



## Turkiye gains nuclear status with delivery of first nuclear fuel to Akkuyu Power Plant: President

ANKARA (Agencies): Türkiye's first nuclear power plant, Akkuyu, has been officially granted nuclear facility status with the delivery of the first nuclear fuel to the plant site, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday, Anadolu News Agency reports. "With the delivery of nuclear fuels by air and sea to our power plant, Akkuyu has now gained the status of a nuclear plant," Erdogan said during his virtual address to the first nuclear fuel delivery ceremony. Türkiye has risen to the league of countries with nuclear power in the world, albeit after a 60-year delay, he added. An inter-governmental agreement for the plant in southern Mersin province was signed between Türkiye and Russia in May 2010. The plant's ground-breaking ceremony was held on 3 April, 2018, after which construction started on the first unit. Stressing that there are 422 nuclear reactors in operation in the world, and 57 of them are still under construction, Erdogan said the EU gets 25 per cent of its electricity from nuclear sources. "Last year, the European Commission accepted nuclear energy as 'green energy' and eliminated the hesitations on this issue. With Akkuyu, we made our country a part of these developments," he added. "Like many important projects, Akkuyu was realised with a financing model that does not burden



our national budget. Akkuyu is our biggest joint investment with Russia," Erdogan said. "All units of the power plant will be put into service gradually until 2028," he said, adding that the country will meet 10 per cent of its electricity needs from the nuclear plant once all reactors are operational. He added that the project, which will contribute to reducing Türkiye's natural gas imports by \$1.5 billion annually, will also positively impact the increase in the national income. The plant, expected to have an installed capacity of 4,800 megawatts and four reactors, is set to begin generating

power later this year. "Based on our experience in this project, we will take action as soon as possible for our second and third nuclear power plants, which we plan to construct in different regions," Erdogan said. Approximately 30,000 people were employed on the site during the most active project phase. "The fact that our power plant was not affected by the earthquakes on 6 February demonstrates how meticulously our engineers and workers perform their jobs," Erdogan said. He also congratulated all the Turkish and Russian personnel who took part in the construction of the power plant.

## Intel posts largest quarterly loss in company history as chip sales collapse



San Francisco (AFP/APP): Intel on Thursday posted a massive fall in sales for the first quarter of 2023 because of a steep drop in the demand for semiconductors – or chips – that power personal computers and smartphones. Intel's revenue fell 36 percent to \$11.7 billion in the three-month period and the semiconductor giant posted a loss of \$2.8 billion, its biggest ever for a quarter. Rising prices, a global chip glut and poor demand for hardware also punished Intel's rival Samsung, which earlier on Thursday reported its worst quarterly profits in 14 years. The loss and sales collapse was slightly less catastrophic than expectations, but the stock still lost about two percent in post-session trading. Intel is one of the world's leading semiconductor makers that makes a wide range of products, including the latest generation chips along with Taiwan's TSMC and South Korea's Samsung. It was also affected by falling demand for chips that power data centers and is struggling to compete with Nvidia for the semiconductors that undergird ChatGPT-style generative AI, a major new and chips-hungry sector for the industry. The chips industry, which also powers technology such as smartphones and cars, is well-known for its volatility, with demand and supply see-sawing with the dips and rises in the world economy. Its central role in the global supply chain became clear during the height of the Covid pandemic. Lockdowns and health restrictions diminished production out of Asia, leaving surging demand for chips unmet just as everyone turned online for work, shopping and entertainment. Semiconductors have also become a political pawn between the US and China, with Washington urging allies to stop supplying China with cutting edge chips, further destabilizing the sector.

## World's highest railway bridge to open in Indian-administered Kashmir soon

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The bridge over the Chenab River, taller than the Eiffel Tower, will provide all-weather connectivity with the valley. In the middle of the mighty Himalayas in Indian-administered Kashmir lies the world's highest railway bridge. The bridge over the Chenab River – 1,315-metre-long (4,314 feet) and 359-metre-high (1,177 feet) from the bed of the river – will link the remote region with India's vast railway network by providing all-weather connectivity. At the peak of the winter, a large part of the disputed region is cut off from the rest of India. The bridge, taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, lies between the villages of Bakkal and Kauri in Reasi district of the southern Jammu area of Kashmir. Constructed at a cost of \$168m, the bridge is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project (USBRL), which will connect the region's main city of Srinagar with mainland India through rail networks on which work started in 1999.



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## COVID-19 deaths down 95% in 2023:WHO

GENEVA (Agencies): The WHO said Wednesday (Apr 26) that COVID-19 deaths had dropped by 95 per cent since the start of the year - but warned the virus was still on the move. The World Health Organization said COVID-19 was here to stay and countries would have to learn how to manage its ongoing non-emergency effects, including post-COVID-19 condition, or long COVID. "We're very encouraged by the sustained decline in reported deaths from COVID-19, which have dropped 95 per cent since the beginning of this year," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference. "However, some countries are seeing increases, and

over the past four weeks, 14,000 people lost their lives to this disease. "And, as the emergence of the new XBB.1.16 variant illustrates, the virus is still changing, and is still capable of causing new waves of disease and death." Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on COVID-19, said XBB sub-lineages were now dominant worldwide. They have an increase in growth advantage and are also showing immune escape, meaning people can be reinfected despite having been vaccinated or previously infected. She called for increased surveillance through testing "so that we can monitor the virus itself and understand what each of these mutations means".

## UK blocks Microsoft's \$69 bil Activision deal over cloud gaming concerns

LONDON (Agencies): Britain will block Microsoft's \$69 billion acquisition of "Call of Duty" maker Activision Blizzard over concerns it would hinder competition in cloud gaming, dealing an unexpected blow to the biggest-ever deal in gaming. The country's antitrust regulator said on Wednesday that Microsoft's commitment to offer access to Activision's multi-billion dollar "Call of Duty" franchise to leading cloud gam-

ing platforms would not effectively remedy its concerns. Microsoft's president Brad Smith said in a statement the company remained fully committed to the acquisition and would appeal the decision, while Activision said it would "work aggressively" with Microsoft to reverse it. Activision's CEO Bobby Kotick told staff it was not "the news we wanted - but it is far from the final word on this deal".

## 8 ex-India navy officers accused of spying on Qatar for Israel

DOHA (Agencies): Eight former Indian naval personnel are currently facing trial in Qatar on charges of espionage. They are accused of gathering intelligence on Qatar's secret project to acquire high-tech submarines manufactured in Italy, which are designed to be difficult to detect by adversaries. According to the Print, legal proceedings against the officers began on 29 March, with the next hearing scheduled for May. The eight were working for a company called Dahra Global Technologies and Consultancy Services, which was described as a "local business partner" of Qatar's defence and other agencies. They were arrested back in August



2022, although no official charges were brought at the time, it was widely suspected that they were spying on behalf of Israel. An intelligence source was quoted by the Print as saying: "We've tried hard to convince our counterparts in Doha that India and its nationals were not involved in hostile intelligence operations against the emirate."

## Pakistan hands over chairmanship of OIC Group in New York to Mauritania

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, handed over the chairmanship of the OIC Group in New York to his Mauritanian counterpart, Sidi Mohamed Laghdaf, at a simple ceremony on Thursday. In brief remarks, Ambassador Munir congratulated Mauritania on the very successful 49th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in March 2023. He expressed his gratitude to all OIC member states and the Permanent

Observer Mission of the OIC to the United Nations in New York for their invaluable support to Pakistan in discharging its responsibility as Chair of OIC Group during the year 2022. During the past year, the Group continued to pursue the cause of Palestine in the defence of Holy Al-Aqsa. The OIC also observed the Day to Combat Islamophobia and urged the initiation of an Action Plan to halt Islamophobia. The Group promoted the just cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for self-determination and freedom.

## Ukraine has received 98% of promised combat vehicles: NATO chief

KYIV (Agencies): NATO allies and partner countries have provided Ukraine with 1,550 armoured vehicles and 230 tanks to form units and help it retake territory from Russian forces, the military alliance's chief said. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO secretary general, said on Thursday that the deliveries constituted more than 98 percent of the combat vehicles

promised to Ukraine during Russia's invasion and war, giving Kyiv a bigger punch as it contemplates launching a counteroffensive. "In total, we have trained and equipped more than nine new Ukrainian armoured brigades. This will put Ukraine in a strong position to continue to retake occupied territory," Stoltenberg told a news conference.

## China building 24 nuclear power units, ranking No.1 in world: Industry report

BEIJING (Agencies): Construction is in progress on 24 nuclear power units in China, with a total installed capacity of about 26.81 million kilowatts (kW), ranking the first in the world, an industry report showed on Wednesday. Since 2022, China has approved 10 new nuclear power units, put three new commercial units into operation and started construction on six new units, read a report titled China Nuclear Energy Development Report 2023 released by the China Nuclear Energy Association (CNEA). China now has 54 commercial nuclear power units with a total installed capacity of 56.82 million kW, ranking third in the world, the report said, noting that China's nuclear power units have maintained safe and

stable operation for a long time, and the construction of new units has steadily advanced. In 2022, China's nuclear power units generated 417.78 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity, up 2.5 percent year-on-year, accounting for about 4.7 percent of the country's total electricity generation. Nuclear power generation in China ranks second in the world, the report revealed. Compared with coal-fired power stations, China's nuclear power generation in 2022 was equivalent to reducing the burning of standard coal by nearly 120 million tons and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 310 million tons, it noted. The safety performance of China's nuclear power is also at an advanced level globally, the report showed.

## 'Spectacular' Roman camps discovered in Arabian desert could change history



RIYADH (Agencies): Archaeologists using Google Earth have made a 'spectacular' find of three Roman military camps in the Arabian desert that could change understanding of the region's history. The discovery, by University of Oxford researchers, identified three Roman fortified camps spread across northern Arabia. Laid out in the traditional 'playing card' shape, the camps may be evidence of a previously unknown military cam-

paign linked to the Roman takeover of the Nabataean Kingdom in 106 CE, a civilisation centred on the city of Petra, located in Jordan. The surviving Roman history argues the transfer of power was a peaceful event at the end of the reign of the last Nabataean king. "We are almost certain they were built by the Roman army, given the typical playing card shape of the enclosures with opposing entrances along each side," said Dr Michael Fradley, who led the research. "The only notable difference between them is that the westernmost camp is significantly larger than the two camps to the east." Oxford's Dr Mike Bishop, an expert on the Roman military, said: "These camps are a spectacular new find and an important new insight into Roman campaigning in Arabia."

