points will be re-opened on Wednesday to carry out the smooth distribution among people. He said, until now over 1200,000 flour bags are given away among deserving segments of society across the district. Nobody would be allowed to receive flour without personal ID card to prove the identi-

ty, said Umar Jahangir. The DC said that night shifts were started at the sports ground for free flour distribution to facilitate masses. During his visit to different distribution points, he said thousands of citizens were provided free flour through 34 flour distribution points. He said the complete record of flour mills followed by its supply was maintained to ensure transparency in the mechanism. Earlier, Commissioner Amir Khatak had appealed to citizens to observe patience for getting the benefit of the subsidy programme.

Ombudsman Pb. mediates to provide 25.15 mln relief to 19 plaintiffs

LAHORE (Agencies): Ombudsman Punjab Major (R) Azam Suleman, on applications of aggrieved persons against government departments, provided Rs. 25,157,097 financial relief to 19 plaintiffs along with redressal of their issues. The spokesman of the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab stated this in a statement issued on Tuesday. While giving details, the spokesman reported that the education department paid employment dues worth Rs.3,816,160 to Lahore’s Farzana Arif, whose husband had passed away; Rs.24,09,154 to the sister of a Sheikhupura-based widow; and arrears of dues amounting to Rs.586,715 to one Shamim Akhtar by the Khushab municipal committee after they approached the ombudsman office for payment

of their long-awaited amounts. Meanwhile, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab resolved the complaints from various districts about the non-provision of different kinds of dues and family pensions and provided a total relief of Rs.7,882,210 to the plaintiffs, the spokesman added. As a result of the action taken by the ombudsman office on the requests for payment of services and work done by business organizations, one Bassam Ahmad Latif has been given Rs 952,400 by the Punjab Institute of Cardiology, Lahore; Muhammad Humayun Zaib Malik has been paid Rs. 519,234 by the Jhelum municipal committee, and Malik Muhammad Imran has been given Rs.1,624,677 by the PHA Rawalpindi, the spokesman noted.

SC voids ECP decision on Punjab, KPK elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday voided the Election Commission of Pakistan’s (ECP) decision on Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) election. A three-member SC bench comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan announced the decision in open court and declared the ECP’s decision to hold polls on October 8 as unconstitutional. The court directed the ECP to reinstate its previous election schedule under which polls were to be held and extended it by

13 days. The court clarified that the ECP could not go beyond the 90-day stipulated time. The court order stated that 13 days were wasted because of the ECP’s unlawful decision. The court also directed the caretaker government in Punjab to assist the ECP and instructed the ECP to inform the court if the government refused to do so. The constitution and laws of the Election Commission did not allow extension of the date, it added. The order further stated that 13 days were wasted because of the ECP’s unlawful decision.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday due to necessary maintenance and routine development work for various areas of its region. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period

from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Chirah, Kirpa, Ali Pur, CM Pak Zong, Rehara, Tamari, Chatta Baktawar, Lathar Road, ISI Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogazi, Banjial Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Drabi, Talagang City, Main Bazar, Mogla, Dullar, Bilalabad, Daultala Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, SPF Feeders and surrounding areas.

President for speedy relief to citizens against maladministration

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for expeditiously addressing the complaints of the people so as to provide them with timely relief against the maladministration of government organizations. Highlighting the importance of the institutions of Federal and Provincial Ombudsmen, he said that ombudsmen played a significant role in providing justice to the people, adding that ombudsmen needed to be strengthened so that the maximum number of people could benefit from their services. The President ex-



pressed these views while talking to the Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan, Nazar Muhammad Baloch, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Nazar Muhammad Baloch also presented the Balochistan Ombudsman’s Annual Report for the year 2021 to the Pres-

ident. Talking to the Ombudsman, the President emphasized the need for expanding the outreach of ombudsmen to far-flung areas to provide justice to the people at their doorsteps. He further stressed that the Provincial Ombudsman should continue to ensure the timely implementation of his findings by the concerned agencies to maintain public trust in his office. He said that an effective awareness campaign should be started to sensitize the people of Balochistan about the workings and role of the Provincial Ombudsman.

Senate passes Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (Amendment) Bill, 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Tuesday passed the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (Amendment) Bill, 2023 as reported by the Standing Committee. Minister of Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on behalf of Minister for Water Resources Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah piloted the bill in the House. The object and reason of the bill says, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) was established in 1964 and is working as

a body corporate vide PCRWR Act, 2007 under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST). According to PCRWR Act, 2007, the rules of PCRWR shall have provisions for a two-track appointment: contractual and permanent which is a complicated way of recruitment as it allows the advertisement of a specific post twice. In order to make the recruitment process simple and much more transparent the amendment is proposed in the Act.

Over Rs 1 billion spent on By-Elections in 2022, reveals Parliamentary Affairs Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi revealed in a Senate session on Tuesday that a whopping sum of Rs 1.06 billion was spent on holding by-elections in 37 Constituencies across Pakistan during the year 2022. Responding to question of Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, the minister provided a detailed breakdown of the expenses, revealing that Rs 535.38 million were allocated for by-elections in 13 National Assembly constituencies, while the remaining Rs 524.57 million were spent on 24 Provincial Assembly constituencies. The expenses on by-elections in Pun-

jab amounted to Rs 452.43 million for 26 constituencies, while Sindh only spent Rs 163.66 million on five constituencies. The expenditures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were notably higher, with Rs 158.83 million spent on six constituencies in the province. The General Section of the Election Commission of Pakistan Secretariat spent a substantial amount of Rs 226.65 million on holding by-elections in all 37 constituencies. Additionally, the administrative section of the ECP Secretariat spent Rs 41.57 million, and Rs 16.80 million were allocated for electoral rolls by the ECP Secretariat.

