Israel PM: Peace with Saudi Arabia would be 'giant leap' towards ending Arab-Israeli conflict

TEl AVIV (Agencies): Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said on Monday that normalising relations with Saudi Arabia would be a "giant leap" towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, Reuters reports. "We want normalisation and peace with Saudi Arabia. We view that as, perhaps, a giant leap towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict," Netanyahu said, speaking during a meeting in Jerusalem with US Republican Senator, Lindsey Graham. "This agreement could have monumental consequences, historic consequences both for Israel, for Saudi Arabia, for the region and for the world," Netanyahu said. Israel has opened diplomatic ties with several Arab countries since 2020, including Saudi Arabia's neighbours, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. But Riyadh has held back from recognising Israel, saying such moves should be



tied to resolving Palestinian statehood goals. A huge setback for Netanyahu's efforts came last month when a China-brokered deal saw Israel's major regional foe, Iran, mend its ties with Saudi Arabia. Iran's embassy in Riyadh re-opened its gates last Wednesday for the first time in seven years. Separately on Monday, Israel's Foreign Ministry said it had asked China Cohen, in a statement.

to exert influence on Iran to prevent it from obtaining nuclear weapons. "I spoke with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qin Gang, about the danger we see in the Iranian nuclear program, a danger that is shared by many countries in the region, including countries that have diplomatic relations with Iran," said Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli

### Oman allows nationals to marry foreigners without approval

Muscat (Agencies): The Sultan of Oman, Haitham Bin Tariq, issued a decree on Sunday allowing Omani citizens to marry foreign nationals without the need for a permit from the government. Royal Decree No. 23/2023 has seven articles and supersedes and cancels Royal Decree No. 58/93, as well as any related decisions made in its implementation, the Omani News Agency reported. Article 2 of the decree states that the provisions of this decree shall not prejudice the provisions of Islamic Sharia or public order or any provision cited in the laws, Royal decrees or applicable systems stipulating non-marriage to a foreigner as a condition for occupying or continuing to occupy certain public jobs of significance or special



nature. While Article 4 validates the documents evidencing the marriage of Omanis to foreigners that are issued by foreign official authorities on condition that those documents be authenticated by the Omani Foreign Ministry. The royal decree garnered mixed reactions from Omanis, while some opposed it, others believed it will save thousands of Omani riyals in exaggerated wedding expenses entailed marrying an Omani citizen.

## Putin makes surprise visit near military front line



MOSCOW (Agencies): President Vladimir Putin has made an unannounced visit to two command posts in Russia's newly incorporated territories, where he reviewed the progress of the military operation against Ukrainian forces, the Kremlin said on Tuesday. According to a statement. Putin traveled to the command center of the 'Dnieper' battlegroup located "in the Kherson area." He received reports from the group's commander, Colonel General Oleg Makarevich, and Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky, the commander of Russia's airborne troops. The president also made a trip to the Lugansk People's Republic, where he visited the 'Vostok' (East) command center of the National Guard. Putin discussed the situation in the area with top military officials, including Colonel General Aleksandr Lapin. Putin's surprise visit comes as Kiev prepares to launch a counteroffensive in which Western-supplied heavy tanks and new armored vehicles are expected to be involved. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denis Shmigal said on Monday that Kiev will start the operation "in the nearest future."

## EU ambassador



KHARTOUM (Agencies): The EU ambassador to Sudan was attacked on Monday amid continuing clashes between the nation's military and an influential paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the bloc's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, said. The envoy was "assaulted in his own residency," Borrell tweeted. He did not reveal any details regarding the incident, and did not say who was behind the attack. It is unclear if the EU ambassador was hurt in the assault. Borrell called the incident a "gross violation of the Vienna Convention," adding that the security of diplomatic missions is under international law.

### Italy lifts arms sales embargo on the UAE

ROME (Agencies): Italy yesterday lifted the embargo it placed on arms sales to the UAE given the latter's declining presence in Yemen. An official statement from the Italian government stated that the decision to lift the ban was made during a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, according to the Italian news agency ANSA. The decision was issued after listening to a detailed report from the minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation. The statement said: "The export of armament materiel to the United Arab Emirates no longer falls under the prohibitions established by Article 1, paragraphs 5 and 6, of Law no. 185 of 9 July 1990." The statement indicated that the UAE's military presence in Yemen has declined since April capital, Sanaa.



2022, while its diplomatic activities have intensified. In 2021, the Italian government, led by then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, halted arms sales to the UAE under the pretext of its "involvement in Yemen." Yemen has witnessed a war since 2014 between government forces, backed by an Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia, and the Iran-aligned Houthi group, after the Houthis seized large parts of the country, including the



Jerusalem (Agencies): Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, arrived in Saudi Arabia on Monday for talks with Saudi officials, Anadolu News Agency reports. The Palestinian leader was welcomed upon his arrival in Jeddah by the governor of Mecca, Prince Badr bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. According to state news agency, Wafa, Abbas will meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday to discuss Palestinian and regional developments. with air and artillery shelling.

The visit comes amid reports about a possible visit by Hamas chief, Ismail Haniyeh, to the oil-rich Kingdom, the first such visit in years. On Friday, Saudi Arabia hosted a ministerial meeting of Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, during which participants strongly condemned Israeli assaults on worshipers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex and measures that undermine efforts for a two-state solution. Tensions escalated across the Palestinian territories earlier this month after Israeli forces removed worshipers by force from inside the Al-Aqsa complex in East Jerusalem. The Israeli raids on the Mosque triggered rocket fire from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, with Israel retaliating

### US to sell Taiwan anti-ship missiles



WASHINGTON (Agencies): Taiwan is set to purchase hundreds of Harpoon anti-ship missiles in a deal approved by the US government, according to Bloomberg. Reports of the upcoming sale came shortly after a top US lawdeclared the need to accelerate weapof the Harpoon system, the president \$2.3 billion at the time.

of the US-Taiwan Business Council, Rupert Hammond-Chambers, told Bloomberg on Monday. While the Pentagon announced a \$1.7 billion Boeing contract for 400 Harpoons on April 7, it did not specify the buyer. However, three other sources familiar with the deal, including an industry official, confirmed the sale is for Taiwan. A separate contract for 100 Harpoon Coastal Defense Launch Systems was outlined by the Defense Department last year. In that case, the Pentagon named Taipei as the recipient. Both deals are in line with an initial US government anmaker met with the island's leader and nouncement of the Harpoon sales announced back in 2020, which included on sales. Taipei will soon buy up to 100 launchers and 400 missiles, with 400 missiles for the land-based version the full transaction valued at more than

### US sees jump in illegal border crossings





2021 to more than 1.6 million in 2022. This year is on track to dwarf the previous figures, with over 1 million already reported as of March. Border restrictions were tightened following the Covid-19 outbreak, but have been gradually relaxed as the pandemic continues to subside. One rule used to expel millions of undocumented migrants throughout the health crisis, known as Title 42, is set to end next month, prompting concerns of an even greater surge in migration at the

#### Red Cross urges Sudan military rivals to facilitate humanitarian work

Palestine President arrives in Saudi Arabia for talks





monitoring the humanitarian situation in Khartoum and other parts of the country," the statement said. "We are extremely worried that the fighting is affecting densely populated areas. People are seeking cover in their houses," said Alfonso Verdu Perez, head of the ICRC delegation in Sudan. A disagreement between the Army and the RSF the RSF in the Army, has turned into a disputes between the two sides came to said recent movements by the RSF had occurred without coordination and

### Leaked US intel suggests Russia likely to capture key Donbass city – Newsweek

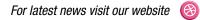
WASHINGTON (Agencies): Newsweek claims to have obtained over four dozen leaked US intelligence documents that suggest Washington is "meticulously following" the fighting around Artyomovsk, known as Bakhmut in Ukraine, and mapping Russian troop positions, individual cell phones and radars. The intelligence was apparently gathered through extensive surveillance using a myriad of what the FBI has described as "classified sources and methods." Most of the documents shared by the outlet are classified as 'top secret' and are part of the trove of Pentagon files which were allegedly uploaded to a gaming web forum by a 21-year-old US Na-

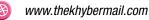


tional Guardsman. The screenshots of what appear to be presentation slides, show a daily overview of the battlefield around Artyomovsk and other parts of Ukraine and detail the positions of both Russian and Ukrainian forces, approximations of their numbers, ammunition usage rates, and territorial gains and losses.

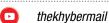
About Khyber Mail The Khyber mail was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932. A newspaper in English by the eminent journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989 it has survived as leading English newspaper in the region by the sons of Sana Ullah i.e. Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah and 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.











### FCAA welcomes abolishing of 100% regulatory duty on imported items

PESHAWAR (Agencies): President cars and to benefit local manufactur-Frontier Custom Agents Association (FCAA), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has welcomed the decision taken by the government of abolishing 100 percent duty on the import of used cars and some other items. In a press statement issued on Tuesday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said the decision would provide a big relief to price hike-stricken consumers and businessmen of the country. The federal government, he added, had taken the decision in November 2022 of enforcing 100 percent duty to discourage the import of used

ers of cars, but the decision did not yield fruitful results. President FCAA said according to estimates the decision regarding abolishing 100 percent regulatory duty would bring a reduction in prices of cars from Rs. one million to 20 million. Zia Sarhadi who also holds the designation of Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) said the decision of imposing 100% regulatory duty only generated Rs. 400 million dollars in revenue. The duty was valid till March 31, 2023, in wake of two

legal regulatory orders and due to its non-extension on expiry had seized to exist, he added. After the termination of the 100% regulatory duty on imports, a reduction in prices of different items was expected including new and old cars, home appliances, high-tech mobiles, meat, fish, fruit, vegetable, shoes, furniture, musical instruments, cat and dog feeds and ice cream, he informed. Around 700 stranded vehicles at the seaport would also get a chance of release after the implementation of the decision, Zia hoped.

#### Eid shopping spree reaches to climax in Khyber Pakthunkhwar

PESHAWAR (APP): Eid shopping spree on Tuesday reached to its peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where a great rush of people was being witnessed in the outlets of readymade garments, bangles, sweets and Peshawari Chappal. As only a few days left in Eid, all small and major bazaars of Peshawar including Qissa Khawani, Karimpura, Jhangirpura, cantonment, boards and university roads were flooded with Eid shoppers. The people were seen busy selecting choice shoes and garments for themselves and loved ones for Eidul-Fitr. On Tuesday, the readymade garments, bangles and Peshawari chappal outlets attracted a large number of shoppers including youth and girls in the city markets packed with a variety of imported and local garments and shoes as special Eid packages. The stitched Salwar Kameez, Kurata shirts, especially of lawn and cotton prints, varieties of bangles and Peshawari and Carsaadda Chappals have dominated the city's fashion markets and shopping arcades. Following prices discounts on most locally made footwear and stitched clothes in Peshawar as a special Eid offer, most of the residents of nearby districts including Charsadda, Nowshera, Khyber, Kohat, Swabi, Mohmand and Bajaur districts are visiting Qissa Khwani, Jahangira Mohalla and adjoining markets to buy their favorite lawns and cotton prints, which was hardly seen in the past. The poor families are taking a keen interest in buying stitched Shalwar Kameez and Kurta, cotton and lawn readymade garments besides henna and artificial ornaments. "I liked readymade garments for Eid as it was more affordable than tailored stitched suits," said Umar Khayam, an employee of the Education Department while talking to APP at Mall Road Peshawar. "I have bought two cotton suites one each for myself and brother and would come again on Chand Raat with the hope that prices of shoes and others items would come down," he added. Zubair Khan, a tailor in Latifabad and fashion designers in Jahingirabad, Shafi Market,



Cantonment and Havatabad told APP that women aged 18 to 35 were taking keen interest in Shalwar kameez and Kurta, artificial jewellery and henna this Eid. "I hired extra labour, working till sehri to fulfill the customers' Eid orders," he said, adding new booking had been closed due to loadshedding and huge stock. He said the increase in shop's rents, labour, load shedding and fabrics materials were major reasons behind the hike in tailors' charges, adding one suite was currently being stitched at Rs1,500 to 2,000.

