



www.thekhybermail.com

Chief Editor: Rizwan Inayat



-Your Source for Alternate News-

Pages 8 Price: Rs. 25/-

Vol 11, No 181 - Thursday 6 April 2023 Ramadan 15, 1444 A.H.

Editor: Omer Rizwan

## Clashes erupt as Israel police enter flashpoint Jerusalem mosque

- Officers stormed the mosque at dawn, beat and arrested dozens of worshippers, damaged a medical clinic, and blocked ambulances

- There have been calls by Jewish extremist groups to slaughter goats at the compound as part of the Passover feast that began on Wednesday evening

**RAMALLAH (Agencies):** Israeli police raided Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on Wednesday, leading to increased tensions in the Palestinian territories. According to reports, officers severely beat and arrested numerous worshippers injured around 50 people, and prevented ambulances from reaching the site. The Palestinian Red Crescent stated that its teams had dealt with 12 injuries during clashes near the mosque and outside the city walls. Additionally, three people were hospitalized, and 25 people with injuries were arrested but later released from Israeli detention centers. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third-holiest site in Islam, and the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah are the holiest.

Israeli military and police have often interfered with Taraweeh prayers offered by large numbers of people during Ramadan. Mean-



while, Jewish extremist groups have called for slaughtering goats at the compound as part of the Passover feast, leading to Muslim worshippers staying in the mosque to pray and prevent the settlers from carrying out their plans. Israeli authorities have closed the Palestinian Territories until Saturday midnight due to the Passover holiday, which forced Muslim worshippers to remain at the mosque to protect it or pray. On Wednesday, Israeli police arrested two settlers who intended to offer a sacrifice for Passover. The police stated that they had arrested masked individuals, stone-throwers, and individuals suspected of desecrating the mosque.

Jordan, which has custodianship over Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, called on Israeli authorities to remove the police and special forces from the holy site. The Islamic Awqaf Department in Jerusalem, which be-

longs to Jordan, said that Israeli police deliberately violated the site's sanctity and appealed to Jordan's King Abdullah to ensure that such attacks and incursions end.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh condemned the actions and referred to them as a process of "Judaization" of Al-Aqsa Mosque by preventing Muslims from praying in it. The Palestinian presidency warned that crossing red lines at holy places would lead to a major escalation, and various countries and organizations, including Kuwait, Iran, Egypt, the Arab League, Qatar, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Türkiye, condemned Israel's crack-down.

Tor Wennesland, the UN's special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, expressed his concern over the apparent beating of Palestinians by Israeli security forces and a large number of arrests.

## Defendant Trump slams criminal charges as 'insult to our country'



**PALM BEACH (AFP/APP):** Donald Trump offered a full-throated defense of his conduct Tuesday in his first public remarks since being charged over hush money payments to a film star, blasting the criminal prosecution as "an insult to our country." Hours earlier the 76-year-old former US president pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts in a dramatic hearing in New York that transfixed the nation -- and began the countdown to the first-ever criminal trial of an American president. "I never thought anything like this could happen in America -- never thought it could happen," Trump told an audience of several hundred donors, political allies and other supporters after returning to Mar-a-Lago, his beachfront mansion in southern Florida.

## China, Pakistan to set up medical cooperation



**BEIJING (APP):** Dr Muhammad Shahbaz, President of the China-Pakistan Medical Association, and Prof. Zhang Xianbin, Vice President of the Association, led a delegation to the Affiliated Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Guangzhou Medical University on Tuesday to discuss future cooperation between hospitals of the two countries. The two sides launched a fruitful discussion on strengthening academic and cultural exchanges of TCM, medical personnel training, TCM education and training, and TCM theory and research technology innovation. The Belt and Road Initiative provides opportunities to promote the internationalization of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which is a durable and effective method of improving health, said Dr Muhammad Shahbaz, President of the China-Pakistan Medical Association.

## Japan changes aid rules; to fund defence projects of friendly nations

**TOKYO (Reuters):** Japan on Wednesday said it plans to offer friendly nations financial assistance to help them bolster their defences, marking Tokyo's first unambiguous departure from rules that forbid using international aid for military purposes. Japan's Overseas Security Assistance (OSA) will be operated separately from the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programme that for decades has funded roads, dams and other civilian infrastructure projects, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said at a regular news conference. "By enhancing their security and deterrence capabilities, OSA aims to deepen our security cooperation with the countries, to create a desirable security environment for Japan," a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday said. The aid will not be used to buy lethal weapons that recipient countries could use in conflicts with other nations in accordance with the three principles that govern arms exports, according to the statement. Specific projects are expected to include satellite communication and radio systems for maritime surveillance, and preparations are underway for the



first aid to be finalised within this fiscal year, the foreign ministry said. The Philippines and Bangladesh are likely to be included as the first recipients of the aid, a government source involved in talks said to Reuters. Japan is considering providing radars to the Philippines to help it monitor Chinese activity in the contested South China Sea, and also weighing Fiji and Malaysia as potential recipients of the aid, the Yomiuri newspaper reported on Monday. In principle, only developing countries will be eligible to receive the aid given it will be provided as grants, according to the foreign ministry. The decision to expand the scope of international aid to military-related projects follows Japan's announcement in December of a military build up that will double defence spending within five years as it looks to counter China's growing military might in Asia.

## Dutch refinery to feed airlines' thirst for clean fuel

**ROTTERDAM (AFP/APP):** Scaffolding and green pipes envelop a refinery in the port of Rotterdam where Finnish giant Neste is preparing to significantly boost production of sustainable aviation fuel. Switching to non-fossil aviation fuels that produce less net greenhouse gas emissions is key to plans to decarbonise air transport, a significant contributor to global warming. Neste, the largest global producer of SAF, uses cooking oil and

animal fat at this Dutch refinery. Sustainable aviation fuels are being made from different sources such as municipal waste, leftovers from the agricultural and forestry industry, crops and plants, and even hydrogen. These technologies are still developing and the end product is more expensive. But these fuels will help airlines reduce CO2 emissions by up to 80 percent, according to the International Air Transport Association.

## Languages, translation agency introduces Umrah performers to landmarks of Grand Holy Mosque in 50 languages

**MAKKAH (SPA/APP):** The Languages and Translation Agency, represented by the Department of Spatial Guidance at the General Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques Affairs, continued to provide its services within the framework of the Landmarks of the Grand Holy Mosque Initiative. Undersecretary for Languages and Translation Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi said

that the agency offers many initiatives that benefit non-Arabic speakers, including the Landmarks of the Grand Holy Mosque Initiative, where visitors and Umrah performers are briefed in 50 international languages during the tour to the landmarks. The initiative addresses visitors and Umrah performers in different languages to enable and facilitate access to all provided services.

## Africa must 'save the world' from homosexuality – Ugandan president



**KAMPALA (Agencies):** The African continent should lead the way in "saving the world" from homosexuality, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has declared, as he prepares to sign into law an anti-LGBTQ bill passed by the country's parliament last month. The bill, which Amnesty International has slammed as "appalling" and "vaguely worded," imposes the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality" and life imprisonment for the "recruitment, promotion, and funding" of same-sex "activities" in Uganda. The UN high commissioner for human rights has urged the president of the East African country not to sign it into law. But Museveni insisted on Sunday at the first ever Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Family Values and Sovereignty in the Ugandan city of Entebbe that homo-

sexuality is a major threat to humanity. "Africa should provide the lead to save the world from this degeneration and decadence, which is really very dangerous for humanity," he said. "If people of opposite sex stop appreciating one another then how will the human race be propagated?" he inquired while interacting with lawmakers from 22 African countries and the UK who had gathered for the two-day conference. Museveni said the existence of so-called conversion therapy meant that "homosexuality is reversible and curable" and that it "should not be preserved or propagated," but rather "confined." The president of the east African nation also assured the gathering that there will be no comprehensive sexuality education in Uganda, saying that children "need to grow as children."

## France's Macron begins China trip with Ukraine, trade on agenda

**BEIJING (AFP/APP):** French President Emmanuel Macron was due in Beijing on Wednesday for a visit in which he hopes to dissuade China from supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while also forging closer ties with a crucial trade partner. Macron will look to stand firm on Ukraine during talks with his counterpart Xi Jinping and offer "another path" from the directly confrontational tone often heard from Washington, an official from his office told reporters before the three-day trip. The French leader's aims include preserving and rebalancing China's trade ties with Europe as well as safeguarding French interests in the Asia-Pacific region, where Paris sees itself as a player due to its overseas territories and military deployments. On the eve of his visit, Macron discussed his trip to China and support for Ukraine during a phone call with US President



Joe Biden, the White House said. The two leaders said they want China to help "accelerate" the search for a solution to the war, according to a French diplomatic source. The conversation showed the "common will of France and the United States to engage the Chinese to accelerate with us the end of the war in Ukraine and build a lasting peace", the source said. The US and French presidents also hope to "obtain from the Chinese a contribution to the global effort of North-South solidarity" and to build "a common agenda" on climate and biodiversity.

**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.



## Food Authority continues crackdowns in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (FSHFA) on Wednesday continued its crackdown against substandard food items, beverages, junk food and dairy and bakery products across the province and imposed heavy fines on shopkeepers. Following the directives of Director General KP FSHFA Shah Rukh Ali Khan, the teams of food authority visited shops, hotels, bakeries and general stores in Lower Kurram, Chitral, Mardan, Kohat, Tank, Bannu and imposed fines over violations. The officials of the Food Authority visited Sada Bazaar in Lower Kur-

ram, inspected the production unit of a bakery in Haqqani market and fined the unit for violation of hygiene rules and non-compliance to the food safety SOPs. Similarly, in Dinin Bazaar, Lower Chitral, the food authority confiscated a large quantity of mislabelled and hazardous packets of junk food and also fined a bakery for using non-food grade chemicals. During an inspection of various shops, bakeries and restaurants in Garhi Kapura area of the district, the FSHFA team found expired soft drinks and other bakery items and imposed heavy fines on the owners. Meanwhile, the Food Authority con-

ducted raids on the main highway road and adjacent areas in Kohat and took samples of milk from different dairy shops and tankers during the blockade and fined the accused of adulteration. Two bakeries were also fined over unhygienic conditions. In Tank district, milk samples were tested from various milk shops and three shopkeepers were fined for adulteration of milk with water and issued notices to others due to the low amount of fat in milk. Whereas, various general stores and wholesalers were inspected in district Bannu and a heavy fine was imposed on different charges.