Parliamentary exchanges are important for regional development: Raja Pervez

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday said that parliamentary exchanges are an effective tool for regional development. During a meeting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, he said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have always enjoyed strong fraternal ties deeply rooted in our shared religion, culture, traditions and mutual goodwill. “Both nations have stood by each other in the testing times,” he added. During the meeting, they renewed their commitment to further enhance cordial relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Pervez Ashraf remarked

that the people and Government of Pakistan have deep respect for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Saudi leadership. He added that Pakistan remains fully committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia as the country attaches immense importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia. The Speaker said that Saudi Arabia has always generously contributed to the social and economic development of Pakistan. Emphasizing enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the Speaker mentioned that cooperation in different spheres for mutual interest would be mutually beneficial.

Railways to float tender for advertising trains, railway platforms

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Railways is set to float tender shortly, allowing national and multinational firms to utilise several passenger trains and railway platforms for generating maximum revenue for the department. “All preparations regarding the branding of trains and platforms, railway station, certain crossings and trains have been completed and hopefully the tender will be floated this week,” sources in the Ministry told APP on Tuesday. The sources said the branding of the trains and platforms would not only address the increasing deficit of Pakistan Railways but will also allow private firms to advertise their products for this purpose. They said that initially, Pakistan Railways would offer five trains for branding their seat covers, internal walls of the passen-

ger coaches, and even toilets as a pilot project. “The deficit of the department will decrease after starting this project and the minister has already directed the concerned to complete all the formalities in this regard as soon as possible,” they added. They said that advertisers would have access to the parking area, platforms, staircases, bridges and other infrastructure at Lahore Railway Station. The sources said this was not the first time Pakistan Railways has attempted to monetize its assets for advertising purposes. In 2014 also, the organization launched a pilot project to offer branding opportunities to companies across the seat covers, internal walls of passenger coaches, and toilets on the Tezgam, Khyber Mail, and Awaam Express. However, the initiative was unsuccessful.

AIOU offers academic programs for international students

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has offered admissions in various academic programs in the second phase of the spring semester 2023 for Overseas Pakistanis as well as other international students. Programs offered in this phase 2.5-year and 4-year BS Programs, Associate degree (BA, B.Com), B.Ed (1.5 Years, 2.5 Years and 4 Years) and one year

Postgraduate Diplomas. Students can apply through online mode only and last date for admission is April 18. Apart from Overseas Pakistanis, residents of other countries can also enroll in these programs to increase their educational qualifications. AIOU is the only university in the country providing educational opportunities for Pakistanis living all over the world. The university is

offering more than 40 educational programs for international students from the semester autumn 2021 by using the latest online technologies. More than 460 students from 36 countries have been enrolled including students from the USA, Africa, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, China, New Zealand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, etc.



## China sees 6 mln employed in translation, language services sector

BEIJING (Agencies): The total number of people employed in China's translation and language services sector stood at 6.01 million in 2022, up 11.7 percent from the previous year, according to the annual conference of the Translators Association of China (TAC), which opened on Monday. At the opening ceremony, reports were released on the development of the translation and language service industry, both nationwide and worldwide. In addition,

an award-granting ceremony for excellent translators in different fields and a national translation skill contest were launched. Tang Heng, deputy secretary general of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said at the event that China's translator and interpreter community has substantially supported and boosted the country's international exchanges on all fronts. Tang called for efforts to enhance mutual learn-

ing between different civilizations, broaden the channel of exchanges, enrich the content of cooperation, and promote the building of a human community with a shared future. Du Zhanyuan, head of both the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration and the TAC, urged efforts to actively engage in international exchange. The two-day annual conference features a series of events, including 22 themed forums.

## Japan's central bank buys record gov't bonds in fiscal 2022

TOKYO (Agencies): The Bank of Japan (BOJ) bought a record 135,989 billion yen (1.02 trillion U.S. dollars) in Japanese government bonds in fiscal 2022, almost double the amount a year earlier, the central bank said. To counter increased bond sales in the market caused by its yield control policy, the BOJ actively bought 10-year and other government bonds in the year through March, the largest amount on re-

cord, topping the previous high of 115,800.1 billion yen marked in fiscal 2016, according to a BOJ filing on Monday. The purchase amount expanded about 63 trillion yen from fiscal 2021 and about 1.5-fold from the 88,025.6 billion yen in fiscal 2013, when outgoing BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda took office and embarked on a massive monetary easing policy, the data showed. Under its yield curve control pro-

gram, the BOJ sets short-term interest rates at minus 0.1 percent while guiding 10-year Japanese government bond yields around zero percent. Last December, the BOJ announced a shift in its ultra-loose monetary policy, raising the yield on the 10-year Japanese government bond as high as 0.5 percent from a previous cap of 0.25 percent. However, the move failed to stem speculative bond selling.

## Profits of S. Korea's listed firms log double-digit fall in 2022

SEOUL (Agencies): Profits of South Korea's listed companies logged a double-digit fall last year due to rapid interest rate hikes to curb inflation and the local currency's depreciation to the U.S. dollar, Yonhap news agency said Tuesday citing the bourse operator. Consolidated revenue of 604 listed firms on the benchmark KOSPI market, which closed the books in De-

cember, advanced 21.3 percent over the year to 2,814.9 trillion won (2.14 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2022, according to the Korea Exchange. It excluded listed financial companies. The revenue increased in double digits on the back of product price hikes amid high inflation, but corporate profits retreated in double figures on higher borrowing costs and raw material price hikes

boosted by the South Korean currency's descent to the greenback. Operating profit of the listed companies decreased 14.7 percent to 159.4 trillion won (121.1 billion dollars), and net income retreated 17.3 percent to 131.5 trillion won (99.9 billion dollars). The ratio of operating profit to revenue for the listed firms dipped 2.39 percentage points to 5.66 percent last year.