Sajid Khan, a resident of Pabbi told APP that he bought a stitched Shalwar Kameez suit for Eid as it was more economical than tailors made suits, adding Shalwar Kameez and Kurta, an amalgamation of modernity and traditions, with matching Peshwari Chappal, enhanced one's look on Eid in this part of the country. Shalwar Kameez with leather-made Peshawari Chappal had widely been recognized as the symbol of traditions and culture in Pakistan especially in KP, where the majority of people prefer it on Eid and other festivals. Peshawari Chappal has made deep inroads into Pakhtoon society and is also being used in wedding and engagement ceremonies. "I have purchased eight sets of Peshawari Chap- ease in the last days of Ramazan.

pals for myself, friends and relatives to look different on Eid," he added. A great rush of girls is being witnessed on henna stalls ahead of Chand Raat at cantonment and city markets. "I came from Nowshera to decorate my hands with a henna expert to avoid rush on Chand Raat at Deans Trade Centre," Sidra Qaiser (25) told APP. Shoppers and customers complained about high prices of fabrics and shoe materials. traffic jams and lack of car parking in shopping malls in Peshawar and urged the caretaker government for immediate solutions to make Eid shopping convenient for people. "I broke my fast on the road the other day due to a massive traffic jam at Qissa Khwani," Sajid Ali said. He said people had to park vehicles in a one-kilometer distance of shopping areas mostly on the roadside and had to pay fine in case their car was lifted by traffic police. The people suggested proper car parking facilities at shopping malls by making it mandatory before issuing no objection certificates and quick removal of all stuff from footpaths to facilitate Eid shoppers. They also demanded action against professional and non-professional beggars so that the shopkeepers could complete their shopping with

### 3 die, 12 trapped people recovered alive, Corps Commander inspects rescue operation at landslide site in Torkham



PESHAWAR (Agencies): Three dead bodies and 12 trapped persons were recovered from a heavy landslide at Torkham in the Khyber district on Tuesday. Corps Commander, Lt Gen Hassan Azhar Hayat visited the landslide-hit site at Torkham where he reviewed the ongoing rescue and clearance operations of the Pakistan Army and others organizations. According to official sources, the Pakistan Army along with Provincial Rescue teams were participating in the operations at Torkham. Pakistan Army's Urban,



www.thekhybermail.com

Search and Rescue teams were actively participating in the relief and rescue operations in the affected area. The Army Engineers' dumpers along with other equipment and machinery were busy in the removal of the landslides.The urban search and rescue teams of Pakistan Army were also using search cameras, rescue redaors, cutters and life locators. As result of use of the modern equipment, three dead bodies were recovered and 12 persons were retrieved alive whose condition was out of danger.

### Peshawar University teachers end strike after Governor assurance

surance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor and sucessfull negotiations with relevant departments, the Peshawar University Teachers Association (PUTA) announced to end the strike and protest on Tuesday. The governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that all professors of the universities were highly respectable and concerns of PUTA employees would be removed. He underscored the need of creating an atmosphere of financial, educational and admin- Anila Durrani was present.

PESHAWAR (APP): Following as- istrative trust between the faculty and administration of the universities including University of Peshawar. With the end of the strike, education activities resumed in the University of Peshawar. The PUTA made the announcement during a meeting with the Governor Haji Ghulam Ali here at Governor House. Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, former Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud and secretary higher education department

### Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami visits Late Mufti Abdul Shakoor's village to express condolences

PESHAWAR (Agencies): In a show of number of district and local leaders solidarity and sympathy, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq visited the native village of Mufti Abdul Shakoor in Lakki Marwat, the senior leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and Minister for Religious Affairs, who recently passed away in a car accident. Accompanied by Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ameer Prof. Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Tehsil Chairman Lakki Marwat Azizullah Khan, Siraj-ul-Haq expressed his conthe late Mufti Abdul Shakoor. A large Khan and others.

and workers, including Jamaat-e-Islami District Bannu Ameer Shafqatullah Khan were also present on the occasion. Paying tribute to Mufti Abdul Shakoor, Siraj-ul-Haq and other leaders appreciated his services to religion, country, and nation. They said that his sudden death is a shock for the entire nation. Meanwhile, Muhammad Munir Khan, the brother of the late Mufti Abdul Shakoor, expressed his gratitude to Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Sirajdolences to the family and relatives of ul-Haq and Tehsil Chairman Azizullah

#### Commissioner Bannu Division chairs meeting to prevent smuggling of food items

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner legal smuggling of wheat, flour, sugar, Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to address the issue of smuggling of district of North Waziristan. The meeting was attended by officials from varmultiple check posts to prevent the il- ing overspending and hoarding.

Bannu Division Parvez Sobatkhel on and fertilizer. District officials and police department officials will be present at all times for continuous monitoring, essential commodities out of the tribal and legal action will be taken against those caught smuggling. He said that these measures will not only prevent ilious departments, decided to establish legal smuggling but also help in avoid-

### KP government launches full-swing admission campaign in government schools

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Educa- have received their books, and the said Tuesday that the government great efforts to increase enrollment in government schools. With a target of 1.6 million children set for the current admission campaign, the government is striving to admit as many children as possible, even in the second shift.To support this effort, the rupees to provide free books to students. So far, 75 percent of students child has access to education.

tion Advisor Rahmat Salam Khattak remaining students will receive theirs after Eid. The government has also of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is making ensured that there is no shortage of teachers or classes to accommodate the increased enrollment.Last year, the government set a target of 0.8 million children, but this year the focus is on quality rather than quantity. In a statement, he said that the admission campaign will continue even after government has allocated ten billion Eid, demonstrating the government's commitment to ensuring that every

### CS KP for expediting rescue, relief operations at landslide site in Torkham

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secre- to clear the landslide and rocks. He tary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem directed the relief and rescue organizations to expedite the operation. The Peshawar and Nowshera districts Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

also visited Landi Kotal tehsil hospi-Aslam Chaudhry on Tuesday visited tal and inquired after the health of the the landslide hit site at Torkham and injured and directed the hospital administration to provide the best medical facilities to them. Commissioner Chief Secretary was informed that Peshawar and Deputy Commissioner heavy machinery was brought from Khyber accompanied with the Chief

### AKF distributes Ramadan Food Packages among 350 widows



PESHAWAR (APP): Al-Khidmat said that the foundation with the Foundation (AKF) with the assistance of Southern Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) Ramadan food packages among 350 widows during a ceremony held here on Tuesday. The food packages consist of flour, ghee, pulses, rice, tea leaf and other essential food items. Addressing the ceremony, the president of AKF Khyber Pakh-

assistance of its donors arranged food packages for poor and deserving people during Ramadan to include them in the happiness of the holy month. He said that the foundation distributes Ramadan Food Package each year, for which the people of the provincial metropolis are paying tributes to it. He pledged that the foundation will continue tunkhwa, Khalid Waqas Chamkani the process in future too.

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#### Transgender Harassment

Recently, the Data Darbar police arrested 16 individuals for physically assaulting transgender individuals during an HIV/AIDS awareness drive. The suspects verbally and physically assaulted the trans people and even snatched their CNIC and purse. While it is commendable that the police acted swiftly in apprehending the culprits, this incident serves as a glaring reminder of the everyday risks faced by the transgender community. It is encouraging to note that steps have been taken after the incident to ensure the safety and well-being of transgender individuals. A special police center has been established to provide security and legal aid to the community, and a transperson has been appointed at the Gulberg Khidmat Markaz Centre. Additionally, protection centers have been set up across the province, and other government departments have taken action in response to the incident, signaling a seriousness toward the matter not granted previously. It is important to acknowledge that feeling safe in public is a constitutional right, and it is a well-known fact that transgender individuals in Pakistan are not safe. The country is a signatory to several international human rights conventions that encompass the safety of transgender and other marginalised communities. This incident highlights the stark failure of such determinations and the prevalent need for community acceptance. Possible recommendations to address this issue could include increased awareness campaigns, sensitisation training for law enforcement personnel, and the implementation of stronger legal measures to protect the rights of transgender individuals. However, regardless of institutional recommendations, the path forward requires sustained efforts from all stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the general public, to create an inclusive and safe environment for transgender individuals in Pakistan. It is crucial to promote acceptance, tolerance, and respect for the transgender community, and ensure that their rights are protected and upheld at all times. Ending transphobic harassment and violence is not only a moral imperative, but also a legal obligation, and it is essential to work toward a society where transgender individuals can live with dignity and without fear of discrimination or violence.

# Avoiding default — By Malik M Ashraf

REPORTEDLY, IMF Director Middle signed the deal with IMF committing East and Central Asia Department Jihad Azour, in a meeting with the Pakistani delegation which is in New York to attend the IMF/World Bank spring meeting, expressed the hope that the IMF would soon reach a staff-level agreement with Pakistan. That assurance has come in the backdrop of commitments from friendly countries which the IMF had been insisting to secure before signing the agreement. It is indeed a good news for Pakistan. The conclusion of the agreement will also unlock other bilateral and multilateral financing avenues for Pakistan helping it to avoid the impending default and get out of the balance of payments crises. However the not so flattering news is that IMF has scaled down the growth forecast to 0.50% from the previously given prediction of 2%. That assessment is a sequel to acute shortage of dollars which has led to disruptions in the supply chains and consequently a number of industrial units stopping production. In view of the above, it will be naïve to assume that with the revival of IMF assistance the economy of Pakistan will suddenly embark on the path of sustained economic growth. The economy is in such a shambles that the managers of the economy have no quick-fix solution to mitigate the sufferings of the people belonging to the lower strata of the society. The agreement with IMF and promised assistance by the friendly countries might help in coping with immediate financial crisis but does not constitute a long-term recipe for the revival of the economy. The compliance with IMF conditions has already triggered hydra-headed inflation in the country. There is a possibility that with the full implementation of IMF conditions the government might have to enhance rates of electricity by 20%, gas by 50% and petrol between 15-20%, though in phases. Nevertheless, rejoining IMF programme is an inevitable necessity. Realistically speaking, the country can no more afford policies based on political expediencies. To be honest providing gas and electricity to the people below the cost of production might be good populous ploy but it is not sustainable over a long period of time without putting strain on the economy. It is indeed

the implementation of the terms prescribed by it, at the fag-end of its rule wriggled out of its pledge laying land mines for the PDM government. It was a disgraceful act. Even more shameful is PTI now having a swipe at the PDM government for putting the IMF progrtamme back on track. If the PTI government were still ruling the roost, it would also have to do the same. The permeating economic situation is also a sequel to political instability fomented by PTI. However, it cannot be solely thrown on its shoulders. The prevailing economic situation is a cumulative effect of the failure of successive governments to adopt rational economic policies to put the economy on the path of sustained economic development and also the impact of the global economic environment. They all have relied on loans and grants from bilateral and multilateral sources to keep the economy floating. Till date Pakistan has received \$ 185 billion from these sources. Pakistan also has entered into bail-out packages with IMF 23 times beginning from fifties. At present, Pakistan owes \$7.8 billion to IMF. It tells the whole story. These loans and grants were never utilized productively. However the governments kept duping the people by making false claims about development.