## KP IGP orders probe into substandard bullet proof jackets, helmets

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan on Wednesday ordered an inquiry into substandard bulletproof jackets and helmets that claimed the lives of two police constables in a terrorist attack in Kohat. Presiding over a high-level police

meeting at the office of Regional Police Officer, Kohat he took a detailed briefing from the concerned police officers about the target killing of the two police constables in Tapi area. He checked the bulletproof jackets and helmets of the constables through which the bullets penetrated

in a terrorist attack and resulted in the martyrdom of two police constables. The police chief also visited Police Station CTD Kohat Region and reviewed the FIR registered regarding the incident of the martyrdom of police personnel and the preliminary progress made so far.

## Over 20 shopkeepers held for profiteering

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration in a grand operation against profiteers on Wednesday arrested more than 20 shopkeepers and butchers for profiteering. Assis-

tant Commissioner Peshawar Syeda Zainab Naqvi visited different markets in Tehkal and Tehkal Payan and found the butchers were not complying with the government price list while other shopkeepers were also selling food items at expensive prices. The AC along with a heavy

contingent of local police conducted a grand operation in Tehkal and Tehkal Payan and arrested 20 shopkeepers for selling meat, vegetables, fruits and other edible items at high prices. She instructed the other shopkeepers to follow the official price list and avoid profiteering.

## One died,six injured in Kohat

PESHAWAR (APP): One man died while six others got injured in Mohalla Pir Abdullah Shah area, here on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Noor Al Hasan, son of Jameel Ahmed while the other six namely Jameel Ahmed, Mohammad Imad, Khalil Ahmed, Bilal, Shakeel Ahmed,

and Raheel Ahmed sustain injuries in the incident. The culprits involved in the incident were cousins and had been embroiled in a long-standing dispute over the ownership of the shop in the main market. The body of the deceased and the injured have been shifted to the hospital.

## KP Minister of Public Health & P&D Syed Hamid Shah visited E-Hujra office

PESHAWAR (Staff Report): KP Minister of Public Health & P&D Syed Hamid Shah visited E-Hujra office and meet Asif Qureshi, Chairman E-hujra of Bannu Gul. Detailed discussions were held on the core issues related to sewerage sanitation and water supply of Bannu Gul. Minister Syed Hamid Shah assured Chairman E-hujra of his full cooperation in solving the problems of Bannu city.



The Chairman E-hujra Asif Qureshi thanked Minister Syed Hamid Shah for his visit and expressed hope for continued help and support for each other in the future as well.

## KP IGP visits bereaved families of martyred police constables

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan on Wednesday visited the bereaved families of martyred police constables Mohammad Ayaz and Qasim Khan and offered Fatiha for the martyred souls. The police chief expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolence to the families of the martyrs and recited Fatiha for the martyrs and reiterated his resolve to provide all kinds of help and support to the families of the martyrs. He assured the heirs of the martyrs that the families of the martyrs will

be taken care of at every forum and all the resources would be utilized for their welfare. He paid tribute to the great sacrifice of the martyrs and said that the cowardly actions of the miscreants cannot demoralize the police force, adding that the sacrifice of every martyr gives a new determination to the police force to fight against terrorists more bravely. RPO Kohat Sher Akbar Khan, District Police Officer Kohat Prince Umar Abbas Babar, SPCTD Kohat Region Muhammad Imran Khan, and other police officials were present on the occasion.

## KPRA briefs CM Advisor,Chief Secretary on service tax collection processes

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Energy & Power and Finance, Himayat Ullah Khan, and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, were given a detailed briefing on the roles and functions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) on Tuesday. The meeting, which took place in the provincial capital Peshawar, included discussions on improving service tax collection

processes, with all relevant officials in attendance. During the briefing, the KPRA officials highlighted the challenges they face in collecting service tax and presented proposals for streamlining the collection process. Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Himayat Ullah Khan emphasized the importance of effective tax collection for the development of the province and stressed the need for collaboration between different departments to achieve this goal.

## KP Info dept recommends stoppage of salaries to 1,109 social media influencers recruited in PTI's tenure

PESHAWAR (APP):The Department of Information and Public Relations Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has asked the finance department to stop the payment of salaries to 1,109 Social Media Influencers (SMIs) recruited during the previous PTI government for its publicity at the expense of the public exchequer. A letter signed by the planning officer of the Informa-

tion and Public Relations Department to the provincial secretary of finance states that after the dissolution of the provincial assembly and setup of interim government in the province, whose constitutional responsibility is to hold the free, fair and impartial election, the subject project titled ‘Establishment of Social Media Participatory Platforms

D.I.KHAN (APP): The station house officer (SHO) of City Police station was suspended and a departmental inquiry ordered into the matter of the alleged torture on a citizen at free flour distribution point. According to a police spokesman, District Police Officer (DPO) Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani has taken immediate notice of the incident and

suspended City Police Station SHO Syed Qamar. Moreover, Sub-Inspector Malik Sajid from police lines has been appointed as the new SHO of the City Police Station. It is worth to be mentioned here that a citizen was allegedly tortured by the SHO at a free flour distribution point here at Govt Higher Secondary school No-4 on Tuesday.

## Rain and snowfall continues on the hills of Kaghan and Naran

KAGHAN (APP): The Kaghan and Naran hills continued to experience heavy rain and snowfall since last week and once again the glacier blocked the Mansehra Naran Jalkhad (MNJ) road. According to details, during the current spell of rain and snowfall, the temperature has gone below zero in Babusar Top, Kaghan and Naran valleys where up to 10 inches of snow has fallen on the hills while other areas

are receiving continuous heavy rain. The MNJ road, which was opened a few days ago, has been blocked once again due to landslides by glaciers near Kaghan. Yesterday, apart from Shogran Road, many other connecting roads of Tehsil Balakot were also closed due to landslides. Similarly, other areas of Hazara Division, especially Abbottabad, Butgram and Kohistan are also facing problems of floods and landslides.

## Citizens stage protest against overcharging in public transports

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Citizens of the city on Wednesday staged a protest against the public transporters, who are still charging extra fares despite the issuance of revised fare lists by the Regional Transport Authority (RTA). In this regard, a delegation of locals led by a member of the Abbottabad Cantonment board (ACB) called on the Additional SP Traffic Warden Abbottabad and discussed the matter of overcharging on local routes. Citizens informed SP Traffic Warden that after the issuance of revised fares and reduction of midway fare, Suzuki driv-

ers refused to charge new fares, and “quarrels between commuters and Suzuki drivers have become a routine matter”. They demanded immediate enforcement of revised fares which were issued last week and provide relief to the citizens as soon as possible. According to the new fare lists, a fare of Rs. 20 will be charged for travelling from Abbottabad to Sethi Mosque, Kakul Main Gate, and Dobather. Whereas, Rs. 25 had been set as fare for commuting from Nawanshahr to Bypass Road and Bilal Town to Missile Chowk.

## DC reviews polio vaccination drive

KURRAM (APP): Deputy Commissioner Syed Saif ul islam on Wednesday reviewed the progress of the ongoing polio vaccination drive in the district and visited different areas. The DC along with health department officials and team leaders visited civil dispensaries and district health units and checked polio vaccination records. He addressed the polio

teams and appreciated their dedication and hard work to rid the country of polio. The DC advised them to ensure the vaccination of every child under the age of five and pay special attention to refusal cases. He urged parents to cooperate with the polio teams and get their children vaccinated to protect them from permanent disabilities.

## 95% work on digital census completed in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Work on the digital census continued at a fast pace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 95 percent work has been completed. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics spokesman told APP that work on the digital census has been entered into the last stage in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Up till now, he said that 95 percent of work in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces has been completed. Similarly, 92

percent of work in Sindh, 72 percent in Islamabad and 62 percent in Balochistan were completed. The spokesman said the last date of the digital census has been extended to April 10 so that every person could be registered during the national drive. The spokesman appreciated the cooperation of civil society and the media for creating awareness among the people that help in the fulfilment of the national obligation.

## Second-shift teachers have been waiting for salaries last 8 months

ABBOTTABAD (Agencies): The teachers working in the second shift in the government schools of District Abbottabad on Wednesday saidthat they have not received their salaries for the last eight months. According to the details, teachers and other staff who were recruited in government schools in the district of Abbottabad eight months ago, their salaries have not been released, unfortunately, most of the staff members were unemployed

educated youth who were recruited for the second shift. While talking to the media, teachers said that they had started this job because they were unemployed and due to financial issues, they accepted a fixed salary job and performed the duty for the last eight months and did not receive a single penny during this period. They have demanded the higher authorities to pay the salaries for the last four months so that we can meet our daily expenses.

## Traffic Police constable killed

DIR LOWER (APP): A traffic police constable was shot and injured by an unidentified armed man during his duty at Talash Bajoro Chowk on Wednesday. According to the police spokesman, the suspect fled away from the scene however, the constable identified as Bakht Zameen succumbed to his injuries on way to the hospital. District Police Officer, Dir Payan Tariq Iqbal, reached the spot and started a search operation

to trace the accused. Later, the funeral prayer of the martyred police official was performed at the police line with official honour. Regional Police Officer Malakand Range Nasir Mehmood, DPO Tariq Iqbal, Commander Dir Scouts, and Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir Shaukat attended the funeral. Constable Bakht Zameen belonged to Ouch area of Lower Dir, his two brothers were also serving in the police department.





Courtesy: Pakistan Today



## Agreement signed between the Government of Pakistan, the Government of Italy and Benazir Nahsonuma Programme of the BISP

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 500 million Pak Rupees Agreement was signed between the Government of Pakistan, the Government of Italy and Benazir Nahsonuma Programme of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), for improving the overall health conditions of the children and pregnant and lactating women in the targeted districts of Balochistan covering Jhal Magsi, Khuzdar and Lasbela. The agreement was signed under PIDSA (Pakistan Italy Debt Swap Agreement). The programme will fa-



cilitate 16,000 children under 2 years of age, by providing specialized nutritious food and taking care of immunization and regular health checks of mother and child in the above flood affected districts of Balochistan. The

Agreement was signed by Mr. Islam Zaib, Co-Director PIDSA Pakistan, Mr. Pietro Del Sette, Co-Director PIDSA Italy and Mr. Naveed Akhtar, Director General, Benazir Income Support Programme. The signing ceremony was also witnessed by Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Economic Affairs Division and Mr. Roberto Neccia, Charge d'Affaires, Italian Embassy. The newly appointed Director Mr. Francesco Zatta, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation was also present on the occasion.

## Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal meets with Sun Weidong, reviews Pak-China relations

BEIJING (Agencies): Minister for Planning, Development and Special initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary had a bilateral meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Sun Weidong here on Tuesday. He was accompanied by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Ambassador Moin ul Haque and Embassy officials. The meeting was marked by traditional sentiments of warmth and mutual trust, that form the hallmark of China-Pakistan ties. Acknowledging the timeless and time-tested nature of the bilateral friendship, the two sides reaffirmed the centrality of the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between the two countries. The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including cooperation under China-Pakistan Economic



Cooperation (CPEC), trade, economic and financial cooperation, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people ties, and reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen cooperation on multilateral fora. The minister thanked the Chinese side for its critical support to Pakistan to ease the country's economic difficulties and amidst Covid-19 pandemic. He also conveyed gratitude for China's for its generous support for the recent unprecedented floods in Pakistan.

## DC Orakzai bans use of fire in forest area

KOHAT (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Tayyab Abdullah on Wednesday imposed section 144 in the district for 30 days and banned the use of fire in the forest area to avoid possible fire eruption and loss of the forest. A notification issued here said that the decision has been taken following reports received by the Divisional Forest Officer Orakzai Forest Division about the possibility of forest fires occurring in different areas of the district from April 01 until the onset of the monsoon season. According to the reports, forest fires could be caused by the burning of grass by farmers,

throwing of burning cigarettes by smokers and cooking during picnics by the general public in forests. The ban, which takes effect immediately, prohibits the aforementioned activities in forests to prevent forest fires from occurring. The ban will remain in force for 30 days from April 04, 2023, unless withdrawn or modified. Any person to be found contravening the order would be penalised under section 188 Cr. PC. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Tayyab Abdullah urged the public to cooperate and follow the ban to prevent the occurrence of forest fires in the district.

## Social security officer held over bribery

SARGODHA (APP): Anti corruption Establishment Sargodha (ACE) on Wednesday arrested Assistant Director of social security department in a corruption case. ACE spokesman said on Wednesday that Mudasar Naseer r/o chak 45 SB submitted his application to Regional Director Anti Corruption Sargodha Division Asma Ejaz Cheema in which it was stated that he paid all government taxes while working in the pharmaceutical company, while Farooq Ahmed Bhatti Assistant Director social security demanding Rs 150,000 as bribe and harassing him illegally. He further said in application that Reader of Assistant Director had already taken Rs 20,000 from him. Upon receiving the application, Asma Ejaz Cheema tasked Muhammad Akram circle officer to look into the matter.

## PHP police attained position in service delivery

FAISALABAD (APP): Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) police Faisalabad region attained first position in service delivery across the Punjab. PHP spokesman Sub Inspector (SI) Rizwan Bhatti said here on Wednesday that PHP teams of 8 regions of the Punjab had arrested 918 Proclaimed Offenders and 1214 Court Absconders across the province from December 15 to March 31, 2023 whereas Patrolling teams of Faisalabad region succeeded in nabbing 186 Proclaimed Offenders and 225 Court Absconders during this period. Similarly, PHP teams had checked 636,317 vehicles after receiving complaints through E-police App and recovered 1679 stolen vehicles from December 15, 2022 to March 31, 2023 whereas Patrolling police Faisalabad recovered 334 stolen vehicles after checking 126,976 vehicles during this period in Faisalabad region.

## IRSA releases 94,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 94,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 63,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.14 feet and was 33.14 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 23,800 cusecs while outflow as 7,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1106.00 feet, 56.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 24,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 27,300, 32,900, 39,900 and 13,200 cusecs respectively.

## FESCO issues shutdown program

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown program for Thursday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the program issued by the company, power supply from Allied, Sahil, Model Town, Serena, State Life, Akbar Abad, Eidgah Road, Cres Tex, Jalal Street and Gulshan Colony feeders originating from 132-KV University grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on Thursday (April 06, 2023).

## Launch of international flights major achievement : AirSial chairman



SIALKOT (APP): AirSial Chairman Fazal Jilani has said the launch of international flights after successful domestic operations is a major achievement of the airline. He stated this while addressing a meeting of AirSial Board of Directors (BoDs) held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). He said that in the next phase, flights to Jeddah would be operated from Karachi, Multan and Sialkot while flights to other Gulf countries will also

be operated soon, adding that flights would be started for Manchester and London as well. It should be noted that at the inaugural ceremony at the Allama Iqbal International Airport, executives and board of directors of AirSial saw off passengers for the Lahore-Jeddah first flight on March 29, 2023. On March 30, the AirSial airline started same number of flights from Islamabad-Jeddah. A total of 68 flights are being operating from Pakistan to Jeddah every month.

## Bazaar Launches Bazaar Prime, its Exclusive Distribution Vertical

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Bazaar, Pakistan's leading B2B e-commerce platform for 5M+ businesses, launches Bazaar Prime - its exclusive market distribution arm for retail suppliers and manufacturers. Bazaar's B2B platform provides procurement, fulfilment, digital lending, and supply chain products to retailers and manufacturers in Pakistan. Since its inception two years ago, Bazaar has raised over \$100m in venture financing and has scaled to become the leading tech enabled distributor in the country with the widest footprint across 50 cities and towns. With its deep technology stack, Bazaar provides hundreds of suppliers direct access to underserved merchants across several



categories. On top of its existing marketplace network, infrastructure and technology stack, Bazaar Prime offers exclusive distribution to brands in designated markets. This provides brands a 24/7 ordering capability instead of booking by agents during work hours, greater coverage in their active cities, access to new markets, real-time data insights, increased cost-efficiency and dedicated resources and operational setup.

## NESPAK engaged on Mujahidin Hydropower Project

LAHORE (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) has awarded the "Consultancy Services for Construction of Mujahidin Hydropower Project at Barando River, District Torgarh" in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the joint venture of ACE-NESPAK-BAK-AGES. National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) Managing Director Dr. Tahir Masood told media here on Tuesday that the project aimed to generate 6.95 MW of inexpensive and environmental friendly electricity through the hydropower project. The main objective of the project is to reduce load shedding in the District Torgarh. The consultant's scope of services includes feasibility review, preparation of EPC bidding documents, evaluation and award of EPC contract, contract management, and assisting PEDO in fulfill-

ing the employer's obligations under the contract with EPC Contractor, he explained. Dr Tahir Masood said, the joint venture of ACE-NESPAK-BAK-AGES brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the project. NESPAK, in particular, has a proven track record in hydropower projects, having successfully completed several projects in Pakistan and other countries. The team, he added, is committed to delivering the project to the highest standards and within the specified time frame. "The Mujahidin Hydropower Project is expected to have a significant impact on the local community by providing reliable and affordable electricity. It will also contribute to the country's efforts to achieve its sustainable development goals by increasing the share of renewable energy in its energy mix," he concluded.

## Religious Ministry urges Ministry of Finance to intensify efforts in arranging forex for Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is trying to arrange foreign exchange for all the intending pilgrims who want to perform Hajj through a regular scheme this year. According to official sources, the religious affairs ministry had urged the finance ministry to go the extra mile and provide foreign exchange for all the aspirant pilgrims. Due to this reason, the religious affairs ministry had postponed the Hajj ballot-

ing which was to be held on April 5, they maintained. They said the ministry was expecting maximum participation of overseas Pakistanis in the Sponsorship Hajj Scheme but it could not yield the desired results as only a few thousand people had applied for Hajj through this scheme. They also said there were some difficulties in transferring funds from the world over in foreign currency, otherwise, the ratio of Hajj applicants would have significantly increased.

## Passenger bus overturned after tyre burst on motorway, 10 injured

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least ten passengers were injured when a bus overturned after a tire burst near Shurkot in Punjab on Wednesday. According to details, Rescue sources said the incident occurred on the motorway when the bus dropped the passengers and was taking a turn

back for another trip, ptv news channel reported. Rescue 1122 emergency service added that as a result, 10 persons sustained injuries. Upon receiving the information, rescue teams and motorway police reached the spot and shifted the injured to Tahsil headquarters hospital in Shorkot.

## Dr Ellinor Zeino called on Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Ellinor Zeino Director Regional Programme Southwest Asia at Konard Adenauer foundation based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Wednesday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar. The Konard foundation has been working for years for the promotion of

parliamentary relations and rule of law in Asian countries, said a press release. Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar talked about the Germany-Pakistan relations and the need for strong collaboration in areas of education, student exchange programs, and rule of law in order to foster strong Germany-Pakistan relations.

## 'Immoral syllabus' not acceptable at all costs: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday said immoral syllabus was not acceptable at all costs as it was against our social, cultural and religious norms. Responding to a calling attention notice in Senate, he said the ministry would serve a memo to the Cambridge University Press directing to remove the chapter in question otherwise; it would ban the book being studies in O-Level syllabus from the course book 'Sociology' under the chapter 'The Family' with sub-heading 'Same Sex Family'. The minister assured that its report would be shared with this august house after taking all cordal formalities. He said he, with the help of all stakeholders, designed a 'national curricula' in a bid to remove deprivation among the students of public and private education institutions. He further said in many a



country, the Federal Board was being preferred compared to any other advanced country's syllabus. Raising the issue on the floor of the house, Senator Mohsin Aziz said through such obscene material, the minds of our young generation was being polluted. Being a Muslim, it was our moral as well as religious obligation not to provide such education to our children, he said quoting the example of "Qaum-e-Loot and its destruction". He urged the government to monitor the syllabus being taught to the students, particularly in private education institutions for their proper upbringing and to make them a civilized members of the society.

## Over 3.9m free flour bags distributed under Ramazan package

MULTAN (Agencies): Commissioner Multan division, Engineer Aamir Khattak has said that over 3.9 million free flour bags had been distributed under the Ramazan package across the division so far. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting to review the free flour Ramazan package here on Wednesday. He said that the complete flour quota had been delivered to various families due to better arrangements as officials and staff of

different departments including police, civil defence and others were working efficiently. Commissioner directed the food department officials to resolve the poor flour quality complaints and said that the Punjab government had introduced the ideal Ramazan package for the deserving people. Deputy Commissioner Multan Umer Jehangir, Additional Commissioner Sarfraz Ahmad and other officials were also present in the meeting.