## Mixed auto sales in US paint murky picture of car consumers

NEW YORK (Agencies): Automakers reported mixed first-quarter US car sales Monday as some sedan models saw gains in a sign that vehicle affordability may be shifting consumer behavior. General Motors, Honda, Hyundai and Nissan all reported higher US sales, while Stellantis and Toyota suffered declines. The murky picture comes as average prices for new autos linger at around \$50,000,

a lofty price tag, especially in light of interest rate hikes that lifted the cost of car loans. Citing much-improved vehicle availability at dealerships, GM delivered 603,208 vehicles, up 17.6 percent from the year-ago period. The figures topped estimates for GM from Cox Automotive, which saw a strong US job market as a supportive factor in an environment clouded somewhat by higher inter-

est rates. GM vice president Steve Carlisle described the period as a "great start" to 2023 saying the company has a "busy season" of product launches coming up. "We gained significant market share in the first quarter, pricing was strong, inventories are in very good shape and we sold more than 20,000 EVs in a quarter for the first time," Carlisle said, referring to electric vehicles.

## Soaring inflation wallops Cubans already battling shortages

HAVANA (Agencies): Cuban retiree Xiomara Castellanos gets a monthly pension equivalent to \$13.80. A carton of 30 eggs in the inflation-battered country costs \$14.10 -- almost four times more than two years ago. "It is hitting us hard, very hard," the 80-year-old told AFP of inflation that officially reached 39 percent last year, but is likely much, much higher. In 2021, the one-party communist government moved to end parallel currencies in Cuba, phasing out a convertible

peso that was pegged to the dollar, leaving only the regular, weaker peso, or CUP. Since then, the currency has fallen from 24 to an official rate of 120 to the dollar. On the black market the rate is 180. To compensate for the currency devaluation, the government two years ago raised all salaries and pensions by 450 percent. But then, "prices... exploded and salaries did not follow," Castellanos told AFP. According to official figures, inflation -- which has several countries in Latin America

and elsewhere in its grips -- reached 70 percent in import-dependent Cuba in 2021 and 39 percent in 2022. But Pavel Vidal, a Cuban economist with the Javeriana University of Cali in Colombia, said real inflation was five to six times higher. "Real inflation in 2022 exceeded 200 percent, one of the highest in the world," Vidal said, citing his own calculations. Before 2021, said Vidal, there was no such thing as a consumer price index in Cuba, making comparisons difficult.

## L'Oreal buys skincare brand Aesop in US\$2.5bil deal

PARIS (Agencies): L'Oreal announced Tuesday the signing of an agreement with Brazil's Natura & Co to acquire its Australian luxury cosmetics brand Aesop in a deal valued at US\$2.53 billion. The Aesop brand posted sales of US\$537 million in 2022, according to a statement. "Aesop taps into all of today's ascending currents and L'Oreal will contribute to unleash its massive growth potential, notably in China and travel retail," L'Oreal CEO Nicolas Hieronimus said in the statement.

"We have great confidence that Aesop will join the L'Oreal Luxe Billionaire brands club and therefore contribute significantly to the growth of the division in the years to come," said Cyril Chapuy, president of the group's luxury division L'Oreal Luxe, adding that he looked forward to welcoming Aesop CEO Michael O'Keeffe and his teams. The L'Oreal Luxe division, which includes brands such as Lancome, Yves Saint Laurent and Giorgio Armani, was the group's top perform-

er for the second consecutive year in 2022, with sales climbing 18.6% to €14.6 billion (US\$15.9 billion). Natura chief executive Fabio Barbosa said "the divestment of Aesop marks a new development cycle for Natura & Co". "With a strengthened financial structure and a deleveraged balance sheet, Natura & Co, exercising strict financial discipline, will be able to sharpen its focus on its strategic priorities, notably our investment plan in Latin America," Barbosa said.

## Australia pauses rate hikes amid economic uncertainty

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's central bank left interest rates on hold Tuesday, pausing a series of sharp hikes that have drawn criticism from homeowners. The Reserve Bank of Australia held borrowing costs at 3.6%, ending a run of 10 successive rate hikes aimed at taming inflation. Governor Philip Lowe said the pause would allow the bank to take stock of previous increases and a global outlook that remains "subdued". "The recent banking system problems in

the US and Switzerland have resulted in volatility in financial markets and a reassessment of the outlook for global interest rates," Lowe said. The news gave a boost to stocks, with the S&P/ASX 200 rising 0.2% in the afternoon. The RBA has come under fire from homeowners who have seen average monthly mortgage repayments skyrocket. Australians are forking out an extra A\$250 (US\$169) every week to meet the repayments on an average mortgage of about A\$600,000

(US\$407,000). Household inflation in Australia currently sits around 6.8% -- down from 7.8% in December but still stubbornly above the central bank's target of between two and 3%. Lowe said, "some further tightening of monetary policy may well be needed to ensure that inflation returns to target". Australia, like most countries fighting inflation, faces a delicate balancing act to bring prices down without stifling economic growth and sparking a recession.