Unfortunately the global economic environment which also has profound impact on the economies of countries like Pakistan is also not very encouraging. The World Economic Forum (WEF) predicted in 18th Edition of its Global Risks Report 2023 that the cost of living will dominate global risks in the next two years, while climate action failure will continue to haunt the planet's residents for the next decade. The report has highlighted multiple areas where the world is at a critical inflection point, opining that as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine approaches one year, economies and societies will not easily rebound from continued shocks. The report calls for collective preparation for the next crisis the world may face and in doing so and shaping a pathway to more stable and resilient world. It is pertinent to mention that inflation is presently a global issue. Almost all the countries have been hit by it.

Courtesy: Pakistan Observer

## Netanyahu's government has gone with the wind

- By Dr Amira Abo el-Fetouh

Since Benjamin Netanyahu assumed premiership for the sixth time in an alliance with the extremist racist right three months ago, the Israeli state has been in turmoil and chaos in the street. Netanyahu has been experiencing a real dilemma and the situation may turn against him and he becomes unable to control it. He fears the fragmentation of the Jewish society into warring sects. The former Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin, warned of this, saying, "Israel's foreign policy must be based on three bases: the first is maintaining the strategic alliance with America; the second is maintaining the strategic alliance with America and the third is the strategic alliance with America." However, Netanyahu recently accused America of being involved in these demonstrations against him and of being behind them. However, the only thing the US did was issue statements condemning the statements by Netanyahu's government, to the point of explicitly stating that Netanyahu will not be invited to the White House any time soon. This goes against the tradition that has been followed for decades in this regard, thus indicating the major gap between the US and Israel. The crisis suffered by Netanyahu's racist government has reached the point of thinking about the need for a military coup. Israel's Haaretz newspaper hinted at this in its editorial "Netanyahu's Chaotic Government Is Forcing Israel into an Impossible Situation" saying, "In the absence of political leaders, the task falls to the heads of the security forces." The latest opinion polls have shown overwhelming support for the opponents of the Netanyahu government, as the opposing camp will get 64 seats if the elections are held today, without counting the Palestinian seats and the decline of the ruling Netanyahu camp from 64 to only 46 seats. This means that hundreds of thousands

tremist Netanyahu government, have quickly realised their mistake and poor choice of those to represent them in the Knesset and that they are the ones who put Israel in this crisis after choosing the fascist right-wing government. This large number of voters discovered the danger of religious Zionism and that it does not work in reality, as well as the weakness of Netanyahu and his submission to them due to his great need for their support to escape this crisis. It has become clear to everyone that Netanyahu does not care about anything else when it comes to his interests, and that his selfishness outweighs his concern for Israel's security. When it comes to him, to hell with everyone, just in order for Netanyahu to remain Prime Minister. Netanyahu has deluded the Israeli community into believes that his government is capable of achieving what none of the previous governments could achieve and promised to impose the spatial division of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and then to achieve the dream of complete control over the Mosque by unleashing religious Zionism, led by his ally Ben-Gvir. At the same time, he promised them to continue to attract more Arab countries to normalise relations with Israel and promised economic comfort to the people. However, it then became clear to the people, in the last 100 days, that these promises were fake and they were lies that could not be fulfilled. The Palestinian people showed their complete willingness to defend Al-Aqsa Mosque with their lives and offered their blood as a sacrifice for it. It became completely clear that imposing the spatial division of Al-Aqsa and imposing Israeli sovereignty over it is a fantasy and that it would be a turning point in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that will have its implications in the region, and will be an obstacle to normalising relations with the rest of the Arab countries that

Netanyahu dreamed of. The majority of the Israelis have realised that the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, which Netanyahu's allies are calling for, means the removal of the PA, Abbas's security coordination authority that protects the Israeli enemy from the Palestinian Resistance, and which control the situation on the security level. It acts as a barricade against the attacks of the Resistance and prevents the outbreak of a third Intifada. Removing the PA would mean returning to the time of black and white, where the situation is real and clear; it is an Occupation and a nation exercising its legitimate right to resist. This image is what the Zionist propaganda has worked to distort since the beginning of its project and this distortion of facts is represented by the establishment of a fake Palestinian state working under Israel and following its orders. It is like a security branch added to the Israeli security forces. The Palestinian Authority is the biggest lie in history. This result of the cursed Oslo Accords is the biggest trap that the Palestinians fell into and, when the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat became aware of this and returned, frustrated, after his last meeting with the former US President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the Camp David resort and started the second Intifada - the Al-Aqsa Intifada - they isolated him and poisoned him. The Netanyahu government relies on a closed ideology that deliberately relies on provocations and demagogy. This is why most of the Israeli people turned to the anti-Netanyahu camp because they thought that this camp is capable of manoeuvring and preserving the achievements that the Zionist movement has achieved, so far, since the establishment of Israel on the ruins of the Palestinian people, whose land they seized by force.

Courtesy: Middle East Monitor

### Promoting AI – By Huma Yusuf

THE launch last week of a task force stan must embrace AI to tackle the mulon Artificial Intelligence to spur national development is welcome news. Its goal is to develop a roadmap for AI adoption in governance, healthcare, education and business. It should be more ambitious, considering the role of AI in energy, housing, transport, etc. One assumes the task force will consider both opportunities and risks. But in its findings it should also recognise that successful AI adoption is intertwined with Pakistan's broader political trajectory. The PML-N has been beating the AI drum for some time, having set up the National Centre for AI in 2018, which trains students in AI, robotics, cybersecurity, etc. Its narratives have somehow leapfrogged the AI-as-job-killer story into a pitch for harnessing youth-led innovation and boosting economic competitiveness. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal projects a fantasy vision, in which the government hands out laptops, and young people develop AI programmes and bring in dollars. To be fair, the fantasy has some tendrils: 25,000 IT graduates are added to our workforce annually, and 85 million Pakistanis subscribe to 3G/4G cellular service. According to Tracxn, there are 92 AI startups in Pakistan, ranging from companies supporting precision agriculture to SME lending and women's reproductive health

of people who voted to create the ex-

tidimensional crises its economy and bureaucracy face. Done right, AI improves efficiency and productivity, and allows emerging economies to bypass clunkier technologies. Interestingly, the task force was launched days after over 1,000 tech leaders and researchers signed an open letter calling for a moratorium on developing advanced AI systems because — in an unregulated form — they present "profound risks to society and humanity". Those supporting the moratorium until "shared safety protocols" are agreed, depict a world in which AI systems destroy the global financial order, spark nuclear war, or remotely program labs to develop deadly viruses. Short-term concerns are arguably more relevant, including the implications of AI algorithms for individual rights, equality and political polarisation. When designed poorly (or nefariously) or fed bad data. Al systems can develop discriminatory, coercive or manipulative behaviour. For example, facial recognition technologies have demonstrated ethnic biases, while a test version of the AI chatbot GPT-4 could be swaved to feed users information about how to buy illegal guns. The role of AI algorithms in pushing disinformation on social media is well known. The moratorium idea has met with criticism, primarily because it isn't Courtesy: DAWN

enforceable. Few in the West would trust tech companies to self-report, and fewer would believe that China would cease all AI development, voluntarily surrendering a competitive edge. There are growing calls for government regulation instead (despite the acknowledgement that hapless regulators are playing catch up, with many govern- our own included — still struggling to pass adequate data privacy and protection laws). The debate is a reminder that tech is only as good as the societies and political systems in which it is developed and deployed. And this is where the plan to make Pakistan AI-enabled comes up against the current political turmoil. Safe and ethical AI requires the basic ingredients of a sound democracy: transparency, rule of law, accountability, respect for human rights, equality and inclusion. In our current context, these are hard to come by. The main pitfalls of AI have been highlighted in the political arena, where algorithms have been used to manipulate swing voters, spread deep fakes and generate extreme political arguments to drive polarisation. Our leadership is willing to manipulate the Constitution to retain power — can you imagine what they would do with algorithms?

#### Toxic textiles

Synthetic textiles are a significant source of microplastics in the environment, which pose a severe threat to the environment and human health. Microplastics are small plastic particles that are less than 5mm in size and can be released from synthetic textiles during washing. These particles are too small to be captured by wastewater treatment plants and end up polluting the environment, causing significant environmental damage. Synthetic textiles, such as polyester, nylon, and acrylic, are made from petroleum-based materials

awareness. There's no doubt that Paki-

#### Letters to the Editor

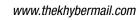
manufacturing, use, and disposal of synthetic textiles, small fibers can break off and become released into the environment as microplastics. Microplastics can also have adverse health effects on humans. Inhalation of microplastics has been shown to cause respiratory problems, and ingestion of microplastics can lead to damage to the digestive system. There are several solutions to address the issue of microplastics from synthetic textiles. One solution is to reduce the use of synthetic textiles and switch to natural alternatives such as cotton, linen, and wool. There are several that do not biodegrade. During the natural fibers that can be used as -Lahore

alternatives to synthetic fibers that have similar properties and are cost-effective. These natural fibers have similar properties to synthetic fibers but are more sustainable and eco-friendly. The release of microplastics from synthetic textiles during washing is a significant contributor to the pollution of our oceans and waterways, causing severe environmental damage and potentially impacting human health. The use of synthetic textiles must be reduced, and alternatives such as natural materials should be encouraged.

- Fayyaz Salih Hussain

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regrettable to note that PTI which











### Sindh CM approves Rs1.6bn Sindh Toll Plaza Surveillance project

KARACHI (Agencies): Sindh Chief Minthere was a dire need to enhance securiister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting at Chief Minister House approved a Rs1.6 billion Sindh Toll Plaza Surveillance Project to enhance security at entry points to Sindh through the installation of CCTV Cameras on 40 Toll-Plazas. The meeting was attended by IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Home Secretary Saeed Mangnijo, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Adl IG (Investigation) Munir Shaikh, Secretary Finance Sajid Jamal Abro, and other concerned officers. Sindh Chief Minister said that

ty at the entry points to the province. He added that the province has 40 Toll Plazas where high-definition CCTV cameras should be installed to ensure proper monitoring. IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon told the CM that his department has prepared a Rs1.56 billion Sindh Toll Plaza Surveillance Project. He said that the CCTV Cameras would have Fullframe (FR) and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capabilities with centralized monitoring and alert system for blacklisted vehicles and crim-

inals. The CM after discussion approved the scheme and directed the IG police to launch the project at the earliest. The meeting also discussed granting Investigation Allowance to Investigators. The IG police told the chief minister that 8000 residential quarters of Sindh police have been damaged by the recent heavy rains and floods. He also added that various training barracks have also been affected badly. The chief minister approved Rs 4 billion for repairing and renovating the residential quarters and Rs 2 billion for repairing training barracks.

### UoS organizes seminar on 'Promoting Peace through Interfaith Harmony and Cultural Diversity'

SARGODHA (APP): Directorate of and harmony. Speakers at the semi-ing peace and harmony is possible. By Students Affairs & Raiz Shad Co-curricular Forum organized a one-day seminar on 'Promoting Peace through Interfaith Harmony and Cultural Diversity' at the University of Sargodha on Tuesday. The seminar aimed at encourage dialogue and understanding between different faiths and cultures, and to promote mutual respect and acceptance. The seminar was well-attended by participants from various religious and culturalbackgrounds, including Christian Rev. fr.Waqas Mubarak and Suneel Sameer from the Hindu community. The event featured presentations on the importance of interfaith harmony and cultural diversity in promoting peace much-needed reminder that promot-

nar stressed the need for individuals and communities to work together to 'build bridges' across religious and cultural divides. They said that interfaith and intercultural collaborations could have on communities and showcased successful examples from around the world. They stressed that diversity was a strength and that it was only through recognizing and embracing differences to build a more peaceful and harmonious world. Speaking at the event, Dean faculty of Arts and Humanities Prof. Dr. Gulam Abbas Gondal said: "In a world where intolerance and division often dominate the headlines, initiatives such as this seminar are a

celebrating our differences and working together, we can create a world that is more just, peaceful, and harmonious for all", he added. The keynote speakers at the seminar praised the organizers of UoS for providing a valuable platform for dialogue and collaboration and expressed their hope that similar events would be held in the future. Many emphasized the importance of promoting interfaith harmony and cultural diversity in today's increasingly diverse and interconnected world. In the end, Prof. Dr. Gulam Abbas Gondal expressed their gratitude to all the participants, keynote speakers, and guests for making the event a success by giving them appreciation shields.