## Death anniversary of renowned Qawwal Ghulam Farid Sabri marked

ISLAMABAD (APP): The death anniversary of renowned Qawwal Ghulam Farid Sabri marked on Wednesday (April 5). Ghulam Farid Sabri along with his brother Maqbool Sabri were known as Sabri Brothers and earned much fame in Qawwali, a pri-

vate news channel reported. "Mera Koi Nahin Hai Tere Siwa", "Bhardo Jholi Meri Ya Muhammad" and "Taa-jdar-e-Haram" are some of their most acclaimed qawwalis. He was born in 1930 in Rohtak, India and died on this day in 1994 in Karachi.



## Farooq Rehmani condemns proposals for religious tourism and corridor in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of J&K People's Freedom League Muhammad Farooq Rehmani on Wednesday strongly condemned proposals for religious tourism and corridor diplomacy along with the Line of Control (LOC) in Azad Jammu & Kashmiri (AJK) and called for a campaign to secure the right of self-determination for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). Rehmani called the proposals for religious tourism

and corridor diplomacy farcical and misleading attempts at irresponsible politics. He warned that if implemented, the proposals for religious tourism and corridor diplomacy would be the last ceremonial nail in the body dispute of IIOJK. He urged the government of IIOJK to adopt a resolution to the deteriorating human rights situation there. He also appealed to Pakistan to kick off an international campaign in the United Nations (UN) in that regard.

## Govt releases Rs 46.326 bln for various water schemes so far in fiscal year 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government had released an amount of Rs 46.326 billion for various water resources schemes under the annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) so far in the current fiscal year 2022-23, said an official data issued by the Planning Commission here on Wednesday. According to details, the government had specified a sum of Rs 97.559 billion for various projects in PSDP 2022-23. Out of the total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 38.172 billion while the foreign aid component was Rs 8.153 billion. A sum of Rs 42.447 billion had been spent on various water-related projects so far. The Ongoing schemes included 13 hydel and 61 water sector projects, whereas the new

projects were only 13 in total. The allocation of ongoing hydel projects included Rs 55,383 million for Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW), Rs 12,083 Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (696 MW), and Rs 12,000 million for Tarbela fifth Extension Hydro Power Project (1,410 MW). Among the ongoing water sector projects, Rs 20,000 million each was allocated for Diamer Basha Dam Project and K-4 Greater Water Supply Scheme (260 MGD), Rs 12,060 million for Mohmand Multipurpose Dam Project, Rs 7,000 million for Diamer Basha Dam Project (Land Acquisition and Re-settlement), and Rs 5,000 each for Nai Gaj Dam Project Dadu (Sindh) and Karachi Canal Project (Phase-I) Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Bolan and Jhal Magsi.

## Pakistani textile merchants explore Chinese market

BEIJING (Agencies): Pakistan has been exporting cotton and yarn to China for 40 to 50 years and now Pakistani textile merchants are trying to develop exports of fabrics and ready-made garments, said Usman Saeed, head of the China operations of a Pakistani textile company. Talking to media at the Intertextile Expo held in Shanghai, Usman said the international textile exhibition provided a platform to showcase Pakistani products. Pakistani exhibitors can also benefit from the state-of-the-art technologies and trends from their Chinese counterparts, he added. Usman hoped that more Chinese enterprises would participate in the upcoming 4th International Textile Expo to be held in Karachi next month for tech-

anical and professional exchanges, CEN reported on Wednesday. There will be products ranging from raw materials to finished goods at the expo that are competitive in price and quality all around the world, he added. Pakistan is a leading textile country with a production capacity spanning the whole industrial chain. Most of its textile products are exported to Europe and America. Usman's company has also contributed to Pakistan's textile exports by manufacturing for international sports brands. Believing that China's large population, with its diverse tastes, could make room for many products, the company started its business in China in 2016 by opening an office in Dongguan, Guangdong.

## Commissioner visits Divisional Public School to review SSC exams arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chattha here on Wednesday visited Divisional Public School, center of Secondary school Certificate (SSC) annual examination and reviewed the arrangements made by board of Intermediate and Secondary education Rawalpindi. The Commissioner visited various examination halls and rooms and inspected the arrangements and the exams holding process. The Commissioner also checked attendance sheets of the students and their roll number slips. "Transparent examination is the first responsibility of all of us," he said

adding, there would be no compromise on the transparency of the examination system. Deputy Commissioners, Additional Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of all the districts were monitoring all the examination centers on daily basis, he informed. Strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the cheating mafia and no one would be allowed to violate the rules, he said and informed that separate raiding teams had been formed to make the monitoring system more effective. He directed the monitoring teams to perform their professional duties without any discrimination.

## Ishaq Dar wins defamation case in UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar has won a defamation case filed against a private TV channel with a court in the United Kingdom over false allegations of "money-laundering, criminal activities, opening fake accounts and running away in Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's plane." The channel from its UK station had aired these allegations leveled by former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Minister Farrukh Habib when Ishaq Dar was about to return to Pakistan to

take over the Finance Ministry in September 2022. In a settlement reached with Ishaq Dar after he initiated defamation proceedings under UK laws, the channel (92 News) issued an apology to Ishaq Dar on its UK channel categorically stating that the allegations of criminal activities made on the channel by PTI leader Farrukh Habib were "completely false, baseless and untrue." The channel apologised to Ishaq Dar stating that it "deeply" regretted airing false allegations by Farrukh Habib.

## Police arrest 12 for possessing illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Amir Khan Niazi conducted raids in different areas and netted 12 accused for possessing illegal weapons. According to a police spokesman, Waris Khan, Naseerabad, R.A.Bazar, Civil Lines, Airport, Wah Cantt, Saddar Wah, Saddar Baroni and Dhamial police rounded up 12 namely Faisal, Irfan, Afaq, Adil, Ihtesham, Anas, Majid, Rafi, Sajid, Abdul Wahab, Kamran, and Amir

Shehzad and recovered 10 pistols 30 bores, a 30 bore rifle and ammunition from their possession. The spokesman informed that Rawalpindi district police in their ongoing operation against professional beggars also arrested 39. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. The SSP said that strict action by the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations against aerial firing and illegal weapon holders would continue.

## Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan increase 17.02% in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 17.02 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$346.522 million during July-February (2022-23) against exports of US \$296.109 million during July-February (2021-22), showing growth of 17.02 percent, SBP data revealed.

## Int'l Day of Sport to be marked tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) will be marked on April 6 across the globe including Pakistan for recognising the power of sport in promoting peace and erasing cultural barriers worldwide. Sport is a positive way of achieving goodwill, healthy competition and cooperation across all cultures. The IDSDP promotes healthy lifestyles and emphasises the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) focus on giving as many people as possible access to sports. It is a day when some of the world's leading sportspeople work together with communities to bring sporting opportunities for enriching lives, particularly children. The IOC and the UN have a long-standing commitment to using sport as a tool for social change and have worked together on many projects over the years. Both organizations have used sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, to bridge cultural understanding and improve education, health, economic and social development.

## Tajikistan's ambassador calls on Khurram Dastgir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Pakistan Mr. Ismatullah Nasruddin called on Federal Minister for Power Division Engineer Khuram Dastgir Khan here on Wednesday. The minister appreciated the mutual cooperation and efforts of the Tajik government in the power sector, said a press release. The Tajik ambassador assured his government's support for innovation in the power sector, it was further said. Khuram Dastgir also extended an invitation to his Tajik counterpart to visit Pakistan through the ambassador.

## Police arrest drug dealer, seize 1.1kg hashish

KARACHI (APP): Police have arrested a drug dealer in a drug smuggling case and recovered 1,100 grams of hashish from his possession. According to District South Police Karachi spokesman, the arrested accused identified as Abdul alias Abdul Jalil was smuggling drugs from Quetta to Karachi. It is worth mentioning here that the name of the suspect was included in the list of wanted drug dealers issued by the authorities concerned. A case has been registered against the arrested accused while further investigation was underway.

## 16 held with contraband

SARGODHA (APP): Police claimed on Wednesday to have arrested 16 criminals from various part of the district and recovered narcotics and illegal weapons from their possession. The teams of different police stations raided and arrested Amir, Aslam, Sajid, Bakr, Zakir, Naveed, Nadeem, Nawaz, Wahab, Shafique, Rafique, Ramzan and other.

## Two killed, four injured in roof collapse

KASUR (APP) :A woman and her daughter were killed, and four others injured when the roof of a house caved in near here on Wednesday. According to the Rescue 1122, the incident occurred in the area of Mandi Usmanwala where the roof suddenly collapsed. On information, the Rescue 1122 reached the spot and recovered the bodied of Mootia Bibi, 35, and her daughter Zammer ,4, from debris.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan also increased 60.49 percent from US \$38.222 million in February 2022, against the exports of US \$61.345 million in same month this year. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan also surge 82.58 percent during February 2023 as compared to the exports of US \$33.598 million in January 2022, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed a decrease of 9.65 percent in the eight months, from US \$ 20.632 bil-

lion to US \$ 18.639 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the period under review were recorded at US \$ 13.540 million against US \$119.328 million last year, showing a decline of 88.65 percent in July-February (2022-23). On a year-on-year basis, the import for Afghanistan witnessed also decreased by 98.89 percent from US \$13.723 million in February 2022, against the imports of US \$0.151 million in February 2023.

## Pesticide company's CEO booked for fake products

MULTAN (APP): A case was registered against the chief executive officer of a pesticide company UDL Karachi as fake pesticides and weed-icides worth Rs 11.5 millions were recovered during a raid in limits of Shujabad Sadar Police. According to the agriculture information department, officers of agriculture department raided and seized pesticides worth Rs 11.5 million at NLC Bypass.

The samples collected during the raid were sent to the lab for analysis. The samples proved fake. The officers of the department, through a trace and track system, also took some other samples the company UDL Karachi. According to secretary agriculture Wasif Khursheed, nobody will be allowed to sell fake pesticides or weed-icides and convey loss not only to farmers but country's economy.