## Adani JV in talks for first dollar loan since Hindenburg

NEW DELHI (Agencies): A joint venture of India's Adani group is in talks with about half a dozen banks for a loan of about US\$220 million, which will be its first since short-seller Hindenburg released a damaging report on it this year, Bloomberg News reported on Tuesday. Data centre provider Adani-

ConneX, a joint venture with Virginia-based EdgeConneX, will use the money for capital expenditure, with a five-year tenor under discussion, the news agency reported citing people familiar with the matter. The loan may be signed in the next few weeks, the report added. The Adani group declined comment to

Bloomberg News. The group did not immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment. Hindenburg's report released on Jan 24 eroded more than US\$100 billion in the value of shares in Adani group of companies and forced it to scale back some of its aggressive expansion plans.

## ADB sees Pakistan's economic recovery with robust reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Asia Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday said Pakistan's economy continued to face strong headwinds but it had the potential to 'bounce back' with robust macroeconomic and structural reforms. "Pakistan's economy continues to face strong headwinds while last year's catastrophic floods have exacerbated the economic and financial challenges" said Country Director ADB Yong Ye in a news release while issuing an Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2023, flagship economic report. "Yet, with a history of resilience in the face of adversity and depending on a fast return to stability twinned with robust macroeconomic and structural reforms, Pakistan can bounce back.

ADB is committed to continuing to support Pakistan's economic recovery and development plans," he added. The country economic growth is expected to slow in FY2023 (ends June 30, 2023) in the wake of last year's devastating floods, ballooning inflation, a current account deficit, and an ongoing foreign exchange crisis, ADB report said. Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to slow to 0.6% in FY2023 from 6% last fiscal year as the economy struggles to recover. Growth is forecast to rise to 2% in FY2024, assuming the resumption of macroeconomic stability, implementation of reforms, post-flood recovery, and improving external conditions.

## Means of production prices fall in China

BEIJING (APP): Most of the capital goods in China posted lower prices in mid-March compared with early March, official data showed Tuesday. Of the 50 goods monitored by the government, which include seamless steel tubes, gasoline, coal, fertilizer, and some agricultural products mainly used for processing, 11 posted rising prices, 37 registered lower

prices and two remained unchanged, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Hog prices dropped 4.4 percent in mid-March to 15.1 yuan (about 2.2 U.S. dollars) per kg, NBS data showed. The figures, released every 10 days, are based on a survey of nearly 2,000 wholesalers and distributors in 31 provincial-level regions across the country.

## Trade deficit narrows by35.51% in 9 months of FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 35.51 percent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The trade deficit during July-March (2022-23) was recorded at \$22.900 billion against the deficit of \$35.509 billion in July-March (2021-22), a decline of 35.51 percent. The exports during the period were recorded at \$21.046 billion against \$23.350 billion last year, showing a decline of 9.87 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 25.34

percent falling from \$58.859 billion last year to \$43.946 billion during the current fiscal year. On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 14.76 percent and were recorded at \$2.367 billion in March 2023 against the exports of \$2.777 billion in March 2022. The imports also decreased to \$3.828 billion from \$6.407 billion in March 2022, showing negative growth of 40.25 percent. On a month-on-month basis, the exports during March 2023 however increased by 8.03 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.191 billion in February 2023.

## Tokyo stocks close higher after US gains

TOKYO (Agencies): Tokyo shares closed higher on Tuesday, helped by gains on Wall Street, though investors were increasingly cautious ahead of key US jobs data due later this week. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.35 percent, or 99.27 points, to 28,287.42, while the broader Topix index rose 0.25 percent, or 5.08 points, to end at 2,022.76. The dollar fetched 132.72 yen in Asian trade, against 132.35 yen in New York on Monday. The Tokyo market started with gains on sound US shares, "but the upward energy soon lost steam", said strat-

egist Minami Koura of Daiwa Securities. "Blue-chip trading lacked a sense of direction ahead of the US jobs data for March due on Friday," she noted. Shipping firm Kawasaki Kisen rallied 3.40 percent to 3,070 yen, and its rival Mitsui O.S.K. Lines added 2.29 percent to 3,345 yen. Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing rose 1.03 percent to 29,970 yen. Energy developer Inpex gained 1.29 percent to 1,493 yen. Hitachi gained 1.13 percent to 7,442 yen, and Olympus climbed 1.73 percent to 2,411 yen, while Sony Group slipped 0.12 percent to 12,015 yen.

## Oil market surges on shock output cuts

LONDON (Agencies): World oil prices soared Monday after several top producers led by Saudi Arabia sprang surprise output cuts despite already angering the United States with a similar move last year. Crude futures surged almost eight percent at one stage, a day after multiple members of the OPEC+ exporters' alliance unexpectedly slashed production by a total of more than one million barrels per day. The shock reduction will start in May and last until the end of the year, with OPEC+ saying Monday it involves Algeria, Gabon, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It came on top of a decision from Russia,

also an OPEC+ member, to extend a cut of 500,000 barrels per day. The oil cartel had already angered Washington in October by slashing production by two million barrels per day. At the time, the White House accused OPEC+ of "aligning with Russia", saying the cuts would boost Moscow's revenue and undermine Western sanctions imposed over its invasion of Ukraine. Russia's war on Ukraine stoked inflation as it sent energy prices soaring last year, but crude prices have fallen since then. OPEC+ said in a statement on Monday that Sunday's move was a "precautionary measure aimed at supporting the stability of the oil market".

## HK's workforce sees its biggest drop in almost 40 years

HONG KONG (Agencies): Hong Kong's labour market has seen its sharpest drop on record, underscoring the city's challenges with an ageing population and outflow of talent. The Asian hub's working population fell by 94,100, down 2.4% in 2022, according to data released Monday by the Census and Statistics Department. This is the largest labour plummet since the government began keeping records in 1985. Hong Kong is running an uphill battle as the government seeks to kick-start an economy that recorded its third an-

nual contraction in four years. Tens of thousands of people, including lawyers and bankers, left the city following the national security law and strict pandemic curbs. A manpower shortage will affect services for the public and the city's competitiveness, Hong Kong chief executive John Lee said at a daily press conference on Tuesday. Lee has made attracting talent a key priority for his administration. Last October, he started a global talent programme that includes a two-year visa plan for high-income workers and top university graduates.