#### Uzbekistan shows interest to invest in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov has expressed keen interest to enhance bilateral relations in trade, industry, and e-commerce and emphasized the need to take appropriate steps to expand trade volume up to \$1 billion between both countries. He expressed these views in a meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar here on Tuesday. He said bilat- minister's political reconciliation efforts full support and cooperation.

eral trade relations had shown a positive trend, and trade data for the fiscal year 2021-22 reflected a growth of \$91 million, whereas Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan had doubled from \$36.56 million in July-March 2021-22 to \$73.12 million during July-March 2022-23. He said that bilateral trade volume could increase to \$5 billion annually by removing unwanted barriers. He also acknowledged the

to bring all parties on the negotiation table. The two sides also agreed for working jointly to identify opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, and other sectors. During the meeting, the commerce minister acknowledged the enormous potential for trade between the two countries and said that there was a need to identify new sectors for cooperation and assured the ambassador of his

#### Scores of initiatives being taken to make Pakistan climate resilient country - Sherry

Islamabad (Agencies): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman represented Pakistan at the 4th Meeting of the Heads of the Ministers and Agencies of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states responsible for Environmental Protection organized virtually by India. During the meeting, Minister Rehman emphasized the critical role that the SCO could play at the regional level in achieving shared goals related to environmental sustainability and climate resilience. She also highlighted the value of the SCO as a forum for member states to share their perspectives on this existential crisis that is now redefining global, regional and national priorities and responses in the 21st century. Minister Rehman said, "The sustainability of life on earth and the overall socio-economic development of current and future generations are now under threat. We all agree as combat pollution. Despite the fact la. The Minister concluded, "Climate that constructive cooperation on bold that our policies are aligned with SCO Change knows no borders. The need climate and environmental issues is critical to actively move the needle and bridge the gap between the pledges and pipelines that we all make multilaterally, as well as the gap between ambitions and actions." Minister Rehman drew attention to Pakistan's unique position as one of the ten most vulnerable countries to climate change, despite contributing less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions. "We are on the front lines of climate change, braving disastrous floods, unlivable heatwaves, and fast-melting glaciers," said the Minister. She highlighted the catastrophic floods that occurred in Pakistan in 2022 which inundated one-third of the country, impacted 33 million people and caused over US\$30 billion in economic losses and damages. Minister Rehman also said that for Pakistan climate change has become a high priority on all ministerial agendas, and both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan are actively working to address climate



els. "We have intensified our efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and implement large-scale nature-based interventions, as well Fund under the UNFCCC's umbrelgoals as well as by commitments made in the Paris Agreement, implementation of our collective plans fall short as the climate clock is ticking faster than we imagined," the Minister said. She shared details about Pakistan's recent policies and programmes, such as the National Clean Air Policy, National Hazardous Waste Management Policy, Clean Green Pakistan, Living Indus Initiative, the creation of new national parks and expansion of protected areas, and federal-level regulations on plastics. The Minister emphasized that the SCO is a crucial multilateral forum for cooperation and collaboration, and Pakistan remains committed to engaging with it to create momentum in climate action. She also mentioned that Pakistan has championed the cause for climate justice multilateralism at COP27 by leading the negotiations on establishing the Loss & Damage Fund as the Chair of G77+ China, which is a demonstration of goals successfully

expressed her belief that SCO members can contribute to future dialogues on capitalizing the Loss & Damage for effective utilization of this forum by ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Is- stations until the fines are paid, addleveraging our respective comparative advantages and sharing experiences and working towards our common goal of mitigating and adapting to climate change is the need of the hour. We must act now to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come." The meeting was led by a ministerial delegation from the SCO member states of China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Russia and Uzbekistan. In a joint statement, the SCO members emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation in the field of information exchange, conservation of biological resources, adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its consequences. They reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, and the Paris Agreement, and emphasized the need to ensure a holistic approach to combating climate change.

#### Efforts of FESCO officials for uninterrupted power supply commendable: Chairman BoD

achieved when countries collaborate

FAISALABAD (Agencies): Chairman Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Board of Directors (BODs) Malik Tahsin Awan has said that the efforts of FESCO officers and officials to ensure uninterrupted power supply to

commendable. In a statement here on Tuesday, he said that despite shortage of staff and adverse conditions, the electricity was supplied continuously to the consumers especially during Sehr, Iftar and

consumers during the holy month are Taraweeh hours. He said that consumers' complaints were also resolved by taking prompt action whereas teamwork of FESCO staff facilitated the fasting people to perform their religious rituals and prayers without any difficulty.

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#### President announces 90-day remission in sentences for prisoners on Eid

Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday approved remission in sentences for prisoners on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr. The president approved the remission of 90 days in exercise of the Article 45 of the Constitution, the President House said. The relief will be applicable to male prisoners above 65 years, who have completed their one-third sentence. The remission will also be applied to the female prisoners aged

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President above 60 years, who have completed their one-third sentence. Likewise, the prisoners under the age of 18 years, who have completed their one-third sentence, would also be eligible for availing the relief. However, the remission will not apply to those convicted of capital punishment, espionage, rape, anti-state activities, kidnapping, terrorism, incurring loss to national exchequer, financial crimes, and robbery.

### Polio vaccination at transit sites during Eid exodus

MULTAN (Agencies): Punjab has deployed polio teams at key transit sites to ensure the vaccination of children travelling with their families to celebrate Eidul Fitr in their hometowns. Keeping in view the magnitude of movement, polio teams have been deployed at 20 key sites in 14 high-risk districts. Districts, where polio teams have been deployed, include Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Bahawalpur, Mianwali, Bhakkar, Attock and Rahim Yar Khan. Teams have been deputed mostly at railway stations and bus stands. Teams have also been deployed at the tourist destination, Fort Monroe. These will perform their duties for one month in two shifts and ensure that no child remained unvaccinated. The teams deployed at these sites are in addition to the human resource deployed at permanent polio transit sites set up at inter-provincial entry and exit sites as well as international airports. Head

of the polio programme, Khizer Afzaal Chaudhary, chaired a meeting on Tuesday to finalise the deployment of polio teams and locations of the special transit sites. The Polio programme head expressed the hope that the deployment of polio teams will help prevent poliovirus reinfection. He expressed his satisfaction that all the teams deployed during the Eid holidays have been given orientation. He appealed to the parents to cooperate with polio teams at the transit sites. "as understood people are travelling to their native towns to celebrate Eid with their loved ones. But it is also necessary that children are given polio drops when they are travelling. The administration of drops will help prevent poliovirus circulation from one place to another", the EOC head underlined. Punjab is polio free for the last over two years. But polio environmental samples collected from two sites tested positive in Lahore this year in January, says a news release.

### RDA issues notices to three marketing companies

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Rawalpindi it could not be declared as an approved Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa on Tuesday issued notices to three marketing companies for advertising illegal housing projects. According to RDA spokesman, the Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA issued notices to Advice Associates, Lead Marketing, and Zameen.com for violating the rules and directed to stop advertising illegal housing schemes.

or legal project. "The marketing companies are misleading the citizens and they are investing in illegal housing schemes. The marketing, and projection of such projects is giving the impression that the projects are approved and legal, he added. "The marketing companies have been directed to stop advertisements of illegal projects." He advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing schemes and check their status before any investment on the RDA website www.rda.gop. The marketing companies had been pk. "The MP&TE Directorate of RDA directed that unless a project gets a No can also be contacted to know the status Objection Certificate (NOC) from RDA, of the housing societies," he informed.

### NEOC to be served as central digital hub: - Chairman NDMA

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Tuesday briefed the Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Senator Mushahid Hussain that the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) would serve as a central digital hub and revamped National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) as think tank which would enhance resilience to disasters.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed met the NDMA chairman here in his office, the NDMA wrote on its official Twitter handle. He briefed the Senator on National Disaster Preparedness and Response Regime in light of lessons learnt from Floods 2022. Mushahid Hussain endorsed the concept of Remodelled National Preparedness & Response Regime and lauded NDMA's efforts to enhance capacity for better disaster management.

#### Islamabad Police issue list of 100 Safe City E-Challan defaulters

a list of 100 defaulters of Safe City E-Challan, who have been found the most frequent violators of traffic rules. "These individuals have been issued e-challan tickets for their violations but have failed to submit the required fines," said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Police on Tuesviolators would be locked in police for all citizens, he added.

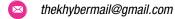
lamabad Capital Police has issued ing that the Safe City cameras are diligently monitoring vehicles violating the traffic rules. The spokesman urged all citizens to comply with the city's traffic rules. The owners of these vehicles have been asked to submit the fines as soon as possible. The Islamabad Capital Police is making efforts for making an integrated day. He said that the vehicles of the traffic system to ensure safer roads

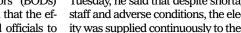
#### PCB to play its part in reducing carbon emission

LAHORE (Agencies): The Pakistan cricket fans at large. PCB Manage-Cricket Board will use its reach to create awareness about the need to hands with Minus2Degrees (M2D). As part of its corporate social responsibility, the PCB will promote practices that encourage recycling during cricket events with the aim of achieving net zero carbon emission. The first step towards this cause will see the PCB and M2D plant as many as a thousand trees on Lahore's famous Canal road. Over the course of the next two years, the PCB will benefit from the M2D's research on bringing down the carbon emission and will adopt recommended practices for the betterment of environment that will help the sport and Pakistan

ment Committee Chairperson Najam Sethi said on Tuesday: "The climate reduce carbon emission by joining change is a real threat to our existence and it is extremely important that we play a role in create awareness about the need to reduce carbon emission". "Cricket is the most loved and followed sport in the country and we have signed a MoU with Minus-2Degrees to use the game's reach for a cause that will benefit this and the future generations. "The PCB has always been a supporter of eco-friendly campaigns and we will support M2D in this cause. Together, we can make changes and contribute to our society, making it a habit to use eco-friendly, recycled, and sustainable products to reduce pollution", he added.









### Compliance center opened at commerce ministry to facilitate businesses, exports

Tuesday inaugurated the first-ever National Compliance Centre (NCC) to ensure international compliance requirements and facilitate the manufacturers, exporters, and certification agencies through information sharing and training/capacity building. Addressing the launching ceremony of the center, the minister reiterated the resolve of the government to accelerate efforts for promoting sustainable and inclusive development. He said that Pakistan stood firm in its commitment to United Nations as well as the international community for joining hands in their endeavors for promoting ethical supply chains, developing humane and discrimination-free workplaces, and replenishing and rejuvenating climate. He said the government wanted to solve problems of industry and exports in one place, adding that the regulatory regime should be the same for all buyers adding that all commitments made under GSP Plus would be fulfilled. Exporters would

be facilitated for the promotion of ex-

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of ports in future which would result in Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on an improved economic situation, he added. Naveed Qamar said that the economic situation needed to move forward as the industrial sector was anxiously waiting for the signing of the IMF program. Federal Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Interior Climate Change, Overseas Pakistani and Human, Resource Development, Human Rights, Industries and Production, Attorney General of Pakistan and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs attended the event. The diplomats of various countries including the EU member states China, US, the UK, Japan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were also present, besides a large number of notable industrialists, representatives from ILO, World Bank Group, Pakistan Regional Economic Integration Activity (PREIA) USAID, other development sector agencies and academia.