## Baisakhi Mela to start from April 12 at Gurdwara Panja Sahib

ATTOCK (Agencies): Baisakhi Mela celebrations will start from April 12 at Gurdwara Panja Sahib Hassanabdal. More than 10,000 Sikh pilgrims from all over the world, including India will participate in the four-day Baisakhi Mela and perform various religious rituals. The Punjab government has started foolproof security arrangements to protect the Sikh pilgrims. Special trains have been arranged for their arrival and safe return. Sikh pilgrims coming to Panja Sahib include Sikhs living in European countries and America. The main event will be held at Panja Sahib on April 14 and on April 15 the Sikh pilgrims will return to Lahore and Nankana Sahib. Deputy Commissioner Attock, DPO, Assistant Commissioner and other officials will be present to welcome the Sikh pilgrims. DC Attock Rao Atif Raza and DPO Dr Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan held a meeting for arrangements and security in which to provide all facilities including cleanli-

ness, accommodation and anchorage for foolproof security and hospitality of Sikh pilgrims and an action plan was decided. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Chairman of Evacuee Trust will also participate in the main event of Baisakhi Mela. It should be noted that Baisakhi celebrations in Pakistan continue from April 12 to 21. According to the Sikh religion, the festival of Baisakhi marks the beginning of the new year. In this context, Sikhs living all over the world participate in the celebrations held on Baba Guru Nanak. In the sitting room, they read and listen to Granth Sahib with great devotion, while Prasad is cooked inside the Gurdwara and various religious rituals are performed, come to do Tabaruk or Prashad is also distributed during the ceremony which is received by the devotees with great respect. After finishing the ceremony at Gurdwara Panja Sahib, the Sikhs proceed to Lahore and Nankana Sahib.

## Arrangements finalized for Sachal Sarmast Urs

SUKKUR (Agencies): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khairpur, Dr Sharjeel Noor Channa held a meeting at his office on Wednesday to finalize arrangements of annual Urs celebrations of Sachal Sain scheduled from 14th of Ramazan. It was told in the meeting that Chairman, Pakistan People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zaradari would inaugurate the Urs whereas ministers, MNAs and

MPAs would also be invited at different events. The celebrations will comprise events, such as mehfil-e-sama, a national literacy conference at the Daraza Sharif auditorium, mushaira, Sufi Music concert and awards will also be presented to eminent personalities of the country. Sugharan Ji Katchery and traditional Sindhi games will also be a part of the celebrations.

## Man attacks daughter, three others with acid over domestic dispute

MUZAFFARGARH (Agencies): A man injured his daughter and three others by throwing acid at them over a domestic dispute at Kalma Chowk railway crossing on Wednesday. According to police sources, Sharif Chandia had a dispute with his wife over some domestic issues and she was living in her parent's home along with her children for the last month. The accused was not happy with her daughter Maria Bibi for a teaching job in a private school.

In a fit of anger, he threw acid on her daughter when she was returning from school with her two cousins including 7-year-old Ehtesham and Muhammad Aqmam (9) on an auto-rickshaw. Resultantly, the kids sustained injuries while the driver of the auto-rickshaw was also affected by acid. City Kot Addu police have started the investigations into the incident, however, the district police officer has directed stern action against the accused.

## Terrorist commander among eight others killed, soldier martyred in South Waziristan: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): A terrorist commander among eight others were killed whereas a soldier of Pakistan Army embraced martyrdom while four got injured during a heavy gunfight amid an intelligence based operation (IBO) conducted by the Security Forces in general area Shinwarsak, South Waziristan District on Wednesday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), intense fire exchange took place between own troops and the terrorists, during the conduct of the operation. The Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists location and eight terrorists including terrorist commander Jan Muhammad alias Chargh

were sent to hell. However, during intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Hamid Rasool (age 31 years, resident of District Rawalpindi) having fought gallantly, embraced shahadat while another four personnel including two officers got injured. Moreover, weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists. The killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

## KP CM's aide Malik Mehr Elahi assumes charge of labour dept portfolio

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to KP Caretaker Chief Minister Malik Mehr Elahi on Wednesday has assumed

charge of the portfolio of Labour Department, said a notification issued by Establishment Division here on Wednesday.



## S'pore starts US\$7.5mil fund to woo next Crazy Rich Asians

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore is starting a S\$10 million (US\$7.5 million) fund to support international movies that showcase the city to a global audience, helping finance production and marketing costs where the island is featured. The fund — a joint initiative of Infocomm Media Development Authority and the Singapore Tourism Board — follows past collaborations including the hit 2018 film Crazy Rich Asians, the agencies said in a joint statement Wednesday. The latest move will also allow

local talent to participate in those projects, they said. “Singapore has many surprises to offer as a filming destination,” said Jasmine Ng, president of the Singapore Association of Motion Picture Professionals. “The compact city is home to a wide range of striking architecture and rich, diverse cultures while providing a safe and trusted working environment.” While Asia was slower than the rest of the world to open its borders after the Covid pandemic, travel is now starting to pick up in the region, par-

ticularly after China reopened after almost three years of being shut off from the outside world. Tourists are now spending 60% more on Singapore-based activities compared with pre-pandemic levels on travel platform Klook. The new fund will support selected projects that are set in Singapore. About 300 locals worked on Crazy Rich Asians including production crew and a dozen local actors, while landmarks such as Marina Bay Sands and Merlion Park were featured.

## UAE fintech Wafeq secures \$3m to double down on Saudi presence and expand to Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies): Wafeq, a UAE-based financial software company for small and medium enterprises, raised \$3 million in a seed funding round led by Raed Ventures with participation from Wamda Capital to double down on its Saudi presence as well as expand to Egypt. Launched in 2019, Wafeq is a fintech startup that provides easy-to-use software to empower accounting and finance operations for SMEs. In an exclusive interview

with Arab News, Nadim Alamddine, Founder and CEO at Wafeq, said that Saudi Arabia is the largest and most important market for the company. “As such, we will double down on our growth here to continue offering our solutions to SMEs in the Kingdom. We already count some of the most successful SMEs and startups as our customers, and as we grow here, we will continue to help businesses become compliant with account-

ing regulations,” he stated. Built for the finance and accounting needs of SMEs in the region, Wafeq’s software is trusted by over 5,000 business owners and professional accountants processing over \$117 million in monthly invoices. “Our platform is used by leading startups and SMEs from a diverse range of industries, including contracting, food and beverage, ecommerce, retail, and more,” Alammeddine explained.

## UBS shareholders to weigh in on Credit Suisse mega-merger

GENEVA (Agencies): UBS shareholders get their first chance to grill the bank’s bosses Wednesday over its shotgun marriage to Credit Suisse, done in double-quick time behind their backs. Switzerland’s biggest bank is absorbing its stricken closest domestic rival in a deal stitched together on March 19 out of fears of a global banking crisis if the floundering Credit Suisse went under. But some UBS shareholders

may have concerns closer to home as to what it means for their personal investments now the bank is taking on an institution that repeatedly got itself into trouble. Shareholders of both banks had no say in the mega-merger, which was engineered behind closed doors by the Swiss government, the central bank and the financial regulators. Wednesday’s annual general meeting takes place in Basel, one of the two birth-

places of UBS along with Zurich. The AGM is being held in the St Jakobshalle indoor arena, famously the stomping ground of Swiss tennis great Roger Federer – Credit Suisse’s top brand ambassador. The meeting will see Dutch chief executive Ralph Hamers bow out. Once the AGM is over, Sergio Ermotti returns as CEO, having been called back to UBS to handle the delicate integration process.

## Saudi Arabia tests self-driving electric cars

RIYADH (Agencies): Self-driving electric cars are a step closer to coming to Saudi roads after the Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services launched a trial of the revolutionary vehicles. Deputy Minister of Transport and Logistic Services Rumaih Al-Rumaih helped the experiment get underway, reported the Saudi Press Agency, as part of the government’s efforts to support and develop progressive transportation sys-

tems in the Kingdom. This initiative is intended to limit the rate of transport accidents and deaths as well as enhance mobility between and within cities. In addition, it adds to the Kingdom’s sustainability by reducing the harm that sectors impose on the environment, noted Al-Rumaih. Saudi Arabia’s giga-project NEOM will heavily rely on the development of the self-driving electric car being tested by the ministry as the inno-

vation hub plans to create a sustainable, safe and seamlessly connected mobility ecosystem, while aiming for zero carbon emissions and 100 percent renewable energy. The ministry’s experimentation falls in line with the objectives of the National Transport and Logistics Strategy, which aims to position the Kingdom among the most advanced countries in terms of road quality and safety.

## Asian markets mixed as soft US data raises recession fears

HONG KONG (Agencies): Asian stocks drifted Wednesday after a retreat on Wall Street as data showing a softening in the US jobs market pointed to a slowing economy and fuelled fresh fears of a recession. After March’s banking sector-sparked turmoil, markets have enjoyed a few bright weeks on optimism the Federal Reserve will temper its interest rate hikes earlier than thought.

The rally continued at the start of this week, even after a shock cut in oil output by major producers sent prices soaring and reignited worries over inflation, which has been coming down in the past months. But New York traders ran out of energy Tuesday and turned sellers after data showed February job openings at US companies fell to their lowest level since May 2021 and below forecasts.

While figures showing a strong labour market have been welcomed as giving the Fed room to stop hiking rates, analysts said the reading was also seen as a warning that the economy was on the slide. “The bears are feeling confident that the recent rally can’t keep going given valuations and how the rates markets are clearly signalling we are recession bound,” said Oanda’s Edward Moya.

## Musk’s Twitter Blue promo fails to win many subscribers

NEW YORK (Agencies): Twitter Inc is struggling to sell users on its new subscription product, Twitter Blue, according to a new report. Only 116,000 people signed up for the service of 2.6 million people who visited the Twitter Blue sales page on the web in March, according to estimates by SimilarWeb, which analyses internet traffic. Twitter owner Elon Musk had said that starting this month, only subscribers to Twitter

Blue would be eligible for verification checkmarks, previously reserved for public figures. In March, when a person who got a check through the old system logged onto Twitter, they sometimes received a message encouraging them to sign up to pay for Twitter Blue in order to keep their status. The change in rules was expected to cause an uptick in subscriptions. Recently, Musk decided to give some verified

users more time to decide whether to pay him. Twitter Blue had less than 300,000 subscribers in February of this year, according to The Information. Even accounting for the additional 116,000 sign-ups estimated by SimilarWeb, less than 1% of monthly users are currently subscribed to Twitter Blue. SimilarWeb’s estimates do not include sign-ups through a mobile app or bulk purchases from organisations.