Russians, Belarusians set to return at world taekwondo championships

LAUSANNE (Agencies): Russian and Belarusian taekwondo athletes are set to compete at next month's world championships after the sport's global governing body said it would allow them back as neutrals following the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) guidance. The IOC issued recommendations last week for athletes from the two countries to return to international competition since their ban last year in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow



calls a "special military operation". Table tennis, fencing and judo are the other Olympic sports which have readmitted Russians and Belarusians as

neutrals. World Taekwondo said a review committee will oversee a verification process to "ensure strict neutrality" of individual athletes and support personnel after its ruling council met remotely for an extraordinary meeting on Monday. The South Korea-based body added that it would follow guidelines established by the IOC, which said athletes who support the war, or are contracted to their countries' military or national security agency should be excluded.

Stellini, Spurs settle for a point against Everton

MANCHESTER (Agencies): Up by both a goal and a player, Tottenham Hotspur should never have allowed an equaliser in their 1-1 draw with Everton on Monday, interim manager Cristian Stellini said. "The approach of the game was good... The only problem?" Stellini said. "When you find the way to score, and you are leading the game 1-0, you have one extra player, you have to be much more lucid in the way you keep the ball." The draw against a team which



is battling to avoid relegation was a disappointment for Stellini in the Spurs' first match since manager Antonio Conte was sacked. Harry Kane scored a penalty in the 68th minute

after Michael Keane brought down Cristian Romero in the box. Keane made up for his blunder in emphatic fashion with a blistering goal in injury time, sending Spurs home with just a point in their race for a top-four finish. "We didn't lead the game with the ball," Stellini said. "After the red card, we had the chance to control the game better than we did. And you have to do it with the ball, because you have one extra player and you have to lead the game.

Ferguson gets medal 40 years after Aberdeen's famous European win

LONDON (Agencies): Alex Ferguson is already known as one of the greatest managers in football history but the Scot will have to make room in his trophy cabinet for one more medal that is set to be awarded 40 years after he guided Aberdeen to European glory. Before Ferguson became a serial winner with English side Manchester United, where he won 13 Premier League titles and two Champions League trophies among



other honours, he managed Aberdeen from 1978 to 1986. His greatest success at the Scottish club came when they beat Real Madrid in extra

time in the final of the European Cup Winners' Cup in May 1983. However, only the starting 11 and five substitutes received winners' medals on the night in Gothenburg. Uefa have now agreed to provide six additional medals, with Ferguson the first name on the list. "It's a great honour to be receiving this medal and I am grateful to everyone who has worked so hard to make this happen," Ferguson, 81, said in a statement.

Svitolina loses at Charleston Open in first match as a mom

CHARLESTON (Agencies): Two-time Grand Slam semifinalist Elina Svitolina did not exactly ease her way back in her first match as a mother: Her return after more than a year away from the tennis tour was a back-and-forth three-setter lasting 2 hours, 46 minutes at the Charleston Open on Monday. Svitolina — ranked as high as No. 3 in the past and currently No. 1,081 — could not quite pull out a victory, ceding the last two games and losing 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-4 to Yulia Putintseva on the main sta-



dium's green clay on a cloudy, breezy day. "Physically, it was not easy for me," said Svitolina, a 28-year-old from

Ukraine. "It showed, I think, that I'm not at my best, but I'm getting there." She felt goosebumps when the crowd roared to mark her entrance. There were her familiar big-cut forehands. Her customary visor. And the unmistakable competitiveness displayed by clenched fists and yells of "Let's go!" "It's very nice to have her back. She's always been super nice and an inspiration for me, because she was a warrior on court, a fighter, and I love these kind of players.

Empoli earn first win since January in Serie A

MILAN (Agencies): Empoli earned their first win since January when they beat fellow struggler Lecce 1-0 in Serie A on Monday. Francesco Caputo converted a 62nd-minute penalty kick to end a four-match losing run and lift Empoli 12 points above the bottom three. Lecce were four points below the Tuscan side after a fifth straight defeat. Kickoff was delayed for an hour after a small fire started in the Empoli dressing room because of a short circuit. It was swiftly brought



under control but the teams were evacuated and the fire service arrived to ensure it was safe for the match to

go ahead. Perhaps affected by that incident, the match got off to a sluggish start and the only real chance of the first half was when Lecce goalkeeper Vladimiro Falcone pulled off a stunning save to fingertip Caputo's long-range effort over the bar, just before halftime. Empoli broke the deadlock after Fabiano Parisi ran into the area and was clumsily barged over by Lecce midfielder Morten Hjulmand. Caputo powerfully placed the resulting penalty down the middle.

WWE, Endeavor-owned UFC to merge into \$21bn entertainment giant

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. will combine with Endeavor Group-owned mixed martial arts franchise UFC to form a new, publicly listed entertainment giant valued at about \$21 billion, the companies said on Monday. The deal unites two of the biggest names in wrestling and entertainment and caps a months-long sale process for WWE, overseen by its co-founder and executive chairman Vince McMahon who returned to the company's board in January. "This is a once-in-a-life-



time opportunity to bring together two leading pure-play sports and entertainment companies," Endeavor

CEO Ari Emanuel said in an investor presentation, describing the deal as a "transformational step" for Endeavor. Emanuel said he would capitalize on Endeavor's expertise in securing media deals, sponsorships and new forms of distribution to fuel growth at the new company, which he will lead as chief executive officer while continuing in his role at Endeavor. McMahon will retain his role in the new company, which will be majority owned by Endeavor with a 51 percent stake, while WWE investors will own the rest.