Secretary Commerce introduced the evolution of the idea of the National Compliance Centre and informed the audience that in a globalized integrated world, compliance and



standardization were crucial for export competitiveness. He urged the businesses to understand the compliance requirements of international markets and assured them that the NCC would partner with them in the cause of promoting a culture of equitable growth and a discrimination-free workplace. Chairman Pakistan Textile Council (PTC) Shahzad Saleem appreciated the idea of the National Compliance Center and in-

formed that for the competitiveness of the textile sector, compliances were getting stricter and urgent action was needed. Officer in charge of ILO Khemphone highlighted the work done by ILO in consultation with businesses and workers in Pakistan. Khalil Sattar spoke about compliance requirements in agro food sector and informed that the sector looked forward to working with NCC for the national cause. Vice Chair- attended the event online.

man South, PTC Fawad Anwar also endorsed the idea of setting up NCC. Musadaq Zulqarnain highlighted the challenges faced by the sector in improving compliance and hoped that the establishment of NCC shall go a long way in helping Pakistan achieve a quantum leap in exports. Thomas Seiler, Deputy Head of EU Mission in Pakistan spoke about the relationship between UN conventions pertaining to Good Governance and Sustainable Development. He lauded the work done by Pakistan in implementation of conventions since the grant of GSP+ and mentioned that the EU looked forward to continue working with the government of Pakistan in this regard. Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also joined the event and interacted with diplomats and entrepreneurs. He highlighted the future plans that the Government has developed for promoting inclusive and sustainable policies. Chief Secretaries of the provinces, Representatives from provincial departments of labour, industry, planning and development also

### University College of Nursing of IUB holds Health Seminar

BAHAWALPUR (Agencies): University College of Nursing the Islamia University of Bahawalpur has organized the Model of World Health Seminar (Session on Health Care Issues). Where the students of University College of Nursing and Quaid-e-Azam Medical College participated as delegates from different selected countries and the ethical problems of their country were presented in the seminar as the prospects and views of the problems of these countries to be solved. Therefore, resolutions were proposed in the World Assembly. The seminar was presided over by Principal University College of Nursing Farhan Mukhtar and at the end of the session he presented a declaration stating that the international nations need to take urgent steps to solve such ethical issues in health care. The best delegate award was given to the team representing the USA by the students of the fourth semester University College of Nursing. The second position was won by the team representing Britain, which was won by fourth semester University College of Nursing students, while the third position went to the team representing China, which was won by second year MBBS students of Quaide-Azam Medical College. The panel of judges included Prof. Dr. Imran Habib,



Participants of the seminar jointly organized by the University College of Nursin Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawa

Dean Faculty of Law, Islamia University Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Yasmin Rufi, Department of Political Science, Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Dr. Sara Nasir, Assistant Professor, Radiology, Quaid-e-Azam Medical. The chief guest of this prestigious event was Prof. Dr. Sophia Farrukh, Principal, Quaide-Azam Medical College, during her address, she said that such activities develop the intelligence of the learners and it will provide the students with a wider perspective of ethical concepts. She appreciated the efforts of the University College of Nursing team for or-

ganizing such informative sessions on sensitive and less discussed bioethical issues. She emphasized that in future also such activities should be planned between the University College of Nursing and Quaid-e-Azam Medical College so that the students can get maximum education. Prof. Dr. Asadullah Madani, Director QEC/Chairman Department of DPT, Prof. Dr. Haji Muhammad Shoaib Khan, Chairman Department of H&ND and Dr. Fazal Mehmood Director Medical Education/ Chairman Department of Public Health also attended the event.

### Punjab PDWP approves 10 developmental schemes

LAHORE (Agencies): Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) in its 54th meeting of current financial year approved ten developmental schemes of various sectors with an estimated cost of Rs 23561.089 million here on Tuesday. The approved deagatpur at the cost of Rs 2107.533 million; Punjab Rural Sustainable Water and Sanitation Project (PRSWSSP) Pilot Phase: Cluster Central - I (Remaining Villages of Bhawana) at the cost of Rs 896.320 million; Punjab Rural Sustainable Water Supply & Sanitation

Project (PRSWSSP) Pilot Phase: Cluster South-1 (Project: Phase II- Revenue Villages Tehsil Khair Pur Tamewali, Bahawalpur) at the cost of Rs 1003.350 million; Punjab Rural Sustainable Water and Sanitation Project (PRSWSSP) Pilot Phase: Cluster North at the cost of velopmental scheme Included: Punjab Rs 1441.940 million; Punjab Rural Sus-Rural Sustainable Water and Sanitation tainable Water and Sanitation Project Project(PRSWSSP) Pilot Phase: Clus- (PRSWSSP) in Tehsil Kahror Pakka opment of Online Statistical System in ter South-III (Remaining Villages of Li- (Lot-2) at the cost of Rs 1153.538 million; Up-Gradation of Emergency Operation Theaters/Radiology/Laundry & Pathology Department, Lady Willingdon Hospital, Lahore (Revised) at the cost of Rs 695.38 million; Provision of Whole Body Multi-Slice Ultra-Fast CT Scanner for Acute Stroke and vascular

Interventions at Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, Rawalpindi (Revised) at the cost of Rs 562.112 million; Programme for Revamping of Emergencies of Tertiary Care Hospital in Punjab (DHQ Teaching Hospital, Rawalpindi) at the cost of Rs 489.145 million; Construction of Papin Dam Project. (Revised) at the cost of Rs 14616.271 million; Devel-Puniab (OSSP) (Revised) at the cost of Rs 595.500 million. P&D Board Chairman Ali Sarfraz Hussain presided over the meeting, while the Board Secretary Sohail Anwar, all the board members, provincial secretaries and other senior representatives of the relevant departments attended the meeting.

### Balochistan vital link in economic changes due to CPEC: Wali Kakar

QUETTA (Agencies): Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan said that Balochistan was an important link in the economic changes taking place in the areas due to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Gwadar is the shining jewel in the crown of a great project like CPEC, due to the long coastline, there are great responsibilities for the development of the blue economy and the

promotion of marine sciences, he added. He expressed these views while talking to the Vice Chancellor of Lasbela University Dr. Dost Mohammad Baloch and the Pro-Chancellor Dr. Jalal Faiz at Governor House Ouetta here. On this occasion, the governor said that we should plan to keep in mind the requirements of the near future saying that In this regard, Lasbella University could play an important

role in making use of maritime trade and stabilizing the blue economy.He said that only by making full use of the world's modern research and innovation, we could promote a healthy environment in the higher education institutions across the province saying that we would raise the educational standard and harmonize the teaching and learning methods with modern requirements.

#### Elephant Noor Jahan being given continuous medical care under foreign experts:

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr Syed Saifur Rahman on Tuesday said that the Karachi Zoo elephant Noor Jahan was being given continuous medical care with the consultation and guidance of a 9-member committee of experts formed for the treatment and well-being of the zoo elephant. The zoo staff and experts using the prescribed medicines and doing all this as per in-

structions on the video link from the international organization Four Paws. He said that the local team of experts in Karachi Zoo is in full contact with Four Paws and constant information was being exchanged regarding the health of the elephant Noor Jahan. A 9-member committee has been constituted comprising veterinary experts from Austria and Germany who are particularly

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qualified to treat elephants, Four Paws has been working for the welfare and care of the animals and this organization provides guidance and support in the care and treatment of animals in different parts of the world, which is why KMC has hired their services for the treatment of Noor Jahan. He said that the suggestions given by the committee will be implemented without delay.

### Exhibition of rare manuscripts of the Holy Quran held in Parliament House



ISLAMABAD National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that the Holy Quran is the best guide for humanity and implementing its teaching in letter and spirit will lead all Muslim umma out of current socio-economic challenges. Speaking at inaugurating of Exhibition of rare Manuscripts of The Holy Quran in connection with Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Constitution at Parliament House, He said that this Exhibition would make our next generation familiar with rich islamic values and traditions. He added, " both Pakistan and Iran enjoy mutual ties based upon shared culture of Islamic values and traditions." The Exhibition of rare manuscripts of the Holy Quran was organised by National Assembly Secretariat in collaboration with Iranian Consulate and Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies. Parliamentarians, Muslim world.

(Agencies): Speaker Media Representatives, Students and large number of public witnessed the Exhibition. The exhibition was held in connection with Golden Jubilee Celebration of Constitution and sacred Day of 27th Ramadan. Iranian Ambassador in Pakistan Seyyed Muhammad Ali said that both Pakistan and Iran enjoys cordial mutual ties based upon shared Islamic culture and traditions. He also expressed his gratitude to Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf for extending cooperation to held this exhibition. Later on , in response to a query by Media Representatives Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that improving ties between Iran and Saudia Arabia is pivotal for regional peace and progress. He said that recent positive developments in relations between both Iran and Saudi Arabia is good omen for

#### Queen's commonwealth essay competition 2023 opens



ISLAMABAD (APP): The Royal Commonwealth Society has announced the opening of entries for the prestigious Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition until 30 June 2023. Thousands of young people take part every year in the Oueen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, the world's oldest international writing competition aimed to recognise achievement, elevate youth voices and develop key skills through creative writing, said a news release here on Tuesday

This year, the essay competition asked entrants to explore the power young people hold within the global community and consider how this power can be harnessed to make a meaningful impact in the world. This focus coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government declaring 2023 a year dedicated to youth-led action for sustainable and inclusive development. Essays are submitted in two categories – a 'Senior Category' born between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2009 and a Junior Category' born on or after 1 July 2009. All successful entries will receive a Certificate

of Participation. Whereas, the top two winners from each category will be awarded a trip to London for a week of educational and cultural events, culminating in a special Awards Ceremony at a royal palace. Pakistani youth have done extremely well in recent years with Zahra Hussain. a student of Lahore Grammar School International, coming first in the senior category in 2018 and Zainab Nawaz, a grade 8 student, achieving a Bronze Award in the junior category in 2022. Zoë Ware, Acting Deputy Head of Mission at the British High Commission, said, "The Queen's Commonwealth Essay is a fantastic opportunity for young Pakistanis to engage with the Commonwealth and sharpen their writing skills to become the future leaders of tomorrow." "Sixty per cent of the Commonwealth's 2.5 billion people are under the age of 30. This young demographic represents a dynamic 'youth force for change', made up of exceptional young people who are increasingly involved in advocacy, decision-making and action. I hope to see some winning essays from young Pakistanis in this year's competition," she added.

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### PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 201.38 points

dex of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 201.38 points, with a positive change of 0.50 per cent, closing at 40,448.05 against 40,246.67 points on the previous day. A total of 67,536,928 shares were traded during the day as compared to 94,781,630 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 2.275 billion against Rs 1.16 per share, and Hascol Petrol with

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The 100-in- 3.056 billion on the last trading day. 2,759,500 shares at Rs 5.55 per share. ISLAMABAD (APP): Textile exports million, knit-wear by 9.10 per cent As many as 330 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 163 of them recorded gains and 145 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd. with 3,534931 shares at Rs 1.98 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 3,323,854 shares at Rs

Nestle Pakistan XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 100.00 per share price, closing at Rs 5350.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with a Rs 71.75 rise in its per share price to Rs 1040.63. Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 246.00 per share closing at Rs 18054.00, followed by Khyber Textile with a Rs 51.75 decline to close at Rs 638.25.