**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.



## KP Governor stresses need for guaranteeing good governance

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali has stressed the need for guaranteeing good governance across the province including in the newly merged districts of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Area. He was talking to various delegations, which called on him under the leadership of the Caretaker Ministers Justice (retd) Irshad Qaiser, Shahid Khattak, Bakht Nawaz and Advisor to Chief Minister, Rahmat Salam Khattak here in Governor's House on Wednesday. These delegations congratulated the Governor on Eid-ul-Fitr and also briefed him

regarding problems in their respective areas. In the meanwhile, representative delegations led by the Chairman Tehsil Mir Ali, North Waziristan, Ahmad Saeed and Senator Abdul Rasheed and Chairman Kaghan Development Authority, Dr Aimal Zaman also separately called on the Governor and briefed him regarding the problems faced by the people of their area. The Governor issued directives for the immediate resolution of the problems. Members of the delegation thanked the Governor for taking an interest in the resolution of the problems faced by the people. Talking to the Chair-

man of Kaghan Development Authority, the Governor said that concerned authorities should not only take revolutionary steps for the promotion of tourism rather also ensure the facilitation of tourists and in case of any hurdle bring them to the notice of the provincial government, so tourism could be promoted in real sense. Later, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also visited Patwar Bala, a suburban locality of the city and expressed condolence over the demise of Janas Khan with his heirs. Ghulam Farooq Khan and Abdul Salam also accompanied the Governor.

## 86,000 tourists visit KP on Eid holidays

PESHAWAR (APP): The influx of local tourists increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the three days of Eid ul-Fitr, wherein 86,000 tourists visited various destinations. KP Tourism Authority spokesperson Muhammad Saad on Thursday said that 37,885 tourists groups visited Naran Kaghan, 25,268 Galiyat,

17,000 went to Malam Jabba, 4,549 visited Kalash and Garam Chashma in Chitral, 1,281 visited Kumrat Valley in Swat, whereas 155 went to Mastuj. He said that KP Tourism police officials remained on duty during the Eid holidays and facilitated and guided the tourists at various designated spots.

## Two hospitals specified for Mpox cases in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Directorate General of Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has specified two hospitals in the provincial capital to deal with suspected monkeypox (Mpox) cases coming from abroad. A notification issued here said that Landi Kotal Hospital at the Pak-Afghan border would check the affected persons at the Torkham border point while an isolation ward has also been set up at the hospital for Mpox-positive cases. Similarly, Police Services Hospital Peshawar would manage Mpox cases to be reported from Bacha Khan International Airport here. It is pertinent

to mention here that Mpox is an infectious viral disease that can occur in humans and some other animals with symptoms including fever, swollen lymph nodes and a rash that forms a blister and then crusts over. The duration of the symptoms is typically two to four weeks, said Dr Farrah of the Department of Zoology, adding that the disease may spread from infected animals by handling infected meat or via bites or scratches. She said that human-to-human transmission can occur through exposure to infected body fluids or contaminated objects and possibly through airborne routes.

## KP Finance Dept. rejects news regarding presenting four months budget

PESHAWAR (APP): A spokesperson for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department has clarified that the caretaker government has not taken any decision to present four monthly budgets in October 2023. Rejecting the new items regarding the presentation of four monthly budgets, he said that the previous

government had issued a circular of integrated budget 2023 in December 2022 to start the new budget cycle for years 2023-24, however, a decision regarding budget presentation has not been taken so far. A spokesperson said that the media would be informed about any progress regarding the matter.

## JIP desires election in all provinces, centre on same day: Prof Ibrahim

PESHAWAR (Agencies): The leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Thursday met with Provincial Ameer Professor Ibrahim Khan in the chair and said that the party desired election in all provinces and centre on the same day. The meeting of JIP leadership of KP was held at Almarkaz-e-Islami and was attended by Provincial General Secretary Abdul Waseh, Vice

Ameers, Inayatullah and Maulana Tasleem Iqbal among others. The meeting expressed condolences to the victim's families of the Kabal Swat blast. Professor Ibrahim said separate elections in provinces would create problems. He said that his party would participate in the election in an independent capacity. However, the option of seat adjustment was open.

## Engr. Jawad Ali Afridi successfully defend his Ph.D Thesis



PESHAWAR (Staff Repeat): Engr. Jawad Ali Afridi successfully defended his Ph.D thesis yesterday. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Haseeb Zafar, Department of Electrical Engineering was his Ph.D supervisor. The topic of his Ph.D thesis was "Analyzing and enhancing inter-network communication and modular connectivity in IoT for the development of smart cities". Engr. Jawad presented his research findings through a seminar in public forum session, followed by Viva-Voce examination by the Examination Committee. Engr. Jawad is serving as Lecturer in the Department of Electrical Engineering, UET Mardan; he has published 03 research papers

in Impact factor journals of international repute. The REC members included Prof. Dr. Syed Waqar Shah, Chairman, Department of Electrical Engineering, UET Peshawar, Dr. Shehzada Alamgir, PTCL Academy Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Sadeeq Jan, Department of Computer Systems Engineering, UET Peshawar and Prof. Dr. wShafiuallah, University of Science and Technology, Kohat (KUST). Prof. Dr. Amjad Ullah, Dean, Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering were also present on the occasion who congratulated Engr. Jawad Ali for his successful Ph.D defense. A large number of faculty and students were also present on the occasion.

## Rain with thunder/hailstorm likely to persist in KP; PDMA issues advisory for farmers, businessmen

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Thursday issued an advisory for farmers and persons affiliated with livestock businesses to take adequate precautionary measures to safeguard their crops and livestock from adverse effects of thunderstorms and hailstorms predicted by the Met Office across the province. It warned that as per the Met Office forecast, a westerly wave had entered the country and would cause rain with dust and thunderstorms and hailstorms at isolated places across the province

from April 27 evening to the first week of May. It said that rain with dust and thunderstorms and hailstorms were expected in Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charasadda, Khyber, Bajaur, Orakzai, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, Hungu, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, DI Khan, Tank and Waziristan. The Met Office warned that strong wind and hailstorms could cause damage to loose infrastructure and standing crops in the province while

heavy rains could cause flash floods in Mansehra, Abbottabad, Chitral, Shangla, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Torghar, Battagram and Kurram from May 1-4. Similarly, landslides might occur in vulnerable areas of the province during the period while day temperature was likely to drop significantly. PDMA has directed all the district administrations and line departments to take precautionary measures to avert the loss of human lives, livestock and properties. It further directed to ensure round-the-clock monitoring of the situation with regular feedback to PDMA.

## CS approves establishment of 21 checks post to curb wheat, sugar smuggling

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary has approved the establishment of 21 check posts in 10 districts of the province, bordering Afghanistan, to curb the smuggling of wheat, sugar and fertilisers. Presiding over a meeting here on Thursday, he directed intelligence-based operations against hoarders and smugglers and strict surveillance of dealers and

their stock. The chief secretary was informed that during various operations, the district administrations and food authority confiscated over 57 tonnes of sugar from Peshawar and 22 tonnes from Khyber district. He directed to sell the confiscated sugar in the market after fulfilling the legal procedure and strict action against those involved in hoarding and smuggling the essential commodities.

## ATC seeks record in Afridi's murder case

PESHAWAR (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court on Thursday adjourned hearing on a bail application in Abdul Latif Afridi Advocate's murder case till Friday while seeking the relevant record. The accused in the case Abdul Majid Afridi who was booked under sections 109 and 164

in a murder case of former President Supreme Court Bar Association Abdul-Latif Afridi had filed a bail application in the court. The three other accused and facilitators named in the incident including Zakir, Fawad and Adil Advocate were already on bail.

## Education Deptt restricts exam duty, posting, transfers of enumerators

PESHAWAR (APP): The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday refrained Chairmen of all boards of intermediate and secondary education, directors of E&SE and District Education Officers from engaging teaching faculty on census duty in examination or any other duty till further order. A notification issued here said that the field operations of the 7th population and housing cen-

sus-2023 have been extended due to negative or slow growth rates in the Peshawar, DI Khan and Abbottabad districts of the province. It was therefore directed that all the enumerators engaged for census purposes should adhere to the instructions issued by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and they should not be posted, transferred or engaged in any other duty till further order, adding that violators if any would proceed accordingly.

## PHC stays transfer of Director Finance Capital Metropolitan Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) here Thursday stayed the transfer of Director Finance Capital Metropolitan Peshawar Nasimullah Kundi. A division bench of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice Ishfaq Ibrahim and Justice Wiqar Ahmad heard a writ petition filed by Nasimullah Kundi, Director

Finance, Capital Metropolitan Peshawar who was transferred by the Chairman Local Council board by the strength of permission from the Election Commission of Pakistan. Senior Advocate Mian Muhibullah Kakakhel assisted by advocate Nouman Muhib Kakakhel appeared on behalf of the petitioner.

## PM paid internship program receives overwhelming response in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Prime Minister (PM) paid internship program has received an overwhelming response from the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) including merged tribal districts, terming it an excellent opportunity for hundreds of thousands of fresh graduates and diploma holders to get the required experiences in the competitive working environment. As many as 60,000 paid internships have been announced by the Federal government for the youth of Pakistan including KP in the Public Sector Development Projects (PSDP), government, private and development departments under the PM youth development programme. Under the landmark program, 20,000 internships will be provided in PSDP and 40,000 in government, private and development departments for a

period of six months to one year. The beneficiary will receive Rs25,000 to Rs40,000 per month scholarship besides required work experience in an excellent environment from the top professionals and experts. The PM youth development program is an umbrella project covering 15 programs including a paid internship program launched for the youth of Pakistan. Under this historic program, as many as 15 initiatives are in progress. PM's Youth Laptop Program, Ba-Ikhtiyar Naujawan Internship Program, and 5,000 scholarships for students in Balochistan and erstwhile FATA were also announced by the federal government for the economic empowerment of the youth. Providing an excellent opportunity for the young generation to excel in studies viz a viz choice professions, the program

will help equip youth with all necessary skills and expertise to compete at local and international levels. Ehtisham Qasier, a postgraduate student of the University of Peshawar told APP on Thursday that the PM paid internship was a great opportunity for fresh graduates and diploma holders to get practical experiences and excel in their selected professions besides abroad jobs. He said that many of his friends and relatives belonging to the Nowshera and Peshawar districts had applied for it. "The applications of the majority of graduates and diploma holders were rejected in the government and private sectors due to lack of professional experiences and skills. The internship would not only provide the relevant experience to the fresh graduates but also provide them cash payment to live with

dignity," he said. Ehtisham Qasier said that PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif deserved full credit and appreciation for launching the paid internship program that would help facilitate hundreds of thousands of young graduates and diploma holders in the country including KP. Shahryar Zaman, another graduate and resident of Wapda Town Nowshera has also pinned high hopes for the internship program and eagerly awaiting to get work experience along with payment after selection. PMLN KP spokesman and former MPA, Ikhtair Wali Khan told APP on Thursday that the program was launched under the Prime Minister's youth development initiatives by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives to help serve the over 64% youth population of the country.