Olympic champion Lee targets Paris 2024 despite kidney issue

FORT WORTH (Agencies): Olympic champion Sunisa Lee said is focusing on her health and recovery after her college gymnastics career was cut short by a kidney problem, but she still intends to compete for a spot on the U.S. team for next year's Paris Games. Lee, who won the all-round gold in Tokyo, had said in November that 2023 would be her final



NCAA season at Auburn University as she planned a return to training at

elite level in preparation for her second Olympics. On Monday, the 20-year-old wrote on Twitter that she had been dealing with a health related issue involving her kidneys. "It's been challenging to end my Auburn career early, but I am thankful for all of the love and support," she said. "I will not stop pursuing my dreams for a bid to Paris in 2024.

Australian rugby star Jarryd Hayne convicted of sex assault

SYDNEY (Agencies): Former Australia rugby league star and San Francisco 49er Jarryd Hayne was convicted today of sexual assault in his third trial in the case. The 35-year-old — who made a short-lived attempt to break into the NFL — was found guilty on two counts



of sexual intercourse without consent, New South Wales district court papers showed. Hayne, who denied the charges of sexually assaulting a woman in 2018 at her home in Newcastle, north of Sydney, shook his head as the verdict was read, local reports said.

Fifa strips Peru of U-17 World Cup hosting rights



ZURICH (Agencies): Peru became the second country in recent weeks to be stripped of the right to host a Fifa tournament, after the governing body on Monday said the South American nation had failed to fulfil infrastructure commitments ahead of the under-17 World Cup. Fifa said the U-17 tournament is still set to take place from Nov 10 – Dec 2, adding that its Council will designate a new host. "The move was made given the inability of the host country to fulfil its commitments to completing the

infrastructure required to stage the tournament," Fifa said in a statement. "Despite a very positive working relationship between Fifa and the Peruvian Football Federation (FPF), it has been determined that there is now not sufficient time to secure the required investment and complete the necessary work with the Peruvian government ahead of the tournament start date. "Fifa would like to express its thanks to the FPF for their efforts, and remains open to organising a competition in Peru in the future." The FPF took note of Fifa's statement, before providing further explanation for the decision. "The decision is based on the delays in the start of the execution of the sports infrastructure works ... in addition to the recent weather events in Peru that have caused damage and left many families affected," the FPF said in a statement.

5 things to look out for at the 2023 Masters

AUGUSTA (Agencies): The second week of April is sacrosanct in the calendar of every golfer. As the azaleas and the dogwoods reach their full bloom around the hallowed turf of Augusta National Golf Club, it signals the start of spring in the US as well as the start of the Major season. The Alister MacKenzie-designed course, with inputs from Bobby Jones — one of the most cerebral and celebrated golfers in the history of the game — poses the most devious questions to the elite field that has gathered for the 87th Masters. As is often said, it is a tradition like no other, and as it has done over the years, it will ordain the worthiest, the most prepared and the most resilient golfer come Sunday. With prize money going



through the roof on the PGA Tour and LIV Tour, the Masters champion may not walk away with the biggest cheque in the sport, but then you cannot put a dollar value on the presence of a Green Jacket in the wardrobe. There are various compelling storylines heading into the Masters this week, but here are five that should keep you glued to your devices.

Huskies down San Diego State for fifth NCAA men's basketball crown



HOUSTON (Agencies): The University of Connecticut Huskies overpowered the San Diego State Aztecs 76-59 to win the men's NCAA collegiate basketball crown for the fifth time on Monday. Tristen Newton scored 19 points and Malian power forward Adama Sanogo added 17 as the fourth-seeded Huskies dominated almost from start to finish to close out

the victory at Houston's NRG Stadium. Sanogo was named the tournament's outstanding player after the win. Jubilant Huskies head coach Dan Hurley said his team had played with a point to prove after starting the college season without a ranking. "They buried us before the season, and they buried us in the mid-point — we weren't ranked going into the year, so we had a chip on our shoulder," Hurley said. "But we knew the level we could play at even in those dark times. This means everything." San Diego, who had fought back from a 14-point deficit to win Saturday's semifinal clash with Florida Atlantic, began brightly to lead 8-4 early in Monday's final.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 5, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES**: It might seem like nothing can go right today, but it's all a matter of perspective. Sure, you're experiencing a few setbacks, but if you see them as challenges, you should jump back in the game!  
– **TAURUS**: Your intense energy should make you rather popular today. It's just the sort of thing people are looking for! You may not have time for everyone, but you can choose a few and move on.  
– **GEMINI**: You're slowing down, maybe because you've been running at top speed for a while or because you're starting to question what you see around you. Take all the time you need before moving on.  
– **CANCER**: Use that potent intuition to figure out what to do next. Your feelings of certainty should be on or off with nothing in between, so you will know what's right and what's not very quickly.  
– **LEO**: Watch out for ego conflicts today. You might be one of the fighters! Your ability to sidestep delicate drama is tested, so be ready for an

onslaught of folks with nothing better to do.  
– **VIRGO**: You just can't sit still today even if you're at work or you need to be patient with children! It's a good time to take a walk or look for new opportunities. Something should work out for you.  
– **LIBRA**: You've got to decide between giving too much and giving too little today. It's not fun, but it's essential. Once you've made the call, stick with it and things should start to improve pretty soon.  
– **SCORPIO**: Now is the time for you to tackle seemingly impossible tasks. Your amazing energy should at least help you make the most of them. Your ability to withstand opposition is at an all-time high!  
– **SAGITTARIUS**: The deeper parts of your consciousness are out in force today and might make life a lot more interesting before the day is through. It's a good time to figure out odd problems and make big decisions.  
– **CAPRICORN**: Share your hopes with your family. They are supportive in ways you'd never expect. Things get better and better for you as long as you're as open as possible about what you want to see happen.  
– **ACQUARIUS**: You need to do something big for the community, maybe a donation, maybe some volunteering, or maybe something creative that only you can pull off. Whatever it is, make it the focus of your day!  
– **PISCES**: Slow down negotiations or just say not to any project or proposal that doesn't seem exactly right to you. The details do matter, and your gut check should force all parties to reconsider.