### Goldman earnings take shine off US stocks

London (Agencies): Strong Chinese bered by Covid health restrictions economic growth boosted markets in Asia and Europe on Tuesday, but Wall Street stocks sagged on disappointing bank earnings. The blockbuster 4.5 percent expansion reported by China, helped by above-forecast retail sales last month, revived optimism for a recovery in the world's second-biggest economy after its worst performance in decades last year. The first-quarter figures are the first snapshot since 2019 of a Chinese economy unencum-

that included city-wide lockdowns lasting months.But below-forecast readings on Chinese industrial output and fixed-asset investment suggested weaknesses remained in the economy, and an uneven recovery. "We expect to see higher GDP growth rate in upcoming quarters as a result of the low base from last year, and the annual growth target of five percent should be achievable," said Chaoping Zhu, a strategist at JP Morgan OANDA trading group.

Asset Management. "That said, some challenges still exist in the economy.' The Chinese economy remains beset by a series of problems including a debt-laden property sector, global inflation and the threat of recession elsewhere. "It's not just the pandemic that the country is bouncing back from, confidence in the property market has been severely undermined and it will take time to recover," said Craig Erlam, senior analyst at the

### Electric vehicles are key battleground at Shanghai Auto Show

Shanghai (AFP/APP): China was the road to the future for foreign brands at the Shanghai Auto Show on Tuesday, who are racing to catch up with Chinese competitors in the crucial electric vehicle market EVs make up a quarter of car sales in China, the world's largest car market, and dozens of new models from domestic and Western brands were unveiled at the country's first auto show since Covid restrictions were lifted. Domestic brands command 81 percent of the EV market in China, according to analysts at Counterpoint Research, and European industry titans were at pains to emphasise the importance of doing business in China. "China is the place to be," BMW executive Frank Weber told a news conference. "Munich is where we come from, but China is where we are at home." Almost 70 percent of BMW's newest operating system involves functions specific to the Chinese market and the company has tripled its research and development there in the past three years, BMW said. "What moves Chinese customers today will move the world tomorrow," another BMW executive, Oliver Zipse,



the i Vision Dee, a colour-changing electric sports sedan. Fellow German carmaker Volkswagen announced it would invest one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in a new development centre for electric vehicles in southern China as part of its "in China, for China" strategy. An earlier news release said its brands would present 20 electrified models at the show, with the Volkswagen ID.7 and new Cayenne Porsche getting their world premieres. "With

told the audience as he presented its high level of innovation, China is an important pacesetter for the entire automotive industry," the news release said. "A strong position in China strengthens our global competitiveness." Mercedes-Benz announced it has fully electrified two classic models, the off-road G-class and its Maybach SUV. Elon Musk's Tesla, the biggest seller of electric cars globally, is not attending, and a representative did not say why it was a no-show when contacted by AFP.

#### Fitch upgrades eight Saudi banks' long-term issuer default ratings to 'A-

RIYADH (Agencies): US credit rating that banks in Saudi Arabia are receivagency Fitch has upgraded eight Saudi banks' long-term issuer default ratings to "A-" from "BBB+," with a stable outlook, according to a press statement. The eight Saudi banks are Riyad Bank, Saudi Awwal Bank, Banque Saudi Fransi, Arab National Bank, Alinma Bank, The Saudi Investment Bank, Bank Aljazira and Gulf International Bank — Saudi Arabia. According to Fitch, the rating upgrade reflects these banks' creditworthiness relative to other issuers in Saudi Arabia. The press statement further revealed that Fitch ternational depository receipts to "A-"

ing adequate support from the authorities, affirming their financial stability. "The authorities have a strong ability to provide support to the banking system given their large external reserves and increased access to external markets," said Fitch in the report.

The report added: "There is a long record of support for Saudi banks, and Fitch considers the authorities to still have a strong willingness to support the banking system to maintain stability in the domestic financial system." Moreover, Fitch upgraded the governupgraded Gulf International Bank's ment support ratings of Al Rajhi Bankand Gulf International Bank UK's in- ing and Investment Corp. and the Saudi National Bank to "A-" from "BBB+." from "BBB+." In its report, Fitch noted However, both banks' LT IDRs are progressive dividend.

unaffected by the rating actions. Earlier on April 05, Fitch had upgraded Saudi Arabia's IDR to "A+" from "A." The increase was attributed to Saudi Arabia's strong financial position, favorable debt-to-gross domestic product ratio and secure sovereign net foreign assets. Fitch added the improved rating is conditional on Saudi Arabia's continuous commitment to steady progress with fiscal, economic and governance reforms. Last week, Fitch also upgraded oil major Saudi Arabian Oil Co.'s rating to "A+" from "A," with a stable outlook. Fitch attributed the rise in Aramco's rating upgrade to the company's strong business profile and solid ambitions to deliver a sustainable and

#### HSBC top shareholder renews call for breaking up of bank

HONG KONG (Reuters): Top shareholder of HSBC (HSBA.L) renewed its call for breaking up of the Asia-focused bank on Tuesday, saving the lender has failed to address key business model challenges which has resulted in deterioration in its operating performance. Ping An Asset Management Company (Ping An AMC) said in a statement HSBC has "drained" its Asia unit of div-



idends and growth capital to support its relatively low-return non-Asia businesses. Over the past two years, Ping An AMC said it had shared numerous structural suggestions with HSBC management ranging from listing the HSBC Asia business in Hong Kong to consolidating Asia businesses Reporting by Selena Li; Editing by Sumeet Chatterjee and Louise Heavens

### Airbus delays some 2024 deliveries, keeps output goals

PARIS, April 18 (Reuters) - Airbus (AIR.PA) has started notifying airlines about delivery delays in 2024 for its best-selling A320neo family of jets, with several hundred of the single-aisle planes set to be postponed by as much as three months, industry sources said on Tuesday. Airbus confirmed unspecified delays for 2024 in a statement to Reuters but said they did not reflect any worsening of supply chain problems since it revised production plans earlier this year. It reaffirmed production targets for 2024 and beyond. "We already communicated in December on the impact for 2023 and are now



talking about 2024 in detail," Airbus said by email. For airlines, the latest wave of notices marks the first concrete indication of supply constraints beyond this year. The delays particularly affect the larger and in-demand A321neo variant, which now represents over half of Airbus deliveries, the sources said. Airlines and leasing companies have protested in recent months over a trickle of short-term delay notices amid ongoing supply chain problems. Airbus is now giving more advance notice. "We try to be as transparent as possible to provide visibility for our customers," an Airbus spokesperson said. Two airline industry sources said they were still struggling to find the clarity needed for network planning, however. "We are still being drip-fed," one of the sources said, adding the delays suggested supply chains were not significantly improving.

### Over \$12 bln textile products exported in 9 months

reached \$12,476.459 million during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2022-23), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Textile exports showed a decline of 12.40 percent from \$14,242.613 million during the same period of last year (July-March 2021-22). The export of raw cotton witnessed positive growth during July-March (2022-23) of 97.46 percent from \$6.577 million (last fiscal year) to \$12.987 million, and that of tents, canvas and tarpaulin went up by 25.10 percent from \$82.145 million to \$102.766 million. Similarly, the export of cotton varn showed negative growth by 36.92 percent from \$908.487 million to \$573.084 million. Likewise, the export of cotton cloth decreased by 14.34 percent from \$1,795.487 million to \$1,538.031 million; cotton (carded or combed) by 38.99 per cent from \$1.631 million to \$0.995 million, yarn (other than cotton yarn) by 31.69 per cent from \$48.188 million to \$32.918 according to the PBS data

from \$3,729.682 million to \$3,390.335 million, bed wear by 17.03 percent from \$2,448,860 million to \$2,031,741 million and towels by 9.07 percent, from \$819.589 million to \$745.288 million. The export of readymade garments also declined by 7.20 percent from \$2,863.567 million to \$2,657.265 million; art, silk and synthetic textile by 9.94 percent from \$343.591 million to \$309.432 million; made-up articles (excluding towels, bedwear) by 14.71 per cent from \$627.006 million to \$534.761 million, and all other textile materials by 3.69 percent from \$567.834 million to \$546.856 million. On a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the textile goods' exports declined by 22.61 percent in March 2023 to \$ 1,257.804 million against \$1,625.242 million in March 2022. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, the textile goods' exports however increased by 6.55 percent in March 2023 against \$1 180.450 million in February 2023,

### Asian markets drop as China growth data fails to impress traders

Hong Kong (AFP/APP): Asian mar- optimism for an economic recovery kets mostly fell Tuesday, even as data showed China's economy grew quarter after activity resumed following three years of painful zero-Covid measures. The blockbuster 4.5 percent expansion, helped by above-forecast retail sales last month, revived country to a standstill.

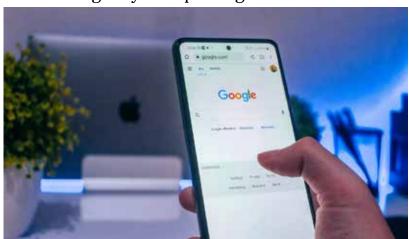
in the country after its worst performance in decades last year. The figfar more than expected in the first ures are the first snapshot since 2019 of a Chinese economy unencumbered by public health restrictions, which included months-long city-wide lockdowns that brought large parts of the

#### RCCI inks contract with ANTH

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpin- ments. Under the agreement, RCCI di Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) and Dr Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital (ANTH) on Tuesday signed an agreement to provide discounts to its members on various services. President Saqib Rafiq behalf of RCCI and Col (retd) Dr Ghulam Mujtaba Abbasi behalf of ANTH signed and exchanged the agreement docu- were also present on the occasion.

members will get a discount rate facility on various hospital Services at ANTH including executive clinic consultation, diagnostic services and hospital Services (Procedures and IPD). Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh and Secretary General Irfan Manan Khan, among others,

### Samsung may dump Google Search for rival



NEW YORK (Agencies): Shares of fell by as much as 4% on Monday in the biggest single-day decline in more than two months. The slide followed a was considering switching to Microsoft's Bing as the default search engine that has risen in prominence recently after the integration of artificial intelligence technology. Microsoft, a primary investor and partner of research lab OpenAI, the developer of ChatGPT, al this year, the report added.

added a similar chatbot that is capa-Google's parent company, Alphabet, ble of having open-ended text conversations. There was "panic" at Google as the potential switch by the world's leading smartphone maker would put Sunday report by the New York Times at risk around \$3 billion of its \$162 bilthat South Korean tech giant Samsung lion annual revenue, the outlet said, citing internal messages. The contract between Alphabet and the South Koon its devices. Bing is a minor player rean company is being negotiated, and Samsung could end up sticking with Google, according to the NYT. Another \$20 billion is tied to a similar contract with Apple, which will be up for renew-

### US 'credit crunch' has started – Morgan Stanley

NEW YORK (Agencies): The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and the ensuing banking crisis have triggered a credit crunch in the US, claims Morgan Stanley's top stock strategist Mike Wilson. He pointed to data that shows a tightening of lending standards by financial institutions. The warning comes over a month after massive deposit runs caused two lenders, Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, to fail within days. A third lender, First Republic, ended up being the recipient of a \$30-billion rescue from top Wall Street banks in the form of deposits. The big players stepped in over investor fears that First Republic would become the next institution to fail. In a note seen by Business Insider, Wilson said that lending levels have seen the steepest decline on record over the past two weeks. He attributes the drop to US banks' attempts to offset the breakneck pace of deposit flight in market can suddenly get in front of the the month since the collapse of SVB.