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## Series of online activities launched to showcase ‘Chinese Tea Culture’ in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): In order to give tea a greater role to play in enhancing friendly dialogue and mutual learning between civilizations, the worldwide event “Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon” will be held on and around May 21, the International Tea Day. It will be organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China, in cooperation with international organizations and Chinese embassies, consulates and missions abroad, and by means of overseas China Cultural Centers and China National Tourist Offices. In honour of the upcoming International Tea Day as well



as our upcoming Tea Yaji event, China Cultural Center in Pakistan is happy to announce the release of our brand-new Chinese tea video series, Tea and Harmony – Yaji Cultural Salon. These

series of online activities include video and photography exhibitions such as “The Tea Road”, “Chinese tea culture”, “Tea story of Fujian”, “Tea culture of Hubei”, “Tea Culture of Yunnan”, “Tea



• Pot” Jiangsu Tea Culture and Yixing Zisha Exhibition”, “Technique of making Pu’er Tea”, “Enshi Yulu Green Tea of Hubei”, “Charm of Water, Charm of Jiangsu-Virtual Workshop Series – Explore the Timeless Ritual of Tea Ceremony From Jiangsu”, Grand documentary series on Chinese Tea and World and much more. The centuries-old tea culture has attracted new interest worldwide with the addition of “the traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China” to the Representative List of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## Chinese delegation visit COMSTech to promote biotechnology, traditional medicines



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A high-level delegation of Chinese scientists and Industrialists visited the COMSTech secretariat on Thursday to promote cooperation for research and development in the fields of natural products, biotechnology, public health and traditional medicine through institutional and industrial linkages between China and OIC member states. The delegation visit also aimed to help strengthen academic and research initiatives between the People’s Republic of China and the OIC member states. The delegation consisted of top-tier leadership of industries in the area of traditional medicine. Participants from several OIC member states also joined the discussions virtually. OIC member states such as Pakistan, Iran and Indonesia are already exploring traditional medicines in their own capacity. Through this collaboration, COMSTech seeks to liaison between OIC member states and Chinese institutions for strengthening cooperation in the field of healthcare. To strengthen this collaboration and enhance networking, COMSTech organized this dialogue which included a series of key talks on the subject by scientists, and representatives of pharmaceutical industries of China. The event was attended by researchers, relevant personnel from the research laboratories and industries and representatives from the embassies of the OIC member states in Islamabad. The aspects of collaboration such as set up of Joint labs, exchange programs for scholars of OIC member states and product-based research were also discussed. Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary gave a comprehensive briefing to the delegation on COMTECH programs and initiatives, its scope and avenues of collaboration. He explained the avenues for Sino-COMSTech collaboration for the development of natural products, biotechnology, public health and traditional medicine in OIC member states. Prof. Choudhary briefed the delegation on various ways of institutional cooperation, capacity building, the establish-

ment of traditional Chinese medicine clinics and research labs. President of Hunan University of Chinese Medicine, Prof. Dr Aiguo Dai, said, “Our meeting will promote the international cooperation of traditional medicine between our school and ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ countries.” He said that the relations between China and Islamic countries were traditionally friendly. Prof. Dai said that China attaches great importance to friendly relations with Islamic countries and regards the OIC as an import bridge for China to cooperate with Islamic countries. Science Commissioner of the Embassy of China in Islamabad, Yin Shengxin appreciated the Sino-COMSTech initiative. He said that the work of Dr Iqbal Choudhary was a good example of nurturing cooperation. He reiterated time tested Sino-Pak friendship. Shengxin said that traditional Chinese medicine cures diseases and brings health to the people. Director General (EC & OIC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Asima Rabbani, said that China had a rich history of traditional medicine, which has been practiced for over two thousand years. She said the Sino-COMSTech initiative on strengthening cooperation in traditional medicine and allied biomedical sciences in OIC countries was a “significant step” towards promoting collaboration between China and OIC states. Rabbani said that COMSTech played an important role in the development and promotion of institutional linkages in the field of science and technology. Chairman of Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer’s Association, Syed Farooq Bukhari said that the Sino-COMSTech collaboration initiative provides an excellent opportunity for Pakistan to learn from the experiences of China and other OIC states, and develop strategies and policies that are tailored to its own needs and priorities. The representatives of different Chinese pharmaceutical companies addressed the occasion as well. The Chinese delegation members met and exchanged ideas with scientists and experts in the field during the networking session.

## The Mevlana exchange program between the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and the universities of Turkey restored

BAHAWALPUR (Staff Report): The Mevlana exchange program between the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and the universities of the Islamic brotherhood of Turkey has been restored. Under this program, the agreement between Selcuk University Konya and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur on mutual cooperation and collaboration in teaching and research was signed by Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The agreement will come into effect after the signing of Selcuk University Konya Rector Prof. Dr. Metin Aksoy. Under this agreement, the teachers of the two universities will be able to visit each other for lecture series, while students will also be able to visit each other and continue teaching activi-

ties. According to the agreement, researchers can carry out their teaching activities in both universities. In this regard, they can participate in conferences and workshops as well as exchange research and teaching materials. Both the universities will also make progress for joint research projects. Among the subjects in which teachers and students can benefit from the exchange program are Food Science and Technology, Soil Science, Plant Nutrition, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Technology, Economics, Business and Management studies, History, Pharmacy, Persian language and Literature, International Relations and Agriculture are included. Under this program 390 students and 130 teachers will be benefited in the exchange program of 8 months and 3 months.

## 927 defective streetlights replaced in city

FAISALABAD (APP): Municipal Corporation Faisalabad (MCF) has replaced 927 defective streetlights on Narwala Road, Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Kashmir Road, Sir Syed Town, Afghan Abad, Hajji Abad, Commissioner Office Road, Gulistan Colony and Sammundri Road during last 10 days. A spokesman of MCF said here on Wednesday that these lights were defective for a long time, which were replaced on special direction of Divisional Commissioner/MCF Administrator Silwat Saeed. He said that MCF also installed 19 new 120-watt LED lights in various parts of the city so as to facilitate the people during night hours. He further said that MCF also collected revenue of Rs.2.9 million under the head of commercialization of different buildings and approval of their maps.

## Former bureaucrat Abdul Rasheed Luni passes away

QUETTA (APP): Retired bureaucrat and former senior member of board of Revenue Balochistan Abdul Rasheed Luni passed away after a brief illness, family sources confirmed on Wednesday. His funeral will be held on Thursday, 27 April at 10 am at his ancestral village Luni, district Sibi. He was the father of Mustafa Luni, Dawood Luni and Haroon Rashid Luni.

## IGPs Sindh Balochistan discuss joint actions against criminals

KARACHI (APP): A meeting was held at Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi on Thursday presided over by Inspector General of Police IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon and IGP Balochistan to discuss actions against criminals after an encounter in Jacobabad where six policemen were martyred. The SSPs of Jacobabad and Naseerabad gave a point-to-point briefing on the incident and made some necessary recommendations, according to a spokesman for Sindh Police. Later, DIGPs Larkana and Naseerabad also told the meeting in their briefing that 12 operatives of the dacoit group associated with Jakhraani group have been arrested under various cases and are currently in jail. IGP Sindh said the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain, DIGP Larkana will form an investigation team and bring the accused involved in the incident to justice. He directed DIGP concerned to provide vehicles for the police while also instructing AIGP Logistics to ensure the supply of arms and ammunition required by the concerned police in the ongoing operation against dacoits.

## Another youth drowned, death toll rose to seven in 3 days

ATTOCK (APP): Another young man of Attock’s Hazro tehsil died after drowning while taking a bath on Thursday. Last evening, the funeral prayers were performed for 32-year-old Sajjad Riaz, who was taking a bath at the Indus River at Attock Khurd. The bodies of three persons, including the 2 brothers, could not be found yet, after tireless efforts Rescue 1122 ended the operation. 16-year-old Makrab Tufail resident of Garhi Alizai Tehsil Hazro was visiting his maternal uncle in the village of Ghazi Tehsil when he went down to bath in the pond on the side of the Ghazi Brotha canal where he drowned. On the other hand, Sajjad Riaz, a resident of Hazro, who drowned in the Indus River at Attock Khurd last evening.

## AJK PM emphasis for timely completion of ongoing development projects

MIRPUR (APP): An extraordinary high-level meeting, held with Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwaar ul Haq on Wednesday in the chair, reviewed the Annual Development Program 2022-23 of the Department of Local Government and Rural Development. The meeting was attended by senior minister Colonel (retd) Waqar Ahmad Noor, Members of Assembly Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Javed Ahmad Butt, Sardar Akmal Sargala, Secretary of Local Government and Rural Development Syed Shahid Mohiuddin Qadri, and others. During the meeting, instructions were issued to concerned authorities for the preparation of a work plan for spending the annual develop-

ment fund and submitting it to the prime minister. The meeting laid emphasis on reviewing the Local Government Act, amending sub-rules of the act and formulating suggestions for its improvement. A committee consisting of the Principal Secretary, Law Secretary and Local Government Secretary has been formed to review the laws and the legal status of the Coordination Council. On the occasion, the Secretary of Local Government briefed the prime minister on the prevailing procedure for the creation, inclusion and approval of terms in the Annual Development Program and ADP. While addressing the review meeting, Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq directed that 100% utilization of the development fund should be ensured.

## Germany opens Honorary Consulate in Quetta

QUETTA (APP):The Federal Republic of Germany has opened its Honorary Consulate in Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan. In this connection, a ceremony was held in the local hotel of Quetta. Consulate General of Germany based in Karachi Dr. Rüdiger Lotz was the chief guest Member of the Balochistan Assembly, Coordinators, prominent businesspersons, politicians, media, dignitaries, members of civil society and officials from the government attended the official ceremony. “It is wonderful that for the first time ever in Balochistan, the office of the Honorary Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany has been opened in Quetta,” Consul General of Germany in Karachi Dr. Rüdiger Lotz while addressing the

opening event said. He said the appointment of the first Honorary Consul in Quetta will further highlight bilateral relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Pakistan. Dr. Lotz expressed his confidence in Honorary Consul Mir Murad Baluch and thanked him for his continued services to Germany. He expressed the hope that the opening of the Honorary Consul in Quetta will contribute to expanding the relations between Germany and Pakistan in various areas including trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. It merits mentioning here that Mir Murad Baluch, a renowned businessperson in Quetta, was appointed as the first Honorary Consul in Balochistan in February this year.

## Mpox advisory issued to enhance screening at airports

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Border Health Services on Wednesday issued Monkeypox (Mpox) advisory to the health authorities to enhance screening of inbound passengers at all international airports on the recent case detection in the country. According to an official of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, the ministry and National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) at the National Institute of Health (NIH) are vigilantly monitoring the situation. He added they are monitoring the situation both at the national and global levels while keeping all the relevant stakeholders on board for ensuring preparedness, timely response, and con-

tainment of Mpox cases in Pakistan. He said that the NIH, provincial health departments and Border Health Services at all Airports, District Health authorities at Islamabad and provinces have been advised to ensure surveillance through laboratory diagnostics, contact tracing, rapid identification of suspected cases and clusters of infections as well as the source of infection in order to provide optimal clinical care, isolate cases to prevent further transmission, identify, manage and follow-up contacts to recognize early signs of infection, identify risk groups for infection and for severe disease, protect frontline health workers, and tailor effective control and prevention measures.