## Swiss court upholds corruption ruling against mining magnate Steinmetz

GENEVA (Agencies): A Swiss appeals court on Tuesday upheld a guilty verdict for corruption for mining magnate Beny Steinmetz, who was sentenced in Geneva two years ago in one of the mining world's most high-profile legal disputes. However, it acquitted him of an earlier sentence for forgery. Steinmetz can appeal the verdict. His lawyer and spokesperson were not immediately available for comment. The ruling followed seven days of hearings in which Steinmetz



and two other defendants challenged an earlier verdict which found they had paid, or arranged payment, of bribes to obtain exploration permits for the

world's richest untapped deposits of iron ore in Guinea and of forging documents to cover it up. The higher court's three judges sentenced Steinmetz to three years' imprisonment of which 18 months must be served. During the appeal, lawyers for Steinmetz called for his full acquittal or, failing that, for the case's closure on the grounds that Switzerland was not the appropriate venue to rule on the case since the alleged crimes were not committed there.

## India's milk imports soar as disease hits local cattle stock



KHEJRI BUJURG (Agencies): Buying milk is getting expensive in India and the price could soon hit an all-time high, forcing the world's biggest producer to step up imports to boost supplies and ease cost of living pressures. Farmers are wrestling with a rare double whammy: a lethal condition called lumpy skin disease in their cows and a drawdown in market-ready cattle stock after the coronavirus pandemic slowed breeding. Milk prices have already jumped more than 15% to 56 rupees (\$0.68) a litre over the past year - the fastest rise in a decade - making it difficult for the government to bring retail inflation below the central bank's target. The soaring prices of milk and other basic goods is expected to become a political issue heading into state elections later this year. "Any upside risk coming from higher milk prices is going to pose an additional challenge," said Upasna Bhardwaj, chief economist at India's Kotak Mahindra Bank. "Since milk has a weightage of 6.6% in the consumer price index, any spike could have a reasonable implication on headline inflation," she said.

## US shrugs off Saudi-led oil production cut



WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): President Joe Biden on Monday shrugged off a sharp output cut by Saudi-led OPEC+ oil producers, while the White House criticized the move but said it would be of limited impact on the US economy. "It's not going to be as bad as you think," Biden told reporters while travelling in Minnesota to promote his economic record. White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters "we don't think that production cuts are advisable at this moment, given market uncertainty." The United States "made that clear," he said, but added: "we're focused on moving ahead here." A group of OPEC+ countries, led by longtime close US ally Saudi Arabia, announced a surprise cut of one million barrels a day in a bid to boost prices.

## Australia bans TikTok on government devices



SYDNEY (AFP/APP): Australia said Tuesday it will ban TikTok on government devices, joining a growing list of Western nations cracking down on the Chinese-owned app due to national security fears. Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said the decision followed advice from the country's intelligence agencies and would begin "as soon as practicable". Australia is the last member of the secretive Five Eyes security alliance to pursue a government TikTok ban, joining its allies the United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

## Virginia teacher shot by 6-yr-old student sues school leaders for \$40 mln

Virginia (Agencies): A Virginia teacher shot by a 6-year-old student on Monday sued school administrators for \$40 million, alleging they ignored warnings from staff and pupils that the boy had a gun. The Jan. 6 attack on Abigail Zwerner in Newport News was unusual among U.S. school shootings given the young age of the assailant and the fact police said the boy shot his first-grade teacher on purpose. The complaint said Richneck Elementary School Assistant Principal Ebony Parker failed in her duty to protect Zwerner despite multiple reports a firearm was on school property and likely in the boy's possession. Parker could not immediately be reached for comment. She resigned after the shooting. Also named as defen-



dants were the Newport News School Board, former schools superintendent George Parker, whom the board fired after the shooting, and former Richneck principal Briana Foster Newton, who was assigned another role in the district. Zwerner said school leaders knew of the student's history of attacks on pupils and teachers and allowed the boy to return to Richneck in 2022 after he was removed for violent behavior.

## Russian drones strike Ukraine's port of Odesa: officials



KYIV (AFP/APP): Russian drones struck the strategic Ukrainian port of Odesa, local authorities said in the early hours of Tuesday, adding that "damage" had been recorded. "The enemy has just struck Odesa and the Odesa district with attack UAVs," local authorities said in a statement on Facebook, referring to unmanned aerial vehicles. "There is damage," the statement said

without providing further details. Citing the head of the Odesa district military administration, Yuriy Kruk, the statement said Ukraine's air defence forces were at work and warned of a possible second wave of attacks. No other details were immediately provided. The Black Sea port of Odesa was a favourite holiday destination for many Ukrainians and Russians before President Vladimir Putin sent troops into pro-Western Ukraine in February last year. Since the start of the invasion, Odesa has been bombed several times by Russian forces. In January, the United Nations cultural agency UNESCO designated the historic centre of Odesa a World Heritage in Danger site.