## Google says its AI supercomputer is faster, greener than Nvidia

CALIFORNIA (Agencies): Alphabet Inc’s Google released on Tuesday new details about the supercomputers it uses to train its artificial intelligence models, saying the systems are both faster and more power-efficient than comparable systems from Nvidia Corp. Google has designed its own custom chip called the Tensor Processing Unit, or TPU. It uses those chips for more than 90% of the

company’s work on artificial intelligence training, the process of feeding data through models to make them useful for tasks such as responding to queries with human-like text or generating images. The Google TPU is now in its fourth generation. Google on Tuesday published a scientific paper detailing how it has strung more than 4,000 of the chips together into a supercomputer using its own

custom-developed optical switches to help connect individual machines. Improving these connections has become a key point of competition among companies that build AI supercomputers because so-called large language models that power technologies like Google’s Bard or OpenAI’s ChatGPT have exploded in size, meaning they are far too large to store on a single chip.

## J&J proposes US\$8.9bil settlement of talc cancer claims

NEW YORK (Agencies): US pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson on Tuesday proposed a US\$8.9 billion settlement to resolve years-old lawsuits claiming that its talcum powder products caused cancer. The New Jersey-based company said the proposed settlement, which needs the approval of a bankruptcy court, “will equitably and efficiently

resolve all claims arising from cosmetic talc litigation.” J&J has been facing thousands of lawsuits over talcum powder containing traces of asbestos blamed for causing ovarian cancer. The firm has never admitted wrongdoing but stopped selling the talc-based baby powder in the US and Canada in May 2020. “The company continues to believe that

these claims are specious and lack scientific merit,” Erik Haas, J&J’s vice-president of litigation, said in a statement. J&J said the US\$8.9 billion would be paid to the tens of thousands of claimants over 25 years through a J&J subsidiary, LTL Management LLC, which was set up to address the claims and has filed for bankruptcy protection.

## China’s banking crackdown picks up pace with fresh probe

BEIJING (APP): Chinese authorities have launched a probe into the former chairman and party chief of state-owned China Everbright Group, the latest sign that the country’s crackdown on corruption in the financial sector is picking up pace. Li Xiaopeng is suspected of “serious violations of discipline and law,” the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the State Supervision Commission said in a one-sentence statement. The announcement came after the anti-graft body said last week it will start a fresh round of checks at more than 30

state-owned companies. As part of the inspection, they will also “look back” at five financial firms that had been previously targeted, including China Everbright Group. China’s US\$60 trillion finance industry is being rocked by a clampdown that has become its most extensive since beginning in late 2021. It comes amid a broader push to rein in risks in the sector as policymakers seek to restore growth, manage the economic fallout of frayed ties with the US and step up their charm offensive with foreign business and private industry.

## Iraq, Kurdish region sign deal to resume oil exports

BAGHDAD (Agencies): Iraq’s federal government and the Kurdistan autonomous region signed an accord on Tuesday to allow Kurdish oil exports to resume through Turkey after they were halted 10 days earlier. The agreement, signed in Baghdad in the presence of Prime Minister Mohamed Shia Al-Sudani and Kurdish Premier Masrour Barzani, was to be implemented “today,” a Kurdish regional government official told AFP. The deal was described as temporary but signals the end of independent oil exports by northern Iraq’s Kurdish regional

government. The agreement comes two days after Iraq, major oil exporters announced a sharp reduction in their production from May that sent up global energy prices. Barzani said on Twitter that the deal is “temporary” until Iraq’s parliament agrees a new oil and gas law, but he called it “a crucial step toward ending the long-standing dispute” between Irbil and Baghdad. Ankara had stopped handling Iraqi Kurdish oil last month after an international tribunal ruled in a nine-year-old dispute that Baghdad was right to insist on overseeing all Iraqi oil exports.

## China urges WTO to probe US-led chip export curbs

BEIJING (Agencies): China has urged the World Trade Organization to scrutinise US-led technology export restrictions aimed at curbing its ability to make advanced chips, state television said on Wednesday. Chinese representatives told a regular WTO meeting this week that Japan, the Netherlands and the US should report their plans and subsequent measures to the body, which it urged to step up supervision on the matter, broadcaster CCTV said. On Tuesday, the commerce ministry said Beijing was seriously concerned about Japan’s export curbs on chip-making equipment and called for it to cor-

rect its “wrong practice”. The move of the three nations in alignment to curb chip exports to China “violates the fairness and transparency principles of WTO”, CCTV said. Last week, without specifying China as the target, Japan had said it would restrict export of 23 types of semiconductor manufacturing equipment, a move in line with Washington’s curbs announced last October. That came after the Netherlands said last month that it also planned to limit similar exports, such as those from ASML Holding NV, which dominates the market for lithography systems used to create chips’ minute circuitry.

## Global grain giants to exit Russia operations by July

PARIS (Agencies): Three of the world’s largest grain distributors have announced that they will pull out of Russia by July, a move likely to reinforce Moscow’s control over the global wheat market. Government pressure and operational difficulties in the wake of Russia’s war against Ukraine have made staying in the country unfeasible for Cargill, Louis Dreyfus (LDC) and Viteira, the companies say. Until now they had maintained operations in Russia including transport and storage via silos and port terminals, saying it was essential for ensuring the supply of crucial commodities for countries

worldwide. Russia is the world’s largest wheat exporter, and the grain was not targeted by the raft of Western sanctions against Moscow after it launched its invasion in February 2022. But starting July 1, the companies will only charter cargo ships for agricultural shipments from Russia. US giant Cargill is operating “only essential food and feed facilities” in the country, it said in a statement last Wednesday. “However, as grain export-related challenges continue to mount, Cargill will stop elevating Russian grain for export in July 2023 after the completion of the 2022-2023 season.”

## Eyes on Apple to join quest for metaverse

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Apple fans are watching to see whether the iPhone maker puts a culture-changing spin on virtual reality, even as rivals slow their march toward the metaverse. All eyes are on whether Apple will commit to releasing long-rumoured VR or augmented reality (AR) “goggles” at its annual Worldwide Developers Conference in June, with programmers and software companies eager to get a jump start on providing content. Apple chief Tim Cook fueled the speculation this week in a GQ

interview, saying AR is “exciting” and that the company has a history of going its own way with innovations, even amid doubts and criticism. “I’m not interested in putting together pieces of somebody else’s stuff,” he told GQ, saying that the release of the iPhone and Apple Watch both had their serious detractors. Cook did not confirm plans for Apple eyewear, instead focusing more broadly on the promise of VR or augmented reality and defending the time it would take to release a product to market.

## Dollar struggles near 2-month low on weak data

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The US dollar was stuck near two-month lows on Wednesday as weak economic data bolstered views that the Federal Reserve is near the end of its monetary tightening cycle. Data overnight showed US job openings dropped to their lowest level in nearly two years in February, suggesting that labour market conditions were finally easing. Job openings, a measure of labour demand, were down 632,000 to 9.9 million on the last day of February, the monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS report, showed. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 10.4 million openings. The dollar index,

which measures the currency against six peers, eased to a fresh two-month low of 101.43, after dropping 0.5% overnight. The euro was up 0.12% to US\$1.0965, hovering near two-month peaks it touched on Tuesday. Sterling was last trading at US\$1.2509, up 0.08% on the day, just shy of the ten-month high it scaled on Tuesday. The kiwi rose 0.08% to US\$0.632 ahead of a policy decision from Reserve Bank New Zealand later in the day. The central bank is expected to slow the pace of monetary tightening, raising rates by just 25 basis points. Investors will be closely scrutinising the accompanying commentary for any hints of an end to its tightening cycle.



Liverpool call for end to ‘vile chants’ about Hillsborough disaster

LIVERPOOL (Agencies): Liverpool have called for an end to “vile chants” about the Hillsborough Stadium disaster after they were heard during Tuesday’s goalless Premier League draw with Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. The 1989 FA Cup semifinal was the scene of Britain’s worst sporting disaster when 97 Liverpool fans lost their lives after a crush in an over-crowded and fenced-in enclosure. One victim died



in July 2021 after suffering severe and irreversible brain damage. “We know

the impact these vile chants have on those who continue to suffer as a result of football tragedies. For their sake, this has to stop,” Liverpool tweeted. Chelsea apologised and said “hateful chanting has no place in football”. The Premier League said it condemned the “tragedy chanting” at the match. “We continue to treat this as an unacceptable issue and are seeking to address it as a priority,” it added.

Late Lukaku penalty earns Inter 1-1 draw at Juventus

TURIN (Agencies): Juventus and Inter Milan shared the spoils in an energetic 1-1 Coppa Italia semifinal first-leg draw on Tuesday, after a stoppage-time penalty by Romelu Lukaku cancelled out a late goal by Juve midfielder Juan Cuadrado. Juventus could have gone ahead through Angel Di Maria in the fourth minute but Inter keeper Samir Handanovic tipped away his low shot from the edge of the box. Inter, who could have scored in the 33rd minute when Marcelo Brozovic’s shot was



saved by Juve keeper Mattia Perin, dominated possession in a lively first half. Shortly after the break Juventus forward Dusan Vlahovic tried to surprise Handanovic with a close-range

header from a stunning, lofted pass by Nicolo Fagioli but the attempt by Serbia forward went just over the bar. Henrikh Mkhitaryan could have made it 1-0 for the visitors in the 64th minute with a powerful low shot towards the far post but he missed the target by centimetres. Cuadrado gave the record 14-times winners the lead in the 83rd when he collected a loose ball inside the box and sent it into the bottom left corner after Inter defender Alessandro Bastoni had unsuccessfully tried to clear it off the line.

\$272,000 up for grabs at Jiu-Jitsu President’s Cup in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI: The Jiu-Jitsu President’s Cup is to begin on Friday at the Mubadala Arena in Zayed Sports City, with competition for boys and girls in the U-14 and U-16 divisions on the opening day. The UAE Jiu-Jitsu Federation tournament boasts a total value of more than \$272,000 (AED 1m) in championship prizes. “In the coming days, as we observe the holy month, we are making final preparations to organize the hotly anticipated Jiu-Jitsu President’s Cup



in the new format,” said Fahad Ali Al-Shamsi, Secretary-General of the UAEJJF. “Over the years, the championship has undergone significant im-

provements and achieved remarkable progress in terms of competition rates and performance quality. “In recognition of the Jiu-Jitsu President’s Cup’s significance as a foundation for developing new and emerging talent, the organizing committee has introduced a new U-14 category to the competitions. This move reflects the UAEJJF’s commitment to enhancing representation among male and female athletes, while also targeting specific age groups.