## Vitamin D levels may affect body’s response to cancer treatment: Study

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vitamin D levels may be key in determining the human body’s response to anti-cancer immunotherapy, especially among people with advanced skin cancer, according to a study. The findings, published online in the peer-reviewed journal CANCER, showed that for patients with advanced melanoma, it may be important to maintain normal vitamin D levels when receiving immunotherapy medications called immune checkpoint inhibitors. Vitamin D has many effects on the body, including regulation of the immune system. To see whether levels of vitamin D might impact the effectiveness of immune checkpoint inhibitors, the team analysed the blood of 200 patients with advanced melanoma both before and every 12 weeks during immunotherapy treatment. A favourable response rate to immune checkpoint inhibitors was observed in 56.0 per cent of patients in the group with normal baseline vitamin D levels or normal levels obtained with vitamin D supplementation, com-

pared with 36.2 per cent in the group with low vitamin D levels without supplementation, Medical Daily reported. Progression-free survival – the time from treatment initiation until cancer progression – in these groups was 11.25 and 5.75 months, respectively. “Of course, vitamin D is not itself an anti-cancer drug, but its normal serum level is needed for the proper functioning of the immune system, including the response that anti-cancer drugs like immune checkpoint inhibitors affect,” said lead author Lukasz Galus, from Poznan University of Medical Sciences, in Poland. “In our opinion, after appropriately randomised confirmation of our results, the assessment of vitamin D levels and its supplementation could be considered in the management of melanoma.” Melanoma is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in melanocytes (cells that colour the skin). Melanoma can occur anywhere on the skin. Unusual moles, exposure to sunlight, and health history can affect the risk of melanoma.



ECC approves four licences for oil & gas exploration in Attock, Chakwal

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Thursday approved four summaries of the Petroleum Division about the renewal and grant of Exploration and Production (E&P) licences in Attock and Chakwal in a bid to accelerate oil and gas exploration activities in the country. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presided over the ECC meeting, a Finance Ministry press release said. The ECC accorded its approval to the following summaries of Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division):- Extension in renewal of Bhal Syedan Development and Production Lease (D&PL) covering an area of 16.41 sq kms located in District Attock, Punjab w.e.f. 1st January, 2022 till 10th April, 2024 in favour of M/s OGDCL

(Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd). -Declaration of Commerciality (DOC), approval of Field Development Plan (FDP), and grant of Development and Production Lease (D&PL) over Fazil Discovery (Mubarik Block) for a period of five years w.e.f 8th June 2022, in favour of M/s United Energy Pakistan (UEP) Beta GmbH, in order to meet the ever-growing energy needs of the country. -Grant of five years renewal to Pariwali Development and Production Lease (D&PL) field covering an area of 121.95 Sq. Kms located in Attock district, Punjab, to M/s POL (Pakisatn Oilfileds Ltd) w.e.f. 1st July, 2022. -Grant of five years renewal over Minwal Development and Production Lease (D&PL), covering an area of 18.85 sq kms located in Chakwal district, Punjab, w.e.f. 1st April, 2023.

Mpox possible threat: CM asks health department to set up isolation wards

QUETTA (APP): In view of the possible mpox, a viral zoonotic disease threat, Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizinjo on Thursday directed the health department to set up isolation wards in all government-run hospitals. The Isolation wards with 5 to 10 beds should be established at a separate location from hospitals, CM directed the health department authorities. “Isolation wards should be set up at BMC, Civil Hospital, Shaikh Zaid, Mufti Mehmood Hospital, and Fatima Jin-

nah Hospital,” he urged. CM also called upon the authorities to provide necessary medical equipments and other items including hygiene kits to cope with the possible mpox threat. In compliance with the CM directives, the health department, government of Balochistan has issued an alert. Director General Health Balochistan has directed all government hospitals of the province to set up the isolation wards,” a letter written to the heads of the hospitals by DG Health read.

Suspected dacoit held in injured condition

HYDERABAD (APP): A suspected outlaw was arrested in injured condition after an exchange of fire between Tando Jam Police and a dacoit gang here on Thursday. According to a police spokesman, the police had an encounter with a dacoit gang near Sipiya Mori, Tandojam. As a result, an accused identified as Aftab Ahmed Bhurgari was arrested with bullet wound while two of his accomplices managed to escape. The arrested

robber and his accomplices had been involved in motorcycle theft, robbery and other crimes in the city and other areas, he added. Police also recovered a pistol from the possession of the arrested accused, who was immediately shifted to civil hospital for medical aid. Tandojam police have started a search operation for other accused involved in the crime incidents while the record of the arrested suspect was also being checked.

Police arrest three flour smugglers; recover 1100 bags, 49 tonnes

RAWALPINDI (APP): Naseerabad police along with the food Department Rawalpindi team here on Thursday arrested three flour smugglers and recovered 1100 bags and 49 tonnes from their possession. According to a police spokesman, three drivers namely Wajid, Abdul Rehman and Usama were rounded up during the operation while three vehicles were also

impounded with 49 tonnes and 1100 flour bags. He informed that the accused were trying to smuggle wheat flour out of the Rawalpindi division. The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the authorities concerned were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids, he added.

Steering Committee formed for export sector’s digital transformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday set up a Steering Committee comprising experts from Information Technology (IT) and private sectors for the implementation of digital transformation and to increase the country’s export volume. The minister announced this initiative while addressing a roundtable conference on “Digital Transformation in Pakistan” organized by the Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, a news release said. Earlier, a report on “Pakistan’s Digital Journey, Recommendations for Digital Transformation in Pakistan” was launched by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI). The report prepared by OICCI covers wide-ranging suggestions to boost digital infrastructure and connectivity, e-governance, e-commerce, EdTech, Fintech, AgriTech, HealthTech,

IT exports and Web 3.0 technologies. The report argues that digitization has the potential to add \$60 billion to the economy by 2030 if the government creates a favourable investment climate for local and foreign investors to fill the large gaps that existed in digital infrastructure and connectivity. Speaking on the occasion, the Planning Minister highlighted that the IT sector was the key driver to increasing digital exports, reiterating the government’s commitment to give a top priority to the sector for the increased digital exports. The Steering Committee will hold meetings every month to implement the recommendations of OCCI regarding digital transformation. “To increase exports is the only solution to get rid of the country’s economic problems,” Ahsan Iqbal said while assuring the stakeholders to implement the OCCI’s recommendations in letter and spirit.

Power consumers due relief stands at 41 paisa per unit in FCA for March

ISLAMABAD (APP): Electricity consumers are due a relief of 41 paisas per unit in fuel cost adjustment (FCA) as per actual generation in March 2023. This relief has been realized due to strict monitoring by the Power Division of fuel consumption, load management, and an increase in usage of indigenous fuel sources under the leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, said a statement issued by the Power Division here Thursday. Central Power Purchasing Agency (CP-

PA-G) has sought an increase of Rs 1. 17 per unit from power regulator National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for Rs 14 billion in arrears for a period of June 2021. The difference between the additional arrears of June 2021 (Rs. +1.58) and negative FCA for March 2023 (41 paisas) led to the filing of Rs. 1.17 per unit in FCA. NEPRA will hold a public hearing on May 3, after which the final FCA is to be charged for March, it was further said.

President Chinese Youth Federation calls on Chinese Charge d’ Affaires Pang Chunxue

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation (APCOYF), Aasma Ismail Butt called on Chinese Charge d’Affaires to Pakistan Pang Chunxue at the Chinese Embassy here on Thursday. During the meeting, President APCOYF Aasma Ismail Butt highlighted deep-rooted historical bilateral relations between the two countries and appreciated the important role of Charge d’ Affaires

Peng Chunxue in making Pak-China relations stronger. She said, “China is our long-standing friend, whose friendship is a priority for every Pakistani citizen.” The federation was playing an important role in promoting the culture of both countries so that Pakistan-China relations will be stronger in the future, she added. They also discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation and agreed to work together on the promotion of

culture to further strengthen Pakistan-China relations, said a press release issued by APCOYF. On this occasion, Aasma Ismail Butt said that the culture of Pakistan and China was quite similar. “This is the reason why the government as well as the people of both the countries like each other’s culture and traditions. This federation would promote the culture of both countries,” she added.

Medical store sealed

SARGODHA (APP): A medical store was sealed for selling fake medicines here on Thursday. According to the official sources,a team headed by Deputy Drug Controller Shahpur Dr Faheem Zia inspected store of Anwar-ul-Haq near Jhawarian Shahpur and recovered expired medicines. The team sealed the store and sent the case to the District Quality Control board.

IRSA releases 111,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 111,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 110,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1444.17 feet and was 46.17 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 28,700 cusecs while the outflow as 35,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.55 feet, 69.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 39,800 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 38,700, 43,700, 34,900 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 23,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 10,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

DC reviews Gujar Khan’s land revenue records

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema during a visit to Tehsil Gujar Khan on Thursday reviewed the land revenue records. Chairing a meeting held in Gujar Khan tehsil, he checked the land revenue records including distribution of the land, ‘jamabandi, Girdawari’ and other administrative issues. Assistant Commissioner Gujar Khan Mian Murad Hussain and other administrative officers attended the meeting. The DC directed the authorities concerned to finalize the manual inventory of the land records as soon as possible. All the ‘khasrajats and khewat’ block cases should be resolved on a priority basis, he added.

CTD Inspector dies in Khuzdar blast

QUETTA (APP): Station House Officer of the Counter-terrorism Department, Sharbat Khan died in a blast near his vehicle on Thursday morning, district administration confirmed. “The blast took place near Jhalawan Medical Complex on the National Highway,” Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar Ilyas Kibzai told media, adding that an explosive device was planted on the roadside. The CTD SHO was on his way to the office when explosives planted along the roadside went off, he further said.

Khairpur Police recovers Hindu dispenser

SUKKUR (APP): SSP Khairpur, Mir Rohail Khoso on Wednesday said that the Khairpur police has recovered a Hindu dispenser who was kidnapped 20 days ago. While talking to the media, he said that police from the Katcha area of Baradi Jatoi intensified the ongoing operation and recovered Chetto Mal, the Hindu dispenser, after an encounter when he was being shifted to another place.

Another CPEC project worth Rs 1.25 trn approved to connect KP with Balochistan: Asad Mahmood

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Federal Minister of Communications Asad Mahmood has announced that a project worth Rs 1.25 trillion to connect Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Balochistan through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route had been approved. He stated this during a meeting with a delegation of Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) local leadership on Thursday. The minister said this project of a 210-km long road would connect Yarik to Saggu and then Saggu to Zhob which

would be completed with the joint cooperation of the governments of Pakistan and China. He informed that the secretary of communication was on a visit to China for the final approval of matters from China. Asad said that the completion of this project would make the travel between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan easier. He said this route would pass through the areas of both provinces which remained neglected during the past, adding, it would also ensure economic prosperity in the areas.