## UN chief urges action to rid world of landmines that continue to kill innocent people

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Landmines still lay hidden in nearly 70 countries that continue to kill or maim innocent people, despite the destruction of millions of booby traps globally by UN personnel over the past two decades, the world body said Monday. Marked annually on April 4, the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, draws awareness to why landmines are one of the most insidious and indiscriminate weapons of war. The latest estimates show that in 2021, more than 5,500 people were killed or maimed by landmines, most of them were civilians, half of whom were children. More than two decades after the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty, about sixty million people in nearly 70 coun-



tries and territories still live with the risk of landmines on a daily basis. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), created by the treaty, launched the campaign "Mine Action Cannot Wait" to mark the International Day, as countries like Angola, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Vietnam, continue to suffer from decades of landmine contamination. Landmines can lie dormant for years or even decades until they are triggered, it was pointed out.

## Average temperatures in March hit record high in northern to western Japan



TOKYO (Xinhua/APP): Japanese weather officials said most regions in Japan logged record-high average temperatures for March this year. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), average temperatures in checkpoints from northern to western Japan were higher than the norm by 2 to 3

degrees Celsius, making this March the warmest since record-keeping began in 1946. The figures were higher in 114 checkpoints out of 153 across the country. By region, the average temperatures in northern and eastern Japan were up 3.4 degrees, a record high, while in western Japan, the rise of 2.6 degrees tied the record of March 2021. The average temperatures in the northern cities of Sapporo and Sendai in March were 3.8 degrees higher than the norm, while the figures in central Tokyo and Nagoya were 3.5 degrees higher, and in Osaka 3.1 degrees, and Fukuoka 2.8 degrees.

## Brazil creates rights medal named after Black writer, replacing princess

BRASILIA (Agencies): Brazil's leftist government on Monday abolished a human rights medal that former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro had named after the daughter of the country's last monarch, replacing it with a prize named after a Black writer and abolitionist. The medal will now be named after Luiz Gama, who was a leader of the movement to abolish slavery in Brazil in the 19th Century. When slavery was finally abolished in 1888, Brazil was a



monarchy ruled by the Braganca family of Portuguese origin, but the monarch was ill, so his daughter Isabel signed the abolition decree.

## Former New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern to help tackle online extremism



MELBOURNE (Agencies): Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern will help tackle violent extremism online and will also be on the board of an environmental prize set up by Prince William as she look ahead to a life after politics. Ardern stepped down as prime minister in January saying she had "no more in the tank" to lead the country and would also not seek re-election to parliament. She is due to give her final speech in parliament on Wednesday. Ardern, who became the youngest female leader in the world when she won power in 2017 at the age of 37, will serve as an unpaid special envoy for the Christchurch Call, an initiative she co-founded in 2019 to bring together countries and technology companies to combat extremism, the government said. Attacks on two mosques in Christchurch,

New Zealand's second-largest city, in March 2019 killed 51 people dead and wounded 40. The white supremacist gunman who carried out the assault live-streamed part of it on Facebook. "The Christchurch Call is a foreign policy priority for the government and Jacinda Ardern is uniquely placed to keep pushing forward with the goal of eliminating violent extremist content online," her replacement as prime minister, Chris Hipkins, said in a statement. "Terrorist and violent extremist content online is a global issue, but for many in New Zealand it is also very personal."

## Two civilians killed in Israeli strike on Syria: state media

DAMASCUS (AFP/APP): Two Syrian civilians were killed in an Israeli air strike Tuesday, state media reported the fourth such attack on government-held areas of the war-torn country in less than a week. "At 00:15 (2115 GMT Monday) the Israeli enemy carried out an air strike... and the attack resulted in the death of two civilians," state news agency SANA said, quoting a military source. The strike came from the direction of "the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting some points in the vicinity of Damascus and the southern region," adding that air defence intercepted "most of" the missiles. During more than a decade of civil war in Syria, Israel has launched hundreds of air strikes on Syrian territory, primarily targeting Iran-backed forces and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters as well as Syrian army positions. SANA had earlier reported "an explosion heard in the vicinity of Damascus". The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor gave the same civilian death toll.

## F-35 supply chain too risky for next war, general says

NATIONAL HARBOR, MARYLAND (Agencies): The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter will need a more resilient supply chain to ensure the military can keep it flying in a future, highly contested war, the Air Force officer in charge of the program said Monday. The F-35 program was set up with a "just in time" supply chain, where parts arrive right before they're needed and little inventory is stockpiled, Lt. Gen. Michael Schmidt, the program executive officer, said during a panel discussion at the Navy League's Sea Air Space conference being held this week in National Harbor, Maryland. In the private sector, Schmidt said, that kind of efficient supply chain works well for keeping costs low. But in a future war involving highly contested environments, it could lead to disaster, he said.

## Swedish court overturns police decision to ban Qur'an burnings

STOCKHOLM: A Swedish court Tuesday overturned a police decision to ban two Qur'an burning protests, saying security risk concerns were not enough to limit the right to demonstrate. The "police authority has not had sufficient support for its decisions," judge Eva-Lotta Hedin said in a statement, referring to planned protests outside the Turkish and Iraqi embassies in Stockholm.

## Ex-world champion Khan handed two-year ban for doping

London (AFP/APP): Former light-welterweight world champion Amir Khan has been handed a two-year ban from all sport after testing positive for a prohibited substance, UK Anti-Doping said on Tuesday. Khan, 36, returned a positive result for the anabolic agent ostarine following his loss to Kell Brook in Manchester in February 2022. Ostarine is a drug designed to have similar effects to testosterone.

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