Messi ‘likely’ to leave PSG at end of season

PARIS (Agencies): Lionel Messi is “much more likely” to leave Paris Saint-Germain at the end of the season than sign a new deal, a source close to the club told AFP on Tuesday. “The dynamics have completely changed with PSG less pushing to renew (his contract),” the source said, adding that there was “no deal, no exit yet. But exit is much more likely.” World Cup winner Messi, who will turn 36 in June, joined in 2021 on a two-year deal which expires at the end of this



campaign. On Sunday, the Argentine’s name was jeered by some PSG fans as the teams were announced prior to the 1-0 home defeat against Lyon in Ligue 1. Supporters of the Qatar-owned club

are unhappy at the malaise around the team since they were eliminated from the Champions League in the last 16 by Bayern Munich last month. PSG have lost eight times in 18 games in 2023, a run which has seen them go out of the French Cup prematurely although they remain six points clear at the top of the French table. “The fans have changed things completely,” the source said of the chances of Messi’s deal being renewed and the supporters’ reaction at the weekend.

Tiger on Masters: ‘I don’t know how many more I have in me’

AUGUSTA (Agencies): Tiger Woods admitted Tuesday he wonders each time he plays the Masters if it’s his last competing at Augusta National, where he has won five of his 15 major titles. “I don’t know how many more I have in me,” Woods said. “So just (have) to be able to appreciate the time I have here and cherish the memories.” Woods still struggles with walking after suffering severe leg injuries in a 2021 car crash and the undulating layout of Augusta National offers a stern stroll under the Georgia pines. Woods made his



competitive comeback at last year’s Masters, when he shared 47th but achieved a major feat simply by finishing 72 holes. “For me to be able to come back and play was a small victory in

itself,” Woods said. “Last year, I didn’t know if I was going to play again at that time. For some reason everything kind of came together and I pushed it a little bit and I was able to make the cut, which was nice.” Woods withdrew after three rounds of last year’s PGA Championship with leg pain, skipped the US Open and missed the cut at the British Open. Former world number one Woods, now ranked 1,001, showed his skills at Riviera in February, sharing 45th in his PGA return, and has impressed in practice rounds this week.

Embiid tosses in 52 as Sixers hold off Celtics, Bucks near top spot in East

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Joel Embiid enhanced his MVP credentials with a 52-point masterclass as the Philadelphia 76ers held off a furious late rally from the Boston Celtics to win a hard-fought battle of the Eastern Conference heavyweights on Tuesday. Embiid — one of the front-runners for the NBA’s regular season Most Valuable Player award — produced a towering performance in a 103-101 victory in Philadelphia that all but extinguished second-placed Boston’s hopes of winning the top-seeding in the East. The



Celtics must now win all three of their remaining regular season games and hope that Milwaukee lose their final three fixtures to snatch first place and the all-important home advantage in

the playoffs. Embiid finished with 52 points from 20-of-25 shooting while hauling in 13 rebounds and laying on six assists, while James Harden finished with 20 points. P.J. Tucker was the only other Sixers player in double figures, with the bulk of his 11 points coming from a flurry of three-pointers late in the fourth quarter. However, the third-placed Sixers were given a scare down the stretch, when they almost blew a 103-96 lead with just 10 seconds remaining to allow Boston to get back to within two points.

N.Zealand demolish Sri Lanka in 2nd T20

DUNEDIN (AFP/APP): New Zealand demolished Sri Lanka with a nine-wicket victory in the second Twenty20 international to level the series Wednesday, as opener Tim Seifert finished on 79 not out. Black Caps bowler Adam Milne had earlier taken five wickets for just 26 runs in a man-of-the-match performance as Sri Lanka were skittled for just 141 runs. “You always dream of taking five wickets for New Zealand. As I had three in the last over with a couple of tailenders in, I started feeling a little bit greedy,” Milne later admitted. Seifert then helped steer New Zealand to victory as the hosts hit a rapid-fire 146-1 in reply after 14.4 overs. New Zealand captain Tom Latham hailed his side’s



“pretty clinical performance”. “The way we were just able to keep taking wickets, that’s the best way really to stall a run rate,” he added. “I thought our bowling performance was outstanding.” New Zealand’s victory in Dunedin levelled the series 1-1 ahead of the decider this Saturday in Queenstown. Sri Lanka had won the opening T20 match

last Sunday in Auckland. Milne’s impressive bowling display left New Zealand with a target of 142 to win. Opener Chad Bowes was caught after hitting 31 off 15 balls before Seifert peppered the boundary in a partnership of 106 alongside Latham, who finished 20 not out. Seifert then wrapped up New Zealand’s innings in style with two towering sixes. It was a brutal defeat for Sri Lanka, who had made a good start. Kusal Perera (35) and Dhananjaya de Silva (37) put on a middle-order partnership of 62 off 46 balls to steer the visitors to 99-4 after 12 overs. The tourists then collapsed by losing their next six wickets for just 42 runs as New Zealand’s seamers found their length to devastating effect.

Ibanez goal sends Osasuna into Copa del Rey final



BILBAO (Agencies): An extra-time goal from Pablo Ibanez snatched a 1-1 draw for Osasuna against Athletic Bilbao in their Copa del Rey semifinal second leg on Tuesday to give them a 2-1 win on aggregate and put them in their first cup final since 2005. Athletic, down a goal from the first leg, opened the scoring at the San Mames stadium in the 32nd minute when Mikel Vesga flicked on a corner to Inaki Williams, who turned in the ball from close range. Osasuna levelled the score and

took the lead on aggregate in the 116th minute when substitute Ibanez collected a cross on the edge of the box and volleyed well beyond the reach of goal-keeper Julen Agirrezabala. “It’s something that can’t be explained. We’ve been through tough rounds and to get to this final is because of all the way we’ve been going through the competition,” said Ibanez, after Osasuna got their fourth extra-time win in the competition. “We knew what could happen. That we could concede a goal. We’ve suffered, we’ve kept working and in the end we’ve been rewarded. Osasuna coach Jagoba Arrasate added: “The truth is that we have to recognise that Athletic have been the better side, but we have done an exercise of survival and I also think it is fair that Osasuna is in the final.”

‘Black Tuesday’ as Nadal, Alcaraz pull out of Monte Carlo

MADRID (Agencies): Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz withdrew Tuesday from the Monte Carlo Masters, raising questions over their fitness ahead of next month’s French Open. Nadal is preparing for a tilt at a record-extending 15th French Open title – and a 23rd Grand Slam crown, to break the men’s all-time record he shares with Novak Djokovic. “Hi everyone, I’m still not ready to compete at the highest level,” the 36-year-old Nadal tweeted. “I will not be able to play in one of the most important tournaments of my career, Monte Carlo.” Nadal has won the Monte Carlo tournament 11 times. The French Open starts May 28. Nadal said he was hoping to return soon from the hip flexor injury



he sustained in the Australian Open in January, suffering a second-round exit against Mackenzie McDonald. The Spaniard pulled out of hard-court tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami, with his sights set on a return at the start of the clay-court season. Record Monte Carlo Masters champion Nadal won the tournament eight consecutive times between 2005 and 2012.

Ronaldo double keeps Al-Nassr on track for the title



RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice to drive Al-Nassr to an emphatic 5-0 win over Al-Adalah on Tuesday that keeps the Riyadh giants a point behind leaders Al-Ittihad with eight games of the Roshn Saudi League season remaining. The five-time Ballon D’or winner bagged a goal in each half to take his personal tally for the campaign to 11 as Al-Nassr stayed in second with a comfortable win over the team that were promoted last season

and are battling to stay in the top tier. Given the fact that the two teams are at opposite ends of the table, it was no surprise that Rudi Garcia’s men were on top from the beginning. Al-Nassr had two great headed chances in the first half but unfortunately neither fell to Ronaldo. First Abdulrahman Ghareeb should have done better but his effort was easy to save and then, just after the half hour, Anderson Talisca had an even better opportunity only to head right into the grateful arms of Milan Mijatovic. Then, eight minutes before the break, Abdulaziz Al-Jamman brought down Abdulelah Al-Amri in the area, the referee pointed to the spot and Ronaldo stepped up to fire a low shot to the left bottom corner to give the goalkeeper no chance.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 6, 2023



– It’s a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES**: On most days, you’re happy to engage with all comers, friend and foe alike. Today, though, you’d rather take time for yourself and think things through. It’s a good day for self-reflection.  
– **TAURUS**: If you’re coupled, your energy is probably devoted to your mate today. If you’re single, you are almost certainly throwing yourself into the search -- or getting over your breakup. Things should move quickly.  
– **GEMINI**: You’re much more thoughtful than usual today and that could mean that you’re finding it harder than ever to deal with immediate, pressing concerns. Try to put them off for a few days, if possible.  
– **CANCER**: Take all the time you need to make up your mind today -- or put off decisions until more information comes in. You need to know for sure that you’re making the right call before your heart will be in it.  
– **LEO**: It’s a great time to pull back from the action and look more closely at the fundamentals of the situation, whatever it is. You can see nuance

and detail that would elude almost anyone else.  
– **VIRGO**: Make sure that you take the time to hear everyone out today -- even if it feels as if it’s a waste of time. The good you do by reinforcing their egos is plenty to balance the time lost.  
– **LIBRA**: Work and money-related matters are foremost in your mind today and you should be able to tackle them with the gravity they deserve. Make sure there aren’t any big surprises headed your way!  
– **SCORPIO**: You can keep working and playing quite late tonight and should find that others can keep up with you only as long as you’re around to motivate them. Use that great energy to start or finish something big!  
– **SAGITTARIUS**: You’re finding that your ambitions are changing somewhat -- though that does not mean they’re softening! You should try to figure out what’s beneath it all and then move forward toward the future.  
– **CAPRICORN**: Look deeply within yourself and you should find some surprising ambitions. Clues have been popping up for quite a while, but they may all come together today and point you in a new direction.  
– **ACQUARIUS**: You are focused on your career in a new way -- one that might surprise a few people! See if you can make that jump or lateral move with a minimum of fuss and drama, because you’re eager to keep on track.  
– **PISCES**: It’s too easy for you to let others have their way at your expense right now, so be on guard for exploitive behavior. If you know what to expect, you can shore up your own support so it evens out.