Murad lauds 160-year educational services of St. Joseph’s Convent school

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that the Catholic education philosophy reveals a concern for an education that combines sound knowledge and skills with overall personal development and such an education involves a high level of interpersonal relationships between teacher and student. This is something to be proud of that [today] as we are commemorating 160 years of educational growth and services of St. Joseph’s Convent school at the main campus. This he said on Thursday while speaking at the 160th closing ceremony of St. Joseph’s Convent School which was commemorating the Sesquicentennial year (1862 – 2022-23). The CM was accompanied by Minister of Education Syed Sardar Shah. Principal of the school Sr. Elizabeth Niamat, Provincial Superior Sr.

Angelina Francis, Rev. Sisters, Rev. Fathers, nuns from the Institute of the Daughters of the Cross - Liege, and School Staff received him at his arrival. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that it was a great pleasure to attend a programme to mark the 160th Sesquicentenary Years. He added that a golden milestone has been achieved in the history of not only St. Joseph’s Convent School but in the history of Pakistan. “We are duly indebted to the Christian Community of Pakistan for providing quality service in the field of education,” he said. A great thing about St. Joseph’s is that it has evolved with the passage of time and has incorporated a syllabus that benefits National Curriculum, the CM said and added that he has learned that St. Joseph’s Convent School was against bullying and corporal punishment.

7 passengers died in train burning incident: PR

LAHORE (APP): At least seven passengers including three children died when a coach of Lahore bound Karachi Express train caught fire after mid night between Wednesday and Thursday, (April 26 to 27, 2023). A spokesperson for the Railways said on Thursday morning that an investigation team led by Federal Government Inspector of Railways (FGIR) had left for investigation into the incident and findings would soon be shared with the media. It is pertinent to mention here that seven

passengers died when an A/C business class coach of Lahore bound Karachi Express train caught fire near Tando Masti Khan railway station. Fire brigade teams controlled the fire at around 3:00 a.m. The PR spokesperson informed that 4 passengers were missing after the incident and the PR police were making efforts to find them. The train was set off for its journey early in the morning after detachment of the burnt coach. The officers concerned were present at Tando Masti Khan railway station.

CS directs finance dept to reduce POL consumption in GB secretariat by 50%

GILGIT (APP): Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Muhiudeen Wani has directed the finance department to reduce POL consumption in the GB secretariat by 50%. In an official statement to media here on Thursday, he said, “I have repeatedly noticed that students reaching school from far-flung areas are often charged transportation costs because schools lack an adequate supply of petrol or budget for petrol.” Wani highlighted many hospitals fail to run generators and meet their energy requirements because they also do not possess the financial capacity to ensure an uninterrupted supply

of fuel. “This problem is naturally linked to the ongoing fiscal crisis in the country, however, it stems from mismanagement and poor allocation of resources as well,” he maintained. The chief secretary said to mitigate that element, he was taking the step of reducing his official POL consumption also by 50% starting this month. He said secretaries of Health and education were directed to carry out an assessment of the POL requirements of schools and hospitals. “We hope to meet this shortfall through the savings we incur by reducing the official consumption of POL,” he added.

SC can’t direct political parties to hold dialogue on elections: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday said the Supreme Court could not direct the political parties to hold dialogue on simultaneous general election of all national and provincial assemblies. The CJP expressed these views while heading a three-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar, which heard the case regarding holding of simultaneous election of all assemblies across the country. During the course of proceedings, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that the first meeting between the coalition government and opposition parties was held on April 19 and it was decided that the next one would be held on April 26. He said

Ayaz Sadiq and Khawaja Saad Rafiq met former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on April 25 where the latter stated that he was not authorized by the party to hold negotiations. He said the meetings of the coalition government parties were held yesterday and two of them had objections on the negotiations, but a way was found. The Senate chairman had written letters to the government and the opposition in the Upper House of the Parliament and sought four names each from the two sides, he added. The Chief Justice asked what efforts were made after Asad Qaiser who was not authorized to negotiate. The Attorney General said it was learned from the media on Tuesday that Shah Mehmood Qureshi was authorized by the PTI to negotiate.



## JS Bank takes step towards enhancement of minority BIPL shareholders

KARACHI (Agencies): The JS Bank has taken a big step towards positively enhancing and developing minority shareholders of Bank Islami Private Limited (BIPL). The Board of Directors of JS Bank Limited (JSBL) amended consideration for the public offer portion for the acquisition of

24.88% shareholding of Bank Islami from shares to cash offering, said a news release on Wednesday. Earlier, BIPL minority shareholders were offered shares of JSBL subsidiaries, JS Global Capital Limited (JSGCL) and JS Investments Limited (JSIL). Some shareholders wanted cash or

Shariah-compliant consideration. The offer, which was for Rs 23 per share was at a significant premium to BIPL's share price. Both organizations will operate independently with separate management. In a slow market, this acquisition has built a lot of interest and hope.

## Boeing reports another loss in Q1, but confirms forecast

NEW YORK (Agencies): Boeing reported a bigger-than-expected quarterly loss Wednesday due to quality control problems that have limited commercial plane deliveries and lifted costs in its defense program. The company reported a loss of \$425 million, compared with \$1.2 billion in the year-ago period. But Boeing affirmed its full-year outlook for operating cash flow, a key metric,

and for 737 plane deliveries in 2023. The company's revenues came in at \$17.9 billion, up 28 percent from the year-ago period and topping analyst expectations, but under the level of the pre-pandemic 2019 first quarter. Shares rose on the report. "We are progressing through recent supply chain disruptions but remain confident in the goals we set for this year, as well as for the longer term," said

Chief Executive Dave Calhoun. "Demand is strong across our key markets and we are growing investments to advance our development programs and innovate strategic capabilities for our customers and for our future." Boeing's commercial plane program has been beset with various manufacturing and quality control issues that have limited deliveries for its top-selling jets, the 737 and 787.

## Argentina to pay for Chinese imports in yuan rather than dollars

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): Argentina will start to pay for Chinese imports in yuan rather than dollars, the government announced Wednesday, a measure that aims to relieve the country's dwindling dollar reserves. In April, it aims to pay around \$1 billion of Chinese imports in yuan instead of dollars and thereafter around \$790 million of monthly imports will be paid in yuan, a government statement

said. The decision aims to ease the outflow of dollars, Argentina's Economy minister Sergio Massa said during an event following a meeting with the Chinese ambassador, Zou Xiaoli, as well as with companies from various sectors. The decision comes as the South American nation battles critical levels in its dollar reserves amid a sharp drop in agricultural exports caused by a historic drought, as well

as political uncertainty ahead of elections this year. In November last year, Argentina expanded a currency swap with China by \$5 billion, seeking to strengthen Argentina's international reserves. The agreement will allow Argentina "to work on the possibility" of advancing the rate of imports, Massa added, with yuan-denominated import orders being authorized in 90 days rather than the standard 180 days.

## Toyota edges past 9.1 mln vehicle output goal, warns chip shortage lingering

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan's Toyota Motor Corp (7203.T) set a global annual output record in the business year ended in March, just edging past its target of 9.1 million vehicles as factory disruption from global chip supply woes and pandemic lockdowns eased. But the world's biggest automaker by sales warned it continued to see impacts from the long-running global chip shortage,

saying it remained hard to predict its effect going forward. Toyota said on Thursday it produced 9.13 million vehicles in the 12 months through March 31, a fraction ahead of its target, though that goal was downgraded twice from an initial goal for the year of around 9.7 million amid industry disruption. In the previous year vehicle output was 8.57 million. Global sales for the 12 months ended

March rose to 9.61 million vehicles from 9.51 million in the prior year, setting another annual record for the company. The company didn't release new sales or production targets for the current business year that started in April. It disclosed it has so far sold just 17,473 battery electric vehicles (EVs) worldwide, including those of its luxury Lexus brand, for the first three months of 2023.

## Changshu textile enterprises invited to participate in Karachi TEXPO

BEIJING (Agencies): Terming the 4th International Textile Expo (TEXPO) as the largest event in Pakistan, Commercial Counsellor, Pakistan Embassy, Ghulam Qadir has said it would provide a common platform to connect textile industry experts from home and abroad. In his recent visit to Changshu, Suzhou City, Jiangsu province on Thursday, the commercial counsellor briefed the local textile enterprises on the current situation of the textile industry

in Pakistan and the upcoming TEXPO to be held in Karachi from May 26-28. Ghulam Qadir, along with Chief Representative of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), Shaikh Muhammad Shariq, invited the enterprises of Changshu, known as the hometown of the textile industry, to participate in the TEXPO and take advantage of the incentives and opportunities. The TEXPO highlights the revolution of Pakistan's textile industry, which transcends borders

and supports countless jobs, improved lifestyles, enhanced identities, and the dreams of millions of people around the world. During the visit of IBI International Group Co., Ltd. head office, the delegation held in-depth discussions with Ibrahim Munir, Group Chairman, Awan Arshad Iqbal, Director and Qasim Kamal, Group Director on China-Pakistan trade and project prospects for the future development of China-Pakistan collaborations.

## Asian stocks mixed after lacklustre session on Wall Street

HONG KONG (Agencies): Asian markets overcame a shaky start to enjoy modest gains on Thursday, bucking a session on Wall Street that saw major indices sink despite a surge in tech. Blockbuster earnings lifted the tech-heavy Nasdaq on Wednesday, with both Microsoft and Meta soaring after delivering expectation-beating reports, but recession fears and concerns over the banking sector dragged down the Dow and the S&P. By mid-afternoon in Asia,

however, futures for all three indices were comfortably in the green. Hong Kong, Tokyo and Shanghai were all up on Thursday afternoon as earnings season got into full swing, in spite of lacklustre reports from some major players. Japan's Nomura bank saw its share price plunge more than seven percent after announcing its profits fell 76 percent to \$55.3 million in the last quarter. South Korean tech giant Samsung reported its worst quarter-

ly profits in 14 years, blaming slowing consumer spending and falling microchip prices. The company's first-quarter net income fell 86.1 percent to \$1.17 billion, and sales dropped 18 percent, though its stock closed 0.78 percent higher. Japanese airline ANA Holdings, meanwhile, fell 1.54 percent, but said in an announcement after the market closed that it had returned to profit in the year ending in March, rebounding from deep pandemic-related losses.