"The data suggest a credit crunch has started," the analyst said in a Sunday note, noting that \$1 trillion in deposits has been withdrawn from US lenders since the Federal Reserve began its series of rate hikes nearly a year ago. According to Wilson, major stock indexes holding steady since the failure of SVB should not be taken as an indication of recovery, but rather a sign that stocks are at risk of a sudden drop similar to what has been seen in small caps and bank stocks since March. "To those investors cheering the softer-than-expected inflation data last week, we would say be careful what you wish for," Wilson warned, pointing to the March Consumer Price Index report that revealed the inflation rate has been climbing less than projected. "If/when revenues begin to disappoint, that margin degradation can be much more sudden, and that's when the earnings decline we are forecasting."

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### Argentina to replace Indonesia as U-20 World Cup host

ZURICH (Agencies): Argentina will host the under-20 soccer World Cup, world governing body Fifa said on Monday following the decision to strip Indonesia of the right to stage the tournament. Fifa announced the decision to remove Indonesia as host on March 29 after the country's FA cancelled the draw to be held in Bali as its governor refused to host Israel's team. The Argentine FA formally submit- American Football Confederation Conted its bid to host the May 20-June 11 tournament one day later at the South



gress. "I would like to thank the AFA, its President Claudio Tapia, as well as

the governmental authorities, for their commitment to hosting this magnificent event at such short notice," Fifa president Gianni Infantino said. "Having this year's edition taking place in a country that lives and breathes football will be a tremendous inspiration for the stars of tomorrow." Fifa added that the official draw for the tournament will take place on Friday in Zurich. Argentina hosted the under-20 World Cup in 2001 when they won the fourth of their record six titles.

### Chebet retains Boston Marathon title, Kipchoge comes up short

BOSTON (Agencies): Kenyan Evans Chebet retained his Boston Marathon title today, overcoming a talented men's field in 2:05.54s, as two-time Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge failed to reach the podium. Tanzanian Gabriel Geay finished 10 seconds behind Chebet while Kenya's Benson Kipruto, the champion in 2021, took third in 2:06:06s. Chebet, who also won in New York last year, made his break after the 35km mark but fight, and Kipruto caught up by the



Geay refused to go down without a

40km mark to make it a three-man race. But with a mile to go, Chebet had established an unassailable lead and was all on his own as he crossed the finish to roars from the crowd, becoming the first man since 2008 to retain his Boston crown. World record-holder Kipchoge was among the biggest attractions at the World Marathon Major but lost his momentum around the halfway mark and finished sixth.

### Riyadh Derby sees Al-Nassr and Al-Hilal eyeing different priorities

RIYADH (Agencies): The Riyadh Derby is always a huge affair and Tuesday's is bigger than most. The situation for Al-Nassr is simple win no matter the cost. For Al-Hilal however, it is a little more complicated and there is the question as to whether temporary local bragging rights are more important than crucial cup games later this month. A win for Al-Nassr and their megastar level on points at the top with leaders Cristiano Ronaldo at the home of their biggest rivals would put them will have a game in hand. Al-Hilal Hilal fans.



Al-Ittihad, though the Jeddah giants

are now 10 points off the pace and know that top spot is realistically out of reach, but this could still be a season-defining game. Whatever happens, there is bound to be many talking points and there is always controversy surrounding the fixture – whether it is Al-Hilal defender Ali Al-Bulaihi planting a blue flag in the center circle after a win in the Asian Champions League, or Talisca's delighted goal celebration in front of

### Al-Hilal dealt major blow as goalkeeper Al-Owais is ruled out of derby against Al-Nassr

RIYADH (Agencies): Al-Hilal have been dealt a major blow ahead of Tuesday night's Riyadh Derby against Al-Nassr after goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais was ruled out for three weeks with an injury picked up on Sunday. The club's official Twitter account revealed that the Saudi No. 1 injured his shoulder ligaments and will now undergo a rehabilitation match against the team sitting secprogram that will rule him out of the



ond in the Roshn Saudi League table.

Al-Owais was one of Saudi Arabia's standout players at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, and performed heroically in the historic 2-1 win over eventual champions Argentina at Lusail Stadium. Al-Hilal's hopes of retaining the league title are slim as they sit in fourth place with 46 points, 10 points behind leaders Al-Ittihad and seven behind Al-Nassr, with seven matches of the season left.

#### Sri Lanka thrash Ireland by an innings and 280 runs in first Test

Galle, Sri Lanka (AFP/APP): Sri Lanka thrashed Ireland by an innings and 280 runs on Tuesday, in one of the biggest winning margins in Test history and the largest by the South Asian nation. In what was also Ireland's biggest defeat to date, the visitors were all out for 168 on day three in a hot and humid Galle International Stadium. It was the 12th-largest innings victory in Test history, behind England's win over the West Indies in 2007 by an innings and 283 runs. Sri Lanka's previous biggest win was when they hammered Zimbabwe by an innings and 254 runs in 2004 in Bulawayo. Sri Lanka in their first innings demathen hit unbeaten hundreds. Sri adding to his seven in the first inclared on a mammoth 591 for 6. dimal and Sadeera Samarawickra- wickets in Ireland's second innings, securing Test status in 2017.



Lanka then bowled out Ireland for nings. Ireland's Harry Tector top-

Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne top 143 and enforced the follow-on, fin-scored for the visitors in the second scored with 179 runs while Kusal ishing the job just after tea on day innings with 42. Ireland have now Mendis posted 140. Dinesh Chanthree. Prabath Jayasuriya took three lost all five of their matches since

### Alcaraz brushes aside Borges in Barcelona

Barcelona, Spain (AFP/APP): World number two Carlos Alcaraz began his belated build-up to the French Open with an emphatic second-round win over Nuno Borges at the Barcelona Open on Tuesday. The Spanish teenager was back in action after hand and back problems forced him to pull out of last week's 2023 debut on European clay at the Monte Carlo Masters. The top seed swept aside the world number 79 from Portugal 6-3, 6-1 to set up an all Spanish last-16 clash with either Bernabe Zapata Miralles or Roberto Bautista Agut. "I feel great," said Alcaraz, playing on the surface for the first time since Rio de Janeiro in February. Alcaraz pulled out of Monte Carlo with the injuries that had hampered his last appearance, in the semi-finals in Miami where he succumbed to Jannik Sinner. Alcaraz arrived in Miami as the world number one after success at Indian Wells, but was knocked off the top of the ATP rankings by Novak Djokovic after the loss to Sinner. The



19-year-old's bid to successfully defend a tour-level title for the first time got off to the best possible start, as he despatched Borges in 63 minutes on the court named after Rafael Nadal, another absentee from Monte Carlo. Aside from unforced errors that enabled Borges to reclaim a break in tle sign of rustiness. He allowed the special place for me."

Portuguese only one more game in a lop-sided affair. The 2022 US Open champion converted five of seven break points to continue his quest for a third title of the season after Indian Wells and Buenos Aires. "Moving well, hitting the ball really well so I feel a lot of confidence playing here in the eighth game, Alcaraz showed lit- Barcelona," said Alcaraz. "It's a really

### Liverpool thump Leeds 6-1

LEEDS (Agencies): Diogo Jota and Mohamed Salah grabbed two goals each as Liverpool banished their away day blues with an emphatic 6-1 Premier League victory over lowly Leeds United at Elland Road on Monday. Jota was on the scoresheet for the first time in over a year while Cody Gakpo and Darwin Nunez were also on target as Liverpool recorded a second away win in 2023. They move to 47 points from 30 games, nine behind Newcastle United in the fourth Champions League qualification position. Leeds had chances in the first half but just as in the 5-1 home loss to Crystal Palace in their previous match, they were far too open defensively. They remain two points above the relegation zone after 31 games. Luis Sinisterra scored their



consolation goal. Salah now has nine goals in six league matches against Leeds, a joint Liverpool record with Gordon Hodgson, and has moved to 26 for the season after two clinical finishes. There was some controversy over Liverpool's first goal from Gakpo in the 35th minute as Leeds claimed a handball from Trent Alexander-Arnold in the build-up but as the fullback was not the scorer the Video Assistant Referee did not intervene.

#### Kings leave Warriors in hole, Sixers take 2-0 lead



LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Sacramento Kings defeated the Golden State Warriors 114-106 to take a 2-0 lead over the NBA champions after a bruising Game 2 in their best-of-seven Western Conference playoff series on Monday. After edging a thrilling Game nis was reluctant to be drawn on the 1 on Saturday, the Kings once again explosive fourth-quarter tangle with proved too much for the Warriors in another pulsating postseason battle between the two Northern Californian rivals in Sacramento. De'Aaron Fox and Domantas Sabonis led the Sacra- ankle as he lay on the court.

mento scoring with 24 points apiece in a stormy encounter that saw Warriors stalwart Draymond Green ejected after stamping on the chest of Sabonis in the fourth quarter. The victory leaves the Kings on pole position as the series heads to San Francisco for Game 3 on Thursday. "We came out here tonight and everyone fought, we were locked in," Sabonis told TNT television. "It's playoff basketball. We're here to fight. Every time we step on the floor we're going to give everything for our teammates and our franchise." Sabo-Green that led to the Warriors veteran being tossed. Green was ejected after appearing to aim a stamp on Sabonis's chest as the Kings player held on to his

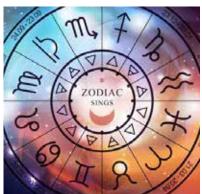
### Barcelona have not cheated, insists chief Laporta

BARCELONA (Agencies): Barcelona President Joan Laporta insisted Monday his club never tried to cheat amid investigations into payments made to a former refereeing chief. In a two-hour news conference, he said there was a smear campaign against Barcelona and the head of La Liga for backing the case against the Catalan club, who are top of the league. "Obviously referees were not bought and there was no attempt to influence their decisions," he told reporters gathered at the club's Camp Nou stadium. "Barcelona has never done anything with the aim or intention of adulterating the competition in order to gain a sporting advantage." Last month Spanish prosecutors charged the Catalan club with corruption after payments of more than 7.3 million Spanish prosecutors.



euros (\$7.8 million) to a company owned by a former refereeing chief were uncovered earlier this year. Barcelona say they paid Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira, the former referee and ex-vice president of the refereeing committee of the Spanish football federation (CTA) between 1994 and 2018, for reports and advice related to refereeing. Barcelona ceased its payments in 2018 due to Negreira's departure from the CTA, according to

## DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 19, 2023



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

ARIES: Money is on your mind, especially the ability to earn it! You might simply be pondering your next raise, or you could get more ambitious and look forward to the next step on the career path.

TAURUS: You can count on your friends and vice versa. Today's activities make your connections obvious and should help you see each other's value. It's a good time to ask for support.

- GEMINI: You may feel tempted to avoid that big, pressing issue, at least for a few days, but now is the best time to face it. You can get more support than you think from friends and family, so go for it!

- CANCER: Your original thinking can earn some big praise today as long as you're willing to risk the possibility that the more far-out stuff will be rejected. You're in a good position to advance.

 LEO: You may bristle under authority today, so try to remain calm. Things should be smooth unless you decide to

escalate, so it's up to you to keep things light and fluffy!

VIRGO: You're pondering big issues today and should find that most people are willing to cut you some slack while you try to figure it all out. You might hit on a big answer to something that bothers you.

: Emotions are bubbling underneath the surface of your relationships, and now is a great time to watch closely to see what's really going on. You may find that people are willing to talk openly later.