## Ukraine to buy 100 Rosomak armored vehicles from Poland

WARSAW (Agencies): Ukraine will acquire 100 eight-wheel-drive Rosomak armored modular vehicles from Poland for its armed forces, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced during a visit to the Polish plant that makes the vehicles. "The Ukrainian Army will buy from us 100 units of the Rosomak, which is produced in Siemianowice 1skie. Rosomaks are top-shelf combat vehicles," Morawiecki said in a Facebook post on April 1. Ukraine will pay for the vehicles with the use of the funds it has obtained from the Europe-



an Union and the United States, according to the prime minister. Poland has been calling on its Western partners to further increase the funding to support Ukraine's combat against the Russian invasion, Morawiecki said. The value

of the order was not disclosed by the politician. The factory in Siemianowice 1skie is operated by local company Rosomak S.A., a subsidiary of Poland's state-run defense giant PGZ. The group produces the Rosomak under a license from Finland's Patria. Since 2004, about 900 vehicles in different variants have rolled out of the Polish plant. In its combat version, the Rosomak can accommodate a crew of three, plus eight troops. The vehicle has a maximum speed of 100 km/h (62 mph), according to data from PGZ.

## US moves armoured vehicles from Iraq to Syria, say sources

BAGHDAD (Agencies): Dozens of American military vehicles and containers arrived in the United States' bases in the Syria's Al-Hasakah from northern Iraq yesterday. The official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) quoted local sources as saying that the US convoy had included "60 army trucks loaded with containers of weapons, ammunition, advanced armored vehicles, 40 oil-stealing tanks," adding that it had entered Syrian territories through the "illegal Al-Waleed border crossing." "The convoy, coming from the US bases in Iraq, headed to the Syrian town of Al-Yarubiyah," the sources said, noting that the convoy had ultimately "settled in the Syri-



an Jazira region." The sources pointed out that the American supplies were meant "to support the Syrian Democratic Forces – known as "Qasd" – on one hand, and to arm its affiliated groups in Homs' Jazira and At Tanf bases." The latter, SANA reported, is where the US carries out attacks on state infrastructure, as well as sites belonging to the Syrian Arab Army.

## Global Pharma: FDA says India firm linked to US eye drop deaths broke safety norms



MARYLAND (Agencies): The Indian manufacturer of eye drops linked to three deaths and serious infections in the US violated several safety norms, the country's top regulator has said. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a report last week after inspecting Global Pharma's plant in India's Chennai city. The firm recalled the drops in February after a recommendation from the FDA. The FDA had

also stopped imports of the products. The eye drops - made in India by Global Pharma and imported to the US under two brand names, EzriCare Artificial Tears and Delsam Pharma's Artificial Tears - were linked to a deadly outbreak of drug-resistant infections in the US. – Blindness and injuries cause eyedrops recall in US In March, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified 68 patients across 16 states with a rare strain of Pseudomonas aeruginosa, which can cause serious infections, especially in immunocompromised people. The drug-resistant strain had never been found in the country before the latest outbreak.

## Masood Khan felicitates Texan lawmaker Salman Bhojani for strengthening Pak-US ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S., Masood Khan, Tuesday called the newly-elected Texas House of Representatives Member, Salman Bhojani, a Pakistani-American, to thank him for his role in strengthening Washington-Islamabad relations, according to a Pakistani embassy's press release. He congratulated him for the landmark resolution in Texan State Assembly to recognize "Pakistan Day of Action at the State Capitol" on the occasion of Pakistan Day. "Politicians of Pakistani descent are making Pakistani diaspora and Pakistan proud not only by their dynamism and leadership qualities but also by serving as a bridge between the two countries and forging robust linkages between law-makers, professionals, experts, business com-



munity and others," the Pakistani envoy said during his phone call to Representative Bhojani. "Pakistan has one of the world's youngest populations, with about 63 percent of the nation's citizens being between the ages of 15 and 33 and Texas businesses can utilize the country's highly skilled young professionals to advance the state's economy, particularly in the information technology and biotech industries," stated the resolution introduced by Rep. Bhojani.

## Credit Suisse chiefs say sorry to angry shareholders



ZURICH (AFP/APP): Credit Suisse chairman Axel Lehmann said Tuesday he was "truly sorry" that the beleaguered bank could not be saved as he faced angry and tearful shareholders whose money has gone up in smoke. Credit Suisse's chiefs fronted up at the bank's annual general meeting, 16 days after its hastily arranged takeover by larger rival UBS -- a me-

ga-merger of Switzerland's two biggest banks in which the shareholders of both institutions had no say. The 167-year-old bank's final AGM was the first chance Credit Suisse shareholders had to voice their frustrations, and some were in tears as they counted the cost of the bank's implosion. "I can understand the bitterness, the anger and the shock of all those who are disappointed, overwhelmed and affected by the developments," Lehmann said at the Hallenstadion, Zurich's biggest indoor arena.

## Cryptocurrency surges as Musk changes Twitter logo to 'meme dog'

PARIS (AFP/APP): A meme-inspired cryptocurrency's price jumped on Tuesday after Elon Musk changed the blue-bird logo of Twitter to a dog associated with the digital token, despite the mogul being sued over his previous promotion of the coin. Musk bought Twitter in October last year for \$44 billion and has since slashed the workforce, introduced paid-for accounts and reinstated banned users including former president Donald Trump. His decision to change the



logo to a Shiba Inu dog, whether permanent or another short-lived joke, caused the price of dogecoin to surge by more than 25 percent, from below \$0.08 to more than \$0.10.

## OPEC+ production cuts likely to lift oil prices above \$100 a barrel

SINGAPORE/SEOUL (Agencies): The OPEC+ group's surprise additional production cuts could push oil prices back toward \$100 a barrel, tighten the market and encourage refiners to diversify supplies, analysts and traders said. Oil prices jumped more than \$4 a barrel on Monday after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their allies including Russia announced further production cuts of about 1.16 million barrels per day from May through the rest of the year. The pledges will bring the total volume of cuts by the group known as OPEC+ since November to 3.66 million bpd according to Reuters calculations, equal to 3.7 percent of the global demand. OPEC+ had been expected to hold output steady this year, having already cut by 2 million bpd in November 2022. Rystad Energy said it believed the cuts will add to tightness in the oil market and lift prices



above \$100 a barrel for the rest of year, possibly taking Brent as high as \$110 this summer. UBS also expects Brent to reach \$100 by June, while Goldman Sachs raised its December forecast by \$5 to \$95. Goldman said strategic petroleum reserve releases in the US and in France, due to ongoing strikes, as well as Washington's refusal to refill its SPR in the 2023 fiscal year, may have prompted the OPEC+ action. An official at a South Korean refiner said the cut was "bad news" for oil buyers and OPEC was seeking to "protect their profit" against concerns of a global economic slowdown.

## UK airport scraps 100ml liquid rule with scanners



LONDON (Agencies): London City Airport has scrapped the 100ml liquid limit by using high-tech scanners which also allow electronics to be kept in hand luggage at security. Travellers can now carry on up to two litres of liquid, and toiletries no longer have to be put in separate bags. It is the second UK airport to use this technology in all its security lanes, after Teesside introduced it in March. The government has set a June 2024 deadline for most UK airports to install the machines. London City Airport has brought in the C3 scanners which takes high-resolution 3D images of bags. Passengers at other airports currently have to remove items such as tablets, laptops and liquids from hand luggage for security checks. The current rules were introduced in November 2006, at the end of a ban on liquids in the cabin, when British police said they had foiled a plot to blow up as many as 10 planes using explosives hidden in drinks.

## UN says Afghan women staff blocked from work by Taliban



UNITED NATIONS (AFP/APP): The Taliban have extended a ban on women working for NGOs to the United Nations' mission throughout the country, a UN spokesman announced Tuesday, calling such an order "unacceptable." The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) had said earlier in the day that UN women employees had been blocked from work in eastern Nangarhar province. "UNAMA received word of an order by the de facto authorities that bans female national staff members of the United Nations from working," spokesman for the secretary-general, Stephane Dujarric, told reporters, adding that the UN had heard "from various conduits that this applies to the whole country." The UN had so far been exempt from a December Taliban order for all foreign and domestic NGOs to stop women personnel working across the crisis-stricken nation. Dujarric said no written order had yet been received, but that the UN was to hold meetings with the Taliban on Wednesday in Kabul to "seek some clarity." For UN chief Antonio Guterres, Dujarric said, "any such ban would be unacceptable and frankly, inconceivable." "This is the latest in a disturbing trend undermining the ability of aid organizations to reach those most in need," he added. After the ban announced last year, several NGOs suspended their entire operations in protest, piling further misery on Afghanistan's 38 million citizens, half of whom are facing hunger according to aid agencies.

## CLASSIFIED

## COMMANDER ESTATES

Property Consultants

Lt Cdr (R)

**Asmat Ullah Tariq**  
CEO

Authorized Dealer for

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

0345-8282666  
0336-8282666

UG-356 Deans Trade  
Center, Peshawar Cantt.



commanderestates@gmail.com

## US gains military access to Philippine bases close to Taiwan and South China Sea



Manila (Agencies): The Philippines on Monday identified the locations of four new military bases the US will gain access to, as part of an expanded defense agreement analysts say is aimed at combating China. The four bases include three on the main island of Luzon, close to Taiwan, and one in Palawan province in the South China Sea (SCS). The US has stepped up efforts to expand its Indo-Pacific security options in recent months, amid mounting concerns over China's aggressive territorial posturing throughout the region. The new locations, opened up under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Arrangement (EDCA), will allow the US to rotate troops to a total of nine bases throughout the Philippines, including on the strategically important Balabac Island close to Chinese installations in the South China Sea. "These new locations will strengthen the interoperability of the United States and Philippine Armed Forces and allow us to respond more seamlessly together to address a range of shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, including natural and humanitarian disasters," said deputy Pentagon press secretary Sabrina Singh during a briefing Monday.



## Khyber Prints

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