## J&J's consumer unit named in talcum powder cancer claims

NEW JERSEY (Agencies): Johnson & Johnson's newly formed consumer health unit Kenvue has been named in claims that the company's talcum powder can cause cancer, the Financial Times reported on Thursday. Kenvue has been named in at least seven talc lawsuits filed since the start of April, according to the report, citing regulatory filings and people familiar with the matter. The news comes as Johnson & Johnson (J&J) said it's seeking up

to a US\$42.95 billion valuation for Kenvue in its initial public offering. Earlier this month, J&J agreed to pay US\$8.9 billion to settle tens of thousands of lawsuits alleging that talc in its iconic Baby Powder and other products caused cancer, dwarfing the company's original offer of \$2 billion. J&J has claimed that its talc products are safe and do not cause cancer. One of the new cases naming Kenvue was filed in Middlesex county, New Jersey, on

behalf of a husband and wife who live in Louisiana, FT said. Their lawsuit claims Justin Bergeron contracted mesothelioma as a result of using J&J talc containing asbestos, FT reported. Lawyers working for talc claimants said it could be the first of many claims filed against Kenvue and other J&J divisions not previously named in lawsuits, the paper added. J&J did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on the lawsuits.

## Australian watchdog raps Murdoch's Sky News over climate coverage

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia's media watchdog has rapped the climate coverage on Rupert Murdoch's Sky News, finding multiple inaccurate and unfair statements that led to breaches of broadcasting rules. The Australian Communications and Media Authority said Wednesday that the sister channel of Murdoch's US-based Fox News aired inaccurate statements in segments of its Sunday "Outsiders" programme. The watchdog reviewed 80 allegations across 10 Outsiders episodes

and identified code-breaching incidents in items on Antarctic ice cores, heat pumps in the United Kingdom, Great Barrier Reef corals and Japanese temperature data. The show features three commentators with conservative viewpoints who address the news of the week. "The programme has an obligation to its audience to clearly separate fact from comment," said watchdog chair Nerida O'Loughlin. "Across a number of its episodes Outsiders failed to do so and did not present

news content either accurately or fairly." Sky News acknowledged the finding in a statement, but said the complaints were lodged by former Labor prime minister and now Australian ambassador to the US, Kevin Rudd. Rudd has campaigned for a public inquiry into Murdoch's media ownership in Australia - which includes a string of newspapers that have long-supported conservative politicians and causes. Sky News noted the majority of Rudd's 80 complaints were rejected.

## China's central bank adds liquidity via reverse repos

BEIJING (Agencies): China's central bank continued to inject funds into the financial system through open market operations Thursday. The People's Bank of China said it has conducted 93 billion yuan (about 13.44 billion U.S. dollars) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 2 percent.

The move aims to keep month-end liquidity in the banking system stable, according to the central bank. A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

## A stronger yen could jolt global markets

LONDON (Agencies): Investors are positioning for a regime change in global markets as the Bank of Japan edges closer to ditching the policies that depressed the yen for decades, thereby luring Japanese money back home. The BOJ, by flooding its financial system with cheap cash and keeping interest rates below zero for years, turned its currency into the ideal funding vehicle and sent trillions of dollars of Japanese cash overseas in search of better returns. It is now the last holdout in the global race to raise rates, but with Japa-

nese inflation at multi-decade highs, the yen has steadily strengthened. That means portfolio managers are having to factor a stronger yen into global stock selection in way they have not for years, with some even anticipating mergers and acquisitions as the Japanese market revs up. "The trigger for the revaluation of the Japanese markets is higher rates and then a stronger yen. It's a market that has been undervalued for years and years and has been a value trap," said Carmignac's head of cross-asset Frederic Leroux.

## US stock exchanges close over 1% lower

ISTANBUL (Agencies): US stock exchanges closed more than 1% lower Tuesday. The blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 344 points, or 1.02%, to 33,530. The S&P 500 fell 65 points, or 1.58%, to 4,071. The tech-heavy Nasdaq decreased 238 points, or 1.98%, to 11,799. The VIX volatility index, also known as the fear index, jumped 11.1% to 18.76. Meanwhile, the 10-year US Treasury yield

fell 3.3% to 3.4%. The dollar index rose 0.5% to 101.89, while the euro remained unchanged at \$1.0972 against the greenback. Precious metals were mixed, with gold rising 0.4% to \$1,997 per ounce but silver trimming 0.6% to \$25.02. Oil prices were also mixed, with global benchmark Brent crude rising 0.1% to \$80.66 per barrel and US benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude falling 2.1% to \$77.13.

## Samsung Electronics logs worst quarterly earnings in 14 years

SEOUL (Agencies): Samsung Electronics on Thursday (Apr 27) reported its worst quarterly profits in 14 years, blaming slowing consumer spending on electronics and a global microchip glut that hit its core memory business. The South Korean company - one of the world's largest makers of memory chips and smartphones - said in a statement that operating profit fell to 640 billion won (US\$478.6 million) - down 95 per cent from a year earlier. Its first-quarter net income fell 86.1 per cent to 1.57 trillion won, and sales dropped 18 per cent to 63.75 trillion won. The company said that "over-

all consumer spending slowed amid the uncertain global macroeconomic environment". Samsung also blamed weakening demand for memory chips - which usually generate about half of its profits - and falling chip prices. The firm's chip division reported 4.58 trillion won in losses, its first operating loss since 2009 - when the world was emerging from the 2008 financial crisis. It said this was due to "continued price declines and an increased valuation loss ... amid weakening sentiment and continued impacts of inventory adjustments by customers caused by prolonged external uncertainties".

## Meta earnings better than expected after belt tightening

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Facebook-parent Meta on Wednesday (April 26) reported it made a profit of US\$5.7 billion (RM25.4 billion) in the first quarter of this year, beating forecasts after a massive wave of cost-cutting and layoffs. The profit came on revenue of US\$28.6 billion and as the number of people using Facebook every month grew to just shy of three billion, an earnings report showed. "We had a good quarter and our community continues to grow," said Mark Zuckerberg, Meta founder and CEO. "We're also becoming more efficient so we can

build better products faster and put ourselves in a stronger position to deliver our long term vision." Zuckerberg, who has called 2023 the "year of efficiency", added that artificial intelligence being used at Meta is "driving good results" across its business. Meta shares were up nearly 10% to US\$239 in after-market trades that followed release of the earnings figures. Meta said the number of ads shown across its "family of apps" that includes Instagram increased 26% from the same period a year earlier, but the average price per ad slipped.

## Hyundai Motor to exit Russia

SEOUL (Agencies): South Korea's Hyundai Motor Co plans to exit Russia and sell its manufacturing plants there to a Kazakh company, South Korean media reported on Wednesday. South Korean TV network MBC reported that negotiations to sell Hyundai's factories in Russia are in the final stage, adding that the automaker has been waiting for a final approval from the Russian government. "It is true that there are ongoing discussions regarding the sale, but nothing has been decided," Hyundai Motor said, according to the TV network. Hyundai Motor

suspended operations at its Russian operation last year. In March, the automaker said it was reviewing "various options" for its Russian operation. In a statement to Reuters on Thursday, Hyundai Motor said it was reviewing various scenarios for the future of its business in Russia, adding no decision had been made so far. Many factories in Russia have suspended production and furloughed workers due to shortages of high-tech equipment because of sanctions and an exodus of Western manufacturers since Moscow invaded Ukraine last year.

## AstraZeneca's 1Q profit, revenue beat expectations

LONDON (Agencies): AstraZeneca today beat expectations for its first-quarter profit and revenue, helped by sales of its roster of drugs in emerging markets. The London-listed drugmaker, which reports its results in US dollars, reported adjusted profit of US\$1.92 per share on sales of about US\$10.9 billion. Analysts on average were expecting US\$1.71 per share on sales of about US\$10.6 billion, according to company-compiled consensus esti-

mates. AstraZeneca's performance in emerging markets was particularly strong, CEO Pascal Soriot said in a statement. Excluding sales of its Covid-19 products, sales grew 22% to US\$3.1 billion in emerging markets on a constant currency basis. AstraZeneca is seen as a bellwether for the pharmaceutical sector in China, given its outsized presence in the region. In 2022, the country accounted for about 13% of the company's total revenue.



Saudi Arabia bow out of ACC Premier Cup with heads held high after Oman defeat

KATHMANDU (Agencies): Saudi Arabia’s run in the ACC Premier Cup 2023 came to an end on Wednesday when they lost to Oman by 72 runs, but the squad will go home with high praise for their performance. Saud Arabia’s appearance in the tournament held in Nepal started last Thursday. The team lost the first fixture to Malaysia but two days later outplayed Qatar. On Monday, they split competition points with Nepal after their group stage game was abandoned because of rain. In Wednesday’s



match, Saudi Arabia folded with 294 runs in the 47th over in reply to Oman’s 366 runs for six wickets in 50 overs. With that result, the Saudi team came fourth in Group A, col-

lecting three points in four matches. Victorious Oman (six) and hosts Nepal (five) progressed to the semifinals, while the journeys of Malaysia (four) and winless Qatar ended in the group stage. After the match with Oman, Saudi head coach Kabir Khan told Arab News that the team, which was still new to international cricket, showed great talent. “Oman are an experienced side. They have been in the game for a long time. Today they won with experience, talentwise we were good enough,” he said.

Andreeva, 15, gets 1st tour-level win; Raducanu withdraws at Madrid Open

MADRID (Agencies): After her backhand fell inside the baseline for match point, 15-year-old Mirra Andreeva raised both hands and covered her face. She couldn’t stop smiling as she headed to the net, as if not believing what had just happened. The 6-3, 6-4 upset of former US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez at the Madrid Open on Wednesday was the first tour-level win for the Russian teenager, coming three days before here 16th birthday. Andreeva became the third-youngest player to win a main-draw match at a WTA 1000 tournament, behind Coco Gauff and CiCi Bellis. She was only



the second 15-year-old to defeat a top-50 opponent at a WTA 1000 event. “It was really tough match for me and I just tried to give my best and to play every point,” Andreeva said. “I’m extremely happy with my level today.” Andreeva had never faced a top-50

opponent but had already earned impressive results this year on the junior and ITF levels. Her first main-draw victory extended her unbeaten pro record in 2023 to 14-0, and she was coming off two consecutive ITF W60 titles. Andreeva’s second-round opponent will be 13th-seeded Bia Haddad Maia of Brazil. Brenda Fruhvirtova, who is 16, lost 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to Anna Kalinskaya, but her 17-year-old sister Linda Fruhvirtova on Tuesday had won her first-round match against Katie Volynets 6-3, 7-5. She will next play 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko.

NBA, players finalize new collective bargaining agreement

NEW YORK (Agencies): The NBA and its players have voted to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement, formalizing a deal that was tentatively agreed to earlier this month. The sides announced the deal on Wednesday. It goes into effect in July and stretches through the 2029-30 season, though both sides have the option of ending it a year early. It means the most financially successful era in NBA history will continue uninterrupted for at least six more years. Among the highlights: The addition



of an in-season tournament that Commissioner Adam Silver has wanted for years, and about \$160 million in team and league licensing revenue getting added annually to the total of

basketball-related income that is split with the players. Such income will remain a 50-50 split — but the pool will get bigger, which will add to player salaries. Other changes coming in the new CBA include the elimination of marijuana from the list of banned substances, less invasive testing for performance-enhancing drugs, a slight drop in the percentage of salary players will lose when suspended for a game or more — and the assurance that even if revenues drop, the salary cap will not.