SCORPIO: Your attachments to people and ideas needs some modulation today, if only so you can have room to breathe! It's a good time to loosen up and let go of control of the situation somehow.

SAGITTARIUS: You most likely style yourself as a big-picture sort of person, but on a day like today even you need to attend to the details of life! It's a really good time for you to try something

- CAPRICORN: You're feeling great and should try to let your friends and family know. Better still, if you're single, now is the time to say something to your crush or to seek out a new one! - ACQUARIUS: You need to do things in your own way today even if others look askance. You've got your own ideas, though, and you should prove them right in the long run if you keep

**PISCES**: Use your creative powers to surprise your family. They won't see you coming and you should score a big hit. It may be a change of plan or an addition to the house, but it's getting them

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at it like this!



#### Iranian court delivers sentence over downing of Ukrainian passenger plane

THRAN (Agencies): A military court in Tehran on Monday sentenced ten defendants to prison over the downing of a Ukrainian passenger jet, Iranian news agency Mizan reports. An Iranian missile struck the Ukrainian plane in January 2020. All 167 passengers and nine crew members on board were killed. The primary suspect, a commander of the Iranian Air Defense system that shot down the Ukrainian Boeing 737-800 airliner, was sentenced to a total of 13 years in jail on several charges, according

#### Blair knew Iraq bombing was illegal but ordered it anyway - media



LONDON (Agencies): Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair ordered the 1998 bombing of Iraq despite repeated warnings that such a move was unlawful, according to documents published by Declassified UK on Monday. Blair would follow the same template - insisting that illegal military action was legal - when the UK invaded Iraq in 2003. The US and UK launched a fourday bombing campaign against Iraq in December 1998, after then-US President Bill Clinton accused Saddam Hussein of breaching commitments to the UN and developing weapons of mass destruction. As many as 1,400 Iraqi soldiers were killed in strikes on around 100 military facilities. In the runup to the bombings, Blair was repeatedly told by his advisers that using force against Iraq would be illegal without a resolution from the UN Security Council, according to documents from the National Archives cited by Declassified UK, an investigative outlet that focuses on Britain's military and intelligence agencies.

#### Rent-a-hitman application gets soldier arrested



TENNESSEE (Agencies): A 21-yearold member of the Air National Guard in the US state of Tennessee is facing up to ten years in prison after applying for a job at Rentahitman.com and accepting a downpayment for a contract killing from an undercover FBI agent. Josiah Ernesto Garcia, 21, has been charged with "use of interstate facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire," the US attorney's office in Nashville said on Thursday. According to federal prosecutors, Garcia applied for contract mercenary work on the website back in February. Saving he needed more money for his family, he bragged about being an expert marksman with several weapons, nicknamed "Reaper." "I'm looking for a job, that pays well, related to my military experience (Shooting and Killing the marked target) so I can support my kid on the way," the criminal complaint quotes Garcia as saying in a follow-up email. "What can I say, I enjoy doing what I do, so if I can find a job that is similar to it, (such as this one) put me in coach!"

#### 'Shocking' number of rapes in **UK** hopitals revealed

LONDON (Agencies): Despite the prevalence of CCTV and security guards, more than 6,500 rapes and sexual assaults - some against children under 13 - have been committed in hospitals in England and Wales since 2019, according to a report by the Women's Rights Network (WRN) published on Monday. A least 2,088 rapes and 4,451 sexual assaults in hospitals were recorded by police forces in the UK between January 2019 and October 2022, the organization said, citing Freedom of Information requests to 43 police forces. One in seven of these attacks took place inside hospital wards, the report stated.



to Mizan. Nine other defendants, including the air defense system's crew, a Tehran military base commander, and an officer at the regional operations control center, as well as a regional Air Defense commander, were

sentenced to between one and three years behind bars. The primary defendant was also ordered to compensate the relatives of the people killed in the incident. Iran vowed to pay \$150,000 for each victim, in addition to compensation payments ordered by the court. The court also imposed "additional punishments" on the defendants, the outlet said, without elaborating further. The defendants still have 20 days to appeal the decision. Neither Tehran nor Kiev have commented on the ruling so far.

#### Pentagon doesn't know how many documents were leaked - spokeswoman

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US Department of Defense is still trying to "understand the scope and scale" of a document leak that saw a trove of classified information posted online, a spokeswoman told reporters on Monday. "We're going to continue to find documents online," Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said at a briefing. Singh added that the Pentagon does not "have a specific number" of leaked documents identified, and that the "scope and scale" of the leak "is something we're still assessing." The documents in question appeared on a Discord server at some point in the last month, before spreading to the wider internet and catching the attention of the mainstream media. The alleged leaker, a 21-year-old airman



Guard named Jack Teixeira, was arrested by the FBI on Thursday after the New York Times published his identity. Files allegedly leaked by the suspect revealed that US and NATO special forces were active in Ukraine, that Ukrainian casualties were higher than publicly acknowledged by US officials, that Kiev's forces were low on ammunition, and that the US has spied on its allies throughout the conflict. US officials have dismissed many in the Massachusetts Air National of the leaked files as fake or doctored.

### US economy 'crashing' – Trump



WASHINGTON (Agencies): America and its economy are facing major challenges that could undermine Washington's position in the world, former US President Donald Trump told a National Rifle Association (NRA) convention in the state of Indiana last week. The Biden administration has pushed the country to the brink of collapse with both its foreign and domestic policies,

ambitions for the 2024 presidential campaign. "The USA is a mess. Our economy is crashing, inflation is out of control," the former president stated. The US dollar is "crashing" as well, he claimed, adding that the American currency "will soon no longer be the world's standard." This would amount to Washington's "greatest defeat in 200 years" and was "unthinkable just a few years ago," Trump said as he addressed the NRA convention in Indianapolis last Friday. The Biden administration's failures in the foreign policy field have seen Russia join forces with China, the former president said, adding that, together with Iran and North Korea, Moscow and Beijing have now formed Trump claimed as he spoke about his a "menacing and destructive coalition."

### Scientists 'turning dead birds into drones'

NEW YORK (Agencies): A team of scientists in the US state of New Mexico has undertaken a novel approach to studying the animal kingdom: by attempting to install drones into dead, taxidermied birds as part of an experiment designed to understand more about their flight patterns. "We came up with this idea that we can use dead birds and make them [into] a drone," Dr. Mostafa Hassanalian, an associate professor at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, told Reuters this week. "Everything is there. We do reverse engineering." Hassanalian and his team came up with the unconventional idea after failing to see tificial mechanical 'birds' in flocks of man aviation.



living animals. The taxidermied bird drones are currently being tested in a customized cage - but can at present only be flown for around 20 minutes at a time. It is hoped that the project will shed new light on how birds conserve energy by flying in certain formations when the artificial drones are flown alongside living flocks. This data could the desired results when they flew ar- potentially be applied to streamline hu-

#### Google chief warns of potential AI dangers



NEW YORK (Agencies): Artificial Intelligence (AI) will soon impact "every product of every company," Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai said on Sunday, warning of the dangers that the technology poses for employment sectors and the distribution of misinformation. "We need to adapt as a society for it," Pichai told American television network CBS. He added that job growth and sustainability will be disrupted for industries that rely on what he referred to as "knowledge workers," such as writers, accountants - and even the engineers who designed the software. Google launched its AI 'chatbot', Bard, last month. This followed the debut of OpenAI's ChatGPT online in 2022, which received significant publicity for its ability to compose academic papers and write intricate and detailed passages of prose with human-like language, among other utilities. However AI chatbots - and specifically ChatGPT - have had their critics.

#### Moscow and New Delhi in talks over free trade deal

Russia are holding discussions on a free trade deal to boost their growing economic ties, the countries' foreign ministers announced on Monday at a business dialog meeting in New Delhi. According to Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, New Delhi is in "advance agreement" on a trade deal, which Russian Trade

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India and and Industry Minister Denis Manturov said would bring a guarantee of bilateral investment. Russia is traditionally a supplier of military equipment to India. This year, it has displaced Iraq as the South Asian nation's top supplier of oil. India's overall imports from Russia have nearly quadrupled, reaching \$46.33 billion in the year to March 31, according to Jaishankar.

### US arrests Chinese 'secret police'

NEW YORK (Agencies): The Department of Justice on Monday arrested two New Yorkers, charging them with helping the government of China establish a secret police station in Manhattan, and with trying to hide evidence of that from the FBI. The US government also charged 44 Chinese nationals with "repression schemes" targeting Americans online. 61-yearold "Harry" Lu Jianwang and 59-yearold Chen Jinping were arrested earlier this morning at their respective homes in the Bronx and Manhattan, the DOJ said. They were charged with conspiracy to act as agents of the Chinese government and with obstruction of justice, facing up to 25 years in prison if convicted. According to federal prosecutors, the two men had a "long-standing relationship of trust" with the Chinese Ministry of Public Security (MPS), which they helped

"surreptitiously open and operate an illegal MPS police station on US soil." The alleged outpost of the Fuzhou branch of the MPS operated from an office building in Manhattan's Chinatown, until it was raided and closed by the FBI in October 2022. "The [People's Republic of China], through its repressive security apparatus, established a secret physical presence in New York City to monitor and intimidate dissidents and those critical of its government," Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen said in a statement, adding that these actions "go far beyond the bounds of acceptable nation-state conduct." US Attorney Breon Peace, from the Eastern District of New York, called the existence of the secret police station a "flagrant violation of our nation's sovereignty," saying that it has no place in New York City "or any American community."

#### Women incapable of serving in elite combat units-IDF



TEL AVIV (Agencies): Including women in Israel's elite armed forces isn't possible due to physiological differences between them and their male counterparts, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) told the country's High Court of Justice on Monday, according to a report by the Jerusalem Post. The position taken by the IDF comes amid requests by women to be considered for try-outs for special forces units and follows two separate analytical studies conducted in recent years into the effectiveness of female soldiers in specific units, such as heavy infantry. These analyses found, according to the IDF, that women run a far greater risk of injury when required to perform tasks that require lifting heavy weights, such as backpacks and large firearms. The studies also noted that women would be more useful in operational situations with infantry brigades, including roles in mortar team units, which don't have such significant physical requirements.

#### Gaming giant Sega mulls buying creator of Angry Birds



TOKYO (Agnecies): Japanese gaming major Sega Sammy Holdings has offered to buy Rovio Entertainment, best known for creating the 'Angry Birds' franchise, in a deal valued at about \$776 million. Bloomberg has reported. citing a statement from Sega. The Tokyo-based multinational offered €9.25 per share (just over \$10) in cash to the shareholders and €1.48 per option to the option holders of Rovio, which is based in Finland. The board of the game developer has unanimously recommended that the investors accept the offer, which is backed by 49% of shareholders, including co-founders the Hed family. Rovio stock jumped by nearly 19% to €9.17 per share in Helsinki on Monday. Previous speculation about such a deal sent the shares soaring over 50% for the year to date. Earlier this year, the Finnish mobile-game maker announced plans to completely reconsider its business strategy. Back then, Israel-based Playtika Holding offered Rovio €9.05 per share in a deal that could be valued at \$810 million. However, talks stalled and on March 22 Rovio said it had ended negotiations with Playtika, but continued discussions with other parties it didn't identify. Rovio's iconic Angry Birds franchise, first released in 2009, reportedly generates over 80% of the company's gross bookings. It became the first mobile game to hit a billion downloads. The company has been seeking to expand to some other types of games and brands, as the excessive reliance on profits related to Angry Birds worried investors.

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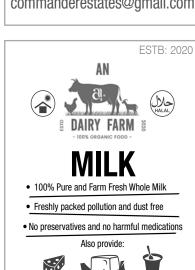
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