Treble-chasing Inter beat Juventus 1-0 to reach Cup final

MILAN (Agencies): Inter Milan maintained their push for a trio of trophies as they beat Juventus 1-0 on Wednesday to reach their second straight Italian Cup final. Federico Dimarco scored the only goal of the match to help defending champions Inter advance 2-1 on aggregate. The Nerazzurri will play either Fiorentina or Cremonese in the final on May 24 in Rome. Inter play AC Milan in the Champions League semifinals next month. They beat their city rivals to win the Italian Super Cup in January.



“I can’t tell you the truth, but it doesn’t matter how I hit it,” Dimarco said with a laugh when asked if he had actually mishit his shot. “The important thing is that the ball went in. That’s

what matters in the end. “We’ve got through the Champions League quarterfinals, we’ve reached this final, we have to continue like this. This group is incredible, made up of boys who fight for this jersey every match and show what they’re worth.” It was a largely mediocre performance from Juventus, which will have to swiftly bounce back as they are also in a European semifinal as well as being involved in a tight battle for the top four in Serie A and a place in next season’s Champions League.

Loeb grabs stage victory to give Bahrain Raid Xtrme lead in Mexico

HERMOSILLO (Agencies): Sebastian Loeb took the outright lead in the Sonora Rally with a superb stage victory for Bahrain Raid Xtrme as Prodrive Hunters dominated second-day proceedings in Mexico. Partnered by Fabian Lurquin in his BRX Prodrive Hunter, Loeb secured a 2 minutes, 45 seconds victory on the 162-km second stage from overnight leader Nasser Al-Attiah, to grab a slender overall advantage over his chief rival in the World



Rally-Raid Championship. The result means nine-time World Rally Champion Loeb still has control in the WRC title race, in which he led

Al-Attiah by 16 points heading into the third round in Mexico. It was an outstanding day for the Prodrive Hunters, which set four of the five fastest times on a stage guarded by giant cacti, and it could have been better. Guerlain Chicherit and Alex Winocq, last year’s Rallye du Maroc winners, finished the day holding third place overall in their Hunter, despite losing front-wheel drive over the last 45 kilometers to be fifth on the stage.

Madushka, Mendis hit double tons as Sri Lanka pummel Ireland

Galle, Sri Lanka (AFP/APP): Nishan Madushka and Kusal Mendis both made double centuries against Ireland Thursday as Sri Lanka’s top four batters all hit hundreds for only the third time in Test history. In reply to Ireland’s 492 all out, their highest-ever Test score, Sri Lanka declared their first innings on 704 for three after tea on the fourth day of the second Test in Galle, 212 runs ahead. Ireland lost two early wickets in their second innings to end the day 54 for two, needing a further 158 on the final day to avoid a second straight innings defeat. Ireland could still achieve a historic first draw if they can hang on after losing all five of their games since obtaining Test status in 2017. “We struggled to get Sri Lankan wickets. But the positive for us is the application and skill our batters showed in the first innings,” Ireland coach Gary Wilson said. “The challenge for us now is to do it again tomorrow and go back home with a draw,” he added. Madushka converted his maiden



Test century into a double hundred, becoming the second-youngest Sri Lankan to score a Test 200 after Mahela Jayawardene. He was dismissed for 205 in the third over after lunch, lbw to Andy McBrine, with Ireland successfully reviewing the decision after the initial appeal was turned down. Madushka’s marathon knock lasted six minutes short of eight hours after he faced 339 deliveries and hit 22 fours and a six. Mendis, who had twice been dismissed in the 190s, reached his first Test 200 by pushing a Ben White delivery behind square to steal a single. He amassed 245 runs and was one short

of Wasim Akram’s world record of 12 sixes in a Test innings when he was caught at long-off attempting to equal that mark. Angelo Mathews was dismissed for a duck in the first Test and was put down on one this match, but made the most of his reprieve to post his 16th Test hundred. That gave the hosts their quadruple-centurions entry in the history books, after India against Bangladesh in 2007 and Pakistan against Sri Lanka in 2019. Captain Dimuth Karunaratne, who scored 115 on Wednesday, declared immediately. Their monster total of 704 for three was also the highest-ever score in Galle, eclipsing Bangladesh’s 638 all out in 2013. The pitch was still a batter’s paradise but Ramesh Mendis cleaned up James McCollum for 10 before Prabath Jayasuriya had Peter Moor caught at short extra cover. Andy Balbirnie and Harry Tector took Ireland to stumps without further trouble, with the captain on 12 not out and the Ireland number four on seven.

Sprinter Shereen to train in Florida amid financial challenges

PETALING JAYA (Agencies): United States-based 400m ace Shereen Samson Vallabouy will train in Florida from June to qualify for the Paris Olympics next year. However, the holder of the national records in outdoor and indoor 400m faces a daunting challenge of funding her training and stay in Florida. Olympian Josephine Mary said her daughter would struggle with the financial strains of coaching, sports massage, accommodation, travel and other living costs. Josephine said she was seeking financial help for Shereen to train in Florida and qualify



for the Olympics, “which has been her dream since young”. Her plea comes amid calls for Shereen to be included in the podium programme under which athletes receive better support from the national sports council.

5 Things on how City masterclass spiked Gunners



LONDON (Agencies): Manchester City brushed aside Arsenal with contemptuous ease to put one hand on the English Premier League trophy in a one-sided, so-called title decider at The Etihad. The misfiring Gunners still top the table – by two points – but the reigning champions have two games in hand and are now overwhelming favourites

to make it three titles in a row and close in on an historic treble. 1. Title decider? More like title clincher Billed as a heavyweight contest, it turned out to be a mismatch – between a genuine heavyweight and a puffed-up middleweight. Arsenal arrived with championship pretensions, but on the night they didn’t even pretend. They were out-thought, out-fought and outclassed by Pep Guardiola’s men whose superiority should have seen them home and dry by half-time. Only the heroics of keeper Alan Ramsdale – the lone Arsenal player to do himself justice – kept the scoreline down to one-nil.

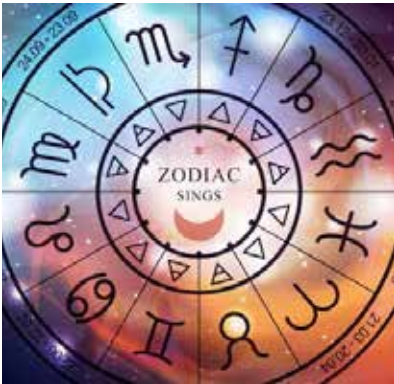
‘Pele’ now defined as ‘someone out of the ordinary’

BRASILIA (Agencies): ‘Pele’ is now a word to describe ‘someone out of the ordinary’ as the three-time World Cup winner’s name was included as a new adjective in the Portuguese edition of the Michaelis dictionary. Earlier this month, the Pele Foundation and Sportv launched the “Pele in the dictionary” campaign to pay tribute and recognise his legacy in other fields besides sport. Having reached more than 100,000 signatures, the name of the former player, who died in December, is now an entry in the dictionary. “pe.lé adj m+f sm+f That or someone who is out of the ordinary, who or who by virtue of their quality, value or superiority cannot be equalled to anything or anyone, just like Pelé®,” says the dictionary entry which was unveiled at the Summit Sports event, in Paqueta, on Wednesday. “Edson’s nickname Arantes do Nascimento (1940-2022), considered the greatest athlete of all time; exceptional,



incomparable, unique. Examples: He is the Pele of basketball, she is the Pele of tennis, she is the Pele of Brazilian dramaturgy, he is the Pele of medicine”. Pele’s family was presented with a plaque with the entry and Michaelis has already included it in its digital edition. The definition will also be included in the next printed version. “The Pele campaign in the dictionary is one of the most original we have ever participated... His name in the dictionary is a very important piece of his legacy that will keep Pele alive forever,” said Joe Fraga, executive director of the Pele Foundation.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: APRIL 28, 2023



– It’s a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
– **ARIES**: Keep your eyes open for unexpected events. Little accidents are much more likely to happen today, but most can be avoided through careful attention. You’re in a good position to help out.  
– **TAURUS**: You and your sweetheart are in sync today. If you’re not seeing someone, it’s a good time for a date or to check out the dating apps. Your ability to spot potential mates is as sharp as ever!  
– **GEMINI**: You usually communicate pretty well with family and close friends, but today brings down a field of static that may interfere quite dramatically. Try to keep it simple for a few days!  
– **CANCER**: Your brain is powerful today, so you should be able to apply logic and rigor to any situation that requires it. Of course, some personal issues are much more dependent on creativity!  
– **LEO**: You’ve got more to think about today than you realized at first. In fact,

you may need to do a top-to-bottom reassessment of a big plan! That’s fine. Your mind is ready for the challenge.  
– **VIRGO**: You should be able to get yourself well organized today, even more so than usual. It’s one of those days when you feel as if your energy is bursting out of you in all directions!  
– **LIBRA**: You’re learning to let go of anger, and today brings a sense of peace you didn’t know was possible. Your forgiveness may not be complete yet, but you’re a long way from where you were!  
– **SCORPIO**: Your ability to gather and manipulate information is strong now. It’s a good time to learn and research. If you’re in school, things should go your way. At work, you could stumble onto something big!  
– **SAGITTARIUS**: You and a friend have words today, and it could get quite heated! The encounter could leave you scratching your head, but you’ll be able to kiss and make up soon.  
– **CAPRICORN**: You feel completely centered and at peace, or close to it! Your good energy is perfect for connecting with your partner or making up with a coworker you’ve been feuding with lately.  
– **ACQUARIUS**: It’s imperative that you look more deeply into the current situation. It may be that some hidden variables need to be brought out into the open. You can make a lot of progress once you know.  
– **PISCES**: You may get quite a few requests for help today, and you should be sure to at least give them your honest consideration. Your energy is best spent in a supporting role for the time being.



## Veto responsible for non-resolution of Kashmir, Palestine issues: Pakistan says in UNGA's debate

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has told the UN General Assembly that it considers the veto power vested in the Security Council's five permanent members an important issue that needed to be tackled as part of the 15-member Council's reform to make it more effective. Speaking in a debate marking the first anniversary of the 193-nation Assembly's landmark resolution that requires



the permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the U.S. — to justify the use of veto, Ambas-

sador Munir Akram said the Security Council has been paralyzed by the strategic rivalries of its permanent members and the exercise of the veto. "It is precisely for this reason that longstanding disputes such as Kashmir and Palestine could not be resolved," the Pakistani envoy said, adding that the vetoes in the Council have prevented and hindered the implementation of UN resolutions.

## Global warming made Horn of Africa drought possible: report

Paris (Agencies): A devastating drought that has struck the Horn of Africa could not have occurred without global warming, according to a new report released on Thursday from an international team of climate scientists. "Human-caused climate change has made agricultural drought in the Horn of Africa about 100 times more likely," said a summary of the report by the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group. "The ongoing devastating drought would not have happened at all without the effect of greenhouse gas emissions," it added. Since late 2020, countries in the Horn of Africa — Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan — have been suffering the worst drought in 40 years. The extended drought has led to the deaths of millions of heads of cattle and wiped out crops. The WWA study con-

centrated on the three areas worst hit by the drought: southern Ethiopia, Somalia and eastern Kenya. While climate change had little effect on total annual rainfall in the region, "higher temperatures have significantly increased evaporation from soil and plants, which has made dry soils much more likely," according to the 19 scientists who contributed to the WWA report. "Without this effect, the region would not have experienced agricultural drought, when crops and pastures are affected by dry conditions, over the last two years," the summary added. "Instead, widespread crop failures and livestock deaths have left more than 20 million people at risk of acute food insecurity." The WWA said that, for its rapid analysis, "scientists looked at changes in rainfall in 2021 and 2022 in the affected region, covering southern Ethiopia, southern

Somalia and eastern Kenya". "They found that climate change is affecting the rainfall periods in opposite ways. The long rains are becoming drier, with low rainfall now about twice as likely, while the short rains are becoming wetter due to climate change," it added. "This wettening trend in the short rains has been masked recently by the La Nina weather pattern, which reduces rainfall in the short rains." Joyce Kimutai, a Kenyan climatologist who contributed to the report, told AFP: "It is time we act and engage differently. Central to this process is to transform and enhance the resilience of our systems. "We need to innovate across and throughout food systems, improve collaboration, involve vulnerable groups, make the best use of data and information, as well as incorporate new technologies and traditional knowledge."

## PM Shehbaz, Chinese Premier speak over telephone, agree to enhance bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang, spoke over the telephone on Thursday wherein they agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in all spheres aimed at benefiting the peoples of their countries besides contributing to regional peace, prosperity and stability. The conversation was marked by traditional warmth and cordiality that has always characterized Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the Prime Minister's Office said. The prime minister extended his felicitation to the Chinese Premier's on his election for this high office, which reflected the deep-seated trust of the Chinese nation and confidence in him, stemming from his many achievements in public service. As All-Weather partners and close friends, Pakistan appreciated China's

peaceful development as a positive factor of international peace and stability, and was confident that China would continue to achieve milestones on its journey towards modernization and rejuvenation, Shehbaz remarked. Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's unstinting support to China on its core issues, including the "One China" policy, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and the South China Sea. He expressed Pakistan's sincere gratitude for China's principled position on the Jammu & Kashmir dispute and support for Pakistan on other core issues. The Chinese Premier appreciated Pakistan's support for China and reaffirmed China's continuing support to Pakistan's national development, sovereignty and territorial integrity. As an All-Weather Friend, China would continue to stand with Pakistan at all times, he pledged.

## Sudan's army and RSF say ceasefire extended but fighting goes on

KHARTOUM (Agencies): The Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have agreed to extend their ceasefire amidst ongoing violence in the capital Khartoum and the western Darfur region. In the final hours of the repeatedly broken three-day truce, due to end at midnight (22:00 GMT) on Thursday, the army said it would extend the ceasefire "for an additional 72 hours" following mediation efforts by Saudi Arabia and the United States. On Thursday, warplanes patrolled over the capital's northern suburbs as fighters on the ground exchanged artillery and heavy machinegun fire, witnesses told the AFP news agency. The previous ceasefire has not stopped the fighting, but created enough of a lull for tens of thousands of Sudanese to flee to safer areas and for foreign nations to evacuate hundreds of their citizens by land and sea. Together, the army and the RSF toppled a civilian government in an October 2021 coup but are now locked in a power struggle that has derailed an internationally backed transition to democracy and is threatening to destabilise a fragile region. The army claims it controls most of Sudan's regions and is defeating a large RSF deployment in Khartoum, where some residential areas have turned into war zones. Despite a partial lull in fighting since the first 72-hour ceasefire began, air attacks and anti-aircraft fire could be heard on Thursday in the capital and the nearby cities of Omdurman and Bahri, witnesses and Reuters journalists said.

## Biden to make landmark visit to Papua New Guinea



PORT MORESBY (AFP/APP): Joe Biden is set to become the first sitting US president in at least a century to visit Papua New Guinea, Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko said Thursday, revealing plans for a brief but symbolic trip. Biden plans to stop at Port Moresby in May as he travels between a G7 summit in Japan and a Quad summit in Sydney, Australia, the foreign minister said. "He is coming on the 22nd, in the morning, and will be here for three hours only," Tkatchenko said, adding that talks were expected to focus on the economy, security and climate change. Biden's trip may put the finishing touches on a US-Papua New Guinea Defence Cooperation Agreement that would allow more joint training and the development of security infrastructure. The presidential trip is a nod toward Papua New Guinea's rapidly growing strategic importance. A series of US secretaries of state have visited in the past, including Hillary Clinton and then US vice president Mike Pence in 2018, who stepped in when then-president Donald Trump cancelled his attendance at a regional summit. According to State Department records, which date back to Theodore Roosevelt's administration in 1901, no sitting US president has visited Papua New Guinea.

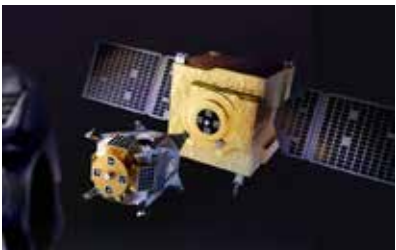
## Biden, Yoon warn North Korea of nuclear response to any attack

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): US President Joe Biden and his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk Yeol warned North Korea it would face a nuclear response and the "end" of the leadership there if Pyongyang uses its arsenal. Speaking at the White House after Oval Office talks during only the second state visit so far in the Biden presidency, the two leaders said the US security shield for South Korea was being strengthened in the face of the nuclear-armed North's ag-

gressive missile tests. And they made clear that if the isolated, communist dictatorship in North Korea attacks the South or the United States, the response will be devastating. "A nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies... will result in the end of whatever regime were to take such an action," Biden told reporters at a joint press conference with Yoon. Yoon said his priority was to secure peace through the "superiority of overwhelming forces

and not a false peace based on the goodwill of the other side." "In the event of a North Korean nuclear attack," he said, Washington and Seoul have agreed to "respond swiftly, overwhelmingly and decisively using the full force of the alliance including US nuclear weapons." A military honor guard and hundreds of guests massed outside the White House where Yoon and his wife, Kim Keon Hee, arrived for a day of pomp and ceremony.

## Out of gas in orbit? This US space company is here to help



COLORADO SPRINGS (Agencies): The US company Orbit Fab is aiming to produce the go-to "gas stations" in space, its CEO tells AFP, hoping its refuelling technology will make the surging satellite industry more sustainable -- and profitable. The solar panels typically attached to satellites can generate energy for their onboard systems such as cameras and radios, but can't help the orbiting objects adjust their positions, explains Daniel Faber, who co-founded the company in 2018. "Everything always drifts, and so very quickly, you're not where you needed to be -- so you need to keep adjusting, which means you need to keep using up propellant," he tells AFP at the space industry's annual gathering in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Satellites' lives are therefore limited by how much fuel they can carry along with them -- at least for now. "If you can refuel satellites in orbit," Faber says, "you can stop them having to be thrown away" -- a model he describes as "crazy" due to their high cost to manufacture and launch.

His company envisions sending several large tanks into orbit, each containing up to several tons of fuel. Then smaller, more easily manoeuvrable vessels will shuttle back and forth between the tanks and satellites -- like robotic pump attendants. Asked what the risks associated with operating such a system in orbit are, Faber is candid: "Everything you might imagine." But he reassures that with lots of testing on the ground, and in orbit, "it's going to be safe." Like cars, satellites hoping to receive additional propellant from Orbit Fab will have to have compatible fuel ports.

## Brazil court suspends Telegram app in neo-Nazi probe

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP/APP): A Brazilian court on Wednesday ordered the countrywide suspension of messaging app Telegram after its parent company failed to provide data sought by authorities on neo-Nazis operating on the network, officials said. The move came after a spate of violent school attacks, at least one of them linked to exchanges on a group with anti-Semitic leanings. Justice Minister Flavio Dino said the court had fined Telegram a million reais (about \$198,000) per day for "not complying" with an ongoing probe into neo-Nazi activity on social networks, and ordered the "temporary suspension of (its) activities." "There are groups called 'Anti-Semitic Front' and 'Anti-Semitic Movement' acting in those networks, and we know that this is at the core of violence against our



children," the minister said in a video sent to journalists. Earlier this month, a hatchet-wielding man killed four children between the ages of four and seven at their school, in the same week as two other, non-fatal school attacks. Last month, a 13-year-old boy killed a teacher in a knife attack at a school in Sao Paulo. In November, a 16-year-old shooter killed four people and injured more than 10 others in twin attacks on two schools in Aracruz in the southeastern state of Espirito Santo.

## Republicans pass bill to avert US debt crisis, slash spending

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): US Republicans voted Wednesday to raise the national borrowing limit, but only in conjunction with drastic cuts, as they sought a showdown with President Joe Biden over "excessive" spending with a potentially ruinous credit default looming. The government is expecting to hit the debt ceiling within weeks, raising the possibility of the world's largest economy defaulting on repayments and igniting a firestorm in global mar-

kets. The Limit, Save, Grow Act advanced from the House of Representatives by a narrow margin of 217-215 but has no chance of becoming law as it is opposed by Democrats controlling the Senate and White House. Republicans were determined to muscle it through the lower chamber of Congress to strengthen their position in negotiations with Biden, who has resolutely refused to agree to any spending cuts to get the debt cap raised.

## Pythons on your porch? Call Myanmar's 'Snake Princess'

KYAUKTAGA (AFP/APP): At four in the morning outside a Yangon monastery, Shwe Lei and her team were wrestling 30 writhing pythons into old rice sacks and loading them into a van. It was just another day in the life of Myanmar's premier snake removal squad, prising pythons and cajoling cobras from dangerous entanglements with the human world before returning them to their natural habitat. Stuffed into the sacks were three months' worth of work, rescued from homes and apartments around Yangon and cared for at the monastery until they are fit for release to the wild. "I love snakes because they are not deceitful,"



Shwe Lei told AFP at the snake shelter run by the group, a python entwined around her body. "If you acknowledge their nature, they are lovely." Her mentor Ko Toe Aung, a burly 40-year-old who said he has been hospitalised seven times since he started catching snakes in 2016, was more prosaic.

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